# The Love of Liberty Divided Us Here? Factors Leading to the Introduction and Postponement in Passage of Liberia's Dual Citizenship Bill

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# Abstract

Having never been formally colonised and more recently emerging from 14 years of intermittent armed conflict, Liberia represents a stark case study in citizenship construction because of its idiosyncratic history of black settler state formation. Because 'Liberian citizenship' has historically been a tool of exclusion—once barring women, non-settlers, non-Christians, and non-blacks—it remains a violently contested space of inquiry with newer forms of citizenship now developing in Liberia and within transnational spaces.

In this thesis, I argue that conflict, migration, globalisation and post-war recovery have configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time, thereby influencing the introduction and postponement in passage of a dual citizenship bill proposed in 2008.[1] The bill is used as a point of entry to evaluate Liberia's long-standing struggle to construct a unique brand of citizenship that is totalising, tactical and timeless.

My findings show that contemporary constructions of 'Liberian citizenship' transcend the legal definition enshrined in the country's Aliens and Nationality Law—moving from passive, identity-based citizenship to more active, practice-based citizenship. Thus, claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship are manifestations of the hybridity of citizenship (identity + practice). Using actor-oriented analysis as my theoretical framework, I examine the interfaces between 202 Liberian interviewees—namely, homeland Liberians in Monrovia; Liberian diasporas in London, Washington, Freetown, and Accra; permanent and circular returnees; executive and legislative members of government, including the four sponsors of the proposed dual citizenship bill—showing that their conceptualisations of 'Liberian citizenship' differ according to their lived experiences and social locations, and ultimately influence participation, or lack thereof, in post-war recovery.

Given the dynamic trends in citizenship configuration across the globe and particularly in Africa, my findings fill gaps in the growing body of literature on citizenship and participation in emigrant-sending countries. The thesis further contributes to debates about how to rebuild states whose wars were fuelled by the politicisation of identity.

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[1] If enacted, the bill would enable Liberian citizen women to pass on citizenship to their children as well as grant dual citizenship to Liberians by birth who naturalised elsewhere (or have aspirations to naturalise), and those born outside of Liberia to Liberian citizen parents, respectively.

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## Chapter I
## The Love of Liberty Divided Us Here?

Liberia's official seal and motto are symbols of its contested ontology and of competing realities colliding and co-mingling. The official seal, or coat of arms, consists of a shield with an idyllic pictorial of a passenger ship seen from the shore, approaching new territory. An invisible, straight line connects the ship with an inviting palm tree jutting out of the earth. There is a white dove hovering on the horizon, its beak carrying a scroll symbolising peace and freedom (Henries and Henries, 1950: 35). Beaming rays from a half-exposed sun appear in the background to complete the symbolism of newness and discovery. In the foreground of the shield, on lush, green grass, lie a shovel dug into the earth and a plough representing the dignity of hard labour, primarily from subsistence agriculture (Henries and Henries, 1950: 35). Above the shield is a scroll with Liberia's national motto: *The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here*, and below it another scroll with the words *Republic of Liberia*.

**Figure 1: Liberia's Official Seal**



Source: http://www.mytmzliberia.net/2011/12/liberian-national-anthem.html

This pictorial signifies America meeting Africa, yet it depicts the experiences of only a small fraction of Liberia's population, at independence in the mid-19th century,

and now, almost 200 years later in the 21st century. In fact, Liberia's Constitution, national motto, seal, flag and Declaration of Independence—which states: "*We, the people of the Commonwealth of Liberia* were originally inhabitants of the United States of America"—all exemplify settler hegemony in the body politic (Dunn, 1979). Yet, some scholars argue that Liberia was not subject to the kind of polarised hegemonic narrative espoused by historians. For instance, in the early years of independence Liberia expanded horizontally and vertically, while "many indigenous groups that were shown on maps as included in the territory were not subject to the control—and oppression—by the Liberian state until decades after independence" (Burrowes, 2004: 2). Furthermore, there were wars of resistance pitting indigenes against settlers during the first half-century of the country's establishment (Dunn, 1979: 31; TRC, 2009b: 114; Waugh, 2011). However appealing these counter-narratives appear, it is virtually impossible to negate the pervasive nature of settler domination before 1980.  In 19th century Liberia, the 'love of liberty' signified erasure and silencing of indigenous agency because it evoked the experiences of repatriated blacks from the US. It further represented a euphemistic proclamation that divided rather than united settler Liberians and their indigenous counterparts. In the 21st century, the 'love of liberty' represents a contemporary resurgence of contestations about citizenship.

This thesis examines the junctures at which multiple histories intersect to interrogate the meaning of 'Liberian citizenship' in contemporary development and political practice. I use inverted commas to encase the term throughout the thesis because it refers to the constantly shifting conceptualisations and practices of citizenship over space and time. My title, "The Love of Liberty Divided Us Here?", is a satirical revision of Liberia's motto, where the 'here' signifies a dualism of time, in this case, the 21st century, and a matter of utmost importance to national development, the question of citizenship. I argue that 'Liberian citizenship' has been configured and reconfigured across space and time because of four historical and contemporary factors, namely, conflict, migration, globalisation and post-war recovery. From the beginning of Liberia's state formation, citizenship was conceived of as identity, practice, and a set of relations, although early forms of citizenship

were characterised by exclusion rather than inclusion. Citizenship, therefore, remains a violently contested space of inquiry.

## From Black Settler Migration to Post-War Recovery

Liberia's historical trajectory has been characterised by migration, mobility, contestation, conflict, exile and return, thereby facilitating new configurations of citizenship across space and time. The country was established in 1822 as an "American outpost" for free blacks and repatriated slaves by the American Colonisation Society (ACS), an association of influential abolitionists, yet its history predates black settlement (Burrowes, 2004: 1; Moran, 2006: 2; Kieh, 2012a: 168). In 1847, Liberia declared itself independent seeking increased autonomy from the ACS, fearing British and French territorial encroachment (Guannu, 1989: 49; Burrowes, 2004: 61). During this time, the country became a prime location for the convergence of a multitude of disparate actors, including the 16 ethno-linguistic indigenous groups already occupying the territory, black repatriates from the United States, recaptives from the Congo River Basin in central Africa, and emigrants from the West Indies (Liebenow, 1987: 19; Guannu, 1989). Despite its amalgam of identities, Liberia adopted a uniquely defined frame of citizenship that soon turned hegemonic (Burrowes, 2004: 69). Modelled after the United States' initial conferring of citizenship on white male landed gentry, Liberia's construction of citizenship in the 19th century reflected a settler male ethos, ruling out indigenes, non-Christians, women of both indigenous and settler orientation, and non-blacks (Burrowes, 2004: 69). Not until 100 years after state formation would most Liberians of 'Negro descent' experience citizenship fully (Wreh, 1976: 42; Dunn, 1979), further illustrating that 'Liberian citizenship' has historically been a tool of exclusion and privilege rather than an automatic entitlement at birth. Furthermore, the nature of Liberia's black settler state formation precluded nationalism and did not lend itself to national identity consolidation. Unlike African polities that underwent fierce nationalist struggles against colonial rule, Liberia was declared the first black African republic nearly a century before independence movements began in earnest in Africa.

Liberia was ruled from 1847 to 1980 by the True Whig Party (TWP), an oligarchy of descendants of black settlers (Guannu, 1989). Before President William Tubman introduced an Open Door Policy in 1947 to court foreign investors, there were calls to incorporate indigenous populations into the mainstream (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 3; Kieh, 1992: 39; 42). Tubman introduced the Unification Policy in 1946 subsequently recognising women and indigenous men as citizens for the first time in a decidedly failed attempt to construct a nation within a state (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 341). Elite Liberians travelled to the United States and elsewhere for vacation, business ventures and higher education, but rarely did they remain outside of the country for long periods of time until Tubman's successor, William Tolbert, was assassinated in a 1980 coup (US Department of State, 2001; Advocates for Human Rights, 2009: 12). Rumoured to be an orchestrated plot by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Dunn, 2009), the coup was led by a 25-year-old indigenous master sergeant in the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), Samuel Kanyon Doe; it effectively toppled the TWP hegemony (Dick, 2002: 64).

Doe's military regime lasted until elections in 1985, which were largely viewed as fraudulent, entrenching his power in an arbitrary institutional arrangement (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1986: 118). For many, Doe's reign signified the beginning of an indigenous political renaissance because, among other reforms, he abrogated a 'hut tax' that tied citizenship to property ownership (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 170). Yet, his grip on power declined over time. When an attempted coup in November 1985 led by Thomas Quiwonkpa, one of Doe's trusted allies, was rumoured to have been supported by Liberians abroad, a wave of out-migration ensued with large numbers of Liberians leaving the country fearing reprisals from the Doe regime (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 275). This effectively reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship,' making it transnational for the first time in the country's history.

Liberian exiles in the United States, led by former Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) President Amos Sawyer and current Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, lobbied against Doe's authoritarian rule through the Association of Constitutional Democracy of Liberia (ACDL), but their cries for regime change fell on

deaf ears (Huband, 1998: 47). These political elites in large part would eventually support[2] Charles Ghankay Taylor, a counter-revolutionary with political ambitions (Sirleaf, 2009: Waugh, 2011). Taylor trained in Libya and launched an armed rebellion in 1989 from neighbouring Ivory Coast, thereby prompting another wave of out-migration. From 1989-1997, approximately 200,000 Liberians were killed (Saul, 2007) and between 500,000 and 750,000 internally displaced; in the first year alone as many as 700,000 fled the country, primarily to Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Nigeria (Gberie, 2005). It is not clear how many Liberians returned to the country after elections in 1997 brought Taylor to power. From 1997 to 2003, he ruled with an iron fist, involving Liberia in Sierra Leone's armed conflict, thereby prompting two militia groups, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), to agitate between 1999 and 2003 for his ouster (Waugh, 2011: 264-268; Hazen, 2013: 105-110; 121; 131-133). Liberians once again fled the country for safety, followed by a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in August 2003 in Accra, Ghana, with Taylor exiled at the invitation of the Nigerian government (Waugh, 2011). On April 26, 2012, Taylor was eventually convicted on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for aiding and abetting rebels during Sierra Leone's war[3] (Bowcott and Mark, 2012).

From 2003 to 2005, an interim government was established to pave the way for elections in 2005 in which Africa's first female president, Sirleaf, was elected (Government of Liberia, 2005). From 2003 onwards, waves of return migration to Liberia grew in magnitude and scale, with post-war recovery efforts in security, economic revitalisation, governance and the rule of law, and infrastructure and basic services eliciting renewed hope in a country once considered the "heart of darkness" (Williams, 2006; Government of Liberia, 2008a). Despite its multi-layered post-war challenges, Liberia has undergone transformation in Sirleaf's two successive terms, creating what some have argued has been an enabling environment for diasporic return and re-engagement. Nevertheless, post-war

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[2] In 2009, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that the ACDL donated US$10,000 to support Taylor's insurgency against Doe.
[3] Taylor was given a 50-year jail sentence on May 30, 2012, and after losing an appeal was transported to a British prison to serve his time.

recovery and return migration have complicated relations between Liberians of divergent lived experiences and world-views, thereby reviving unresolved historical fissures. In 21st century Liberia, the amalgam of different identities has somewhat metamorphosed, with homeland Liberians, returnees and diasporas all vying for a stake in post-war development. At the centre of this convergence are questions about citizenship, essentially, who belongs to the nation-state and who can legitimately participate in its reconstruction. In this thesis, I argue that 'Liberian citizenship' has been constructed and reconstructed since the founding of the nation-state in 1847, with proposed dual citizenship legislation serving as a contemporary manifestation of that reconfiguration over space and time.

**Proposed Dual Citizenship Legislation Reconstructs 'Liberian Citizenship'**

Having never been formally colonised and more recently emerging from 14 years of intermittent armed conflict, Liberia represents a stark case study in citizenship construction because of its idiosyncratic history of black settler state formation. 'Liberian citizenship' has always been and remains a space of contestation. As a case in point, there is a fundamental contradiction between Article 27 of Liberia's 1986 Constitution, which states, "All persons, who, on the coming into force of this Constitution, were lawfully citizens of Liberia shall continue to be Liberian citizens," and Section 22.1 of its Aliens and Nationality Law, which automatically revokes the legal citizenship status of Liberia-born nationals of 'Negro descent' who naturalise in, declare formal allegiance to, enter into the armed forces of, vote in the elections of, or formally renounce 'Liberian citizenship' in a foreign state[4] (Government of Liberia, 1973; Government of Liberia, 1986). Passed into law in 1973, and modelled after the 1952 US Immigration and Nationality Act, the Aliens and Nationality Law of Liberia has never been amended. Some have argued that it therefore fails to contend with contemporary configurations of 'Liberian citizenship' largely brokered by conflict, migration, globalisation, and post-war recovery.

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[4] Although Liberia's Constitution was amended in 1986 as part of a post-election constitutional review process, the reviewers neglected to reconcile the apparent contradictions between the Constitution and the Aliens and Nationality Law on matters of citizenship. In 2012, President Sirleaf commissioned a Constitution Review Committee to review and make recommendations for amending the 1986 Constitution, based on a series of national consultations with Liberian citizens. Three years earlier, in 2009, the president had established a Law Reform Commission through Executive Order No. 20, which appears to have overlapping functions with the Constitution Review Committee.

For example, the current law states explicitly that only those of 'Negro'[5] descent can be citizens and only those whose fathers were citizens of Liberia during the time of their birth and resided in Liberia before their birth can be granted citizenship at birth (Government of Liberia, 1973). It also states that children of Liberian citizen parents must declare at the age of majority whether or not they claim legal 'Liberian citizenship' or the citizenship of the country in which they were born (Government of Liberia, 1973). Therefore, the law distorts the principles of *jus soli* citizenship— citizenship by birth, regardless of race, ethnicity, or class—as well as *jus sanguinis* citizenship—citizenship by ancestry, regardless of parentage. Although I do not interrogate the 'Negro clause'[6] in this thesis, I acknowledge that the controversial reference to race as a defining marker of legal 'Liberian citizenship' remains contested, as do other markers such as citizenship traced through patrilineal lines alone. Many argue that Liberia's current law is anachronistic and overtly exclusionary because it defines citizenship along racial and gender lines (American Bar Association, 2009)[7]. Others argue that revoking the citizenship of a natural born Liberian without due process is unconstitutional, as evidenced by the lawsuit filed in Liberia's Supreme Court in 2011 by US-based Liberian legal expert, Counsellor Alvin Teage Jalloh.[8] Responding to increased pressure from what appears to be a strong transnational tide, Liberia introduced a dual citizenship bill in 2008 to reconstruct markers of citizenship.

In their proposed "Act to Establish Dual Citizenship for Liberians by Birth and Background," four senators in Liberia's Legislature, namely Cletus Segbe Wotorson, Sumo G. Kupee, Jewel Howard Taylor, and Abel Massalay, endorsed amendments to

[5] To date, Liberia and Sierra Leone are the only two countries in Africa that explicitly define citizenship by 'Negro' descent, although Sierra Leone's 2006 Dual Citizenship Act enables 'non-Negroes' to naturalise.

[6] Although there is considerable contestation about the merits of maintaining a race-based clause in Liberia's Constitution, it has been argued that the preponderance of Lebanese, Indian, and Chinese entrepreneurs in the country's strategic commercial sectors strengthens the case for the 'Negro clause.' Essentially, 21st century angst amongst Liberians about foreign domination of the country's economy re-inscribes the settlers' 19th century preoccupation with escaping economic servitude in the United States.

[7] The American Bar Association has argued that citizenship based on race is inconsistent with Article 5 of the Liberian Constitution, which prohibits ethnic discrimination, as well as the Convention on All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which Liberia ratified in 1978.

[8] Jalloh's case is not in pursuit of dual citizenship, per se, but rather a lawsuit interrogating sections 22.1 and 22.2 of Liberia's Aliens and Nationality Law, which, he argues, violates Article 20 of the Liberian Constitution guaranteeing due process.

sections 20.1 and 22.1 of the Aliens and Nationality Law to conform to the current Constitution by enabling Liberian citizen women to pass on citizenship to their children and granting dual citizenship to Liberians by birth who naturalised abroad (or have aspirations to naturalise) as well as those born outside of Liberia to Liberian citizen parents, respectively (Government of Liberia, 2008c). Two questions ultimately underpin the proposed legislation, and, by extension, this thesis: why was the bill introduced in 2008 and why has its passage been postponed? According to the bill's chief sponsor, Wotorson, the premise of proposing amendments to the Aliens and Nationality Law was to respond to the needs of Liberians who emigrated as a result of intermittent armed conflict:

> ...a lot of them [Liberians abroad] had to change their lifestyle, accept the dictates from a strange country, for survival, in some countries it meant you had to become [a] citizen of that country, to enjoy the benefits...So, they had to do that. It's a temporary means of getting their aims accomplished. But in taking that involuntary stance, it qualified them for disqualification of their citizenships in their own country, which, I believe, is unfair. It's unfair given the background that the drafters of the Constitution did not foresee that such a scenario would have happened.[9]

Though the bill recommends broad sweeping changes with major implications for reconfiguring the meaning and practice of 'Liberian citizenship,' its first iteration is rather low on substance and does not explicitly define the rights and responsibilities of would-be dual citizens, thereby opening it up to targeted attacks.

Despite unequivocal support from Liberians abroad about the potential benefits of dual citizenship—with a number of outliers here and there—those at home are, for the most part, less convinced. Senator Taylor presented her analysis of why the proposed bill has sustained opposition:

> ...Liberians here [Liberia], a lot of them are not working, they're unemployed, and they feel as if Liberians coming from the diaspora who have had all of these opportunities want to come and take their space. So, the common sentiment you'll find with those living in Liberia, especially the young people is, like, "Yeah, hey! Those guys

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[9] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on March 6, 2013.

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can decide whether they want to be Liberians or Americans [or another nationality]. If they want to remain Americans, let them stay where they are. But they can't have it both ways because you're coming and the possibility of those of us who have not had such an opportunity being upstaged is so high. So, either you come home and be a Liberian or you remain where you are."[10]

As acknowledged by Senator Taylor, there are concerns that dual citizenship would represent a zero-sum game for those based in Liberia, further impinging upon their already limited access to political, economic and social opportunities. Given the backlash against the bill, there has been a barrage of assertions made about the potential positive outcomes of dual citizenship if it is enacted, chief among which is the claim that Liberians who naturalised in other countries will be able to retain their legal status as Liberian citizens, thereby contributing more meaningfully to post-war recovery. The assumption herein is that dual citizenship will facilitate political, economic and social renewal by transnationals. The converse argument could be applied, however, that there is no direct correlation between the retention of emigrant citizenship and involvement in post-war development (Whitaker, 2011; Spiro, 2012). Furthermore, the assumption that transnationals are the panacea to reconstruction, as is apparent in the literature on diasporas and development, negates and obscures the lived experiences of homeland development actors. This thesis problematises core assertions about the diasporas-development nexus by evaluating the active citizenship practices of Monrovia-based Liberians despite the constraints on their citizenship rights and privileges. Therefore, the position of the Liberian state in reconciling transnational *commands* with homeland *demands* is a central feature of this thesis.

Given that the proposed dual citizenship bill is the first comprehensive policy mechanism that the government of Liberia has ever introduced specifically to respond to diasporic claims beyond the range of ad-hoc emergency capacity building programmes, this thesis deploys it as a point of entry to evaluate Liberia's long-standing struggle to construct a unique brand of citizenship that is totalising,

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[10] Ibid.

tactical and timeless. This research challenge is not only unique to Liberia, but is also relevant to other post-war states whose wars were fuelled by the politicisation of identity. In this vein, I fill gaps in the growing body of literature on emigrant citizenship by focusing my analysis on how historical and contemporary factors have configured and reconfigured citizenship in a post-war sending country, Liberia; how that reconfiguration impacts the sending country's homeland citizens, those who reside in Liberia, and its diasporas, those who reside outside; and last but not least, how new meanings and practice of citizenship impact post-war recovery.

While the purpose of this thesis is not to delve into the legal contours of Liberia's Constitution, Aliens and Nationality Law, and the proposed dual citizenship bill beyond this brief introduction, it is worth scrutinising the conception and practice of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time within this backdrop.

**'Liberian Citizenship' as Both Identity and Practice**

In this thesis, 'Liberian citizenship' signifies simultaneously an identity (passive, fixed)—including legal status and national identity—and an expression of that identity through practice (active, constructed) (Barry, 2006). Departing slightly from Stuart Hall's (1992) and Homi Bhabha's (1994) post-colonial conceptualisation of hybridity, a theory associated with the effects of racial and cultural mixture on identities, I argue that:

i) Increased claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship for Liberia are a manifestation of the hybridity of citizenship (identity + practice);

ii) Liberia's diasporas do not represent a composite of homeland and host country identities alone, but are rather a hybrid mix of both identity expression and political practice, hence there is a need to pluralise 'diaspora' when referring to Liberians abroad, specifically, and collectivities of migrants from other countries, generally;

iii) Public reactions to proposed dual citizenship legislation by Liberians at home and abroad serve as a proxy for notions about how diasporas should and should not be involved in post-war recovery.

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Herein, I examine relations between Liberia's diasporas and the Liberian state, between homeland Liberians and the Liberian state, and between homeland Liberians and Liberia's diasporas—based on qualitative interviews conducted with respondents in London, England; Washington, D.C.; Freetown, Sierra Leone; Accra, Ghana; and Monrovia, Liberia's capital. As such, the central research question I seek to answer is:

**How have current and historical factors influenced the introduction and postponement in passage of Liberia's proposed dual citizenship legislation?**

I consider six key subsidiary questions:

i) How is 'Liberian citizenship' currently conceived of and practiced at home and abroad?

ii) How have the conception and practice of 'Liberian citizenship' been configured and reconfigured over time and space?

iii) Is there a symbiotic relationship between citizenship and development practice, and if so, what are its qualities?

iv) How has diasporic political, economic, and social involvement in post-war recovery affected dual citizenship claims and counter-claims?

v) How has homeland political, economic, and social involvement in post-war recovery affected dual citizenship claims and counter-claims?

vi) What can be gleaned from models implemented elsewhere (regionally and globally) regarding the range of transnational citizenship options and their political and socio-economic implications, and how have these models influenced policies in Liberia?

My central argument is that four current and historical factors—conflict, migration, globalisation, and post-war recovery—have reconfigured the meaning and practice of 'Liberian citizenship' thereby influencing both the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation and its subsequent postponement in passage. In the thesis, I also put forward three overarching hypotheses that are tested and analysed. First, the demand for dual citizenship is not only about the need for involvement in the political and socio-economic milieu of post-war Liberia, but also about the need for identity recognition and expression. Second, current power relations between Liberia's diasporas and the Liberian post-war state favour the former, thereby enabling diasporas to influence domestic homeland policies such as proposed dual citizenship legislation. And third, historical inequities between settlers and indigenes have been replicated by contemporary tensions between diasporas and homeland Liberians, thereby creating a negative backlash against the proposed bill.

In the next section, I discuss how my positionality framed my research questions and selection of sites and informants.

**Researcher Positionality: Navigating between 'Insider' and 'Outsider' Access**

In 2000 when I was 18, I watched my mother raise her right hand and pledge allegiance to the United States of America. In the small room in downtown Washington with official-looking, mahogany furniture, I felt a sinking regret in the pit of my stomach. Yet, all around me there was pomp and pageantry during the naturalisation proceedings. A six-foot United States flag billowed in the background. As keynote speaker, the president of Howard University (where I was then a freshman undergraduate) regaled the newly minted US citizens with clichés about what a wonderful place America was. However, my mother naturalised on that eventful day, not because of some deep, abiding love for America, but because she needed US citizenship to regularise my status. Her revocation of legal 'Liberian citizenship' represented, for me, the pinnacle of parental sacrifice.

Born in Monrovia, I emigrated to the US in 1988 through a very complicated process, and lived in undocumented limbo from the time I was six until I was 20, a sophomore in college. Those 15 years of legal invisibility fundamentally shaped and

moulded my identity as a Liberian citizen. I have come to define citizenship, generally, and 'Liberian citizenship,' specifically, as a political construct, as much about 'doing' as it is about 'being.' I grew up in Washington, studied in Ghana, South Africa, Egypt and the UK; nevertheless, I remained so metaphysically connected to Liberia that my American accent defied logic. I taught primary school English grammar at a Liberian refugee camp on the outskirts of Accra when I was a 20-year-old study abroad student. My honours undergraduate thesis and masters dissertation both focused on Liberia, catapulting me back to the country in 2002 and 2006, respectively, for field research. I joined the Liberian Studies Association (LSA), learned how to cook Liberian cuisine, and perfected the lilting Liberian English that rolls off the tongue like an unstoppable locomotive. I developed a wanderlust that facilitated my permanent return to Monrovia in 2007, at the age of 25, to work as an aide to the president of Liberia. In my personal and professional endeavours, I have come across Liberians of varying backgrounds, perspectives, and ideologies, which enabled access to 202 respondents in this study spanning three continents. As an academic, activist, and author, I represent a composite of the categories of Liberians I interviewed in the field—homelanders, returnees, diasporas, executive and legislative members of government—making me an 'insider' and 'outsider' all at once.

For this study, I spoke to Liberians with divergent citizenship statuses, who, like me, remained fiercely engaged with the country in both tangible and intangible ways. Although I spent most of my life in the United States, I opted for permanent residency rather than naturalisation because I did not want to relinquish my legal 'Liberian citizenship'. Nonetheless, I recognise that Liberians like my mother naturalised for a variety of reasons, whether by compulsion or choice. This thesis is primarily informed by my desire to interrogate why people make certain citizenship status decisions and what policies and practices support or invalidate those choices—from an empirical point of reference. At the moment, most of the literature on citizenship is overly theoretical and Eurocentric, prompting Conover et al (1991: 801) to contend that theoretical discourses on citizenship are "conducted in what is virtually an empirical void." In this thesis, I examine constructions of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time, thereby filling an empirical void in the academic

literature. Although a self-professed transnational, I have maintained a decidedly critical stance on deterritorialised forms of citizenship, primarily because Liberia has had a complicated relationship with its nationals abroad. Because of this, I knew that I would have to temper my opinions during interviews in the field and remain constantly aware of my political stances. Although I do not claim to be neutral or objective in my positionality, I have mitigated biases in writing this thesis by constantly seeking and validating positions that are different from mine.

In the section that follows, I present in summary form an overview of the entire thesis and its constituent chapters.

**Nine Chapters Examine Citizenship Spaces of Contestation and Convergence**

This thesis is divided into nine chapters, beginning with an introduction that contextualises the entire scope of the study. In Chapter II, I explain the reasons for adopting as a theoretical framework actor-oriented analysis, which catalogues how the lived experiences and social positions of agents influence their responses to development interventions. Chapter III justifies my methodological approaches in the field. I provide a rationale for interviewing 202 Liberians in five field sites as well as seven Sierra Leonean policy makers. I present a demographic profile of interviewees and examine their multi-layered identities. The chapter also describes general trends observed in the field, thereby providing a premise for detailed analysis in the five subsequent core chapters. In Chapter IV, I evaluate how 'Liberian citizenship' is currently conceived of and practiced in Liberia and across transnational spaces, reflective of the social discontinuities within respondents' lived experiences. I argue that contemporary citizenship construction sits on a continuum between identity (passive citizenship) and practice (active citizenship). In this chapter, I also demonstrate that the fluidity of the conceptions of 'Liberian citizenship' transcends the legal definition articulated in the country's Aliens and Nationality Law.

Chapter V is the first of a series of chapters examining historical and contemporary factors that have influenced the introduction and postponement in passage of proposed dual citizenship legislation. In it, I argue that four conflict interfaces in

Liberia and across transnational spaces have fundamentally configured and reconfigured citizenship construction and practice. The chapter shows that conflict—manifested in direct and structural violence—simultaneously ruptured and sealed state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations, thereby casting citizenship as a space of contestation. Here, I review some of the conflict literature, exploring how the manipulation of citizenship was a driver of Liberia's armed conflicts and how it continues to be a driver of continued tensions amongst homeland, diaspora and returnee Liberians in the post-war milieu.

In Chapter VI, I argue that migration to and from Liberia in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries fundamentally altered the meaning and practice of citizenship by creating categories of Liberians that defy the legal definition of citizenship. While the proposed dual citizenship bill is an attempt to reconcile the (forced) migration of hundreds of thousands before, during, and after intermittent armed conflict, it has been postponed because, for some, naturalisation abroad signifies a rejection of the fundamental tenets of 'Liberian citizenship.' Because of the dearth of quantitative data on pre- and post-war migration, I include in this chapter a qualitative mapping of the migration patterns of respondents in the five field sites to illustrate how experiences of migration impact citizenship status choices. Chapter VII maintains that globalisation has fundamentally configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship' through Liberia's adoption of human rights norms and regional protocols as well as its integration into the global capitalist system. In this chapter, I argue that although Liberia has attempted to join sub-regional and continental trends in deterritorialising citizenship, its proposed dual citizenship bill has been postponed because the country has yet to reconcile its capitalist aspirations with the accompanying marginalisation of its citizens.

In Chapter VIII, I argue that there is an underlying assumption that Liberians abroad and their returnee counterparts have contributed to Liberia's development, and could further advance post-war recovery if granted dual citizenship. However, I also show that there has been backlash against dual citizenship as a policy prescription because a disproportionate number of returnee recruits have been implicated in public sector graft cases, thereby underscoring the need to severely restrain

transnational citizenship pursuits. This chapter further reveals that although post-war recovery may require the active participation of all Liberians, what Liberia needs is not 'all hands on deck' but rather only those hands that are truly committed to transformation. My concluding chapter summarises key arguments and findings and lists a set of policy recommendations and projections for future research, chief among which is the need to base Liberia's legal citizenship reconfiguration on empirical studies such as mine, rather than on the whims of political entrepreneurs such as the four sponsors of the proposed dual citizenship bill. This chapter also discusses the implications of my thesis for other post-war countries currently examining issues of citizenship construction and practice.

**Conclusion**

Although Liberia's official seal and motto are currently undergoing scrutiny in a national symbols review process, it is clear that they reflect the exclusion that permeated the first 100 years of the country's existence as a nation-state. A parallel review of the tenets of 'Liberian citizenship' is also underway, brokered by a dual citizenship bill introduced in 2008 that has languished in the Senate. This introductory chapter presented broad-based contextual analysis for an examination of how historical and contemporary factors have influenced the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation. In the chapter, I briefly highlighted how the bill serves as a proxy for debates about how conflict, migration, globalisation, and post-war recovery have configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time. I also analysed my subjectivity and positionality as a Liberian researcher who has inhabited multiple spaces in Liberia and abroad. I evaluated my own biases as a child of Liberian soil who made a conscious choice not to naturalise in the US despite my upbringing in Washington, and how this decision influences my analysis of 'Liberian citizenship.' This chapter concluded by outlining the scope and organisation of the thesis.

In the next chapter, I review the literature on citizenship and frame my conceptualisation of 'Liberian citizenship.' I also validate Norman Long's brand of actor-oriented analysis as my theoretical framework.

# Chapter II

## University Deadlock Shows Competing Worldviews on Citizenship

In May 2013, the University of Liberia, once a bastion of political advocacy against government repression, came to a standstill. A mob of students heckled and jeered at a delegation from the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) attempting to host one of many town-hall meetings discussing the merits of dual citizenship. Although a few students supported the delegation, pushing back at their naysaying counterparts, the forceful majority barred them from speaking. In the same month as the students' stand-off, one of Liberia's most notorious senators, Dan Morias, unleashed an anti-dual citizenship radio campaign that left the delegation scrambling to return to the United States to raise funds for lobbying more conciliatory members of the Legislature.

Interactions between disparate social actors—such as the incident at the University of Liberia—is framed by actor-oriented analysis as sites where competing realities collide and comingle. As will be discussed in this chapter, citizenship represents a space of contestation and convergence in theory and practice. The chapter is organised into two parts. Part I consists of an analytical review of how citizenship has evolved in the modern world over time, which serves as a basis for my own conceptual framing of 'Liberian citizenship' as identity, practice, and a set of relations. In Part II, I explore why and how a strand of social constructionism, actor-oriented analysis, serves as the theoretical framework for this thesis.

**Part I: Evolution of Citizenship and the Emergence of Dual Citizenship**

Citizenship has been construed over time to inscribe an individual within a particular polity, yet modern forms of citizenship transcend the nation-state. What has been termed 'citizenship' in modern times has its antecedents in the Greek city-state, which defined a citizen as a Greek male resident, ruling out foreigners, women, and slaves (Hoffman, 2004: 18). This definition further evolved from the era of feudalism to the emergence of the nation-state dating back to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 "which launched the modern system of nation-states as the

principal actors within the world system" (Kashyap, 1997: 4; Turner, 2000: 137). In the nation-state system, a social contract defined the nation-citizen relationship, as theorised by Rousseau, Hobbes, and Locke (Adejumobi, 2005: 21). As modern nationality laws were formulated from the 19th to 20th centuries, states either adopted a *jus sanguinis* (ancestral lineage) or *jus soli* (birthplace) principle, thereby defining which inhabitants of a state were citizens and non-citizens (Koslowski, 2001: 206).

Throughout the modern era, citizenship has come to be described as a system of rights, a form of political activity and a form of identity and solidarity (Bosniak, 2000: 451). As an officially authorised category, citizenship defines formal legal status, and as a set of relations, it refers to "the shared understandings and practices that constitute a political community" (Joppke, 1999: 632). Barry considers citizenship as both a legal status (legal citizenship), and as an identification of group and individual engagement (active citizenship) (Barry, 2006: 20-21). Citizenship, therefore, is the process by which identity becomes anchored in law (Barry, 2006: 25), with certain trends emerging out of an increased tendency toward more cosmopolitan forms of citizenship, such as dual citizenship. However, scholars often disagree about whether or not dual citizenship should be an extension of the modern form of legal, political, social, cultural, and economic engagement.

European bilateral treaties regarding nationality during the latter half of the 19th century brought about norms against dual citizenship in customary law, accumulated in the 1930 Hague Convention on Certain Questions Relating to the Conflict of Nationality Laws (Koslowski, 2001: 206), which states that all persons should only have one nationality. This, Koslowski says, birthed the 'demographic boundary maintenance regime,' which tied citizens to a unitary polity (Koslowski, 2001). In contemporary international relations, however, nation-states are moving away from the demographic boundary maintenance regime because of a constantly shifting international order. Even though historical precedents have deterred most modern nation-states from recognising dual citizenship, a growing number of

governments have endorsed it not because of increased internationalisation, per se, but because of domestic politics (Koslowski, 2001).


**Citizenship and Nationality as 'Bounded' or 'Unbounded'**

Rapid international migration and mobility, coupled with globalisation, have ruptured state-centric conceptions of citizenship, identity, and belonging (Jacobson, 1996; Sassen, 2005), with legal scholars asserting that dual citizenship or multiple citizenships are becoming the rule rather than the exception in the 21st century (Spiro, 1997; Rubenstein and Adler, 2000). Rather than an indicator of the erosion of state sovereignty, the efforts by emigration states, for instance, to institutionally embrace their citizens abroad highlight a reassertion of nation-state sovereignty "based on the Westphalian principle of territorial sovereignty" in which a renegotiating of the terms of the social contract enables "citizenship a la carte" (FitzGerald, 2012: 285-286). This involves "voluntaristic ties rather than being coercively 'ruled,' a menu of options for expressing membership, an emphasis on rights over obligations, and the legitimacy of plural legal and affective national affiliations" (FitzGerald, 2012: 285-286). Using Mexico as a case study, FitzGerald argues that emigrant citizenship *is* being transformed, but that this process is a result of the strengthening, not the weakening of state sovereignty (FitzGerald, 2012: 292). While some scholars suggest that there is increasingly a weakening of territorially bounded nation-state sovereignty, International Relations theorists assert that the conceptual triad of identity-borders-orders still carries relevance in which borders are vital to identity formation and preservation and their existence is not simply a feature of social life (Lapid, 2001: 2; Brown, 2001: 129).


While a growing body of literature is evaluating how globalisation and transnationalism restructure or challenge the nation-state (Clifford, 1994), some scholars argue that this should be treated as an empirical question rather than an exaggerated assumption. Sociologists like Brubaker (2005) remain sceptical that a radical shift in perspective has occurred from seeing the nation-state as a single unit of analysis and citizens as bounded to that nation-state to increased levels of

globalisation, deterritorialisation, and transnationalism subverting said relationship. It is argued that in the 21st century, in fact, states have strengthened rather than weakened mechanisms to control movement of people within their borders "by deploying increasingly sophisticated technologies of identification and control including citizenship, passports, visas, surveillance, integrated databases and biometric devices" (Brubaker, 2005: 9). This is certainly the case in Liberia where the Aliens and Nationality Law prohibits dual citizenship.

Other authors wrestle with the tendency to dismiss the state as a site of national identity and citizenship formation altogether. Although traditional notions of national identity and citizenship are being challenged, some authors assert that the underlying tenets and values of republican citizenship—described as a form of citizenship in which someone is actively involved in shaping the future direction of his or her society—should be reasserted as a form of politics and nationhood should be reasserted as a form of political identity (Miller, 2000). According to Miller, republican citizenship requires citizens to share a common identity within a national border—bounded citizenship—thereby critiquing cosmopolitan forms of citizenship—transnational citizenship— as "either parasitic on national forms or else not genuine forms of citizenship at all" (Miller, 2000: 4). In defending the tenets of national identity as a hallmark of citizenship, Miller argues that there are several distinguishing features of national identity: i) nationality exists because people believe in it; ii) nationality involves historical continuity; iii.) national identity is an active identity; iv) national identity connects a group of people to a particular geographical place; and v) people who compose the nation share traits that distinguish them from other groups of people (Miller, 2000: 28-30). Miller's premise is that nationality is a primary source of identity for citizens in contemporary democracies, yet some citizens may uphold their clan, ethnic, or religious identity before claiming national solidarity with other members within a nation-state. Furthermore, Miller might be accused of methodological nationalism, which conflates "a nation-state with a concept of society" thereby assuming that "members of those states share a common history and set of values, norms, social customs and institutions" (Glick Schiller, 2009: 4).

While Miller espouses the idea that citizenship should be confined to a unitary nation-state, some scholars argue that given the challenges to state sovereignty, the legal principles associated with nationality need to be reconfigured to reflect contemporary realities of citizenship and nationality in a globalised world (Rubenstein and Adler, 2000: 521). While some perceive territorially unbounded citizenship as an appropriate and inevitable response to globalisation (Turner, et. al, 1993; Bauböck, 1994), others frame it as a tactical enterprise, rather than a marker of identity formation or consolidation of political, social, or cultural rights (Ong, 1999). For instance, Ong argues that individuals and governments adopt a flexible notion of citizenship and sovereignty in order to accumulate capital and power: "'Flexible citizenship' refers to the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions" (Ong, 1999: 6). Therefore, globalisation does not necessarily weaken state power, but rather states have increasingly found ways to respond to transnationalism (Ong, 1999: 7). Ong uses the term 'flexible citizenship' to refer "especially to the effects of [Chinese] mobile managers, technocrats, and professionals seeking to both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investments, work, and family relocation" (Ong, 1999: 7). Unlike much of the literature, Ong regards citizenship, and by extension, dual citizenship, especially with respect to overseas Chinese transnationals, as a strategic approach to wealth accumulation and economic opportunism, and subversion of state control over that capital (Ong, 1999: 112-113; 123).

**Diasporas Challenged by and Challenging to State-Centric Citizenship**

Conceptions of the traditional state as an "administrative unit" and "spatially discreet homogenous political identity" are being called into question by social and political theorising of diasporas (Adamson and Demetriou, 2007: 490). In this light, Adamson and Demetriou make two major claims: i) the concept of diasporas is a useful tool for International Relations (IR) scholars to adopt when analysing changes in the relationship between states and collective identities under contemporary processes of globalisation; and ii) non-state political entrepreneurs and state elites are taking advantage of new technology to utilise transnational

diaspora mobilisation as a means of generating material resources and political support in a global economy (Adamson and Demetriou, 2007: 491).

The basic unit of analysis of IR is implicitly the nation-state, yet diasporas unsettle that assumption, calling into question how 'state' and 'nation' are related and how that relationship may change over time (Adamson and Demetriou, 2007: 491-492). Brubaker (2005) and others debunk claims made by the literature on diasporas that the nation-state is a static, homogenous, timeless entity, while diasporas are changing, shifting, heterogeneous. He maintains that diaspora scholars make the mistake of pitting the perceived homogeneity of *the* nation-state against the heterogeneity of diasporas, when *the* nation-state represents a figment of the sociological imagination: "The conceptual anti-thesis between the nation-state and the diaspora obscures more than it reveals, occluding the persistent significance (and great empirical variety) of nation states" (Brubaker, 2005: 10).

**Diasporic Stances and Dual Citizenship Claims as Mutually Constitutive**
Current debates on citizenship illustrate the processes by which diasporas affect the citizenship regimes in their host nations, yet there are emerging parallel discourses focused entirely on how diaspora communities influence citizenship regimes in their country of origin (Baranbantseva and Sutherland, 2011: 1). This debate has situated claims for dual citizenship at the centre, as in the case of Liberia. Baranbantseva and Sutherland stress that both diasporas and sending nations actively engage in the process of revising the meaning of citizenship (Baranbantseva and Sutherland, 2011: 1). For them, citizenship is fundamentally linked to nation-building and state-legitimacy and citizenship and its relationship with state territoriality has increasingly become problematised by international migration (Baranbantseva and Sutherland, 2011: 6; 8). Most legal means by which immigrants are incorporated maximise individual liberty, but their extraterritorial political participation comes at the cost of allowing members to make policies to which they are not directly subject and tilts citizenship towards claiming rights rather than fulfilling obligations (FitzGerald, 2006).

Contrary to claims by proponents of dual citizenship, Spiro also cautions that extraterritorial citizenship may not necessarily evidence a strong tie to the homeland state, because in many cases little is required of external citizens: neither paying taxes, nor military service; essentially, there is no cost to maintaining one's original citizenship (Spiro, 2012: 311; 318). On average, external citizens have less of an interest in homeland governance than resident citizens (Spiro, 2012: 321), an argument often invoked by homeland Liberians who challenge the institution of dual citizenship. There is no empirical basis, moreover, for claiming that dual citizenship necessarily enforces homeland-emigrant ties, rather dual citizenship simply enables "external populations to secure citizenship in their places of external residence without relinquishing the material and sentimental advantages of retained original citizenship" (Spiro, 2012: 319). This is why some states have opted for a compromise by granting quasi-citizenship to their non-resident nationals through the issuance of identity cards (i.e., India, Turkey, Ethiopia) that enable certain rights but stop short of political rights, enabling some form of membership, i.e., ethnic citizenship (Joppke, 2005; Spiro, 2012: 324).

**In Medias Res: Boundedness and Transnationalism Converge**

Some authors position themselves in the middle of what appears to be a binary between state-centric citizenship and transnational citizenship, arguing that the two are not mutually exclusive. The central argument of my thesis is closely aligned with this paradigm, which constructs contemporary 'Liberian citizenship' as a hybrid manifestation of both bounded and unbounded forms of identity and practice. This will become clear in Chapter IV where I discuss the myriad ways in which Liberians in my study—both home and abroad—conceive of and practice 'Liberian citizenship,' regardless of their legal citizenship status.

Bosniak argues convincingly that the struggle over the concept of citizenship beyond the nation-state has really been a struggle over the true meaning of citizenship in the contemporary world (Bosniak, 2000: 451). She examines and reassesses recent trends in political and social theory to locate citizenship beyond the nation-state, questioning whether or not citizenship has begun to be

reconfigured in post-national terms (Bosniak, 2000). According to Bosniak, there is no single answer to this claim because there is no singularly accepted conception of citizenship. Therefore, analysing citizenship from its varied meanings seems to suggest that it is being reconfigured beyond the nation-state to varying degrees. Because the process of denationalisation has been experienced more extensively and meaningfully in some domains than in others, the extent to which citizenship is denationalised will vary depending on the context (Bosniak, 2000: 451). Following this logic, then, it cannot be assumed that the state is losing its analytical vigour.

**Beyond the Legal: Cultural and Social Citizenship**

Legal definitions often underpin the discourse on citizenship—whether bounded or unbounded—but emergent scholarship is beginning to define citizenship along cultural and social lines. Glick Schiller introduces the term "transborder citizenship" to define "people who live their lives across the borders of two or more nation states, participating in the normative regimes, legal and institutional system and political practices of these various states" (Glick Schiller, 2005: 27). In framing transborder citizenship, she moves beyond legal constructions of citizenship to examine cultural citizenship, defined by Latino scholars in the United States as "the right to be different with respect to norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong" (Rosaldo and Flores, 1997: 57), contrary to the typologies of Safran (1991), Sheffer (1993) and Cohen (1997) who argue that diasporas feel alienated in host nations because of their inability to assimilate.

Some authors conceptualise citizenship as a social process whereby "norms, practices, meanings and identities" are constantly negotiated by individuals and social groups (Isin, 2000: 5). This framing aligns with the actor-oriented theoretical model of social interface, which I discuss later in this chapter. As a sociological construct, citizenship is relational; therefore the interactions between a citizen and his/her society are just as important as the interactions between a citizen and his/her state (van Steenbergen, 1994: 2). Furthermore, a citizen is framed as "a competent member of society" (Turner, 1993: 2) who "governs and is governed" by a set of practices (van Steenbergen, 1994: 2). Expanding on this sociological model,

Glick Schiller (2005) introduces the concept of social citizenship, which is inclusive of, but broader than, the definition of cultural citizenship. Social citizens, she argues, "claim rights to citizenship through social practice rather than through the law" by making contributions to the state or demonstrating against discrimination within a state, for example (Glick Schiller, 2005: 31).

In deconstructing citizenship, Sassen also argues that the narrow legal definition of citizenship does not adequately explain how citizens within a particular polity experience the institution differently, and how minority groups, though citizens, may not benefit from the social and political dividends of citizenship (Sassen, 2005). In this vein, Yuval-Davis develops the notion of 'multi-layered citizenship' to describe how "people's rights and obligations to a specific state are mediated and largely dependent on their membership of a specific ethnic, racial, religious or regional collectivity" (Yuval-Davis, 2000: 172). Although not entirely confined by it, "people are not positioned equally within their collectivities" just as "states are not positioned equally with other states" (Yuval-Davis, 2000: 172). This will become clear in subsequent chapters of the thesis when I show that Liberians experience the institution of citizenship differently depending on their social locations. In essence, equal membership rights are not guaranteed by citizenship, legally defined only, prompting some excluded groups to subvert the institution of citizenship, thereby claiming more rights and privileges (Sassen, 2005). New forms of citizenship are being created and the global city is the site where these interactions take place, where the disadvantaged can engage with each other and assert their presence by engaging globalised forms of corporate power (Sassen, 2005: 91). This assertion is crucial to my study, as I evaluate the citizenship practices of Liberian social actors in five urban centres.

**Moving from Europe and North America: Citizenship in the Global South**

The literature on citizenship heavily emphasises analysis from immigration states, yet some scholars argue that an examination of citizenship construction from the perspective of emigration states, such as Liberia, is becoming increasingly vital. The nature and meaning of citizenship within emigration states vary greatly from that of immigration states, as emigration states increasingly depend on the contributions of

their citizens abroad (Barry, 2006: 19). Barry uses the case of Mexican emigrants in the United States to illustrate how remittances, the boom in transport and communication networks, and the activism of Mexicans abroad, have broadened the scope for citizenship reconfiguration (Barry, 2006). She argues that migration "decouples citizenship and residence" (Barry, 2006: 17), deconstructing the notion that citizenship is bounded within a particular nation-state.

According to Barry, there are three ways in which emigrant citizens and their homeland states are reconfiguring citizenship: i) emigration states have construed emigrant citizens as heroes who contribute to the economic regeneration of the state through remittances, taxes (i.e., Eritrea and Korea), and investment incentives (i.e., India); ii) emigration states have embraced plural citizenship by amending citizenship laws, thereby allowing their nationals to retain homeland citizenship while simultaneously naturalising in a foreign country (i.e., Philippines, Turkey, Senegal); and iii) emigrants are demanding the right to participate fully in the political processes of their homelands—and being granted that right in the cases of Colombia, Peru, and Dominican Republic—although most emigration states do not permit the holding of political office or voting in general and presidential elections by nationals abroad (i.e., Mexico) (Barry, 2006: 34). Nevertheless, Barry's analysis is biased in that it privileges the citizenship practices of emigrants. I respond to this blind spot by examining and validating the citizenship practices of domestically rooted Liberians resident in Monrovia, thereby presenting them as agential social actors rather than mere recipients of donor aid and diaspora remittances.

Just as the literature neglects perspectives from emigration states and their resident citizens, which Barry and I attempt to fill, respectively, far fewer sources examine in detail post-independent African states and their articulations of citizenship. In her book, *Struggles for Citizenship in Africa*, which advances the arguments in Mahmood Mamdani's 1996 seminal text, *Citizen and Subject*, Manby asserts that citizenship laws in Africa are residual hallmarks of the colonial era that have fomented conflict and instability in the contemporary era (Manby, 2009: 1-2). As a result, citizenship laws across the continent have been contested because of their exclusionary and

discriminatory manifestations fashioned by the history of colonialism (Manby, 2009: 1-2). Contemporary contestations around citizenship are particularly stark in the Liberia case study, although the country admittedly only experienced a pseudo form of colonial rule under the American Colonisation Society (ACS) in the first half of the 19th century (Levitt, 2005). In the colonial architecture of most African states, citizenship was non-existent for the subjects of colonial rule, and only a few native administrators retained any form of citizenship within colonial territories (Mamdani, 1996: 16-17). During independence, citizenship laws were reconfigured in the same vein as European law configured liberal citizenship, by birth or ancestral lineage, whereby those not native to the soil were excluded, either because they had migrated to the region during the colonial period, or because they had migrated from another section of the territory (Manby, 2009: 6-7; 18-21; 37-93). Just as colonial boundaries were not reconfigured after independence, citizenship norms were often adopted that reflected a European ethos that is still maintained today (Manby, 2009: 3-8).

Recent trends in changing legal norms coupled with globalisation are pressuring African countries to loosen their regulations on citizenship, with about half adopting dual citizenship provisions. However, post-independence states still hold very strict definitions of who belongs to the nation-state, often excluding ethnic groups who were not physically present in the polity by a particular date (i.e., Uganda and DRC), non-Negroes (i.e., Liberia and Sierra Leone), and immigrants (i.e., Nigeria) (Manby, 2009: 6-9; 12; 14-15; 109-112). This trend is manifested in the fractured nature of African identity formation (Mamdani, 1996; Adejumobi, 2005; Manby, 2009). The colonial definition of native Africans as subjects rather than citizens explains why so many crises along issues of identity, citizenship, and rights have plagued the West African sub-region in the 20th and 21st century, with Liberia as an applicable case study. Adejumobi argues that the adoption of colonial administration practices further made antagonists of citizens, who challenged authoritarianism, with this dichotomy discussed extensively by Mamdani (1996). Taking his cue from Mamdani, Adejumobi asserts that claims to the attendant rights and privileges of citizenship— further complicated by rapid globalisation and migration—have fuelled the

proliferation of conflicts in West Africa and elsewhere on the continent (Adejumobi: 2005: 20).

Nevertheless, Adejumobi's explication of citizenship as a site of contestation in Africa is at odds with the liberal definition of citizenship in social theory defined by T.H. Marshall, who believed that modern citizenship included civil, political and social rights for all members of a given society, whereby all enjoy the right to equal treatment under the law, such as equal voting rights, access to education, health care, housing and the minimum levels of income (Marshall, 1950). Marshall has been critiqued implicitly and explicitly for his myopia and naïveté (Yuval Davis, 2000; O'Connell Davidson, 2013), and I intend to further challenge his liberal assumptions by evaluating the differentiated citizenship experiences of respondents in the five field sites chosen for this thesis. In fact, some have argued that citizenship by definition is exclusionary because by delineating who belongs one inadvertently defines who does not (Castles and Davidson, 2000: 10-11). Similar to Yuval-Davis' framing of citizenship as 'multi-layered', O'Connell Davidson (2013: 15) argues that citizenship in practice is "gendered, aged, classed, and raced, and those who enjoy citizenship in the formal sense do not always enjoy equal access to its privileges and protections." Therefore, exclusionary citizenship laws are not unique to Liberia or Africa. It is difficult, and sometimes virtually impossible for migrants to acquire citizenship in most parts of East Asia, South Asia, or the Pacific with their overtly racist nationality laws (Castles and Davidson, 2000: 194). Therefore, citizenship as a site of contestation seems to be apparent not only in the Liberia case study, but also manifests itself more generally in the legacies of many formerly colonised states.

The literature suggests that conceptualisations of citizenship remain varied and nuanced in Africa and elsewhere, thereby supporting the central argument of this thesis—that the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation in Liberia is a manifestation of the contested configurations and reconfigurations of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time. The brief section that follows clearly delineates how I conceptualise 'Liberian citizenship' as an amalgam of the legal, political, and sociological definitions of citizenship in the academic literature.

**'Liberian Citizenship' as Identity, Practice, and a Set of Relations**

Just as the meaning of citizenship across the globe is constantly shifting, I argue that 'Liberian citizenship' has been constructed and reconstructed because of historical and contemporary processes such as conflict, migration, globalisation and post-war recovery. In this thesis, 'Liberian citizenship' is simultaneously theorised in legal, political and sociological terms. First, 'Liberian citizenship' is passive and fixed, representing an identity anchored in legal status, cultural and national affiliation. Second, 'Liberian citizenship' is active, representing a bundle of practices enacted by a multitude of actors. And third, 'Liberian citizenship' is a combination of identity and practice represented by a set of relations between the Liberian state and its citizens in Liberia and abroad (state-citizen relations) and between Liberians across spatial landscapes (citizen-citizen relations)—similar to the manner in which Fierke frames security as a set of relations between the protector and protected, the threatener and threatened (Fierke, 2007). Citizenship can be conceived of as active or passive depending on whether or not it was configured 'from below' or 'from above' (Kuisma, 2008: 616). For instance, whereas the French Revolution engendered citizenship 'from below', making citizenship active in France, the unification of Germany under the Treaty of Versailles produced citizenship 'from above' thereby making German citizenship more passive in orientation (Kuisma, 2000: 616). In this thesis, I demonstrate that while mid-to-late 19th and early 20th century 'Liberian citizenship' was passive and constructed 'from above' by a hegemonic state, late 20th and early 21st century citizenship has been largely active and reconstructed 'from below' by citizens themselves, primarily through processes of contestation.

With this conceptual framework of 'Liberian citizenship', I examine throughout the thesis whether or not the Liberian state has protected the rights and privileges of its citizens, whether or not Liberian citizens have upheld their civic responsibilities to the state and to each other, and how this has impacted claims for and counter-claims against proposed dual citizenship legislation. In the sections that follow, I situate my study and multi-sited fieldwork within a particular strand of social constructionist theory, actor-oriented analysis, which frames development intervention, and, by extension, policy prescriptions such as dual citizenship, as a site where the different

worldviews of a range of social actors converge. Actor-oriented analysis facilitates in-depth framing of 'Liberian citizenship' as a set of relations.

**Part II: An Actor-Oriented Analysis from Below**

Actor-oriented analysis—with its constituent elements of human agency, life-worlds, social interfaces, and development interventions—represents the theoretical grounding for this thesis because I examine relations between a multitude of actors—homeland Liberians, Liberian diasporas, permanent returnees, circular returnees, executive and legislative members of government—and how their conceptualisations of 'Liberian citizenship' differ according to their life-worlds, social locations, and experiences of conflict, migration, globalisation and post-war recovery, thereby influencing claims for and counter-claims against proposed dual citizenship legislation.

Actor-oriented types of analysis were popular in anthropology and sociology in the 1960s and 1970s, ranging from transactional and decision-making models to symbolic interventionist and phenomenological analysis (Long, 2001). Some studies fell short by reverting to a kind of methodological individualism "that sought to explain social behaviour primarily in terms of individual motivations, intentions, and interests" without considering larger structural forces (Long, 2001: 14). Nevertheless, Long's brand of actor-oriented analysis, which this thesis adopts, considers the interplay between agency and structure and is concerned with "actors' lived experiences, desires, understandings and self-defined problematic situations" in the midst of planned development interventions (Long, 2001: 27-28). It begins with the notion that different social forms—in the case of this study, the varying conceptualistions and practice of 'Liberian citizenship'—"develop under the same or similar structural circumstances. Such differences reflect variations in the ways in which actors attempt to come to grips, cognitively and organisationally, with the situations they face" (Long, 1990: 10). As a case in point, post-war challenges invariably impact Liberians in Liberia and abroad, respectively, thereby impacting their disparate responses to homeland government policy prescriptions such as dual citizenship.

The different patterns of social organisation which emerge result from "interactions, negotiations, and social struggles that take place between several kinds of actor [s], not only those present in given face-to-face encounters but also those who are [physically] absent yet nevertheless influence the situation, affecting actions and outcomes" (Long, 1990: 7), such as diasporas in my study. This point is particularly stark in the case of Liberians abroad whose experiences of conflict and migration have influenced the reconfiguration of 'Liberian citizenship' manifested in proposed dual citizenship legislation. Analysis of the actor-oriented paradigm requires distinguishing and codifying the strategies employed by actors and their rationales, the conditions under which these strategies arise, "their viability or effectiveness for solving specific problems, and their structural outcomes" (Long, 1990: 10). It places a premium on the varied interactions amongst different sets of actors, and does not assume imposition from the 'top' to the 'bottom' (Long, 2001: 27). In this vein, actor-oriented analysis enables the framing of 'Liberian citizenship' as a set of relations between diasporas and the Liberian state, diasporas and homeland Liberians, as well as homeland Liberians and the Liberian state, for example. Each category of actors in this thesis possesses varying levels of power that mediate one another—as is evidenced by the deadlock on proposed dual citizenship legislation—without one group dominating the other.

At the nucleus of actor-oriented analysis is human agency, which Long defines as the individual actor's "capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion" (Long, 2001: 15). Despite constraints, all social actors possess Gidden's coupling of 'knowledgeability' and 'capability' in his theory of human agency (Giddens, 1984), whereby they "can engage with, distance themselves from, or adopt an ambiguous stance towards certain codified rules and interpretations" (Long, 2001:17). Expanding the 'knowledgeability' and 'capability' frame adopted by Giddens, Long references Turner, who argued that "a theoretical interpretation of social action must go beyond a consideration of knowledgeability, consciousness, and intentions to embrace also 'feelings, emotions, perceptions, identities, and the continuity of agents across space and time' (Turner 1992: 91)" (Long, 2001: 18). This point is particularly relevant for my thesis, because I argue that conceptualisations of

'Liberian citizenship' across space and time are not manifestations of rationality alone, but rather a combination of actors' lived experiences of and emotive responses to conflict, migration, globalisation, and post-war recovery. Agency is not universal because it is constructed differently based on cultural and worldview interpretations (Long, 2001: 19), particularly by a range of social actors in this study who live within and outside the territorial confines of the Liberian nation-state. In this thesis, agency represents the application and management of social relationships and networks across varying spatial landscapes (Long, 2001: 17).

Actor-oriented analysis situates "individuals in the specific life-worlds in which they manage their everyday affairs" and acknowledges that these same individuals devise strategies for solving problematic circumstances while actively engaged in "constructing their own social worlds, even if this means being 'active accomplices' to their own subordination" (Long, 1990: 14). Long borrows the term 'life-world' from Shutz and Luckmann (1973) who defined it as "a lived-in and largely taken for granted world" that, according to Long, "is *actor* rather than observer defined" (Long, 2001: 189). In Long's analysis, everyday life is experienced as an "ordered reality" shared with others in which actors both "manage their social relationships" and "problematise their situations" (Long, 2001: 189), particularly in the face of planned development intervention such as proposed dual citizenship legislation in the case of Liberia. What is particularly important in interpreting processes of intervention is identifying the tactics employed by actors "for dealing with their new intervenors so that they might appropriate, manipulate, subvert or dismember particular interventions" (Long, 2001: 233). This point is particularly relevant for my analysis of how 'Liberian citizenship' continues to be a space of contestation, as evidenced by the dissenting opinions about proposed dual citizenship legislation as a policy prescription.

Although Long examines how individual actors—poor peasants, entrepreneurs, government bureaucrats, or researchers—respond to development projects in localised, rural settings in the developing world, thereby revealing their divergent social locations and life-worlds (Long, 1992: 5), this thesis assesses how Liberian actors across varying spatial landscapes regard a proposed policy intervention –

dual citizenship – with its presumed development outcomes, and what this reveals about their disparate experiences of being Liberian and practicing 'Liberian citizenship'. Therefore, my study spanning three continents and Long's studies in localised, rural settings cohere in attempting to understand the "'social life' of development projects—from conception to realisation—as well as the responses and lived experiences of the variously located and affected social actors" (Long, 2001: 15). In this theoretical framing, development interventions, such as proposed dual citizenship legislation, are not taken for granted processes of amelioration, but rather objects of contestation and accommodation, simultaneously:

> Rather than viewing intervention as the implementation of a plan for action, it should be visualised as an ongoing transformational process in which different actor interests and struggles are located. Integral to this type of approach are two other crucial aspects: an understanding of the processes by which knowledge is negotiated and jointly created through various types of social encounter, and an understanding of the power dynamics involved (Long, 1992: 9).

In addition to examining individual actors, human agency, and development interventions, actor-oriented analysis also adopts 'interface' as a central unit of analysis. It is at the site of 'interface' where the different life-worlds of social actors "interact and interpenetrate" that social change occurs (Long, 1992: 6):

> Interface analysis concentrates upon analysing critical junctures entailing differences of normative value and social interest. It aims to depict not only the struggles and power differentials that emerge but also seeks to understand the cultural meanings, accommodations and compromises that underpin the interactions and transactions that evolve. Even those interfaces characterised by strong hegemonic tendencies—and therefore symbolically and organisationally geared to the enforcement and reaffirmation of authoritative knowledge and forms of domination—show evidence of countertendencies and 'counterwork' which exploit the inherent ambiguities and partial connections of interface phenomena (Arce and Long, 2000: 3; 8-9; 19-20).

Through interface analysis, one is able to glean the "ongoing processes of negotiation, adaptation and transformation of meaning that takes place between

specific actors" (Long, 2001: 72) without assuming that one group dominates the other:

> As the many examples reveal, there are myriad ways in which so-called 'subordinate' or 'weaker' actors can create space for themselves, defend their own worldviews and standpoints, and subvert the best-laid plans and discourses of 'dominant' actors, while at the same time continuing to live in a world full of inequalities and vulnerabilities. The advent of global communication technologies has clearly been of considerable logistical benefit to many counter-development actions and movements, including those involving indigenous groups (Long, 2001: 238).

In my study, 'interface' does not signify a physical encounter, rather it is characterised by a transnational discourse on the tenets of 'Liberian citizenship' in which diasporas have influenced the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation as much as their homeland counterparts have affected the bill's postponement. Actor-oriented analysis enables an examination of how different social actors such as diasporas and homeland Liberians, for instance, represent varying nodes of knowledge and power that "are just as likely to reflect and contribute to the conflict between social groups as they are to lead to the establishment of common perceptions, interests and intentionalities" (Long, 2001: 19). Therefore, interface embodies not only spaces of conflict, divergence and opposition, but also intervals of consent, convergence, and accommodation. For example, while a small minority in this study expresses extreme opinions about the merits or demerits of dual citizenship, the vast majority of social actor respondents are moderate and accommodating. The ways in which Liberians diverge and converge on the tenets of citizenship is analysed in Chapter IV where I examine how 'Liberian citizenship' is currently conceived of and practiced domestically and transnationally.

Within interface analysis is also the notion of 'boundaries' demarcated within the social interfaces of various actors. According to Villarreal, boundaries "show the delimitations people themselves put on their worlds, on their projects, on their own roles and aspirations, on their allies and enemies" (Villarreal, 1992: 254). While the researcher cannot affix arbitrary boundaries, s/he can identify the boundaries

actors set and examine what kinds of changes these boundaries undergo during the processes of interface, argues Villarreal:

> And the most important task is to analyse the negotiations and interpenetrations that take place at the boundaries. In this way, we can appreciate the boundaries actors draw between themselves and institutions, between themselves and other actors, but also with respect to projects, plans, and activities, and places. Adopting this approach, boundaries do not set the limits of research inquiry but provide useful information on crucial social processes concerning struggles over identity and truth adjudication (Villarreal, 1992: 254).

Throughout this thesis, I illustrate how visible and invisible boundaries have come to separate Liberian social actors who devise caricatured stereotypes of one another emphasising differences to justify discordant views about dual citizenship.

Besides examining interfaces and boundaries between divergent social actors, actor-oriented analysis also acknowledges the researcher as an actor with his/her own life-world, social location, and agency. While some theoretical paradigms may obscure the role of the researcher, relegating him/her to a mere observer, chronicler, and interpreter of political, economic, and social phenomena, actor-oriented analysis views the researcher as part and parcel of these processes. Given my embeddedness within this particular research study—a Liberian doing research on Liberian social actors whose life-worlds influence their conception and practice of 'Liberian citizenship'—I remain convinced that "the life-worlds of researcher and other social actors intersect in the production of specific ethnographies and types of social interaction" and that intervention processes are "socially-constructed and continuously negotiated" (Long and Long, 1992: xi). Although my study does not employ ethnography, I argue that what Long and others refer to as 'life-worlds' and 'social interfaces' can be observed through the verbal utterances and life stories of individual actors, captured in one-off semi-structured interview settings in the field, and not necessarily observed over the long duree. During fieldwork in five urban centres across Europe, North America, and West Africa, I relied on the verbal expressions of respondents during one-on-one semi-structured interviews to construct schemas of their life-worlds through discussions about how they conceive

of and practice 'Liberian citizenship' and how this colours their responses to dual citizenship as a proposed policy intervention.

In summary, the basic tenets of an actor-oriented approach are "agency and social actor, the notion of multiple realities and arenas of struggle where different life-worlds and discourses meet, and the idea of interface in terms of discontinuities of interests, values, knowledge and power" (Long, 1992: 271). In this thesis, I examine how the agency of Liberian social actors across diverse spatial landscapes has enabled them to conceptualise and practice 'Liberian citizenship' in a multitude of ways because of their different experiences of conflict, migration, globalisation, and post-war recovery. The bundle of divergent, visceral responses to dual citizenship as a proposed policy intervention signifies an interface wherein these social actors negotiate the discontinuities in their lived experiences of being Liberian. Such interfaces have an ultimate bearing on post-war development outcomes in Liberia, as discussed in the core chapters of this thesis.

**Actor-Oriented Analysis Embedded in Social Constructionism**

Long's actor-oriented analysis builds on other theoretical models that attempt to reconcile structure and actor paradigms, such as theories of practice. Similar to the 'actor' in actor-oriented analysis, practice theory, which preceded actor-oriented analysis, adopts the term 'agent' to describe an individual actor, where individual actors/agents are the carriers of practice and neither completely autonomous nor completely controlled by externalities (Reckwitz, 2002: 256). According to Reckwitz, practice as a social phenomenon is "a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements" including "bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002: 249-250). While social practices can be theoretically dichotomised between "bodily and mental routines" (Reckwitz, 2002: 257), practice theorists are concerned with the "interconnectedness of bodily routines of behaviour, mental routines of understanding and knowing, and the use of objects" (Reckwitz, 2002: 258). In this thesis, I am particularly concerned with how citizenship is constructed as both a

form of 'being'—identity, or mental routines—and a form of 'doing'—practice, or bodily routines.

Authors who have advanced theories of practice include Bourdieu (1977, 1990), Giddens (1979, 1984), Foucault (1984), and Schatzki (1996, 2001). They have been primarily concerned with the 'everyday' and 'life-worlds' of particular agents or actors (Reckwitz, 2002: 244), although there is no grand, overarching theory of practice (Reckwitz, 2002: 257). Bourdieu (1990) and Giddens (1984) were pioneers of theories of practice, where the former devised concepts such as habitus, capital, and field, while the latter devised concepts such as rules and resources (structures), and practical consciousness (Everts, et. al, 2011: 324). Bourdieu's conceptualisation of habitus is the bedrock of practice theory, and by extension, actor-oriented analysis. According to Bourdieu, habitus represents the "systems of dispositions" and "embodied history" (Bourdieu, 1990: 56) implanted "in each agent by his [or her] earliest upbringing, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination" (Bourdieu, 1977: 81). Furthermore, the *habitus* is a product of history that "produces individual and collective practices—more history—in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences" (Bourdieu, 1990: 54). However, this theoretical frame does not imply that social actors are mechanically controlled by their embodied histories. Rather, it illustrates how agents develop and deploy tactics that are adapted to their individual and collective life-worlds. Borrowing from theories of practice, actor-oriented theory is steeped in social constructionist modes of analysis that place an emphasis on the agency of individual and collective actors. It is concerned with how "social actors (both 'local' and 'external' to particular arenas) are locked into a series of inter-twined battles over resources, meanings and institutional legitimacy and control" (Long, 2001: 1).

There is a fundamental difference between structuralist and phenomenological theories, where the former looks at macro-level aggregate structures and trends (i.e., Marxist/structuralist approaches), while the latter looks at micro-level changes affecting operating or acting units (i.e., actor-oriented approaches) (Long, 1990: 4). While phenomenological approaches may also examine macro-level change, they

are primarily concerned with "detailed accounts of differential responses to structural conditions" and exploring "the strategies and cultural dispositions of the social actors involved" (Long, 1990: 4). The macro theories of modernisation and structural Marxism, for instance, frame political and economic processes as about 'external forces', reducing the autonomy of individual social actors, thereby "undermining local or endogenous forms of cooperation and solidarity, resulting in the increased socio-economic differentiation and greater centralised control by powerful economic and political groups, institutions and enterprises" (Long, 2001: 11). Like Giddens' theory of structuration—in which structures are neither completely constraining nor enabling (Giddens, 1984: 25), Long's brand of actor-oriented analysis does not negate structural forces, rather it accounts for them by emphasising "the detailed analysis of life-worlds, struggles and exchanges within and between specific social groups and networks of individuals" in the midst of development interventions (Long, 1990: 18). Whereas structuralist analysis is "tainted by determinist, linear, and externalist views of social change" (Long, 2001: 11), 'agent' or 'actor' oriented analysis adopts a more fluid interpretation of how social actors are influenced by and influence structural outcomes.

An actor-oriented paradigm serves as an alternative to structuralist analysis, whereby external forms of intervention "enter the existing life-worlds of the individuals and social groups affected, and in this way are mediated and transformed by these same actors and structures" (Long, 1990: 6). According to Long, more nuanced analyses of social change are needed which stress the dynamic "interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships" thereby acknowledging "the central role played by human action and consciousness" (Long, 1990: 6). As a case in point, my study shows that both external and internal forms of intervention—by donors, by the Liberian state, by Liberian diasporas, and by resident homeland Liberians—have had a profound impact on 'Liberian citizenship' construction and practice across space and time. One of the advantages of employing an actor-oriented theory of analysis is that one can begin to explicate the "differential responses to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear relatively homogenous" (Long, 1990: 6), such as the divergent reactions to proposed dual citizenship legislation by a multitude of

Liberian social actors. Therefore, one can demonstrate that the "differential patterns that arise are in part the creation of the actors themselves" who are neither "disembodied social actors or passive recipients of intervention, but active participants who process information and strategise in their dealings with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel" (Long, 1990: 7). My study frames Liberian social actors as possessing varying levels of agency in the midst of structural change.

Responding to critiques of social constructionism, which argue that this brand of social theory implies a 'ready-made' set of plans and blueprints, Long counters by arguing that:

> [Constructionism] is principally concerned with understanding the processes by which specific actors and networks of actors engage with and thus co-produce their own (inter)personal and collective social worlds. This is not simply achieved on the basis of reworking existing cultural repertoires, or language and learned behaviour, but also through the many ways in which people improvise and experiment with 'old' and 'new' elements and experiences, and react situationally and imaginatively, consciously or otherwise, to the circumstances they encounter (Long, 2001: 3).

Therefore, social construction, and actor-oriented analysis by extension, does not suggest that social actors have a clear understanding "of why they do things, in the first place, or of how their doing of things affects outcomes" (Long, 2001: 3). Rather, social construction acknowledges that actors possess the knowledgeability and capability to act in the first place.

In the section that follows, I explore how one group of respondents in this study, diasporas, fit within an actor-oriented analysis as both social actors and categories of practice.

**Diasporas as Social Actors and Categories of Practice**

There is a range of competing conceptual frameworks for diasporas. One school of thought conceptualises diasporas as *active* and constructed (Brubaker, 2005) while

another defines diasporas as *passive* and fixed, representing a state of being, an identity (Safran, 1991; Sheffer, 1993). This thesis situates Liberia's diasporas in the 'interstices' (Bhabha, 1994) of the conceptual debate because for Liberians abroad, being 'of' and 'within' the diaspora is not only an expression of identity, but it is also a category of practice, just as 'Liberian citizenship' is conceptualised as both identity and practice. With the proliferation of the meanings of diasporas, three core elements remain widely understood about the term: i) dispersion; ii) homeland orientation; and iii) boundary-maintenance (Armstrong, 1976: 394-397; Safran, 1991: 84). In other words, diasporas can be characterised as dispersed collectivities residing outside their country of origin who "maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homeland and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries" thereby underscoring their distinctness and unity abroad (Sheffer, 2003: 10-11). Therefore, when I refer to Liberia's diasporas in this study, I am specifically referring to Liberians born in Liberia (or born to Liberian parents) who live outside the territorial boundaries of the Liberian nation-state; claim Liberia as their 'homeland'; and engage at varying levels while maintaining a definitive Liberian identity in their host countries, regardless of their citizenship statuses.

**Figure 2: Main Features of Liberia's Diasporas**



dispersion

homeland orientation

boundary maintenance
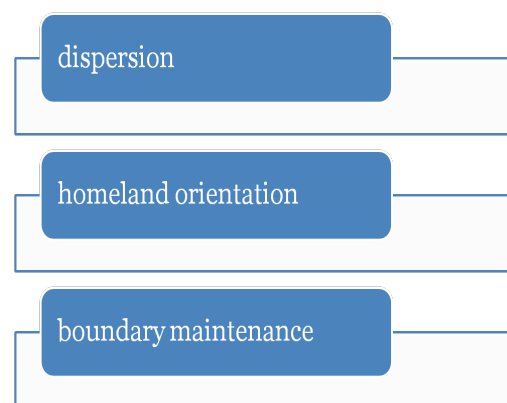
This thesis frames Liberia's diasporas as social actors whose life-worlds have shaped how they conceive of and practice 'Liberian citizenship' transnationally, how they engage with the homeland nation-state, Liberia, and how they interact with other Liberians, both home and abroad, in interface situations. It is concerned with

how particular diaspora agents employ their knowledgeability and capability to influence policy outcomes in Liberia, such as dual citizenship, while others engage transnationally in development interventions. Diasporas, in this sense, are categories of practice, rather than only collective identities. They are not homogeneous political actors, but rather heterogeneous in their motivations and aims (Adamson, 2002) and represent a multitude of distinct life-worlds.

The growing body of literature that conceptualises diasporas as categories of practice seems to be diametrically opposed to essentialist notions of diasporas as fixed identities. Brubaker (2005) challenges Tololyan (1991, 1996), Sheffer (2003) and others who perceive diasporas as being a singular 'entity,' preceded by a definite article 'the,' who function as unitary actors, possessing countable, quantifiable memberships without any consideration of whether or not individuals within the groups being counted actually self-identify as members of diasporas at all. He says that rather than thinking of diasporas as bounded entities, it is more useful to think of 'diaspora' as a category of practice:

> As a category of practice, 'diaspora' is used to make claims, to articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilise energies, to appeal to loyalties...As idiom, stance, and claim, 'diaspora' is a way of formulating the identities and loyalties of a population (Brubaker, 2005: 12).

Those who formulate loyalties and identities can be from the population in question or may be speaking on behalf of the homeland state, but not all those who are claimed as belonging to a diaspora take on a diasporic stance (Brubaker, 2005: 12). Indeed, it is sometimes only a minority of the population who consistently adopt a diasporic stance, thereby constituting a diaspora themselves (Brubaker, 2005: 12). This delineation of a 'diasporic stance' is particularly relevant for my study, as specific groups of Liberians in the United States, for instance, emerge from the woodwork yearly only to campaign for the extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Liberians who fled intermittent

armed conflicts.[11] Similarly, Liberian diasporas in West Africa have been at the forefront of lobbying on behalf of Liberian refugees in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Ghana. My study compares the myriad forms of diasporic political activity in disparate spheres of influence.

With the publication of the 2012 book, *Politics from Afar: Transnational Diasporas and Networks*, diasporas have been increasingly framed as categories of practice. Just as civil society groups, interest groups and political parties participate in political life in order to influence outcomes, so too do diasporas, although they bring a different set of resources, claims, and agendas to political processes thereby challenging how political life should be organised (Lyons and Mandaville, 2012: 7). For instance, diaspora political and social mobilisation in host countries is often a function of why/how they left their home countries in the first place (Adamson, 2002). Drawing on other studies, Østergaard-Nielson illustrates that political refugees who leave their nations of origin on a collective basis tend to take on a more political stance towards their homelands than economic migrants who leave through individualised means (Østergaard-Nielson, 2001: 10). Diasporas from conflict prone regions, such as Liberia, often become politically involved in order to transform what they perceive to be suppressive social, political, and economic practices in their countries of origin, and often attempt to transform home by mobilising in the host nation, raising international intention about their countries of origin, and in some instances, funding insurgent groups to topple unfavourable regimes (Adamson, 2002). This is certainly evidenced in the Liberia case, where diaspora organisations have ranged from politically explosive, focused entirely on agitating for regime change in Liberia, to apolitical and solely focused on homeland humanitarian and development relief.

Yet, the tendency to characterise diasporas as either positive or negative influences on conflict generation has been challenged by a relatively new body of literature (de Montclos, 2005). Triangulation of diasporic practices is crucial to understanding

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[11] Since 1991, thousands of Liberians have relied on short-term provisions such as TPS and DED granted by the White House to extend their legal right to remain in the US. These individuals, many of whom have been in the United States since fleeing Liberia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, have retained legal status which allows them to live, work, and pay taxes in the US.

their varied roles in the conflict cycle. The general literature on conflict generated diasporas seems to focus entirely on diasporas as supporters of insurgencies or political instability in their homelands, failing to account for constructive contributions of diasporas during and after conflict, including international advocacy and mobilisations for peace (Brinkerhoff, 2008: 19-20; Hammond, 2012); remittances (Lucas and Stark, 1985; Kapur, 2003; de Haas, 2005; World Bank, 2006; Pieke, Van Hear, and Lindley, 2007; IFAD, 2009); diaspora philanthropy (Geithner, Johnson & Chen, 2004; Minoian and Freinkman, 2006; Sidel, 2007); diaspora knowledge transfer (Ndiaye, Melde, and Ndiaye-Coic, 2011); diaspora foreign direct investment (Esman, 2008; Riddle and Marano, 2008; Ketkar and Ratha, 2011); and diaspora transnational entrepreneurship (Iskander, 2008).

The different modes of engagement and practices by diaspora social actors may endow them with power 'above' and beyond the homeland state, thereby privileging their social locations at the interface. For instance, Shain and Barth argue that while diasporas are geographically 'outside the state,' they remain 'inside the people' by virtue of their identity claims to the homeland, and how they use that identity to influence foreign policy decision-making (Shain and Barth, 2003: 451). Moreover, diasporas can be seen to exert influence on the homeland *because of* their influence in the hostland (Shain and Barth, 2003: 461). Shain and Barth posit that if the strength of relations between diasporas and the homeland state favour the former, then diasporas as social actors will be better able to influence the homeland's foreign policy (Shain and Barth, 2003: 466). I expand their theory to include a discussion of how Liberian diasporas have actively influenced domestic, homeland policy, bringing into focus dual citizenship legislation as one iteration of that influence. However flawed Shain's and Barth's theory appears—in it they only employ Armenia and Israel to show how diasporas do and do not influence homeland foreign policy, respectively—their analysis is still relevant for a discussion about the reconfiguration of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time, precisely because diaspora social actors have influenced that reconfiguration given their experiences of conflict, migration, globalisation and post-war recovery.

According to Shain and Barth, the factors affecting the efficacy of diasporic influences on homeland foreign policies—or homeland domestic policy, as I argue in this thesis—include: i) the degree of diasporic motivation; ii) the socio-political nature of the homeland and hostland (i.e., if the hostland's foreign policy is important to the homeland, and the hostland is receptive to the influences of diasporas on its foreign policy, then the ability of diaspora social actors to influence the homeland's foreign policy is enhanced or if the homeland is weak and receptive to diasporic input then the ability of diasporas to influence homeland foreign policies is enhanced); and iii) the strength of relations between the homeland and its diasporas (i.e., if the homeland is in need of diasporic support—financial and otherwise—and diasporas are united about the direction the homeland's foreign policy should take, then diasporas' ability to influence that direction is enhanced) (Shain and Barth, 2003: 462-465). Given that Liberia is a relatively fragile post-war state heavily dependent on external financial and human capital, I argue in this thesis that the strength of relations between Liberia's diasporas and the Liberian state in many ways favours the former. It is precisely because of this imbalance in power at the interface that dual citizenship legislation has been introduced.

Notwithstanding power differentials between Liberian diaspora social actors and the Liberian homeland state, it would be misleading to assume that diasporas are the panacea to homeland development. Diaspora engagement with the homeland can have overwhelmingly negative consequences, manifested in money laundering, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, scams or terrorist activities (de Montclos, 2005). Kapur, in what he terms "the Janus-face of diasporas," cautions that ideologically extreme expatriates can negatively impact democratic consolidation at home and in host countries (Kapur, 2007). In practicing long distance nationalism, some diasporas can be more extreme politically than their homeland compatriots and at odds with the political machinery at home (Anderson, 1992; Kapur, 2007: 97), which explains why some of them may be in exile in the first place. Because they do not live in the homeland, some diasporas may take a hard-line stance politically since they do not have to deal with the consequences of their ideological leanings (Kapur, 2007). Furthermore, empirical evidence has shown that participation of diasporas in policy formulation and development outcomes may pose critical

challenges, especially in post-war settings. For example, a recent review of post-war state-building confirms that the return of diasporas to their homelands can lead to the emergence of a new political elite, thereby inflaming socio-political tensions between returnees and homeland residents (Chesterman, Ignatieff, and Thakur, 2004). This is particularly central to contestations about granting dual citizenship to Liberian diasporas, who are perceived as representing an already privileged social category. Throughout the chapters in this thesis, I provide an in depth examination of how interface encounters between returnees and homeland Liberians, amongst other social actors, has created a polarised discourse on the conception and practice of 'Liberian citizenship'. Moreover, I show that the relatively elevated social locations of diasporas does not negate the agency of other social actors, such as policy makers in Monrovia or homeland Liberians. Furthermore, not all diasporas occupy positions of privilege, as will be seen in the comparisons of 'near' and 'wider' diasporas in this thesis. Indeed, it is at the interface where contestations and negotiations take place between and amongst the multitude of Liberian social actors in this study, homelanders and diasporas alike.

Given Liberia's migratory history and its struggles to reconcile political and socio-economic inequities that fomented armed conflicts, evaluating how historical and contemporary factors have influenced the introduction and postponement in passage of proposed dual citizenship bill requires an analysis of the multiple roles of diaspora actors in fuelling conflict, facilitating development, neither, or both simultaneously. As one of many social actors in this thesis, diasporas reveal through their distinct social locations and life-worlds that 'Liberian citizenship' is simultaneously identity, practice, and a set of relations.

**Conclusion**

As illustrated in the introduction of this chapter, the University of Liberia impasse between diaspora lobbyists and homeland student activists indicates how social actors may consciously and unconsciously display their divergent lived experiences in interface situations. Given the multi-layered meaning of citizenship as a legal, political, sociological, and cultural construct, I have argued that 'Liberian citizenship' is equally as complex. Conceptually, I framed 'Liberian citizenship' as passive (based

on identity), active (based on practice), and interactive (based on a set of relations). In addition to defining citizenship generally and 'Liberian citizenship' more specifically, I provided a rationale for using this conceptual framework in my study. While Long's analysis examines the disparate ways in which social actors respond to development interventions within rural settings in the developing world, the form of intervention relevant for my analysis is a policy prescription, namely dual citizenship, in Liberia. I maintained in this chapter that, as a theoretical framework, actor-oriented analysis enables an exploration of how the life-worlds and social locations of actors such as diasporas, returnees, and homeland Liberians have influenced the introduction and postponement in passage of proposed dual citizenship legislation. This chapter also included theoretical approaches to diasporas, highlighting Shain's and Barth's conceptualisation of diaspora influences on homeland foreign policy (and by extension homeland domestic policy), with an explanation of how Liberia's diasporas in my multi-sited study either refute or substantiate the theory using homeland domestic policy (dual citizenship) as a point of departure.

The next chapter builds on actor-oriented analysis with a detailed rationale for why and how my 14-month fieldwork included interviews with six categories of Liberians in five urban field sites spanning three continents.

# Chapter III

## From One-Room Boxed Houses to Flawless Rooftop Offices
## in the Field

In mid-May 2013 at the Buduburam Refugee Camp on the outskirts of Accra, Ghana's capital, a petite seamstress hurtled out of a decrepit one-room house to fetch some rainwater that was pouring endlessly from her corrugated rooftop. I paused my interview recorder nearly four times during an interview with this 38-year-old former refugee who had opted for local integration after living in Ghana for 23 years. Torrential showers splashed through her punctured window screens, exposing me to the elements. Dripping wet, the woman re-entered the house holding a bright blue bucket on the crown of her head—filled with what I assumed was water for washing clothes and bathing—and placed it in a corner of the room. She sat down on a wooden bench facing me and we continued the interview, shouting to hear each other above the loud clamour of the rain.

Just one month earlier, I had sat comfortably in the refurbished rooftop office of a 48-year-old Liberian businessman and consultant in downtown Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital. Exuding privilege, the man had lived and worked in similar settings across five different countries within sub-Saharan Africa for two decades. When he offered me a chilled orange Fanta in a sleek bottle, I could not help noticing his form fitting tailor-made suit. As the man walked to the single leather recliner facing me, his shiny shoes made a soft noise on the white porcelain tiles. I placed my recorder on his mahogany table and pressed Play.

As the two vignettes illustrate, the settings of interviews with Liberian social actors in the field are emblematic of their disparate life-worlds and social locations. During 14 months of fieldwork across five urban centres in Liberia and abroad, I deliberately sought out Liberian respondents of different ages, genders, educational levels, incomes, places of birth, countries of citizenship, and migration histories to examine how their experiences of conflict, migration, globalisation and post-war recovery have influenced the introduction and postponement of dual citizenship

legislation. During fieldwork, I balanced my interviews with 181 diaspora, homeland and returnee respondents speaking unofficially with 21 respondents speaking in their official capacities as government of Liberia representatives or regional diaspora heads of organisations. Divided into two parts, this chapter is an expansive overview of fieldwork interfaces with these respondents. Part I explains my qualitative research design, providing a rationale for the selection of field sites and respondents as well as a summary of data collection processes and general trends observed in the field. In Part II, I present a comprehensive demographic profile of the unofficial, anonymised interviewees, as this initial framing enables further analysis of citizenship construction and practice in subsequent chapters of the thesis.

**Part I: Research Design, Rationale, and Mitigating Biases**

My fieldwork design and planning was systematic and thorough. First, I relied on previous pilot surveys I had conducted in 2010 and 2011 on the perceptions of dual citizenship of Liberians based in Europe and North America and registered Liberian voters in Monrovia, respectively, to inform the selection of my research tools and questions. Second, I selected five field sites—Monrovia, Liberia; London, England; Washington, D.C.; Freetown, Sierra Leone; and Accra, Ghana—to conduct semi-structured interviews with a range of Liberian social actors, namely policy makers, diasporas, returnees, and homelanders. Third, I pursued in-depth case study analysis on Sierra Leone, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with relevant decision-makers in Freetown to be able to compare how the question of citizenship reconfiguration has been addressed in another country in the sub-region. Fourth, I collected documentary data such as official reports and publications from the Liberian government and its donors to construct a broad-based narrative about Liberia's development deliverables and challenges to date, enabling me to subsequently gauge through in-depth interviewing what difference diaspora contributions have made to post-war recovery and how this has influenced claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship. And fifth, I monitored commentary and news reports about dual citizenship on media websites and Liberian diaspora listservs to assess domestic and transnational sentiments about the proposed bill and what it signifies.

Since the research methodologies employed in this study were meant to be exploratory in nature rather than representative, I applied non-probability sampling for my semi-structured interviews. Interviewees were selected through a snowball sampling method, in which I contacted individuals I knew personally or professionally, and asked them to recommend others who fit within my analytical categories, explained further in this chapter. All interviews were audio recorded—with the exception of Liberian embassy officials in Accra who asked not to be recorded—and respondents were asked to sign a form indicating their consent to participate in the study. I used an interview protocol document finalised by my supervisor and myself to jot down notes during all interviews as well as collect demographic data on each 'unofficial' interviewee, those not speaking in official capacities representing regional heads of diaspora organisations, the Liberian or Sierra Leonean governments. The interviews were held in public places, in work places, as well as in homes: wherever appeared most convenient for interviewees. All interviews were conducted in English, and where necessary, I used informal Liberian English to clarify terms and concepts that appeared too complicated in standard English for some interviewees.

Although my positioning as a Liberian writer, scholar and activist enabled access to Liberian social actors in the five field sites selected, I knew it would also influence the ways in which informants responded to my questions in interview settings. I mitigated these concerns by deliberately selecting a combination of Liberian interviewees I knew and those I had never met in each of the field sites. Where appropriate, I gently challenged the interviewees I knew personally to provide justifications for their responses, rather than accepting their positions at face value. For instance, during an interview with a 59-year-old permanent returnee entrepreneur who had worked in diaspora engagement and was very pro-dual citizenship, I provided him with case study examples from the academic literature showing that dual citizenship does not necessarily evidence strong ties to the homeland state (FitzGerald, 2012: 285-286; Spiro, 2012: 311; 318). Where possible, I also tempered my interjections in interviews with Liberians whom I did not know to carve out a safe space for them to air grievances that were obviously lodged at Liberians of my ilk: relatively privileged, educated and well-connected

transnationals. As a case in point, I refrained from rebutting a 25-year-old homeland female banker who praised Charles Taylor for curbing the capital flight that is so endemic in Sirleaf's administration dominated by diaspora returnees, even though Taylor's regime was notorious for public sector graft. While I did not succeed in maintaining a neutral stance in all instances, I jotted down any body language changes, facial contortions, and other nuances in non-verbal communication of my interviewees for further analysis. Given the increasingly contested space citizenship occupies in both theory and practice, I knew that it would be crucial to triangulate sources in order to reconcile my subjective biases. According to Ozerdem and Bowd (2010), research biases can be mitigated through triangulation, and this is why I pursued an expansive field plan, thereby selecting a relatively large pool of interview subjects and field sites.

During and after the course of fieldwork, I hired seven young professional Liberians as research assistants who transcribed interviews conducted in Europe, North America, and West Africa, and we used Dropbox for file sharing. Research assistants were required to sign a confidentiality statement witnessed by a third party, in which they explicitly agreed not to share my research files with anyone. After transcribing interviews, research assistants attested in writing that they had deleted all my research files from their computers and emptied their recycle bins of said files. I also stored audio files and field notes on the SOAS server through my PhD research Logbook.

In the section that follows, I present a rationale for the selection of five urban field sites.

**Rationale for the Selection of Five Urban Field Sites**

Because I intended to interrogate the meaning and practice of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time, I knew from the outset that my fieldwork would have to be multi-sited. I narrowed the spatial landscape of field sites to capital cities given the growing body of literature on how certain urban centres, particularly global cities such as London, New York and Tokyo, for instance, reproduce, refashion, and reconfigure identities, political engagement, and social practices (Sassen, 1991; Isin,

2000). According to Isin, global cities are the primary sites of citizenship construction and reconstruction:

> Being at the interstices of global networks of flows of commodities, services, capital, labour, images and ideas, the global city, both as a milieu and object of struggles for recognition, engenders new political groups that claim either new types of rights or seek to expand modern civil, political and social rights…Cities, particularly global cities, have therefore become political spaces where the concentration of different groups and their identities are intertwined with the articulation of various claims to citizenship rights (Isin, 2000: 6; 13).

I selected cities not only occupying different spheres of global influence, such as London and Washington, but also those with relatively sizeable Liberian populations, such as Monrovia, Freetown, and Accra. From the beginning, I was aware that there would be a considerable urban bias in my field-based methodology. Nonetheless, the focus on cities was a deliberate attempt to hone in on how access to urban spaces shapes identity constructions and citizenship practices amongst a range of Liberian social actors in Liberia and abroad. Reserving eight months for exploratory fieldwork in Monrovia, I spread the remaining six months available for fieldwork across the four field sites abroad, representing countries that had adopted dual citizenship in practice or in theory. I also selected particular cities outside Liberia with Liberian embassies, signifying that Liberia, with its meagre resources and inability to support foreign missions in every country, attaches a certain level of importance in implementing its foreign policy agenda in these locales.

Monrovia was the primary field site because it represents the locus of Liberian identity construction and practice, where rural to urban migration during/after armed conflicts and the limited opportunities available to Liberia's rural dwellers stretched the city's population beyond its capacity. Monrovia is not a global city like London or Washington, nor is it a West African hub like Accra. In many respects, it is akin to Freetown, representing a post-war capital struggling to reconstruct and reinvent itself. According to 2008 census figures[12] generated by the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), about one third of Liberia's 3.4

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[12] The 2008 census was the first of its kind to be conducted in Liberia in almost 24 years.

million population resides in Monrovia, a city that was constructed to only accommodate 500,000 people (Government of Liberia, 2009). Given that Monrovia is Liberia's most populous city, I decided to conduct all fieldwork interviews there to showcase the diversity of perspectives about how 'Liberian citizenship' is manifested in identity construction, development practice, and the nuanced interactions between the Liberian state and its citizens as well as amongst citizens. Monrovia also enabled access to Liberian policy makers, foreign donors, multi-nationals, civil society actors, and a growing repository of documentary data about Liberia's post-war development milestones and challenges.

Given that the vast majority of Liberians outside of Liberia reside within the West African sub-region, I selected two capitals, Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Accra, Ghana, for a comparative investigation. It was crucial for me to draw on a sub-regional analysis to fill a void in the academic literature that places a premium on migrants in the Global North. Unlike London and Washington, Freetown is not a global city. In fact, it does not top the rankings of West African political, economic, and social hubs. Yet, I selected the city because I suspected that the identity constructions, citizenship practices, and lived experiences of Liberian migrants settled in Freetown and its environs would be starkly different from those in London, Washington, and Accra, primarily because of their geographic proximity to Monrovia. Furthermore, Freetown houses the Mano River Union (MRU)[13], a sub-regional body comprising bordering countries Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast, which was founded on principles of economic cooperation (Robson, 1982).

Conducting fieldwork in Accra enabled me to analyse the life-worlds and social locations of Liberian migrants in the larger Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) supra-national entity, which has a 'free movement of persons' protocol (Ibeanu, 2007). Unlike London and Washington, Accra is not a global city. Yet, unlike Freetown, it has transformed into a West African regional hub, and therefore boasts a cosmopolitan milieu. Moreover, I selected the city because I suspected that Accra would represent a composite of the demographic profiles of

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[13] Co-founded by Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1973 and later joined by Guinea in 1980 and Ivory Coast in 2008, respectively, the MRU pre-dates the larger regional body, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which was founded in 1975.

respondents in London, Washington and Freetown, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Furthermore, there appears to be a growing repository of published case study analysis about Liberians in Ghana, particularly because the Buduburam Refugee Camp at one time hosted the largest number of Liberian refugees in the West African sub-region (UNHCR, 2004; UNHCR, 2007). Although most research has so far focused primarily on refugees at Buduburam, my study encompasses Liberians in Accra and its environs who identify as economic migrants as well as those who identify as former refugees, now locally integrated residents.

Given that the vast majority of Liberians outside of the West African sub-region reside in the United States, and because of Liberia's historical relationship with America, I selected Washington as a fourth field site. As the headquarters of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and US Treasury, Washington is not only an important centre of global power today; it is also where the Liberian state was first conceived of by the American Colonisation Society (ACS) in the early 19th century (Kieh, 2012a: 168). In Washington, political entrepreneurs such as Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, now Liberia's president, and Amos Sawyer, former head of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) and now chair of Liberia's Governance Commission, once formulated the Association for Constitutional Democracy in Liberia (ACDL) to oust President Samuel Kanyon Doe in the early 1990s (Sirleaf, 2009). It is the site of mass political rallies in front of the White House to bring about a cessation to enduring armed conflict in Liberia[14]. When the Liberian Embassy in Washington was burned down in the early 1990s, many Liberians suspected that a political statement was also being made although an investigation revealed no suspects. Washington is also the site of lobbying on Capitol Hill and strategy meetings with members of the US Congress to regularise the status of Liberians on Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED)[15]. Although there are concentrated pockets of Liberians in Providence, Rhode Island, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Staten Island, New York, I selected Washington to conduct

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[14] [DL34] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 17, 2012.
[15] [PR3] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.

fieldwork because it represents a global city where the manifestations of 'Liberian citizenship' and Liberian transnational activities have been expressly political.

London too represents a global city where transnational practices are particularly stark. It is where material resources and institutional networks can be galvanised for "homeland-oriented causes or political projects" (Adamson and Koinova, 2013: 7-9). As such, I selected the European hub as a fifth field site in order to fill major gaps in the literature on the migratory flows of Liberians before, during, and after armed conflict. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Diaspora Project[16] enabled Liberians in the UK, US, and Ghana to participate in public hearings that culminated in a report entitled "The House with Two Rooms" (Advocates for Human Rights, 2009). Besides this study, I have not come across published empirical research generated about Liberians in Europe, generally, and the UK, specifically. Instead, the growing body of published academic literature on Liberia's diasporas tends to focus on Liberians in the West African sub-region (Van Damme, 1999; Dick, 2002; Kaiser, 2004; Utas, 2004; Boateng, 2005; Gale, 2008; Hampshire, et. al, 2008; Porter, et. al, 2008; Hardgrove, 2009) or within the United States (Chaudhry, 2008; Lubkemann, 2008; Young and Park, 2009). Through fieldwork conducted in London, I inserted Europe as a third node in the migration trajectory of Liberian social actors, beyond Africa and North America.

The multi-sited interviews were meant to gauge systematic differences and/or similarities, if any, amongst social actors in Monrovia and the four diasporic communities in terms of their engagement with the homeland (state-citizen relations) and with other Liberians home and abroad (citizen-citizen relations); their contributions to post-war recovery (citizenship practices); and their views about the opportunities and challenges that dual citizenship presents for post-war Liberia. In the next section, I provide a rationale for the selection of respondents in the field.

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[16] Liberia's TRC is unprecedented in that it included significant contributions from Liberian diasporas in the UK, US, and Ghana, who participated in outreach, gave testimonies during public hearings, and provided advisory support in project operation.

**Rationale for the Selection of Six Categories of Liberian Respondents**

From June 2012 to July 2013, I conducted semi-structured interviews with six categories of Liberians across five field sites—namely, diasporas; executive branch policy makers; legislative branch policy makers; homeland Liberians; permanent returnees; and circular returnees—to gauge how citizenship is manifested as identity, practice and a set of relations, and what impact this has had on claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship. The 202 Liberian respondents included:

a) three Liberian ambassadors in London, Freetown, and Accra, respectively;

b) three additional embassy officials in Washington and Accra;

c) three heads of Liberian diaspora regional organisations in London, Washington, and Accra;

d) four sponsors of the proposed dual citizenship bill;

e) eight Executive branch policy makers heading ministries/agencies responsible for driving post-war recovery deliverables in Liberia;

f) 10 permanent returnees who relocated to Monrovia after 2003, the last post-war moment;

g) 11 circular returnees who had spent 12 consecutive calendar months in Monrovia after 2003, yet considered their time in Liberia conditional;

h) 50 'homeland' Liberians based in Monrovia;

i) 110 Liberians residing in London, Washington, Freetown, and Accra.

In this thesis, I do not make claims that the 202 respondents are representative of Liberians worldwide, especially since statistics on the number of Liberians abroad are difficult to ascertain. Instead, I sought to compare and contrast thereby examining trends in the life-worlds and social locations of respondents through their myriad migration patterns and experiences; perspectives about post-war recovery milestones and challenges; assessments of whether or not diasporas have helped or hindered recovery; and conceptions about Liberian identity/citizenship. Interviewees not speaking in official capacities as government representatives or heads of regional diaspora organisations were considered 'unofficial,' and therefore anonymised. The basic criterion for the selection of Liberian interviewees speaking unofficially was their self-identification as Liberians regardless of citizenship status.

Beyond psychological attachments to Liberia, those interviewed were also either born in Liberia or to at least one parent who was a Liberian citizen at the time of their birth—representing the legal definition of 'Liberian citizenship'. The respondent pool does not include Lebanese residing in Liberia or those who would be considered non-'Negroes' because their 'Liberianness' is contested both constitutionally—based on the 'Negro clause'—and sociologically by Liberians at home and abroad, as will be discussed briefly in Chapter IV.

The four field sites outside of Monrovia were chosen because 'near' and 'wider' diasporas (Van Hear, 2009: 181) represent central nodes of my study. In my original research proposal, I intended to interview Liberian diasporas or Liberians who had explicit transnational ties to the country and were engaged in homeland 'development,' broadly defined. I realised early on that this qualification would limit my analysis, given that Liberians engage with the 'homeland' in a multitude of individual and collective ways, and may not necessarily identify with a putative diasporic Liberian community. In the field, I sought to examine how the lived experiences of Liberian refugee diasporas in West Africa, for instance, compare with economic diasporas who left Liberia for the United States or Europe before armed conflict, and how the Liberian government engages with these communities at varying levels through embassies abroad. Accra and Freetown presented optimal case studies for 'near' diasporas because they host fairly large populations of Liberians in the West African sub-region (UNHCR, 2004; UNHCR, 2007). Washington and London were selected as sites comprising 'wider' diasporas because they represent centres of power in North America and Europe, respectively, and the politically charged nature of Liberian diasporas in these centres. For instance, the US and UK provided the lobbying machinery for proposed dual citizenship legislation under the auspices of the Coalition of Concerned Liberians (CCL), whose founder is based in Washington, and the European Federation of Liberian Associations (EFLA), whose president is based outside of London.

In addition to interviewing Liberian social actors abroad speaking in unofficial capacities, I also interviewed Liberian embassy officials in the four 'near' and 'wider' diaspora centres to ascertain how the Liberian state's representation in these

locales might affect the practice of 'Liberian citizenship' transnationally. Liberian ambassadors interviewed were then ambassador to the UK, Wesley Momo Johnson[17], the late ambassador to Sierra Leone, Thomas Brima[18], and the former ambassador to Ghana, Rudolph Von Ballmoos[19], who now serves as ambassador to the UK. Liberian Ambassador to the US Jeremiah Sulunteh was unavailable for an interview, so he instructed his two deputies, Deputy Chief of Mission Jeff Dowana[20] as well as the Minister Counsellor for Public Affairs, Gabriel I. A. Williams[21], to speak with me. At the embassy in Accra, 2nd Secretary Angela Lavela Von Ballmoos[22] was asked by the ambassador to explain the embassy's processes of engagement with Liberians in Ghana. Also speaking in 'official' capacities were the heads of regional diaspora organisations legitimated by respondents in three of the four diasporic field sites. Through interviews with Prince Taylor[23] of the Union of Liberian Organisations in the UK (ULO-UK), Nee Allison[24] of the Liberian Community Association in the Washington Metropolitan area, and Julia Richards[25] of the United Liberian Association in Ghana (ULAG), I endeavoured to examine how citizenship is manifested in the collective practices of Liberians resident in London, Washington, and Accra, respectively. The absence of a regional Liberian organisation in Freetown is indicative of the fact that Liberian and Sierra Leonean identities are fluid, as corroborated by Ambassador Brima: "The two countries [Liberia and Sierra Leone] are so interrelated that it's very difficult to actually differentiate a Liberian from a Sierra Leonean."[26]

Just as I selected a range of respondents in the four diasporic urban centres, I was deliberate in interviewing 83 Liberians of varying demographic profiles in Monrovia, comparing and contrasting the lived experiences and social locations of 'homeland'

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[17] Semi-structured interview in London on June 14, 2012. Johnson, a former opposition party member of the Progressive People's Party in the 1980s, was replaced in 2013 by Rudolph Von Ballmoos, a veteran Liberian diplomat who had most immediately served as Liberia's ambassador to Ghana.

[18] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 18, 2013.

[19] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 23, 2013.

[20] Semi-structured interview in Washington on November 2, 2012.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 23, 2013.

[23] Semi-structured interview in London on June 16, 2012.

[24] Semi-structured interview in Washington on November 2, 2012.

[25] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 18, 2013.

[26] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 18, 2013.

Liberians, permanent and circular returnees, legislative and executive branch policy makers. What follows is a detailed categorisation of these Monrovia-based respondents.

*Homeland Liberians (or Homelanders)*

In my initial research proposal, 'homeland' Liberians were defined as Liberians who had never left the country after 1997, Liberia's first post-war moment. I developed this airtight definition because I assumed that their perspectives about post-war recovery, identity/citizenship, and dual citizenship might vary from those who had considerable exposure or interactions abroad. During fieldwork, however, I discovered that migration had touched the lives of all Liberians, and even if they had not migrated to other countries post-1997, many had certainly migrated pre-1997. And if they had not migrated at all, they certainly had Liberian relatives living abroad. Furthermore, most Liberians have tactile experiences of migration, serving as the basis for Chapter VI on how migration has configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship'. I also discovered that globalisation—the flow of migrant transfers through remittances and the advancements in mobile telephony and the internet—had also transported migration to those who may not have physically left Liberia during their lifetime, as discussed in Chapter VII.

Early on in my fieldwork in Monrovia, I discovered that finding 'homeland' Liberians—as initially defined in my research proposal—would be very difficult because most of the individuals I spoke to had spent some time abroad, either through short-term study, short-term job assignments, short-term displacement, or short-term cyber travel. Therefore, an 'authentic homeland Liberian' only existed in my analytical imagination. And so, I reconfigured my definition of 'homeland' Liberian to describe Liberians who had spent most, if not all, their lives in Liberia before the first war started in 1989, and most, if not all, their lives in Liberia after the first post-war moment in 1997. Exceptions were made for individuals who found short-term work and/or short-term study opportunities outside of Liberia during these periods. Unlike permanent and circular returnees described later, homeland Liberians identified Liberia as the only 'home' they had ever claimed as

their own. This has, in turn, become the defining marker of a 'homeland' Liberian. As a case in point, out of 50 'homeland' Liberians interviewed, 26 had never physically left Liberia, and one had never left Liberia after 1989 although he studied in Europe prior to the first armed conflict. Eleven homelanders had travelled for short stints because of the wars between 1989-1997 and/or 1999-2003, and six had travelled abroad for schooling post-1989. Six homelanders had travelled for short stints post-1989 for a combination of reasons—due to war, for studies, and/or for work.

*Permanent Returnees*

Just as my categorisation of homeland Liberians was reconfigured in the field, so too was my classification of 'permanent returnees.' In my initial research proposal, permanent returnees were defined as Liberians who had returned to Liberia between 2003 and 2013 and lived in the country consecutively for six years during the 10 years of uninterrupted peace. The consecutive six years was, to me, analytically relevant because it represented one full term of a head of state in Liberia, and signified a commitment to remaining in Liberia for the long duree. While in the field, however, I discovered that a number of respondents considered their return to Liberia permanent between 2003 and 2013, yet for various reasons, they either had to leave Liberia for further studies or were appointed for diplomatic assignments abroad, thereby interrupting the permanency of return. Individuals who considered the current move to Liberia a permanent move were classified as permanent returnees. What I gleaned from the permanent returnees interviewed was their heightened level of engagement with Liberia while abroad, from participating in rallies for TPS/DED extension, to serving Liberia in the diplomatic corps, to representing Liberia in the arts and humanities, to maintaining businesses and investments in Liberia. They differed in their orientation from circular returnees in that they demonstrated an expressed commitment to remain in Liberia.

*Circular Returnees*

In my initial research proposal, circular returnees were defined as Liberians who had spent at least three consecutive calendar months in Liberia between 2003 and

2013. While in the field, however, I came to understand that three months was not indicative of a circular returnee, and the short timeframe did not appear to capture transnational ties with the homeland. I therefore reconfigured this categorisation to define circular returnees as those who returned to live in Liberia for at least 12 consecutive calendar months—but less than six consecutive years—within the past decade. I considered the one year an appropriate amount of time to re-establish ties with Liberia while also leaving room for periodic return. Moreover, what differentiated circular returnees from other respondents in this study was their sustained and considerable transnational engagement with Liberia. These individuals admitted that their return to Liberia was conditional, and, therefore, temporary, based on a number of factors, including, but not limited to: whether peace and stability prevailed in Liberia, their continued job security in the country, and familial obligations abroad. Circular returnees differed in their orientation from permanent returnees because most admitted that they were still weighing their options and were unsure of whether they would return permanently to Liberia.

*Legislative and Executive Branch Policy Makers*

Through interviews with legislative members of government, namely the four sponsors of the proposed dual citizenship bill, I was able to gauge the range of individual and collective motivations for attempting to reconfigure the generic legal definition of 'Liberian citizenship', as enshrined in the Aliens and Nationality Law. I completed interviews with the four sponsors of the proposed bill before pursuing other respondents in Monrovia, as this provided me with appropriate contextual framing to ask appropriate questions of other interviewees. In December 2012, I interviewed two sponsors of the proposed bill, namely, Senators Sumo Kupee[27] of Lofa County and Abel Massalay[28] of Grand Cape Mount County. They both corroborated that the proposed dual citizenship legislation was heavily advocated for by three prominent Liberian diaspora organisations, the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA), the Coalition of Concerned Liberians (CCL), and the European Federation of Liberian Associations (EFLA). Both Kupee and

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[27] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on December 4, 2012.
[28] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on December 12, 2012.

Massalay asserted that, given the contributions to development in the homeland by Liberians abroad before, during, and after armed conflict, it would be unfair to penalise those who naturalised elsewhere, and their descendants, from being granted full entitlements to legal 'Liberian citizenship', including the right to own land, a contentious issue that will be further analysed in Chapter IV on how conflict has configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship'.

In March 2013, I interviewed the two remaining proposed dual citizenship bill sponsors, Senators Cletus Wotorson[29] of Grand Kru County and Jewel Howard Taylor[30] of Bong County. As chief sponsor, Wotorson provided the necessary background context of the proposed bill, explaining that he had introduced the bill after being petitioned by groups of Liberian diasporas in the US and Europe. He listed off the merits of dual citizenship for Liberia—family cohesion, economic revitalisation, etc.—but maintained that opposition within the country (and within the Liberian Legislature) had side lined the bill's passage. Wotorson said that he had held town hall meetings with Liberians in the US, as well as within Liberia, but had fallen short of conducting empirical research on experiences of other countries in the sub-region. I would later find out through two interviewees in Monrovia that Wotorson's purported reason for sponsoring the proposed bill was to enable his US citizen children and American grandchildren to legally inherit his accumulated wealth and property in Liberia. Taylor, former wife of warlord-turned-president Charles Ghankay Taylor, admitted after much prodding that she had developed misgivings about the proposed bill. She expressed concerns that Liberians abroad lobbying for dual citizenship were not committed to developing Liberia, but rather narrowly interested in participating in the political processes of the country. Taylor revealed that the difference between her former husband's administration and the administration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's was that Taylor insisted his returnee cabinet officials relocate to Liberia with their families, thereby facilitating full integration.

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[29] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on March 6, 2013.
[30] Ibid.

In addition to interviewing the four sponsors of Liberia's proposed dual citizenship bill, I also interviewed eight executive branch policy makers in Monrovia to gauge significant post-war development milestones and challenges, comparing them to documentary data from government and non-government sources. The interviews were intended to gauge to what extent Liberia's diasporas, through return migration and/or transnational activities, had impacted Liberia's development trajectory thereby influencing the introduction or postponement of dual citizenship legislation. Those interviewed were the ministers of Foreign Affairs[31] (who spoke in his capacity as immediate past Minister of Finance), Defence[32], and Lands, Mines, and Energy[33]; the then Minister of Justice[34]; the then National Investment Commission Chairman[35]; the Governance Commission Chairman[36]; the former (and immediate past) Minister of Public Works[37]; and the former (and immediate past) Director-General of the Civil Service Agency[38]. I was able to access these policy makers because I worked with them collaboratively for four years as a mid-level aide to President Sirleaf. Interviews with the eight specific policy makers were conducted because their ministries/agencies represented pillars on which Liberia's post-war recovery agenda from 2006-2011 was based, namely, peace and security; economic revitalisation, governance and the rule of law; and infrastructure and basic services. My attempts to secure interviews with the current Ministers of Agriculture and Finance & Development Planning[39]—the latter who served as Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs from 2008-2011 oversaw the implementation of the *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy—proved futile because of their very hectic schedules.

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[31] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with Augustine Ngafuan on June 11, 2013.

[32] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with Brownie Samukai on July 12, 2013.

[33] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with Patrick Sendolo on June 28, 2013.

[34] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with Christiana Tah on June 19, 2013. Tah resigned in October 2014.

[35] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with O. Natty B. Davis on June 13, 2013. Davis was shortly replaced thereafter by Michael Wotorson, who resigned in August 2014 and returned to the US amidst the Ebola outbreak.

[36] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with Dr. Amos Sawyer on June 25, 2013.

[37] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with Kofi Woods on June 25, 2013.

[38] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with Dr. C. William Allen on June 4, 2013.

[39] The current minister of finance and development planning insisted that he see my questions before the interview, but I declined to share my interview protocol because I was concerned that his responses would be scripted.

It is worth noting that of the eight executive branch policy makers interviewed, five were actively recruited from the United States—Tah, Samukai, Sendolo, Sawyer, and Allen—while three remained in Liberia for much of their professional lives—Ngafuan, Davis, and Woods. It has been difficult to ascertain if the above breakdown is representative of the president's cabinet composition because she has frequently reshuffled her ministers. It is clear, however, that at least one third of the cabinet—at any given time in Sirleaf's current and past administrations—have returned from abroad. One of the things I sought to find answers for in the field was to what extent diaspora returnees aligned themselves with local aspirations or international agenda-setting, since they fall into what I call a 'third post-war reconstruction space.' Although most of the policy makers—returnees and non-returnees alike—eschewed critiques that Liberia's post-war recovery had been primarily driven by the 'one-size-fits all' agenda of donors, with minimal local ownership, former Minister of Public Works Kofi Woods admitted boldly that Liberia too often "panders to the international community"[40] and that local aspirations have been side-lined completely in the process of state-building. In Chapter VIII, I offer a deeper analysis of the ways in which returnee and non-returnee Liberians have either 'pandered' to the international community or reconciled the 'local' with the 'international' in post-war recovery, and the impact of this on dual citizenship claims and counter-claims.

Although Sierra Leone's process of enacting dual citizenship does not feature prominently in this thesis, I interviewed two Sierra Leonean executive branch policy makers and five parliamentarians to glean comparable policy experiences on dual citizenship. The rationale was to gauge the factors that influenced Sierra Leone's dual citizenship passage in 2006, its potential ramifications, and the nodes of resistance to changes in the country's citizenship law. I gained access to the two executive branch policy makers through contacts I had met during a 2010 study tour in Sierra Leone's Diaspora Affairs Office incubated in the Statehouse, the office of Sierra Leone's president. I gained access to the five parliamentarians through a Liberian respondent in Freetown who had contacts in the upper echelons of Sierra Leone's political hierarchy. Although the timing of the interviews with

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[40] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 25, 2013.

parliamentarians was undesirable—I did them all in a span of three hours, back-to-back—I knew that it was important to pursue these interviews because it would enable an appropriate comparison with Liberia's six-year dual citizenship impasse. During my time in Parliament, I also obtained from the archives an official copy of the proposed dual citizenship bill for Sierra Leone and the actual Act signed into law in 2006. It is worth noting here that Sierra Leone took nearly 10 years to eventually enact dual citizenship, an important lesson for the Liberia case study.

The section that follows includes brief descriptions of fieldwork in the four diasporic urban centres as well as general trends observed about data collection.

**Data Collection Processes and General Trends in Four Urban Centres Abroad**

Fieldwork processes and trends observed in the four urban 'near' and 'wider' diaspora centres were similar in some respects, but very different in others. What follows is a detailed description of the snowball sampling methods employed in each site.

*London*

In London, I conducted fieldwork from mid to late June 2012, interviewing 30 anonymised diaspora respondents, one ambassador, and one head of a regional diaspora organisation. I initially approached the president of the European Federation of Liberian Associations (EFLA), John Brownell, who provided me with a long roster of his personal contacts. The Union of Liberian Organisations in the UK (ULO-UK) also forwarded their listserv a generic fieldwork interview request form that I had written for potential interviewees, and two Liberians opted to do the interview because of this e-mail correspondence. I also interviewed Liberians I had met through social functions during the course of the academic year, some of whom were not actively engaged in any Liberian organisation in the UK. I visited a Liberian restaurant in Brixton, Keneja Bar and Grill, and was able to interview three respondents patronising the establishment. During the fieldwork period for London, the Liberian Government held a consultation for Liberians in London to solicit feedback for *Liberia Rising 2030*, an 18-year vision agenda that proposes to catapult

Liberia into middle-income status by the year 2030. I interviewed a number of Liberians during and after this consultation, bearing in mind that many of them were embassy contacts, and did not represent the full range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences of Liberians across London and its environs.

*Washington*

Fieldwork conducted in Washington covered the month of October 2012, during which I interviewed 30 anonymised diaspora respondents, two embassy officials, and one head of a regional diaspora organisation. I initially emailed and/or called a number of my personal contacts in Washington, who in turn referred me to other Liberians willing to be interviewed. I had reservations about interviewing friends of my parents or distant relatives, but they were surprisingly candid once they received an assurance that they were being anonymised. Unlike in London, I interviewed a number of young professional Liberians aged 25 to 35 in Washington, the vast majority of whom were not born in Liberia. This added an interesting dynamic to the analysis, as I discovered that some of these *jus sanguinis* Liberians were as engaged in 'development' in Liberia as those twice their age, and in some instances more engaged than their parents' generations. This made me reflect on how one's notion of identity can be heavily influenced by socialisation and parental nurturing. *Jus sanguinis* Liberians are emblematic of the assertion that diasporas are both identity and practice. In order to own their 'Liberianness,' they seemed to compensate for not being born in Liberia by their relentless engagement with the country, from establishing small-scale businesses in Liberia to leading large-scale empirical research studies on Liberia.

*Freetown*

In Freetown, I conducted fieldwork for two weeks in April 2013, interviewing 20 anonymised diaspora respondents and one ambassador. I initially emailed or called a number of my personal contacts throughout the West African sub-region and Europe who referred me to Liberians in Freetown. One respondent was gracious enough to drive me to a sprawling refugee camp on the outskirts of Freetown in

Waterloo, where I interviewed a number of Liberians still awaiting ID cards for local integration in Sierra Leone. The son of a Liberian citizen father/Sierra Leonean citizen mother, my former partner also introduced me to Liberians in Freetown in the community where he grew up as well as Liberians at his mother's church, attended by ethnic Krus whose descendants started migrating to and settling in Sierra Leone after Great Britain reserved a segment of Freetown for Kru seafarers who had assisted the British navy in staving off illegal slave trading on the Atlantic coast (Brooks, 1972). I also interviewed a few Liberians who had been referred to me by the Liberian embassy in Freetown.

Unlike in London and Washington, I found it particularly difficult identifying and securing respondents in Freetown because I discovered that Liberian identity in Sierra Leone is relatively fluid. Moreover, because of the shared border between Liberia and Sierra Leone, Liberians in Sierra Leone have managed to integrate into Sierra Leonean society in a way that almost obliterates sharp markers of "Liberianness." Sesay, et. al describe Liberia and Sierra Leone as fraternal twins—"twins but not identical"—to describe their similarities (Sesay, et. al, 2009: 11). Moreover, Edward Wilmot Blyden, a native of the Virgin Islands who naturalised in Liberia in the 19th century, once remarked that Sierra Leoneans and Liberians "are one in origin and one in destiny; and, in spite of local prejudices, they must co-operate" (Blyden, 1884: 15). As a case in point, many respondents in the field had one Sierra Leonean parent/one Liberian parent, had been born in one of the two countries, had travelled extensively across borders, and therefore considered themselves both Sierra Leonean and Liberian. Also, the Krus in Freetown often identify as Kru first, and as Liberian, Sierra Leonean, or Ghanaian second, so ethnic Kru identity superseded Liberian identity. This is primarily why my interviewee threshold for Liberian diasporas—30—was not met in Freetown.

*Accra*

Fieldwork in Accra covered the entire month of May 2013, during which I interviewed 30 anonymised diaspora respondents, one ambassador, an embassy official, and the head of a Liberian diaspora regional organisation. I was referred to

Liberians based in Accra through my contacts in Ghana and elsewhere, and those contacts referred me to other Liberians based in Accra and its environs. The president of the United Liberian Association in Ghana (ULAG), Julia Richards, was particularly helpful in identifying Liberians in Accra, as well as Liberians living at the Buduburam Refugee Camp near Kasoa and its environs. I spent two days at the Buduburam Camp, and over half of my interviewees were Liberian refugees residing at the Camp or in Accra proper who had opted for local integration in Ghana. Unlike in Freetown, I had little difficulty finding Liberian interviewees in Accra because Liberian national identity tends to be entrenched because of Ghana's strong nationalist fervour. Unlike Liberia's fluid relationship with Sierra Leone due to a shared border, ECOWAS regional integration has only fortified Ghanaian national identity, thereby clearly delineating who belongs to the nation-state and who stands outside its ambit.

I have shown herein that data collection in the four diasporic field sites required slightly different channels for securing interviews, although I relied primarily on my personal contacts in all cases. In the next section, I provide detailed demographic profiles of diaspora, homeland and returnee respondents, which support my argument throughout this thesis that their varied life-worlds and social locations impact claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship as a policy prescription for Liberia.

**Part II: Demographic Composition of Homelanders, Returnees and Diasporas**
Although the methods employed in this study were primarily qualitative, descriptive statistical analysis has been drawn from my snowball sampling, such as demographic data on Liberians resident in Monrovia and those who migrated to London, Washington, Freetown, and Accra—including gender, age, educational attainment, employment status, income levels, citizenship status, and migration trajectories. Where possible, I purposively sampled for a broad range of ages in order to gauge differences in perspectives amongst Liberians of varying generations. I also deliberately sought to balance the number of men and women in my respondent pool to assess whether or not they conceive of and practice 'Liberian citizenship' differently. Though I purposively sampled for age and gender, I did not

ask respondents explicitly for their ethnic identities because ethnicity was politicised during Liberia's intermittent armed conflicts and remains a sensitive topic to broach. Because the frame of my thesis is citizenship and therefore much broader than ethnic identity, I remained convinced that ethnicity would emerge organically in conversation with respondents who considered it an impediment to experiencing legal 'Liberian citizenship' fully, and this is apparent in Chapter IV.

Across the five field sites, some interesting trends emerged from the range of gender and age distributions amongst the 181 'unofficial' anonymised respondents—those not speaking in official capacities as government of Liberia representatives or heads of regional diaspora organisations. Table 1 shows the range represented in my interview sample and is not indicative of age or gender distributions amongst Liberians in these field sites generally. Gender and age distributions were particularly stark in diaspora urban centres. While age distribution was more concentrated amongst 41 to 50 year olds in London, with no respondent above the age of 60, respondents in Washington, Freetown, and Accra were more widely distributed in age.[41]

Table 1: *Gender/Age Distribution of 181 Anonymised Diaspora and Monrovia-Based Interviewees*

| Gender/Age | M | F | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 | 71-80 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London (30) | 15 | 15 | 1 | 9 | 15 | 4 | N/A | N/A |
| Washington (30) | 14 | 16 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Freetown (20) | 14 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Accra (30) | 17 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 1 | N/A |
| Monrovia (71) | 36 | 35 | 26 | 20 | 15 | 5 | 4 | N/A |
| **Total Absolute Number/** | **96/** | **85/** | **43/** | **49/** | **43/** | **27/** | **12/** | **3/** |
| **Percentage of Total** | **53** | **47** | **24** | **27** | **24** | **15** | **7** | **2** |

As Table 1 illustrates, male and female respondents in London, Washington, and Accra were equally or nearly equally distributed. Contrastingly, the proportion of male interviewees was more than double that of female respondents in Freetown.

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[41] One respondent in London and two respondents in Accra refrained from divulging their ages, respectively.

Many of the women I approached in Freetown were either too shy to consent to being interviewed, or lacked enough confidence in their ability to engage with interview questions, despite my attempts to reassure them that questions could be answered easily. I realised early on, however, that the low levels of formal education amongst the women I approached could be a primary reason for their reticence. As a case in point, I started interviewing a middle-aged woman who had had no formal schooling beyond the 6th grade, and had to stop and discard the interview because she could not understand concepts germane to my study, such as 'citizen', or explain how she identified herself—as a Liberian, a Sierra Leonean, neither, or both. Another barrier I encountered was the low level of English proficiency amongst those not formally educated, particularly women. Those with no formal schooling in Freetown tend to speak only Krio, the de facto national language of Sierra Leone and a lingua franca developed by descendants of repatriated blacks from the West Indies, the UK, and US (Cole, 2013).

Monrovia represented even distributions of gender and uneven age distributions amongst homelander, permanent and circular returnee respondents, as Table 2 illustrates.

Table 2: *Gender/Age Breakdown of 71 Anonymised Monrovia-Based Interviewees*

| Gender/Age | M | F | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 | 71-80 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homelanders (50) | 25 | 25 | 23 | 13 | 10 | 2 | 2 | N/A |
| Permanent Returnees (10) | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | N/A |
| Circular Returnees (11) | 6 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | N/A | N/A |
| **Total Absolute Number/ Percentage of Total** | **36/ 51** | **35/ 49** | **26/ 37** | **20/ 28** | **15/ 21** | **5/ 7** | **4/ 6** | **N/A** |

Men and women in all three Monrovia respondent categories were equal or near equal in representation. Age[42] distribution was more varied, however, for those who disclosed this information. In the case of homelanders, age distribution was

[42] One circular returnee refrained from divulging his age.

concentrated amongst 21 to 30 year olds because I deliberately sought out young university students. According to 2008 census figures, more than 60 percent of Liberia's population is below the age of 35 (Government of Liberia, 2009), so I attempted to mirror these figures with respondent selections. Unlike homeland interviewees, however, age was more widely distributed amongst permanent and circular returnee respondents. It is worth mentioning here that the highest percentage of permanent and circular returnee interviewees were in the 31 to 40 age bracket. This could be attributed to the fact that adults in this age range are more established professionally than their younger counterparts, yet less apprehensive about taking risks than their older counterparts. According to many 31 to 40 year old permanent and circular returnee respondents, a return to Liberia after protracted periods of time abroad was considered a strategic move to build up an established career or 'test the waters' by venturing into other areas of professional life, such as entrepreneurship. For instance, two circular returnee respondents, a 35-year-old Liberia-born female who naturalised in the US and a 31-year-old male born in the US to a Liberian citizen father, respectively, had secured jobs as consultants in Liberia while also exploring business opportunities in the country. The woman had registered a retail business in Monrovia and accumulated considerable amounts of property—both family owned and personally acquired—to lease and rent. The man was saving up to invest in a fisheries start-up enterprise with a friend.

**Education, Employment and Income Show Wide-Ranging Social Locations**

Just as gender and age demographics unearth certain trends, the education levels of respondents in this study expose their divergent social locations. As Table 3 indicates, 'wider' diaspora respondents in London and Washington obtained on average higher levels of education than their 'near' diaspora counterparts in Freetown and Accra, in the same way that permanent and circular returnees in Monrovia obtained on average higher levels of education than their homeland counterparts. Although the education levels of permanent returnee respondents were nearly evenly distributed—three high school graduates; three bachelors degree holders; three masters degree holders; and one PhD holder, respectively—their circular returnee counterparts reported higher levels of education across the

board—two bachelors degree holders; eight masters degree holders; and one PhD holder. With the return of expatriate nationals to post-war Liberia, the labour market has become increasingly competitive. As such, domestically rooted Liberians have placed a premium on university degrees in the past 10 years. Eighteen of the twenty-one homeland high school graduates reported they were pursuing bachelors degrees, while another 18 homelanders had already obtained bachelors degrees. Of the remaining 11 homeland respondents, nine were masters degree holders, and one each reported having a medical degree and a PhD, respectively.

Table 3: *Highest Education Levels of 181 Anonymised Interviewees in Monrovia and Abroad*

| Educational Attainment | Below High School/ No School | High School Diploma | Bachelors Degree | Masters Degree | PhD or Professional Degree (i.e., law, medicine) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London (30) | N/A | 8 | 11 | 10 | 1 |
| Washington (30) | N/A | 5 | 14 | 10 | 1 |
| Freetown (20) | 6 | 10 | 3 | 1 | N/A |
| Accra (30) | 3 | 14 | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| Monrovia (71) | N/A | 24 | 23 | 20 | 4 |
| **Total Absolute Number/ Percentage of Total** | **9/ 5** | **61/ 34** | **57/ 31** | **47/ 26** | **7/ 4** |

The educational attainment of respondents had a positive correlation with their employment status and income levels, with some women more marginalised than others. In cases where educational attainment was high, respondents reported higher levels of income, for those who opted to disclose this information. While twenty-seven of the 30 London-based respondents were employed with a median income of £35,000 per annum, twenty-six of the 30 Washington-based respondents were employed with a median income of US$71,000 per annum. Unlike in London and Washington, however, only five Freetown-based (male) respondents reported being employed, with a wide variance in income levels. For instance, a consultant/administrator reported an annual income of US$180,000 on the highest end of the spectrum while a pastor reported an annual income of US$300 on the lowest end. A higher number of respondents in Accra, 18, reported being employed

than in Freetown. Similar to Freetown, however, Accra-based respondents reported a wide variance in income levels that exposed not only disparities in educational attainment but also gender. For instance, a male banker/economist and Masters degree holder reported an annual income of US$170,000 on the highest end of the spectrum while a female seamstress and high school drop-out—one of only eight female respondents employed in Accra—reported an annual income of US$600 on the lowest end. Although Chapters IV through VIII provide a more nuanced analysis of the differentiated 'homeland' engagement patterns of diasporas in this multi-sited study, it is important to state here that unlike respondents in London and Washington, the limited employment prospects of interviewees in Freetown, generally, and Accra to a certain degree, impedes their ability to formalise that engagement by actively practicing 'Liberian citizenship' from afar.

Wide income gaps within the Monrovia respondent pool also revealed their differentiated social locations. Although 30 percent of homelanders reported being unemployed, the 70 percent who were employed disclosed extensive variances in their income levels. For instance, a male development economist reported an annual income of US$91,000 on the highest end of the spectrum while two females—a programme assistant and an accountant, respectively—reported annual incomes of US$2,400 on the lowest end. Amongst permanent returnees, the highest income reported was US$200,000, the middle US$34,000, and the lowest US$4,200. Within the circular returnee respondent pool, five reported having an annual income of US$50,000 and above while the lowest reported income earner received US$27,000 per annum. These variances represent a microcosm of increasing income inequalities within post-war Liberia, as discussed in detail in Chapter V on how conflict has configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship.'

**Divergent Life-Worlds Manifested in Citizenship Status and Migration Patterns**
Since the education levels, employment status and annual incomes of the social actors within this study serve as the building blocks of a demographic profile, their citizenship status and migration patterns are equally important in developing a schema of their life-worlds and social locations. The citizenship status of respondents abroad is worth highlighting here because it signifies an important

shift in the citizenship configurations of Liberians post-1989, which I examine fully in Chapter VI on how migration has influenced the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation. As Table 4 indicates, most 'near' and 'wider' diasporas were born in Liberia, yet London and Washington accounted for the majority of respondents who naturalised abroad and/or were born abroad.

Table 4: *Place of Birth/Country of Citizenship of 181 Anonymised Diaspora and Monrovia-based Interviewees*

| Place of Birth (PoB)/ Country of Citizenship (CoC) | PoB Liberia | PoB Other | CoC Liberia | CoC Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| London (30) | 28 | 2 | 6 | 24 |
| Washington (30) | 24 | 6 | 11 | 19 |
| Freetown (20) | 15 | 5 | 14 | 6 |
| Accra (30) | 30 | N/A | 29 | 1 |
| Monrovia (71) | 66 | 5 | 60 | 11 |
| **Total Absolute Number/ Percentage of Total** | **163/ 90** | **18/ 10** | **120/ 66** | **61/ 34** |

Of the 30 respondents in London, two were born in the UK to at least one Liberian citizen parent at the time of their birth, thereby being entitled to both *jus soli* UK citizenship and *jus sanguinis* 'Liberian citizenship' until the age of majority. Of the 28 Liberia-born respondents, 21 had naturalised in the UK and one had naturalised in New Zealand, all in the early 2000s. Of the six respondents who did not naturalise, four had Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (the equivalent of permanent residency status); one was on a Tier 4 student visa; and one respondent had diplomatic status because of a spouse working in the Liberian foreign service. Although I include an in-depth analysis of the migration patterns and experiences of respondents in Chapter VI, it is important to note here briefly that of the 30 London-based respondents, 63 percent resided in Liberia at the advent of armed conflict in 1989 yet migrated directly to the UK shortly thereafter or to a second party country within the West African sub-region before relocating permanently to the UK. A small group of men representing 16 percent of the UK respondent pool had won Liberian government scholarships in the late 1980s to attend school in the former Soviet Union, yet relocated to the UK in the early 1990s when Cold War politics dismantled the USSR. These young men had benefitted from Soviet assistance to Liberia in the

form of scholarships to Liberian nationals beginning in the late 1970s, in exchange for Samuel Kanyon Doe's Cold War alliance with the USSR (Kieh, 1992: 101; 155). On average, the 30 London-based respondents had spent approximately 17 years residing in the UK.

While the migration patterns and citizenship status of Washington-based respondents is similar in some ways to that of their London counterparts, they differ in that fewer opted for naturalisation abroad. About a third of the Liberia-born respondents in Washington did not naturalise despite being eligible to do so because they admitted to feeling a sense of abiding patriotism to Liberia despite apparent inconveniences in the US. Those who kept their legal 'Liberian citizenship' were fiercely nationalistic, and expressed strong intentions to return to Liberia, with or without the passage of dual citizenship legislation. This could be attributed to the politicisation of Liberian identity in Washington, in which naturalisation could be perceived as a renunciation of any ties to the homeland. Conversely, however, some respondents asserted that naturalisation enabled them to access the corridors of political power in Washington as legitimate stakeholders, thereby aiding Liberia's development.

Of the 30 respondents in Washington, six were born in the US to at least one Liberian citizen parent at the time of their birth, thereby being entitled to both *jus soli* US citizenship and *jus sanguinis* 'Liberian citizenship' until the age of majority. Of the 24 Liberia-born respondents, 12 had naturalised in the US at varying times, with the earliest reported naturalisation in the late 1980s and the latest in 2012, respectively; one was entitled to *jus sanguinis* US citizenship at the time of his birth because of his US citizen father; and the remaining 11 retained their 'Liberian citizenship' despite the majority being entitled to US citizenship. Of the 11 respondents who retained their 'Liberian citizenship', six reported being permanent residents; one reported conditional residency; one was on an F1 student visa pursuing a PhD, one was on a G4 visa as an international civil servant working for a multilateral organisation; one was on refugee status; and another reported being on DED.

Of the 30 Washington-based respondents, 57 percent resided outside of Liberia at the advent of armed conflict in 1989, the majority of whom were already settled in the United States. This statistical variation differs from the demographic profile of London-based respondents because the concentration of US-born Liberians is higher in the Washington respondent pool than UK-born Liberians in London. Furthermore, those respondents not born in the US who found themselves residing abroad at the advent of armed conflict left prior to 1989 either to pursue higher education or because of the mounting political instability in Liberia in the early to mid-1980s. The migration patterns varied considerably amongst the 43 percent Washington-based respondents who resided in Liberia at the beginning of the war in 1989. Some migrated directly to the US shortly after the war started, while others passed through a second party country within the West African sub-region before relocating permanently to the US. On average, the 30 respondents had spent approximately 20 years residing in the US, a slightly longer trajectory than the respondents in London.

The citizenship status and migration patterns of interviewees in Freetown illustrates not only how fluid Liberian/Sierra Leonean identities have become, but also how access to naturalisation proceedings for Liberians based in London and Washington differed from those in Freetown. Of the 20 Freetown-based respondents, five were born in Sierra Leone and therefore entitled to *jus soli* Sierra Leonean citizenship. Three of the five identified as Sierra Leonean citizens even though they had also been entitled to *jus sanguinis* 'Liberian citizenship' until the age of majority because of a male Liberian citizen parent. Of the remaining two respondents born in Sierra Leone, one had spent considerable time living in both Liberia and Sierra Leone because of his Sierra Leonean citizen father and Liberian citizen mother. Moreover, he had opted to retain his *jus sanguinis* 'Liberian citizenship', thereby being entitled to refugee status (and thereafter refugee local integration) when he moved to Sierra Leone during armed conflict in Liberia. The other respondent born in Sierra Leone had two Liberian citizen parents, lived all his life in Liberia, and only returned to Sierra Leone in 2007 to take care of family property. His immigration status in Sierra Leone remained ambiguous. Of the 15 Liberia-born respondents, three had taken on Sierra Leonean citizenship through

both official and unofficial channels. One respondent admitted that he had obtained a Sierra Leonean passport not through official naturalisation proceedings, but rather through his personal connections and bribe payments[43]. Of the remaining 12 Liberia-born respondents, five had opted for local refugee integration but were still awaiting residency cards from UNHCR and the Sierra Leonean government; four reported having legal residency status in Sierra Leone; and three reported having no official immigration status in Sierra Leone at all, primarily because of the free movement of persons protocols within the MRU and ECOWAS sub-regional bodies, respectively (Ibeanu, 2007). Unlike respondents in London and Washington, whose demographic profiles signify relative privilege and access, 90 percent of the Freetown-based interviewees resided in Liberia at the advent of war in 1989, with the majority of them migrating to Sierra Leone in the early to late 1990s because of the crisis. The 10 percent who resided in Freetown in 1989 were born in Sierra Leone to Liberian citizen parents at the time of their birth. On average, the 20 respondents had spent approximately 17 years residing in Sierra Leone, similar to the average of their London-based counterparts.

The citizenship profiles and migration patterns of Accra-based respondents contrast in some considerable ways with those in London, Washington, and Freetown. Unlike respondents in other cities, all Accra-based interviewees were born in Liberia yet only one had naturalised in the US. This respondent's relative privilege and US passport enabled him to reside in Ghana with only a tourist visa. Of the 29 Accra-based respondents who retained their legal 'Liberian citizenship', 16 had opted for local refugee integration but were still awaiting residency permits from the Ghana Immigration Board and passports from the Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (53 percent of the respondent pool); nine reported having legal residency status in Ghana (30 percent of the respondent pool); two were still considered refugees because one had been granted exemption from discontinuation of his refugee status, while the other had applied for exemption (7 percent of the respondent pool); and two had no official immigration status in Ghana, primarily because of the free movement of persons protocol within ECOWAS (7 percent of the respondent pool) (Ibeanu, 2007). Admittedly, however, one of the two respondents without official

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[43] [DL80] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 19, 2013.

immigration status said he had applied for refugee status after migrating to Ghana in 2003[44], but never received a response from UNHCR.

Granted, it could be argued that most interviewees in Ghana maintained their legal 'Liberian citizenship' because having refugee status prohibits naturalisation, and, if given the choice, they would have naturalised in greater numbers like their counterparts in London and Washington. Yet, most of these respondents argued that naturalising in Ghana does not entitle one to major economic and/or political opportunities. Also, naturalising in Ghana is tedious, costly, and difficult, particularly for those without political and social connections. This seems to be an echo of the sentiments shared by respondents in Freetown. Similar to Freetown, 90 percent of Accra-based respondents resided in Liberia at the advent of armed conflict in 1989, with most of them migrating to Ghana in the early 1990s because of war. Of the 10 percent who resided outside of Liberia, two took a circuitous route to Accra—one via the Soviet Union and the UK, the other via the US and Liberia—while another had lived in Ghana since migrating there in 1981 for school. On average, the 30 respondents had spent approximately 15 years residing in Ghana, less than the averages of the other three diasporic field sites.

As Table 5 indicates, the citizenship status of Monrovia-based respondents varied across categories.

Table 5: *Place of Birth/Country of Citizenship Breakdown of 71 Anonymised Monrovia-Based Interviewees*

| Place of Birth (PoB)/ Country of Citizenship (CoC) | PoB Liberia | PoB Other | CoC Liberia | CoC Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homelanders (50) | 50 | N/A | 50 | N/A |
| Permanent Returnees (10) | 8 | 2 | 8 | 2 |
| Circular Returnees (11) | 8 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| **Total Absolute Number/ Percentage of Total** | **66/ 93** | **5/ 7** | **60/ 85** | **11/ 15** |

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[44] 2003 was the year of Liberia's infamous World Wars I, II, and III, in which Charles Taylor's forces battled rebel groups Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) for control of Monrovia, eventually culminating in Taylor's asylum in Calabar, Nigeria.

Although 48 percent of homelanders reported migrating to other countries during Liberia's conflict cycles, all 50 had maintained their legal 'Liberian citizenship'. Permanent and circular returnees, however, had more differentiated citizenship and migration profiles. While the vast majority of permanent returnees had the option of naturalising abroad, the overwhelming majority did not. Of the 10 permanent returnees, eight had retained their legal 'Liberian citizenship' while abroad; one was born in the US (and therefore entitled to *jus soli* US citizenship); and one had naturalised in the US in 2007. Five had returned most immediately from the US; four had returned most immediately from within the West African sub-region; and one had returned most immediately from Europe. Most of the permanent returnees from the US had secured immigration status abroad, as did the returnee from Europe. The returnees from within Africa did not secure immigration status because they were refugees and ineligible for permanent residency. Of the 10 permanent returnees, seven resided in Liberia at the advent of armed conflict in 1989, and found their way to West Africa, the US or Europe during different cycles of the war. Of the three who lived outside of Liberia when armed conflict began, two left Liberia in the early 1980s because of political instability and one fled to Ghana slightly before the war began. On average, the 10 respondents had spent approximately 16 years residing abroad.

Unlike most permanent returnees, circular returnee interviewees appeared to be deeply rooted in the countries from which they had come, through immediate family ties and investments, and this is reflected in their citizenship status. Of the 11 circular returnees, four had naturalised in the US; three were born in the US to at least one Liberian citizen parent (and therefore entitled to *jus soli* US citizenship); two had retained their legal 'Liberian citizenship' while abroad, yet held US permanent residency; one had naturalised in the UK; and one was born in Liberia to a Liberian citizen father/US citizen mother, but was considered a US citizen by ancestry because she never denounced her *jus sanguinis* US citizenship at the age of majority. Eight of 11 circular returnees had returned most immediately from the US; two had returned most immediately from Europe; and one had returned most immediately from within the West African sub-region. Of the 11 circular returnees, six resided in Liberia at the advent of war in 1989, and found their way to other

parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the US or Europe during different cycles of the conflict. Of the five who lived outside Liberia when armed conflict began, three were born in the US and had been living there when war erupted; and two had been living outside of Liberia because of political instability in the early 1980s. On average, the 11 circular returnees had spent approximately 22 years residing abroad, much longer than their permanent returnee counterparts.

In this section, I have shown that the demographic composition of unofficial, anonymised social actors within and across the selected five field sites is wide-ranging. This serves as a basis for arguing throughout this thesis that their differentiated life-worlds and social locations have influenced 'Liberian citizenship' construction and practice across space and time, and ultimately impacted the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation.

**Conclusion**

The female seamstress and business executive described in the introductory vignettes in this chapter are indicative of the divergent lived experiences and socio-economic positions of Liberian respondents in this study. Because my thesis is primarily concerned with how qualitative factors have influenced the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation in Liberia, I employed multi-sited, semi-structured interviews in the field with a range of social actors like the seamstress and businessman to gauge perceptions, feelings, and opinions about 'Liberian citizenship' construction and practice across space and time. In this chapter, I described, analysed, and justified my research plan and implementation, thereby providing a rationale for the selection of five field sites and six categories of Liberians including 202 respondents in London, Washington, Freetown, Accra, and Monrovia. A detailed demographic profile of respondents was presented, and where appropriate, I explained how data collected from the five field sites will be employed throughout the thesis. In the chapter, I also described general trends observed in the field, thereby providing a premise for detailed analysis in the five subsequent core chapters.

In the next chapter, I provide empirical grounding for my conceptual framing of 'Liberian citizenship' as identity, practice, and a set of relations by examining how respondents conceive of and practice 'Liberian citizenship' domestically and transnationally.

# Chapter IV
## Will the Real Liberian Citizen Please Stand Up?

Liberia's historical and contemporary trajectory makes for an interesting sociological case study, especially where the study of citizenship is concerned. It is a country where one's citizenship can be called into question because of an Aliens and Nationality Law that has yet to respond to constantly shifting social processes, as illustrated in the vignettes below:

35-year-old Beyan[45] was born in Nairobi, Kenya, to two Liberian citizen parents, grew up in the US and Gambia and returned to Liberia to work in the mid-2000s. He is eligible for *jus soli* Kenyan citizenship and US naturalisation, but holds fast to his Liberian passport for fear that his *jus sanguinis* 'Liberian citizenship' might be revoked.

49-year-old Teta[46] was born in Rivercess, Liberia, to a Liberian citizen mother and a Lebanese citizen father. Having emigrated to the UK at the age of 12 and naturalised in the mid-1990s, she was asked by the Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to swear an oath of allegiance to Liberia and formalise her legal status when she returned to the country in 2008 to renew her passport. She says she often wonders whether her UK-born children will ever be able to obtain legal 'Liberian citizenship' after the age of majority.

55-year-old Precious[47] was born in Liberia to a Mandingo father and therefore has cultural roots in Guinea. She married an Indian national and entrepreneur in Monrovia who was ineligible for legal 'Liberian citizenship' because of his race, and together they had children who, by law, are not considered Liberian citizens although they were born in Liberia.

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[45] This pseudonym is used to protect the identity of permanent returnee respondent PR7.
[46] This pseudonym is used to protect the identity of diaspora respondent DL6.
[47] This pseudonym is used to protect the identity of diaspora respondent DL9.

38-year-old James[48] was born in Freetown to a Sierra Leonean citizen father and Liberian citizen mother but spent most of his life in Liberia. He was able to obtain a Liberian passport while growing up, although his mother could not legally pass on citizenship to him. When James returned to Freetown in 2006, he was asked by the Sierra Leonean government to naturalise in the country of his birth because his accent and way of life were considered 'too Liberian.'

Based on the snapshots of select respondents above, I use this chapter to interrogate whether or not an 'authentic' Liberian citizen actually exists. First, I examine how Liberian social actors across the five field sites in this study conceive of citizenship. Then, I assess how they practice citizenship in their every day lived realities. The chapter provides empirical grounding for my conceptualisation of 'Liberian citizenship' as identity, practice, and a set of relations, simultaneously. Citizenship, in my analysis, is not only a bundle of rights and privileges embedded in constructions of legal, national and cultural identity, but it is also a set of practices and interactions embodied in the life-worlds of respondents in Liberia and across transnational spaces.

**Birthplace, Bloodline, and Beyond: How 'Liberian Citizenship' Is Currently Conceived of in Liberia and Abroad**

The introduction and postponement in passage of proposed dual citizenship legislation in Liberia is a manifestation of the ways in which 'Liberian citizenship' is constantly being negotiated and redefined. During an interview, then Minister of Justice Christiana Tah shared her reflections with me about the reconfiguration of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time:

> The definition [of 'Liberian citizenship'] has taken on new meanings. And because we went through this period of transformation during the war, it took on another meaning, too. Besides, the major thing that has identified Liberians is this accent…But I think now it goes beyond that. It goes to the extent that it incorporates experiences. Shared experiences. And this is an informal definition, and it's a definition that just emerged from the war.[49]

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[48] This pseudonym is used to protect the identity of diaspora respondent DL63.
[49] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 19, 2013.

While 'Liberian citizenship' may have been construed as passive and constructed before armed conflict, newer meanings of citizenship are emerging to include more active forms of citizenship, bringing about the reconfiguration to which former Minister Tah alluded. Therefore, the conception of 'Liberian citizenship' amongst 202 Liberian social actors in London, Washington, Freetown, Accra, and Monrovia sits on a continuum between passivity and activity, identity and practice. I compiled the list in Table 6 to illustrate recurring responses to an open-ended question posed to all respondents about how they defined a Liberian citizen, without prompts from a prescribed list.

Table 6: *Top 10 Conceptions of What Constitutes a Liberian Citizen Amongst 202 Respondents*

| Markers of a Liberian Citizen | Cities Where Responses Most Frequent |
|---|---|
| Born in Liberia (*jus soli*) | All |
| Has Liberian mother or father (*jus sanguinis*) | All |
| Identifies as Liberian, feels and behaves Liberian culturally (speaks Liberian language or Liberian English; dresses in Liberian clothing; eats Liberian food) | All |
| Considers Liberia 'home' | London, Washington, Freetown, Monrovia |
| Raised in Liberia | London, Freetown, Monrovia |
| Has lived in Liberia extensively and/or currently resides fulltime in Liberia | All |
| Naturalises in Liberia | All |
| Has 'heart', love or affinity for Liberia (and Liberians) | London, Washington, Accra, Monrovia |
| Shows allegiance, loyalty, and patriotism to Liberia (and Liberians) | London, Freetown, Monrovia |
| Contributes to Liberia's development (involved in capacity building and nation-building; abides by the laws of Liberia and its Constitution; pays taxes; invests in real estate and businesses; supports democratic governance and peace; engages in political processes) | All |

Although the markers of a Liberian citizen in the table are not ranked, the most prevalent responses were: i) born in Liberia; ii) has a Liberian mother or father; iii) naturalises in Liberia; iv) has heart, love or affinity for Liberia; and v) contributes to

Liberia's development. The first five conceptions listed in the table of what constitutes a Liberian citizen are passive thereby constituting identity, whereas the last five are active thereby constituting practice. The multiple meanings of 'Liberian citizenship' can thus be visualised as a continuum coupling passivity with identity and activity with practice. Whereas some respondents listed a single identity-based or practice-based criterion, such as 'born in Liberia' or 'contributes to Liberia's development', respectively, others listed multiple criteria from each end of the continuum. As illustrated in Table 6, Monrovia-based social actors in this study were most emphatic, with a composite list of markers that mostly surpasses those of respondents in the four diasporic field sites.

On the 'passive' side of the continuum, variants of the 'by birth' (*jus soli*) or 'by blood' (*jus sanguinis*) principles were invoked most often by respondents in the field. 'Birthplace' and 'bloodline' occupy the passive end of the spectrum because they generally require minimal to no effort. When queried about who a Liberian citizen is, the majority of respondents conceptualised citizenship as a form of legal identity as enshrined in the Liberian Constitution and Aliens and Nationality Law. Yet, it is clear based on Liberia's cultural and social milieu that all those born in the country, regardless of their entitlements as 'Negroes', are not considered equal, just as Yuval-Davis (2000) argued that citizenship is 'multi-layered' and largely differentiated by race, class, gender, and ethnicity. This is particularly stark for Liberians of the Mandingo ethnic group whose ancestors migrated from the Mali empire in the 14th and 15th centuries, establishing trade routes in slaves, gold, and kola nuts connecting the hinterland to the Atlantic coast (Konneh, 1996: 9; 56; 63). Because of their constantly shifting trade and migratory patterns, faith in Islam, as well as cultural ties to several different West African countries, Mandingos have often been characterised as 'strangers' and therefore non-Liberian citizens (Konneh, 1996: 15; 25). Their participation in economic and political life is further contested because they tend to dominate the public transport and consumable goods sectors of the economy (Konneh, 1996: 135). Resident in London for 14 years, this 55-year-old female respondent with paternal roots in Guinea talked about the importance of maintaining the *jus soli* principle of citizenship, particularly for Liberia-born Mandingos:

> I think [a] Liberian citizen is, I would say, those of us who grew up over there [Liberia]. Because we have had that problem, we as Mandingos in Liberia. People always say, "You Mandingo, you foreigner." But we say, "We were born here [Liberia]. We got just as much rights as, you know, as you people!"…Someone who was born in Liberia, I will consider them a citizen…[50]

'Negroes' phenotypically, Mandingos pass the race-based requirement for legal 'Liberian citizenship', yet they are a stark example of how the birthplace principle in the Aliens and Nationality Law remains contested.

Roots, blood coursing through one's veins, and psychological attachments embody the existential entitlements of those who identify as Liberian citizens by ancestry, but who were not born in the country. For instance, a 59-year-old Washington-based respondent who had lived in the US for 31 consecutive years quipped about how her American-born daughter, who has never touched Liberian soil, understands the cultural logics of Liberian dress better than she does:

> [My second-generation daughter] thinks she's a Liberian. You see that girl tie her lappa like one Kru woman and set that thing on her head. I was sitting here one time, the girl, when she was going to do her laundry, and she took the laundry basket and put it on her head…And I sat down here, I sat down, and she didn't even…she just sat it on her head, it's just like it was something that was just *in* her. And the way I, who [am] a Liberian woman or an African woman, when I tie lappa I have to tie it two/three times because it can be tight on my feet like this. That girl tied that thing and she was just going. I'm like, wow!…This girl, this thing is *in* her.[51]

The idea that one's Liberianness can be inherited through cultural transmission, regardless of birthplace, was echoed vigorously by other respondents in this study. For instance, a 65-year-old permanent returnee in Monrovia insisted that no one could negate the Liberianness of her American-born son, who had spent his childhood and adolescence in Liberia but returned to the US in adulthood to settle out of 'convenience':

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[50] [DL9] Semi-structured interview in London on June 13, 2012.
[51] [DL56] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 26, 2012.

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He grew up here [Liberia], he knows the streets, he knows all the corners, he knows the culture. But even in America, he's Liberian. He doesn't go eat hamburger or McDonald's. He goes to the Puerto Rican, and Indian and Chinese shops to look for palm butter…And his children, he's got two children by a white girl, they wake their father up in the morning and they say they want rice and cassava leaf. Yes, my grandchildren! My son never liked Corn Flakes and my grandchildren don't like Corn Flakes. So, what are we going to do? They've never been here [Liberia]. They've never visited…My grand kids, they've never been here but they eat cassava leaf, palm butter, potato greens. Everything. They know everything about, you know, as much as they can about Liberia. So, that's why I say if you are born of Liberian parentage…I'm an African to the core, so, they are born of Liberians, their blood comes from here.[52]

Though the relevance of bloodline ties cannot be negated, some respondents argued that cultural links alone should not signify an automatic entitlement to 'Liberian citizenship' as a legal status. For instance, a 49-year-old female respondent resident in the UK for 37 years argued that her UK-born children must earn the right to be considered Liberian citizens:

I wouldn't consider them [my children born in the UK] to be Liberian citizens. However, if they do choose to come and live in Liberia, then I would expect that if it is a decision that they want to make to be…granted [legal] 'Liberian citizenship', they should be offered that right to do so. Because obviously, they are descendants of Liberia, so they should be given that right. But, if they don't live in the country and they have never lived in the country I don't think it should be their automatic right because their parents are Liberians. I think if they choose to do and come and live in Liberia, then, yes, they should be given that opportunity to decide, well, I've been living here for X amount of years, I want to be a citizen and be given equal rights like people who are living in the country. I think it should be their right to choose.[53]

This respondent was echoing the sentiments of many interviewees in Monrovia who ardently supported the provision within Liberia's Aliens and Nationality Law that someone of Liberian parentage must declare at the age of majority whether they want to maintain legal 'Liberian citizenship' or the citizenship of the country in

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[52] [PR6] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 24, 2013.
[53] [DL6] Semi-structured interview in London on June 12, 2012.

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which they were born. Presumably, the drafters of the 1973 law believed that this would minimise divided loyalties, discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Although there was contention about who should qualify for *jus soli* 'Liberian citizenship' and whether or not a statute of limitation should be placed on *jus sanguinis* citizenship, most respondents debunked the notion that citizenship should be traced only patrilineally. This position was particularly salient for respondents who were born to Liberian citizen mothers/non-Liberian citizen fathers. As a case in point, one 43-year-old female resident in London for 22 consecutive years was born in the UK to a Liberian citizen mother. Although this respondent had lived in Liberia for half her life, having moved there before her first birthday, she complained about constantly having to defend her right to be called Liberian:

> I say it's difficult because sometimes when I say to people, "Well, my father was a naturalised Liberian and I was born in the UK and, you know, and my maternal grandmother was actually Jamaican", they're like, "You're not Liberian!" and I'm like, "What gives you the right to say that, you know? Because I feel I am!" You know, I think I would define a Liberian citizen as someone who has some sort of ties, whether it's mother or father, to that country...a true Liberian is someone who identifies with that country and who accepts that they've got roots there.[54]

Since President Tubman's Unification Policy, which legally incorporated indigenous men and women and settler women who owned property as Liberian citizens, the notion that Liberian women should be relegated to the private sphere alone, without the attendant rights and privileges of citizenship, has been contested. As a case in point, the majority of male and female respondents in this study critiqued Liberia's constitutional provision barring a Liberian citizen woman from passing on citizenship to her children as overtly sexist and discriminatory.

While there was consensus amongst interviewees about the need to enfranchise Liberian citizen women fully, those who voluntarily interrogated the 'Negro clause' were more ideologically divided. For instance, Monrovia-based respondents, particularly homelanders and dual citizenship bill sponsors alike, were more

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[54] [DL15] Semi-structured interview in London on June 15, 2012.

emphatic about maintaining the race-based proviso particularly because of the perceived contemporary socio-economic inequities between Lebanese, Indian, and Chinese merchants and resident Liberians, while their counterparts abroad were either ambivalent or more inclined to reject the 'Negro clause.' Wide-ranging dissent about the 'Negro clause' is a function of historical and contemporary Asian and Middle Eastern immigration to Liberia. While Indian and Chinese migration to Liberia is relatively recent—with no empirical studies documenting this trend—Arab migration started in the early 20th century and is therefore embedded in modern Liberian economic history:

> The number of Arabs or "Syrians" in Liberia was 12 in 1914 and increased to 80 in 1925, giving rise to a public call for a tightening of immigration standards. The latter influx may have been in response to encouragement from British and French colonialists in the West African region who sought the creation in their colonies of a foreign business class as middlemen between their administrations and the African populations...The number and influence of these Arabs steadily increased in Liberia so that by the 1960s they constituted the largest nationality group among large and medium-sized commercial establishments...The trend obviously continued for in 1983, they were estimated to be about 6,000...In the 1980s, they held a controlling interest in, among others, CEMENCO (for many years a monopoly cement factory), MIC furniture factory, LIPFOCO foam mattress plant, many of Monrovia's leading restaurants and the hotel industry (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 203).

The most prevalent Arab emigrants in Liberia today are Lebanese nationals who cannot obtain citizenship because they are not considered 'of Negro descent.' A 30-year-old male homelander argued that the Lebanese, who have collectively resided in Liberia longer than Indian or Chinese migrants, are culturally differentiated by their own choice and therefore cannot be considered Liberian citizens:

> Lebanese can never be Liberian by heart...In a sense that the Lebanese, they have customs and traditions...I don't care, the Lebanese can live here [Liberia], they can be born here, but their roots can never be forgotten. They can never forget their root.[55]

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[55] [HL17] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.

Taking an opposing view, a 57-year-old man based in Accra who had lived in the UK previously argued that the Lebanese in Liberia had assimilated over multiple generations, which should automatically qualify them for legal 'Liberian citizenship':

> There are Lebanese who have been in Liberia for 40 years, 30 years, these people know no other place other than Liberia, so people like that, in as much as I will call them Lebanese, but I accept the fact that they've already gotten acculturated into the society. So, you will say, "Well, he's a Liberian already," and more than that even if you say he's not a Liberian, he's doing things that Liberians should be doing...[56]

The 'things' alluded to in this respondent's statement are economic in nature, as Lebanese merchants dominate the retail industry in Liberia as owners of consumable goods, building materials and cement commercial chains across the country (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 203). For this reason, arguments for maintaining the 'Negro clause' are often framed as an economic zero-sum game with Liberians inevitably losing, said this 53-year-old male homeland entrepreneur:

> I believe Liberians are a very long way from gaining control of their economy, which I believe is fundamental to our stability and peace. And until deliberate efforts are made—by not just this government, any government for that matter—to see Liberians take control, meaningful control of the economy, I think it would be premature to have foreigners become citizens of Liberia, foreigners meaning people of non-'Negro' descent.[57]

Nevertheless, a 68-year-old Freetown-based man argued that people of non-'Negro' descent, such as the Lebanese, already control the economy and barring them from citizenship will not fundamentally transform Liberia positively:

> If they [the Lebanese] have been there and they have assimilated in the society and they are contributing, you know, to the economic development, I think they should be given that right to become Liberians. Because my belief is that way they will be able to invest more and bring economic development.[58]

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[56] [DL82] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 6, 2013.
[57] [HL18] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.
[58] [DL70] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 12, 2013.

Echoing these sentiments, a Monrovia-based circular returnee man argued that non-'Negro' residents in Liberia such as Lebanese nationals are politically and socially embedded precisely because of their economic clout:

> I'd consider them [Lebanese] to be Liberians, because I think they fulfil the conditions – living here, being part of the culture. They're part of the political discourse because they influence the political decisions that are made…Yeah, because of their economic power. In my definition, they are Liberians because any businesses they own pay taxes in Liberia.[59]

However compelling the argument may be to fully incorporate non-'Negroes' as citizens in Liberia, there are also visceral responses against this, such as the one offered by this 31-year-old male resident of London:

> If we move this ['Negro'] clause, they [non-'Negroes'] will buy up every lick of the private sector. There's a whole bunch of landowners in Monrovia who will be eager to sell because they will see six zeros and their eyeballs will start turning and Liberia won't be Liberian anymore. It won't. That's why I'm in favour of it [the 'Negro clause'], and if that makes me a bigot or a pseudo racist or prejudice then, yeah, I am. This [Liberia] is my damn country and I got more right to it than you![60]

Deeply embedded in Liberia's historical DNA, the 'Negro clause' was instituted at a time when repatriated blacks had fled economic servitude in the United States vowing to create a haven for black people where they would be the sole owners of capital, land, and the means of production. The controversial clause also has contemporary manifestations demonstrating its continued relevance today. During my interview with Governance Commission chairman, Dr. Amos Sawyer, who previously served as head of Liberia's constitutional review committee in the early to mid-1980s, he admitted that his committee maintained the 'Negro clause' because of staunch opposition to removing it from Liberians of all persuasions. Dr. Sawyer vividly recalled one of his interactions in rural Liberia in which a traditional chief implored the constitutional review committee not to abandon the clause because

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[59] [CR7] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 18, 2013.
[60] [DL29] Semi-structured interview in London on June 22, 2012.

"all the white people will take our land."[61] Just as opposition to dual citizenship is embedded in concerns about inequality, so too is support of the 'Negro clause.' In order to penetrate what appears to be an impasse in debates about race and 'Liberian citizenship', one respondent in this study, a 43-year-old man based in Accra, argued that gradual measures should be instituted to appease pro- and anti-'Negro clause' proponents alike:

> I think it would be very difficult to move from what we have in the Constitution now to outright citizenship [for non-'Negroes']; I think that would be quite difficult. But I also think that somebody who's there, who has business there and who resides there, who can show that they pay taxes there should not have to renew their immigration status every year…So, something similar to a permanent residency or something like that. I think it's something that we should move to.[62]

Race and 'Liberian citizenship' are clearly entangled, yet unlike the first five markers of citizenship listed in the table at the beginning of the chapter that are passive and identity-based, the second set constitutes practices that are active in orientation. This is where I shift the discussion, as practice-based citizenship integrates my third conceptual framing of 'Liberian citizenship' as a set of relations (interactions) between the state and its citizens and amongst citizens themselves. As one Monrovia-based circular returnee man informed me, being a Liberian citizen is "a decision, and also an act."[63] For instance, one who naturalises in Liberia expresses more active citizenship than someone who was merely born or raised in Liberia. The very act of naturalisation is agential, and involves making a conscious and deliberate choice to become a Liberian citizen. Therefore, the middle of the 'Liberian citizenship' continuum would include those who become Liberians 'by choice', incorporating individuals who naturalised in Liberia, or who have the 'heart' for Liberia, as a 31-year-old London-based female respondent asserted:

> 'Heart' in a sense where you love Liberia, you mean well for Liberia …you do find people who are born in Liberia who don't have as much passion for Liberia compared to foreigners. I would say people who weren't born in Liberia but they found out about Liberia

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[61] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia with Dr. Amos Sawyer on June 25, 2013.
[62] [DL85] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 10, 2013.
[63] [CR7] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 18, 2013.

and they met Liberians and they've gone to the extent of investigating about Liberia and they've built that passion and do stuff for Liberia more than they do for themselves or their own country…I would personally say if you've got the heart for Liberia you are a Liberian as well as those who are born there…[64]

The word 'heart' appeared as a recurring verbal motif in utterances from London to Washington, from Freetown to Accra, and within Monrovia, bringing us closer to what Barry and others call 'active citizenship' (Barry, 2006) or citizenship as a 'public vocation' in which "the (true) citizen plays a full and active part in the affairs of the community" (Dagger, 2000: 27). For instance, a 30-year-old male homelander resident in Liberia all his life conceived of a Liberian by 'heart' as someone who prioritises Liberia's advancement above all other nations, regardless of one's citizenship or residence status:

> When I talk about being a Liberian is by heart, it's that no matter the case, whether I have citizenship abroad, or whether I have citizenship in Liberia, but if I have Liberia at heart and I know that, yes, indeed, I am from Liberia, my root is from Liberia, all other development, all other improvement to make sure that Liberia improves, to make sure that Liberia be part of those nations that are up there, those expertise, those knowledge that I have, I should come and invest it in Liberia. That means I have Liberia at heart. Whatsoever I will do I will always take Liberia first no matter where I am.[65]

This respondent echoed van Steenbergen, who defines the ideal citizen as "active in public life and fundamentally willing to submit his [or her] private interests to the general interest of society" (van Steenbergen, 1994: 2). Also employing the 'heart' trope was a 59-year-old woman resident in Accra on and off for 15 years, who argued that, "…for a person to be a Liberian, the person must have Liberia at heart. I mean, the person should be thinking development, thinking nation-building, human capacity…"[66] A 35-year-old female London resident who was born in the UK to a Liberian citizen mother used the same 'heart' frame to articulate how a measure of care for Liberia and Liberians makes one a citizen, regardless of birthplace:

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[64] [DL3] Semi-structured interview in London on June 9, 2012.
[65] [HL17] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.
[66] [DL83] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 7, 2013.

Whether you were born in the country or one of your parents is from the country—it's a culture that, I think, once it's made its mark doesn't leave you…And I think one of the important ways to tell whether someone is from any country is to see whether they care for the country or not. And I'd like to think that I do! Beyond politics, I care about what happens to the country and I care about how the people develop and I'm not talking about, you know, the wealthy few. I'm talking about everybody.[67]

Similarly, a 36-year-old female homelander in Monrovia equated 'heart' with jingoism and nationalist fervor, another common thread throughout my interviews: "A Liberian has a sense of patriotism, belonging to Liberia, and makes an effort to love his/her country thereby doing things that make Liberia progress or develop."[68] Indeed, the articulation of 'Liberian citizenship' as 'having heart' or as being patriotic appears to transcend the citizenship as identity trope thereby eliminating birthplace, bloodline, or race as defining markers of Liberianness.

According to many respondents in the five field sites, one who actively contributes to Liberia's development through capacity building, paying taxes, or investing in real estate or local enterprise, demonstrates more active citizenship than one who merely identifies as Liberian or considers Liberia 'home.' A significant number of respondents conceived of 'Liberian citizenship' as a form of practice, essentially citizenship as 'doing' rather than 'being.' This brings us to the extreme end of the 'Liberian citizenship' continuum, narrowly defined as 'by contribution', in a multitude of frames. For instance, a "Liberian is somebody who lives Liberia–not somebody who talks about Liberia"[69], or someone who is "prepared to give to Liberia, to serve Liberia, to be Liberia."[70] On the extreme end of the 'contribution' spectrum is the notion that a Liberian citizen is "one who is prepared to go to war for Liberia…prepared to take a bullet for Liberia…"[71] More practically, however, a 38-year-old male respondent based in Freetown for 12 years argued that personal and substantial investments in Liberia define a Liberian citizen, that if "you are there and you have a very big institution that are contributing to the development of

[67] [DL25] Semi-structured interview in London on June 22, 2012.
[68] [HL7] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 6, 2013.
[69] [CR7] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 18, 2013.
[70] [PR1] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 7, 2013.
[71] [PR3] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.

the country, I believe we should put hands around that person and make them a citizen of the country."[72] A 34-year-old male resident in Accra for 12 years used more rhetorical language to describe how 'contribution' can be manifest in concrete action:

> Let's take for example, if you're a Liberian and then you manage to work outside Liberia and earn some money, and then you cannot return back to Liberia and help the people there. For me, I don't think you are a Liberian, that's what I think...People must know that that country is the only thing we have, and must be willing to contribute. That is how I define a typical Liberian, contributing in any way possible to the society...Do you have family there, are you helping the family there? Do you have a home there? Can people really appreciate who you are? These are contributions...[73]

Most respondents who coupled 'citizenship' with 'contribution' argued that those contributions, however varied, should meaningfully impact Liberia and the lives of Liberians, wherever they happen to reside—essentially, 'Liberian citizenship' as a set of relations. One 38-year-old homeland woman even insisted that contributions should be unconditional, debunking claims by some diaspora respondents that their continued engagement with Liberia would be contingent on the passage of dual citizenship legislation:

> A Liberian is somebody that is a true stakeholder...You know already that stakeholders are people that have interests, close interests to anything. So, an individual who is considered to be a Liberian shouldn't, there shouldn't be anything attached to attract that person's way of life. I say this to say that I don't need to have X number of something or cash, or work before I know that I am a Liberian...Yes, to rebuild the country without any material, nothing offered, without opportunities being offered...You can't come and say, "Before I participate as a Liberian, the government should give me better housing; I need to be employed to get this."[74]

Similarly, a 43-year-old male homeland development specialist insisted that unconditional commitment to Liberia should be a criterion for citizenship:

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[72] [DL62] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 11, 2013.
[73] [DL105] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 20, 2013.
[74] [HL24] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 17, 2013.

I think anyone who has a vested interest and commitment to seeing this country grow, whether it's economically, whether it's politically, whether it's culturally, whether it's socially, but demonstrates a high level of patriotism, you know, the love for a land, the love for a fellow compatriot...Anyone who is coming and saying, "Look, I don't care whether I am offered a job in the government or a public agency, I just want to invest. I want the opportunity to contribute.[75]

While some respondents argued that contribution to reconstruction and development should not be conditional, others, like one 48-year-old male homelander, maintained that 'Liberian citizenship' is bounded not only by residence in Liberia, but also by paying taxes regularly to the Liberian state:

First thing, it [citizenship] has to be tied to residency...You have to be here, you have to pay tax...That bounds you to the state-citizen responsibility, it's a part of the social contract...Paying taxes is an important thing. If you are a resident, you should have a vested interest...It could be in terms of your investment in businesses. Investment in just...property. Even investment in how you stay engaged with the country, in terms of even the political processes because all of those things add to who you are as a citizen...Anybody can carry a passport...It's about you, in your own way, contributing whatever it is to the growth and development of the country. You then have [a] stake in the future of that place that you call your country. But if you are sort of [a] distance away, and not being in what is unfolding, how do you own the future?...Yes, because it's not just about being born. It's about belonging, so if you belong to a society, you form part of the societal ethics and solidarity. You don't just live in the abstract world. This is a community, so if you live in a community, there are roles and responsibilities, there are duties binding upon you to ensure that that community lives and fulfills its mandate, not just sucking from the community but you are contributing, giving back to the community.[76]

By arguing that citizenship involves duties and responsibilities, this respondent implicitly described citizenship as a set of relations not only between the Liberian state and its citizens (whether in Liberia or abroad), but also between Liberian citizens. Although the respondent insisted that only residence could facilitate meaningful contribution, he conceded that residence could be sporadic and circular. Moreover, physical residence as a requirement for citizenship was not only

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[75] [HL3] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 5, 2013.
[76] [HL45] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 24, 2013.

advanced by homeland Liberians. An experienced media consultant who has been shuttling between the US and Liberia since 2006, one circular returnee respondent argued that "what makes you a citizen of the country is to live, and make [a] decision to be there, to be part of that culture…Because you can't be in the US and say 'I'm Liberian', not wanting to come home…So, you have to come home and be Liberian."[77] I suspect that this respondent's resolve to return to Liberia was primarily informed by his conception of what signifies a 'true Liberian citizen'—one who resides within the territorial confines of the nation-state, even if occasionally.

Nevertheless, the view that 'Liberian citizenship' is territorially configured, based on residence, and includes both rights and responsibilities represents an extreme position not shared by all respondents in this study. For instance, a 56-year-old male Washington resident scorned the citizenship-as-residence trope, instead arguing that a Liberian is "anyone who dedicates his or her cause of life and everything to the Liberian cause…you cannot say because that person is not in the country, he is not a Liberian or she is not a Liberian."[78] Some respondents, particularly those abroad, stressed their legal entitlements to 'Liberian citizenship' first, while only belatedly discussing obligations, if at all. This has been corroborated by literature that critiques the discourse on dual citizenship as only about rights and privileges, rather than about duties and responsibilities (FitzGerald, 2006; FitzGerald, 2012: 285-286; Spiro, 2012: 311; 318). One 58-year-old male respondent in Accra interrogated the tendency of Liberians to omit the 'responsibility' side of the citizenship equation altogether:

> Let's ask ourselves, do we have citizenship only by name? Or you have citizenship based upon your responsibility and duty? You understand? If we say we are a Liberian, what are we doing for Liberia as a Liberian?...We cry [for] citizenship, we cry for rights, ok. Now, everything we find in this earth today, it has responsibility attached to it. You understand? We cry for our right. What right do you get without duty and responsibility?[79]

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[77] [CR7] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 18, 2013.
[78] [DL52] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 25, 2012.
[79] [DL101] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 19, 2013.

Although most respondents in all field sites claimed that a Liberian citizen is someone who actively contributes to the country's development, interviewees in Freetown, Accra, and Monrovia were more explicitly wedded to this criterion. This could be attributed to the fact that resident citizens and 'near' diasporas, particularly those residing in countries in the Global South such as Sierra Leone and Ghana, are closer in proximity to the challenges of development and therefore understand more intuitively the imperatives of active citizenship embodying privileges *and* obligations. This trend was particularly apparent in the debates about whether or not citizenship should be based on residence. While most diasporic respondents dismissed residence in Liberia as a marker of citizenship, many homeland respondents, for instance, insisted that living in Liberia fulltime would be the only means of actively participating in the political, economic and social life of the nation.

Just as the residence requirement appeared to be a contested space of inquiry, so too was the citizenship by 'contribution' trope, proving that where 'Liberian citizenship' is concerned dissent is the only constant. Some respondents argued that 'Liberian citizenship' is solely about legal, cultural and national identity, and, by extension, rights and privileges, such as current Foreign Affairs Minister Augustine Ngafuan, who said, "...whether you contribute or not if you're a Liberian, you are Liberian. No one can take that citizenship from you. It's part of a reality that you refuse to contribute...you are a Liberian."[80] However, Dr. C. William Allen, former Director-General of Liberia's Civil Service Agency (CSA) and now ambassador to France, countered this by providing the most comprehensive articulation of the 'Liberian citizenship' continuum:

> Well, I think being a Liberian comes from what I call the Liberianness of a person. And, it's something like character. It's something that is on the inside of you. What do you feel in your soul? What do you feel in your inner self? Do you feel Liberian? And I think when you come to grips with that then the outward expression of your Liberianness is what makes you a Liberian [citizen]. Do you feel patriotic? Do you love your country? Do you honestly want to contribute towards its reform and its reconciliation and its development? Do you remain

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[80] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.

psychologically engaged with Liberia? If some other country were to attack Liberia tomorrow, would you devote your resources, and your time and your talent? Your time, your talent and your treasure, you can put it that way...would you be willing to give your time, treasure, and talent to the defence of Liberia? Ok, now, time, we all cannot serve in the military but could you provide advice? Treasure, meaning would you be willing to contribute to the national effort, resources, money, to help that effort? I think these are the real things that make you a Liberian [citizen]. It's not what colour of passport you wave around.[81]

Dr. Allen's understanding of Liberianness as being manifested in contributions of 'time, talent, and treasure', serves as a central node of this thesis because it couples identity with practice and rights with responsibilities, simultaneously. This particular frame is all-encompassing, thereby illustrating clearly the multi-layered meanings of 'Liberian citizenship' and how it has come to be reconfigured over space and time as identity, practice and a set of relations.

In the next section, I employ Dr. Allen's 'time, talent, and treasure' metaphor to assess whether or not the conception of 'Liberian citizenship' aligns with practice transnationally and domestically, particularly amongst Liberian respondents speaking in unofficial capacities in this study.

### Time, Talent, and Treasure: How 'Liberian Citizenship' Is Practiced Transnationally and Domestically Amongst Unofficial, Anonymised Respondents

Although there are some nodes of synergy, the practice of 'Liberian citizenship' amongst unofficial anonymised respondents in London, Washington, Freetown, and Accra differs from those of respondents in Monrovia. This is unsurprising. While diasporic citizenship practices occur within a transnational social field, resident citizenship practices are largely bounded territorially therefore locally entrenched. Amongst social actors in the four diasporic field sites, there appears to be a continuum of transnational citizenship pursuits largely contingent upon socio-economic positioning abroad, as illustrated in Table 7 ranking transnational citizenship practices from most frequent responses in the field to least frequent. I compiled the list in Table 7 to illustrate recurring responses to an open-ended

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[81] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 4, 2013.

question posed to anonymised 'near' and 'wider' diaspora respondents about how they remain engaged with Liberia and Liberians while abroad, without prompts from a prescribed list.

Table 7: *Top 10 Ways of Practicing 'Liberian Citizenship' Transnationally Amongst Anonymised 'Near' and 'Wider' Diasporas*

| Transnational Citizenship Practices | Cities Where Responses Frequent |
|---|---|
| 1) Sending remittances to Liberia (in goods, cash and kind) | All (London, Washington, Freetown, Accra) |
| 2) Participating in Liberian diaspora organisations[82]- fundraising, charity/development work in health and education (in Liberia and abroad) | All |
| 3) Paying school fees of Liberians in Liberia | All |
| 4) Investing in businesses and real estate in Liberia | All |
| 5) Paying property taxes in Liberia | London, Washington, Accra |
| 6) Engaging in investment promotion on behalf of Liberia | London, Accra |
| 7) Visiting Liberia periodically | London, Washington, Accra |
| 8) Collaborating with Liberian embassy (Investment Forum; July 26th celebrations; meetings with embassy staff; meetings with visiting government officials; Liberia Rising 2030 Forum) | London, Washington |
| 9) Actively engaging in Liberia's political processes (voting in national elections; serving Liberian government in ad-hoc roles: policy support, reconciliation initiative, capacity building; advocating for governance reforms) | Washington, Accra |
| 10) Engaging in direct capacity building in Liberia and abroad (mentoring Liberians abroad; providing individual voluntary service to tertiary institutions in Liberia on a yearly basis; facilitating educational exchanges between Liberian students and US students; providing individual pro-bono service to health institutions in Liberia) | London, Washington, Accra |

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[82] London-based respondents are members of the following organisations: LASO, Liberia Rebuild Global Team, ELFA, ULO-UK, and Mandingo Association. Washington-based respondents are members of the following diaspora organisations: R.I.S.E., Liberian Students Association in America, Liberian Community Association, Liberian Studies Association, Marylanders for Progress, Tubman High Alumni Association, BW Harris Alumni Association, Liberian Professional Network (LPN), Sinoe Reconstruction, Chicago Bright Foundation, Coalition of Concerned Liberians (CCL), ELFA, ULAA, Liberian Development Group, Bethel Outreach Ministries, UNIBOA, and Grand Bassa Scholarship Foundation. Freetown-based respondents are members of the following diaspora organisations: Youth Vision, Liberians for Progress, Kru and Bassa Christian Association, and Kru Development Association. Accra-based respondents are members of the following diaspora organisations: ULAG, Liberia Refugee Women Organisation, Health Page Liberia, Rotary Club, Women of Glory, Liberian Students Association (LISA), Liberian Youth Group, Foundation for Peace and Justice, Liberian Refugee Welfare Council, and Association of Bong County Citizens in Ghana.

'Liberian citizenship' practices amongst respondents in London, Washington, Freetown and Accra range from individual activities—remitting money to relatives and friends in Liberia—to collective ventures—pooling resources to sponsor students in Liberia—in spite of legal citizenship status in Liberia. At the level of individual transnational pursuits, a 35-year-old respondent in London indicated that she sent remittances to Liberia for both consumption and income generation:

> I send money home to my mom to support her quite regularly...She's trying to plant a couple of fruit farms so, you know, pineapple and mangoes, so I send enough money for that too. 'Cause I see it quite as a kind of long-term investment in the area in Liberia. It would potentially be a source of income and I want to be able to, we both want to be able to say, "Well, this is what can be done with X amount of effort. We've done it and then maybe replicate it."[83]

Moreover, there appeared to be a healthy balance amongst respondents between individual citizenship practices and collective pursuits with Liberian diaspora organisations serving as conduits for interventions in Liberia. For instance, a 46-year-old male resident in London established an organisation that transformed from a social club to a full-fledged education charity, galvanising the support of many UK-based Liberians:

> The charity work is LASO, Liberia Social Organisation. We organised this charity, first as a group, but during the war we launched it into a charity...we sponsor an orphanage...we're building a school project: twelve classrooms, three nurseries, and a dormitory. So it's a big project, so it's all part of the reconstruction process.[84]

Employing similar tactics, a 60-year-old Washington resident used his hometown association to raise funds for health sciences scholarships at tertiary education institutions in Liberia:

> When I was president for the United Bassa Liberia Organisation in America (UNIBOA)...under my leadership we sponsored 10 students to Mother Patten College of Nursing, and out of the 10, one dropped [out] and nine graduated and they are now working in the Liberian

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[83] [DL25] Semi-structured interview in London on June 22, 2012.
[84] [DL20] Semi-structured interview in London on June 16, 2012.

government as nurses in the hospital. Presently I'm the Executive Director for the Grand Bassa Scholarship Foundation...We're sponsoring students to go to the Community College; right now we have 50 students...[85]

Transnational pursuits also vary from directly impacting Liberia through on-the-ground development outputs—investing in businesses and property in Liberia—to indirectly impacting the lives of Liberians, whether in Liberia or abroad, through humanitarian relief or capacity development. As evidenced by an increase in the number of houses constructed in Monrovia and its environs that I have observed in the past eight years, land ownership appears to be the most popular means of planting roots firmly in Liberia for diasporas. Many respondents revealed that they had purchased land or already built houses in Liberia, such as this 57-year-old London-based man:

> I went there [Liberia] and people were building, coming back home, so I purchased for myself land...2005 is the time I purchased the land, then I started building...At some point, I bought these two acres. Then there was the opportunity for me to buy, you know, land, which I did with my wife. We bought about five acres...Then in Lofa, I built a three bedroom [house] for somebody to stay in...[86]

Similarly, a 48-year-old Freetown-based man talked about investing in real estate for personal and commercial purposes, to mitigate affordable housing shortages in Liberia:

> I'm developing a four-acre property, my private property. I'm trying to put up some real estate housing, affordable housing for rental, because I have my kids and I would like them to have those...And I have another property in the, how do you call it, Thinker's Village, office, yeah, in there. I have another property, that house is completed. I constructed that during the Taylor, President Sirleaf [administrations] that I reside there when I go...[87]

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[85] [DL55] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 26, 2012.
[86] [DL18] Semi-structured interview in London on June 16, 2012.
[87] [DL79] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 19, 2013.

Besides developing real estate, other respondents boasted of substantial investments in agriculture, particularly cash crops, such as this 61-year-old man in Washington:

> We have a business [of] which I'm a shareholder, it's called the pepper sauce…We have the hot pepper sauce, then we have the vinegar and other stuff like that…We have a large…over 500 acres, a land that used to be a rubber farm that was leased to me and my brother. But there is no rubber on it right now…We're trying to replant but it's taking us a long time because the capital to do it involved is kind of difficult, but we plan to do that.[88]

Another respondent, a 43-year-old resident in London, said she used her transnational cargo business to earn an extra income, provide reliable shipping services to Liberians in the UK, and generate tax revenue for the Liberian state:

> I think we've succeeded in this [shipping] business because people trust us and they know that when we say we're going to do something we do it. I think we've changed the whole business ethics of doing business in Liberia because I say to people, "You're going to get your things for 26th" and before July 26th [Liberia's Independence Day] they will have their things…And we have to send money from here to pay the duty and everything and, you know, I insist on going the proper way. The Liberian government says you need to pay your duty on goods you ship to the country. I charge people duty. What some people have come out and say, "Oh, you don't need to pay duty to the Liberian government!" I am like, "Look, whatever you're paying me is what is building the roads in Liberia right now. It's what is developing the country so if you don't want to see Liberia get off her feet, then you can go behind. I am not going to go, you know, [through] the back door. I'm going to do what exactly I'm supposed to do."[89]

By paying taxes to the Liberian state, this respondent framed herself as contributing to improved state-citizen relations. In addition to owning the shipping company with her husband, the London resident also served as a distributor for pharmaceutical supplies to Liberia and boasted of other substantial investments in the country, such as a cab service, a biofuels start-up company in rural Liberia, and large amounts of real estate.

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[88] [DL50] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 24, 2012.
[89] [DL15] Semi-structured interview in London on June 15, 2012.

Other respondents said that they practiced 'Liberian citizenship' transnationally by impacting the lives of Liberians abroad through humanitarian relief, such as this American-born 55-year-old woman based in Washington:

> I use to be involved in the Liberian Community Association correct, yes, that's a while ago…I served as its president for two years. I served as programme vice-president and I served as membership vice-president. A lot of the work involved helping recently arrived immigrants get Temporary Protected Status (TPS), I think that's what it was called at the time…Some people needed housing, trying to put them in touch with lawyers who we thought could help them. And a lot of it was helping people who died, helping them get buried and all that stuff. So we did a lot of that in the community besides just having, you know, activities.[90]

By participating in relief efforts to address the material well-being of Liberians in Washington, this respondent framed herself as contributing to improved citizen-citizen relations.

Although respondents across the four diasporic sites engaged in the first four transnational citizenship activities listed in Table 7 at varying degrees—diaspora organisational support, remittance transfers to Liberia, school fees payments, and investments in Liberia—careful analysis shows that the remaining six transnational citizenship activities are unique to particular diasporic groupings particularly because of their varied positionalities abroad. For instance, although some respondents in Freetown admitted to owning inherited or personally acquired property in Liberia, few indicated paying property taxes unlike their counterparts in London, Washington, and Accra. As discussed in Chapter III, this can be attributed to the fact that on average the socio-economic status of respondents in Freetown—most of whom have applied for local refugee integration in Sierra Leone—is much lower than those who settled in London, Washington and Accra, with a few outliers here and there. As a case in point, the practice of 'Liberian citizenship' varies considerably between relatively established resident Liberian professionals in Accra and their locally integrated refugee counterparts. Although the majority of Freetown-based respondents were closer in proximity to Liberia, few of them

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visited Liberia regularly primarily because of financial constraints. Some of their counterparts in London, Washington, and Accra, however, said they visited Liberia more regularly despite travelling longer distances and paying a higher premium.

Professional and/or educational attainment also impacted on the citizenship practices of respondents across the four diasporic field sites. As a case in point, respondents in London and Washington admitted to engaging directly in capacity building and skills development in Liberia through short-term visits or educational exchanges, such as this 56-year-old doctor based in London who visits Liberia once a year to render voluntary medical services to his county of origin:

> Because every year I go, I offer voluntary services to hospitals in Nimba…I normally take five weeks off, but it's becoming more difficult too to go away for extended periods so I think I may be taking between three to four weeks at a time…I have taken equipment again to Ganta Hospital. I have also given some services to the Tappita Hospital, the new Chinese hospital. I went in there a year ago [2011] and helped to set up some of their equipment. And also I have plans to go again to see what new equipment they have to see if it will be possible to help to get them going. The School of Nursing in Ganta, I took a hundred stethoscopes to them. I sometimes take equipment like sutures and other equipment to the hospitals…[91]

Similarly, a 59-year-old female health professional in Accra provides transnational medical relief services for women and children in Liberia largely facilitated by her vast networks established while living abroad:

> I came up with the first cancer awareness message in all of our dialects still playing on UNMIL [United Nations Mission in Liberia] Radio…I was able to treat nine women, brought them in [to Ghana], they did all their chemo and everything and they are back in Monrovia and they are doing well right now…And then I also, seven years ago [2006], took on the children. I call them the vulnerable medical fragile children, Liberian children suffering…So I fly them out [to receive medical care abroad] and in seven years I've done 149 children and not counting 2013.[92]

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[91] [DL30] Semi-structured interview in London on June 23, 2012.
[92] [DL83] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 7, 2013.

Other respondents in Accra—many of whom took advantage of the UNHCR skills development schemes—revealed that they also transferred knowledge to Liberians primarily in Ghana, such as this man who organised vocational training for Liberian refugees at the Buduburam Refugee Camp:

> Well, we try to give skills training to refugees, especially preparing them to go back home [to Liberia] and contribute. So, we had a school at the refugee camp and this school was set up by the late Bishop Augustus Kpaweah. The school was called AHEAD, Agency for Holistic Development something…Well, it was not an elementary school, it was, let's say, pre-tertiary. So we trained people in carpentry, masonry, tie-dye, batik, but we also had some other skills like training them in theology. Also, we had community health, yeah, and so basically those were the areas of concentration…[93]

Unlike respondents in London, Washington and Accra, most interviewees in Freetown, who collectively possessed lower levels of education, did not engage in capacity building efforts in Liberia or Sierra Leone. Unsurprisingly, the demographic profiles of respondents in the four 'near' and 'wider' diaspora field sites of this study are indicative of continental trends, where African migrants who travel to North America and Europe tend to be more educated and well-off than their counterparts in the Global South (Black, et. al, 2006: 7).

While some citizenship engagement patterns are based on socio-economic positioning in the country of settlement, others are based on networks in Liberia and abroad. For instance, respondents in London and Washington appeared to have closer ties with embassy officials in those locales and were therefore more engaged with government-sponsored activities than their counterparts in Freetown and Accra. As discussed later in this chapter, a large percentage of the respondent pool in Freetown and Accra were former refugees whose status would be compromised by sustained political engagement with the Liberian government. Moreover, it is unsurprising that some respondents in Washington indicated being more engaged in the political process in Liberia than their counterparts in London and Freetown, given the historically politicised nature of Washington-based diasporas discussed in the previous chapter. One Washington-based male respondent, a 44-year-old

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[93] [DL104] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 20, 2013.

veteran political activist and staunch proponent of dual citizenship, established a lobbying organisation in 2003 to influence US foreign policy in Liberia and Liberian domestic policy:

> Our initial effort was lobbying for peace and reconstruction in Liberia…And then our further effort involved collaboration with members of Congress, mainly Congressman Donald Payne…Yeah, he recently passed away. He introduced a bill, 450 million [United States] dollars Liberia Reconstruction and Development Act…We helped in tailoring the language and the details of that bill.[94]

Mirroring the profiles of their Washington-based counterparts, respondents in Accra who admitted to being actively engaged in domestic homeland politics were elites who had previously worked for the Liberian government on short-term assignments or were entangled with the ruling political class through personal connections. As evidenced by the examples detailed herein, Liberians across the four diasporic field sites practice citizenship differently, largely contingent upon their socio-economic status and established social networks in Liberia and abroad.

At this juncture, I shift the analysis from diasporas to consider the citizenship practices of homeland Liberians above all other Monrovia-based respondents, primarily because they appear to be the most rooted, as illustrated in Table 8 ranking domestic citizenship practices from most frequent responses in the field to least frequent. I compiled the list in Table 8 to illustrate recurring responses to an open-ended question posed to homeland and returnee respondents about how they are engaged in post-war recovery, without prompts from a prescribed list. Although the manner in which homelanders practice 'Liberian citizenship' mirrors returnees in many ways, the depth and breadth of their embeddedness in Liberia supersedes that of permanent and circular return migrants. This is attributed to the fact that on average homelanders have spent longer periods of time in Liberia and are entangled in the complicated web of social relations and mores, whereas returnees must reconstitute networks or create new ones no matter how economically empowered or politically connected they happen to be.

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[94] [DL44] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 22, 2012.

Table 8: *Top 10 Ways of Practicing 'Liberian Citizenship' Domestically Amongst Homeland and Returnee Respondents*

| Domestic Citizenship Practices | Most Frequent Monrovia-Based Respondents |
|---|---|
| 1) Engaging in capacity building work (teaching at all levels—from elementary to tertiary—and conducting teacher training; engaging in organisational development, especially amongst NGOs; mentoring young Liberians; providing scholarships) | All (homelanders, permanent and circular returnees) |
| 2) Investing in Liberia (real estate, businesses, stocks) | All |
| 3) Paying income and real estate taxes | All |
| 4) Involved actively in political life (voting in national elections; holding membership of political parties; conducting elections monitoring and registration) | Homelanders |
| 5) Engaging in community development activities (community clean-up campaigns; community peace initiatives, blood donation drives; sanitation hygiene and health promotion/awareness; reconstructing physical infrastructure; civic education; sports promotion) | All |
| 6) Contributing to humanitarian, emergency and development aid to Liberia (resettling Liberians after war; demobilising ex-combatants; food distribution; grant writing; working with orphans) | All |
| 7) Involved in advocacy, policy making, and public service (advocating for participatory governance, human rights, women's empowerment, transitional justice, media development) | All |
| 8) Contributing to charity organisations through membership (Rotary Club, Paramount Young Women's Initiative, United Methodist Youth Movement, Catholic Youth Secretariat, Lion's Club, Young Women's Christian Association) | All |
| 9) Writing and publishing creative works about Liberia | Homelanders |
| 10) Conducting empirically driven research on Liberia | All |

What primarily differentiates the citizenship practices of Liberian diasporas from their Monrovia-based counterparts, particularly homelanders, is distance and scale. Most respondents in the 'wider' diaspora were engaged in their host nations as citizens or legal residents with the attendant rights and responsibilities therein, and therefore were less actively involved in Liberia because of their relative physical distance. Homelanders, on the other hand, demonstrated citizenship practices that appeared broader in magnitude and more expansive in scale. For instance, homelanders were more consistently involved in the political life of Liberia, voting

in national elections and other electoral processes, and actively contributing to broad sweeping political and governance reforms. For instance, a 47-year-old homelander resident in Liberia his whole life was one of only two respondents I interviewed who had voted in all four national elections since 1985[95]. Given Liberia's recurring political upheavals, this is no small feat. Neither is navigating through a politically charged post-war environment littered with the competing interests of donors, national government, civil society, multi-nationals, and the UN, but that is precisely what two male homelanders have managed to do. While one 48-year-old transitional justice expert was involved in establishing Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2005[96], a 47-year-old legal scholar and pro-bono law lecturer served in a number of appointed positions in natural resource governance, including as head of the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI).[97] Regardless of failed outcomes discussed in subsequent chapters, these respondents' efforts to strengthen rule of law has challenged the Liberian state to improve state-citizen relations through better governance.

Homelanders tended to be more entrenched in the economic life of Liberia as well, having paid income and real estate taxes for longer periods of time than their diaspora or returnee counterparts. While citizenship practices manifested in the political seemed to be largely dominated by male homeland respondents, economic activities presented fertile ground for women. One 38-year-old entrepreneur said that she managed multiple businesses by involving local communities in the process:

> I have a material store where I do general merchandise. I have a power saw which I do pit sawing...Those places that we are doing the pit sawing, many of those villages, their bridges are not intact. To enable us to get the planks from those places that we are sawing, we are compelled to reconstruct the bridges. So, we reconstruct. It's expensive but I persuade them. I get to the place, speak the local dialect...Though I want to get cash, but I make them feel included...So, in that way, I use their trees, fell the trees, we produce planks, I only buy nails; labour is free. And when I bring the planks, I have planks right after Fiamah. There is [a] sawmill. I went, I spoke to another person, I got [a] sawmill. He doesn't have planks. He makes no planks.

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[95] [HL29] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 18, 2013.
[96] [HL45] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 24, 2013.
[97] [HL6] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 6, 2013.

> So we keep our planks there. I started with them and other people have joined…My father got a farmland but apart from my father's land, in Suakoko, people were selling their land so I bought three acres for the same purpose of doing farming…[98]

While agriculture and farming may interest a select few, many homeland Liberians, like their counterparts abroad, have gone into real estate for commercial purposes regardless of recurring land tenure disputes throughout the country. Despite working full time as a project manager for donor-funded initiatives, this 54-year-old male respondent said he also pursued real estate investment:

> I own a parcel of land in ELWA with houses on it. I own one acre of land around Duport Road and I own properties around the Cuttington University. So, I do have properties around Liberia…To be honest with you, I was in real estate. Some of the buildings I own, I lease them out and then get money. And I'm in the process of trying to build a guesthouse.[99]

Similarly, a 43-year-old development specialist who has spent short stints abroad said he invested in real estate to generate profit and create employment opportunities for Liberians who may not have the luxury of drawing on two incomes:

> I pay income tax on my income and I pay real estate [tax], you know. I'm back and making investments. Ok, one of the things that happened was that during my return and between Sudan and these consultancies I was doing, I was able to complete my building and I moved there. I've done two other buildings after that and I'm now investing in a flat or apartment complex, and, of course, through that I'm providing employment. All throughout I have been providing employment opportunities for Liberians.[100]

Through his real estate business, this respondent framed himself as contributing to improved citizen-citizen relations by employing his fellow Liberians.

In addition to practicing citizenship through economic activities, homelanders exhibited higher levels of engagement in community development, charity organisations, and the creative arts than their diaspora or returnee counterparts.

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[98] [HL24] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 17, 2013.
[99] [HL22] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 14, 2013.
[100] [HL3] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 5, 2013.

Moreover, community outreach activities appeared to be gendered and age-specific, with more women and young men engaged at this micro-level. One of the youngest respondents, a 23-year-old female university student, said that her work with a young women's organisation was contributing to gender equality and awareness raising:

> I'm a member of one of the largest female oriented organisations in Liberia, the Paramount Young Women Initiative, and basically our primary objective is to educate and empower young women in the field of education, awareness, HIV/AIDS, financial management, personal hygiene, small business establishment; we also provide scholarships to needy female students…[101]

Inspired by her passion for women's empowerment, a slightly older female respondent was responsible for establishing the first organisation for women living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. The 36-year-old activist recognised that women were being unduly stigmatised in communities largely dominated by men:

> Well, the organisation was founded simply to give women and girls living with HIV a face, help them live a life of dignity even in the face of the pandemic. And then I realised that a lot of women who are diagnosed HIV positive, they get thrown out of their homes, no deference to the men, the men are the innocent ones, the women are the ones who went out. Never mind that they have had children, they have accumulated properties with some of those men and it's actually through, as we say in Liberia, their sweat…So, we started with small loans, kind of, sort of a revolving fund and then we tried to keep in contact as much as possible with the women…Peer to peer counseling has done a lot in keeping a lot of women alive because if I am HIV-positive and I can get another woman who is HIV-positive to talk to me and say, "Look, I've been through this and I'm here. You know, I think you can rise above it." It has helped greatly in increasing the lives of women who live with HIV.[102]

Given their efforts to improve the lives of women and girls in Liberia, the two previous female respondents contributed to strengthening citizen-citizen relations through development practice.

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[101] [HL37] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 21, 2013.
[102] [HL7] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 6, 2013.

A 45-year-old mother of two also demonstrated efforts to improve citizen-citizen relations with her community development work:

> Wherever I find myself, I try as much as I can to bring people to another level, to train them, to build their capacity. Likewise, we work in our communities. I served as community leader before in my block where I stay in New Georgia. So, we do community work…What we do mainly in, like I live in New Georgia Block D; we have our own committee so we do like clean-up campaign, we advise the youth, we got youth that we advise and we also do this savings club to help other members…you invest money, you can take loan; it is not the daily susu[103] or monthly, yes, so you can invest. We did that once, so we wanted to generate profit to be able to do some income generating project for the group.[104]

As has been illustrated, the micro-level community sphere appears to be where homeland women are most visibly active and therefore empowered to perform citizenship. It is a sphere occupied by young men as well, as articulated by this 29-year-old former youth volunteer and activist:

> We called ourselves the Peer Counsellors…So, we said that there were [a] lot of ills in the Catholic school…so, we put ourselves together from various schools…once we put a full report together, we went through the Youth Director, it went to the Catholic Education Secretariat and what we considered as ills in the various schools, we catalogued them…In my own school, the principal got dismissed for that, for not being an able leader to lead his school with all of those challenges…Then they started that process of rotating the principals because they noticed that people were getting complacent when they were staying in one place for a long period of time. So, because of our efforts, they started rotating principals around, and then gradually it also led to the Secretariat having more monitoring activities in the school. It's not directly related to it but through their direct monitoring and supervision they realised that the Business Manager was siphoning the school's resources and then they started the process of paying directly to the bank…[105]

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[103] Susu is the Liberian version of a revolving micro-credit community venture in which groups of women pool money together monthly and each has a chance to collect a lump sum of money once during the payment cycle.

[104] [HL4] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 5, 2013.

[105] [HL23] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 14, 2013.

It is clear based on analysis of the political, economic, and social/community domains of homeland citizenship practices in Liberia that men and women, young and old, practice citizenship differently primarily based on their social locations, and that practices have a direct impact on the set of relations between the Liberian state and its citizens as well as amongst citizens themselves.

In the next section, I explore in more detail my conceptual framing of 'Liberian citizenship' as a set of relations by examining interactions between the Liberian state (through its embassies) and Liberians in 'near' and 'wider' diaspora sites, as well as amongst Liberian social actors in regional diaspora organisations.

**Citizenship as a Set of Relations between the Liberian State and Diasporas**

The Liberian embassy's engagement with Liberians in the UK reveals loose state-citizen relations. The embassy lacked an official database, and could only boast of registering 1500 to 2000 of the approximately 5000 to 6000 Liberians in the UK, according to then Ambassador Johnson, who also indicated that aside from the 2000 or so Liberian Londoners, large concentrations of Liberians reside in urban centres such as Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, Bradford, and Milton Keynes. Beyond serving as a channel for UK aid and investment links to Liberia, the embassy appeared constrained in its ability to reach Liberians in London, and by extension, the UK, especially those who were undocumented. Ambassador Johnson indicated that Liberians in the UK previously viewed the embassy as an extension of a transatlantic surveillance system. However, he could not articulate a clear engagement strategy beyond the fact that the embassy assists Liberians periodically who need to regularise their status in the UK and serves as a partner to Liberian organisations in the UK.

That the embassy has limited penetration amongst Liberians in the UK was particularly stark in my interview with Prince Taylor, head of the Union of Liberian Organisations in the UK (ULO-UK), who said that his organisation had been asked by the embassy to gather demographic information on Liberians in the UK for a comprehensive database. Filling the void in embassy engagement, organisations like ULO-UK strengthen Liberian citizen-citizen relations abroad. According to Taylor,

ULO-UK and its member organisations facilitate access to social services for Liberians thereby collaborating with other UK-based diaspora organisations, and were in the process of transitioning from a collection of social and recreation oriented organisations to organisations involved in development activities in Liberia:

> Within the UK, we have been involved with our members who've got problems with like immigration. We seek assistance through the legal channel, if you like. We've been like a link with service providers in the UK to Liberians who will need help or through Liberian organisations...[In Liberia] we have been involved with the J.V. Massaquoi School and at the moment working with other institutions to see where we can get books and other materials for university, for educational purpose. We had anticipated looking at the health sector, but due to other constraints we haven't been able to actually pour out our resources to reach to those needed, people within the health sector or the educational [sector]. But specifically it's J.V. Massaquoi School that ULO-UK's been working with, and other local organisations are also doing charity work for orphanages and other institutions in Liberia.[106]

ULO-UK's deliberate shift in focus from the social to the developmental is indicative of the reconfiguration of 'Liberian citizenship' from identity to political, economic, and social practice.

Because of the citizenship practices of Liberian social actors in Washington, the Liberian embassy has demonstrated a more spirited engagement with citizens abroad than its counterpart in London. This is evidenced by the previous ambassador's fleeting efforts to establish a Diaspora Advisory Board[107], the current ambassador's establishment of a diaspora liaison at the embassy, the embassy's mediation role in a series of civil and criminal cases involving Liberians resettled in the US as well as its hosting of a diaspora/dual citizenship symposium during festivities marking Liberia's 165th Independence Day celebrations in July 2012. Moreover, the embassy's annual July 26th Independence Day celebration on its manicured grounds attracts hundreds of Liberians and friends of Liberia. The

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[106] Semi-structured interview in London on June 16, 2012.
[107] The Liberian Diaspora Advisory Board, of which I was a member, had a relatively short shelf life because of limited support from Monrovia. Ambassador Nathaniel Barnes established the Board in 2009 to formalise the relationship between Liberians in the US and the Liberian government, thereby attempting to harness the financial, political, social, and cultural capital of Liberians in the US for development in Liberia.

success of July 26th is partly due to the embassy's collaboration with Liberian associations in both the planning and execution of activities, said Minister Counsellor for Public Affairs Gabriel I. A. Williams:

> And we bring the community leaders, those that are here [Washington], and we form a committee and we get them involved. For example, this 'Educate to Elevate,' we brought in alumni associations of the various institutions, high schools/colleges that are active here, and other, USAID and other agencies that support education in Liberia, the alumni associations of the various universities in Liberia, we bring their leaders here and we say, "Look, this is what we want to do." And all of them have booths here and then we connect with all the community organisations across the country as much as we can. As we move towards the event, I send out a lot of information to the community, it's a whole network, and then by the time 26th comes, a lot of people too they bring their artefacts, food...[108]

Although the Washington embassy appeared committed to improving state-citizen relations, engagement was primarily confined to its social and political networks with an expressed mandate to strengthen Liberian citizen-citizen relations abroad, such as the Liberian Community Association in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Vice-president Nee Allison averred that the Community Association's activities were not 'development' oriented and geared towards Liberia, per se, but rather social, cultural, and humanitarian in nature and focused on interventions in the Washington area, such as advocating on behalf of Liberians registered under Deferred Enforced Departure (DED):

> Our community, we are not directly active in Liberia, but we work with the Liberians in this community, the Liberians that are coming in. We assist the senior citizens. We do have a senior citizen programme for Liberians that are within the diaspora—not the diaspora, within the metropolitan area. We also, on a smaller scale, we do have programmes for our younger kids because a lot of our parents, they work multiple jobs. Kids get in trouble when the parents are not home, so we try to network with the community to assist them with after school programmes, mentoring programmes and other things...Presently, we're trying to expand our programmes. We're in the process of acquiring our own building so we can have, it's going to be more of a cultural centre because most of the Liberians that are born here, they have a strong disconnect with our culture and we

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[108] Semi-structured interview in Washington on November 2, 2012.

> need to have a place where those things can be exhibited, where people can talk stories, folk tales, on things that are happening in Liberia—just the basic things so they can have that sense of connection with the community at large.[109]

It was clear from Allison's account that while the Community Association was more politically active in the 1990s and early 2000s during Liberia's armed conflicts, it has adopted a rather apolitical stance in the past 10 years, particularly amongst those who do not have regularised status in the United States. This is supported by academic literature which states that diasporas have cycles of active engagement that often mirror the political climate in their countries of origin (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2001; Adamson, 2002; Brinkerhoff, 2008).

As there was no regional umbrella organisation comprising Liberians in Freetown, I did not interview a regional organisational head as I did in London and Washington to examine Liberian citizen-citizen relations. Despite the fluidity of Liberian and Sierra Leonean identities, the Freetown-based Liberian embassy revealed weaker state-citizen relations than its counterparts in Washington and London. The late Ambassador Brima admitted that because the embassy does not have a database of Liberians in Sierra Leone, it relies heavily on UNHCR statistics. It was apparent from our interview that the embassy lacks the infrastructure to document migration flows from Liberia to Sierra Leone, prompting the ambassador to speculate that about 4000 Liberians have resided in Sierra Leone since UNHCR discontinued refugee status for Liberians in June 2012. Because the vast majority of Liberians who travelled to Sierra Leone seeking refuge from armed conflict were protected by UNHCR, any official connection to the Liberian embassy in Sierra Leone—and, by extension, the government of Liberia—would jeopardise their refugee status. This, according to Brima, has severely constrained the embassy's engagement with Liberians in Sierra Leone. Yet, despite its hands-off policy with regard to refugee interference, the embassy has intervened on behalf of Liberians under the auspices of UNHCR, particularly those who have been unduly incarcerated for criminal offences, said Brima:

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[109] Semi-structured interview in Washington on November 2, 2012.

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> ...there was a time when the Liberian refugees went on the rampage and they had [a] problem with the UNHCR. The UNHCR didn't want us to, at all, interfere, but I couldn't help but do something about it. They went through the case as a case against the Sierra Leonean government. They had these people incarcerated. I followed the case and at the end of the day, the merits they gave were not as grave as the UNHCR wanted to take it, so at the end of the day we were able to convince the [Sierra Leonean] government and the case was dropped. In those instances we interfere. If they are unjustly treated, of course we do something about it.[110]

Ambassador Brima's admission that the embassy interferes on behalf of refugees when it is warranted was an indication that the Liberian state's engagement with its nationals in Sierra Leone, albeit conditional, is still anchored on an expressed responsibility to protect the interests of Liberian citizens abroad.

Nevertheless, Brima's counterpart in Accra did not operate under the abiding principle of 'responsibility to protect'. Of all the embassies I approached across the four urban centres abroad, the Liberian embassy in Accra appeared the least engaged with Liberian migrants, and the least successful in propelling the 'development diplomacy'[111] foreign policy agenda introduced by former Liberian Foreign Minister Olubanke King-Akerele, a diaspora returnee who had previously worked for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Dakar, Senegal. The embassy does not have a full record of Liberians in Ghana, and instead relies on statistics from UNHCR, which had a database of 47000 Liberians in 2005 and as of May 2013 had 3000 Liberians registered for local integration. Echoing the sentiments of his counterpart in Freetown, then Ambassador Von Ballmoos[112] admitted that the embassy had been constrained to respond to the needs of its citizens in Ghana because the vast majority were registered under UNHCR protection, and therefore could not officially seek assistance from the embassy without jeopardising their refugee status. The ambassador could not articulate a clear engagement strategy for Liberians in Ghana, beyond the embassy's one-off

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[110] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 18, 2013.
[111] http://www.mofa.gov.lr/public2/2press.php?news_id=179&related=7&pg=sp
[112] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 23, 2013.

outreach event for over 1000 Liberians in Accra and its environs in January 2013, executed by embassy 2nd Secretary Angela Lavela Von Ballmoos.[113]

While Liberian state-citizen relations are virtually non-existent in Ghana, citizen-citizen relations appear to be more solid, especially amongst former refugee members of the United Liberian Association in Ghana (ULAG). Established in 2010, ULAG responds to the needs of its 30+ active members by providing financial support to Liberians in Accra and its environs and facilitating social gatherings for community cohesion, said president Julia Richards:

> The main function of the organisation is to cater to Liberians, the welfare of Liberians, socially, financially and bringing Liberians together. That's one of the main functions…to improve the status and livelihood of Liberians living in Ghana. Since the UN, they did not exist under the umbrella of the United Nations anymore. Though it was founded before the United Nations closed its operation in Ghana, we tend to seek financial support for Liberians who are, like for instance, maybe when they fall ill or Liberians who fall short of some financial thing that they cannot take control of, and some Liberians who are sick, you know, just to be there basically for Liberians who are unable to, you know, handle all of their problems though we do not take care of all their needs because ULAG is a small organisation and most of us in Ghana came here as refugees.[114]

In many respects, ULAG mirrors the mandate of the Liberian Community Association in Washington yet it is less financially robust. ULAG's lack of financial capacity prohibits the kinds of development oriented collective efforts undertaken by the Union of Liberian Organisations in the UK (ULO-UK), for instance. Nevertheless, the Association helped to facilitate the *Liberia Rising* 2030 Town Hall Meeting in Accra in 2012 to solicit the views of Liberians in Ghana to feed into the country's second major post-war development agenda, proving its ability to maintain satisfactory state-citizen relations. Although ULAG appears to be apolitical, Richards revealed that she had also collaborated with the European Federation of Liberian Associations (EFLA) and the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) as a signatory to the petition for dual citizenship by members of Liberia's

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[113] Ibid.
[114] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 18, 2013.

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diasporas. When EFLA delegates transited through Accra in 2010 on their way to Monrovia to lobby for dual citizenship, Richards facilitated their informal discussions about the merits of dual citizenship with Liberians resident in Accra and its environs, indicating that ULAG also maintains strong citizen-citizen relations with other Liberian nationals abroad.

In this section, I have demonstrated that relations between the Liberian state and its nationals abroad have been either limited or expansive largely because of embassy engagement, or lack thereof, and the social locations (manifested in immigration status) of Liberians abroad. I have argued that regional diaspora organisations tend to fill gaps in state-citizen relations with their own brand of citizen-citizen engagement, ranging from humanitarian relief abroad to transnational development practice in Liberia.

## Conclusion

According to analysis in this chapter, the respondents whose narratives were showcased in the introduction—Beyan, Teta, Precious, and James—would all be considered Liberian citizens on a continuum, as would their offspring, because their Liberianness is anchored by the fluidity of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* principles of citizenship. Therefore, an 'authentic' Liberian citizen does not exist. Instead, 'Liberian citizenship' remains a contested category of inquiry primarily due to variances in the social locations and life-worlds of Liberians within Liberia and across transnational spaces. This is also emblematic of a larger narrative of citizenship reconfiguration across the globe. In this chapter, I argued that contemporary constructions of 'Liberian citizenship' sit on a continuum between identity-based citizenship and practice-based citizenship, thereby transcending the legal definition of citizenship in the Aliens and Nationality Law. While homeland Liberians embody citizenship practices that are domestically rooted and territorially confined to Liberia, diasporas and returnees engage in transnational pursuits that attempt to positively alter citizen-citizen and state-citizen relations abroad and within Liberia. I also demonstrated in this chapter that relations between the Liberian state and its diasporas have been strengthened or weakened depending on

the levels of engagement of embassies and the immigration status of nationals abroad.

In the four chapters that follow, I argue that factors such as conflict, migration, globalisation and post-war recovery have come to configure and reconfigure contemporary 'Liberian citizenship' in the manner described in this chapter by respondents—as identity, practice, and a set of relations between the Liberian state and its citizens and amongst citizens. The next chapter examines how historical and contemporary conflict interfaces have influenced the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation.

## Chapter V

## Give Me Your Land or I'll Shoot!

On December 15, 1821, Peter, paramount king of the Cape of Mesurado on the coast of pre-settler Liberia, was held at gunpoint (Levitt, 2005: 40-41). His assailants, Dr. Eli Ayers and Robert Stockton, were white agents of the American Colonisation Society (ACS) (Levitt, 2005: 40-41). The ACS was founded in Washington in 1816 to solve the 'race problem' in the US by establishing a settlement on the West African coast for free blacks and those who agreed to migrate if they were manumitted (Kieh, 2012a: 168). King Peter, like all the other African kings Ayers and Stockton had approached to secure land, was intransigent. Use of force, or the threat of violence, appeared to be the only means of pacifying him. Frustrated, "Stockton pulled out his pistol, cocked it and gave it to Ayers with instructions to shoot if necessary. He then aimed another pistol at King Peter's head" and insisted that he and five other kings relinquish parcels of land by 'deed' in exchange for US$300 and tradeable goods such as rum, tobacco, and guns (Levitt, 2005: 40-41).

When the black settlers arrived at the Cape in 1822, however, King Peter attempted to return compensation for the land claiming that he had been duped (Holsoe, 1971: 336; TRC, 2009b: 103-104). This would mark the first documented conflict over land ownership, which became a major tenet of 'Liberian citizenship.' In this chapter, I argue that 'Liberian citizenship' has been configured and reconfigured because of conflicts[115] precipitated by four major interfaces between a range of social actors: i) the 1847 founding of the nation state, its pre-settler antecedents and post-independence state-building and nation-building architecture; ii) the toppling of True Whig Party rule in 1980; iii) armed conflicts (1989-1997 and 1999-2003) which ruptured and sealed state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations simultaneously; and iv) post-war conflicts over income inequality, land tenure and transitional justice. I argue further that these four sites of conflict reveal a crisis of citizenship dating back to Liberia's state formation beginning in the mid-19th century, and

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[115] According to Levitt (2005), Liberia experienced more than 18 deadly conflicts between 1822 and 2003.

therefore underpin contemporary claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship.

Just as Liberia's citizenship construction has undergone a series of iterations, so too have its state-making processes, primarily triggered by conflicts varying in degrees and scales. Conflict, in my analysis, includes both physical and structural violence, coined by Johan Galtung (1969) to mean the social structures and institutions that inhibit individuals from meeting their basic needs, or from actualising their fullest capabilities (Sen, 1999: 291). While I employ Long's notion of the interface herein, I also incorporate Galtung's conflict triangle with the elements of contradiction (C), attitude (A), and behaviour (B) representing each point. According to Galtung (1996: 70-73), conflict signifies a dynamic process in which the 'incompatibility of goals' of different actors (contradiction) fuels their perceptions and misperceptions of themselves and each other (attitudes) thereby influencing actions (behaviour) that may range from opposition to accommodation, as will be seen in the analysis that follows.

**Figure 3: Galtung's Conflict Triangle**



Source: http://www.azerweb.com/ngos/512/events/970/02.htm
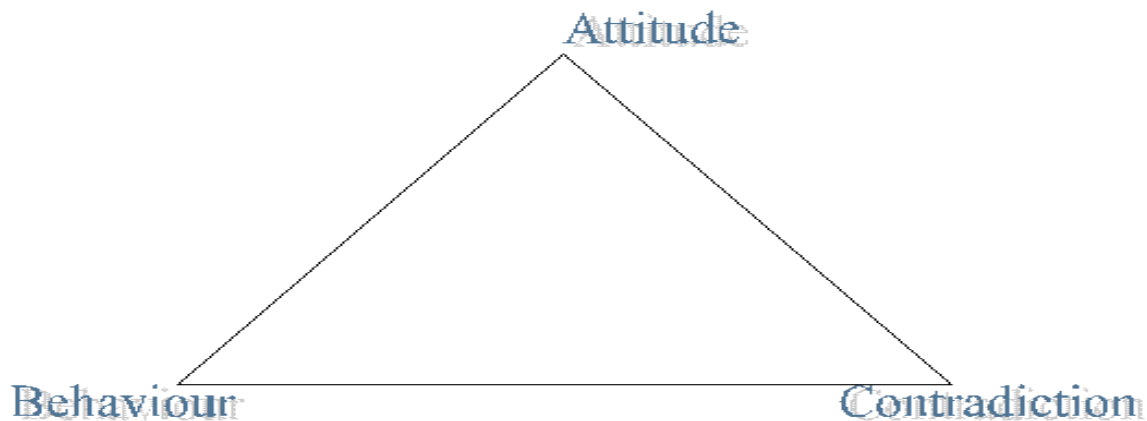
**From Settlement to Unification and Integration**

The first interactions between Liberia's indigenes and settlers exemplified not a 'clash of civilisations' (Huntington, 1993), but rather a clash of life-worlds. Through a series of interfaces in the 19th century, white ACS agents and black settlers

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encountered 16 ethno-linguistic groups[116] who already occupied the hinterland and coast, and had been engaged in small-scale warfare over territory, trade (human and commodity) and political legitimacy (Levitt, 2005: 25; Utas, 2009: 271). Eventually, the free blacks would be joined by Africans from the Congo River Basin who had been liberated from slave ships en route to the Americas (Levitt, 2005: 6). Whereas the colonists and their settler counterparts espoused an individualistic, free-market approach to territory, the indigenes believed that they were the communal custodians of land. According to Liberia's Land Commission, the practice of treating all undeeded land as public and easily acquired privately was a misguided policy established by the ACS because, to date, there is no clear reconciliation between public land and preexisting customary land rights (Government of Liberia, 2013a: 6). While the natives defended their territorial integrity in pre-independence Liberia, the settlers launched counter-offensives, pushing further inland, appropriating more land and establishing political dominion (Levitt, 2005).

They came to an eventual truce in 1822 and a subsequent peace settlement in 1825, though relations between the two groups would remain hostile, particularly over trade, land tenure, taxation, and political jurisdiction, well after the colony drafted a constitution in 1845. The Constitution was modelled after that of the US and Liberia became an independent republic in 1847 with the coastal counties[117] Montserrado, Grand Bassa and Sinoe comprising its initial territory (Holsoe, 1971: 340-353; Jaye, 2003: 66-68; Levitt, 2005: 89; Waugh, 2011: 17-19). According to the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) preliminary findings, contention between settlers and indigenes was inevitable precisely because of their competing life-worlds and social locations:

> The new settlement was anti-slavery, pro-trade, predominantly Christian and highly centralised; whereas, most coastal native groups were pro-slavery, commercial tradesman, non-Christian and lived under decentralised authority structures. Hence, the likelihood of any form of union between the settlement and native nations was highly unlikely (TRC, 2009a: 49-50).

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[116] Bassa, Dan, Dei, Gbandi, Gio, Gola, Grebo, Kissi, Kpelle, Krahn, Kru, Loma, Mandingo, Mano, Mende, Vai

[117] These were three of Liberia's current 15 political sub-divisions.

However, it would be inaccurate to claim that all interactions between indigenes and settlers were antagonistic. While some ethno-linguistic communities, most notably the Bassa, Dei, Gola, Grebo, Kru and Vai, resisted settler rule in a series of deadly conflicts through to the early 20th century, others such as the Gio and Kpelle were more accommodating (Gershoni, 1985: 67; Levitt, 2005: 6). Furthermore, trade in palm oil, tobacco, rice, rum, cotton goods, beads, and cassava connected settler costal towns to inland indigenous communities and indigenous knowledge in medicinal relief saved settlers from the worst bouts of malaria (Clegg, 2004: 242).

Ill-trained, ill-prepared, and ill-educated, however, the settlers appeared oblivious to the sophisticated writing systems, well-developed trade routes and administrative governance structures of the indigenes they encountered (Kieh, 2012a: 169). Their dismissive behaviour was embedded in xenophobic tendencies, as argued by a male circular returnee informant: "Because there's this fear of the stranger. It's not a culture. I think it's a historical thing…That fear is ingrained in Liberians' psyche, so deep that people express it anywhere, anyhow."[118] The free blacks had been barred from citizenship in the United States, yet they adopted a narrow definition of legal, national identity that excluded women, non-Christians, non-blacks, and most indigenes, just as ancient Greek citizenship had excluded women and slaves (Shafir and Brysk, 2006: 277). Though a response to the invisibility of life in the US, the "legalised personhood" and "documented existence" of the repatriated blacks infringed upon the life, liberty, and property of the indigenes they encountered (Clegg, 2004: 247). For the newly-birthed nation-state whose territory was yet to be fully consolidated, a citizen was categorised as a male land owner of 'Negro descent' who, "over at least three years, had consistently attended church services, dressed in Western clothes, and cultivated two acres" (Burrowes, 2004: 69).

This form of hegemonic citizenship had loopholes, however. For a small number of indigenes, intermarriage and apprenticeship became the channels through which citizenship could be acquired. In 1838, for instance, an apprenticeship law was enacted enabling settler families to take in indigenous children. In exchange for

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[118] [CR7] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 18, 2013.

their domestic labour, these children were provided clothing and food, and upon reaching the age of majority (21 for young men and 18 for young women), they were considered 'civilised' and therefore eligible for legal 'Liberian citizenship' (Gershoni, 1985: 27-28). An 1841 act further conferred citizenship on indigenes who "abandoned all the forms of, customs, and superstitions of heathenism" and adopted "the forms, customs and habits of civilised life" (Clegg, 2004: 242). Also in the 1870s, selected natives were appointed 'referees' or 'delegates' in the National Legislature as advisors, followed by more meaningful participation in the political process in the 20th century (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 340-341). Tiers of citizenship soon developed, nevertheless, with the "settler, commercial, coastal and political elite" at the top, followed by the "small business persons and farmers," recaptives, and select indigenes (Levitt, 2005: 91). However appealing the concessions on citizenship appeared at the time, the Liberian state still operated with exclusion and autocracy as its mandate, virtually overlooking indigenes in the hinterland who remained "legally, politically, economically, and militarily independent" until the early 1900s (Levitt, 2005: 3).

**Partial and Qualified Citizenship under President Barclay and the 'Hut Tax'**

There were concerted efforts in the early 20th century to integrate natives formally into the body politic although the settlers established "a governance structure embedded in political repression and socio-economic inequalities" (Kieh, 2012a: 169; 126). Through a system of indirect rule in 1904, President Arthur Barclay attempted to ward off encroachment by French and British imperialists as well as establish a consistent stream of revenue for the administration of the hinterland (Gershoni, 1985: 36). Employing the tools of state-building as theorised by Tilly (1975), Barclay extended Liberia's geographic ambit through military might and a system of centrally-controlled taxation (Gerdes, 2013: 19). Under the 'Barclay Plan', as it came to be known, Liberia was divided into administrative units under the auspices of district commissioners who maintained law and order according to the Liberian Constitution, reporting directly to the president, and traditional chiefs who governed according to customary law (Gershoni, 1985: 38). The chiefs had a semblance of autonomy, although the administration of traditional norms could not contradict the Constitution in any way. Violently resisted by ethno-linguistic groups

such as the Gbandi, Grebo, Kpelle and Kru, a series of norms were instituted under the 'Barclay Plan' through the construction of military outposts in strategic locations in rural Liberia with the backing of the Liberian Frontier Force (LFF)[119], established in 1908 to squash native rebellion in the hinterlands (Williams, 2002: 49; Levitt, 2005: 147-180; Utas, 2009: 277; Waugh, 2011: 23-30): i) indigenous Liberians who were educated, converted to Christianity and adopted 'Western standards' of conduct and appearance could qualify for legal 'Liberian citizenship'; ii) a 'hut tax' was imposed on native households and administered through local chiefs who received 10 percent commission; iii) Poro and Sande secret societies were banned; and iv) forced indigenous labour became widespread (Government of Liberia, 1949; Gershoni, 1985: 36-48; Williams, 2002: 61; Jaye, 2003: 68-69; Utas, 2009: 271; TRC, 2009b: 115).

As Waugh puts it, Liberia's settlers and their descendants "never showed much respect for or interest in developing the countryside except as a reserve of natural resources and a supplier of manpower in peacetime or fighters in war" (Waugh, 2011: 44). Effectively, the 'Barclay Play' failed to meaningfully integrate indigenes, rather it only "established a dual and unequal system of administration" (Jaye, 2003: 70). Hinterland residents, often referred to as "uncivilised natives" in official policy documents, were performing citizenship through their payment of taxes, yet treated as colonial subjects within a bifurcated state (Mamdani, 1996). There were two clearly defined categories of Liberians in the early part of the 20th century, those governed nationally by the Liberian nation-state (often settler in orientation, urban, and considered 'civilised') and others governed locally by territorially bounded chieftain authorities (often indigenous in orientation, rural and considered 'native') (Moran, 2006: 75). Most inhabitants of the Liberian territory were not considered full citizens and were therefore excluded from formal rights and privileges until President William V.S. Tubman, Liberia's longest serving head of state, introduced the Unification and Integration Policy in the mid-20th century, nearly 100 years after Liberia's declaration of independence (Williams, 2002: 62; TRC, 2009a: 52; TRC, 2009b: 118; Waugh, 2011: 23).

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[119] Established through financial and administrative support initially from the British, followed by the Americans, the LFF would later metamorphose into the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) in 1962.

**Limited Full Citizenship under Tubman's Unification and Integration Policy**

Although Tubman stretched the bounds of Liberianness wider than Barclay thereby attempting to form a nation within a state, he fell short of granting universal citizenship and therefore failed to consolidate a strong national identity in Liberia. In his 1944 inaugural address, Tubman announced that hinterland Liberians who owned property and paid taxes would be full citizens under his administration rather than subjects:

> In the administration of our population inhabiting the hinterland, our aim and purpose shall be to educate them into good and useful citizens, capable of knowing their duty, status and rights as citizens, and competent of exerting, enjoying and asserting them: to have them love their native land and feel proud to be called Liberians. For it is to these fellow citizens of ours, inhabitants of the hinterland, that we must look very largely for the future maintenance and perpetuity of the state; for we are aiming at developing a civilised state, the civilisation of which will be as weak as its weakest pagan link if due precaution not be taken (Tubman, 1944).

He also announced that citizenship would be extended to Liberian indigenous and settler women who owned property, therefore enfranchising them for the first time:

> It seems to me that if a woman possesses the same qualifications of a man in the state which entitles him to enjoy the suffrage, the mere and only fact of difference in sex should not reasonably form a bar to her enjoying that privilege...We shall therefore persevere in our endeavour to extend to the women of Liberia full participation in the affairs of government and its political activities including the right of woman suffrage (Tubman, 1944).

True to his inaugural address, Tubman officially launched the Unification and Integration Policy in 1946, extending voting rights, among other privileges, to property owners who paid taxes (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 341). This was coupled with equally measured, concessionary reforms: i) indigenes were entitled to a small number of elected positions within the Legislature, although settlers retained the offices of the speaker of the House of Representatives and president pro-tempore of the Senate; ii) infrastructure such as road networks, water and sanitation services were extended to former hinterland territories; iii) and basic social services such as access to healthcare and education were accorded indigenous

citizens, albeit at a lower standard (TRC, 2009a: 52; TRC, 2009b: 120; Kieh, 2012b: 9). In 1964, Tubman further reconfigured Liberia's political subdivisions by introducing four new counties "that brought old hinterland areas on par with the coastal counties" administered by settler elites (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 341).

In hindsight, one could argue that Tubman, of non-Monrovia elite stock, was forward thinking despite the constraints of his time. However, his main objective was to "facilitate the expansion of the settler state and broaden its power base" (Kieh, 1992: 33) by appeasing "settlers of low status, indigenous chiefs, and members of the Monrovia elite who had become disaffected by their own inner circle" (Sawyer, 2005: 16). Furthermore, Tubman's words of unprecedented conciliation to hinterland inhabitants were contradicted by patronising and offensive references to paganism and civilisation. What his inaugural address connotes is that the aim was assimilation rather than unification since only those hinterland residents willing to abandon their traditional 'pagan' ways and adopt 'civilisation' could be embraced as citizens. For settler Liberians, being 'civilised' was often conflated with being a citizen, demarcated by the ability to speak English fluently, membership in a Christian church, employment in the formal economy as a wage labourer, residence in urban centres such as Monrovia, and the consumption of Western products (Moran, 2006: 78).  However, native Liberians did not adopt the same conception of Liberianness, as their "local identities were built around either small clusters of towns with their accompanying farmlands (in the south and east) or loosely structured, often multi-ethnic and multi-lingual chiefdoms (in the north and west)" (Moran, 2006: 79). Throughout the 20th century, a ward system replicated the 19th century apprenticeship law in which children of native families were shuttled to Monrovia to be raised and educated by settler families (Cooper, 2008; Sirleaf, 2009; Waugh, 2011: 25-27). While the process of assimilation enabled the adoption of settler names, conversion to Christianity, and formal incorporation into a highly stratified elite social structure, it also alienated natives from their rural counterparts (Waugh, 2011: 26-27). Effectively, becoming a 'civilised' citizen was akin to relinquishing formal ties with one's indigenous heritage.

Indeed, the Unification and Integration Policy was nothing more than pacification intended to create a cult around Tubman, support his patronage networks, and facilitate unencumbered exploitation of Liberia's natural resources by foreign multi-nationals. Because citizenship was still tied to private property ownership, the Policy effectively negated indigenous forms of communal land ownership and alienated men and women who did not have the wherewithal to acquire land and pay taxes on that land. As such, the Policy did not fundamentally reconfigure the institution of 'Liberian citizenship'. Furthermore, although Tubman sought to create national cohesion, his administration was characterised by political repression, where opponents were either jailed or forced into exile; economic elitism, in which a few families controlled the export-based economy that relied heavily on the extraction of mineral and agricultural resources such as rubber, iron ore, gold and timber without value addition; de facto one-party state entrenchment characterised by 'selections' rather than 'elections'; and social alienation embedded in hierarchies of skin colour, ethnicity, class & caste coupled with religious intolerance against non-Christians (Jaye, 2003: 73-77; Kieh, 2004: 60-67; Levitt, 2005: 181-190). The end of Tubman's 27-year reign, upon his death in 1971, would usher in the most agential forms of citizenship practice Liberia had seen to date. The expansion of citizenship rights and privileges facilitated increased political activism in Liberia, culminating in a 1980 coup that effectively toppled settler hegemony.

**1980 Coup Pushes the Boundaries of Liberian Citizen Agency**

In addition to overthrowing the True Whig Party dynasty, the 1980 coup symbolically reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship', casting it as an institution that all Liberians of 'Negro descent' could access for the first time. As product of a cauldron that had been bubbling for over 100 years, William Tolbert, Tubman's successor, had opened up the political space considerably to "indigenous and settler intelligentsia, technicians, civil service personnel, rural educated elite, military elite, local business interests, university professors and teachers and other professionals, students and trade unions," thereby alienating members of the top brass of his party (Levitt, 2005: 192). A number of interconnected factors in the late 1970s contributed to the dismantling of True Whig party rule, top among which was the agency of Liberians made manifest after long periods of pacification and coercion

(Konneh, 2002: 76-79; Williams, 2002: 64-65; Levitt, 2005: 191-197; TRC, 2009b: 129-139; Waugh, 2011: 34; 58; 61-63).

First, Liberia's economy experienced a nosedive because of the downward spiral of global commodity prices in exports such as palm oil, rubber, iron ore, and timber. Eclipsed by the oil crisis, Liberia's economic meltdown led to increased inflation, food insecurity, and increased rural to urban migration. Second, large numbers of indigenes began attending universities in Liberia and abroad through government-sponsored scholarships, and upon their return they assumed positions within the civil service though rarely at high managerial levels. Third, although President Tolbert attempted to adopt gradual political reforms, he appointed members of his family to strategic positions within the executive branch of government, including the ministries of defence and finance, leading to public rumblings about patronage and nepotism. Fourth, civil unrest came to a head on April 14, 1979 when state security forces attacked, arrested, wounded and killed street demonstrators after the government proposed an increase in the price of imported rice "designed to benefit the president and other 'absentee farmers' who stood to gain from the increase" (Kieh, 2012b: 175). Although the proposed price increase may also have been intended to encourage consumption of the country's locally produced staple crop, it had not accompanied positive structural changes in the living conditions of the majority of Liberians. Therefore, the 'rice riots', as they were popularly called, mirrored simultaneous labour strikes advocating for higher salaries and better working conditions.

When President Tolbert spent an estimated US$200 million in hosting the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Summit in Liberia in July 1979 amidst economic decline, there was widespread and visible discontent amongst an increasingly politicised populace (Kieh, 2012b). Similarly, the emergence of opposition groups—such as the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL), and the Progressive People's Party (PPP)—permitted to register and operate freely—unsettled True Whig Party rule for the first time in over 25 years since opposition parties were banned in the 1950s (Kieh, 2012b: 145). As former Liberian Ambassador to the UK Wesley Johnson recounted,

it was his exposure to the relatively egalitarian political systems in the US while a student in the 1970s that galvanised him to join the opposition movement in Liberia in the 1980s:

> [I discovered] this is real freedom here [in the US]. Why [do] we have one and only one political party in Liberia? It can be better! Then we organised PAL, which is the Progressive Alliance of Liberia, Bacchus Matthews, Samuel Jackson, Oscar Quiah, Marcus Dahn, all of us were there then and we organised the Progressive Alliance of Liberia and we began to challenge the government on the one party state. And so by 1984/85 we became a registered party called PPP, Progressive People's Party, and then from there we became United People's Party which we are still today. Fortunately for us Ellen [Johnson Sirleaf] was one of those who was an activist, you know, she never per se joined but she was a serious supporter of us and she saw a vision for the country that it can be better. You don't have to have one party state, you don't have to be a politician to get a job. You can be apolitical or just have the mind, get the education, get the experience and that's it.[120]

Imbibing the spirit of native resistance, marginalised groups of Liberians began to make claims to citizenship that effectively set the stage for a coup. On April 12, 1980, a group of non-commissioned officers in the AFL, led by an unknown master sergeant, Samuel K. Doe, entered the Executive Mansion, assassinated President Tolbert, and declared military rule (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 90-91). They executed 13 members of Tolbert's cabinet immediately after the coup, symbolising the annihilation of settler hegemony (Sawyer, 1987). A Krahn man of limited education, Doe was celebrated as a channel through which indigenous Liberians could finally access the tenets of full citizenship. He subsequently suspended the 1847 Constitution and instituted a more inclusive military government, the People's Redemption Council (PRC), hiring a number of indigenous civilians who had returned to Liberia with terminal degrees from US universities; those of settler lineage were also incorporated in various ministerial posts (Sawyer, 1987; Konneh, 2002: 78). Months after the coup, the PRC abolished the controversial 'hut tax', thereby enabling those who did not own property to become citizens for the first time (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 170).

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[120] Semi-structured interview in London on June 14, 2012.

Doomed to follow the mistakes of his predecessors, however, Doe became increasingly agitated with students, labour unions, clergy, and opposition leaders who resisted his authoritarian dismissal of popular dissent. He developed an inner circle comprising members of his own ethnicity, the Krahns, invested heavily in the military, confiscated property, imposed curfews and restricted the movement of civilians (Konneh, 2002: 78). After appointing in 1981 a National Constitution Commission to draft a new Constitution that would return the country to civilian rule in 1986, it became clear that Doe was not fundamentally interested in challenging the status quo (Sawyer, 1987). Dismissing the Commission's draft Constitution, which limited presidential powers amongst other recommendations, Doe co-opted a Constitutional Assembly, whose members had political ambitions, to revise the draft by increasing the terms of office for president from four to six years in exchange for increasing the terms of office for senators from six to nine years and representatives from four to six years (Sawyer, 1987; Kieh, 2012b: 166). When a 1985 election should have returned Liberia to civilian rule, Doe allegedly rigged the ballot boxes to win the presidency by a 51 percent majority (Konneh, 2002: 79; Williams, 2002: 77). Although Doe's coup ultimately expanded the parameters of legal 'Liberian citizenship' by repealing the 'hut tax', his reign ironically muzzled the political practices of citizens who gained the franchise for the first time.

In November 1985, Thomas Quiwonkpa, one of Doe's trusted allies, was assassinated after attempting to topple the military regime (Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes, 2001: 275). Reprisals against ethnic Mano and Gio civilians in Quiwonkpa's Nimba County ensued until a general amnesty was adopted in 1986 (Konneh, 2002: 79). Following the attempted coup, Liberia was marked by entrenched authoritarianism, economic decline, and the politicisation of ethnicity. Doe responded to repeated protests with violence; amassed personal wealth from millions of dollars in foreign aid thereby neglecting public spending on important social services; and increased the number of Krahn members in his cabinet (Konneh, 2002: 80-81). One respondent, a 63-year-old Washington resident, recalled how the 1985 attempted coup spiralled Liberia into an abyss and altered his life:

> It was the coup d'état that really drove some of us from there [Liberia] because there was a lot of instability, anticipated instability, that we knew was going to happen…Before the coup took place everything was fine. I was working as assistant minister, special assistant. I was working as Director for Research and Planning. And then we realised that the country was getting harder and harder because there was a flight of capital. All the companies were leaving, they had packed up and they had left, so I just decided, "Well, I think I will go to a greener pasture"…because I had anticipated that something bigger was going to happen…From there that was it; it just went downward.[121]

As foreshadowed by this respondent, Liberia's state-citizen relations would be transformed through conflict once again with intermittent warfare beginning in 1989 and ending officially in 2003. Contrary to the mainstream literature that characterises Liberia's wars as localised and 'civil', however, it is clear from the various actors involved that the wars had international dimensions. They were also indicative of state collapse, representing continuations of the state-building, and I would argue the citizenship construction, project started in 1822 (Gerdes, 2013: 6).

## Two Uncivil Wars, the Rupture & Melding of State-Citizen/Citizen-Citizen Relations

On Christmas Eve in 1989, Charles Taylor, a former cabinet official in Doe's administration, launched an insurgency from neighbouring Ivory Coast to topple his former boss (Waugh, 2011). According to Kieh, "Taylor's strategy for winning support was anchored on the exploitation of the grievances of the various groups who were essential to the success of his military campaign" (Kieh, 1992: 130). Backed by external forces such as Libya, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Liberian exiles in the US, Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) was multi-ethnic and comprised large numbers of Gio and Mano dissidents (Kieh, 1992: 131; Konneh, 2002: 83; Kieh, 2004: 69; Waugh, 2011). A number of other insurgent groups emerged, but it was a splinter faction from the NPFL, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) led by former Taylor ally Prince Johnson, who would lure Doe to the Freeport of Monrovia in 1990, torture and kill him while taping the assassination (Waugh, 2011). Akin to the brutal murder of President Tolbert a decade before, Doe's death represented a symbolic levelling of illegitimate

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[121] [DL58] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 27, 2012.

state authority by disgruntled citizens.

Fuelled and funded in part by the exploitation of Liberia's timber and diamonds, the first war ebbed and flowed between 1989 and 1997. Fearing a regional crisis, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deployed an ad-hoc peacekeeping mission, ECOMOG, which eventually became a party to the conflict by allying itself with various warring factions (Jaye, 2003). Nevertheless, ECOMOG assisted in bringing the war to an end in 1996 with the signing of the Abuja II Peace Agreement, the last of 17 agreements total, followed by elections in July 1997 that ushered in Taylor's presidency (Konneh, 2002: 85; Kieh, 2011: 53-54; Waugh, 2011: 228). Eschewing the one-dimensional frame of analysis marked by much of the literature on Liberia's first war (Ellis, 1999), Kieh adopts a multi-dimensional causal frame, arguing that armed conflict was precipitated by historical, political, cultural, economic, social, and military factors already discussed earlier in this chapter (Kieh, 2004: 60-67; TRC, 2009b). Kieh's 'crises of underdevelopment' analysis supports my claims that Liberia's contemporary conflicts are underpinned by unresolved historical crises of citizenship.

After two years of relative peace under Taylor's administration, his reign of terror and subsequent foray into the Sierra Leonean crisis incited two rebel groups to stage a second war in 1999. Comprising former combatants from the first Liberian war and anti-Taylor enthusiasts, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) launched an offensive from neighbouring Guinea (Waugh, 2011: 264-268; Hazen, 2013: 105-110). Backed by the Guinean and American governments and supported by financial contributions from Liberians abroad, LURD also sustained itself through looting and diamond extraction (Hazen, 2013: 113-118). The splinter group MODEL began its incursion into Liberia in 2003 and was hoisted up by political support from Liberians abroad as well as the military and economic assistance of then Ivory Coast president Laurent Gbagbo (Hazen, 2013: 121; 131-133). Although Taylor had an advantage in terms of supply networks of guns and money, LURD and MODEL gained the upper hand when his arms and revenue stockpiles began to dwindle in 2003 (Hazen, 2013: 107). With mounting international pressure to step down and LURD and MODEL approaching Monrovia, Taylor was defeated and deflated when he agreed to seek political asylum in Nigeria

in August 2003, leading to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which ushered in a transitional government in 2005 (Waugh, 2011: 273-274; Hazen, 2013: 107).

Although the vast literature on armed conflict emphasises poverty, inequality, bad neighbourhoods and governance, weak state institutions, and natural resource dependency as the causal factors (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000; Fearon and Laitin, 2003), Call argues that grievances against Taylor's exclusionary behaviour after the 1997 elections—repression and assassination of political opponents, media suppression, and the exclusion of former enemies within the security forces—led to war recurrence in Liberia (Call, 2010: 353-356). Kieh (2009) further concludes that failures of the post-war transitional and peace-building processes led to overall deprivation. Furthermore, young ex-combatants underwent demobilisation without the necessary reintegration. They were socially excluded and further marginalised because of their war-time status, proving that state failure and its aftermath affects citizens in disparate ways.

**When Two Elephants Fight, the Grass Suffers[122]**

By its very definition, citizenship signifies a certain level of agency, of empowerment, of men and women making sense of their natural environment (Castles and Davidson, 2000: 21). It is supposed to bring about order, yet Liberians were forced to redefine what it meant to be citizens in the absence of a functioning state during the two wars. In fact, most respondents in this study left Liberia for short stints, extended periods, or indefinitely during this time, fundamentally altering how they identified with the state and with each other. The breakdown of law and order constituted this mass exodus, said one Washington based 53-year- old female respondent: "We wouldn't have left in those numbers were it not for the fact that there was no rule of law, no respect for property because there were soldiers getting in peoples' houses, toilets are busted out, you know, glasses busted out of the windows."[123] Echoing this respondent's assertions, Cletus Wotorson, chief sponsor of the dual citizenship proposed bill, argued:

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[122] A Liberian proverb.
[123] [DL47] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 23, 2012.

> Liberians by nature love their country and they never like to part from their country...the drafters of Liberia's Constitution did not foresee that we were going to have a destabilising civil war that would displace our citizens, most of them involuntarily, to countries, some of which were hostile, in a hostile environment, and for which reasons their choices were limited.[124]

Yet, the trajectory of Liberia's conflicts—from settler state formation to the 1980 coup—uniquely foreshadowed outbreaks of direct violence.

One could argue that the two wars were indicative of a long trajectory of conflict and "the continuation of state-run violence in the hinterland" (Utas, 2009: 281). From Liberia's inception, rural dwellers were limited in their participation in the political and economic life of the nation-state. They could hardly boast of experiencing full citizenship with the attendant rights and responsibilities, even after measured reforms instituted by Tubman, Tolbert and Doe. It is no wonder, then, that Liberia's two major armed conflicts were launched from ungoverned rural spaces—Nimba County in 1989 and Lofa County in 1999. What differentiated the armed conflicts in Liberia from those in neighbouring Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast, was the wanton destruction of essential infrastructure such as the Mt. Coffee hydroelectric facility built in the 1960s, roads, bridges and power plants (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 57). According to Liberian environmental activist Alfred Brownell, urban infrastructure represented easily expendable "monuments of hatred"[125] in the eyes of young combatants because they could not access these fully in their communities. Mats Utas reveals how "the failure of impoverished youth to find a place in Liberian society" represented a key motivation for joining a number of competing armed factions in the first and second Liberian wars (Utas, 2005: 151). In Utas' analysis, young combatants, undeniably victims in their own right, asserted their agency by transitioning into adulthood through the AK-47. Although there was forced conscription during Liberia's first war, most young combatants joined various factions of their own volition, primarily to topple "an elitist urban leadership made up of autocrats" as well as "rural gerontocratic leadership" (Utas, 2009: 270):

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[124] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on March 6, 2013.
[125] Informal discussion in Monrovia in June 2013.

> Thus war was fought to a large extent by marginalised peoples, predominantly youth, who saw the hostilities as possibly the only opportunity for them to experience mobility from the margins into the centre of politics and the economy (Utas, 2009: 270).

Based on his extensive field research on young ex-combatants in Liberia, Utas' findings support my claims that while the wars ruptured state-citizen relations for some, it provided the impetus for others to access forms of citizenship that had been previously denied by structural forces. Systematically disenfranchised, Liberia's urban and rural youth used the wars to rage against state machinery, said Gabriel Williams of the Liberian embassy in Washington:

> The society over the years has been structured in such a way that it hasn't given back to its own people where you have feelings. Look at the war, how these young kids came and destroyed everything. They have no stake in it. We're not the only country that had war, look at Sierra Leone next door, look at Ivory Coast, the people got their lights on. What did we do in Liberia? We cut down the poles. You have to pass the wire over people, people have houses in their villages, you know, and then even the hospitals, they're dying, and you expect that we're going to protect those things? They have no reasons.[126]

In addition to the wanton destruction of physical infrastructure by disaffected young people, Taylor's counter-revolution followed by the LURD and MODEL insurgencies effectively reconfigured citizenship for the vast majority of Liberians in the most profound ways. During the first war alone, a quarter million people died, as many as 700,000 Liberians sought refuge in neighbouring Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast, and approximately 1.2 million were internally displaced (Dick, 2002: 2; Konneh, 2002: 84). Unprecedented waves of out-migration, discussed in detail in Chapter VI, prompted the official rupture of state-citizen relations for many. One 46-year-old Accra-based man, for instance, vowed to never resettle in Liberia because of the trauma and loss he experienced during the war.[127] Another respondent, a 55-year-old woman who settled in the Gambia from 1996 to 1998 before relocating to London, said she grew increasingly frustrated with the war because of the continuous loss of livelihood:

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[126] Semi-structured interview in Washington on November 2, 2012.
[127] [DL96] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 13, 2013.

I got tired. I kept waiting for the war to finish, you know. Ok, as soon as it started we didn't have any plane again so that was gone. But I was still trying, trading, going to Guinea or Ivory Coast; make my way, buy things. Because my husband got killed during the war and I had the kids. So I was trying to find [a] way to make money, you know, to get them out, because for me I could have gone to the [United] States, but I couldn't just go and leave my children. So, I said well, we will all go somewhere until I really know, you know, that they are safe, then I can take the next step. So, I was just tired. You work, you think things are getting better, when you look again another one [war] starts and everything is gone...I think most of us didn't understand civil war. We had been through coups, so we thought it was the same thing; it will blow over one month, you know...So, we said we'll hang around...I'm a Mandingo and anyway business is in our blood. That's what we do best. So, I said, ok, next thing, let me start trading, you know. I took the kids to Ivory Coast, put them in the international school there. I was trading backward and forward. And then when you look again, I don't know what faction it was or whatever happened, all my market went again. It happened three/four times. I said, no, look I'm getting tired of this. I'm not going anywhere and this thing is not going to end just now. So, I just decided to leave.[128]

Some Liberians lost faith in a state that was already on the brink of implosion, argued a 32-year-old man who spent 13 years in Nigeria before relocating to London:

People didn't trust the system in Liberia, even when peace was coming back to Liberia...there's another war again. And my mom was like, during the war, "Let's get out of this country and go because this thing will still continue." And when I left I think there were [a] series of wars still...and that shows that at the time people were not trusting the system. So, they felt like, "Let me get the citizenship [of another country], let me be surviving, let me see how I can move on with my life."[129]

According to a 44-year-old Washington-based male respondent who left Liberia a few months before the first war, some Liberians abroad "acquired these [foreign citizenships] circumstantially...for survival reasons"[130] or as insurance in the event of future crisis. As a case in point, the majority of Liberia-born respondents in this study who naturalised in other countries, did so during or after the second war.

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[128] [DL9] Semi-structured interview in London on June 13, 2012.
[129] [DL12] Semi-structured interview in London on June 14, 2012.
[130] [DL44] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 22, 2012.

Discussed in more detail in Chapter VI, revoking legal citizenship ties to Liberia, however, does not imply Liberians became any less Liberian 'by heart.' While warfare undoubtedly erodes state-citizen relations for many, it does not necessarily disrupt citizen-citizen relations. For instance, some respondents in this study said the armed conflicts became opportunities for them to practice citizenship from afar, as long-distance nationalists advocating for the cessation of war (Anderson, 1992), or by sending humanitarian aid to relatives who got stuck in the crossfire. Senator Sumo Kupee, one of four sponsors of the proposed dual citizenship bill, quipped that "there are two things Liberians were looking up to [during the war]: God and Western Union"[131] because remittances were the only reliable means of survival for those who could not leave. For the vast majority of informants in this study, citizenship was not fundamentally tied to an abstract notion of statehood, but rather belonging to a community and being accountable to and responsible for that community—essentially, a set of citizen-citizen relations.

Some Liberians abroad, however, undermined citizen-citizen and state-citizen relations by stoking the flames of war under the guise of toppling Doe. This phenomenon is now so widespread that a growing body of literature has emerged on diasporas as warmongers (Appadurai, 1995; Danforth, 1995), countering the literature on diasporas and development. In the case of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, now president of Liberia, and Dr. Amos Sawyer, now Governance Commission chairman, were the masterminds behind a pressure group, the Association of Constitutional Democracy in Liberia (ACDL), which provided financial support to Taylor's insurgency against Doe (Sirleaf, 2009; TRC, 2009b). Nevertheless, not all politically active Liberians were wedded to the idea of a violent regime change. A 55-year-old respondent based in Washington recalled how during initial ACDL meetings in the late 1980s she served as a lone voice against overthrowing Doe through unconstitutional means:

> We went to Minnesota because the Nimba People's Association had wanted ACDL to come, and so, we went, I went on that trip...And one of the concerns that I had was that however we felt about the Government and what was going on politically and the disenfranchisement of the people, waging war in the manner that it

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[131] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on December 4, 2012.

> was waged, I didn't feel it was appropriate...I didn't feel that he [Taylor] needed to invade his own country in order to get his, whoever was in charge, get them out. I thought he should have tried to use the Constitution because he could have gotten on a ballot, gotten petitions, or whatever, but he didn't do that...So, that was my position and that was something that I had a difference of opinion with the other people because at the time it was, "We want to have one voice and the voice should be support Charles Taylor to get rid of Doe", and I said, "I can't do that."[132]

The pitfalls of practicing transnational citizenship to incite conflict has not been lost on Liberians who did not have the wherewithal to leave during the war, argued this Accra based male respondent:

> When the war started those who had other citizenships, they all fled. They all left, and those of us who didn't have, we had to stay there and go through, even though some of the problems were caused by them. But they all could leave and could be evacuated...[133]

Indeed, it is because of the experience of war that some Liberians either reject dual citizenship entirely or insist on instituting measures to curb abuse if it is enacted, as discussed later in this chapter. In fact, a 57-year-old male respondent based in London said that Liberia's wars have engendered deep reflection about the tenets of active citizenship:

> Because the war displaced people. It's today because of the war that we are talking about dual citizenship. The number of people that died, the family conflict, the kind of, you know, things that we have destroyed, our resources, where we're coming from, our culture have all been dismantled. We now need to have a better attitude about, "This is my country, whatever happens, whatever political changes it should not result into violence."[134]

Liberia's post-war discourse is infused with debates about the trajectory of reconstruction and citizen participation in that development process. Principally, conflicts tend to arise around issues of income inequality, land tenure, and transitional justice, which ultimately underpin claims for and counter-claims against

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[132] [DL34] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 17, 2012.
[133] [DL104] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 20, 2013.
[134] [DL18] Semi-structured interview in London on June 16, 2012.

dual citizenship. This is why the term 'post-conflict' is highly problematic and inaccurate in the Liberia case, as will be explored in the sections that follow.

**Post-War Ideologies Re-Inscribe Pre-War Crisis of Citizenship**

Malkki (1995) argues that "in the aftermath of violent conflict, many elements are reconfigured: relations of power, techniques of government, modes of organisation, livelihoods, identities and collective memories, and the relations between people and places" (Malkki, as quoted in Long, 2001: 231). In the case of Liberia, competing post-war ideologies about income inequality, land tenure, and transitional justice have re-inscribed 19th and 20th century conflicts over claims to citizenship. This is primarily manifested in the 'incompatibility of goals' between Liberian social actors whose perceptions and misperceptions of each other influence their actions and interactions. For the sake of analysis, I take on the most extreme views espoused by respondents in this study because I draw on historical comparisons of interface encounters between settlers and indigenes. What often differentiates Liberians in the post-war milieu is whether or not one identifies as a diaspora, a returnee, or a homelander. These categories of social differentiation pit one group against the other in interface situations that often mirror 19th and 20th century conflicts discussed earlier in this chapter.

Although there are slight remnants of the settler-native divide in post-war Liberia, multiple factors such as intermarriage, civil unrest, migration, exile and return have blurred these lines, instead creating two diametrically opposed markers of citizenship differentiated by war-time experiences. On one hand, those who travelled abroad during the intermittent crises are often framed as not being 'Liberian enough' because they did not suffer the dredges of war, said this 36-year-old female respondent who relocated to London a few years before Liberia's first armed conflict:

> It's interesting because we hadn't experienced "the war," there were times when people would make that almost a criteria of being [a] Liberian [citizen]. And I'm like, "Hello!", you know, "I don't think I need to dodge bullets to qualify as a Liberian."[135]

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[135] [DL8] Semi-structured interview in London on June 13, 2012.

Yet, direct war-time experiences embolden claims to citizenship that indirectly exclude those who fled Liberia voluntarily or involuntarily, argued Foreign Affairs Minister Augustine Ngafuan, a homeland cabinet official:

> There are a lot of people here who feel that they did not run away from the country. They ate the "Borbor John"…the greens that they took from the swamp when they couldn't get potato greens. Whatever they got in the swamp they ate and they survived…they went through check-points, and they were here for all the wars…They take some of their brothers that come from the diaspora as those who chickened out. "When those times of difficulties existed, you were more than glad to run away and not to face the burden with us. Now that the country has gotten stable and opportunities are coming, then you come and say you are a Liberian [citizen]."…Local people, some of them, detest diasporans too much. They carry their fear and their paranoia to [a] ridiculous extent because part of it, some are afraid of competition and they just feel that you are not a Liberian if you were not recruited from Liberia and that is unfair…[136]

Extreme perceptions and misperceptions about returnees are completely unfounded and often create feelings of alienation, argued one 44-year-old circular returnee male respondent who relocated to Monrovia with his entire family in 2012:

> Well, the first and the only person who has said to me, "Welcome home!" was the Lebanese. I've never gotten the welcome home, even from Liberian members of my family. Now, I don't think it's because they necessarily have some deep-seated animosity towards me but I do think it is because – whether most Liberians want to admit it or not – I do believe there is some low-level animosity, envy, or whatever you want to call it, that they have towards returnees. There is an assumption that we are returning with all this wealth, and that we don't understand all that they went through during the war years and the post-war years, and that we are returning with this chip on our shoulder…[137]

Contrary to this respondent's claims, Minister Ngafuan admitted that returnee arrogance is particularly prevalent in government circles:

> From the beginning of the regime, there was a concept, there was some notion that people on the ground might not have been too good

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[136] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.
[137] [CR2] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 5, 2013.

enough...The contempt they have, the contempt diasporans in government have for local people...it still exists.[138]

While returnees are caricatured as pompous and ego-maniacal, with a semblance of settler sensibilities, those who remained in Liberia are often stereotyped as unskilled and incapable of handling the demands of post-war recovery, said this 24-year-old male homelander:

> In Liberia, one other thing I observe about our society is that we are like, let me use the term 'xenocentric' [ethnocentric]. We believe in foreign policies, foreign activities, foreign education, and foreign stuff more than our own. So, if a Liberian, in Liberia, that acquires a certain degree, for a typical example from the University of Liberia or any other university like the United Methodist University, and someone coming from the United States, like Harvard University or the University of Georgia, you will find out that the person coming from abroad will be given more credence, more preference, than the person in Liberia with the Liberian diploma or the Liberian degree.[139]

The distorted perceptions of homelanders as parochial and incompetent—essentially 'incomplete' citizens—conjures up 19th and 20th century notions of the 'civilised citizen' as practicing Christianity and consuming Western products. The markers of civilisation in Liberia's post-war milieu are defined as Western education, Western inflection, extensive travel experiences, and networks abroad. However baseless, these social categories of differentiation often inform policy-making and fuel discrimination and discontent, said one 48-year-old male homelander:

> Generally, there is the perception that there is a gap in the human resource base...there is a tendency by the government and international partners to look down on the existing resource base as not being adequate enough to respond to the post-conflict environment. Therefore, maybe some of what they've learned from abroad might not be applicable to our national context...It doesn't really mean that you qualify or [it] makes you competent, particularly if you have lived out of here for a long time of your life. You grew up in a different societal context, from abroad, so when you come here, even though you're a Liberian but you're still new because the context is

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[138] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.
[139] [HL16] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.

different...So, it thus created [an] 'us versus them' sort of mentality and it placed us in the way that people get appointed.[140]

Although the ideologically driven perspectives I have highlighted herein are embedded in some national policy making discussed in the next section, it would be misleading to assume that all Liberians espouse these extreme views. As former Justice Minister Christiana Tah reflected soberingly, "everybody who is here is not unfriendly towards Liberians who come in, and everybody who comes in do[es] not come with an air of arrogance..."[141]

## Post-War Policies on Income, Land Tenure, and Transitional Justice Fuel Conflict

It can be argued that the post-war conflicts between social actors who operate domestically and transnationally are often fuelled by misguided national policies on income, land tenure, and transitional justice. In the case of income allocation within the executive branch of national government, for example, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration has effectively created multi-tiered income levels reminiscent of the multi-layered citizenship hierarchies of the 19th and 20th centuries. According to Kieh, prior to the 1980 coup, members of the ruling class and urban dwellers earned an average annual income of US$600 while their rural counterparts earned only US$70 (Kieh, 1992: 128). That was then. Now through the establishment of emergency capacity building programmes such as the Liberia Emergency Capacity Building Support (LECBS), the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), and the Senior Executive Service (SES), funded by philanthropist George Soros, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Humanity United, respectively, Liberian returnees are often paid wages far exceeding that of their homeland counterparts, as a top-off of their civil servant salaries (Government of Liberia, 2010a; Government of Liberia, 2012a). As a case in point, diaspora returnees in managerial positions are paid US$3,500 untaxed under the SES programme while their equally qualified homeland counterparts can make up to US$2,000. While the SES and TOKTEN programmes are more transparent, with wages of the different tiers of income published, the LECSBS, now phased out

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[140] [HL45] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 24, 2013.
[141] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 19, 2013.

because of a lack of funding, was shrouded in secrecy and under the sole discretion of President Sirleaf. As someone who benefitted from LECBS for one year and was privy to confidential information about remunerations, I can attest that there was a wide variation between what some officials were paid compared to others, in addition to receiving their government of Liberia salaries and amenities such as assigned vehicles, gasoline vouchers, and top-up phone cards. The rationale for allocating these incomes was based not on core competencies or considerable contributions to post-war recovery, but solely on the president's personal preferences.

Although the Civil Service Agency tried to standardise civil service pay scales during my time in the Office of the President, the proposed reforms were often met with half-hearted commitments. I attribute this to the lack of political will from the president and the reluctance of high-level appointees, since their incomes benefit from a lacklustre approach to genuine reforms. Some returnees in Liberia's semi-autonomous agencies earn up to US$15,000 a month, as was the case with former EU-funded Auditor-General John Morlu (Government of Liberia and the European Commission; 2007: 117; 154). Liberia's adoption of the international system of unequal remuneration, in which agencies such as the UN and World Bank pay expatriate staff exorbitant salaries while compensating local staff at much lower 'domestic rates', has hastened resentment and compromised productivity. One 29-year-old homelander who handles salary arrangements within an international organisation in Liberia revealed how domestic senior staff earn less than many of the US citizen Liberians who are under their supervision:

> We have [a] couple of Liberians who were employed on US citizenship...They purely interact like Liberians; they speak like Liberians. It's only when you have to prepare immigration documents you know that, or when you have to deal with their salary issues... They get paid more. They are hired because they are foreign nationals living here so they got a lot of allowances. And I can say for sure that they're not paying taxes. Some of their money is not going back to Liberia. So, it's going outside of Liberia...And, so, even in the project, there are senior staff who are getting less than they because they are known as foreign nationals.[142]

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[142] [HL23] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 14, 2013.

It is clear from the examples detailed herein that the inflated salaries of diaspora returnees are indicative of international income inequalities that have widened across the globe (Held and McGrew, 2007: 130), thereby creating a clash of life-worlds. While some returnees justify their excessive earnings as an incentive for the 'sacrifice' of return migration, homelanders, such as this 43-year-old man, scorn the policy as misguided and downright criminal:

> How can you be in a post-conflict country where poverty is at its peak, and you feel proud that you make 15 to 20,000 [United States] dollars a month? And there's nothing wrong with it because you're qualified and, you know, you're being paid for a professional service...So, I think there are some inconsistencies around values, around principles and how it translates into professionalism and our quest for what we call 'giving back to a country.' So, I think there's a total disconnect between our commitment, you know, as patriotic citizens and our quest and ego for affluence.[143]

Others argue that given the relative deprivation of most Liberians in-country, a real sacrifice would mean moving one's family to Liberia, relinquishing a mortgage abroad, and investing wholeheartedly in the post-war economy instead of transferring money to maintain a transnational lifestyle.

Besides income inequality, land tenure is also indicative of Liberia's post-war crisis of citizenship. As has been argued, private property was a primary criterion for citizenship up to the early 1980s when the 'hut tax' was abolished by President Doe. Though no longer a *criterion for citizenship*, land ownership now defines a *right of citizenship* though it is in a state of crisis:

> Land tenure arrangements and administration—as well as the ownership and use of the various resources affixed to and buried in the land—are not well developed and/or contradictory, contributing to poor land use and management plan, skewed wealth distribution, environmental damages, and contention and conflict between stakeholders (owners and users access rights). For example, while most of the land in cities like Monrovia are privately claimed or deeded, land outside of cities or rural land have overplaying access and ownership rights. This arrangement has led to a dual land market and administration, between customary land and statutory land,

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[143] [HL3] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 5, 2013.

leading to a general atmosphere of confusion and conflict between the state, citizens, and investors (Government of Liberia, 2010b: 14).

With less than 20 percent of Liberia's land privately titled and registered, the government adopted reform measures such as the Community Rights Law of 2006 and the Community Rights Act of 2009 to "properly formalise community ownership"; however, "land rights remain poorly defined, with many rural lands having overlapping and unresolved ownership" (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 4). The post-war transition further exacerbated this trend (UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2011: 57). Because of Liberia's two intermittent wars, which fuelled both rural to urban and international migration, land was often left unclaimed for long periods of time and then appropriated by squatters having no legitimate deeds. With the return of Liberians from abroad, some of whom revoked their citizenship and therefore legally relinquished their entitlements to property once owned, land tenure has become increasingly tenuous. This 23-year-old female homelander reflected on how land crises can often turn violent very fast between two competing claimants:

> The thing about land issue in Liberia is something that cannot be over emphasised. You have a land, and this person abandon[s] this land for close to twenty-five years. Other people took the land and built houses on it and other people started investing in this land. All of a sudden, you say the person came from America and want[s] to gain their land back. You know land issue, it cause[s] serious trouble all around the world and not only in Liberia. Other people feel bitter, other people feel because they're not of that class so other people want to over ride them...The other one that happened recently on the Robertsfield Road [Highway], the police had to go there, about the Cooper family. They burned tires on the road, and started burning the tires. People took up cutlasses, sticks. It can be very brutal. It's not something to see. Land issue is a very serious thing.[144]

The land crisis became so grave that the government established in 2009 a Land Commission which finalised the country's first Land Rights Policy in 2013 to reform the tenure system for public, private, government and customary land (Government of Liberia, 2013a). It is beyond the scope of this section of the thesis to examine in detail the reforms undertaken so far, but suffice it to say that the Commission

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[144] [HL37] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 21, 2013.

discovered a number of anomalies that it is attempting to resolve, such as the appropriation of customary land by private citizens, unannounced evictions, the exercise of unlawful eminent domain by government, failure by individuals owners and commercial bodies to pay applicable land taxes, and the inability of the government to enforce and collect property taxes (Government of Liberia, 2013a). Although the Commission's proposed reforms are admirable, the government has undermined these efforts by leasing a third of Liberia's landmass to foreign multi-nationals for the extraction of iron ore, rubber, timber, and oil palm (Siakor and Knight, 2012). The overreliance on concession wealth and unauthorised seizure of communal land has eroded relations between the state and its citizens, and pitted local communities against multi-nationals (Pailey, 2014a: 4).

Liberians abroad who own large tracks of unused land in the country have also begun to raise alarm about the government's haphazard approach to land tenure. One 53-year-old US born woman whose Liberian citizen parents acquired prime property in Monrovia and elsewhere, took serious exception to the prospect of eminent domain:

> If you were born in Liberia, you grew up in Liberia and, you know, forget about people like me who might have been born overseas, but, let's say, just the basic folks who were born there, grew up there, and then left there during the war, came here [the US], have settled here, been here for 35 years. We cannot look at those people and say, "Look, you guys are abandoning your property; you're not doing this and that", because, ultimately, if we could have been at home, we would have been at home. Most of us would have been at home; we wouldn't have left the country…So, all of a sudden, you're saying to me, and again, this is going back to your question of property, you know, being abandoned, you're saying to me, "Well, you abandoned your property, so we have the right of eminent domain. We're gonna take that over and we'll sell it off to the highest bidder or to whomever", which, and seen in parenthesis, is the Lebanese who have the money. So, then, you know, the Liberians are saying, "You know, wait a minute. I was at home perfectly fine until you all started shooting in the air. And I don't feel like I should have stayed there and gotten shot up, so I left![145]

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[145] [DL47] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 23, 2012.

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Although this respondent raised valid points about her family's property being abandoned as a result of warfare beyond their control, her defensive posture about eminent domain calls into question whether or not the *commands* of citizenship—owning land—should somehow supersede the *demands* of citizenship—land development and payment of taxes.

In addition to land tenure, another post-war governance issue that has revealed a clash of life-worlds and crisis of citizenship is transitional justice, which has effectively pitted 'perpetrators' against 'victims', although the two categories can often be blurred. As one 35-year-old male homelander revealed to me, "a victim cannot be a citizen"[146] because victimhood connotes an absence of agency and without justice agency cannot be restored. Disagreeing with this respondent's analysis, I believe victimhood and agency are not incompatible and that even the most marginalised groups can possess agency. Nevertheless, I recognise that the inability of Liberia's government to implement the more controversial aspects of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations has revealed a crisis of citizenship and engendered a polarised discourse on post-war impunity.

One of the provisions within the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ending the second Liberian war was the passage of a Truth and Reconciliation Act in 2005 establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2009a; TRC, 2009b). Mandated to systematically chart the root causes of Liberia's two wars; investigate gross human rights violations, violations of international humanitarian law and other abuses; and determine who bore the greatest responsibility and their impacts on survivors of the conflict, the TRC began full operations with public hearings in 2008 and released its findings and recommendations in 2009 (TRC, 2009a; TRC, 2009b). Although the Commission was mandated to evaluate the periods January 1979 through October 14, 2003, in their findings, however, there is unequivocal admission that Liberia's contemporary armed conflicts date back to the antecedents of state formation in 1822 (TRC, 2009a: 2; TRC, 2009b: 17). It further identified four major conflict issues, which, in my analysis, are underpinned by asymmetrical state-

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146 [HL47] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 25, 2013.

citizen relations: voice and accountability, and the lack thereof; land and property-related disputes; the dualism of Liberian identity and politicisation of ethnicity; and the marginalisation, alienation and manipulation of youth (TRC, 2009b: 211-213).

Unlike the South African TRC, which served as a model, the Liberian TRC in 2009 proffered a series of controversial recommendations aimed at addressing asymmetries of power between the state and its citizens, such as the establishment of an extraordinary criminal court for over 100 individuals deemed to have committed gross human rights violations, including Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson; the barring from public office (lustration) of those recommended for prosecution (both war crimes and domestic criminal prosecution) in addition to a special category of individuals publically sanctioned for financing and supporting warring factions, including then sitting President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, for a period of 30 years; the seizure and restitution of individual and corporate assets acquired by means of economic pillage during the wars; reparations for designated survivors administered through a Reparations Trust Fund; the transformation of Liberia's national motto from 'the love of liberty brought us here' to the 'the love of liberty brought us together'; and the enactment of dual citizenship legislation and diaspora transnational voting (TRC, 2009b: 347-353; 359-362; 369-376; 377-379; 400; 396-397). Essentially, the TRC recommendations mentioned herein were an attempt at strengthening citizen-citizen and state-citizen relations through processes of accountability and justice.

Illustrating the contested nature of the recommendations and the politicisation of the Commission after three years of collecting over 20,000 statements from more than 17,000 individuals throughout Liberia and in select diaspora sites abroad, three of the nine commissioners abstained from affixing their signatures to the final report signifying dissent (TRC, 2009b: xxvi; 186-187). Although the vast majority of Liberians home and abroad hailed the report as a vindication of their losses, those implicated have made full implementation impossible either through political intimidation and threats of renewed violence or by completely ignoring the recommendations altogether (Weah, 2012). To date, the only TRC recommendation that has been implemented fully is the establishment in 2009 of the Independent

National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), which has yet to fulfil its mandate of implementing all TRC recommendations (TRC, 2009b: 388-389). Other recommendations are currently under consideration, such as proposed dual citizenship legislation and a comprehensive review of Liberia's national symbols including the national motto, flag, and seal. Through its endorsement of deterritorialised citizenship as a reconciliatory imperative for Liberia, the TRC was able to balance its portrayal of diasporas by acknowledging in an earlier part of the report their past role in fuelling conflict while subsequently recognising their potential contributions to post-war recovery (TRC, 2009b: 396).

In this section, I have argued that a crisis of citizenship has re-emerged in Liberia's post-war milieu, disguised as conflicts over income inequality, land tenure, and transitional justice which harken back to pre-war societal fissures that were never fully resolved and therefore underpin 21$^{st}$ century anti-dual citizenship sentiments. In the next section, I provide a deeper analysis of how the three post-war conflict issues identified herein have influenced the range of competing claims about dual citizenship, as it represents the entry point for this thesis.

**The Passport Can Change but the Heart Cannot: Dual Citizenship Claims and Counter-Claims**

It is worthwhile here to provide a brief analysis of how the Liberian social actors in my study responded to the question of dual citizenship, given that the proposed bill represents a manifestation of the reconfiguration of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time and a site of extreme post-war contestation. Of the 202 Liberians interviewed for this thesis, 123 supported dual citizenship; 30 supported dual citizenship with reservations; 37 rejected dual citizenship; nine expressed ambivalence about dual citizenship; one policy maker provided no recorded response because he said that he would have to thoroughly study the issue in more detail for an informed opinion; and one policy maker in Monrovia and another embassy official in Accra did not have the opportunity to offer an opinion about dual citizenship explicitly because of time limitations during their interviews. Although the percentages captured in Table 9 are not representative, they reveal qualitative trends in how Liberians across my respondent pool evaluate dual citizenship.

Furthermore, I recognise that the percentages could have been drastically different had I interviewed more homeland Liberians or 'near' diasporas in Accra and Freetown.

Table 9: *Breakdown of Dual Citizenship Perspectives Amongst 202 Respondents*

| Dual Citizenship (DC) | Support DC | Support DC with Reservations | Reject DC | Ambivalent about DC | No Recorded Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London (32) | 27 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Washington (33) | 26 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Freetown (21) | 18 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Accra (33) | 20 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Monrovia (83) | 32 | 19 | 25 | 5 | 2 |
| **Total Absolute Number/ Percentage of Total** | **123/**<br><br>**61** | **30/**<br><br>**15** | **37/**<br><br>**18** | **9/**<br><br>**4** | **3/**<br><br>**1** |

Based on statistical analysis within the respondent pool captured in Table 9, it is clear that the vast majority of interviewees—76 percent—conceive of 'Liberian citizenship' as territorially unbounded, as illustrated by their support of dual citizenship as a policy prescription for Liberia in principle. Conjuring up the ubiquitous 'heart' trope, one 38-year-old Freetown-based male respondent argued:

> If a man must contribute to his nation, most especially like Liberia, the man must go out [of the country]. And if the man goes out, he acquires knowledge that can help Liberia. If you will stop a man from being a citizen in another country that will be contributing to the man's development and indirectly contributing to the nation, Liberia, then it means you'll be hindering the development in Liberia...I support dual citizenship [one] hundred percent because the book [passport] can change but the heart cannot change.[147]

Employing Liberia's future development as her frame of analysis as well, a 36-year-old female respondent based in London argued that dual citizenship would facilitate civic responsibility amongst Liberians abroad:

> People are preparing to come back [to Liberia] and I think if you make people feel excluded, or on the outside, or as outsiders coming in, you

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[147] [DL62] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 11, 2013.

know, you're trying to get people on board, all this 'Lift Liberia' and stuff like that. I think people need to share ownership of that vision and if they feel that they are going to be dipping in and out or come when they're ready, you know, then that commitment will not be strong. People will commit if they feel that something is theirs…[148]

However, respondents who supported dual citizenship with reservations argued that the proposed bill must clearly articulate provisions about the rights *and* responsibilities of would-be dual citizens in order to curb abuse. A 42-year-old female respondent in London, who did not naturalise in the UK despite being eligible for citizenship, articulated her misgivings clearly:

It is nice to have dual citizenship to know that you still have allegiance to your country of birth or country of natural, you know, heritage. But I think the bill is yet to be qualified because of national security, foreign affairs and things like that, you know, the interest of the nation, so that the interest of the nation is not compromised when it comes to, you know, who's doing what and what status has this person got.[149]

Interviewees who expressed ambivalence about dual citizenship were agnostic, articulating effectively the pros and cons of the debate without siding with any one view. Ranked in order from most to least frequently cited, Table 10 summarises major reasons given for supporting or rejecting dual citizenship, which appear to be diametrically opposed to one another.

Table 10: *Catalogue of the Pros and Cons of Dual Citizenship Culled from 202 Respondents*

| Pros of Dual Citizenship | Cons of Dual Citizenship |
|---|---|
| 1) Liberians were forced out of the country involuntarily and may have naturalised abroad because of circumstances beyond their control | Liberians are not patriotic or nationalistic, and will exploit dual citizenship for their own selfish interests |
| 2) Denying citizenship would negate the past and present development contributions of Liberians abroad (remittances, skills transfer, humanitarian relief) | Those who fuelled Liberia's crises had the luxury of stoking the fires of conflict in the comfort and security of their lives abroad, and could do so again if granted dual citizenship |
| 3) Liberians abroad will be encouraged to participate fully in future home-country development (brain gain, | Liberia would become a farmland of extraction, where would-be dual citizens would cultivate Liberia, and send |

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[148] [DL8] Semi-structured interview in London on June 13, 2012.
[149] [DL10] Semi-structured interview in London on June 13, 2012.

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|---|---|
| investment, paying taxes, establishing middle class) | revenues from that cultivation abroad, similar to multinationals |
| 4) Other countries (particularly within the sub-region) have enacted dual citizenship legislation, and Liberians have benefitted from the protection and citizenship of more pluralistic nations | Liberia's development priorities and challenges are innumerable, and enacting dual citizenship is not a matter of urgency |
| 5) Enacting dual citizenship will legislate what already exists in practice, i.e., de facto dual citizenship, thereby encouraging those who carry two passports illegally to come out of hiding | Dual citizenship would privilege an already privileged social class (diasporas/transnationals), thereby increasing inequality in Liberia and replicating the 19th century settler/native divide in the 21st century |
| 6) Dual citizenship will facilitate family reunification and encourage second generation Liberians to be more connected to the country | National reconciliation and healing through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations must be addressed before dual citizenship can be meaningfully debated |
| 7) Dual citizenship will enable free movement to and from Liberia without visa regulation hurdles | Dual citizenship would enable violation of Liberia's already weak penal laws, thereby facilitating transnational crime (corruption, fraud, money laundering) with impunity |
| 8) Revocation of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* citizenship is unconstitutional because citizenship is the birth right of all Liberians | Dual citizenship will dilute the tenets of what it means to be 'truly Liberian' |
| 9) Liberia needs to wean itself off the assistance of foreign agents, and replace them with capable Liberian development partners who may have naturalised abroad | Dual citizenship would create divided loyalties and one cannot "serve two masters at the same time" |
| 10) Liberians abroad will be able to influence governance positively through active participation in the political process (voting, holding political office) | Transnational and diasporic Liberians cannot have the same rights and privileges as resident Liberian citizens (such as owning property, voting in national elections, holding high political office) because their relationship with the Liberian state is distant and contested |

It is worthwhile noting here that no single category of respondents unanimously opposed or favoured dual citizenship, further reinforcing the contested space citizenship occupies amongst Liberians across varying spatial landscapes. Therefore, it is important to mention some critical trends across the five field sites.

Of the 32 respondents in London, the vast majority (27) supported dual citizenship with only five expressing reservations or ambivalence. While the regional head of ULO-UK and two diaspora respondents argued that they would support a bill with clearly defined stipulations, two other London-based respondents were more ambivalent. In Washington, the breakdown was similar, with the vast majority (26) of respondents supporting dual citizenship while three expressed reservations. Unlike London, however, four Washington-based respondents completely rejected dual citizenship as a policy prescription. The slight contrast in perspectives on dual citizenship between London and Washington respondents is reflected in their citizenship profiles, where more interviewees in Washington (11) retained their legal 'Liberian citizenship' while abroad than their London counterparts (6).

Of the 21 respondents in Freetown, the vast majority (18) supported dual citizenship carte blanche. One expressed support with reservations, and one respondent completely rejected dual citizenship. Liberia's late ambassador to Sierra Leone, Thomas Brima, noted his ambivalence about the proposed bill. Unlike his counterparts in the UK and US, Ambassador Brima's personal views differed from the de facto official policy line on dual citizenship by the executive branch of the Liberian government. Instead, he expressed concern that dual citizenship could be subject to abuse and manipulation if it is not regulated thoroughly: "I don't think it will improve anything. I think it will just give [a] chance for people to exploit two situations at their advantage."[150] His admission that he did not fully agree with the Liberian president's position points to a somewhat varied government stance on dual citizenship, despite the official message being maintained. This mirrors the range of divergent opinions amongst Liberian social actors in Liberia and those abroad. Many Liberian citizen residents in Freetown stated that they would not opt for naturalising in Sierra Leone if dual citizenship were enacted because being a Liberian is just like being a Sierra Leonean, with very few distinct markers of identity. Implied in their responses was the beginning of a sharp consciousness about the obligations of citizenship, with many arguing that being a Liberian is more than just carrying a passport, or being born within the country's territorial borders. Rather, being a Liberian means making some kind of concrete contribution to the

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[150] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 18, 2013.

country's post-war recovery. This level of conscientiousness can be attributed to the fact that Liberians residing in Sierra Leone have a better appreciation of the importance of citizen participation in development outcomes because they reside in a country where post-war recovery is lived and experienced first-hand, unlike their counterparts in the UK and US.

In Accra, 20 of the 33 respondents endorsed dual citizenship for Liberia, while four supported it with reservations and one appeared ambivalent. Within the respondent pool of diasporas, Accra represents the site where rejection of dual citizenship was most apparent with seven respondents snubbing the policy prescription as un-nationalistic and unpatriotic. Strong opposition to dual citizenship could be attributed to that fact that while national identity in the UK, US and Sierra Leone is more heterogeneous and malleable, national identity in Ghana is homogenous and entrenched despite the country's enactment of an all-encompassing dual citizenship act in 2002. Therefore, respondents in Accra appeared to have a stronger sense of long distance nationalism (Anderson, 1992) than their counterparts elsewhere, with many subscribing to the notion that citizenship is essentially bounded within a unitary nation-state. Many Accra-based respondents argued that their Liberianness had been strengthened almost by compulsion because they reside in a country that explicitly delineates 'foreigner' from 'native', regardless of one's acquired citizenship status. Echoing these sentiments, a female entrepreneur and 14-year resident of Accra, said:

> I love my country [Liberia], come what may. And I don't see the need of becoming a Ghanaian when we are all ECOWAS. There's no need for that…They [Ghanaians] protect themselves. I think it's a good thing, unlike we Liberians, we don't do that. We love strangers more than our own or ourselves. So, actually no matter what it's their country, you have to accept anything…Because you either take it or you leave it.[151]

Moreover, respondents in Accra were similar to their counterparts in Freetown in admitting that they would pursue non-African citizenships if given the opportunity, because of perceived benefits derived. Although this 28-year-old opted for refugee

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[151] [DL110] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 24, 2013.

integration to attend university in Ghana, she visibly scoffed at the thought of naturalising in Ghana, or any other African country for that matter:

> Why should I get another African country citizenship when my country is an African country?...But when you look at the Western world there are so many facilities, there are things that I can have in America, London, that I cannot have in my country. So, if America is requesting for a citizenship before I can get those things, I prefer having the citizenship because if I come to my country I won't have that thing they are offering me.[152]

In contrast, however, a 51-year-old self-professed Pan-Africanist[153] said that if dual citizenship were enacted in Liberia she would opt for another African passport rather than naturalise in Europe or the US, proving that the social locations and life-worlds of individuals often shape their personal choices and political stances. After moving to the US after the 1980 coup and residing there for 28 years, this Monrovia-based circular returnee retained her legal 'Liberian citizenship' although most of her immediate family became US citizens.

In stark contrast to the perspectives of respondents in London, Washington, Freetown, and Accra, the majority of whom explicitly approved of blanket dual citizenship for Liberia, the greatest resistance to dual citizenship came from homelanders in Monrovia. Of the 50 homeland interviewees, 22 emphatically rejected dual citizenship, either as a conceptual framework or as a legal instrument for Liberia. The majority of those who denounced dual citizenship were Liberians who admitted to physically residing in the country throughout the course of their lives. This supports my initial hypothesis that Liberians who never physically left the country might have slightly different conceptions of 'Liberian citizenship', and the rights/responsibilities therein, than those who travelled for short-stints, or lived abroad for longer periods of time. Sometimes employing symbolic imagery from slavery to describe citizens as slaves and nation-states as 'masters', those who rejected dual citizenship said that Liberians who naturalised abroad had abandoned Liberia by denouncing their 'Liberian citizenship' in favour of a "second master"

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[152] [DL98] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 18, 2013.
[153] [CR9] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 27, 2013.

thereby exhibiting no loyalty to Liberia or divided loyalties at best. Invoking the 'heart' motif, one 30-year-old male homelander emphatically rejected dual citizenship on the grounds of divided loyalties:

> You cannot serve two masters. There is no way that one man can serve two masters. You cannot have two captains running one ship. You will always have the head captain, he's there to make the final decision...If you have ten children or fifteen children, there is no way you can love every one of them equally. Even if you have two wives, there is no way you can love two of them equally. You will always have love for one and it will exceed the other. So, there is no way one can love two countries at heart.[154]

This particular position is theorised by Turner, who makes an interesting distinction between 'hot/cool loyalty' and 'thick/thin solidarity' (Turner, 2000: 141). For instance, it is speculated that while cosmopolitan citizens exhibit 'cool' loyalties to any particular nation-state and 'thin' patterns of solidarity with a particular group of nationals governed within a nation-state, their non-cosmopolitan counterparts exhibit 'hot' loyalties and 'thick' patterns of solidarity within a particular nation-state (Turner, 2000: 141). In addition to rejecting the presumed divided loyalties underpinned by dual citizenship, homeland respondents also argued that the proposed bill would exacerbate an already widening gap between rich and poor and encourage fraud and corruption.

Although the majority of homeland interviewees rejected dual citizenship, 12 endorsed the policy prescription arguing that Liberians should not be penalised for seeking better opportunities abroad. These homelanders asserted that dual citizenship would encourage Liberians who naturalised abroad (and their children) to reconnect with the country and become even more involved in the process of reconstruction. This perspective is supported by my earlier assertion that the movement of people, ideas, and capital across national territorial boundaries has impacted Liberians currently residing in the country. So, rather than representing a composite opinion about dual citizenship, homeland interviewees appeared divided along ideological lines precisely because of migration and globalisation. While only

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[154] [HL17] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.

two homelanders vacillated about dual citizenship, 14 expressed reservations, arguing that if the proposed bill were passed, airtight provisions would have to be included (and most importantly, enforced) to curb abuse and violation of Liberia's laws. These homelanders expressed further reservations about the premature timing of the proposed bill considering Liberia's weak legal frameworks and the challenge of protecting the rights and privileges of those with legal 'Liberian citizenship' alone.

Variations in perspectives on dual citizenship were also apparent amongst returnee respondents, further illustrating the contested nature of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time. While six of the 10 permanent returnee respondents favoured the proposed bill and one admitted to supporting dual citizenship with a few reservations, three categorically rejected such a policy prescription for Liberia. Of those who supported dual citizenship, one 55-year-old US born respondent admitted that she practiced de facto dual citizenship because of her doubly inscribed identity:

> I feel that I am a Liberian and I feel that I am an American by birth. And I feel that these two countries are not in war, they're not in conflict. I'm not aspiring to be president or any high government official, personally. So, what is the conflict? I know it's against the Liberian law but I also know that people turn the other way a lot. And why should I inconvenience myself by giving up one citizenship or the other? Both are valued to me.[155]

The only consistent pattern of perspectives about dual citizenship in this study came from circular returnee respondents, all of whom—except one who expressed ambivalence—admitted to supporting dual citizenship carte blanche. One 44-year-old male born in the US to Liberian citizen parents discussed why Liberians of his ilk should be able to legitimately carry two passports:

> As a post-war country, we should be clamouring, we should be clawing, screaming, fighting tooth and nail to make sure that everyone who even has an inkling of wanting to be considered Liberian, particularly if they have something to offer, we should be fighting to

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[155] [PR2] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 7, 2013.

get them to be Liberian. There is no reason why we should have a nuclear physicist or two, or three, or four, an endocrinologist, a general surgeon or four, or five or six whatever, out there who by simple virtue of their partial parentage or perhaps during the war years, they were born outside this country but they actually want to identify with Liberians. There is no reason why we should not be pulling those people in.[156]

Such an impassioned appeal reinforces the argument that dual citizenship is of significant importance to social actors who lead transnational lives, as they would be the primary beneficiaries of legislation in this regard.

The most revealing manifestation of citizenship as a contested space of inquiry for Liberia is the fact that one of the sponsors of the proposed dual citizenship bill, Senator Jewel Howard Taylor, expressed ambivalence about the policy prescription while her other co-sponsors emphatically endorsed it. Taylor said she now has misgivings about the bill's unintended consequences, given its implications for her own political future in Liberia. She therefore questioned the motives of Liberian diaspora proponents of dual citizenship:

> What they're actually clamouring for is political ownership of Liberia. It's not economic; it's not developmental. That's how I feel. Because they want to determine who becomes president in Liberia…So, they're looking for political capital; I don't see them looking for development or the interest in Liberia as we want to see…So, can you imagine people want to stay in America to take advantage of the opportunities there, live in the luxury that they have, they don't care what's happening here [Liberia], but when it's time to vote, all of them will rush home and say, "Oh, I'm a Liberian citizen."…I don't want somebody living in America…then you come and say…"Let [a] thousand of us go decide, ok, Senator Taylor will not be president for Liberia. Let's make sure we get George Weah" because you like George Weah…So, I'm one of those that have really taken a step back because we need to be a little careful, because I don't want to do something that in the end will hamper the lives of my children…I'm not withdrawing as a sponsor, but I think until we get the issues a little bit clearer, we need to really look at it.[157]

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[156] [CR2] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 5, 2013.
[157] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on March 6, 2013.

Although implicitly self-serving, Senator Taylor's statement is supported by the academic literature. Using Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal as case studies, Whitaker has also argued that increased claims for dual citizenship may be driven as much by selfish political interests as by concerns about national reconstruction, economic development, or security, especially with the advent of multi-party competition, the involvement of emigrants in homeland politics, and the need for African politicians to establish constituencies abroad for support and funding (Whitaker, 2011: 756). For instance, although dual citizenship proponents in Liberia and elsewhere argue for enactment based on assumptions about economic gains to the country of origin, there is no empirical evidence that explicitly recognises a correlation between increased economic contributions by a country's diasporas and the enactment of dual citizenship legislation (Whitaker, 2011). Therefore, Senator Taylor's comments unsettle the very foundation upon which the bill was proposed, consensus by its sponsors. If the proposed bill's sponsors disagree about its potential merits, then it is no wonder that Liberians at home and abroad clash over what it signifies for them.

The inconsistency in perspectives about dual citizenship amongst legislative branch sponsors of the proposed bill is also mirrored in the divergent viewpoints of their executive branch counterparts. Whereas two of the eight executive policy makers fully endorsed dual citizenship as an important policy imperative, four others expressed reservations admitting that provisions in the proposed bill would have to restrict the privileges of would-be dual citizens, such as serving in the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) or holding high political office. One policy maker wavered on the issue, neither fully rejecting nor endorsing dual citizenship. Another abstained from offering an opinion about dual citizenship. It is evident from the high-ranking officials in this study that the Liberian government, particularly the executive branch, lacks a unified policy position despite President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's public statements endorsing dual citizenship.

It is apparent based on the divergent life-worlds and social locations of Liberians in Liberia and abroad that, as a policy intervention, dual citizenship is yet to reach a consensus. This is not surprising, however, since the conception and practice of 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time has remained contested.

**Conclusion**

It is clear from the analysis in this chapter that King Peter's coerced sale of indigenous land in 1821 marked the first in a long series of conflicts over citizenship. Four major interfaces of conflict ultimately followed, thereby reconfiguring 'Liberian citizenship' from passive and fixed to active and constructed. According to Utas, "the social contract of the modern state has never been signed in Liberia, as there has never been any established reciprocity between state and citizens" (Utas, 2009: 283). Disagreeing with Utas' claim, I demonstrated that while state-citizen relations have engendered conflict, divergence and opposition—i.e., the imposition of the 'hut tax'; protests against the proposed increase in the price of rice; the thwarted constitutional review process—improvements in those relations have also ushered in intervals of consent, convergence, and accommodation—i.e., the Unification and Integration Policy; repeal of the 'hut tax'; and the Land Rights Policy of 2013. I have traced the defining moments in which Liberian social actors have employed a variety of domestic and transnational tactics such as protest and resistance to hold their state accountable, with state responses ranging from repression to conciliation.

While Moran's study explores the symbiotic relationship between violence and democracy amongst the Grebo-speaking people of southeastern Liberia (Moran, 2006), I argued in this chapter that conflict and citizenship have served as mutually reinforcing elements of the "struggle for voice and autonomy" amongst Liberian social actors (Moran, 2006: 162). Just as the French Revolution of 1799 was fought on the grounds of citizenship, so too were Liberia's multiple upheavals, beginning with the indigenous wars of resistance in the 19th century and climaxing in 21st century post-war rifts over income inequality, land tenure and transitional justice. Based on the analysis presented in this chapter, it is clear that contestations over proposed dual citizenship legislation serve as a manifestation of the ways in which 'Liberian citizenship' has been configured across space and time and is still undergoing reconfiguration.

In the next chapter, I examine how a second socio-political process, namely migration, has configured and reconfigured the meaning and practice of 'Liberian

citizenship', thereby influencing claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship legislation.

## Chapter VI
## They're Not Your Citizens…Oh, Yes, They Are!

A permanent returnee based in Monrovia, 55-year-old Denise[158] is a product of the exceedingly complex historical and contemporary migratory patterns to and from Liberia. Born in the American South to two Liberian citizen parents, one of whom was in medical school at the time of her birth, Denise and her brother once held dual citizenship. Not the de facto, illegal kind practiced by some Liberian transnationals nowadays, but the legal kind sanctioned by the country's Aliens and Nationality Law. As a child, Denise shuttled between Liberia and the US with ease as a *jus soli* US citizen/*jus sanguinis* Liberian citizen. In preparation for a return trip to Liberia in the early 1960s, Denise's parents attempted to obtain US visas for her and her brother. Halting them in their tracks, the US immigration officer at the time said, "But, we don't give our own citizens visas," to which Denise's father replied, "They're not your citizens!" The immigration officer offered a cheeky, yet measured, retort, "I beg your pardon, sir, but until they are old enough to choose, they are American citizens!" Thereafter, Denise and her brother carried two passports—American and Liberian—because they belonged to both nations legally, at least until reaching the age of majority.

As the above vignette illustrates, Liberia's contemporary history is steeped in processes of migration, mobility and flux. Whereas movement in the 19th century was directed inwards, the late 20th century was characterised by unprecedented out-flows in which migration touched the lives of all Liberians. In this chapter, I argue that historical and contemporary migration to/from Liberia has simultaneously challenged and reinforced the merits of Liberia's legal citizenship framework, thereby influencing the introduction and postponement in passage of proposed dual citizenship legislation. First, I present a brief overview of the migration literature relevant for this study. Second, I trace Liberia's historical and contemporary migration trends, paying close attention to the migratory patterns of social actors in this study. Third, I present an exploration of the citizenship status of

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[158] This pseudonym is used to protect the identity of permanent returnee respondent PR2.

respondents and their motivations for naturalising or not naturalising abroad. I discuss how the divergent citizenship status choices of respondents both strengthen and challenge claims to dual citizenship. Lastly, I explore how the challenges embedded in processes of migration influence claims for dual citizenship. In order to maintain a focused discussion, this chapter examines international migration to and from Liberia rather than internal migration within Liberia, primarily because emigration has influenced more significantly the introduction and postponement of proposed dual citizenship legislation than internal migration.

**Contestations Over Mobility and Place Complicate Migration**

Migration appears to be embedded in philosophical debates about movement and stasis. According to Cresswell, there are two paradigms framing mobility and place. On one hand, contemporary social thought depicts mobility as "progressive, exciting, and contemporary" while rootedness, stasis and sedentarism are seen as "reactionary, dull or of the past" (Cresswell, 2006: 25). Furthermore, movement is embedded in social and political history, in which "people have always moved, whether through desire or through violence" (Malkki, 1992: 24). This could be attributed to the motivations for introducing Liberia's dual citizenship bill, as the bill represents simultaneously recognition of Liberia's history of migration and conciliation to emigrants residing abroad, discussed later in this chapter. The 'nomadic metaphysic', as it is called, "links mobility to forms of subaltern power…central to the practices of transgression and resistance" (Creswell, 2006: 46).

On the other hand, there is an alternative school of thought referred to as the 'sedentarist metaphysic', in which "people are often thought of, and think of themselves, as being rooted in place and as deriving identity from that rootedness" (Malkki, 1992: 27). This paradigm influences backlash against dual citizenship and the subsequent postponement of the proposed bill in Liberia. As a case in point, one 28-year-old Monrovia-based circular returnee in this study described herself as 'deeply rooted' even though she had only returned to Liberia in 2011 after 21 years abroad. Having naturalised in the US just before relocating to Liberia, this

respondent ironically questioned the logic of dual citizenship on the grounds of its rootlessness:

> If people have dual citizenship they are basically in a win-win situation because it almost forces them not to be deeply rooted somewhere. It's just like if they are in Liberia, if something pops up they can just pick up and leave to go somewhere else. So, there is this level of, like, non-attachment to a place. So, I think that, and in the case of Liberia, having people not be deeply rooted and not be attached to this place could possibly be dangerous...I think right now for Liberia, we need people that are deeply rooted here...because I think where your heart is, is where your energy is going to be...[159]

Embedded in nationalist discourse and entangled with arborescent metaphors, the 'roots' paradigm frames mobility as pathological, dysfunctional and threatening (Malkki, 1992: 27-28; Cresswell, 2006: 27; 31). This frame has fundamentally influenced the securitisation of migration, where heightened preoccupations with containment have emboldened modern nation-states to adopt restrictive citizenship and visa regimes as well as border controls (Dannreuther, 2007: 101; 105-107; 110-111; Duffield, 2008: 146; 152-155). According to this frame "mobility is often the assumed threat to the rooted, moral and authentic existence of place" and mobility involves "the absence of commitment and attachment and involvement" (Cresswell, 2006: 31). This paradigm colours the thinking of opponents of dual citizenship for Liberia; while they may see migration as involuntary, they often view naturalisation abroad as a voluntary abdication of commitment to Liberia and its citizens. It can be argued that those who view naturalisation abroad as a legitimate response to protracted conflict view 'Liberian citizenship' through a nomadic metaphysical lens, while those who adopt a sedentarist metaphysic argue that naturalisation is an illegitimate revocation of 'Liberian citizenship' as legal, cultural and national identity.

Yet, displacement, particularly of refugees, unsettles sedentarist biases in some ways. Just as mobility is seen as unnatural in the sedentarist metaphysic, displacement caused by violence can also be viewed as rupturing the 'natural order of things', in which case refugees fleeing armed conflict cannot be framed as

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[159] [CR10] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 27, 2013.

aberrations. In her empirical study on Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Malkki discovered that while refugees settled in urban centres juggled multiple identities through partial assimilation, those inhabiting camps staunchly held onto an essentialist construction of national identity bounded by territory (Malkki, 1992: 35-36). Camp refugeeism became a symbol of cultural purity and a status signifying "the ultimate temporariness of exile and of the refusal to become naturalised, to put down roots in a place to which one did not belong" (Malkki, 1992: 35). In my study as well as in Malkki's, keeping one's citizenship and refusing to assimilate signifies authenticity and rootedness for some, however imagined.

Just as the sedentarist and nomadic metaphysics challenge understandings of mobility and place, contemporary migration flows, whether internal or international, disrupt widely held assumptions that migration is unidirectional and permanent (Leitner, 2003: 450-451). Migration may occur in stages, with multiple intermediate destinations over a protracted period of time. It can also be circular or cyclical, with migrants moving regularly between two or more locales representing destination and origin countries, as is evidenced by the circular returnees in this study. While migration may change from temporary to permanent, it can also involve return migration after a long period of exile. These trends are indicative of the migratory flows to and from Liberia, which can be considered circular in nature rather than unidirectional, from pre-settler origins to contemporary migration patterns.

Quite often, migration is 'mixed' in terms of motivations with the nature of flows essentially a combination of both compulsion *and* choice (Van Hear, et al: 2009: 1):

> It is increasingly recognised that few migrants are wholly voluntary or wholly forced. Almost all migration involves some kind of compulsion; at the same time almost all migration involves choices. 'Economic' migrants make choices, but they do so within constraints. For example, what is the balance of force and choice for the supposed 'voluntary', 'economic' migrant who 'chooses' to seek work in her country's capital or abroad, but whose child would otherwise die if she does not earn money to pay for medical treatment? 'Forced' migrants likewise make choices, within a narrower range of possibilities; but even in the most dire circumstances, there is still some choice, since some may choose to stay and suffer starvation or violence rather than leave their homes. Nevertheless, even if all migration involves choices, some

migrants have more choices than others…Thus, while outward movement may be forced, precipitated by persecution, conflict, war or some other life-threatening circumstance, inward or onward movement, including the choice or determination of the destination, may be shaped by economic, livelihood, betterment or life-chance considerations. At some point, then, forced migration may transmute into economic or livelihood migration…(Van Hear, et al, 2009: 3-4).

Just as contemporary 'Liberian citizenship' sits on a continuum of passivity and activity, so too do migration motivations and flows sit on a continuum "ranging from 'choice' or 'more options' at one end to 'little choice' or 'few options' at the other" (Van Hear, et al, 2009: 3). Mixed migration recognises the nuanced structural forces at play, while simultaneously acknowledging the agency of migrants. This level of analysis serves as the bedrock of my discussion later in the chapter about whether or not naturalisation can be considered a compulsion or a choice.

While discussion about the continuum of choices in migration remains dynamic, other debates have emerged about the assumed symbiotic relationship between migration and development. Perspectives about the relationship between migration and development have shifted considerably in the last 60 years "from developmentalist optimism in the 1950s and 1960s to neo-Marxist pessimism over the 1970s and 1980s, towards more optimistic views in the 1990s and 2000s" (de Haas, 2010: 227). While migration is an evolutionary process, it has been catalysed in the 21st century by neo-liberal capitalist expansion and accumulation, argue some authors (Canterbury, 2012: 1). Others believe that while migration can be a consequence of capitalist development, it has also been employed as a livelihood strategy to "overcome local development constraints" (de Haas, 2010: 251). Nevertheless, scholars often agree that migration alone cannot mitigate structural constraints such as "endemic corruption, misguided macro-economic policies, credit and insurance market failure and insecure property rights" because states must assume responsibility for instituting general reforms (de Haas, 2010: 251; 256). Consequently, development in emigration states such as Liberia can be seen as a "prerequisite for investment" by migrants rather than as a "consequence of migration" (de Haas, 2010: 256).

Empirical evidence has shown that impacts of migration on development are neither completely positive nor negative in their outcomes, argues de Haas:

> While neo-classical and developmentalist perspectives on migration and development tend to underestimate, structuralist perspectives tend to overestimate the importance of structural constraints and thereby also largely rule out agency. Hence, an improved theoretical perspective on migration and development has to be able to account for the role of structure—the constraining or enabling general political, economic, social and cultural context in which migration takes place—as well as agency—the *limited but real* capacity of individuals to overcome constraints and potentially reshape structure (de Haas, 2010: 241).

Furthermore, there is a reciprocal relationship between migration and development, rather than linear or causal (de Haas, 2010: 253). Neo-classical models of migration simplistically categorise migrants as individuals motivated by utilitarian aims, thereby thoroughly disregarding how households, social networks, and families influence decisions to migrate (Leitner, 2003: 454; de Haas, 2010: 231). As an alternative to the neo-classical model, the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) frames the household or family as the basic unit of analysis in migration decision-making and risk sharing practices, thereby casting migration as one of many livelihood strategies employed by households and their individual members (de Haas, 2010: 242-244). Yet, this model has also been critiqued for its limited focus on labour migration and skewed analysis of the family/household as a homogenous entity with singular interests and no power differentials (Leitner, 2003: 455).

Following this brief literature review is a detailed description of historical and contemporary migration patterns to and from Liberia, with an exploration of how movement across diverse spatial landscapes has configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship'.

**This Land of Migration, Not 'Liberty'**
Long before the arrival of black settlers in the 19th century, there was significant migration to the territory that is modern-day Liberia. As a case in point, most of

Liberia's 16 ethno-linguistic groups are not 'indigenous' at all. They migrated in several waves, with the Gbandi, Gio, Kpelle, Lorma, Mandingo, Mano, Mende, and Vai arriving between the 12th and 17th centuries from far-flung West-African territories such as contemporary Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, and Sierra Leone (Guannu, 1983: 9-10; Konneh, 1996: 7-11). Other early documented waves of migration began at the end of the 15th century, when Mande-speaking peoples cascaded up the Niger River, settling in present-day Sierra Leone and Liberia (Gershoni, 1985: 2). The Mane warriors, whose descendants are the Gbandi and Lorma, constituted another wave of migration as they settled in what is modern-day northern Liberia and southern Sierra Leone, thereby pushing the Golas further south into the forest belt (Gershoni, 1985: 2). Traditionally seafarers who travelled along the West African coast and across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe as early as the 19th century, the Krus from southeastern Liberia also exhibited migratory patterns that gradually spread into "the area between the central Liberian coast and the hinterland, up to the San Pedro River in what is now Ivory Coast" (Gershoni, 1985: 2; Black, et. al, 2006: 41). Migrants were particularly attracted to the coast because of interactions with Portuguese seamen who began making regular expeditions to trade with the local people in the mid-15th century (Gershoni, 1985: 3). In exchange for brass, glass, clothes, and iron supplies, the local populations traded in slaves, skins, gold, and ivory (Gershoni, 1985: 3).

By the time repatriated blacks arrived on the coast of pre-settler Liberia in the mid-19th century, 250 years of migration had preceded them, with various ethno-linguistic communities virtually settled in their confederations of clans and chieftaincies, "traditions of alliances, and rivalries" (Gershoni, 1985: 3-4). Between 1822 and 1867, the American Colonisation Society (ACS) facilitated the emigration of 18,858 blacks to Liberia. Of the total, 6000 emigrants had been granted freedom on the condition that they leave the United States; others were either born free or had purchased their freedom (Gershoni, 1985: 8). Although recaptives from the Congo River Basin trickled into pre-settler Liberia, the 1850s marked a surge in their immigration. Between 1858 and 1861, nearly a dozen slave ships en route to Cuba and other places in the Americas were intercepted and diverted to the shores of Liberia and by late 1860, between 3600 and 6000 recaptives had arrived (Clegg,

2004: 245; Moran, 2006: 2). These numbers were augmented by a few hundred immigrants from Barbados after the abolition of slavery on that island (Moran, 2006: 2).

Consequently, citizenship in post-independence Liberia was embedded in experiences of migration. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the earliest presidents of Liberia were born in the US, the West Indies, and Sierra Leone (Guannu, 1989). As one 29-year-old male homelander in this study acknowledged, what ultimately defines Liberia is its "various shades of immigration":

> I've always had this opinion that defining 'Liberian citizenship' is a very, very difficult thing because I think Liberians don't have a unique identity that you can easily look at and say, "This guy is a Liberian."...you have a lot of Mandingoes who have relatives in Guinea...They are Liberians. They can easily mingle in Guinea; they could easily pass on as citizens in Guinea. You have some people of the Kissi tribe who have relatives across the border in Sierra Leone...They can easily mingle as Sierra Leoneans; they could easily mingle as Liberians. We also have some Liberians, way back, when we were much younger, people used to laugh at the Ghana Kru and Nigerian Kru. But, actually, there are Kru people who...most of the Kru people, some of them will tell you, "I was born in Ghana, then I came on this side [Liberia]."...So, that was it. Even my own situation, my grandfather, my paternal grandfather, came from Ghana and settled here and then he had a Kpelle woman who had my father. And now, my mother is a Kru. So, sometimes identifying myself as a Liberian can be a little bit tricky...And then, historically, most of the tribes came from right around West Africa. So, if you came from around West Africa and settled here, other people came from maybe the Congo basin, or they came from the US, they settled here, after a period of time, if there are other people who [are] settling on that side and coming here, how do you define yourself as more a Liberian than those who are just settlers like you are?[160]

As acknowledged by the homeland respondent, the trajectory of Liberia's migratory flows and its bearing on citizenship construction is exceedingly complex. Whereas Liberia's first citizens were immigrants with no filial ties to the land, the institution of citizenship became increasingly defined by residence and land ownership for the first 100 years of the history of the republic. Emigration from Liberia was rare

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[160] [HL23] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 14, 2013.

during the early processes of state formation and later stages of attempted nation-state consolidation. During the Tubman and Tolbert regimes, for instance, Liberians who could afford to travelled abroad, particularly to the United States for vacation or for studies, but rarely ever stayed for prolonged periods of time (TRC, 2009b: 118). After the 1980 coup, however, the citizenship-as-residence trope no longer held sway since Liberians fleeing the ensuing crises still considered themselves citizens. As indicated in Liberia's TRC report, the reconfiguration of 'Liberian citizenship' as identity, practice and a set of relations was a direct consequence of migration patterns post-1979:

> The Liberian diaspora prior to 1980 was composed mostly of students and individuals with diplomatic and business connections in the international community. The Liberian conflict fundamentally altered the nature of the Liberian diaspora, however, both by increasing the diaspora's size and changing its composition to reflect the political, economic, and social divides in Liberia during the conflict. Liberians who were outside of Liberia when the civil upheaval began with the Doe coup, and particularly when the civil wars began in full intensity in 1990, found themselves trapped with neither support nor the means to return home (TRC, 2009b: 283).

Although the first Liberian-American diasporas developed at the time of settlement in the 19th century, one could argue that Liberian diaspora identities fundamentally crystallised in the 1980s through to the early 2000s because of conflicts varying in scale and magnitude, as discussed in the previous chapter. One 55-year-old Washington-based female respondent argued that it is precisely because of political contestations in Liberia and subsequent mass migration that diasporas emerged:

> I think it still concerns me that I still hear people say, "I don't want to be involved in politics", or "I'm not political", or "This is not a political organisation", and I don't know how you live and it's not political…The whole reason we're in the diaspora is a political issue…So, when people say, "I'm not political," I think it's like a split, that they mean a disconnect between the reason you're actually here in the diaspora, whether you're in France, in Germany, in Sweden or in Australia, you forget that the reason you're in these places is because of politics. Because if politics hadn't played the way it played, we wouldn't be here, at least in the number that we are…So, when we say we're not political or we don't want a political organisation, or we

> don't want to be involved in a political organisation I think we are, I don't know, deluding ourselves...[161]

Moreover, the nation-state of Liberia became fundamentally multi-territorialised, with a sizeable number of Liberians scattered throughout the globe, yet still fully engaged transnationally as a result of armed conflict. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Liberia represented one of the highest refugee producing countries in Africa (Black, et. al, 2006: 5), with record highs in internal migration. Table 11 indicates that while there was a gradual decrease in the numbers of registered Liberian refugees worldwide between 1993 and 2005, the numbers of internally displaced persons spiked one year before each of Liberia's armed conflicts ended (1996 and 2002, respectively).

Table 11: *UNHCR Refugee/Asylum/IDP Population Statistics for Liberia*

| Category/Year | 1993 | 1996 | 1999 | 2002 | 2005 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Refugees | 150,153 | 120,061 | 96,317 | 64,956 | 10,168 |
| Asylum Seekers | N/A | 1 | 29 | 10 | 29 |
| IDPs | N/A | 320,000 | 90,584 | 304,115 | 237,822 |

Source: 2002 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook-Liberia

Various sources estimate that hundreds of thousands of Liberians fled the country during the wars to locations as diverse as Ghana (with a refugee settlement exceeding 30,000 Liberians as of 2007), Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Guinea in the West African sub-region, which hosted as many as 780,000 Liberian refugees in 1996 (UNHCR, 2007). Liberians also fled to other destinations around the globe, particularly the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Norway in Western Europe and Providence, Rhode Island, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Staten Island, New York, in the United States, though the exact number and size of Liberians in these regions is contested (Scott, 1998; US Department of State, 2001; Lubkemann, 2008: 49; Advocates for Human Rights, 2009; TRC, 2009b). As a case in point, the distribution of populations in the United States is the least verifiable, with estimates ranging from under 10,000 to over 450,000 (Lubkemann, 2008: 49; TRC, 2009b: 68).

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[161] [DL34] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 17, 2012.

Apart from the West-African sub-region, the United States hosts the largest population of Liberians outside of Liberia. This can be attributed to a number of factors, namely, the historical links between Liberia and the United States; the temporary migratory flows of Liberian elites to the United States pre-armed conflicts; and that the US boasted one of the largest resettlement programmes for Liberian refugees. The US government granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to approximately 200,000 Liberians living in America, and this has been renewed annually since it started in 1991 (Waugh, 2011: 313). Additionally, the US refugee resettlement programme offered naturalisation as a durable solution to two categories of Liberians: asylum applicants who could prove political persecution in Liberia and those who demonstrated considerable family ties to the US who could be reunited (Waugh, 2011: 314). According to Gabriel Williams of the Liberian embassy in Washington, the generations of Liberians who eventually settled in the US are indicative of pre- and post-war patterns of migration:

> People who are older, 50, 60, 70 years or older, many of them came here [US] for education and then over time they over stayed, especially during the 1960s coming through the 1970s. And then you have all of the civil upheavals that we had in Liberia beginning with the Rice Riots in the late 1970s that culminated into the 1980 military coup, so many of those people from that background who came here for educational purposes to get various professional background to go back just stayed. And then of course you had the nearly 20 years, more than 15 years of civil upheaval, the civil war that allowed thousands of people to vote with their feet and many of them on resettlement. Other people came here and gained political asylum. This is how we have the huge exodus that led to brain drain in Liberia.[162]

Trends in the regularisation of status of Liberians in the US also mirror the conflict-peace cycles. Table 12 captures how many Liberians were newly registered in the US as permanent residents, naturalised US citizens, refugees and asylees. The figures for permanent residents are captured as early as 1970-1979, as this timeframe represented an initial spike in newly registered Liberians in the US. The 1970s were also indicative of increased out-migration as a result of brewing conflict in Liberia following the death of President Tubman in 1971.

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[162] Semi-structured interview in Washington on November 2, 2012.

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Table 12: *Newly Registered Liberia-born US Permanent Residents/Citizens, Refugees, Asylees*

| Category/ Years | Permanent Residents | US Citizens | Refugees | Asylees |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1960-1969 | 841 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1970-79 | 2,391 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1980-89 | 6,420 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1990-1999 | 13,587 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2000 | 1,570 | 1,022 | 2,620 | 782 |
| 2002 | 2,869 | 1,047 | 560 | 746 |
| 2004 | 2,757 | 1,218 | 7,140 | 399 |
| 2006 | 6,887 | 2,193 | 2,402 | 113 |
| 2008 | 7,193 | 2,468 | 992 | 91 |
| 2010 | 4,837 | 3,360 | 244 | 61 |
| 2012 | 4,109 | 4,332 | 69 | 35 |

Source: US Department of Homeland Security 2008 & 2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics

As the table illustrates, the number of Liberia-born newly registered US permanent residents more than doubled in the 1990-1999 period, when Liberia was its most unstable. Similarly, the numbers of Liberia-born newly registered US refugees spiked in 2004, one year after Liberia's second armed conflict ended, before steadily declining. Not surprisingly, the number of Liberia-born newly registered US asylum grantees declined after 2002 as Liberia became more stable. Whereas the number of newly registered US permanent residents fluctuated from 2000 to 2012, the number of newly registered US citizens increased consistently. The DHS official statistics on newly registered US citizens reinforces the findings of my study, in which eight of the 12 Liberia-born Washington-based residents who naturalised opted to do so in the 2000s although the vast majority of them were eligible for US citizenship long before this time. As will be discussed later in this chapter, respondents adamantly held onto their legal Liberian citizenships, either opting for naturalisation long after the second armed conflict ended or dismissing naturalisation altogether.

Just as assumptions about naturalisation trends for Liberians abroad have influenced the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation, so too has post-war migration data, albeit scanty. According to UN figures, the number of Liberian refugees decreased since the cessation of armed conflict in 2003. UNHCR, for instance, estimates that there were up to 160,000 refugees still outside of Liberia as

of February 2006 with numbers declining to just over 75,000 in 2008 (UNHCR, 2007). It is unclear, however, how many Liberians actually reside abroad today, with the statistics on return migration to Liberia equally as inconclusive. Although policy-making and academic research has been infused by the recognised importance of Liberians abroad, the lack of reliable statistical data on Liberia's diasporas has proven to be a huge impediment. The gaps in data on contemporary out-migration and return migration represent a microcosm of the "conflicting accounts of the volume of migration in contemporary Africa, reflecting the paucity of data sources and their often poor quality" (Black, et. al, 2006: 5).

Regardless of the dearth of reliable data on contemporary migration flows for Liberia, it is clear that the process of migration, whether in-bound or outbound, has touched the lives of all Liberians thereby invariably influencing the introduction and postponement in passage of proposed dual citizenship legislation. For instance, the migration patterns of Liberia-born 'unofficial' anonymised interviewees in this study—those not speaking in their official capacities as government of Liberia representatives or heads of regional diaspora organisations—is a particularly stark illustration of how migration became a mainstay in contemporary Liberian demography. As Table 13 indicates, of the 163 Liberia-born anonymised respondents, 84 percent had traveled outside the territorial confines of the nation-state at some point in their lives. Though 16 percent, principally homeland Liberians, had never travelled internationally, all interviewees admitted to having at least one relative abroad, primarily as a consequence of armed conflict. Although the percentages captured in the table are not representative, they certainly reveal trends in the first-time migration patterns across my respondent pool.

Table 13: *First-Time Migration Patterns of 163 Anonymised Liberia-born Respondents[163]*

| Field Site/ Migration Patterns | Left Liberia before 1980 | Left Liberia between 1980-1989 | Left Liberia between 1990 and 1997 | Left Liberia between 1998 and 2003 | Left Liberia after 2003 | Never Left Liberia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London (28) | 1 | 10 | 14 | 2 | 1 | N/A |
| Washington (24) | 1 | 9 | 10 | 3 | 1 | N/A |
| Freetown (15) | N/A | 2 | 7 | 2 | 4 | N/A |
| Accra (30) | N/A | 3 | 19 | 7 | 1 | N/A |
| Monrovia (66) | 1 | 6 | 25 | 6 | 2 | 26 |
| **Total Absolute Number/ Percentage of Total** | **3/ 2** | **30/ 18** | **75/ 46** | **20/ 12** | **9/ 6** | **26/ 16** |

From the numbers tabulated in Table 13, it is clear that the highest spike in first-time migration amongst Liberia-born anonymised respondents occurred during the first armed conflict, which brought Charles Taylor to power in 1997. Unsurprisingly, first-time migration also increased from the 1980 coup to the onset of the first insurgency by Taylor in 1989. Of the 28 London-based Liberia-born respondents, 12 had spent some time in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Gambia, Ivory Coast or Nigeria before settling in the UK, proving that West Africa served as a transit point before settlement. Of the 24 Washington-based Liberia-born respondents, only four had transited for some time through another African country—namely Nigeria, Guinea, Zimbabwe or Ghana—before settling in the US. Of the 15 Freetown-based Liberia-born respondents, only three had transited through Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana or Nigeria before initially settling in Freetown; the other 12 travelled directly to Freetown. This is unsurprising given that Liberia and Sierra Leone share a common border. Of the 30 Accra-based Liberia-born respondents, five had spent some time in the US or Europe before settling in Ghana, while five had passed through Togo,

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[163] I did not capture the migratory patterns of foreign-born Liberians in this table because I wanted to establish a baseline of first-time migration for those who were born in the country. I deliberately refrained from explicitly asking the 21 government officials and heads of regional organisations about their migration patterns, as I realised early on that this information was not necessary for my analysis.

Guinea, Sierra Leone, or Nigeria before settling in Ghana. The remaining 20 had travelled to Ghana directly from Liberia. Of the 24 homeland Liberians who had travelled abroad, many of them migrated for short stints to the West African sub-region before returning subsequently to Liberia. Quite often their migratory patterns were circular in nature, with out-migration peaking during times of conflict and return migration increasing during times of relative peace. These varying trends are supported by the academic literature, which argues that contemporary migration is neither unidirectional nor permanent (Leitner, 2003: 450-451).

In the sections that follow, I explore how migration has simultaneously expanded and contracted the menu of legal citizenship options for Liberians abroad thereby influencing their perspectives on the merits/demerits of bounded or unbounded 'Liberian citizenship'.

**A Complex Web of Citizenship Configurations**

'Liberian citizenship' has become exceedingly nuanced and multi-dimensional, largely brokered by processes of migration. As Table 14 capturing citizenship status suggests, the majority of 'unofficial' anonymised respondents in this study were Liberia-born Liberian citizens (65 percent), followed by Liberia-born naturalised foreign citizens (24 percent). Although these statistics may not be representative, they do indicate that slightly higher numbers of Liberians maintained their legal 'Liberian citizenship' than naturalised abroad, contrary to popular lore. Thus, one assumption embedded in the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation—that Liberians abroad have naturalised in record numbers—may be more politically motivated than factual and based on sentiments rather than empirical evidence (Pailey, 2013a).

Table 14: *Citizenship Status of 181 Anonymised Respondents*[164]

| Field Site/Citizenship Status | Liberia Born-Liberian Citizen | Liberia Born-Naturalised Foreign Citizen | Liberia Born-Jus Sanguinis Foreign Citizen | Foreign Born-Foreign Citizen | Foreign Born-Jus Sanguinis Liberian Citizen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London (30) | 6 | 22 | N/A | 2 | N/A |
| Washington (30) | 11 | 12 | 1 | 6 | N/A |
| Freetown (20) | 12 | 3[165] | N/A | 3[166] | 2 |
| Accra (30) | 29 | 1 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Monrovia (71) | 59 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| **Total Absolute Number/Percentage of Total** | **117/ 65** | **44/ 24** | **2/ 1** | **15/ 8** | **3/ 2** |

The third largest category of respondents (8 percent) were Liberians born abroad who automatically obtained *jus soli* foreign citizenships, a function of the complex and varied migratory patterns and circumstances of Liberians worldwide. The respondents in this study who were born outside of Liberia before the onset of contemporary conflict in 1979 admitted that their parents lived abroad because of school or work opportunities. This is supported by demographic migration trends for Liberians pre-1980. Contrastingly, *jus soli* foreign citizen respondents born 1980 and after admitted that they were born abroad because of continued instability in Liberia. This is further supported by the spike in emigration after the coup that toppled Tolbert. One of the most salient ways in which migration reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship' is that it created a hybrid category of simultaneous *jus soli* foreign citizens/*jus sanguinis* Liberian citizens like Denise, described in the introduction of this chapter. By virtue of the Aliens and Nationality Law, dual citizenship is recognised for these conditional Liberian citizens although they must decide at the age of majority whether to maintain their foreign citizenship by birth or their 'Liberian citizenship' by ancestry. One respondent, a 43-year-old London

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[164] I deliberately refrained from explicitly asking the 21 government officials and heads of regional organisations about their citizenship status, as I realised early on that this would be a sensitive subject to broach for those speaking in their official capacities. Therefore, this information is not captured in my analysis.

[165] In Freetown, two of the three Liberia-born Sierra Leoneans admitted that though they did not go through any formal channels of naturalisation they still obtained Sierra Leonean passports.

[166] One of the three Sierra Leone-born Liberians admitted that though he was born in Sierra Leone, he had to officially naturalise when he returned to the country in 2011 because he had spent most of his life in Liberia.

resident who was born in the UK to Liberian citizen parents but grew up in Liberia, admitted that she feels more Liberian than British, and would rather not relinquish the Liberian passport that she carries illegally:

> ...it would break my heart if I couldn't get a Liberian passport. I don't want to be British. I live here [the UK] but I'm a Liberian and I say it all the time, you know. I may live in this country, but I'm traditionally a Liberian. I eat Liberian food, I train my children the Liberian way, you see what I mean?[167]

If enacted, Liberia's proposed dual citizenship bill would mitigate the concerns of this respondent by enabling her to legally carry UK and Liberian passports.

Other categories of Liberians tend to further complicate what appear to be clearly defined stipulations on citizenship in the Aliens and Nationality Law, such as *jus soli* Liberian citizens who retained their foreign citizenship by virtue of being born to at least one foreign citizen parent (1 percent of the respondent pool) and *jus sanguinis* Liberian citizens born abroad who retained their legal 'Liberian citizenship' by virtue of having at least one Liberian citizen parent (1 percent of the respondent pool). These two categories of Liberians were fewer in number in this study, although I suspect that a comprehensive quantitative study will show they represent a larger percentage of the overall Liberian emigrant pool. Moreover, Liberia-born *jus sanguinis* foreign citizens and foreign-born *jus sanguinis* Liberian citizens occupy a unique space within the 'Liberian citizenship continuum' because they made choices that were contrary to their native-born citizenship status. While the *jus soli* Liberians took on the foreign citizenships of their foreign-born parents by the age of majority, their *jus sanguinis* counterparts maintained the citizenship of their Liberia-born citizen parents. As a case in point, one 35-year-old Monrovia-based permanent returnee, whose parents were working in East Africa at the time of his birth, retained his *jus sanguinis* 'Liberian citizenship'. Even though he was entitled to Kenyan citizenship by birth and eligible for US citizenship having lived there for over a decade as a permanent resident, this respondent opted for 'Liberian citizenship' instead:

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[167] [DL15] Semi-structured interview in London on June 15, 2012.

I met some Kenyan people in the UN system here [Liberia] and they were like, "You were born in Kenya! You should apply for Kenyan citizenship; you are entitled!" I'm like, I haven't really taken the time to investigate that but seeing once again the dual citizenship faux pas, and I haven't really been inspired to go after it…When I went into Kenya [in May 2009], the immigration officer at the airport, when I paid my ten [US] dollars for the airport visa, he said, "But you were born in Kenya, how come you have a Liberian passport?!" My parents were just working here, so [he said]…"You have to get a Kenyan passport!"…Well, I knew at the time that Liberia did not honour dual citizenship and I always felt like I would be selling my soul by going to another nationality. But that's just me.[168]

The respondent's decision to choose 'Liberian citizenship' from a menu of three legal identity options illustrates the intricate nature of 'Liberian citizenship' construction and practice. Discussed later in this chapter, the motivations for making divergent, personal choices about which citizenship to maintain is entangled in a complex web of what it means to practice de jure or de facto 'Liberian citizenship' and what it means to be Liberian 'officially' or 'unofficially.'

While I argued in Chapter IV that contemporary constructions of 'Liberian citizenship' transcend the legal definition enshrined in the Aliens and Nationality Law—moving from passive, identity-based citizenship to active, practice-based citizenship—it is still important to explore trends in the legal citizenship status of informants in this study. After all, the ways in which respondents altered or maintained their Liberian citizenships is indicative of their varied life-worlds, social locations, and the divergent circumstances that influenced their choices. As a case in point, the highest proportion of 'unofficial' anonymised Liberia-born respondents (65 percent) retained their legal Liberian citizenships, with a disproportionate number represented by 'near' diasporas in Accra and Freetown and Monrovia-based homelanders. Of the 50 homeland Liberians, slightly over half (52 percent) said they had never travelled outside of Liberia, and therefore would not have been eligible for foreign citizenships. Of the 110 total anonymised Liberian diaspora respondents, slightly over 50 percent retained their legal Liberian citizenships despite having lived abroad for long periods of time. In the 'wider' diaspora (UK and US), London-based Liberians naturalised at a far greater rate than their Washington-based

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[168] [PR7] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 25, 2013.

counterparts. As discussed in Chapter III, this could be attributed to the highly politicised nature of 'Liberian citizenship' in the US capital. In the 'near' diaspora (Sierra Leone and Ghana), however, the number of naturalised Liberians in Freetown and Accra is negligible. As mentioned in previous chapters, this demographic trend could be attributed to the fact that while Sierra Leonean and Liberian identity/citizenship are mutually inclusive, 60 percent of the Liberia-born Liberian citizens in Accra were refugees and therefore ineligible for foreign citizenships before the UNHCR revoked in 2012 the refugee status of Liberians worldwide. Of the 50 'near' diasporas in Freetown and Accra, slightly less than half (48 percent) were refugees who would not have been eligible for foreign citizenships without formal resettlement proceedings.

Nevertheless, ineligibility does not necessarily lessen one's hunger to naturalise, particularly in the Global North. The record numbers of Liberians who apply annually for the Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) Programme[169] to travel to the US or who still yearn for resettlement in Australia and Europe despite the cessation of automatic refugee status for Liberians abroad proves that ineligibility does not evidence diminished desire. Similarly, eligibility does not necessarily evidence a strong compulsion to naturalise. Like me, many respondents in this study held onto their legal Liberian citizenships despite being eligible to naturalise abroad. Furthermore, for those who naturalised, the decision was often slow, measured and calculated. In the next section, I explore how respondents' decisions to naturalise or not naturalise were largely contingent upon their experiences of migration, their life-worlds and social locations alike.

**Naturalisation as Betrayer and Betrayed**

Pakistani writer Kamila Shamsie wrote in a March 4, 2014 Guardian essay[170] that she was ambivalent about naturalising as a UK citizen, even though naturalisation

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[169] According to the US Department of State website, the Diversity Visa Immigration (DV) Programme enables "'diversity immigrants' from countries with historically low rates of immigration to the United States" to apply for a limited number of visas available annually. These visas enable recipients to eventually become eligible for US permanent residency and citizenship. Source: http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/immigrate/diversity-visa/entry.html

[170] http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/mar/04/author-kamila-shamsie-british-citizen-indefinite-leave-to-remain?CMP=EMCNEWEML6619I2

officially ended her panicked bouts with fear of deportation from a country that is becoming exceedingly anti-immigrant. In Shamsie's heart-felt piece, naturalisation is described as a process of being both 'betrayer' and 'betrayed':

> I had thought dual citizenship would feel like a gain, not a loss. Instead, as I took my seat in the chamber I found myself reflecting on what it means to be from a country in which acquiring a second passport is regarded across the board as reason for celebration. Weeks later, I was trying to explain this to British-Libyan writer, Hisham Matar, who knew exactly what I meant. "In that moment you are betrayed and betrayer both," he said. "You're betraying your country by seeking another passport, and you're betrayed by your country which makes you want to seek another passport"...the process of coming to British citizenship through six years of residence can't really be a process of feeling increasingly British when it is so marked with threat and insecurity. We want the paper that says we are citizens in order to protect us from the state's growing antipathy to migrants and its ever shifting laws (Shamsie, 2014).

The uncertainty and paranoia Shamsie faced is similar to the experiences of Liberia-born emigrants in this study who naturalised abroad, whose motivations ranged from job security to ease of travel. Though Shamsie was able to officially maintain her Pakistani citizenship, Liberians who naturalised in the UK, US, New Zealand, and Sierra Leone in this study felt more intensely 'betrayed' by a state that could not protect them yet revoked their citizenship upon naturalisation. One respondent, a 49-year-old London-based woman whose foster mother brought her to the UK in the mid-1970s, admitted that she felt compelled to naturalise in the mid-1990s because of continued instability in Liberia:

> I think that [the] majority of Liberians will tell you we are here for that simple reason of the fact that we had to survive and we took naturalisation, British naturalisation, because it was part of the survival mechanism. You know, being Liberian is more important to me than being British...I never tried to change my [legal] 'Liberian citizenship' until the war. I always had maintained, even though I came here at a really young age, I always have maintained my [legal] 'Liberian citizenship'...But I had all my years of being here, I was here for like 20 odd years before I even considered [naturalising] and this was mainly because the war just continued on and on...[171]

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[171] [DL6] Semi-structured interview in London on June 12, 2012.

What was clear from respondents abroad like this one was an explicitly articulated metaphysical connection to Liberia, that they were simply abroad because continued instability forced them to consider the US, UK, Sierra Leone, and Ghana a second home. Contrary to the assumption that all migrants clamour to attain Western citizenships, many respondents held onto their legal 'Liberian citizenship' status long after they were eligible to naturalise abroad because they believed armed conflict would end eventually and they would be able to return to Liberia. When those hopes were abandoned, they naturalised because of increased political and economic entitlements of citizenship abroad. What was clear from the social actors who naturalised was that they remained psychologically and/or financially invested in Liberia, still referring to the country as 'home.'

Explaining why she held onto her legal 'Liberian citizenship' for 20 years despite being eligible for naturalisation in the UK, the previously referenced respondent attributed her actions to a deep and abiding love for Liberia. Yet, she admitted that the need to survive trumped a desire to be patriotic:

> I think it's just, I'll put it down to nationalism, that sort of thing where you, you know, it's an identity. It's your identity you don't want to lose. If you don't have to, you don't want to. But then now we find ourselves in a Catch 22 situation. We didn't want to, we had to because of the war. And now we're being penalised for taking on British citizenship, and it was just about survival really, in a lot of ways. Whenever you went for a job or anything like that it was really difficult presenting your Liberian passport. When a war was going on in your country, a lot of people in England never really knew about Liberia. You say to them 'Liberia' and they're hearing 'Nigeria'…So it was really difficult in a lot of ways because you did not have a British citizenship. So, it was just a matter of you have to survive, you have to get on, you don't know when the war is going to end. And even if the war ended…You had to make sure there was stability before you even start to think about going back home or establishing yourself back home in any kind of way. So, for that reason, I think a lot of us decided, "You know what? This war isn't going to end just now and we just need to carry on with our lives." So we did.[172]

Echoing this respondent's sentiments, a Monrovia-based homelander who still carries a US Green Card though he has not lived in the United States since 1998,

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[172] Ibid.

defended the decision of his relatives who naturalised abroad and other Liberians who felt compelled by survival to take on foreign citizenships:

> …historically Liberians were never a people to want to take on anyone else's nationality…Yeah, we have Liberians that travelled abroad many, many, many years ago. Some took on foreign wives and it never crossed their minds to take on citizenship of other countries or of their spouses'. There is a reason why Liberians now do that and it's an understandable and justifiable reason…A lot of Liberians travelled, left Liberia and that exodus started in 1980. In 1990, it escalated to levels unthinkable. When I lived in the US then, between 1980 and 1982 and 1990/'98, especially early on in '82, if it was possible for me to take on or to get residence or US citizenship, to, in fact, allow me to go to school cheaper, I would have, alright? But at the time, that wasn't the case. In 1990, because of the war, I became a resident. We all filed for political asylum. Some people did what they had to do because they were in foreign lands, not because of their own choosing but because they had to survive as best as they could…As old as my parents were at the time, they took on American citizenship because it afforded certain benefits in the US as old people. My dad passed away last year [2012], he was 99 years old. You couldn't tell him that he wasn't a Liberian. He had held almost every position in Liberia, but he took on an American citizenship when he went in 1990 because at his age he got some benefits as compared to being a non-American. I have siblings who live here [Liberia] permanently, and had Green Cards, and just said, "Just for the hell of it, I'm going to get an American citizenship."[173]

For many respondents, the immediate gratification of naturalisation outweighed the metaphysical guilt of revoking their legal 'Liberian citizenship' status. While ease of travel did not appear to be a major motivator for Washington-based respondents who naturalised, their London-based counterparts constantly referenced it as an impetus for taking on UK citizenship. This could be attributed to the fact that as a global city London represents a hub, with very accessible EU, African, North American and Asian flight routes. The 49-year-old London-based woman referenced earlier also spoke about how the world became her oyster with a British passport:

> Most Liberians will tell you it was becoming more and more difficult to have rights to do certain things and you want to travel, and having a Liberian passport it would be just really, really difficult. I remember having a situation where, number one, the American embassy was

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[173] [HL18] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.

giving me a hard time to get a visa to visit America. Then I wanted to travel to Africa and I remember having a real hard time trying to get a visa to go to Nigeria…And this was in 1993 or '94…It was really, really difficult. And so, I guess I was just advised, you know you've been here for twenty odd years you might as well get your naturalisation so that will offer you the opportunity to be able to travel more or less anywhere you want without the hassle…[174]

One respondent, a 36-year-old woman who migrated to the UK in 1986 to attend school, said that after she obtained the red British passport in 2000, she began to recognise the international system of citizenship tiers, as theorised by Yuval-Davis (2000), in which passport-holders from the Global North are treated better than passport-holders from the Global South, particularly Africa:

Just recently last year [2011], I went to Ghana by [Royal] Air Maroc. The flight was delayed and we had to be put up in a hotel for a couple nights. And it was interesting how they treated those who had a British passport and those who had African passports…And we were put in this hotel which was in the centre with all the amenities…And those who had like African passports who needed to, I don't know how they got [visas], whether they had to in the end, but they required a visa to get out. You know, so it was just like, "I didn't plan. You're the one who put me in this position. I didn't plan to get stuck here." So, they had to wait and so they were really angry. They were put up in this hotel which was nearer to the airport. They were just handled differently and that was, you know, quite racist, actually…[175]

Also lamenting the limitations of travel with a Liberian passport, a 47-year-old London-based male respondent who had lived in the USSR and US previously, said: "Our passports are not respected equally…A British passport holder can go anywhere in the world but a Liberian passport holder cannot go anywhere in the world." [176] Unsurprisingly, the ease of travel was a recurring motivation for naturalisation, particularly for this 30-year-old London-based man and former US resident: "…traveling with my Liberian passport, I still can be randomly selected for searches at American airports. I'd still be denied entry into certain countries or denied visas."[177]

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[174] [DL6] Semi-structured interview in London on June 12, 2012.
[175] [DL8] Semi-structured interview in London on June 13, 2012.
[176] [DL27] Semi-structured interview in London on June 22, 2012.
[177] [DL29] Semi-structured interview in London on June 22, 2012.

Besides ease of travel, one 57-year-old man in London who migrated to the UK in 1989 to obtain a masters degree, listed a long menu of other benefits of naturalising in 1992, including opportunities for career advancement and reduced university fees, social security and retirement perks, investment incentives, and the opportunity to sponsor the migration of his Liberia-based relatives:

> It [naturalising in the UK] was one of the ways out to help me promote my career. I was in the university as a researcher when my passport expired. They had to, they could not renew anything and so one of the suggestions my course tutor give me was, "DL18, try [and] get all your papers together, that's the only way you can cross."…Before you get a job here, you have to either come from the Commonwealth, either you're a European or British. I didn't meet any of those so only because of my stay in the university class, that was one of the things that picked me up…My children are British, which means all the educational opportunities…I've been able to take up employment that would have been ring fenced…When I get old here they will give me [a] pension book…When I retire, they will give me a book and a bus pass…It [naturalising in the UK] gave me the opportunity to send for my two children…It gave me an opportunity to invest in this country. It gave me an opportunity to identify with the reality, which is I am in Britain and I have no other means of perhaps leaving Britain so quickly. So, I needed to become recognised through the paper and naturalisation. It was the best option.[178]

Narrowly focused on career progression, one 63-year-old male Washington-based IT professional, exemplified what Ong (1999) calls the 'flexible citizen.' This respondent's motivation for naturalising in 1986, one of the earliest recorded in this study, was solely based on economic gain, rather than on coercion or compulsion:

> I naturalised in the United States, number one, for convenience, economic convenience…Professional convenience…Because in my profession as an IT specialist, all of my jobs are government related, all of my jobs, in fact, especially a sensitive job, all our jobs are sensitive so we got to have clearance. You see, right now I have top-secret clearance, SCI, and polygraph. That's what I got, the highest, and I work with the FBI right now. I do contract for the FBI…So, naturally you got to be a US citizen in order to work in some places with regards to my job. You see? That's one of the main reasons…Yeah, to work with the federal government, companies that

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178 [DL18] Semi-structured interview in London on June 16, 2012.

work for federal government, when they are hiring you, you got to be a US citizen...[179]

Besides professional advancement, political participation abroad, and the lack thereof in Liberia, motivated other Liberian social actors to naturalise. Having travelled to the US with her student parents in 1982, a 39-year-old female respondent based in Washington said that she finally naturalised in 2009 because she had never voted in a Liberian election and wanted to exercise her franchise after living abroad for 27 years:

> I held on [to my legal 'Liberian citizenship'], I really held on...there were several things that served as impetus for my decision [to naturalise in the US]. I think one had to do with my social capacity. I felt that, "Ok, where am I a citizen of?" I couldn't really identify myself. Yeah, I'm Liberian by consanguinity. I'm born in Liberia but I can't vote there, then I can't vote here [US], so where am I legitimised?...I think it was best for me to vote, to become a US citizen. I had been here at that time for nearly 30 years, and so my whole life is here.[180]

Whereas some respondents in this study, like the two described earlier, admitted to naturalising for purely selfish reasons, others argued that they did it for the greater good. Claiming that he needed the legitimacy of an American passport to remain politically engaged with TPS and DED advocacy on behalf of Liberians in the US, one 49-year-old Monrovia-based permanent returnee said he was driven by altruism to naturalise:

> I was deep into immigration advocacy at the time and I found myself walking the House of Congress talking for TPS and then also talking about peace. We became very good friends with the Rhode Island Legislative Caucus. Every time we went to these places, I felt like I had a much smaller voice. I could not ask these guys to commit a lot more and for me, I really wanted to make an impact, personally. So, I thought that going the next step up [naturalising], I really didn't realise the depth of this. I didn't realise that tomorrow would come and you would come home and you would be considered a stranger. If I could do it again, I would do it again. I feel that the [US] citizenship gave me access to something that helped this country [Liberia].[181]

[179] [DL58] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 27, 2012.
[180] [DL49] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 24, 2012.
[181] [PR3] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.

For Freetown-based respondents, being politically active was not as much a compelling motivation for naturalisation as owning private property. Similar to Liberia, land ownership is one of the definitive rights of citizens in Sierra Leone. A 38-year-old Freetown-based respondent who was born to a Liberian citizen mother and Sierra Leonean citizen father, said that he felt compelled to naturalise in 2012 because he had lived out of the country for 25 years and wanted to own land: "You need to at least be a citizen or else your property, it will not be authentic..."[182]

Just as the motivations for naturalising, mentioned herein, are varied, complex and largely based on migration experiences, constraints and opportunities, so too are the motivations for not naturalising, as discussed in the section that follows.

**No Matter How Long a Rock Stays in a River, It Can Never Turn to Catfish**

While Liberia-born respondents who naturalised abroad did so because they felt 'betrayed' by Liberia, those who opted not to naturalise said they did not want to become a 'betrayer' of the country and its citizens, regardless of their limitations as immigrants. The perspectives of these respondents completely unsettles core assumptions about how migrants from the Global South are utility maximising agents who clamour for citizenships from the Global North. For instance, one 74-year-old permanent resident in Washington said that although he spent over 18 consecutive years in the US, from the onset of armed conflict in 1989, he would never naturalise:

> I refuse to become an American citizen. I'm obligated to Liberia and I think I will die, and I told my family I must be buried in Liberia or Liberia is where my ashes are supposed to be...I'm proud to be Liberian...So, you know, I'm very patriotic and I think that there's hope for the future of Liberia...So, Liberia is in my blood.[183]

Using an African parable to describe his deep and abiding loyalty to Liberia, and motivations for not wanting to naturalise, even if eligible, one Accra-based 58-year-old former refugee who had lived in Togo previously before migrating to Ghana in 2006, said:

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[182] [DL62] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 11, 2013.
[183] [DL48] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 24, 2012.

> No matter how long a rock stays in a river, it can never turn to catfish...it means that your nationality is just your nationality, unless you want to fool yourself. Even if you say you want to go naturalise in Great Britain, yeah, they will say African-British...If you turn to American, they will say African-American...So, it means, are you pure American?...No matter how long I stay outside [of Liberia], I'm still Liberian by birth, I'm still Liberian by nationalism. Because, in the first place, the Ghanaians here themselves, they're calling me Liberian. So who am I? Who am I to tell myself [I'm not]...?[184]

While some respondents discussed the philosophical tenets of retaining legal 'Liberian citizenship', others said that naturalisation simply was not necessary for immigrant life. A 32-year-old London-based student who migrated to the UK in 2010 after living in West Africa for 16 years said that he opted not to naturalise abroad because he was relatively comfortable after graduating from college and obtaining a good job in Nigeria. His admission that other Liberians may have naturalised out of necessity is an indication that the more settled abroad one is without foreign citizenship, the less inclined one will be to naturalise:

> I had the opportunity to naturalise in Nigeria, actually. I lived in Nigeria for ten years and I think I felt like I didn't want to lose my identity, right?...For other obvious reasons, people will lose it simply because they feel that they need to get some benefits from the country. I do accept that. I do understand that. But I went to Nigeria with the intention of going to school...So I was like, I don't think I need the citizenship..."Why I should go for Nigerian citizenship?"[185]

Similarly comfortable in her position as a US permanent resident, one 51-year-old Monrovia-based circular returnee said that naturalisation never appealed to her as a necessity even though she lived in the US for 22 years on and off. Having emigrated after Liberia's 1980 coup, this woman also previously lived in four other African countries:

> I never, and I still don't care to be a US citizen...I never really felt completely at home in America. Never, ever. And that's probably one of the reasons I kept finding my way back [to Liberia] one way or the other. It [the US] never really felt like home for me...I was really hard pressed at one time, I wanted to do it 'cause all my family members

[184] [DL101] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 19, 2013.
[185] [DL12] Semi-structured interview in London on June 14, 2012.

> were becoming US citizens and I remember one time having a discussion with my father and it was so funny. He came home that day with his [US] citizenship and I said, "Ok, we have to be careful how we say certain things around you because you have defected." But, I felt that all the certain privileges, I still was able to get student loans …They related to me as a black American. Yeah. So, I really didn't see what, how being a US citizen would have made a difference.[186]

Though other Liberians could not boast of the relative comfort abroad described by the previous respondents, many admitted that in spite of the real challenges of immigration, they still held onto their legal Liberian citizenships. While this 56-year-old Washington-based male admitted that he was on Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) since migrating in 2002 and therefore ineligible to naturalise in the US, naturalisation never occurred to him as a durable solution to his immigration limbo:

> I was a full-grown man before I came to this country [US]. Maybe in the early 80s when I came here to do my grad degree, you know, I was young, frisky and everything. Maybe had I been here at that time, you know, 24, 25, thereabouts, becoming an American citizen would be something of a celebration and what have you. But now, I'm just passing through, you know. I'm just passing through. I've invested much in Liberia in terms of human capital development and all that kind of a thing, not necessarily material things. My mind, you know, my soul…everything is out there in Liberia. That's what it is.[187]

It is this respondent's perspective that I turn to now to show that although conflict in Liberia may have presented few options beyond migration, settlement in a host country does not necessarily compel one to naturalise, thereby revoking legal 'Liberian citizenship'. Thus, backlash against proposed dual citizenship legislation rests on the fundamental interrogation of whether or not naturalisation is by force. One 36-year-old female Monrovia-based permanent returnee who had lived in Ghana previously as a refugee for 11 years, argued vehemently that naturalisation is a matter of choice:

> …you are free to decide whether you want to be a citizen or you don't want to be a citizen [of Liberia]…I think it's a lame argument to say

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[186] [CR9] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 27, 2013.
[187] [DL52] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 25, 2012.

that because you wanted to leverage on the opportunities available [abroad], that's why you became a citizen [abroad] and now you want to enjoy the benefits of both countries...It's [Liberian citizenship's] your birth right, the [Liberian] Constitution recognises your birth right, but it also recognises the fact that you have a will to decide to continue to maintain your birth right or to give it up.[188]

Other Monrovia-based residents, however, adopt a more nuanced perspective about the choice/force binary. This 53-year-old male homelander who has extensive family ties to the US and previously lived there for a decade, subscribes to the argument made by Van Hear, et al (2009) that, where migration is concerned, some choices are more limited than others:

It [naturalisation] is by choice but that choice can be driven by necessity. So, yes, it's your choice to say, "I pledge allegiance," but it is my choice to say, "I want rice or I don't want rice." But if I'm hungry, then really I don't have much of a choice in that matter. I will say, "Please give me rice."[189]

Though the line appears blurred between force and choice in motivations for naturalising where eligible—similar to the structure versus agency debate still raging in modern sociological theory—deciding not to naturalise when eligible was framed as a choice for respondents in this study. One 55-year-old permanent resident of the UK who migrated in 1998 said that although she faces challenges traveling with a Liberian passport, her motivation for not naturalising was continued legitimacy in Liberia, especially at the port of entry where a Liberian carrying a foreign passport might be scrutinised more intently:

...when I go home [to Liberia], nobody will tell me bullshit! No bullshit to that airport!...I'm proud to be a Liberian. Despite everything we have been through, I think we are lovely people and I'm proud of it.[190]

Also citing her patriotism and love of country, one 42-year-old London-based respondent who migrated to the UK in 1993, said that she retained her legal

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[188] [PR5] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 17, 2013.
[189] [HL18] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.
[190] [DL9] Semi-structured interview in London on June 13, 2012.

'Liberian citizenship' because she has political ambitions and Liberian law prohibits non-citizens from holding elected office:

> I love being a Liberian. And I was very doubtful of giving up my natural identity and to take on another one, when I was aware that if I were to change my nationality, I wouldn't be able to participate in quite a few things in Liberia…[like] working in certain public offices. I have ambition to someday become a senator [in Liberia] and I know that will affect my rights so I've retained that [legal 'Liberian citizenship'] but it's becoming a little more difficult because my daughter's born here [the UK] so it is questionable. But I'm hopeful that, you know, at some point I will, I just wanted to be able to go home someday…and not be questioned about my obligations or my rights to being a Liberian.[191]

Similarly, a 45-year-old Washington-based refugee who had previously lived in the USSR, followed by Ghana, said that his political aspirations for Liberia and loyalty to the country made him reject Ukrainian citizenship, on the grounds that "accepting foreign citizenship would have deprived Liberia of yet another potential intellectual skill."[192] This respondent appeared to have a complex immigration history, claiming that the US had refused him a Green Card because of his former residence in Soviet Russia.

Contrary to the examples explored thus far, the perks of maintaining one's legal 'Liberian citizenship' are not only felt in Liberia. Whereas the advantages of settlement in the US and UK may have been greater for Liberians who naturalised, the maintenance of one's legal 'Liberian citizenship' in Accra and Freetown facilitated certain benefits from the UN for refugees. For instance, many Accra-based former refugees interviewed for this study admitted begrudgingly that, despite the challenges of refugee life, they had received access to free land at the Buduburam Refugee Camp on which to build their very own houses, scholarships to attend school, and security and protection from both UNHCR and the Ghanaian government. As a case in point, one university lecturer who had migrated to Ghana in 1990 admitted that amongst other benefits, his high-level academic pursuits were due in large part to support from UNHCR:

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[191] [DL10] Semi-structured interview in London on June 13, 2012.
[192] [DL36] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 20, 2012.

> My training for undergrad and masters was sponsored by the UN...And a number of Liberians went to school here on UN scholarships. Then others had skills training for those who could not get the pre-tertiary and then even some had secondary education, so there've been a number of benefits. There was feeding before, during the emergency period they were rationing food and...What else?...They provided some Medicare...[193]

I have argued in this section that while the motivations for naturalisation abroad have impacted the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation for Liberia, the motivations for not naturalising have challenged core assumptions about the necessity of such a policy prescription. In the section that follows, I explore how the difficult adjustments embedded in the migration experiences of Liberians abroad have influenced the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation.

**You Na Foreigner!**

For migrants who travel to and settle in a host country, the challenges can be innumerable—language barriers; access to basic social services, rights and privileges; status regularisation; social/cultural alienation, amongst others. One of the motivations underpinning the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation is recognition that migration can be a torturous process—for the highly-skilled and prosperous as well as for the low-skilled and poor—and that upholding citizenship ties to Liberia may somehow assuage the pain of destabilisation and separation from the homeland.

A common thread throughout my interviews was the varied experiences of discrimination across spatial landscapes, regardless of socio-economic positioning abroad. For instance, a 43-year-old female respondent who transited through the Ivory Coast for two years before arriving in London in 2007, talked about how she was confronted with racism for the first time:

> I first realised when I came to this country [UK] that I was coloured, whereas when you are in Liberia you don't see yourself as being coloured...And in terms of work and in terms of working in a local

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[193] [DL104] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 20, 2013.

government or in a predominately white office, growth and career progression is far slower than in a multi-cultural employment environment. I mean, they do say that it's equality and everything but it's really institutionalised...You can try to work your butt off and they have a very subtle way of keeping you where they want to keep you.[194]

Whereas this respondent's skin colour enabled her to blend easily in Liberia, a predominantly black country, her racial positioning in the UK catapulted her into a strange realm of otherness despite being a naturalised British citizen. Similarly, a 57-year-old medical doctor who migrated to the UK to continue his education in 1988, admitted that regardless of his specialised skills and knowledge, he must constantly defend his British citizenship in both social and professional interfaces:

Well, sometimes in some communities they don't accept you as, especially some of the very conservative areas, they don't accept you as a citizen. And people will always ask you, "Where do you come from?"...I had gone to a conference and someone asked me, "Where do you come from?" And I said, "I'm from Dorset." And they said, "No, I mean, where do you come from?", and I said, "I'm from Dorset."...And trying to keep calm when people challenge you time and time again about where you're from...as a non-white and also as someone who trained outside of the UK, you find that you have to be twice as good as the indigenous [British] person to get half way where they are. And besides that, you find that there are a lot of barriers that are in place to prevent you from getting any higher than the British person...Oh, for example, when I started my training they had a two-tiered system. Even though we all did the same training, we were classed as visiting registrars and those who were UK citizens were classed as career registrars. So, there were at least two classes and the career registrars were given a number, which meant that at the end of their training there was a post for them...Automatically there was a post available for them whereas the visiting registrars didn't have a post to go to. So, unless you were extremely lucky, you weren't going to get a consulting post and you, the idea was that you would go back to wherever you came from. You see? So, for career progression there is a big disadvantage [of not naturalising] even though in your normal day-to-day interaction with patients, you find that patients will respect you just as much as they respect the [white British doctor]...[195]

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[194] [DL5] Semi-structured interview in London on June 10, 2012.
[195] [DL30] Semi-structured interview in London on June 23, 2012.

Whereas Liberians in the UK may assimilate into black British anonymity, thereby facing the same sets of challenges as their Caribbean and African brethren, their counterparts in the US often have two choices: become African-American or hold onto one's Liberianness. The alternatives have varying consequences. On one hand, Liberians who assimilate as African-Americans face discrimination borne by centuries of slavery and institutionalised racism in the US. On the other hand, those who maintain strong cultural ties to Liberia and are educated often serve as model immigrants and exceptions to the 'African-American malaise.' Minimally tolerated by white American society but not wholly accepted, these Liberians often encounter strong anti-immigrant scapegoating, particularly from other racial minorities. As a case in point, one 59-year-old Washington-based female medical practitioner who migrated to the US in the early 1980s to pursue a masters degree, revealed how she was interrogated by an African-American patient who asked her: "Why is it that you foreigners come into this country and you get our good jobs? And our people there, our brothers and sisters, and children, they can't even, they can't hardly get a good job?"[196] Although this respondent admitted feeling deeply troubled by constantly having to prove herself as a naturalised US citizen, she seemed to accept discrimination as a function of immigrant life:

> There's a little discrimination...Racism, they hate you, which you know. When I think about it, I don't think it's too much of a major thing because that's just how the world is. As I just told you, when I go home [Liberia] people think I'm a foreigner too because I have an [American] accent. You know, I'm not in that country [Liberia] anymore. So it's the same with them [Americans]...When you come to a country and you try, you know, to better yourself or even if you live there, you will always have some people that will discriminate against you.[197]

In Accra, Julia Richards, head of the United Liberian Association in Ghana (ULAG), also took on a defeatist stance, somehow accepting anti-immigrant backlash as inevitable:

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[196] [DL56] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 26, 2012.
[197] Ibid.

> The difficulty is being a Liberian…Some do accept you but sometimes because of the behaviour of some, yeah, people don't take you kindly or they don't accept you easily. And to be accepted you have to go to school here [Ghana], you have to stay long here, be able to speak the dialect, the language barrier…I think it's like that because everybody, like you and I…everybody tries to protect his or her own, you understand? "So, this is my country, who are you to come here and tell me what I should do and what I shouldn't do?"…So you have to know where to stop and where not to stop. As the saying goes, where one man's freedom begins…another man's freedom ends.[198]

While Richards and others feel cowed by anti-immigrant sentiments, other respondents are less deflated. One 48-year-old businessman and consultant based in Freetown scoffed at the tendency of native-born Sierra Leoneans to discriminate against him and others investing in the post-war country:

> These are people here…they are die-hard Sierra Leonean, and they're quick to put it in your face, "You're a foreigner! You think you na come now here, you do this? You na foreigner!"…So, it makes you feel hurt, [you] say, "But I'm here, I'm doing all of this. And still, they don't appreciate and at the end of the day, they say you're a foreigner." You know? So, using that word [foreigner], as an African, I think it's not appropriate because it kills your desire. Yeah, it kills that desire, that enthusiasm you have made up to do something for them and then you see they begin to pinpoint and say, "No, you're not part of us!..." So, it's not a good thing for the country.[199]

Although the Liberian emigrants I interviewed in the Global South and North face similar challenges varying in degree and scale, the discrimination borne by migration to West Africa is particularly debilitating, especially for poor and semi-educated migrants in Freetown and Accra. Liberia's late ambassador to Sierra Leone revealed that despite his country's prominent position in the Mano River Union (MRU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Liberian migrants are often banned from developing livelihood strategies and often criminalised unnecessarily in Sierra Leone:

> The first thing is getting absorbed…If you look at it from the outside, it looks like it's very easy. But it is not, if you really go into the nitty-

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[198] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 18, 2013.
[199] [DL79] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 19, 2013.

gritty of it. Like I realise on the border, most Liberians that came over were not allowed to farm. No. Even though they are relatives, they will say, okay, you come here as a refugee, but you are not allowed to, for instance, cut palm nut without permission, you are not allowed to make farms...Strangers, they call them strangers, not only Liberians...the only other thing is that, what I realised, and we have taken measures to correct that, to be honest, normally, normally, cases involving Liberians who do not have any particular reason to be here are a little harsh, like prison terms.[200]

Though the challenges for Liberian emigrants in Sierra Leone cannot be negated, Freetown-based respondents in this study encountered fewer obstacles to assimilation than their Accra-based counterparts. What was clear during my interviews in Accra was recognition that Ghanaians can be exceedingly xenophobic and have a strong sense of nationalism/patriotism, which stands in stark contrast to the lack of patriotism in Liberia. As discussed in Chapter I, Liberia did not undergo a fierce nationalist struggle, and the lack of a strong national identity and patriotic fervour could be attributed to the over 100 years of exclusionary citizenship. For Accra-based respondents, the challenges of migration are embedded in structural and societal forces of containment. As discussed by this 42-year-old female resident of the Buduburam Refugee Camp since 2000, the threat of physical violence represents one of the mechanisms of control:

> Liberians have been killed here and nothing came out of it because they [the assailants] were Ghanaians. So many instances, even on the Camp here. Yeah, like before then you used to leave your window open, Ghanaians will pass at the window and juke you. You know, stab you. And then one of these days, Liberians got annoyed and they went on the rampage, they said that they were going to really get at the Ghanaians because one of the boys was caught red handed who stabbed a Liberian and then the Liberians also caught the Ghanaian and they beat him up and they said that the police should keep him and see if the Liberian dies, they were also going to kill him. And the Liberian died and the Ghanaians released the boy to go. So, because of that the Liberians got annoyed; they burned the police station at the time.[201]

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[200] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 18, 2013.
[201] [DL87] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 11, 2013.

Alienation is another form of containment that renders Liberians inert and unable to voice their grievances, according to this 56-year-old female respondent who has lived in Ghana as a refugee since fleeing Liberia's first armed conflict in 1992:

> I don't know what to say, they [Ghanaians], they don't really love strangers, only few, only the educated ones...I don't care how long you have been with them...they always want to let you know that you are not from here...They, I don't know, discriminate...they love it a lot...So it's difficult, even to sell in the market. The accent, our accent is different, so if they are selling something to their people for certain price, if you're a Liberian, go and ask, by the time you ask and they hear you, the accent, forget it. Your price will go up, your prices will go up. And certain places they don't even allow you to talk, in their buses you have to be careful, even if they do something and you want to defend yourself as a human being and not as a Liberian, oh, they will lash at you...[202]

Tales of arbitrary, discriminatory treatment at the hands of Ghanaians were commonplace amongst respondents in Accra, especially since the Liberian embassy exhibited a hands-off approach concerning refugee matters. A resident of Buduburam since 2004, one 53-year-old university instructor explained how he was taunted when a bus attendant insisted that he pay more than the fare Ghanaians were paying on a routine ride from his job to the Camp:

> After I got down, before I got down, they said, "Refugee!" I said, "I'm not a refugee, I don't hold that status any longer." And I showed them my ID Card. "I teach at the university here. I'm moulding the minds of people. So I am not just any other person."[203]

Apart from the challenges of social alienation, some Liberians in Accra also lamented the limited opportunities to attend school and develop professionally. A refugee who fled Liberia's second armed conflict in 2001, one 28-year-old female respondent admitted that the high foreign student fees outside of the Camp setting had deterred her from pursuing university education:

> Going to school here [Ghana] is very difficult, especially as a Liberian. Because, if you enter a school and you can't speak the people's

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[202] [DL89] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 11, 2013.
[203] [DL99] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 18, 2013.

language, they get to know that you are a Liberian, your fees are different. So, it's very difficult. It's because of it that we are just learning on the Camp. We cannot leave the Camp to go and learn. Because the money I will pay on [the] Camp, the money I will pay in Accra, I cannot pay that money on [the] Camp. So, I prefer being on [the] Camp to learn then go to Accra as a Liberian. And on [the] Camp we are not getting the full education…So, I see that as a big challenge and seriously it's really wasting my time. So that's the main reason why I really want to go back [to Liberia] at the end of this year [2013] if I don't enter school…[204]

Other Liberians in Accra, like this male respondent who relocated to Ghana in 1990, complained that their professional growth had been stunted because of national laws barring foreigners from taking certain jobs:

Ghanaians are friendly but there are a few who still harbour some form of xenophobic, you know, behaviour towards foreigners…I mean, even the idea of going into business is a very big issue now in Ghana. The foreigner [is] restricted and the amount of money you need to start a business, I mean, is so much if you are a foreigner and then you are restricted to certain types of businesses, you know, so there's an on-going issue now between foreigners and Ghanaians, especially Nigerians, you know, even though there's an ECOWAS protocol that allows one from [an] ECOWAS country to be treated similarly as a local. But the Ghanaians are still saying that they want to protect a certain part of their trade and commerce for Ghanaians only. And, I mean, it goes as far as even jobs, even jobs, you find that there are very few foreigners you find working and because the policy here is Ghanaians first. So, if there's a vacancy they look and see whether there's no Ghanaian to fill up that vacancy before a foreigner is given the option. And even if you open a company, I mean, by law you are entitled to employ a certain amount of Ghanaians…[205]

Restrictions on employment and education opportunities represent the most salient forms of containment by host states like Ghana, which embolden emigrants to yearn for their putative homeland. A 27-year-old male respondent in Accra since 2003 admitted that what fortifies him amidst the injustices of life in Ghana is his desire to one day to return to Liberia:

I work with a contracting company and sometimes [I am] intimidated at [my] job because I'm not a Ghanaian, neither a naturalised

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[204] [DL98] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 18, 2013.
[205] [DL104] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 20, 2013.

Ghanaian...my salary is determined by whatever they think they can pay me and somehow I'm not still deterred. [I] can just accept it like that because I know I [will] one day return home [to Liberia]...[206]

Indeed the vagaries of immigrant life and the challenging migration experiences of Liberian social actors abroad have in many ways facilitated the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation.

**Conclusion**

Just as she did as a child, in her adulthood Denise has swung on a pendulum between Liberia and the US until she finally settled in Monrovia in her middle-age. Hers is a story that typifies the migration experiences of countless Liberians explored in this chapter, whose movement is neither completely unidirectional nor permanent. In this chapter, I argued that migration waves to and from Liberia in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries complicated the choice/force binary and created Liberians who defy the legal, identity-based definition of 'Liberian citizenship'. Through an exploration of the complex and varied citizenship status choices of the respondents in this study, I showed how the proposed dual citizenship bill is an attempt to reconcile the migration of hundreds of thousands of Liberians before, during, and after intermittent armed conflicts. This chapter illustrated, however, that dual citizenship enactment has stalled because although some Liberians acknowledge migration as an involuntary act, others view naturalisation outside Liberia as a fundamental denial of what it means to be a Liberian citizen, both in name and in practice.

In the next chapter, I examine how globalisation—a process of movement in goods, services and ideas—has fundamentally shaped 'Liberian citizenship' configuration and practice thereby impacting the introduction and postponement in passage of proposed dual citizenship legislation.

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[206] [DL100] Semi-structured interview in Accra on May 18, 2013.

# Chapter VII

## Stopping Firestone and Starting a Citizen Revolution from Below

Firestone has the world's largest industrial rubber plantation in Liberia—a sprawling 118,990 acres adjacent to the country's only international airport—where the stench of raw latex smells like "rotting cheese" (Pailey, 2007). Less than ten years ago, the company's workers would carry on their bare shoulders iron poles with two colourful buckets attached on each end, filled with raw latex they had manually squeezed out of rubber trees (Pailey, 2007). These 21st century rubber tappers resembled forcefully conscripted labour in the 1920s, when Firestone first started operations in Liberia under a severely flawed 99-year lease agreement brokered by the Liberian government (Kieh, 1992: 39; Pailey, 2007; Waugh, 2011: 28; Kieh, 2012b: 170). Nearly a century later, backlash against economic globalisation and the exploitative nature of corporate citizenship crystallised in a transnational campaign, Stop Firestone, spearheaded in 2005 by Liberians abroad, their counterparts in the homeland and an international coalition, to hold the corporation accountable (Pailey, 2007: 82).

Building on this momentum in November 2005, 35 Liberian homeland plaintiffs filed a class action suit in a US court alleging that Bridgestone Corporation and Bridgestone North American Tire, the parent company of Firestone Liberia, had violated labour laws by using children to tap raw latex, inflicted unusual and cruel labour practices by instituting unrealistic daily quotas for tree tappers, and degraded the environment by deliberately dumping toxic substances in the plantation's only water source, the Farmington River (Pailey, 2007: 78). As legal representatives of the plaintiffs, the International Labour Rights Forum invoked the Alien Torts Claim Act, under which US companies can be held liable for human rights abuses committed abroad (Advocates for International Development, 2008). Although the plaintiffs lost the case in 2011, their decision to challenge Firestone in a court of law was unprecedented; it marked the first time Liberian citizen claims were directed in this manner at a powerful US multinational. Such claims

undoubtedly impacted Liberia's renegotiation of the Firestone concession agreement between 2006 and 2008.

As indicated by the Firestone example, Liberia's incorporation into the global capitalist system has both eroded and strengthened citizenship. On one hand, foreign direct investment placed the interests of the investor 'above' the state, thereby undermining state-citizen relations. On the other hand, it created an increasingly politicised workforce and transnational network of Liberian activists, thereby strengthening citizen-citizen relations. In this chapter, I argue that globalisation has fundamentally configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time through parallel processes—the globalisation of capital (aid, trade & investments, and remittances) and the globalisation of ideas, values & practices (universalised notions of citizenship and human rights)—thereby influencing claims against and counter-claims for proposed dual citizenship legislation. The chapter is organised as follows: First I present an overview of the academic literature on globalisation and its impact on citizenship. Second, I examine how Liberia's 20th century capitalist integration and 21st century re-integration have impacted backlash against dual citizenship. And lastly, I explore how the international rights regime manifested in discourses about human rights has influenced a measured acceptance of the merits of deterritorialising 'Liberian citizenship'.

**'Globalisation' or More of the Same?**

Although globalisation is not new—having manifested in deeply exploitative processes such as the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism—it was not until the 1960s and 70s that the term became prevalent, reaching high levels of public awareness in the 1990s (Held and McGrew, 2003: 2). Intermittently, an international discourse on globalisation was sparked in the 1980s when the struggles for citizenship exemplified in the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany and the pro-democracy rally in Tiananmen Square in China were transported globally through international media (Urry, 2000: 62). Globalisation denotes "a structural shift underway in the organisation of human affairs: from a world of discrete but interdependent national states to the world as a shared social space" (Held and

McGrew, 2007: 2). It further involves "the *accelerating pace* of transborder interactions and processes", "a stretching of social, political and economic activities across political frontiers", and "the growing *magnitude*, of interconnectedness, in almost every sphere of social existence" (Held and McGrew, 2007: 2-3). However, globalisation has not produced global equality or global cohesion, rather, it is "deeply divisive and, consequently, vigorously contested…it is far from a universal process experienced uniformly across the entire planet" (Held and McGrew, 2003: 1). According to Held and McGrew, contestations about globalisation are rooted in "two principal axes of disagreement":

> The first concerns the contested intellectual hegemony of the concept of globalisation in the social sciences: its descriptive, analytical and theoretical purchase. The second concerns values and normative attachments: whether on ethical grounds globalisation as a political project or ideal is to be defended, transformed, resisted or rejected (Held and McGrew, 2007: 5).

While statists question the primacy of globalisation in a post/911 world that has shifted from "multilateralism to unilateralism, stability to insecurity, cooperation to geopolitical competition, and soft power to hard power", globalists believe that globalisation is more "widespread," "resilient," and "socially embedded" than sceptics will acknowledge, as evidenced by the worldwide diffusion of capital, democratic ideals, information and communications (Held and McGrew, 2007: 6-10).

Because of globalisation, there has been a new configuration of power in which the binaries of core-periphery, North-South, First and Third World are contested although admittedly this does not mean that "inequalities and differences brought about and institutionalised by such older divisions have suddenly ceased to exist" (Isin, 2000: 2-3). Rather, interactions between nation-states and citizens within those territories are highly differentiated and based on entrenched hierarchies of power, as the composition of global bodies such as the UN Security Council, the World Trade Organisation and the G7 prove. Those who challenge claims about global interconnectedness remain convinced that it is exceedingly asymmetrical and relatively slow in intensity and velocity. As a case in point, the vast majority of the world's multinational corporations are based in the US, Europe and East Asia, and

are therefore regionalised, not globalised (Wade, 2003: 34). Moreover, international trade is more segmented than integrated, with countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) accounting for the largest concentration of world trade, followed by a small number of East Asian countries, which account for the majority of South-South trade (Held and McGrew, 2007: 76). Globalisation, some argue, is constructed and regulated by states and international financial agencies "dominated by the interests of the North"; furthermore, "the subjects, or agents, of globalisation are mainly situated in the rich North but the objects, that is countries that rely most heavily in these processes, mainly in the South" are invariably and negatively impacted (Kuisma, 2008: 621). While sceptics argue that globalisation is a euphemism for the spread and expansion of Western imperialism and Americanisation, globalists believe that, though globalisation unevenly benefits "powerful economic and social forces in the West," it actually is an "expression of deeper structural changes in the scale of modern social organisation" such as the expansion of multi-national corporations and global financial markets, the "diffusion of popular culture and the salience of global environmental degradation" (Held and McGrew, 2003: 5-6).

One of the consequences of globalisation is that it makes some states increasingly "more accountable to external than to internal forces" (Overbeek, 2002: 84), which may erode state-citizen relations in countries like Liberia with limited economic and political capital. The process of globalisation has been unrestrained, without an accompanying global governance regime to curb abuses and mediate power asymmetries between the Global North and Global South, such as unfair trade rules in which poor countries are coerced into opening up their markets and eliminating subsidies while rich countries maintain subsidies in agriculture and textiles (Stiglitz, 2003: 54-57). As a result of economic globalisation, nation-states primarily in the Global South have been constrained to adopt neoliberal economic policies that advocate fiscal discipline, deregulation, and macro-economic management (Held and McGrew, 2003: 55) at the expense of pro-poor spending, and Liberia is without exception. For example, Liberia's US$4.9 billion debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative largely brokered through the IMF and World Bank compelled the government to adopt macro-economic policies such as

privatisation of state-owned parastatals, liberalisation of trade, and the adoption of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper while simultaneously cutting spending in health and education (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 4).

The old Washington Consensus of the 1990s has been largely anchored by a 21st century neo-liberal agenda promoting free market capitalism, free trade and privatisation, which effectively "underplays the role of government, the need for a strong public sector and the requirement for multilateral governance" (Held, 2005: 9-10). Yet, this 'race to the bottom' claim completely negates the capacity of states, however limited, to manoeuvre global and domestic demands, and the power of citizens to mediate state authority (Mosley, 2007: 110-120). Sassen calls for a more nuanced understanding of state authority in the process of economic globalisation regardless of socio-economic positioning in the world order, arguing that "the state is engaged in the implementation of global processes, rather than being a 'victim' of these" (Sassen, 2007: 98). For example, Liberia in 2006 and 2008, respectively, renegotiated its concession agreements with Mittal Steel and Firestone Liberia in an attempt at balancing demands for foreign direct investment with the need to protect the rights of domestic labour (Government of Liberia and Mittal Steel Liberia Limited, 2006; Government of Liberia and Firestone Liberia, 2008). Nevertheless, some have argued that the renegotiated agreements have not altered state-citizen relations because the conditions of Liberian workers have not fundamentally improved, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although processes of globalisation unsettle the "*relative significance* of bounded territories" with states "increasingly embedded in webs of regional and global interconnectedness permeated by supranational, intergovernmental and transnational forces" (Held and McGrew, 2007: 4), it is national governments, as in the case of Liberia, that "remain the only proper and proven mechanisms for ameliorating and combating the scourge of global inequality and uneven development" through effective domestic policy-making (Held and McGrew, 2003: 87). According to Stiglitz, countries that can boast of development successes are the ones that have "partaken of globalisation" and "done so on their own terms":

The most successful countries of the world, notably those in East Asia, had growth that has been based on exports, which depended on globalisation. But this growth involved gradual trade liberalisation, not capital market liberalisation—they did not open up their markets to speculative capital flows, at least in the critical early years (Stiglitz, 2003: 52).

Yet, what Stiglitz and others fail to realise is that nation-states have varying historical, political and economic trajectories that may hamper or facilitate the adoption of protectionist measures. Comparing countries in East Asia with nations in West Africa, for instance, that were colonised and underwent structural adjustment programmes is misguided at best. Regardless of a state's economic position in the geopolitical order, however, it is clear that the IMF doctrine that states must liberalise is fundamentally flawed, since the most successful emerging market in attracting foreign direct investment, China, has not followed this edict (Stiglitz, 2003: 52). Moreover, the highly protected economies of China, India, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea prove that "countries do not have to adopt liberal trade policies in order to reap benefits from trade, to grow fast, and to grow an industrial structure able to produce an increasing proportion of national consumption" (Wade, 2003: 31-32). After all, OECD countries instituted protectionist measures before gradually integrating into the global capitalist system, and as such, cannot legitimately demand that developing nations institute economic policies within a short period of time that they spent decades perfecting. Furthermore, higher levels of trade openness for countries with low to middle levels of income per capita actually fuels inequality while higher levels of openness for higher income countries facilitates equality (Wade, 2003: 32).

My review of the literature has shown that globalisation remains contested in theory and practice, with divergent outcomes for the set of relations between states and their citizens. While it has challenged the territorial sovereignty of nation-states, thereby eroding state-citizen relations, some states have responded with mechanisms of their own to maintain autonomy, thereby strengthening state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations. In the section that follows, I examine how the globalisation of capital and ideas has influenced citizenship configuration across the globe.

**Globalisation and the Tenets of Territorially Bounded Citizenship**

Globalisation and citizenship are both widely contested intellectual spaces of inquiry. The polarised debates about the bounded or unbounded nature of citizenship are mirrored in debates about globalisation, pitting those who advocate for the increased relevance of nation-states and territorially bounded citizenship against those who argue that nation-states are not the basic unit of analysis or the custodians of citizenship, but one of many institutions whose powers extend transnationally, such as multilateral agencies, multinational corporations and international NGOs (Glick Schiller, 2009: 6). According to Isin, globalisation has affected citizenship in two fundamentally entangled ways:

> On one hand, with the rise of global flows of capital, images, ideas, labour, crime, music and regimes of governance, the sources of authority of citizenship rights and obligations have expanded from the nation-state to other international organisations, corporations and agencies such as the World Bank, the IMF, the internet, Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Micro-soft and Coca-Cola. On the other hand, the dominance of such global agents was accompanied by the decline of the capacity of nation-states to set sovereign policies (Isin, 2000: 2).

Isin's complex framing of citizenship and globalisation as mutually reinforcing brings these two seemingly contested processes together. Therefore, it is important to explore the nuanced ways in which globalisation has simultaneously unsettled and entrenched territorially bounded citizenship, as this will serve as the basis for my analysis of how globalisation has configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship' across space and time later in the chapter.

Whereas Marshall's brand of civil, political and social citizenship is based on "*stasis*, of the rights and duties attributed to, and available to, those living and working within a given territory by virtue of long-term membership within a given society," citizenship brokered by processes of globalisation is based on "*flow*, concerned with the causes and consequences of the flows across borders of risks, cultures, migrants and visitors, respectively" (Urry, 2000: 63-64). Although globalisation necessitates the free movement of capital and ideas, there has been an increase in surveillance and control of international mobility and migration after 911. Thus globalisation has not undermined the institution of citizenship per se, rather it has reconfigured "the

ways in which people think about their sense of citizenship, their sense of belonging and their sense of responsibility" (Desforges, et. al, 2005: 442). According to Palacios, global citizens avert the adverse effects of globalisation by collaborating across territorial boundaries:

> The appearance of the global or cosmopolitan citizen, who is mobile by nature and bears multiple citizenships, is in turn giving way to the emergence of a global civil society, which is facilitating the creation of rules and structures for regulating and restraining the power of global corporate citizens, making them more accountable and responsible in their operations (Palacios, 2010: 386-387).

Individuals may form bonds of solidarity across transnational spaces in response to the negative consequences of economic globalisation (Falk, 2000: 7) while simultaneously maintaining their territorially bounded citizenships and calling for universalised notions of personhood, as evidenced by the Stop Firestone Campaign. Moreover, human rights activists employ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to propel citizenship rights 'above the state' thereby stretching the philosophical tenets of citizenship from membership within a political territory to individual humanity and personhood (Shafir and Brysk, 2006: 275; 277). Yet, the relevance of nationally bounded citizenship is maintained despite the globalisation of ideas and the assumed universalisation of human rights. Although citizenship rights can be claimed and protected by law, however limited in scope, human rights cannot (Shafir and Brysk, 2006: 285). Furthermore, the tenets of universal personhood are still highly contested.

While some assert that territorially bounded citizenship is more entrenched than ever before in spite of globalisation, others argue it has fundamentally lost its relevance. Although setting the often stringent parameters on citizenship marks one of the ways in which states maintain autonomy in an increasingly interconnected world, globalisation has virtually eroded the basic tenets of citizenship because its forces (transnational corporations and international non-government organisations) are 'above' and 'below' the level of the state, and, "as a consequence of the processes of globalisation, the ability of states to implement the values of citizenship, the principles of equality and the right to participate, is more constrained" (Kuisma,

2008: 619). According to Tan, "the 'transnational' and 'supraterritorial' aspects of globalisation put tremendous pressures on the prevalent concept of citizenship" as territorially bounded (Tan, 2005: 6-7). Furthermore, "people of the Global South have been increasingly subordinated to global corporations" thereby transforming them from agential national citizens to "corporate subjects to the extent that their livelihood and well-being is dependent on corporations" (Ikeda, 2004: 334).

As a result of economic globalisation, corporate citizenship has emerged as a counterpart to cosmopolitan and global citizenship thereby rivalling traditional notions of citizenship that position an individual within a nationally bounded territory (Palacios, 2010: 389). Corporate citizens, mostly multi-national and transnational companies, are governed by the tenets of corporate social responsibility to 'do no harm', abide by state laws, protect the environment, and ensure workers' benefits (Palacios, 2010: 391), yet in many instances their 'bottom-line' motivations for maximising profit are contrary to these ideals, as the case of Firestone in Liberia illustrates. Furthermore, corporate claims to citizenship are inherently contradictory because as "artificial persons" corporations exhibit "inherent capacities that mortal citizens do not possess" and are often 'above' the state (Greider, 1996: 331). Therefore, they have the capacity to undermine state-citizen relations. Although there are countless examples of citizens challenging the primacy of corporate power, as in the case of the class action suit against Firestone, questions abound about how far citizens can go in fundamentally altering the hierarchies of power among nation-states and the multi-nationals operating within their territories.

In the next section, I examine how economic globalisation has configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship' through space and time, thereby undermining state-citizen relations and causing backlash against dual citizenship.

**From Fernando Po to Open Door: Impact of Liberia's Capitalist Development on Citizenship Construction**

The impact of economic globalisation on 'Liberian citizenship' construction can be traced back to the country's early modern history of capitalist development.

Although pre-settler Liberia established trade relations with Europe in the 1500s, post-independence Liberia began full integration into the international capitalist system in the 20th century thereby invariably impacting the institution of citizenship (Kieh, 1992: 36). For instance, it was during the administration of President Charles D.B. King (1920-1930) that indigenes were conscripted for road construction projects throughout the country and also forcibly shipped to the cocoa producing Spanish colony of Fernando Po to work under labour conditions akin to chattel slavery (Kieh, 1992: 32-33). Considered subjects rather than citizens, hinterland inhabitants were easily expendable and could be used as commodities to attract foreign capital. The Fernando Po crisis, as it came to be known, triggered a formal inquiry by the League of Nations condemning Liberia and prompting the impeachment and later resignation of President King and his vice president in 1930 (Kieh, 1992: 33; Waugh, 2011: 28-29). This crisis effectively foreshadowed Liberia's enduring struggle to match pro-capitalist economic growth with pro-citizen holistic development.

Just as conflict in varying degrees and scales has engendered a crisis of citizenship in Liberia, so too has the country's incorporation into the global capitalist system, facilitated initially by flows of aid and trade (Kieh, 1992: 38). The most egregious example of Liberia's coupling of debt servicing with foreign direct investment occurred in 1926 under the aegis of the controversial President King. Desperate to ward off encroachment into its territory by European colonialists, Liberia contracted a US$5 million loan from the Finance Corporation of America, sponsored by US-based Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, at an interest rate of 7 percent (Kieh, 2012b: 93). Opposed by members of King's cabinet, the terms of the loan dictated that an American financial advisor had to approve the Liberian budget annually and that Liberia could not borrow further without Firestone's written consent (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 3; 40; 44). In exchange for said loan, Liberia signed a concession agreement with Firestone, its first major foreign investor, enabling the company to lease one million acres of land for 99 years at six cents per acre to extract unprocessed raw latex (Kieh, 1992: 39; Waugh, 2011: 28; Kieh, 2012b: 170). The agreement included no provisions for renegotiations or annual financial reports by Firestone (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 53; Kieh, 1992: 39). A Supplementary Planting

Agreement signed in 1935 exempted Firestone "from all and any taxes, duties, excises, licence or other fees…by the same agreement the company's expatriate employees became exempt from any and all direct or personal taxes" (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 55-60).

Although the 1935 Agreement would be revised periodically from the 1950s to the 1970s thereby eventually taxing Firestone and increasing social benefits for Liberian workers[207], Liberia effectively became a "Firestone Colony or Protectorate" during King's administration (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 55-60; 303), which weakened state sovereignty and state-citizen relations. While the Liberian Constitution enabled private ownership of land for citizens only, the 99-year lease agreement with Firestone effectively transferred land into corporate hands thereby displacing indigenous populations from what had been communally held land (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 53). As a result, those inhabiting the concession area were uprooted and forcefully conscripted to work for Firestone as rubber tappers under slave-like working conditions that persist today (Jaye, 2003: 69; Kieh, 2012b: 75). This marked the first major example of corporate citizenship undermining Liberia's state-citizen relations and a turning point in the country's integration into the global commodity exchange race. It effectively paved the way for Tubman's Open Door Policy launched in the late 1940's which mortgaged Liberia's rubber, iron ore and forest products without value addition to primarily large-scale American and European multi-national investors, thereby transforming the country into "an export enclave for raw materials" and cheap, exploited labour (Kieh, 1992: 39; 42).

**Unhinging the Door of Liberia's Economy to Capital Flows of Trade and Aid**
When President Tubman entered office in 1944, Liberia was in dire need of capital, infrastructure, and technical expertise in fiscal management, so he introduced the Open Door Policy in 1947 to court foreign direct investment (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 3). Admittedly, however, the Open Door Policy was not Tubman's brainchild, as his predecessor Barclay had left the door to Liberia's economy 'ajar' by containing

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[207] In 1976, a completely overhauled Agreement forced Firestone to pay all taxes of general application and provide basic services such as housing, healthcare, and education facilities to workers and their families.

hinterland rebellion; signing concession agreements in the 1930s with Dutch, German, Danish and Polish investors; making the US dollar the sole legal tender in the country; and convincing the US government to construct a seaport in Monrovia (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 41-43). Tubman knew that further compromises would have to be made with hinterland inhabitants to ensure the success of his economic agenda, thus his simultaneous introduction of the Unification and Integration Policy expanding citizenship to propertied indigenes and settler women (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 3; 6). Although the Unification Policy expanded citizenship rights and obligations to a larger percentage of Liberians, the Open Door Policy of 1947-1971 placed profit and corporate interests above citizenship claims.

Tubman did not merely open the door of Liberia's economy to global capital flows; he unhinged it. The government granted to European and American concessionaires extended tax holidays, prolonged periods of exemption on import/export duties, special tax tariffs, and large tax deductible items in instances where investors were required to pay taxes (Van der Kraaij, 1983: xvii). Nevertheless, similar incentives were not accorded black African investors for fear that they would legitimately pursue legal 'Liberian citizenship' and unsettle the economic power base of settler elites (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 45). As a result of the corporate incentives, Firestone's profits after taxes in 1951 "amounted to three times the total income of the Liberian treasury for the same year" and revenues from the Liberia Mining Company, Liberia's first iron ore mine, "surpassed the total revenues of the Liberian government until 1960" (Van der Kraaij, 1983: xvii). Trade came with other major allowances. For instance, Liberia revised its Investment Code of 1966 to grant duty free privileges on the importation of machinery and equipment and granted tax holidays for a period of five years, amongst other perks to investors (Kieh, 1992: 50). American and European multi-nationals took advantage of the inexperience of Liberian government administrators and lax regulatory controls by evading taxes, illegally exploiting and exporting natural resources, and erecting complicated legal red tape with adverse results for the Liberian state (Van der Kraaij, 1983: xvii). For example, the Liberian American and Swedish Mineral Corporation (LAMCO), the largest multinational in the mining sector at the time, earned profits of over US$500 million from 1963 to 1971 from an initial investment of US$250 million, and only

paid the Liberian government US$100 million in royalties (Kieh, 2012b: 8; 96). Companies were also granted "the freedom to repatriate profits" and "the freedom to suppress workers" while Liberian citizens were denied the right to form labour unions thereby undermining the freedom of association enshrined in the Constitution (Kieh, 2012b: 77; 82).

Akin to the Firestone agreement, the Open Door Policy constrained the capacity of the Liberian state to take full responsibility for its citizens, thereby eroding state-citizen relations. Between 1950 and 1960 investors developed roads, railroads, ports, power and communications primarily for concession operations and export (Clower, et. al, 1966: 137-143). Concessionnaires also provided workers with low-cost and low-quality housing, schools and medical facilities (Clower, et. al, 1966: 136-137). Liberia became increasingly dependent on foreign aid to fund public sector projects and programmes, and spent much of its income on debt servicing. At the end of 1961, Liberia had an external debt of US$100 million, and committed to paying US$14 million a year between 1963 and 1969 (Clower, et. al, 1966: 280). Foreign aid essentially served as a conduit for multinational expansion, with new overseas markets developed for exploitation (Kieh, 1992: 118-119). Between 1951 and 1961 alone, the United States government gave US$146 million to Liberia in aid (Clower, et. al, 1966: 39). From 1950 to 1962, the UN also provided US$3 million in technical assistance (Clower, et. al, 1966: 374). In 1962, American aid to Liberia in the form of loans and grants was the equivalent of one-third of Liberian government revenues, with aid programmes conditioned on the acceptance of foreign expatriates as technical assistants (Clower, et. al, 1966: 361).

Despite Liberia's deficient gains from its abundant natural resource wealth and the attendant erosion of state-citizen relations, it would be misleading to assume that the country hardly benefitted from incorporation into the global capitalist system during the Open Door Policy. Between 1955 and 1975, Liberia recorded an average growth rate of 7 percent annually, bringing the country very close to middle-income status primarily because iron ore accounted for over half of the country's export earnings with rubber and other cash crops accounting for 15 percent (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 2). Between 1950 and 1959, exports, particularly in iron ore,

rubber and timber without value addition, accounted for a larger share of the economy than imports, before leveling off in 1960 (Clower, et. al, 1966: 29). In 1971, the year of Tubman's death, iron ore export earning was US$160.6 million, accounting for 65 percent of Liberia's total exports. Another major export earner, rubber, was equally as lucrative; in 1950, rubber accounted for 91 percent of exports, dropping to 45 percent in 1960 (Clower, et. al, 1966: 146). In 1971, rubber exports were valued at US$32.5 million, representing 13 percent of total exports.

Although Liberia experienced growth rivaling that of Japan, its shining economic outlook appeared less than impressive for some economists, primarily because the state did not fulfill its primary responsibility to its citizens. Clower, et al famously coined the term 'growth without development' to describe Liberia's economy, arguing that "rapid growth in production between 1950 and 1960 has had little developmental impact on Liberia or Liberians" (Clower, et. al, 1966: vi). Indicting Liberia's concession driven growth further, they concluded that:

> ...enormous growth in primary commodities produced by foreign concessions for export has been unaccompanied either by structural changes to induce complementary growth or by institutional changes to diffuse gains in real income among all sectors of the population...It has increased the wage bill for unskilled labour and has expanded tax revenues received by the government. But the enlarged wage bill has not induced expansion of domestic production of goods bought by wage workers; it has merely raised imports. And increased tax revenues have been spent for the most part in ways that do not appreciably increase the productive capacity of the nation (Clower, et. al, 1966: vi).

Moreover, Liberia's initial growth spurt spelled economic doom for the vast majority of citizens at the end of Tubman's reign:

> In 1970, less than 20 percent of the labour force was employed in the formal modern sector, while 74 percent was employed in low-productivity agriculture. Concessions employed only 7 percent of workers, despite their large share in GDP and exports. Wage inequalities across the sectors were stark: in 1974, per capita GDP in the agricultural economy was less than US$120 per year, compared to almost US$900 in the cash-crop economy and an estimated US$2,500 in the concessions sector. A mere 3.9 percent of the population

controlled more than 60 percent of income, and a large share of the benefits from enclave sectors was repatriated by foreign investors. Human capital levels were extremely low, with only 25 percent of the labour force (above age 15) literate. The average level of educational achievement in the country as a whole was only 1.3 years (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 2).

With global declines in commodity prices in the 1970s and Liberia's inability to capture revenues from natural resources, the country's citizens began to feel the pinch of economic decline thereby leading to mass civil unrest, as discussed in Chapter V. In response to harsh labour practices, poor working conditions and low salaries, workers at Firestone launched strikes in 1961, 1964 and 1975, LAMCO workers launched a strike in 1978, and Bong Mining Company workers launched a strike in 1979 to protest the Liberian government's complicity in their plight (Kieh, 2012b: 82).

Contrary to claims made by free market and pro-globalisation proponents, Liberia's Open Door Policy did not reap the kinds of benefits that it should have given the magnitude of resource extraction, particularly in iron ore and rubber. Because the export of iron ore and rubber was based on capitalist demands, Western countries often set the price of exports thereby making Liberia vulnerable to price fluctuations (Kieh, 2012b: 77). Furthermore companies like LAMCO and the Bong Mining Company held a monopoly in iron ore while Firestone, the Liberia Agricultural Corporation and B.F. Goodrich dominated rubber (Kieh, 2012b: 77). Most importantly, the foreign exchange earnings did not fundamentally transform the material conditions of most Liberians, leaving behind a legacy of 'growth without development' (Clower, et. al, 1966), as well as tense relations between Liberia and its citizens. According to Van der Kraaij, the failures of the Open Door Policy can be attributed to settler elites who voluntary entered into economic alliances with American and European foreign investors rather than genuinely cooperating and integrating with hinterland inhabitants (Van der Kraaij, 1983: xvii).

Despite its major fault-lines, the Open Door Policy's legacy has endured, particularly in mismatched flows of trade and aid that have undermined state-citizen relations.

After steady increases in subsequent years, followed by a decline in 1977 because of the oil crisis, Liberia's iron export earning in 1980, the year of the April 12 coup, reached an all time high of US$310.2 million (Kieh, 1992:42-43). In the 1980s, iron ore accounted for 27 percent of GDP and represented 58 percent of total exports in 1988 (Kieh, 2012b: 130). Rubber exports tripled to US$102.2 million in 1980, at 17 percent of the total, and accounted for 29 percent of total exports in 1988 (Kieh, 1992: 42-46; Kieh, 2012b: 130). Liberia exported iron ore and rubber rather than manufacturing raw materials, with iron ore and rubber accounting for 88 percent of Liberia's total exports by 1989 (Kieh, 2012b: 76). Nevertheless, continued increases in natural resource extraction did not benefit labour. In the 1980s, unemployment was rampant, with Firestone reducing its workforce from 22,000 in 1960 to 5,000 in 1985 and the mining sector experiencing similar labour force retrenchment, from 14,200 employees in 1975 to less than 5,000 in 1985 (Kieh, 2012b: 134).

Similarly, increases in aid accompanied major debt servicing that effectively limited government's social spending. Liberia's total foreign aid expanded from US$11.3 million in 1971 to US$16.0 million in 1975; between 1975 and 1980, aid had surged to US$24.5 million and from 1980 to 1985 aid increased from US$210 million to US$290 million (Kieh, 1992: 49; Kieh, 2012b: 90). Between fiscal years 1975/1976 to 1979/1980, Liberia's debt servicing increased from US$22.1 million to US$49.1 million, making it difficult to invest in basic social services such as health and education and relegating the country to a vicious circle of debt bondage thus reducing its autonomy in foreign and domestic policy making (Kieh, 1992: 52; 56). By 1980, Liberia had accrued a foreign debt of US$594.7 million, excluding interest, and the country spent most of its national budget on debt servicing (Kieh, 1992: 52). In 1980 and 1984, Liberia was forced to accept structural adjustment conditionalities such as reducing the wages of employees in the public sector and slashing public investments in education and health (Kieh, 2012b: 94). As part of the IMF's "Economic Recovery Programme," the Liberian government reduced the salaries of public sector employees by 17 percent and 25 percent in 1981 and 1985, respectively (Kieh, 2012b: 133). As discussed in Chapter V, increased foreign aid and its attendant debt servicing created increasingly politicised citizens who challenged the government's inability to respond to their material needs.

Liberia's armed conflicts represented a continuation of the depravity of Open Door, during which a policy of plunder was adopted that severely eroded state-citizen relations. State resources were bartered off to the highest bidder with GDP per capita falling by 90 percent between 1987 and 1994 (Government of Liberia, 2008a: 15; Government of Liberia, 2011a: 57). Between 1990 and 1994 alone, it is estimated that more than US$500 million was accumulated yearly by leaders of armed factions and their associates from exports in rubber, diamonds and other natural resources; Charles Taylor reportedly accrued US$75 million annually (Sawyer, 2005: 38). His regime beginning 1997 reflected a further perversion of Open Door. The presumed gains in foreign exchange earnings from exports in iron ore and rubber were compromised by the high importation costs of most of Liberia's food products, including the staple crop rice, as well as mineral fuels and other petroleum products (Kieh, 1992: 46).

Like some of his predecessors, Taylor proved early on that he was more interested in capital accumulation than strengthening state-citizen relations. For example, when Firestone workers demonstrated against the company's arbitrary decision in 1997 to deduct 38 percent of their monthly salaries to replace money that had been allegedly stolen in the company's safe deposit box during the first Liberian armed conflict, President Taylor unleashed his security personnel to indiscriminately attack 7000 unarmed demonstrators thereby muzzling dissent (Kieh, 2012b: 206). In 1999, he signed a deal with an Indonesian owned corporation, Oriental Timber Company (OTC), which had a dismal environmental record, and granted it logging rights to close to half of Liberia's rain forest (Sawyer, 2005: 38).

Taylor operated a post-war economy of seismic proportions; while smuggling Sierra Leonean diamonds to fuel that country's armed conflict, he was reportedly wheeling and dealing with the likes of South African diamond producer DeBeers, Al-Qaida, the American evangelist Pat Robertson and lesser known but equally pernicious Dutch, Ukrainian, and Italian businessmen (Sawyer, 2005: 38-39). This prompted the United Nations to impose sanctions on Liberia's diamonds in 2001 and timber in 2003, respectively, precipitated by investigations by Liberian environmental campaigner Silas Siakor of the then Save My Future Foundation in collaboration

with the UK-based natural resources watchdog Global Witness (Global Witness and the International Transport Workers Federation, 2001).

It is clear from the analysis thus far that Tubman's Open Door Policy had continued relevance beyond his 27-year term. It facilitated flows of capital in trade and aid, thus fully incorporating Liberia into the global capitalist system. Yet, economic growth was largely based on extraction without value addition. Furthermore, the Open Door Policy positioned foreign corporate interests above the Liberian state, shifted domestic expenditure from social spending to debt servicing, undermined labour rights, all the while eroding state-citizen relations. In the next section, I examine how Liberia's 21st century post-war regime has expanded Open Door with some measured reforms affecting Liberians home and abroad, thereby facilitating claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship.

## Post-War Economic Development Re-Opens the Floodgates of Global Capital Flows

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia's current president, has extended Tubman's Open Door Policy by maintaining a neo-liberal economic agenda largely dictated by the World Bank and the IMF. Through "increased privatisation of the major means of production and the minimalist state as the compass for guiding economic development" (Kieh, 2012b: 229), Liberia has facilitated the globalisation of capital through increased flows of trade and investments, aid, and remittances under Sirleaf's tutelage. Unlike Tubman, however, she has instituted reforms to mitigate the negative impact of economic globalisation on Liberia's citizens, and embarked on a 'Look South' policy courting investors from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil, and Nigeria, as much as the US and Europe (Government of Liberia, 2014: 24). Nevertheless, Liberia's current participation in the global capitalist system severely undermines state-citizen relations because it places profits above people and GDP growth above human development. Citing the initial protectionist measures adopted by countries such as China and India, Held contends that "for a country to benefit from sustained development, its priority should be internal economic integration— the development of its human capital, of its economic infrastructure and of robust national market institutions, and the replacement of imports with national

production where feasible" not "the single-minded pursuit of integration into world markets" (Held, 2005: 13). Granted, Liberia's 'single-minded pursuit' of global capitalist re-integration could be attributed to the need to bounce back from devastating economic stagnation; yet the path it has taken remains contested.

Though efforts are laudable on the surface of post-war economic recovery—steady growth rates of 5.3 percent, 6.1 percent, 7.9 percent and 8.3 percent in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012, respectively; US$1.3 billion in foreign direct investment between 2006 and 2010 in traditional sectors such as forestry, rubber, and mining; and increases in export revenue from US$175 million in 2006 to US$295.2 million in 2011 (Government of Liberia, 2008b: 17; Government of Liberia, 2011a: 4; 26; Hettinger and James, 2014)—these developments have not rendered fundamental changes in the lives of Liberians, 64 percent of whom still live in abject poverty (Government of Liberia, 2008a: 16). For example, when in 2008 the government devised a three-year Poverty Reduction Strategy as a conditionality for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, many Liberians dubbed the PRS the 'Poverty Enhancement Strategy.'

Table 15: *Liberia's Post-War Real GDP Growth Rates (2004-2015)*

| Year | Real GDP Growth (%) |
|------|---------------------|
| 2004 | 4.1 |
| 2005 | 5.9 |
| 2006 | 8.9 |
| 2007 | 13.2 |
| 2008 | 6.2 |
| 2009 | 5.3 |
| 2010 | 6.1 |
| 2011 | 7.9 |
| 2012 | 8.3 |
| 2013 | 8.1 (estimated) |
| 2014 | 6.8 (projected) |
| 2015 | 8.2 (projected) |

Sources: African Development Bank, African Economic Outlook

Despite Liberia's consistent post-war growth, as Table 15 demonstrates, development is elusive for the vast majority of its citizens. As a case in point, Liberia ranked 174th among 186 countries in the 2013 Human Development Index—admittedly an improvement from its 182nd ranking among 187 countries in 2011

(United Nations Development Programme, 2011: 130; United Nations Development Programme, 2013: 146). Most citizens lack access to electricity, health facilities, feeder roads, quality education, finance, and secure land tenure, amongst other development challenges. According to the 2010 Labour Force Survey, 78 percent of Liberia's work force is engaged in "vulnerable employment" without a steady income, and 68 percent are employed in the informal sector (Government of Liberia, 2011b: xiii). More than half of formal sector workers are employed by the public sector, with the vast majority of non-political appointees earning uncompetitive salaries (Government of Liberia, 2014: 27). Furthermore, Liberia's economy is still reliant on donor aid—which accounts for more than 50 percent of overall spending on education and health—and exports of unprocessed raw materials and minerals, prices of which fluctuate according to global demands thereby adversely impacting the local economy and government revenues (Hettinger and James, 2014: 4; 11-12). The country's staple food, rice, is still widely imported (Hettinger and James, 2014: 4). Effectively, economic globalisation has constrained the government's ability to respond to the needs of its homeland citizens, thereby causing backlash against the presumed privileges of would-be dual citizens. The sections that follow examine how global flows of trade and investments, aid and remittances have simultaneously improved and weakened state-citizen relations.

**Measured Reforms in Trade and Investment Still Harken Back to Open Door**

When Sirleaf assumed office in 2006, she committed her administration to reviewing[208] all concession agreements in keeping with a mandate from the internationally supported and financed Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) instituted in 2005 under the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) (National Resource Governance Institute, 2008). The new administration began with renegotiations of the Mittal Steel and Firestone agreements, respectively, signed under the auspices of the Transitional Government, largely because the NTGL had been accused of gross mismanagement of public finances during its tenure (UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2005; Natural Resources Governance Institute, 2008).

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[208] The concessions reviews were recommended earlier by the UN Panel of Experts on Liberia in 2003.

*Mittal Steel*: The government in 2006 revised the Mineral Development Agreement (MDA) of 2005 with Mittal Steel Liberia Limited, a subsidiary of ArcelorMittal (the world's largest steel company), thereby increasing investment from US$1 billion to US$1.5 billion for a period of 25 years. The amended agreement has a number of positive outcomes, detailed in Table 16, such as the requirement that Mittal pay a reduced withholding tax, inspection and ECOWAS fees (Government of Liberia and Mittal Steel Liberia Limited, 2006). Although the Mittal Agreement is generally more favourable than its Firestone counterpart, UK-based governance watchdog Global Witness flagged its negative outcomes, also detailed in the table (Global Witness, 2007).

Table 16: *Positive and Negative Outcomes of Mittal Amended MDA*

| Positive Outcomes | Negative Outcomes |
|---|---|
| The Buchanan port and Yekepa-Buchanan railway remain the sole property of the government of Liberia | The government of Liberia cannot inspect Mittal's operations without prior notice, severely limiting oversight |
| Mittal must rehabilitate the Buchanan port and Yekepa-Buchanan railroad in three and four years, respectively | Mittal has limited environmental obligations, beyond a vague stipulation that it must comply with the Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia |
| Mittal must hire a Liberian citizen to fill the role of one of three senior managers, with 25 percent and 50 percent of senior management positions to be filled by Liberians within 5 and 10 years, respectively | Mittal has unlimited rights to remove, extract, and use timber free of charge, except protected species, thereby severely compromising Liberia's timber reserves |
| Mittal must cover US$200,000 per year for overseas scholarships for Liberians to study abroad in mining related disciplines | N/A |

Sources: Government of Liberia, Mittal Steel Liberia Limited, and Global Witness

*Firestone*: After extended negotiations, the government in 2008 revised the Firestone agreement of 2005, with Firestone committing a total post-war capital investment of US$135.3 million through 2041. The amended agreement, which included a number of positive outcomes detailed in Table 17, increased the income tax rate of Firestone from 25 to 30 percent and limited the concession area to 118,990 acres (Government of Liberia and Firestone Liberia, 2008). Despite the agreement's seemingly glowing appearance, however, organisations like the Liberia-

based Save My Future Foundation (SMFF) and Global Witness highlighted a number of negative outcomes, also detailed in the table (SMFF and Global Witness, 2008).

Table 17: *Positive and Negative Outcomes of Firestone Amended Agreement*

| Positive Outcomes | Negative Outcomes |
|---|---|
| Firestone must invest US$10 million in a rubber wood factory to produce sawn timber and other wood products for export and domestic use | The US based parent company, Firestone Tire and Company, is not a party to the contract, and therefore is not liable for breaches in the agreement |
| Firestone must pay US$2.00 per acre per year for leased land (up from US$.50 per acre in the previous agreement), limited import duties on rice and fuel, the ECOWAS trade levy, and real property taxes | The agreement was subject to very limited public scrutiny, with only two days carved out for public consultations |
| Firestone must maintain a workforce that comprises at least 50 percent Liberian citizens, and hire at least 30 percent Liberian citizens for senior management positions | Liberian workers cannot challenge Firestone if it reneges on its promise of social benefits such as housing, education and health |
| Firestone must replant at least 50,000 acres of rubber trees from 2017 and thereafter at least 65,000 acres | The agreement does not hold Firestone to best practices elsewhere, such as in environmental standards and water cleanliness |
| Firestone must procure goods and services produced by Liberians in-country and provide smallholder Liberian rubber farmers with 700,000 rubber stumps per year free of charge and of the same quality as Firestone's | The force majeure clause enables Firestone to withdraw from contractual obligations in the case of industrial strikes or employee-employer disputes |
| Firestone must build new housing with basic amenities of running water, electricity and indoor latrines, and continue to provide health care and education through Firestone-managed clinics and schools for its over 7500 employees | The agreement severely stifles the labour rights of Liberian workers, limiting their ability to form unions |

Sources: Government of Liberia, Firestone Liberia, Save My Future Foundation and Global Witness

A comprehensive assessment of each amended agreement is beyond the scope of this thesis, but suffice it to say that each has its merits and demerits. For instance, while the Mittal Agreement is more favourable to labour rights, the Firestone agreement mandates more value addition. Although there is continuous debate about the role Firestone and Mittal have played in Liberia's economic development,

it is clear that the amended agreements reconciled asymmetries of power between the Liberian state and its two initial post-war investors, thereby invariably improving state-citizen relations. Under the renegotiated agreements, Firestone and Mittal became subject to all Liberian laws of general application, including environmental regulations, therefore symbolically placing corporate citizenship 'below' the Liberian state for the first time in the country's history. Although the amended agreements represented conditionalities set by external actors such as the IMF, they set a precedent for Liberia's post-war trade and investment portfolio by highlighting the need to match pro-capitalist economic growth with pro-citizen holistic development.

As a result of investment reforms that followed the amended agreements, Liberia's concession related foreign direct investment increased from US$153 million in 2010 to US$431 million in 2011 (Government of Liberia, 2014: 24). Concessionnaires are now required to make contributions to Social Development Funds that support basic social services and infrastructure within concession areas. As of 2012, the largest contribution, US$3 million, was made by Mittal (Government of Liberia, 2012b: 18). Yet, all the reforms are not pro-Liberia or pro-Liberians. The country's revised Investment Incentive and Revenue codes of 2010, for instance, exempt concessionaires who invest up to US$20 million from import duties on machinery, equipment, spare parts, and raw materials for concession-related projects, thus depriving the Liberian state and local entrepreneurs of essential revenue (Government of Liberia, 2010c; Government of Liberia, 2010d). Although concessionaires are now required to pay an ECOWAS tax levy, they can claim tax deductions of up to 30 percent on machinery and equipment (Government of Liberia, 2010c; Government of Liberia, 2010d). Furthermore, under the IMF's tutelage Liberia was compelled to decrease its minimum corporate income tax from 35 percent in 2010/2011 to 25 percent in 2011/2012 (IMF, 2011: 44). It is clear from these examples and others that follow that Liberia has repeated many of the mistakes of the past in its 'single-minded pursuit' of global capitalist re-integration, thereby undermining state-citizen relations and creating backlash against dual citizenship.

Although Liberia has attempted to diversify its post-war exports by producing cocoa bean, coffee, round logs and sawn timber, it still largely depends on extractive industries for its foreign direct investment, particularly in iron ore and rubber. Together, iron ore and rubber accounted for total export earnings of 68 percent, 66 percent, and 82 percent in 2011, 2012, and 2012, respectively (Government of Liberia, 2013: 31-32). Rubber exports have recently declined steadily, accounting for 62 percent (US$226.1 million), 40 percent (US$176.8 million) and 22 percent (US$120.5 million) of exports in 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively (Government of Liberia, 2013: 31-32). There has been an inverse trend in iron ore production which has increased steadily since the first post-war exports in 2011 by Mittal Steel, accounting for 6 percent (US$22.2 million), 26 percent (US$117.1 million) and 60 percent (US$312.2 million) in 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively (Government of Liberia, 2013: 31-32). Liberia's growth rate of 8.1 percent in 2013 was due in large part to increases in iron ore exports which outpaced rubber for the first time since the cessation of armed conflict in 2003 and has expanded to markets in Asia and the US (Hettinger and James, 2014: 2; 7; 13). In 2013, iron ore, rubber and timber accounted for more than 80 percent of exports and an estimated 22 percent of GDP (Hettinger and James, 2014: 13). In the same year, however, Liberia's trade deficit widened because of its continued reliance on: i) imports in primarily minerals, fuels, and lubricants; machinery and transport equipment; petroleum products; and food & live animals for domestic consumption; and ii) exports of iron ore and rubber, prices of which remain volatile on the international market (Government of Liberia, 2013: 32-34). According to data in Table 18, Liberia imports three times as much as it exports, resulting in severe trade imbalances (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 2; 65).

Table 18: *Liberia's Foreign Trade Statistics (Millions in US Dollars) (2004-2012)*

| Year | Export Earnings | Import Payments | Trade Balance |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2004 | 103.8 | 336.8 | -233.0 |
| 2005 | 131.3 | 309.9 | -178.6 |
| 2006 | 157.8 | 466.7 | -308.9 |
| 2007 | 200.2 | 501.4 | -301.2 |
| 2008 | 242.4 | 813.5 | -571.1 |
| 2009 | 148.8 | 551.6 | -402.8 |
| 2010 | 222.0 | 709.8 | -487.8 |
| 2011 | 367.0 | 1,044.2 | -677.2 |

| 2012 | 444.4 | 1,076.4 | -632.0 |

Source: Central Bank of Liberia

Similarly, Liberia's heavy reliance on international commodity pricing adversely affected the country during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis. GDP declined from 7.1 percent in 2008 to 4.6 percent in 2009, with total exports also declining from US$242 million in 2008 to US$152 million in 2009; of that total, exports in rubber declined from US$207 million in 2008 to US$95 million in 2009 (Government of Liberia, 2011c: 21; Government of Liberia, 2012b: 13). Production in rubber declined further by 13 percent in 2013 due to decreases in world market prices, and timber production—which restarted in 2009 with a shipment to France of the very first consignment of 1917 commercial logs (Government of Liberia, 2011c: 31)—decreased by 51 percent because of a moratorium enacted by the government on exports from Private Use Permits (PUPs). PUPs enabled logging companies to bypass forestry regulations in order to access 24 percent of Liberia's land mass (UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2012: 33-45; Sirleaf, 2014: 12; Hettinger and James, 2014: 2; 13). Post-war FDI projections of US$16 billion in palm oil, rubber, iron ore, oil and timber are also elusive, with natural resources governance in land administration posing serious impediments to those investments (Hettinger and James, 2014: 2-3). As a case in point, Liberian rural dwellers have virtually halted large-scale palm oil production in its tracks because the government did not consult them before leasing thousands of hectares of communal land to investors such as Equatorial Palm Oil in Grand Bassa County, Golden Veroleum in Sinoe County, and Sime Darby in Gbarpolu and Grand Cape Mount counties (Siakor, 2012; UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2012: 45-47; UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2013: 34-35). Effectively, Liberian citizens have responded to dubious concession agreements shrouded in secrecy by attempting to hold the state accountable.

As my analysis shows, trade and investment have not fundamentally improved the lives of Liberian citizens who reside within the territorial confines of the nation-state, thereby undermining state-citizen relations and invalidating the need for dual citizenship. As discussed in the section that follows, aid and remittances pose similar challenges.

**The Erosion of State-Citizen Relations through Flows of Aid and Remittances**

For all the celebration about trade and investment flows to Liberia, data shows that overseas development assistance in the form of grants and loans far exceeds foreign direct investment (Government of Liberia, 2014: 25). Liberia has been slow to access loans since reaching HIPC Completion Point in 2010, yet public external debt was estimated at 11 percent of GDP in 2013 and could increase gradually if anticipated investments do not come to fruition (Hettinger and James, 2014: 7-8). As Table 19 indicates, donor aid disbursed to Liberia in fiscal years 2009/2010 and 2010/2011, respectively, surpassed the national, cash-based budget. In fiscal years 2011/2012 and 2012/2013, respectively, aid disbursed represented two thirds of the national budget. Liberia's donors typically disburse grants and loans through budget support, pooled funds, trust funds, and project support (for government of Liberia executed projects and non-government of Liberia executed projects). More than 50 percent of aid reported in Table 19 was disbursed for non-government of Liberia executed projects financially managed and executed by donors or a third-party contractor, such as in the case of major infrastructure projects.

Table 19: *National Budget and Post-War Aid Disbursal[209] Statistics for Liberia (2005-2013)*

| Fiscal Year[210] | National Budget (millions in USD) | Aid Disbursed (millions in USD) | Number of Major Donors | Top Three Donors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2005-2006 | 85 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2006-2007 | 129 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2007-2008 | 199 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2008-2009 | 298 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2009-2010 | 347 | 355 | 10 | World Bank, US, UN |
| 2010-2011 | 369 | 426 | 11 | US, EU, World Bank |
| 2011-2012 | 516 | 340 | 10 | World Bank, UN, US |
| 2012-2013 | 649 | 423 | 18 | US, EU, World Bank |

Source: Ministry of Finance, Republic of Liberia

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[209] Aid captured in this table does not account for non-government of Liberia donor contributions to NGOs or private entities.
[210] The Liberian fiscal year begins July 1 of each year and ends June 30 of each year.

As one of Liberia's most consistent donors, the World Bank has invested heavily in the development of roads, ports, and bridges, often hiring Chinese contractors for these capital-intensive ventures. While the Bank has focused on tangible investments in infrastructure, the US, Liberia's second most consistent donor, has invested in security sector reform and governance. Harkening back to Tubman's administration, Sirleaf has followed the same pattern of relying on donor dollars to fund Liberia's development. Because much of the national budget is absorbed by recurring expenditures, such as government salaries and operations, donors have effectively filled a void in social spending on health, sanitation and education, as well as on major infrastructure such as public buildings, roads, and electricity. For the purposes of my analysis, Liberia's reliance on aid is problematic for two major reasons. First, it places donors 'above' the state, and subjects Liberia to conditionalities that undermine its sovereignty. Second, aid erodes state-citizen relations by making Liberia more accountable to donors than to its citizens.

Remittance flows to Liberia have impacted citizenship in similarly contradictory ways. It is important to note at the outset that remittances recorded in Table 20 capture World Bank data, which is lower than Central Bank of Liberia data referenced later. Despite the incompatibility of data, however, it is clear that remittances remain consequential for both the Liberian state and its citizens. As Table 20 indicates, remittances nearly equaled aid disbursals referenced in the previous table in 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively, thereby having a direct impact on how the Liberian state invariably relates to its domestically rooted citizens and nationals abroad.

Table 20: *World Bank Remittances Data for Liberia (2004-2013)*

| Year/Remittance Flows | Inflows (millions in USD) | Outflows (millions in USD) |
|---|---|---|
| 2004 | 58 | 0 |
| 2005 | 32 | 0 |
| 2006 | 79 | 0 |
| 2007 | 62 | 0 |
| 2008 | 58 | 0 |
| 2009 | 25 | 1 |
| 2010 | 31 | 1 |
| 2011 | 360 | 1 |

| 2012 | 360 | N/A |
|---|---|---|
| 2013 | (estimated) 383 | N/A |

Source: World Bank 2011, 2014

While the 'remitter' abroad may be practicing active 'Liberian citizenship' by transferring money to build a home in Liberia, sponsor children in school, or invest in a business—as Liberian social actors in this study admitted doing—the 'receiver' in Liberia is constrained in his/her ability to practice citizenship because of limited economic opportunities and the government's inability to provide basic social services. Thus, the 'receiver' becomes more obligated to the remitter than to the state in the same way that the state is more accountable to donors for aid. Because the remitter also fills gaps in poverty alleviation at the household level that the government cannot, the state becomes equally beholden to the remitter, thereby placing the remitter 'above' the state. Liberia's Foreign Affairs Minister Augustine Ngafuan admitted that remittances helped to stave off citizen demands on government, thereby easing the pressure on public spending:

> There are a lot of Liberians who almost every month remit through Western Union, keeping their people to survive, whether it's in the urban areas like Monrovia and others, whether it's in Zwedru. Some poor families live as a result of the work of a brother or sister somewhere in the diaspora, and then there is this flow that is coming, it has helped us [government] because it has helped to keep the country stable, because all those expectations would have been directed to government...[211]

As evidenced by Minister Ngafuan's admission, economic globalisation and the remittances discourse have inadvertently transformed African migrants from 'traitors' to 'development partners' in the eyes of their governments, thereby inserting them in home-country debates about national development and citizenship (Iheduru, 2011: 181). Apart from enacting dual citizenship, some countries in Africa—namely, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia and Zambia—have also established particular government agencies responsible for managing diaspora affairs (Ratha, et. al, 2011: 177-179). Moreover, it is often presumed that dual citizens have a higher propensity to send remittances for investment purposes and partner with foreign

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[211] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.

investors in their countries of origin (Siaplay, 2014: 8). Echoing the claims made by Whitaker (2011), Iheduru argues, however, that recent policies adopted by African governments to extend dual citizenship and voting rights to nationals abroad is less about enhancing national development and embracing pluralistic forms of citizenship, and more about co-optation and strategically harnessing emigrant resources to compensate for weak state fiscal capacities in the midst of donor fatigue (Iheduru, 2011: 182). Whereas lowering tariffs on exports in raw materials and extending tax holidays to multinationals is an attempt to generate revenue for the state, the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation is an attempt to placate diasporas in a similar fashion.

This is precisely why the proposed dual citizenship bill was introduced in Liberia; a core group of legislative and executive branch officials acknowledged the important role Liberian diasporas have played in remitting to their families during the slow pace of post-war development, and sought to provide incentives for continued remittance flows. Nevertheless, remittances have enabled the state to abdicate from its responsibility to citizens, undermined citizen agency, and created a syndrome of dependency, said this 43-year-old male homelander:

> Our remittances have also fuelled the need for the blatant corruption that we have and created an ambience for the government to neglect its primary responsibilities to its people. So, for example, by sending money we have also reduced the chances for people's political consciousness, you know, to hold their government and their duty bearers accountable...So, you have families here, people who are fit, who can do things for themselves, but they are sitting every month waiting for the 50, or 100 or 200 [United States] dollars to come.[212]

The discord between Liberia's foreign minister and the homeland respondent was not only prevalent in my interviews; it is also reflected in the academic literature. Critics and supporters of remittance-generated development agree that migrant transfers represent a significant share of external financing and capital for developing countries, particularly post-war nations like Liberia (Lucas and Stark, 1985; Kapur, 2003; de Haas, 2005; World Bank, 2006; Pieke, Van Hear, and Lindley,

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[212] [HL3] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 5, 2013.

2007; IFAD, 2009). Yet, debate is widespread about their actual developmental impact. While remittances help to augment private consumption and alleviate transient poverty, their impact on structural poverty and long-term sustainable economic development are less quantifiable (Kapur, 2003: 355-356). Because most migrants are not drawn from the poorest households in a sending nation, the effects of remittances on the poorest of the poor will remain limited (Kapur, 2003: 346). Furthermore, remittances alone are not the panacea to homeland development, and nation states must adopt measures to ensure fiscal responsibility, such as improving their overall investment climate, in order to avoid becoming heavily reliant on migrant transfers (World Bank, 2006: xvi).

Yet, when the state effectively ceases to function, remittances often fill an important void. Echoing the sentiments of many respondents in this study, a 23-year-old Monrovia-based female homelander stated that remittances during periods of armed conflict and immediately afterwards meant the difference between survival and demise for many Liberians:

> After the war, most people started from zero so they were actually depending on foreign aid [remittances] as a source of livelihood. So, people sending in money, it helped to stir up the economic activity around here [Liberia] since there were no jobs, no companies, and no elected government at that time. Basically, almost more than half of the population was living on aid [remittances].[213]

There appears to be dissent, however, about the impact of remittances in Liberia's post-war milieu. Dismissing remittances altogether as inconsequential, a 54-year-old male homelander argued that they have not fundamentally tipped the scales in favour of meaningful development:

> Remittance is not enough because remittances are to family members. So, when they [Liberian diasporas] say, "Oh, we are sending plenty money home," yeah, to whom are you sending it? If you are sending money to your blood relative, that is not a contribution because with or without the government, you will not allow your relative to die.[214]

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[213] [HL37] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 21, 2013.
[214] [HL22] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 14, 2013.

Similarly, one 65-year-old female permanent returnee in Monrovia argued that remittances to Liberia pale in comparison with migrant transfers to other parts of West Africa, particularly Ghana:

> What you see in Accra, not to mention Kumasi, Cape Coast, are Ghanaians in the United States of America working in the hospitals, the janitors, the teachers, the professors: they are the ones who remit money to build their homes, to start their businesses. We got Liberians in the United States of America. How many of them remit money? They might remit allowances to family members which goes into the pot or keeps them well, but how many Liberians have sat down in America to send home money regularly to say, "Build me a house," or even, "I want to start a business," and have been here to check?[215]

This respondent's view is corroborated by World Bank data showing that annual migrant transfers to Ghana exceeded that of Liberia from 2004 through 2009, although Liberia surpassed Ghana in 2010 and 2011 (World Bank, 2011; World Bank, 2014). Those who question the impact of remittances on Liberia's development, like the previous homeland and permanent returnee respondents, often interrogate the necessity of dual citizenship as a policy prescription because they fundamentally believe that diasporas and transnational Liberians do not warrant such a privilege.

While the discourse on remittances remains rife with disagreement, there is a parallel discourse on capital flight that also interrogates the developmental impact of remittances. Relatively augmented, the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) figures for remittances are different from the World Bank's because the CBL captures all inflows and outflows received and sent by embassies, service providers, the UN, NGOs and individuals through banks and private firms in Liberia (Government of Liberia, 2008b: 28). What is particularly instructive and relevant for my study is the CBL data on remittance outflows in Table 21, as respondents in this study who contested the developmental impact of remittances often referenced capital flight as detrimental to Liberia's growth and development. As Table 21 indicates, remittance

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[215] [PR6] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 24, 2013.

flows entering Liberia are nearly the same as flows leaving the country on a yearly basis.

Table 21: *Central Bank of Liberia Remittances Data for Liberia[216](2005-2011)*

| Year/Remittance Flows | Inflows (millions in USD) | Outflows (millions in USD) |
|---|---|---|
| 2005 | 630 | 598 |
| 2006 | 685 | 622 |
| 2007 | 753 | 710 |
| 2008 | 959 | 922 |
| 2009 | 760 | 787 |
| 2010 | 981 | 995 |
| 2011 | 1261 | 1362 |

Source: Central Bank of Liberia

The issue of capital flight was a recurring motif in my interviews with homeland Liberians based in Monrovia, who argued that Liberian returnees transfer money out of Liberia to maintain transnational lives almost at the speed at which remittances enter the post-war economy. According to one 43-year-old homeland man, dual citizenship would facilitate excessive capital flight:

> You see Ghanaians, Nigerians, Sierra Leoneans who have dual citizenship, but they have only used the second country for expediency. They all come back home and invest. Liberia is the reverse. So, by even allowing them [diasporas], giving them approval now [for dual citizenship], you're going to have a huge capital flight. You're going to legitimise what is already happening.[217]

These claims were corroborated by my interviews with returnees who, when queried about receiving remittances from relatives abroad, often scoffed in response, saying, "I'm the remitter!" Speaking hypothetically yet referencing actual cases of returnee public sector officials, this 30-year-old homeland male talked about how capital flight has stripped the Liberian economy of essential foreign exchange:

> If I'm working as a minister and my family lives abroad, my wife and everything [are] there, and I only come [to Liberia] to work, if, for any

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[216] 2011 is the last year for which remittances data is available from the Central Bank of Liberia.
[217] [HL3] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 5, 2013.

> reason, I happen to earn maybe 20/25,000 [United States] dollars, I'll ship it abroad. Cash will flow there [abroad] and the economy [in Liberia] will not boom. The economy will not boom. You ship the money to your family because your family needs to survive, and the money that you shipping abroad, that money will be circulated within the economy of that particular country.[218]

It is apparent from my analysis on aid and remittances that they represent two sides of the same coin in the Liberia case. While they have hoisted up citizens who otherwise would not have been able to withstand the excruciatingly slow pace of post-war development, they have also eroded state-citizen relations by relieving the Liberian state of its responsibility to its citizens and obligated Liberian citizens to benefactors—donors and diaspora remitters alike—who operate 'above' the state.

Following this analysis of how the globalisation of capital has configured and reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship', thereby influencing the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation, I shift focus in the next section to examine how the globalisation of ideas—embedded in the human rights discourse and transnational citizenship trends throughout Africa—has facilitated claims for dual citizenship in Liberia.

**How Human Rights Rhetoric Influences Dual Citizenship Claims for Liberia**

Citizenship and human rights are often contradictorily applied. While human rights is embedded in the politics of inclusion, citizenship is embedded in the politics of exclusion, where people are often barred based on a number of social qualifiers such as race (in the case of Liberia), ethnic identity, gender, and birth-place nationality. Yet, there is a new discourse on human rights that frames citizenship and the right to a nationality as a human right among other rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948, "everyone has a right to a nationality" and "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his [or her] nationality" (Manby, 2010: 19). Therefore, any state that ratified the Declaration, regardless of its national laws, is required to uphold it thereby guaranteeing the right to citizenship. Similarly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stipulates that women should be granted equal rights to citizenship under

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[218] [HL37] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.

the law (Manby, 2010: 19). And the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, which only nine African states have ratified, requires a "contracting state" to "grant its nationality to a person born in its territory who would otherwise be stateless" (Manby, 2010: 9; 23). The diffusion of ideas about rights that should be accorded every human being has spread to every corner of the world—including Africa, generally, and Liberia, specifically.

In advocating for the expansion of citizenship rights in Africa to groups previously marginalised, Manby also invokes the human rights frame:

> African states should address the problems of citizenship that the continent's history of colonialism and migration has created and should bring their citizenship laws into line with international human rights norms. They should adopt a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the right to nationality. The African Union and its Regional Economic Communities should lead a process to harmonise national laws and to ensure their compliance with the basic principles of non-discrimination and due process already enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The laws, and preferably the constitutions, of African states should provide for an explicit right to a nationality from birth. In general, laws should provide for citizenship (whether from birth or by naturalisation) to be granted on the basis of any strong connection to the country, including birth on its territory, having a mother or father (including adoptive father or mother) who is a citizen, marriage to a citizen, and long-term residence. The laws regulating citizenship should not refer to membership of any particular race or ethnic group as the basis for inclusion in or exclusion from citizenship rights. Citizenship rights should be based on gender equality in all respects, including the right of a woman to pass her citizenship on to her children and spouse. African states should take legal and other measures to ensure that members of all ethnic groups resident in their territory are given equal rights to citizenship...Obtaining citizenship by naturalisation should be possible for anyone able to prove legal residence in a country for a reasonable period (Manby, 2010: 1-2).

Nevertheless, African treaties—such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa—are relatively silent on the issues of nationality and citizenship (Manby, 2010: 10). Regardless of this, however, the globalisation of ideas embedded in the

human rights discourse has emboldened claims for dual citizenship in Liberia, in which proponents argue that revocation of citizenship without due process severely impinges on one's human rights.

Globalised notions of citizenship as a human right has engendered a transnational conversation about Liberia's citizenship architecture, with non-Liberians also weighing in on the issue of dual citizenship. The American Bar Association (ABA), for example, argues that the provision that one must renounce one's previous citizenship at the time of naturalisation is a deterrent for diasporas and other African citizens who wish to become Liberian citizens (ABA, 2009: 5; 15; 17-18). Furthermore, the revocation of naturalisation—in which a naturalised citizen revokes his/her legal 'Liberian citizenship' if s/he travels to his/her country of first nationality and resides there for up to two years or any other foreign country for up to five years—creates classes of citizenship and denies a naturalised citizen the right to travel or seek employment abroad (Government of Liberia, 1973). Equally harsh is Section 21.58 of the Liberian Aliens and Nationality Law which states that any naturalised citizen of Liberia whose citizenship is revoked automatically loses his/her claim on property owned, which shall go to the state uncompensated, if s/he does not have a Liberian citizen spouse or child to inherit said property (ABA, 2009: 16). The ABA asserts that dual citizenship should be seriously considered for Liberia, as it would enable Liberians who naturalised elsewhere during armed conflict to retain their legal 'Liberian citizenship' status, thereby fully contributing to the country's recovery process. The assumption herein is that dual citizenship will enhance the state-building agenda and further entrench economic renewal. The converse argument could be applied, however, that there is no direct correlation between retention of citizenship and involvement in national reconstruction efforts although migration enthusiasts who view citizenship as unbounded would likely disagree.

Feminist discourses about the rights of women have also influenced advocacy to expand 'Liberian citizenship', as defined by gender. According to the ABA, assigning citizenship at birth based on the father's nationality is inherently discriminatory because a Liberian woman cannot pass on nationality to her child, which is

inconsistent with CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ABA, 2009: 14). The proposed dual citizenship legislation clearly stipulates that Liberian citizen women should be able to pass on citizenship to their children, thereby opening the scope for citizenship to be granted to a larger number of *jus sanguinis* Liberians beyond the age of majority. The ABA also contends that denying a person citizenship because his/her father did not reside in Liberia prior to their birth discriminates against children whose fathers fled Liberia during intermittent armed conflict, a major point of contention for Liberians abroad who advocate for dual citizenship (ABA, 2009: 14). Denying a person citizenship because s/he, having been born outside of Liberia to a Liberian citizen father, is not resident in Liberia at the age of majority discriminates against children who were exiled during armed conflicts and did not return to Liberia before reaching the age of majority (ABA, 2009: 14). The ABA suggests that these provisions be eliminated from the Aliens and Nationality Law because parents whose children fall within the abovementioned categories will be disinclined to repatriate capital to Liberia or invest in Liberia if their children are considered "stateless" (ABA, 2009: 14).

The rights rhetoric has further legitimated an interrogation of citizenship based on race, although Liberia's proposed dual citizenship bill maintains the race-based proviso. The ABA argues that citizenship based on race is inconsistent with Article 5 of the Liberian Constitution, which prohibits ethnic discrimination, as well as the Convention on All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which Liberia ratified in 1978 (ABA, 2009: 13). According to the ABA, although Liberia's citizenship provision based on race was enacted in the spirit of pan-Africanist verve, it is out-dated given the contributions of non-African residents of Liberia—namely, Lebanese, Indians, Europeans and Americans—in the service, retail, trading, agriculture, and mining sectors (ABA, 2009: 14). As discussed in Chapter IV, precluding these residents from citizenship also translates into economic deprivation for Liberia, as the aforementioned nationals more than likely export capital and investment returns out of Liberia because they cannot own land or fully participate in the political process. The ABA advocates for either abrogating the race-based clause, thereby amending the Constitution concurrently, or carefully

defining the terms *Negroes* and *Negro descent* in a way that accounts for international norms (ABA, 2009: 14).

I have argued herein that the framing of citizenship as a human right has strengthened appeals to expand Liberia's legal definition of citizenship to include groups that would otherwise be disenfranchised, particularly *jus soli* Liberians who naturalised abroad. In the next section, I discuss how the race to harmonise citizenship laws across Africa has also emboldened claims for dual citizenship in Liberia.

## Dual Citizenship Bill Influenced by Continental Citizenship Reconfigurations

African governments have increasingly factored diasporas into domestic development and post-war recovery efforts. This explicit acknowledgment of transnationals as 'partners in progress' has manifested in legal instruments and frameworks such as dual citizenship. Within the last decade alone, African countries have expanded constitutional reforms to grant dual citizenship to their diasporas, including, but not limited to: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda (Manby, 2009). Although, admittedly, this trend appears to be global in scale and scope and does not represent African exceptionalism, Africa is a particularly relevant region of analysis given that most of the continent's post-independence citizenship laws represented colonial artefacts that excluded rather than embraced multiple forms of national identity (Mamdani, 1996). There has been mounting pressure on Liberia to harmonise its citizenship laws with the African Union, the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union (MRU), given the country's renewed prominence in these regional bodies.

Within the African Union, over half (57 percent) of the 54 countries have dual citizenship provisions embedded in law, with some more limited than others. For instance, while Egypt, South Africa, Cape Verde, and Rwanda enable carte blanche dual citizenship, Swaziland and Sao Tome & Principe only permit dual citizenship

for *jus soli* citizens (Manby, 2010). The scale also tips in favour of dual citizenship within the ECOWAS sub-region. Of the 15 members of ECOWAS, 12 have legislated dual citizenship in the past 20 years, as Table 22 shows.

Table 22: *ECOWAS Countries' Provisions on Dual Citizenship*

| Country | Allows Dual Citizenship? (Yes or No) | Year Dual Citizenship Granted |
|---|---|---|
| Benin | Yes | 1990 |
| Burkina Faso | Yes | 1991 |
| Togo | Yes | 1992 |
| Mali | Yes | 1995 |
| Nigeria | Yes | 1997 |
| Cape Verde | Yes | 1999 |
| Ivory Coast | Yes | 2000 |
| Ghana | Yes | 2002 |
| Sierra Leone | Yes | 2006 |
| Gambia | Yes | Unclear |
| Guinea-Bissau | Yes | Unclear |
| Senegal | Yes | Unclear |
| Guinea | No | N/A |
| Liberia | No | N/A |
| Niger | No | N/A |

Sources: Manby (2010), Siaplay (2014)

As ECOWAS attempts to facilitate economic integration and streamline the free movement of persons protocol for its citizens (Ibeanu, 2007), it is presumed that harmonising citizenship laws across the sub-region will facilitate the regionalisation of capital flows of trade and investment. At the moment, inter-regional trade amongst ECOWAS nations accounts for only 10 percent of all trade for member countries (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 27). Siaplay uses a random effects economic model to argue that ECOWAS countries which recognise dual citizenship "have positive and statistically significant association with FDI net inflows, gross capital formation, and household consumption" although he does not make claims that dual citizenship is a causal effect of these economic trends (Siaplay, 2014: 3). Nevertheless, dual citizenship is often touted as having definitively positive results. Liberia's current Ambassador to France, speaking in his capacity as immediate past Director-General of the Civil Service Agency (CSA), argued that, given the examples of other African countries, one of the presumed benefits of dual citizenship is that it would promote transparency in Liberia, just as it has in the sub-region:

...if we look at common practices from other African countries with similar geopolitical demographics as Liberia, you would see that they have embraced dual citizenship...They have embraced it with much positive benefits coming from that...I was boarding the plane in Accra a couple of months ago to go to the [United] States and there was a Ghanaian-American, I would say, in front of me and he was exiting the country [Ghana] and he presented his American passport to the Ghanaian immigration officer...and the Ghanaian immigration officer looked at it and he said, "How did you enter?", because he didn't see the immigration endorsement and the fellow flipped out his Ghanaian passport right there...And boom, boom, he stamped it and he left. So there is transparency there. So, you can now put into your database that this person's Ghanaian passport number is X and the other passport is Y. So, you have better control then if you leave it open and people have to sneak and do different things.[219]

Despite reputed gains, the enactment of dual citizenship across the continent and within the sub-region has not happened at lightning speed, primarily because of the same backlash described throughout this thesis. Senator Sumo Kupee, one of the sponsors of Liberia's proposed dual citizenship legislation, admitted that the Liberia bill was inspired by continental trends, with his colleagues warning him that there would be staunch opposition along the way:

I've spoken to parliamentarians in Accra. I've spoken to parliamentarians in Sierra Leone. And they shared the same difficulties they had...And again, especially my colleagues in Ghana. They said it was really tough, and because looking at where Ghana was coming from at the time, grossly underdeveloped, and they had these citizens coming from London, there was this same apprehension from local Ghanaians and their counterparts, you know.[220]

During my interview with Ansumana Jaia Kaikai, Deputy Minority Leader of Sierra Leone's Parliament and chief sponsor of that country's dual citizenship bill, he admitted that it took the president's full endorsement to finally pass the Dual Citizenship Act of 2006 nine years after it was introduced in 1997:

I had noted that there were several Sierra Leoneans that were living overseas, and that they were being disadvantaged because they had

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[219] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 4, 2013.
[220] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on December 4, 2012.

taken dual citizenships in other countries other than Sierra Leone. And because our Constitution prohibited dual nationality, I felt that our country was not, our laws were not favouring, we were disadvantaging our citizens and nationals that were residing overseas, and who had, because they wanted to make their stay in other countries liveable, so they had taken those citizenships as it is required of the laws of those countries…Well, we came to realise, as I said earlier, among those reasons, that in fact there were Sierra Leoneans with access to our roots. I mean, there were people, Americans, Jamaicans, etcetera, Europeans, with their roots from Sierra Leone, either by way of parentage, who wanted to be associated with their home country. So, I thought it fit that I should make it my point of duty to have the president endorse it [the dual citizenship bill]…which he did, and not too long after that it went through cabinet and then it came here [Parliament], became law…[221]

One of the unique aspects of Sierra Leone's Dual Citizenship Act is that it enables African-Americans to become citizens through mitochondrial DNA testing, as evidenced by the US actor Isaiah Washington who claimed and was granted Sierra Leonean citizenship in 2008 (Washington, 2011). During a meeting with a delegation representing the Gullah from South Carolina, who trace their lineage to Sierra Leone, Kaikai said he used the occasion to apply pressure on then President Tejan Kabbah to pass the Dual Citizenship Act. Kaikai, who had lived in the US as a permanent resident for 23 years before relocating to Freetown, claimed that the nine-year limbo for the Act was well worth the wait since Sierra Leonean diasporas have become more engaged in politics:

It [dual citizenship] actually has given lots of chance to Sierra Leoneans to participate in the governments of the country. The amount of members of Parliament [who have dual citizenship] has increased, the amount of cabinet members [who have dual citizenship] has increased…The amount of non-political operations [by diaspora groups] had increased.[222]

There have been other spill-over effects of the Act which have undoubtedly influenced Liberia's introduction of dual citizenship legislation, and its engagement with diasporas. For instance, Ernest Bai Koroma, current president of Sierra Leone, announced an Executive Proclamation shortly after assuming office in 2007 that

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[221] Semi-structured interview in Freetown on April 19, 2013.
[222] Ibid.

diasporas constituted Sierra Leone's 5th Region, prompting a concept note that established an Office of Diaspora Affairs in 2008.[223] During my tenure in the office of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, I was seconded to Sierra Leone's Office of Diaspora Affairs for a week-long study tour in 2010 to examine its contours so that Liberia could establish a similar unit that would be incubated in the president's office. The Liberian president also began referring to diasporas as Liberia's "16th county."

It is clear from my analysis that the introduction of Liberia's proposed dual citizenship bill was prompted not only by human rights claims within Liberia and transnational spaces, but also by citizenship reconfiguration processes across the continent of Africa.

**Conclusion**

As Liberia's first major investor, Firestone is emblematic of how the globalisation of capital (foreign direct investment by Firestone) and the globalisation of ideas (the framing of Firestone workers' rights as human rights) have cast 'Liberian citizenship' as a set of state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations. In this chapter, I argued that although globalisation in theory and practice remains contested, it has impacted the configuration of citizenship across the globe, generally, and 'Liberian citizenship', specifically, in a number of ways. While economic globalisation manifested in unfair trade and conditional aid has exacerbated inequality, political globalisation manifested in notions of social justice has promoted equality (Koenig-Archibugi, 2003: 3-7). This is fundamentally true in the Liberia case. While the globalisation of capital has created vast swathes of poverty in Liberia, thereby eroding state-citizen relations and fuelling anti-dual citizenship angst, the globalisation of ideas manifested in notions of human rights has strengthened citizen-citizen relations and engendered principles of inclusion, thereby advancing pro-dual citizenship sentiments. I have also shown that Liberia's 20th century integration and 21st century re-integration into the global capitalist system has sustained Tubman's Open Door Policy, with simultaneously positive and negative results for citizenship construction and practice.

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[223] This information was culled from a semi-structured interview I conducted in Freetown on April 18, 2013 with Karamoh Kabba, Sierra Leone's Deputy Minister of Political and Public Affairs, who oversees the Office of Diaspora Affairs.

In the next chapter, I discuss how post-war recovery has sparked heated debates about what kind of development Liberia should pursue, who can legitimately participate, and whether or not dual citizenship might help or hinder the process of transformation.

# Chapter VIII

## 'Taylor-Corkrum Nexus' Undermines Transnational Citizenship

In 1984, soon to be warlord-turned-president Charles Ghankay Taylor sat in a drab cell of the Plymouth Massachusetts Correctional Facility, a fugitive on the run (Waugh, 2011: 97). For 16 months, he awaited extradition to Liberia for allegedly embezzling US$922,382 from the country's General Services Agency (GSA), the procurement arm of government he had previously headed before absconding to the US, his adopted home (Waugh, 2011: 97-104). In the early 1970s, the ambitious young Taylor had travelled across the Atlantic from Liberia to attend Chamberlayne Junior College in Boston, Massachusetts, although he subsequently enrolled at Bentley College, studying economics (Waugh, 2011: 63; 65). A consummate politician, he became involved in the Liberian Community Association in Massachusetts, as well as the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA)—then a "vehicle through which educated but politically disenfranchised—mostly indigenous—Liberians could voice their disapproval" of settler hegemony (Waugh, 2011: 67; 69). Travelling up and down the US East Coast for rallies and demonstrations, Taylor, then a critical voice for change in his native Liberia, was elected head of the Boston branch of ULAA (Waugh, 2011: 69-70). When he and other ULAA stalwarts were invited by President William Tolbert in early 1980 to help institute reforms in Liberia for which they had advocated in the US, Taylor declined until a more lucrative offer came from Samuel Kanyon Doe to head the GSA in 1983 (Waugh, 2011: 86).

Rumoured to have acquired permanent US residency while abroad, Taylor stands as a shining exemplar of the anxieties that underpin backlash against proposed dual citizenship legislation. His 1984 aborted extradition and escape from Plymouth has been lodged in the Liberian imagination as indicative of the country's inability to deter transnationals from pilfering meagre state resources and "plunging the country into chaos,"[224] as articulated by one homeland male respondent. In 2013, another indictment and looming extradition, this time involving a Liberia-born US

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[224] [HL29] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 18, 2013.

citizen army pilot, Ellen Corkrum, harkened back to the Taylor case. Appointed managing director of the Roberts International Airport (RIA) in Liberia in 2011, Corkrum was subsequently accused in 2012 of "economic sabotage, theft of property, criminal conspiracy, and misapplication of entrusted property" [225] (Kanneh, 2014). After fleeing to the US, she and her Liberia-born US citizen partner, Melvin Johnson—the first black judge to serve in Lithonia, Georgia—released unauthorised tapes they had recorded implicating other government officials in an attempt to court sympathy (Kanneh, 2014). Nevertheless, the government of Liberia requested their extradition in September 2013, prompting Sirleaf to publically lament her faith in Corkrum's purported ability to lead reforms in aviation:

> A major setback in efforts for the development of the [Roberts International] airport resulted from an unscrupulous and conspiring newly recruited Managing Director [Corkrum], who returned kindness and deference with entrapment and intriguing accusations to damage the credibility of several individuals and the image of the country. This matter is under review by counsel in the United States for legal redress, including extradition (Sirleaf, 2014: 24).

Indeed, Sirleaf's unwavering faith in returnee recruits such as Corkrum has in many ways eroded state-citizen relations, casting diaspora actors as post-war saboteurs.

In this chapter, I argue that post-war recovery has fundamentally reconfigured 'Liberian citizenship', leading to heightened debates about who can legitimately participate in reconstruction efforts. I employ what I call the 'Taylor-Corkrum nexus' to illustrate that the presumed contributions of Liberians abroad and their returnee counterparts are violently contested. While there is recognition that diasporas represent a 'third post-war reconstruction space' through their contributions to recovery—thereby increasing claims for dual citizenship—there is also acknowledgment that they have contributed to post-war profiteering through corrupt practices—thereby influencing backlash against dual citizenship. The chapter is organised into three sections: First, I provide an overview of the literature on war to peace transitions, examining the contestations about the nature of

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[225] http://frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php/news/1910-where-is-the-indictment-corkrum-fiance-ask-government#ex

Liberia's post-war recovery trajectory. Second, I catalogue Liberia's achievements and challenges in implementing its first major post-war development agenda, the *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy, and examine how these developments have impacted citizenship configuration. And lastly, I assess how Sirleaf's diasporic ethos—manifested in her copious appointments of transnationals to government positions of power and influence—has both helped and hindered post-war recovery, thereby influencing claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship as a policy prescription.

**The Great Post-Conflict Makeover Fantasy[226] and War to Peace Alternatives**

In this thesis, I refrain from using the term 'post-conflict' to describe Liberia because it is a misnomer given the country's contemporary post-war clashes over land, income inequality, transitional justice and dual citizenship, as discussed in Chapter V. Nevertheless, 'post-conflict reconstruction' is a term often used in policy circles to describe countries recovering from armed conflict, although post-war nations like Liberia are rarely devoid of deeply entrenched historical fissures. In fact, one of the fallacies generated by the 'post-conflict moment' is that a country emerging from war is a 'blank slate" without a unique historical trajectory (Cramer, 2006: 255). The term 'post-conflict reconstruction' persists, however, and can be attributed to the attempt by the US and other nations to rebuild Europe after World War II (World Bank, 1998). More contemporarily, the term has been used by the World Bank since 1995 to describe the need for "the rebuilding of the socio-economic framework of society" and the "reconstruction of the enabling conditions for a functioning peacetime society [to include] the framework for governance and the rule of law" (World Bank, 1998; Orr, 2004: 10). It is estimated that $400 million in World Bank grants were spent on reconstruction efforts between 1993 and 1998, with the Bank establishing a Post-Conflict Unit (PCU) in 1997 to address economic recovery in addition to combating corruption, improving governance, social cohesion and social capital in post-war contexts (World Bank, 1998: vi-vii).

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[226] "The Great Post-Conflict Makeover Fantasy" is the title of chapter seven in Cramer's 2006 book, *Civil War Is Not a Stupid Thing*.

Although the World Bank argues that it is not in the business of interfering in the politics of a member state, its laundry list of priorities and interventions have prompted researchers to contend that 'post-conflict reconstruction' is a decidedly political project. Scholars like Cramer are vehemently critical of the post-conflict reconstruction paradigm, arguing that "contemporary post-conflict threats to development have three major sources:" i) post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building are not technical undertakings, but fiercely political in nature; ii) the developmental outcomes of peace settlements depend on whether or not economic policy is based on ideological fantasy or on a realistic assessment of particular economies and of historical experience; and iii) the post-conflict "moniker" can be misleading (Cramer, 2006: 245). It is not clear when the post-conflict moment actually begins, nor is there any internationally sanctioned definition of what constitutes post-conflict reconstruction aid (Cramer, 2006: 259). Furthermore, the diverse prescriptions for the 'post-conflict makeover' have been employed since the end of the Cold War, with the World Bank increasing its lending to post-war nations by 800 percent from 1980 to 1998 (Cramer, 2006: 258). Post-conflict reconstruction debates are often driven by a single narrative with an expressed reluctance to accept that there are diverse ways of "managing the challenges of war to peace transitions" (Cramer, 2006: 277).

Just as 'post-conflict reconstruction' is a contested category of inquiry, war to peace transitions are often disputed political processes that involve a number of competing priorities of states, local constituents, and donors. They represent an array of intersecting processes which include, but are not limited to: i) security sector reform (rebuilding the army and other security institutions, demobilising ex-combatants and introducing principles of 'good governance' throughout security institutions); ii) political reconstruction (legal systems, electoral systems, public policy reforms); iii) economic reconstruction (macro-economic policies, tax reforms, budget realignment, controlling inflation, changing banking and commercial codes, realigning expenditures and revenue); and iv) social reconstruction (integrating ex-combatants, repatriating refugees, reigniting social cohesion, identity formation and consolidation) (Ottaway, 2003; del Castillo, 2008; Paris and Sisk, 2010). Another factor that influences war to peace transitions is the level of technical and

international financial assistance, as well as international police and troops, which del Castillo attributes to the country's regional or strategic importance to donors and nations contributing troops (del Castillo, 2008: 9).

Similar to the four-pillar structure of Liberia's first Poverty Reduction Strategy, *Lift Liberia*, as a regional example, post-war reconstruction in Africa to date has been premised on four textbook war to peace principles largely derived and driven by donors: i) *security sector reform* (DDRR, security agency restructuring); ii) *justice and reconciliation* (TRC, war crimes tribunal, judicial reform); iii) *socio-economic transformation* (employment, restoring basic services, GDP growth and economic development); and iv) *political restructuring* (elections, rule of law, governance, mass political participation) (Sesay, et. al, 2009: 7). Akin to post-World War II reconstruction in Europe, there is often an "externalisation of post-war efforts" in Africa where "external actors tend to dominate the designing, financing, and implementation of reconstruction programmes in countries emerging from civil wars" (Sesay, et. al, 2009: 8). As a case in point, Liberia's adoption of neo-liberal measures prompted former Public Works Minister Kofi Woods to lament the country's externalisation of its post-war efforts:

> My frustration with most of these things is that it's [post-war recovery's] captured externally and imposed locally. And when you have these kinds of things happen, when we have to pander to the international demands and the dictates of the international community as to what model we should adapt, what will be good for our country, implementation becomes difficult. We need to develop our national drive, our domestic approaches to be able to address the problems of Liberia, not what happened somewhere else, or not what becomes the most romantic approach to development. And that's part of my frustration. So, nothing that is borrowed without appropriate understanding can be applied consistently in this country. And I don't think we have been able to do it. We want to be a darling of external people, probably some of us – not only the institution or the country – but as individuals, we also want to be a darling of those out there, hoping that our future can be embedded in their institutions, of the IMF, the World Bank, and so forth. So we pander to them without understanding that we need to do more for our own country.[227]

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[227] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 25, 2013.

Despite Woods' contention, other policy makers like current Foreign Affairs Minister/former Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan, who was actively involved in the HIPC process, argued that Liberia has demonstrated more agency than some care to admit in strategically accepting post-war conditionalities:

> Well, because [of] the conditionalities, we agreed upon it. We called them triggers. One was to maintain macro-economic stability. That was good for the Liberian people. Not just an IMF issue. We agreed to institute audits of five key government ministries and agencies, 'HIPC Audits,' including Ministry of Finance, Education, Health and that was good for the Liberian people that those entities were audited. We agreed to the establishment, and making functional, an Anti-Corruption Commission. That was good for the Liberian people. We agreed to clean up…to regularise the Education Ministry payroll. That was good for the Liberian people. We agreed to pass an Investment Code that would take away discretion and that was good for the Liberian people. Of all the triggers agreed, those were triggers that were advancing the interest of Liberians…No, it was not top-down. It was negotiated. We proffered most of these things and we had a common understanding with our partners—the World Bank, the IMF and others in the HIPC process. They say these are the conditionalities because they sprang from the exigent realities of Liberia. Yes, in other situations the neo-liberalist critiques apply but for us to a large extent, we ensured that those triggers agreed upon were triggers that were in the interest of Liberia.[228]

As highlighted by former minister Woods and current minister Ngafuan, there is contestation about whether Liberia's post-war recovery has been externally imposed or domestically driven, and whether it has strengthened or weakened state-citizen relations. Central to the discourses surrounding war to peace transitions in Liberia and elsewhere is the capacity of the state to negotiate the competing priorities of donors and international actors, the state itself, and local constituents.

Post-war countries often share important features—the "mismatch between fiscal capacities and needs as well as on-going societal tensions that could precipitate the renewal of violent conflict"—yet they also exhibit differences which must be considered in formulating war to peace policies (Boyce and O'Donnell, 2007: 2).

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[228] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.

Each war to peace transition is distinct depending on the "specific interplay of the many factors that influence them," including the circumstances under which conflict began (internal strife, regional conflict, the politicisation of ethnicity, or control of natural resources) and whether or not they were resolved through peaceful negotiations or through military intervention (del Castillo, 2008: 9). Though knowledge and experiences gained from other post-war contexts provide a heightened level of insight, "off-the-shelf solutions cannot be imported from one setting and simply grafted into another" (Boyce and O'Donnell, 2007: 2). Furthermore, attempts by donors such as the World Bank to create a blueprint for reconstruction is ill-advised because creating and legitimising institutional structures can only be marginally facilitated by external actors (Ottaway, 2003: 265).

External influence in post-war transitions often compromises their success rates, with del Castillo and others arguing that transitions in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan failed because they did not address fundamental problems of political reconciliation, economic reconstruction, and improvements in the living conditions of citizens (del Castillo, 2008: 2). Thus, there is a need for national authorities to drive the process of reconstruction because "their participation is crucial if policies and aid flows are to contribute to effective reconstruction and peace consolidation in the future" (del Castillo, 2008: 5). What del Castillo and others fail to factor in, however, is how national authorities are legitimated, and in the case of post-war contexts like Liberia where diasporas are strategically involved in the rebuilding process, how diasporic claims to legitimacy are contested or reinforced through existing power dynamics, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Cramer argues convincingly that for economic development to gain momentum in the wake of violent conflict, a strong central state is essential, contrary to popular opinion that the state must take a backseat to the "decentralising and enabling bureaucracy of the post-conflict reconstruction make-over fantasy" (Cramer, 2006: 277). Other scholars also challenge the manner in which international agencies undermine the post-war state in war to peace transitions. According to Boyce, the 'dual public sector' architecture of post-war economic reconstruction efforts—where there exists an 'internal sector' funded and managed by the government and an 'external sector' funded and managed by donors—is counter-productive because: i) it fails to

tap external assistance to build the state's own fiscal capacity; ii) it crowds out the 'external public sector' by recruiting professionals, and often diaspora professionals in the case of Liberia and other post-war contexts, that the government cannot afford; iii) it poses coordination problems for an external public sector that is managed by competing agencies with their own priorities; and iv) there are no mechanisms that make donors (and sometimes states) accountable to local citizens (Boyce, 2010: 102).

As discussed briefly in the previous chapter, externally financed and driven reconstruction efforts fundamentally erode state-citizen relations. Donors' obsession with the "one-size-fits-all" approach undermines citizen agency, strips the state of its historical context, and entrenches the assumption that "institutions, state capacity and governance are purely technical, depoliticised entities" (Cramer and Goodhand, 2003: 150). Unlike Mengisteab and Daddieh (1999) who view the state as a panacea for democratic consolidation in post-war settings, Cramer posits that a powerful state is not sufficient because longer term development transformation can only happen by identifying and encouraging the "conditions under which that state is dominated by political and economic conditions" (Cramer, 2006: 278), such as authority derived from strong state-citizen relations. In other words, a strong state does not necessarily equal a successful post-war transition. Furthermore, the particularities of causes of armed conflicts and state failures mean that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to peace-building and reconstruction (Luckham, 2006: 287). According to Luckham, reconstruction is more likely to succeed if it factors in the multiple layers of authority above and below the state, such as citizens, rather than a single-minded pursuit of rebuilding states through central governance alone (Luckham, 2006: 292). A simultaneous pursuit of state-building and nation-building objectives in post-war contexts is the only means of strengthening state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations, as I argue in the section that follows.

**The Dilemmas of State-building[229] and Nation-building**

Five major contributions supporting the need to strengthen state institutions and

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[229] This is the title of a 2010 publication edited by Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk.

governance structures in war to peace transitions were proffered in 2004 by authors such as Francis Fukuyama, Simon Chesterman, James Fearon and David Laitin, Stephen Krasner, and Roland Paris, which transformed state-building into a growing topic of concern in peace-building scholarship (Paris and Sisk, 2010: 7-10). Paris and Sisk refer to "the construction or strengthening of legitimate governmental institutions in countries emerging from civil conflict" as 'state-building,' which has been used increasingly by the UN and other multilateral agencies as a foundation for peace-building (Paris and Sisk, 2010: 1). While institutional strengthening is certainly not the panacea to sustainable peace or development, sustainable peace and development cannot be achieved in the absence of effective state-building (Paris and Sisk, 2010: 3). As a result of the backlash to the neo-liberal agenda in post-war contexts, questions about "coordination and coherence, local ownership, legitimacy, capacity-building, dependency, accountability, and exit" have foregrounded official discussions by the UN and other international organisations (Paris and Sisk, 2010: 3). A closer examination of these issues is vital to solving the daily challenges of externally assisted state-building efforts, particularly for peace-building agents in the field (Paris and Sisk, 2010: 3).

According to Paris and Sisk, however, post-war peace-building and state-building remain uncertain for a number of reasons: i) the record of peace-building and state-building enterprises have seen divergent outcomes; ii) state-building, for some, represents a new form of colonial control over war-torn states in the form of neo-imperial or capitalist expansion and for others it fosters a 'culture of dependency' when the goal should be self-rule and domestic governance; and iii) the post/911 period has made it difficult to separate discussions of state-building in war-torn states from the failed attempts by the US in Iraq and Afghanistan (Paris and Sisk, 2010: 3). It has been argued that the state-building 'project' does not require reinvestment or re-organisation, but rather rethinking (Paris and Sisk, 2010: 13). Contemporary state-building exercises insist entirely too much on the regulatory role of international institutions to the detriment of locally derived political solutions (Chandler, 2007: 71). Chandler alludes to Samuel Huntington's 1960s study, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, in which Huntington argues that the key

to state stability is the building of a domestic consensus, a sense of political community, and establishing a government of popular will (Chandler, 2007: 71-72)—essentially strong state-citizen and citizen-relations. The problem with state-building as a project is that it "does not require a process of popular consensus building to give the target population a stake in policy making" (Chandler, 2007: 81).

One of the problems with state-building as a war to peace transition agenda is its myopic focus on building state institutions, with the core assumption that no positive institutional practices existed before the 'post-conflict moment'—a fallacy of terra nullius as articulated by Cliffe and Manning (2008: 165). In this analysis, the post-war state represents a 'blank slate,' a tabula rasa to be foisted by donors who function as social engineers, in which policy makers conflate the 'state idea'—our imaginations of what the state *should be*—with the 'empirical state'—how the state actually functions in practice (Abrams, 1988). This usually occurs at the expense of recognising the legitimacy of building national cohesion and has the propensity to delegitimise state authority. Fundamental to Liberia's post-war recovery success or failure, therefore, are discussions centred around citizenship, property ownership, and political participation. This is why the *Liberia Rising 2030* focus on re-defining national identity (and, by extension, the tenets of citizenship) is so crucial, because it recognises nation-building and state-building as necessary parallel processes in Liberia. Although some scholars conflate the terms state-building and nation-building (Jenkins and Plowden, 2006: 1), it is clear from the prevailing literature that the two represent distinct processes altogether that are mutually reinforcing. Whereas state-building focuses on public institutions of the state (laws, courts, legislatures), nation-building refers to the "strengthening of a national population's collective identity, including its sense of national distinctiveness and unity" or the "orderly exercise of a nation-wide, public authority" (Bendix, 1996: 22).

Scholars who examine post-war reconstruction projects place a high premium on state-building, but less of an emphasis on its analytical twin, nation-building. It would appear that state-building and its contested legitimacy stands in stark contrast to the potentially legitimising forms of nation-building. Nation building—as the creation of "communities of shared values, traditions, and historical memory"—

has "political re-legitimation" as its hallmark (Robinson, 2007: 13). Robinson's preoccupation with the social contract between states and their citizens is particularly relevant for my analysis of how Liberians naturalised abroad who automatically revoked their citizenship have used the institution of citizenship as a marker for increased claims to nation-building, which has come to envelop development processes in the context of post-war recovery. Nation-building has three central elements that define it as a success: "a unifying, persuasive ideology, integration of society and a functional state apparatus" (Hippler, 2005: 7). With its emphasis on not only repairing state-citizen relations, but also on strengthening citizen-citizen relations, nation-building appears to be a magic bullet. Yet, it should not be thought of as a concept that provides a simple solution to fragmented societies or failing states, but rather a potentially transformative tool when coupled with other parallel processes, such as state-building (Hippler, 2005: 13).

A number of features defining state-building and nation-building position the two in binary trajectories. While nation-building is 'people centric' and domestically driven, requiring national agency, ownership and resources, state-building is 'institution centric' and externally driven, often soliciting international resources and involving some form of social engineering through a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Although both state-building and nation-building have their advantages and disadvantages, the two processes cannot be transformational if they are pursued in isolation. Thus, state-building and nation-building in Liberia cannot be fully operational without an interrogation of the meaning of citizenship. Whereas the focus of Liberia's post-war recovery thus far has been building state-structures at the expense of solidifying national cohesion, current debates about dual citizenship force policy makers to see state-building and nation-building as mutually constitutive. Claims for dual citizenship beg the question fundamental to Liberia's state and nation-building: how does the state incorporate deterritorialised nationals in its recovery efforts without invalidating the needs and contributions of those who are domestically rooted? I explore the contours of this question in detail later in the chapter when I discuss how diasporas have simultaneously helped and hindered post-war recovery.

In the section that follows, I provide an overview of Liberia's post-war recovery

achievements and challenges to date with an emphasis on how they have impacted citizenship construction and practice.

**From 'Lifting Liberia' to 'Lifting Liberians'—Post-War Recovery and Citizenship Configuration**

Since the cessation of armed conflict in 2003, Liberia has pursued a textbook post-war reconstruction agenda, moving from humanitarian relief to recovery and development. Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of Liberia's post-war achievements and challenges to date—particularly since the Liberian government and its donors have already produced voluminous reports to that end—I have targeted particular cases of post-war efforts to support one of two central arguments in this chapter: that the demands of post-war recovery have created incentives and opportunities for Liberian diasporas and their returnee counterparts to practice active citizenship by contributing their 'time, talent, and treasure' to reconstruction, thereby influencing the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation.

According to Kieh, Sirleaf's "regime, although haphazardly, has embarked upon the implementation of the neo-liberal project, as evidenced by efforts to, among others, liberalise the political institutions, reform the security sector, and recommit Liberia to the peripheral capitalist path to development" (Kieh, 2012b: xix). Liberia's post-war recovery has been anchored by a series of externally driven and financed reconstruction agendas that have simultaneously strengthened and undermined the tenets of citizenship—from the Results Focused Transitional Framework (RFTF) (2003-2005) of the National Transitional Government to the 150-Day Action Plan (2006), Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (2006-2008), *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011), and Agenda for Transformation (AfT) (2012-2016) of the Sirleaf administration. For the purposes of my analysis, I focus exclusively on the implementation of the *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy, which was monitored and evaluated more consistently than the other development agendas to date. Its goal was to reduce poverty by 4 percent, from 64 percent in 2007 to 60 percent in 2011, with the government of Liberia committing a meagre US$500 million of the total US$1.6 billion required to implement the Strategy (Government

of Liberia, 2012c: 9). Although the *Lift Liberia* PRS was dubbed the 'Poverty Enhancement Strategy' by citizens across the country, a second Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire will have to be conducted to validate actual reductions in poverty during the three-year period (Government of Liberia, 2011c: 15).

Table 23: *Summary of the Lift Liberia PRS Four-Pillar Deliverables and Completion Rates*

| Pillar | Number of Deliverables | Completion Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|
| I. Peace and Security | 94 | 67 |
| II. Economic Revitalisation | 118 | 69 |
| III. Governance and the Rule of Law | 52 | 41 |
| IV. Infrastructure and Basic Services | 187 | 57 |

Source: Government of Liberia, 2012c

According to government of Liberia reports summarised in Table 23, the PRS completion rate improved from 20 percent in 2008-2009 to 80 percent in 2009-2010 (Government of Liberia, 2011c: 7), with capacity constraints defined as the major contributor to low levels of implementation in the initial stages of the Strategy. According to former Civil Service Agency Director-General, Dr. C. William Allen, Liberia's inability to implement reconstruction deliverables was largely hampered by a low-level domestic human resource base:

> The challenges, the challenges, first of all, would be capacity. Frankly, both human capacity and institutional capacity and I guess those two would add up into a general deficit in societal capacity. I think clearly those would be the greatest challenges because one may have all the ideas but if you don't have the resources to implement those ideas then the challenges become enormous.[230]

These constraints facilitated emergency capacity building programmes such as TOKTEN, LECBS, and SES discussed in previous chapters, thereby carving out a niche for diaspora returnees and entrenching the influence of donors in the entire PRS process. In fact, Liberia seems to have a chequered history of foreign agenda setting disguised as capacity building through expatriate technical assistance, whether imposed, as in the case of the Finance Advisor within the Firestone agreement, or voluntarily sought (Van der Kraaij, 1983). For example, in 1934

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[230] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 4, 2013.

President Barclay hired a Polish national as his economic advisor (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 300). In the same year, Liberia's first Three-Year Development Plan was devised, and six American specialists were hired although their relationship with the government was shaky, so much so that when the Plan expired in 1937 their contracts were not renewed (Van der Kraaij, 1983: 300). These historical examples show that Liberia's heavy reliance on international experts—whether foreign expatriates or diaspora recruits—for the implementation of its development goals has fundamentally weakened state-citizen relations and undermined the capacity of the state to deliver with autonomy. As a case in point, Liberia's entire PRS superstructure and implementation were primarily driven by a 'one-size-fits-all' race to HIPC Completion Point.

Under the peace and security pillar of the *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy, foreign agents led, financed, and implemented most deliverables. For example, the deployment of 15,000 United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) military personnel in 2003 represented "one of the most expensive operations embarked upon by the UN since 1945" (Sesay, et. al, 2009: 50). Yet, there was a small measure of local ownership in the process of security sector reform, argued Defence Minister Brownie Samukai:

> Yes, the US government provided funding [to the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)] and the funding was dictated by them...They determine who they bring, who the instructors will be. They determine when the instructor will be here, how long they gonna be here, the kind of car the instructor rides, where the instructor lives and everything else... we were building the Army in 2006, they [the US government] provided funding of close to US$200 million for the training, they gave the contract away [to DynCorp], that's their money...The training module [of the AFL] is based on the TRADOC [Training Doctrine] of the US, that is the training doctrine of the United States. We are making that training manual to become what you call interoperability [interoperable] with other African countries so that a Liberian can work here and also work in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, like we have Liberians in Mali, there is no problem at all...The weapons system that we used is not an American M16, it's an AK47, which is pretty much predominant around [Africa]. LARS [Lower Airspace Radar Services] that are also used, we can use those weapons. RPGs [Rocket Propelled Grenades], we can also use those weapons. Pretty much that is what we are presently using, so we can operate within

Liberia, outside Liberia, with other African countries and among other countries around the world...[231]

Despite the minister's assertions, however, it is clear that Liberia's autonomy in its own security restructuring was marginal at best. The US government disbanded and reorganised the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) by contracting DynCorp, an American security firm, with minimal input from the government of Liberia (Kieh, 2012b: 239). Under DynCorp's tutelage, only 2000 Liberian soldiers were trained from 2006 to 2009 although the Liberian government's initial target was 4000 (Kieh, 2012b: 239). From its inception, the restructured AFL was led by a Nigerian Command Officer-in-Charge, Major General Suraj Alao Abdurrahman, until February 2014, when a Liberian, Brigadier General Daniel D. Ziankhan[232], took over the reigns as Chief of Staff (Sirleaf, 2013: 18). Under the supervision of UN Police (UNPOL), an estimated US$0.5 million was spent on training 3500 members of the Liberia National Police (LNP) from 2004-2007 (Kieh, 2012b: 239). While the army and police were priorities, other security outfits such as the National Security Agency (NSA), Bureau of Immigration and Naturalisation (BIN), and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) were virtually neglected because of a lack of donor support (Kieh, 2012b: 239). Nevertheless, Minister Samukai justified the single-minded pursuit of restructuring the AFL, arguing that it served as a proxy for increased forms of human security in Liberia:

> Arising out of the civil conflict, people lost confidence in the security sector. People lost confidence in those who were entrusted to protect them, and so it was not the question of training and retraining but it's how do you build that confidence back both domestically, both on the regional level, and also in the diaspora as well. So, those were the steps we began to take. And working with the US government through their full support for the restructuring process we set out to conduct an empirical vetting process on the order of merits upon which all new entrants into the AFL had to conform to so that actually helped to raise the credibility of the process...And with the support of the UN as observers and civil society as well on the Joint Personnel Board all successful recruits into the AFL had to meet those standards as well. So, if there is anything that we can say that we may have ever done

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[231] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on July 12, 2013.
[232] The full story of the new AFL chief of staff induction was covered in an Executive Mansion press release on February 11, 2014, Liberia's Armed Forces Day:
http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2press.php?news_id=2892&related=7&pg=sp

here over the past seven years is to regain the confidence of the Liberian people into the military, into the security sector, so that they can once again begin to trust that AFL, you know, is a force for good...[233]

Despite Minister Samukai's claims that Liberians have a newfound confidence in the security sector, he admitted that there are still gaps in improving the living conditions of AFL soldiers, which has led to some defection:

> We have trained them, we have equipped them, we're providing for them the salaries. We need to make sure the condition in which they live and work is much better than what it is today...Because the concentration of the troops here in Monrovia at the Edward Binyah Kesselly Barracks, which is actually constructed for 800 persons, now has 2000 persons initially...Then eventually we tried to have some of them relocated to the Coast Guard Base, to Camp Ware and then as well as Camp Tubman in Gbarnga. And then we encouraged them to bring their families, so you had 200 families, now you got probably about 2000 families...And then we have over 500 kids that are going to school, so all of these challenges suggest to us that the condition under which they live and work has been and continues to be a challenge for us...[234]

Minister Samukai's admission about the lack of complete satisfaction within the army is one indicator among many that Liberia's peace is still very fragile. Furthermore, increased instability in the Mano River sub-region remains unresolved and there are concerns about the capacity of Liberia's security personnel ahead of the complete drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) after the up-coming presidential and legislative elections scheduled in late 2017 (UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2013).

Just as peace and security is still tenuous, largely driven by external agenda-setting, so too has Liberia's post-war economic revitalisation undermined state-citizen relations by following the dictates of the World Bank and IMF, as discussed in detail in the previous chapter. For instance, the government welcomed in 2005 the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP), in which

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[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid.

foreign experts were hired to oversee revenue-generating agencies in order to ensure fiscal discipline and transparent management (UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2005: 8-9; Kieh, 2012b: 229). This was undoubtedly based on recommendations from a UN Panel of Experts report recommending the establishment of an "independent economic commission of inquiry" to "conduct systematic investigations of all revenue-producing entities wishing to be active in Liberia" (UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2003: 8). Yet, the systematic review of revenue generation has not mitigated corruption beyond GEMAP's mandate nor followed economic diversification "beyond the traditional natural resource-dependent export products and toward other agricultural and small-scale manufacturing products and services" (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 6). Despite the precariousness of Liberia's post-war development, Defence Minister Samukai praised GEMAP for laying the foundation of economic growth:

> I mean there was nothing here [in Liberia], there was no process, no procedure, no system. I mean people were calling Liberia [a] completely failed state. All of the institutions of governance were already gone. The issue of accountability was not there. Credibility was not there. Confidence was also gone, so you needed [donor] partners to help you to lay the basis to get yourself going. For example, we had the GEMAP people who were sitting in every aspect of government co-signing every document, 3/4 years later we felt that we were confident enough to handle things ourselves…and we got rid of them and we continue our own process today.[235]

Other reforms under the economic revitalisation pillar were largely brokered by collaborations between the Liberian government and its donors, such as debt cancellation of US$4.9 billion; audits conducted by the General Auditing Commission (GAC); the establishment of internal audit systems in all government agencies; and the enactment of public financial management legislation such as the Public Financial Management Law (Government of Liberia, 2011a). These measures, including budget transparency mechanisms instituted, were intended to improve the capacity of the state to deliver development thereby increasing citizen oversight of public finances. According to former Finance Minister and current Foreign Affairs Minister Ngafuan, Liberia's adoption of an open budget process represents one of

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[235] Ibid.

the hallmarks of post-war economic revitalisation, in which Liberia's cash-based budget increased from US$85 million in the 2005-2006 fiscal year to US$649 in the 2012-2013 fiscal year (Government of Liberia, 2011a):

> One of the milestones was to have this sacred, sacredness around the budget taken off and to make it a public instrument and that budgets became instruments to be discussed on radio, journalists having copies, hatai shops discussing it and then lively budget debate. It was all part of the transition. Now, it's good that after we left, my successor [Amara Konneh] has maintained this path with [the] "Open Budget Initiative." But one of the key milestones given the immediate past was, one, we opened the budget process...at least people are not as detached from the budget process today as they were detached before the government of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf came in.[236]

Completely unprecedented in Liberia, budget transparency has opened up the democratic space for citizens to participate in prioritising and financing development. Although the establishment of County Development Funds (CDFs) in 2008 was also intended to decentralise fiscal authority to Liberia's 15 sub-political divisions, thereby strengthening state-citizen relations, the process has been mired by mismanagement and political machinations between executive branch county authorities and legislative caucuses, prompting the Ministry of Internal Affairs to suspend disbursements to the Fund in December 2013, pending review[237].

Akin to the first two pillars of the *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy, governance and the rule of law in Liberia improved in the post-war milieu primarily as a result of policies devised and institutions established to improve state-citizen relations:

> The government has also focused strong efforts on improving governance, strengthening justice, and restoring confidence in the rule of law. During the PRS period, it created the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC), and the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI). To make government institutions more transparent, capable, and oriented toward service delivery, the government created a comprehensive Civil Service Reform Strategy, which reduced the number of civil service employees, and rationalised

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[236] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.
[237] http://allafrica.com/stories/201312161205.html

the functions and mandates of nine ministries and agencies (M&As). The delivery of justice improved as the government developed and implemented a national and county-level case management system; deployed public defenders throughout the country; and replenished the ranks of trained magistrates for the first time in 20 years. Policies that increasingly put power in the hands of local communities are taking hold with the passing of the Community Rights Law, endorsement of a National Decentralisation Policy, and the creation of county-level branches for government service-delivery (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 4).

Nevertheless, state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations in Liberia are fundamentally undermined by Liberia's inability to reconcile formal and informal justice mechanisms. Former Justice Minister Christiana Tah admitted that rule of law remains a challenge to Liberia's post-war recovery, as evidenced by the 41 percent overall completion rate for this PRS pillar:

I think the formal justice system has always had a challenge with the informal justice system. But I think there was better control in the past, because of the relative peace and stability that we had. But, I think, with the war, and the dismantling of the formal justice system, people always have a need to turn to someone or something for resolutions. And when you're on the run, and the formal system is not working, and the informal system is all that is available, it seems like it became more significant, more important to people, and so more people utilised the informal justice system, it appears to me, from my own observation, during the war years...So, now, to come back and re-establish the rule of law, you have to confront this. So, what we did, we actually created a dialogue between actors in both the formal and informal [justice systems]. We thought this is not the kind of thing you fight over, but this is the kind of thing you discuss; you have a dialogue. So, in April in 2010, we had a national conference on enhancing or harmonising the two systems. Enhancing access to justice by harmonising the informal and the formal systems...So, rather than looking at it as a contention between the two, we're dialoguing and working together to see how we can bring them together.[238]

As highlighted by former Minister Tah, harmonising formal and informal justice will be crucial to strengthening the tenets of citizenship. Furthermore, Liberia's perfectly pitched post-war polices must resolve challenges in citizenship governance,

[238] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 19, 2013.

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particularly in land administration and tenure, as discussed in previous chapters. Transparency and accountability also remain major impediments to post-war recovery, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

As the most capital-intensive pillar of the *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy, infrastructure and basic services have been the most sought after by Liberia's citizens yet financed extensively by donors (Government of Liberia, 2012c: 9). In many ways this undermines strong state-citizen relations because while donors heavily fund social spending, the state abdicates from fulfilling its responsibility to the citizenry. During the government's nation-wide consultations with Liberian citizens in 2008, they listed roads, health and education as their top three development priorities (Government of Liberia, 2008a). The government responded by financing these citizen demands with donor dollars. During the PRS process, Liberia reconstructed or rehabilitated 2500 kilometres of laterite and paved roads; increased electrical generation from zero to 23 megawatts; renewed or constructed 48 kilometres of power transmission and distribution lines; and began implementation of the West Africa Power Pool cross-border electrification project (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 4). All infrastructure developments were not entirely driven by donor directives and financing, however. In order to build the capacity of Liberian entrepreneurs, the Public Works Ministry insisted that for infrastructure projects undertaken by concessionnaires investing more than US$25,000, 20 percent of the projects should be reserved for Liberian firms[239] thus improving state-citizen relations. According to former Public Works Minister Woods, the ministry under his guidance began to "tie certain kinds of social investment to private investment to concessions" to improve the material conditions of Liberia's citizens[240]:

> In some cases, we had MOUs, or we had commitment. In other cases we tied it to concessions. For instance, the Putu Mining Company for instance in the Southeast, in Grand Gedeh area, as part of the concession, there is a commitment to build a road that connects Zwedru, we call Grand Gedeh, to Sinoe County. It's a paved road, it's no longer a laterite road. So, the quality of the road and access become very important. In the case of ArcelorMittal, from Ganta to Yekepa –

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[239] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 25, 2013.
[240] Ibid.

for instance – that was not part of the concession agreement; it was a commitment made by Mr. [Lakshmi] Mittal himself to the president [of Liberia], that the road will be paved…In the case of Bong Mines, the China Union for instance also did not have any commitment, but it was an MOU. Initially it was a laterite road, but I insisted personally that we are not going to accept laterite roads in this day and age. We're going to have an asphalt road. So, for me, beyond the commitment, the partnership with the World Bank to build major roads, infrastructure, as well as the Swedish government to build feeder roads, it was important to begin to tie this thing, because for years, Bong Mining Company was here, they didn't build a road to the concession areas. We had many concessions – LAMCO and other people like that. So, that shift now to tie this kind of private investment to these social investments became very critical to re-establish faith in the communities, and to make sure that something is left behind that will benefit ordinary people, especially infrastructure. On another small-scale item, we came up with a policy to make sure that all the log bridges – even on feeder roads – will be transformed to concrete bridges. So, we're not going to accept – whether it's a donor, whoever wants to build roads in rural Liberia – farm-to-market or rural roads – to have these log bridges put into place, these wooden bridges. We're clear in our policy that we want concrete bridges in these kinds of communities. Though they are far away, farm-to-market roads, they are feeder roads, yet they deserve better. So, we transformed that now to insist on concrete bridges instead of log bridges.[241]

Besides infrastructure, basic social services were also a major priority in the PRS period. Although there is contestation about quality, Liberia improved its provision of health and education services, the second and third priorities outlined during county consultations in 2008. In the three-year PRS, the number of health workers increased from 5000 to 8000; health facilities nearly doubled, from 354 to 550; 439 schools were constructed or renovated across the country, with school enrolment numbers improving; teachers were trained with commensurate salary increments; and curricula were harmonised with ECOWAS (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 4). In her 2014 Annual Message to the Legislature, Sirleaf touted the improvements in education—from primary to vocational and tertiary—as her government's response to the capacity constraints of citizens in Liberia's post-war milieu:

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[241] Ibid.

According to the 2010 Census, the system, as currently exists, consists of 2849 schools – 2103 of which are public, 343 private, 226 religious and mission schools, and 177 community schools. There are five community colleges existing or in pre-operational status – Grand Bassa, Bomi, Bong, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, and Nimba; nine four-year degree-granting institutions, including the University of Liberia and Tubman University which are public; two vocational training institutes – Booker Washington Institute, which plans to move from high school to junior college; and the Monrovia Vocational Training Centre, which should move this year [2014] into new modern and well-equipped facilities (Sirleaf, 2014: 27).

Despite these achievements, however, Liberia's post-war development has been infused with obsessions about quantity over quality, which has ultimately compromised state-citizen relations. Under Sirleaf's administration, Liberia has developed a single-minded pursuit of infrastructural development—roads, ports, bridges, and electricity—at the expense of human development manifested in the provision of quality education and health services. The outbreak of Ebola in 2014 and the crisis that ensued exposed the appalling public health system in the country, as will be discussed in the conclusion of this thesis. Infrastructure especially remains weak, with electricity confined to pockets of Monrovia in a country where most citizens still must contend with the cost-prohibitive nature of generators (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 5).

The challenges posed by the infrastructure and basic services pillar mirrored challenges throughout the entire three-year *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy, in which capacity was often highlighted as a binding constraint (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 5):

A recent review of the accomplishments of the PRS shows many "fully satisfactory" outcomes, including maintaining macroeconomic stability with low inflation; a balanced budget; and the reduction of external debt. Outcomes were "partly satisfactory" in the sectors of health, water and sanitation, the business and private sectors, and civil service reform. There were also areas in which outcomes were "marginally positive," including the transition of security to Liberian agencies; delivery of basic education; improvement of roads; environmental issues; labour protection; and crime prevention. Finally, in a few areas—electric power supply, prompt delivery of justice, and decentralisation—outcomes were "unsatisfactory,"

indicating the need for more attention and a revised strategy (Government of Liberia 2011b: 34).

It is assumed that these challenges will be resolved in the five-year Agenda for Transformation (AfT), Liberia's PRS II (2012-2016). Primarily an economic policy and growth strategy, the AfT came out of consultations within 154 Liberian districts in 2011, as the first step in the long-term *Liberia Rising 2030* vision of "socio-economic transformation and development" to achieve the lofty goals of middle income status by 2030, wealth creation and inclusive growth (Government of Liberia, 2011a: ix-x; xvi). Although the AfT is touted as a grass-roots level, home-grown strategy, the process of its consolidation was largely funded and steered by Liberia's donors and its implementation, according to the Liberian government, "will rely heavily on funding from development partners" to cover estimated costs of US$3.2 billion, double the cost of the first PRS (Government of Liberia, 2011a: xvi; 152). Furthermore, the AfT's four pillars[242]—Peace, Security and Rule of Law; Economic Transformation; Governance and Public Institutions; and Human Development—represent replicas of the five-tiered peace-building and state-building goals of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States—Legitimate Politics; Security; Justice; Economic Foundations; and Revenue and Services—a framework providing financial support to countries affected by conflict which was validated at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in November 2011 (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 176). Thus, the AfT remains an extension of the aims of the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action, and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (Government of Liberia, 2011a: xvi; 176).

According to former Public Works Minister Kofi Woods, the AfT represents a ploy to appease donors and an invalidation of what Liberian citizens initially advocated for in the 2008 nation-wide consultations:

> People need simple things that we make complex. And throughout the county consultations [in 2008], it was very clear what they wanted. We made it quite difficult. From the time Toga McIntosh was at

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[242] The four pillars are supported by eight cross-cutting issues: gender equality, child protection, disability, youth empowerment, environment, HIV/AIDS, human rights, labour and employment (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 125).

[Ministry of] Planning [from 2006 to 2008], the people were very clear – roads, health, education, they were very clear...Why are we redefining it? Why are we not focusing on it since those consultations? Simple things they wanted. And if we'd focused on those things by now, we'd be far gone. Why are we reshaping it? Why are we making it complex, into *Liberia Rising*?...You know, I always said to people that [President William] Tolbert made it so simple. For me, the poverty alleviation plan was simple: from mat to mattress. Tell me, who in Liberia couldn't identify with what it meant, from mat to mattress? You know? *Liberia Rising*, this other one, Agenda for what? Transformation? Waste of time with that! You know? Who are we satisfying here? We need to have a language that the guy in the village will identify with. That's the language we need![243]

Nevertheless, unlike previous recovery plans which focused almost exclusively on state-building—'lifting Liberia', the state, through institutional capacity—AfT is expressly anchored on the tenets of nation-building—'lifting Liberians', the citizens, through national cohesion, human development and reconciliation (Government of Liberia, 2011a: 38-39). It remains to be seen whether AfT will fundamentally improve state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations, thereby making good on its promise of wealth creation and inclusive growth.

In this section, I have argued that Liberia's war to peace transition has been largely derived, financed and driven by externally imposed agendas with minimal agency asserted by the Liberian state, thereby simultaneously eroding and strengthening state-citizen relations. In the section that follows, I examine how the participation of transnational Liberians and their diaspora returnee counterparts in post-war recovery has impacted claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship.

**Post-War Transitions, Citizenship and Sirleaf's *Diaspocracy***

While some argue that war to peace transitions are primarily facilitated by external actors exerting a 'one-size-fits-all' neo-liberal agenda without acknowledging differences in post-war contexts, other scholars insist that these processes have become increasingly collaborative, due in part to local actors pushing their own agendas. Because there is often a dichotomy between 'international' aspirations and 'local' aspirations, rarely does the general literature on war to peace transitions

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[243] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 25, 2013.

factor in diasporas, who are neither entirely 'international' nor 'local' in their orientations yet fall somewhere in between. There are multi-layered ways in which diasporas insert themselves in post-war development processes: as political elites, entrepreneurs, development workers, state agents, humanitarians, and reconstruction 'spoilers.' Just as Foner argued that the black experience was central to reconstruction after the Civil War in the post-bellum United States with blacks playing an active role (Foner, 1989), I argue that diasporas are central to post-war recovery processes in many contexts, particularly Liberia. Post-war countries systematically target their diasporas, with some proposing policy measures such as dual citizenship in the case of Liberia to attract transnational engagement. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and Liberia, for instance, diaspora returnees have served as the conduits for post-war state-building, with often contested claims to nation-building.

Liberia is a particularly important case study of the role of diasporas in war to peace transitions because of the country's pre-war migratory history and the observed diasporic dialectic of contestation-migration-exile-return. During her many trips abroad, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has held meetings with diasporas from Accra, Ghana, to Freetown, Sierra Leone; from Washington, D.C., to Minneapolis, Minnesota; from Oslo, Norway, to London, England, imploring Liberians in these population centres to re-engage with the country. Furthermore, a *Liberia Rising 2030* Steering Committee appointed in February 2012 consulted Liberians in the country's 15 sub-political divisions, with five consultations held with diasporas in West Africa, Europe, and North America. This is a clear indication that Liberian diasporas represent not only a 'third post-war reconstruction space,' but also the country's deterritorialised '16th county.' Given Liberia's goals of reaching middle-income status by 2030, a renewal of discussions about the role of diasporas in post-war recovery and development has been infused by heightened debates about the tenets of citizenship and the proposed dual citizenship bill introduced in 2008. In 2012, the president established a Constitution Review Committee to examine the country's citizenship laws, among other provisions in the Constitution[244]. During her Annual Message to the Legislature in January 2014, Sirleaf explicitly acknowledged her

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[244] http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2press.php?news_id=2351&related=20&pg=sp&sub=41

diasporic ethos, thereby endorsing dual citizenship as a worthwhile policy prescription:

> Honorable ladies and gentlemen: A great human capital resource for the development of this country lies in the Liberian diaspora. We trust that as you move forward during this session, and in your deliberations, you will give adequate consideration to the recognition of citizens' rights for those persons born as Liberians, and those born of Liberian parentage who wish to contribute fully to the development of this country as citizens. The grant[ing] of [legal] 'Liberian citizenship' would enable us to draw on the wealth of financial, technical and other resources available to that category of persons that could be deployed nationally (Sirleaf, 2014: 31).

Under Sirleaf's administration, Liberia's executive branch of government can be labelled a *diaspocracy*, a term I coined to describe the systematic rule and dominance of expatriate nationals in government policy and practice. It is worth noting that during Sirleaf's two terms in office, the primary custodians of post-war recovery have been diaspora recruits, some of whom with strong political loyalties to the president. These appointed officials have hoisted up the four pillars of Liberia's externally financed reconstruction agenda: peace and security, economic revitalisation, governance and the rule of law, and infrastructure and basic services. As one of Sirleaf's longest serving cabinet officials, Minister of National Defence Brownie Samukai has managed the restructuring of Liberia's security sector under the auspices of the UN and US. Former Finance Minister Antoinette Sayeh led the country's preparation for HIPC status and the development of the *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy; the current Minister of Finance, Amara Konneh, is also a diaspora recruit, though he had no prior experience in economics or financial management. Sirleaf seems to have entrusted Liberia's economy almost exclusively to returnees. As a case in point, all of Liberia's major revenue generating semi-autonomous agencies, referred to locally as the country's 'cash cows,' have been headed by Liberian returnees appointed during Sirleaf's first and/or second terms in office—Roberts International Airport (Ellen Corkrum); Liberia Petroleum and Refining Corporation (Harry Greaves and T. Nelson Williams, respectively); National Port Authority (Matilda Parker); Liberia Maritime Authority (Binyah Kesselly); Forestry Development Authority (Harrison Karnweah).

On the international affairs front, former Foreign Affairs ministers Olubanke King-Akerele and Toga Gayewea McIntosh courted multi-lateral and bilateral economic and political arrangements that transformed Liberia from a 'pariah nation' to a donor darling. Previously a sociology professor at Morgan State University in Maryland (USA), former Justice Minister Christiana Tah, led the judicial reform agenda; her predecessor and current associate justice of the Supreme Court, Philip Banks, also spent considerable amounts of time abroad. Although her immediate predecessor, Kofi Woods, was not a diaspora recruit, returnee engineer Antoinette Weeks is now overseeing the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure at the Ministry of Public Works. In Sirleaf's first term, Public Works was managed by returnee Luseni Dunzo, before he was dismissed for alleged financial impropriety and later appointed as the president's Infrastructure Advisor[245]. There are rumours that many of these high-level political appointees carry foreign passports, though Liberia's Aliens and Nationality Law is very clear about the revocation of legal 'Liberian citizenship' upon naturalisation abroad.

Sirleaf's brand of *diasporacy* has effectively undermined the legitimacy of homeland citizen contributions to recovery and created a polarised discourse on dual citizenship. According to chief sponsor of the proposed dual citizenship bill, Senator Cletus Wotorson, contestations around returnee contributions to post-war recovery have effectively compromised claims for dual citizenship:

> What didn't help much was that when Ellen [Johnson Sirleaf] got in power most of the people that were coming were from the diaspora and which was not to the liking of those that were here at home. And their jobs were being given to only diasporans, diasporans were preferred, and that didn't work too well and the results have not been too good...[246]

As Sirleaf's *diaspocracy* shows, diasporas can often transform into the vectors of internationally sponsored post-war reconstruction processes because of their transnational ethos. On one hand they are more legitimate than international actors by virtue of being 'children of the soil,' while on the other hand they carry the same

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[245] http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2press.php?news_id=1144&related=7&pg=sp
[246] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on March 6, 2013.

experiences and contexts as international actors because of their experiences abroad. According to former minister Woods, Liberia's diaspora recruits have perpetuated an international agenda for recovery, rather than adopting home-grown solutions to post-war development:

> I think most of the time we perpetuate the international aspirations – most of the time. They [Donors] set the conditionalities; they have what appear to be the resources. Most of us are trained and educated outside, come home with a sense of that aspiration. We are trained with that aspiration, in schools abroad and our associations. So, we pander to it even more. More and more, we get detached from the local realities, and that's the challenge – especially for those of us who are the educated elites – we go to school abroad and come back. We find ourselves more and more detached from the local realities. So, I'm clear that none of us, in many ways – 90 percent of the time – look at the local aspirations. We seek legitimacy internationally rather than locally. We're proud of our friendships, we're proud of the photo ops that legitimises us at international conferences without even understanding what they mean, and I think that's part of our challenges. So, sometimes, you read the newspapers and most of the time we want to shake hands and take pictures and put them in the newspapers. How many of us go in rural Liberia, take pictures with ordinary people, and get that publicised? How many of us celebrate the national efforts in Lofa or in River Gee?[247]

Furthermore, returnees tend to be out of touch with domestic realities and are not fully equipped to drive post-war recovery, argued Woods:

> One of the challenges will be the difficulty of articulating or ensuring that the real views from people on the ground are translated in the national agenda. Because there's a gap in real communication with the majority of those who are in the decision-making positions of government. [The] majority have been out for long, came in, and so there's that gap…But connecting with the people is a whole different process; it's a whole different conviction and passion that is built out of an experience on the ground, throughout the war…I think that lack of coordination, that lack of a consistent, organised, national framework to drive policy creates a level of disorder, inflates ego, and personalises what often should be a national venture or collective vision.[248]

Although former minister Woods remains convinced that Liberian returnees have

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[247] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 25, 2013.
[248] Ibid.

been co-opted by international agents, diasporas have the propensity to both reinforce and challenge 'one-size-fits-all'/'cut and paste' reconstruction planning by powerful nations too often imposed on weaker ones. Diasporas develop hybrid identities that conflate values of the homeland with values acquired or enhanced by host nations (Brinkerhoff, 2007: 187), yet this does not always yield positive results. Informal 'contracts' entered into between local elites, such as returnees, and international actors actually lead to the enforcement of weak states because their interests in creating a facade of change often leave existing state-citizen relations unchanged (Barnett and Zurcher, 2010: 23-52). As argued by some respondents in this study, for example, dual citizenship could inadvertently reinforce elite power structures that fuelled Liberia's armed conflicts in the first place by privileging returnees over those who are domestically rooted. This argument is particularly prolific amongst homelanders who claim that dual citizenship has the propensity to replicate pre-war fissures in social relations. As will be discussed in the next section, the contributions of diasporas and returnee recruits to post-war recovery are widely contested, thereby influencing claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship.

**How Diasporas Have Simultaneously Helped and Hindered Post-War Recovery**
Heightened interest in the impact of Liberian diasporas has been facilitated by the current government's diasporic ethos. Coupled with emerging empirical studies, anecdotal evidence shows that Liberians abroad have been actively engaged with the 'homeland' since the inception of armed conflict in 1989, with both positive and negative outcomes. Although many homeland respondents in this study negated the active citizenship of Liberian transnationals, some, like this 53-year-old man, fully acknowledged their positive contributions to reconstruction as citizens 'by heart':

> Well, some of them come with certain skill sets that are desperately needed, especially in those sectors—health, education, the private sector—not necessarily governmental...I think sometimes they just try to change the attitudes of Liberians that haven't had that exposure...[249]

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[249] [HL18] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.

A 54-year-old male homelander echoed these sentiments, arguing that Liberians from abroad have advanced post-war recovery with their 'time and talent':

> They [diasporas] have helped in trying to advocate for change, helped to express their desire. They have come with technical expertise to be able to contribute towards the rebuilding of our broken nation. So, in that respect, they have helped.[250]

According to Dr. C. William Allen, a returnee who was initially recruited as minister of information during the tenure of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) from 2003 to 2005, diasporas and their returnee counterparts contributed their 'time, talent, and treasure' to humanitarian and recovery efforts before the introduction of proposed dual citizenship in 2008 and continue to do so in spite of the bill's postponement:

> Let's look at what they [Liberians abroad] have already done. During the war, and even now, there was a huge percentage of remittances from Liberians in the diaspora to their relatives and friends here [Liberia]. The numbers are there with Western Union. We're talking about tens of millions of dollars. There were families here who survived almost wholly and solely on remittances. When they [homeland Liberians] were cashing in the Western Union remittances, they didn't say… "those people sending me money are not Liberians." They were happy to receive it. So, why now? And those people who were sending those remittances are adding something to the GDP of Liberia. If you look along the Robertsfield Highway and towards Virginia and Brewerville [outside of Monrovia], you see a lot of construction going on there, and a sizeable number of these constructions are homes I know personally are being done by Liberians in the diaspora. That's contributing to the development of Liberia. There are businesses in Ganta and Gbarnga and other places that are owned by Liberians in the diaspora through their relatives here. It is because they are making the money in the diaspora that they are able to send that kind of money here to contribute to the development of Liberia. There's also quite a bit of intellectual capital I think that Liberians in the diaspora bring to the table. When you talk about the reversal of the brain drain, that's what it is, you know. Liberians in the diaspora are bringing their talent here. Liberians in the diaspora are conducting research that can better inform the governance process in Liberia. They are acquiring skills, knowledge, and abilities that they would eventually bring home either permanently or sporadically. Liberians in the diaspora had a very key

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[250] [HL22] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 14, 2013.

role of advocacy in calling international attention to the atrocities of the war. I mean, I attended demonstrations at the UN headquarters in the late 80s and early 90s where prominent Liberians were present. They didn't just remain silent when these things were going on. Many Liberians in the diaspora have been there to receive their relatives who went as refugees, you know. I think Liberians in the diaspora have also been vocal and eloquent critics of public policy on the ground and to some extent have led to positive changes in those policies as a result of what they've said. I'm sure there are others but the key point I think is that no matter how hard we try, we as a nation cannot disconnect ourselves from Liberians in the diaspora. They are there whether we like it or not and a lot of the reform achievements that happened after the war can be traced directly to the participation of Liberians in the diaspora.[251]

As evidenced by Dr. Allen's anecdotal menu of diaspora-led initiatives and interviewee responses in this study, it is clear that Liberians abroad have practiced active 'Liberian citizenship' from afar, regardless of their legal citizenship status/identity, by: i) providing humanitarian and monetary assistance to maintain livelihoods in Liberia, as well as within the West African sub-region during armed conflicts; ii) lobbying in Washington and other urban centres of power to bring an end to conflict; iii) investing in post-war small to medium sized joint ventures with relatives; iv) constructing homes for commercial and residential use in Liberia; v) infusing the post-war emergency capacity building drive by returning to Liberia with programmes such as the UNDP Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), Senior Executive Service (SES), and the Liberia Emergency Capacity Building Support (LECBS); and vi) aligning themselves with the government's post-war recovery deliverables by participating in transnational networks, hometown associations and regional organisations such as the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) and the European Federation of Liberian Associations (EFLA).

The catalogue of contributions during and after armed conflict show that Liberian diasporas and their returnee counterparts represent a key node in development efforts, yet they are not the panacea to post-war recovery. According to this 45-year-old Washington-based male respondent, diaspora returnees are not fundamentally

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[251] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 4, 2013.

committed to Liberia's post-war development; this is evidenced by their maintenance of the status quo:

> Right now, we all know 90 to 95 percent of Ellen's [Johnson Sirleaf's] cabinet hold one form of foreign status, either they are residents, mostly in the US, not even counting Europe...Either they are residents or they are citizens [abroad], but if you look at their output you have scepticism as to the effectiveness of [proposed] dual citizenship [legislation]. Right now, they are doing things as they are. They are not promoting the country's interest. They are not promoting development. They are not wanting to be creative in their output for the country. They are contented with where the country is, literally, so to speak. If you give them dual citizenship just like that, in effect, what you are telling them, the ball-field is open for everybody to play.[252]

Despite public relations campaigns to the contrary and the forecasts of transformation, most of Sirleaf's first-term development milestones have been mired by challenges. Lack of administrative, financial, and technical capacity as well as rampant corruption have been listed as impediments to sustainable growth with development (Government of Liberia, 2011a). Diaspora returnees have been at the centre of these debates, often perceived by the government and international donors as the panacea to capacity deficiencies while simultaneously viewed by homeland Liberians as the incubators of corruption with impunity. According to homeland cabinet official and Foreign Affairs Minister Ngafuan, returnees have consistently undermined the positive contributions of their diaspora counterparts by succumbing to corruption:

> ...if you track the number of persons, whether public official or so, that have been engaged in fraud, persons that come from the diaspora take a disproportionate portion. So, it makes the locals to get more and more [afraid]...that, well, these people come to loot; that they come with all their sophisticated degrees and at the end of the day they come and loot our funds. So, that hasn't helped the diaspora cause, especially people from the diaspora recruited in the public service engaging in fraudulent activities to the extent that they disgrace and make it more difficult for acceptability for Liberians that come from the diaspora.[253]

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[252] [DL36] Semi-structured interview in Washington on October 20, 2012.
[253] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 11, 2013.

Although Liberia established a number of autonomous agencies responsible for curbing public sector graft—the General Auditing Commission (GAC) (established in 2005); the Anti-Corruption Commission (established in 2008); the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) (established in 2009); and the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (established in 2010)—corruption persists without the political will to tackle it. According to Transparency International's 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index, Liberia scored 38 on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 denoting the highest levels of perceived corruption (Transparency International, 2013). This represents a decline from a 2012 score of 41 and unmasks the endemic nature of corruption in Liberia (Transparency International, 2012). In her 2006 inaugural address, Sirleaf promised Liberian citizens that corruption would be 'public enemy number one' (Sirleaf, 2006: 9), yet her diaspora recruits have been implicated in some of the most high profile graft cases. For example, Global Witness in 2010 investigated allegations that a UK citizen had been dubiously awarded 400,000 hectares of Liberia's forest to harvest carbon credits (Global Witness, 2010; Global Witness, 2011: 9). In response, Sirleaf instituted a special presidential committee headed by respected lawyer and homeland civil society activist Negbalee Warner to probe the allegations. Based on the committee's report, the president, among other actions: referred former PPCC executive director Peggy Varfley Meres (a diaspora recruit) and former Minister of Internal Affairs, Ambulai Johnson (Sirleaf's cousin, also a diaspora recruit) to the Ministry of Justice for further investigation and possible prosecution; and publically reprimanded then Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs Amara Konneh (a diaspora recruit) for not following regulations on the issuance of a concession contract covering Liberia's forests (UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2010: 69). Neither Varfley Meres nor Johnson were ever pursued in court, and the reprimand of Konneh was considered a slap on the wrist. Moreover, the carbon corruption case eroded state-citizen relations and cast Sirleaf as weak in tackling corruption, particularly involving returnees.

Other public sector corruption cases implicating returnees have followed in succession, calling into question their expressed commitment to post-war recovery and practice-based citizenship. Albert Bropleh, former commissioner of the Liberia

Telecommunications Authority (LTA), was declared guilty of economic sabotage in 2012 for defrauding the government of close to US$20,000 and mismanaging nearly US$300,000; he is awaiting an appeal decision from the Supreme Court of Liberia (Government of Liberia, 2011d: 10; Government of Liberia, 2012d: 11). In 2012, the Anti-Corruption Commission successfully prosecuted former Police Inspector General Beatrice Munah-Sieh Brown for misappropriating US$198,000 in donor funds intended to purchase uniforms for the Emergency Response Unit (ERU); she has since appealed the case in the Liberian Supreme Court (Government of Liberia, 2011c: 21-22; Government of Liberia, 2012d: 14). And in 2013, Liberia's Auditor-General, Robert Kilby, and GSA Director-General, Pearine Davis-Parkinson, were both dismissed by the president for alleged conflict of interest: the Auditor-General's private company had been contracted by the GSA thereby violating procurement laws (Sirleaf, 2013). Although implicated in corruption allegations, a slew of returnee heads of government agencies have been dismissed by Sirleaf with no legal action taken against them—namely, Chris Toe at the Ministry of Agriculture; Joseph Korto at the Ministry of Education; Eugene Shannon at the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy; Richard Tolbert at the National Investment Commission; and Harry Greaves at the Liberia Petroleum and Refining Company.[254]

Sirleaf's brand of *diaspocracy* has often been dubbed a *kleptocracy*, prompting former Auditor-General John Morlu, a diaspora recruit himself, to declare in 2007 that her administration was "three times more corrupt" than the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL)[255] although he did not substantiate this comparison with evidence. Nonetheless, post-war profiteering by some diaspora returnees fundamentally underpins claims against proposed dual citizenship legislation, prompting one 30-year-old male homeland respondent to contend: "I don't think they've helped. I believe they have created so much problems…they don't come back to Liberia to help to rebuild…They came back to accumulate wealth for themselves."[256] Echoing his contempt for the theft apparently so prevalent in

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[254] This information was corroborated on July 29, 2014 in an e-mail exchange with Thomas Doe Nah, head of the Centre for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL).
[255] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6225422.stm
[256] [HL17] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 12, 2013.

Sirleaf's administration, a 54-year-old male homelander quipped that returnees "become loose like mad dogs" when they assume public office:

> How have they harmed [post-war recovery]? They have not set a very good example; they are very corrupt...as soon as they come here and get into [a] government job, they get blind or greed takes over them...The [good] practices that they do in America, they will not transmit them here. [257]

According to this 45-year-old male homeland respondent, returnee government recruits often claim to be Liberian citizens 'by heart' but they are neither equipped for the positions they occupy nor committed to post-war recovery, and this is indicative of the lack of merit-based appointments made by Sirleaf:

> I think most of the people who were brought in to do X, Y, Z, a lot of them have really failed the president...Most of them are not qualified and most of them have shown that they are not just up to the task. In fact, they are more corrupt than even people who are here and they bring a new dynamism to corruption in our country. They bring a new order of corruption in our country because, mind you, most of these people, they will not get the kind of job they are doing here in the [United] States...[258]

Referencing Charles Taylor's botched 1984 extradition from the US to Liberia for allegedly pilfering close to US$1 million from the GSA (Waugh, 2011: 97-104), one 47-year-old homeland man argued that transnationals who violate Liberian laws with impunity are far from citizens 'by heart':

> ...most often when people kind of steal public money...the most likely country they go to is America where they live freely and we can't have them come back, in the case of Taylor, for trial, in the case of several public officials now who Auditing Commission, I mean, GAC audited and they found that they were liable. In as much as they're not guilty yet, but, they [have] gone back to live in America. With allegations now, and it's going to take us [a] long time, you know, to kind of have them to come back, and under what law are we bringing them back? I'm asking. Under the Doe government, for corruption charges, the government asked for [Charles] Taylor to come back. The US government refused because they were not pleased with the judicial

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[257] [HL22] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 14, 2013.
[258] [HL12] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 10, 2013.

system [in Liberia]...And then, later on we saw the aftermath, how he [Taylor] came back and what happened to the country, a terrible event that we don't want to talk about...They [the US government] said he [Taylor] would have been executed, this, that. Instead of one man being executed, we had 300,000 lives in the country destroyed simply because he had some paper [Green Card] to stay in America without being troubled...So, Liberians who take citizenship of the United States or Europe have the chance of plunging the country into chaos. They come and take public funds and run.[259]

Taylor's late 20th century incomplete extradition to Liberia has been evoked by the 21st century alleged theft of funds from the Roberts International Airport (RIA) by Corkrum, the Liberia-born US citizen who was indicted on three counts of fraud. According to American attorney Steven M. Schneebaum, who was hired by the Liberian government to expedite the extradition request in the US, the allegations against Corkrum and her partner Johnson are particularly damning:

In the first count, it is alleged that Ms. Corkrum retained a consulting firm owned and run by a friend of hers to do emergency work at Roberts International Airport. The firm – Diaspora Consulting LLP – was retained without following any of the proper procedures for public procurements in Liberia, and without disclosure even to the Board of the LAA [Liberia Airport Authority] itself. And Ms. Corkrum apparently, and again without authority, made a commitment to pay Diaspora [Consulting LLP] many hundreds of thousands of dollars. There is no evidence that Diaspora [Consulting LLP] ever made any constructive contribution to the desperately needed repairs to Robertsfield. Indeed, the necessary work was ultimately done by NACO, a Dutch company, at a price far below the one apparently agreed between Ms. Corkrum and her friend. In the second count, the grand jury alleges that Ms. Corkrum and Mr. [Melvin] Johnson together arranged for LAA funds to be transferred to him for work in connection with the security system at RIA. There is no evidence that Mr. Johnson was qualified to do that kind of work, or that he ever actually performed it. Moreover, there is again no paper trail, and no record of compliance with the laws and regulations in Liberia that are in place to deter corruption and the unaccountable misuse of public funds. Finally, the third count outlines a scheme by which Ms. Corkrum received cash from the LAA Board to purchase electronic equipment that she ultimately did not deliver to its intended (and approved) recipients[260] (Kanneh, 2014).

[259] [HL29] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 18, 2013.
[260] http://frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php/news/1910-where-is-the-indictment-corkrum-fiance-ask-government#ex

In a strange twist of irony, Jewel Howard Taylor, Charles Taylor's ex-wife and now co-sponsor of the proposed dual citizenship bill, referenced the Corkrum case to explain why she now has reservations about dual citizenship:

> Half of the people in government are US citizens. Really! And what's happening now, when you catch them for corruption they all leave. The woman at the airport [Ellen Corkrum]...is a critical component of what I'm talking about. She got in the big helluva trouble; she just got in the plane and went back [to the US].[261]

Akin to Senator Taylor and the previous homeland respondent, many interviewees in this study alluded to Ellen Corkrum and/or Charles Taylor in their analysis of the potential fault-lines in enacting dual citizenship, prompting me to label these two tactile experiences of transnational fraud the 'Taylor-Corkrum nexus.' Nevertheless, former Justice Minister Tah cautioned that high-level cases of corruption involving returnees is not representative of all returnees, but rather indicative of an endemic system of dishonesty coupled with impunity:

> I'm trying to convince people that everybody is not Ellen [Corkrum]...I know that is obvious, but everybody is not Ellen Corkrum, you know, yeah. I mean, they were already looking for some reason to reject people who come from outside...It makes whatever else they already felt, this now makes it easy. They know in their minds that it's not true, and she doesn't represent the diaspora. But if you're already looking for a way to reject a group of people, she makes it easy. And that's what hurts me about what she did...We are indicting her, and we're filing, applying for extradition. They're working on the indictment now.[262]

Contrary to contemporary discourses about the lack of accountability in Liberia, Sirleaf's *diaspocracy* is certainly not the genesis of corruption. Akin to settler polities such as Australia, Canada and the US, Liberia was founded on principles of intrusion and exclusion, dispossession and theft (Pailey, 2013b). The bedrock of corruption was formed in the 19th century when ACS agents seized their first parcel of indigenous land from King Peter through the use of force (Levitt, 2005: 40-41).

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[261] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on March 6, 2013.
[262] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 19, 2013.

According to Clower, et al, corruption became further entrenched in the 20ᵗʰ century during Tubman's reign:

> The governing authorities award loyalty and conformity with jobs, many of which are sinecures requiring only occasional attendance. To each level of government employment there is attached a special set of fringe benefits. The highest echelons and their kin obtain the most lucrative material prerogatives: purchases of shares of stock in iron ore concessions at bargain rates; purchases of tribal land along new roads; sales of phantom services (public relations, advertising) to foreign concessions; sales of real economic services to concessions (e.g. trucking), but at higher cost than the buyers would incur in providing their own services; acquiring compulsory labour for their rubber farms; the right to impose private levies in rice on tribal groups; the use of government vehicles and other equipment for private gain; extraordinarily large expense accounts; free housing and trips abroad; and government scholarships for training and education abroad regardless of merit (Clower, et. al, 1966: 10).

Following this trajectory, twenty-first century corruption in Liberia has become "enmeshed in daily human interaction; it is a function of both poverty and greed"[263] (Pailey, 2013b) involving not only diaspora government recruits but also all of Liberian society. Given its historical antecedents, corruption has now become central to the discourse on citizenship in post-war recovery. There is a recognition in Liberia that building state institutions—state-building—is not a sufficient deterrent to curbing corruption; rather, a parallel process of nation-building must be anchored by the tenets of active citizenship. Because contemporary constructions of 'Liberian citizenship' are more practice-based, largely because of the demands of post-war recovery, those engaged in corruption are rarely considered Liberians 'by heart,' regardless of their legal citizenship status/identity.

In this section, I have argued that Liberia's diasporas and their returnee counterparts have both helped and hindered post-war recovery, thereby influencing claims for and counter-claims against dual citizenship. On one hand, they have lifted Liberia and Liberians by contributing their 'time, talent, and treasure', while on the

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[263] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/18/opinion/global/children-in-the-fight-against-corruption.html?_r=0

other hand eroded state-citizen and citizen-citizen relations by engaging in corrupt forms of post-war profiteering.

**Conclusion**

When Charles Taylor sat in Plymouth awaiting extradition to Liberia in 1984, little did he know that he would end up in a British prison 30 years later for war crimes committed in Sierra Leone (Bowcott and Mark, 2012). His alleged pilfering of Liberia's state resources in the 20th century has been conjured up by allegations against Ellen Corkrum in the 21st century, with both serving as models of transnational citizenship gone wrong. Based on the experiences of respondents in Liberia, many of whom referred to Liberians abroad as Janus-faced, this chapter explored what I refer to as the 'Taylor-Corkrum nexus,' evaluating how Liberia's diasporas have served as both war-mongers/post-war recovery saboteurs as well as development enablers thereby influencing the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation. Cataloguing the ways in which Liberians abroad and their returnee counterparts have contributed to post-war recovery, the chapter illustrated that Liberia's proposed dual citizenship legislation was introduced with the intention of incentivising Liberian transnationals to commit what Dr. C. William Allen refers to as their "time, talent, and treasure."[264] Although recovery in Liberia may require the active participation of all Liberians in order to build state institutions and achieve national cohesion, there appears to be a lack of political will or a strong enough legal regime to safeguard the country from post-war profiteering by those returning from abroad.

This chapter also examined how post-war reconstruction as a political project has configured and reconfigured the conception and practice of 'Liberian citizenship'. I assessed the differences between international state-building interventions and domestic nation-building initiatives in Liberia, thereby illustrating the tensions between international aspirations for Liberia, and a domestic agenda for the country. In my analysis, Liberia's diasporas inhabit a 'third post-war reconstruction space,' constantly brokering and mediating between local aspirations and international agendas.

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[264] Semi-structured interview in Monrovia on June 4, 2013.

By way of conclusion in the next chapter, I assert that citizenship remains a peace-building imperative for Liberia by examining how the state's response in 2014 to the spread of the Ebola virus in the country represents a 'crisis of citizenship'.

# Chapter IX

## 2014 'War on Ebola' in Liberia Reveals a 'Crisis of Citizenship'[265]

"We dodged bullets during the war, now Ebola is going to kill us?" my aunt asked me in distress one evening in mid-July 2014, as we sat commiserating at my house on the outskirts of Monrovia. At the time, Ebola seemed like a looming threat to Liberia in the way that armed conflict had 15 years earlier. But by the end of the month, the Liberian government had declared a 'state of emergency' and days later, the World Health Organisation (WHO) designated the Ebola outbreak in West Africa an 'international health emergency.' Major airlines such as British Airways, ASKY, Kenya Airways, Emirates and Delta suspended services to the affected areas. WHO reported on August 28 that at least 1500 people had died and more than 3069 had been infected in the region, with the number of deaths in Liberia surpassing those in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Nigeria, Africa's largest economy.[266] Yet, even before the highly infectious disease permeated Liberia's borders from neighbouring Guinea in March 2014, the country was already plagued by a 'crisis of citizenship.' As I have shown throughout this thesis, the Liberian state has repeatedly abdicated from its responsibility of shielding citizens from political, economic, and social upheaval. The lack of a robust healthcare system to respond to an infectious disease such as Ebola revealed the volatile nature of Liberia's state-citizen relations.

In July 2014 before the Ebola outbreak hit crisis point, a group of disaffected citizens clashed with riot police at the Mittal Steel concession area in Nimba, north-central Liberia. They were protesting the fact that the iron ore mineral development agreement had not benefitted locals. The government branded the assailants 'thugs' and 'unlawful', making appeals to the parent company ArcelorMittal even before launching a formal investigation into the grievances. This was the beginning of the bubbling cauldron. The Ebola outbreak simply tipped the pot over, and contributed to a succession of further crises. Lacking proper training and protective gear, more

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[265] Excerpts of this introduction were culled from an August 22, 2014 article I published in *The Guardian (UK)* entitled: "Ebola Has Caused Liberia's Cauldron of Dissatisfaction to Boil Over": http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/aug/22/ebola-liberia-monrovia-crisis-citizenship (Pailey, 2014b).
[266] http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/aug/28/ebola-cases-rise-20000-world-health-organisation-west-africa-death-toll

than 50 Liberian healthcare workers, including doctors and nurses, succumbed to the Ebola virus one by one. Their colleagues refused to go to work fearing that they too would become infected. That the Liberian state had not invested heavily in strengthening the crumbling health system was not lost on those who battled the silent killer without a cure. Entire communities barricaded themselves in their homes for fear of contracting Ebola, rather than visiting the limited number of resource-strapped health facilities across the country.

On August 17, looters carrying clubs raided a makeshift Ebola holding centre in the overcrowded West Point slum of central Monrovia, declaring that the disease was not real and that the government was using it as a ruse to shore up donor funding. They made away with bloodstained mattresses and other supplies. Of the twenty-nine confirmed and suspected Ebola patients who escaped, 17 were found three days later and taken to a treatment centre. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf declared on August 19 that effective the next day a national curfew would be instituted to restrict movement from 9 p.m. until 6 a.m.—an attempt to quell growing hysteria and anxiety—and that the rights of citizens would be limited severely. Quarantines were executed without warning in two communities, Dolo's Town and West Point, with the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) deployed to restrict movement.[267] In West Point, the sprawling mass of sardined packed shacks on the sandy beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, a teenage boy was shot in both legs by security forces during a riot and bled to death on the first day of the quarantine.[268] Ten days later, the government lifted restrictions on movement in West Point amidst domestic and international censure about the use of lethal force during the army scuffle with civilians[269]. A proverbial 'War on Ebola' had effectively commenced, as homeland citizens condemned the government for failing them in the most profound ways.

The Ebola outbreak in Liberia has underscored how strained relations between the Liberian state and its citizens severely threatens the peace-building process and has the propensity to destabilise the country once more. Therefore, citizenship in this context is an important frame for discussing future policy prescriptions for Liberia

[267] http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2press.php?news_id=3061&related=7&pg=sp
[268] http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2press.php?news_id=3061&related=7&pg=sp
[269] http://www.liberianobserver.com/security/defense-officials-claim-shaki-kamara%E2%80%99s-corpse

and other post-war countries. In this concluding chapter, I argue that Liberia's proposed dual citizenship legislation is unlikely to be enacted without reconciling contestations over the meaning and practice of 'Liberian citizenship.' I also contend that my conceptualisation of 'Liberian citizenship' as identity (passive), practice (active), and a set of relations (interactive) can be used as a model for theorising citizenship generally, given its multi-layered meanings in the academic literature. And last, but not least, I propose areas of possible future research, such as a comprehensive study of the 'Negro clause' and its impact on Liberia's development.

**Why Citizenship Matters for Policy and Practice in Post-War Liberia**

In this thesis, I have argued that 'Liberian citizenship' has been configured and reconfigured since the founding of the nation-state in 1847. These processes have been largely brokered by conflict, migration, globalisation, and post-war recovery. Therefore, the introduction and postponement in passage of dual citizenship legislation serves as a contemporary manifestation of that reconfiguration across space and time. While conflict interfaces between indigenes and settlers in the 19th century produced a hegemonic form of citizenship, contestation and conciliation in the 20th and 21st centuries facilitated more expansive, multi-layered citizenships. Similarly, migration redefined 'Liberian citizenship' in that it created categories of Liberians who defy the legal definition of citizenship enshrined in the Aliens and Nationality Law. Nevertheless, there is contestation amongst Liberians across spatial landscapes about whether or not naturalisation brokered through migration represents choice or compulsion. Though integration and reintegration into the global capitalist system strained relations between the Liberian state and its citizens, thereby creating backlash against dual citizenship, globalised notions of human rights and deterritorialised forms of citizenship have emboldened dual citizenship claims. Furthermore, the challenges of post-war recovery have effectively carved out a niche for transnational citizenship contributions by diasporas and returnees alike, thereby increasing claims for dual citizenship. Despite these contributions, however, high-profile cases of post-war profiteering by returnees have undermined dual citizenship advocacy.

I have shown throughout this thesis that citizenship mattered in 19th century Liberia in the same way that it carries significant policy and practical importance today. It signifies how Liberians across various spatial landscapes conceive of themselves, express their identity through practice, and engage with the state and with each other. Furthermore, 'Liberian citizenship' is inextricably tied to the trajectory of post-war recovery. Questions abound about whether or not amendments to Liberia's Aliens and Nationality Law will actually harness state- and nation-building processes. While some argue that dual citizenship would facilitate development, reconciliation, sustainable peace and unity, others believe it would exacerbate unresolved societal fissures, thereby compromising post-war recovery. For instance, this study has shown that citizenship-derived conflicts over land ownership, income inequality and transitional justice must be resolved in the short-term to deter future outbreaks of violence. Measured changes in policy and practice would mean implementing fully the Land Rights Policy of 2013; adjudicating land disputes in court; placing a moratorium on concession land acquisition; collecting taxes on all privately and commercially owned land; and instituting eminent domain where taxes are not collected. The Liberian government can take the lead in mitigating income inequality by placing a ceiling on the salaries of political appointees and enforcing a pay grade system commensurate with professional experience and academic qualifications. And last, but not least, members of the Independent National Human Rights Commission established to implement the TRC recommendations must be elected by an independent body comprising civil society, government, and the private sector, rather than appointed by the Liberian head of state. This will enable the body to maintain a semblance of autonomy.

As evidenced by the three post-war conflict-generating issues described above, it is clear that 'Liberian citizenship' remains a space of contestation. Therefore, dual citizenship should not be pursued as a policy prescription until disputes over citizenship are fundamentally resolved. Moreover, the focus of policy should be amending the Aliens and Nationality Law of Liberia to reflect how 'Liberian citizenship' is currently conceived of and practiced domestically and transnationally, as exemplified by the empirical evidence in this thesis. In the same way that Liberia's national symbols are undergoing scrutiny in an attempt to address the

'crisis of citizenship', proposed dual citizenship legislation should also be subject to public debates, national/transnational consultations and policy discussions, followed by a referendum in the future. Based on previous discussions with Liberia's constitutional review committee pre-Ebola, it was speculated that a national referendum on the Constitution would be held in 2015. Though it remains unclear whether or not dual citizenship will be included on a ballot that is now unlikely given the challenges of the Ebola outbreak, it would be unwise to do so because of the highly polarised nature of debates on deterritorialising 'Liberian citizenship.' Because dual citizenship is so emotionally charged, and especially given that opposition to it is strongest in Liberia, passage of the proposed bill may ultimately damage already fragile relations between the Liberian state and its domestic citizens even as it strengthens relations with those who would become dual citizens. Moreover, the historical and contemporary crises of citizenship that culminated in the Ebola outbreak have underscored the need for the state to fortify domestic state-citizen relations—by, for example, investing in basic social services such as quality healthcare regardless of donor support and protecting the labour rights of homeland Liberians in the midst of capitalist re-integration—before it can focus on extending citizenship rights transnationally. Therefore, legislation introduced in Liberia and other countries in the Global South to extend citizenship to nationals abroad is a trend that has far reaching implications, and should not be rushed for political expediency.

In the section that follows, I proffer a model of citizenship that can be generally applied as a means of resolving conflicts over what the term signifies in theory, policy and practice.

### 'Liberian Citizenship' Triad As a Model for Constructing Citizenship Generally

In the same way that Galtung (1996) formulated his conflict triangle, I conceptualise 'Liberian citizenship' as a set of three axes that could be used as a model for reconciling the competing definitions of citizenship in the academic literature.

**Figure 4: 'Liberian Citizenship' Triad**

set of relations (interactive)



identity (passive)                    practice (active)
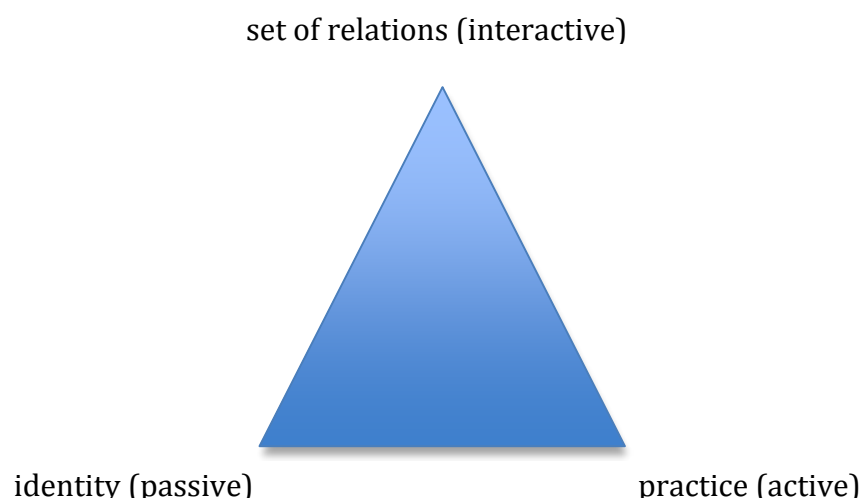
As Figure 4 illustrates, my conceptualisation of 'Liberian citizenship' as identity (passive), practice (active), and a set of relations (interactive) encompasses political, legal, sociological and cultural constructions of citizenship, thereby representing a holistic realisation of the term. It is specific in that it provides concrete examples of how citizenship is defined in the literature, but conceptually broad enough that it can be applied in all contexts. The model includes multiple levels of conceptualisation—moving from the individual to how the individual interacts with his/her society. It reconciles contestations about whether or not citizenship is bounded or unbounded because it does not include spatial categories of differentiation. Furthermore, my citizenship triad is informed by empirical research about a country of emigration, Liberia; therefore it provides an alternative to the overly theoretical and Eurocentric foundation of citizenship studies to date. As a case in point, the seminal academic journal *Citizenship Studies* has few articles on North Africa, and only a handful of articles on sub-Saharan Africa—Zimbabwe; South Africa; Chad; Nigeria; Sudan; northern Cameroon; Central African Republic; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Nigeria; Ghana; Benin; Cape Verde; Uganda; Kenya. Although *Citizenship Studies* showcases empirical studies from across the globe, it is still heavily dominated by articles from and about the Global North.

My thesis is one in a growing body of research that challenges the spatial imbalance of citizenship studies. In response to the abstract and Eurocentric discourses on

citizenship in the academic literature, the project Citizenship after Orientalism was introduced as a post-colonial critique (http://www.oecumene.eu/). Moving citizenship from the abstract and Eurocentric to the concrete and Afrocentric, my thesis also addresses severe gaps in the citizenship literature by dissecting how citizenship is conceived of and practiced in a post-war African context. Because the continent of Africa has seen some of the most violent manifestations of citizenship contestation misguidedly portrayed as identity-based conflicts, it makes sense to adopt a theoretical model of citizenship that takes this context into consideration. My citizenship triad does that and more. Furthermore, employing the 'crisis of citizenship' paradigm as I have in this thesis is particularly instructive for post-war countries like Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Angola as well as conflict-ridden nations such as the Central African Republic and South Sudan because it debunks the overly simplistic, primordial paradigms often attributed to African wars. The 'crisis of citizenship' paradigm would also be useful for non-African post-war contexts such as Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia because it generally examines citizenship as identity, practice, and a set of relations between state and non-state actors in times of war and peace.

In the next section, I discuss strands of possible future research.

## Interrogating the 'Negro Clause' and Other Areas of Future Research

Liberia is one of two countries I am aware of that defines citizenship explicitly along racial lines, and this represents one of the most controversial elements of the country's Constitution and Aliens and Nationality Law. Although I refrained from providing a full evaluation of the 'Negro clause' in this thesis, it remains a contested space of intellectual inquiry that I plan to pursue in future research. Because Liberia hosts growing populations of Lebanese, Indian and Chinese expatriates who dominate the commercial sector, further analysis is needed to understand how these and other non-black foreign nationals conceive of and practice citizenship given that they are barred from formal recognition as Liberian citizens. I also intend to examine what impact this form of exclusion has had on Liberia's political economy. During semi-structured interviews for this thesis, I probed a number of respondents about the 'Negro clause' and discovered that the race-based proviso

elicits passionate views across the spectrum. Similar semi-structured interviews need to be conducted with those who identify as 'non-Negroes' in Liberia, as this would open the space for a critical examination of how they practice what Glick Schiller (2005: 31) calls 'social citizenship'—claiming citizenship rights "through social practice rather than through the law"—and what impact this has had on post-war recovery. Although there have been studies conducted on Lebanese diasporas across space and time (Humphrey, 1998; Nahas and Tabar 2010; Arsan, 2013), focused analysis on how generations of Lebanese in Liberia, for instance, construct and practice citizenship in a country that does not recognise their formal rights to *jus soli* 'Liberian citizenship' would introduce a new strand to this growing body of empirical research.

Another area of analysis that is worth pursuing is the nature of citizenship governance in the midst of weak enforcement in Liberia and abroad. The lack of citizenship governance regimes was particularly stark in the 'Taylor-Corkrum nexus' analysis, although a broader study needs to be conducted to assess how the Liberian state administers citizenship law at home and abroad, what gaps there are in enforcement, and how this impacts how citizenship is conceived of and practiced domestically and transnationally. It was clear from semi-structured interviews with some anonymised respondents in the field that they practice de facto dual citizenship by carrying two passports—Liberian and one other—even though this is prohibited by law. Given that the Law Reform Commission was established in 2009 followed by the Constitutional Review Committee in 2012 to review and harmonise Liberia's general laws of application with the Constitution, and vice versa, it will be worth evaluating what recommendations these bodies have proffered related to the enforcement of citizenship regulations. An investigation of Liberia's citizenship governance mechanisms is important because it has implications for how citizenship entitlements, such as voting eligibility as well as the eligibility to run for elected office, will be managed and enforced in the future.

A third and final area of research inquiry is the need to synthesise migration data for Liberia. My study on citizenship construction and practice has proven that the dearth of reliable data on international migration flows to and from Liberia stifles

evidence-based policy-making related to diaspora engagement. It could be argued that the lack of data has not impeded the introduction of proposed dual citizenship legislation. Yet, data in this regard has implications for the proposed bill's passage. For instance, one of the assumptions underpinning dual citizenship claims is that large numbers of Liberians either naturalised abroad, or have had *jus sanguinis* foreign-born offspring who want to qualify for legal 'Liberian citizenship' after the age of majority. The absence of data to support this argument fundamentally weakens claims for instituting dual citizenship. Although I am not equipped to produce quantitative data, statistics on the sample size of Liberians abroad is crucial for both instituting empirically driven policies that impact diasporas and conducting empirical research on this demographic.

**Conclusion**

Although Liberia celebrated 10 years of uninterrupted peace in 2013, the 2014 Ebola outbreak revealed how fragile relations between the Liberian state and its domestic citizens remains a peace-building conundrum. Furthermore, it underscored that Liberia has maintained a tenuous 'negative peace'—characterised by the absence of direct physical violence in the form of armed conflict—when it should be striving for a robust 'positive peace'—the absence of 'structural violence' such as norms, rules, and regulations that fuel inequality and injustice (Galtung, 1996: 31-34; 221). Like most citizenship laws across the globe, Liberia's current Aliens and Nationality Law is fundamentally exclusionary because it bars *jus soli* citizens who naturalised abroad and their offspring as well as non-blacks who, by law, are not entitled to citizenship at all. Moreover, for those who qualify as citizens by law, citizenship is largely differentiated and 'multi-layered' (Yuval Davis, 2000), based on structural forces that privilege some citizens above others. Therefore, interrogating the meaning and practice of contemporary 'Liberian citizenship' is one of the ways of bringing it closer to the aspirations of those who claim to be Liberians 'by heart', regardless of their legal citizenship status.

According to Falk (2000: 6), the struggle for citizenship is an unfinished one, and the Liberia case study is a stark example of that unfinished narrative. Given the nature of Liberian transnational citizenship pursuits, it is unlikely that diasporas will in the

short-term abandon the homeland regardless of their legal citizenship ties to the country. As a case in point, while relations between the Liberian state and its domestic citizens has been severely undermined by the Ebola outbreak, citizen-citizen relations between diasporas and homelanders have strengthened as evidenced by the outpouring of remittances to family members and shipments of medical relief supplies from abroad. Given the increasing demands by Liberians abroad for formal citizenship recognition, however, it will be imperative in the long-term that domestic state-citizen relations are strengthened in order to carve out a space for diasporas, as citizens 'by heart', to become citizens 'by law.'

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: A PROPOSED ACT TO ESTABLISH DUAL CITIZENSHIP FOR LIBERIANS BY BIRTH AND BACKGROUND

The Liberian Constitution provides, at article 22(a), that "every person shall have the right to own property alone as well as in association with others; provided only Liberian citizens shall have the right to own real property within the Republic". This sacred instrument provides also, at article 27(a) that " all persons who, on the coming into force of this Constitution, were lawfully citizens of Liberia shall continue to be Liberian citizens", and further, at article 28, that " any person at least one of whose parents was a Liberian at the time of the person's birth shall be a citizen of Liberia; provided that any such person shall upon reaching maturity renounce any other citizenship acquired by virtue of one parent being a citizen of another country...."

We, the drafters of this proposed Law are of the belief that the intent of the framers of the provisions quoted above was to protect the Liberian heritage and the Liberian interest, and we most heartily subscribe to that intent. Consistent with that intent, we do not believe that the drafters of the Liberian Constitution contemplated at the time that our country would have degenerated into the unfortunate political turmoil, civil strife and devastation that claimed the lives of over 250,000 of our citizens and caused hundreds of thousands of others to seek refuge and sanctuary in other lands, to preserve and safeguard their lives and security, guaranteed by the very Constitution, and thereby avoid the grave carnage taking place in their country.

It is further our sense that the drafters of the Constitution did not contemplate or intend that, as a consequence of the events surrounding our civil conflict, our people should endure the perpetual hardships of refugees and the attending economic destitutions; as at the time there was no foreseeable end to the carnage and the hardships of the war in Liberia. Yet it was under these conditions and for these reasons that many of our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and children, still loving their country, faced the ultimate dilemma and imperative of taking on the citizenship of the nations that offered them sanctuary, security and livelihood for survival. In a number of cases, their actions were driven by the events of the necessity for life, preservation and survival and/or the results of natural occurrences over which majority of them had no control. Most of them could not fully enjoy the social and civic benefits of their host country, which included securing decent well-paying jobs commensurate with their educational background, or acquire proper education, which is very expensive and often priced much higher for immigrants not having citizenship of the host countries.

Under the Aliens and Nationality Laws of Liberia, their involuntary actions for life, security, safety, and survival deprived them of their Liberian citizenship and consequently the enjoyment of the attending benefits of such citizenship, including the right to ownership of real property. Many of these Liberians have earned very good education and have accumulated resources which they believe they owe a duty to their native land to share, impart and invest, but have difficulty doing so because of the Liberian statutory prohibition. Additionally these Liberians have not

forgotten their country and they continue to positively impact the economy of Liberia by their remittances to the tune of over $50m USD a year to assist their kinship cope with the difficulties and experiences of livelihood in Liberia during and long after the war; and they continue these remittances up to the present. We are of the strong belief that as a result of the experiences of fourteen years of civil war in Liberia, the Liberian people are prepared to take a fresh look at the true intent of the framers of the Liberian Constitution, which is to preserve to Liberians the right to retain their citizenship, consistent with the preservation of the Liberian heritage referenced by the Constitution.

Against the background of the several requests and petitions we have received and continue to receive from citizens at home and abroad, we the undersigned hereby submit to the Liberian Legislature this proposal to grant DUAL CITIZENSHIP to Liberians who are citizens by birth, but who have acquired the citizenship of other lands under the conditions mentioned above are allowed to retain, reacquire or preserve their Liberian citizenship, preserve their lives and security and enable them to obtain economic and professional development which they are eager to transfer to their country of birth. The Republics of Ghana and Nigeria are thriving from the economic and social contributions from their willingness to grant citizenship to their fellow countrymen and women who had secured new nationality and/or citizenship in other countries. This proposal therefore is not only unique to Liberia.

While we do not subscribe to the continued and persistent creation of non-contributory laws, we are of the conviction that the below suggested proposition is so critical to the experiences we have had since the promulgation of that instrument, and we feel that the intent of the provisions of our constitution deserve the reconsideration of the Liberian people. And so we most humbly appeal to the consciences of the Liberian people through their Legislators to see reason for our submission consistent with current national realities. We are seeking the repeal of the Aliens and Nationality Law to provide dual citizenship for Liberians by birth, who lost their citizenship due to the necessities of life and survival.


### AN ACT TO AMEND CERTAIN SECTIONS
### OF THE
### ALIEN AND NATIONALITY LAWS OF LIBERIA

WHEREAS, Article 11 (b) of the Liberian Constitution provides that " All Persons, irrespective of ethnic background, race, sex, creed, place of origin or political opinion, are entitled to the fundamental rights and freedom of the individual, subject to such qualifications as provided for in our constitution"; and

WHEREAS, Article 11(c) of the said Constitution guarantees that "All Persons are equal before the Law and are therefore entitled to the equal protection of the Law", and

WHEREAS, Article 28 of the Liberian Constitution provides that "Any person, at least one of whose parents was a citizen at the time of the person's birth shall be a citizen

of Liberia; provided that any such person shall upon reaching maturity renounce any other citizenship acquired by virtue of one's parent being a citizen of another country. *No citizen of Liberia shall be deprived of citizenship or nationality except as provided by law;* and no person shall be denied the right to change citizenship or nationality"; and

WHEREAS, Article 34(h) of the Constitution also gives the Legislature the authority to "establish laws for citizenship, naturalization and residence" not inconsistent with the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, believing that the intent of the quoted provision is to ensure that Liberians who are citizens of Liberia by virtue of the provisions of the Constitution are not deprived of their citizenship on account of events of necessity for life, preservation and survival which are largely out of their control and/or which are the results of natural occurrences over which they have no control; and

WHEREAS, Article 13(a) of the Liberian Constitution also provides that "All Persons lawfully within the Republic of Liberia shall have the right to move freely throughout Liberia, to reside in any part thereof and to leave therefrom, subject however to the safeguarding of Public Security; and

WHEREAS the circumstances stated herein, i.e. the departure of our citizens to other lands for their safety and security, and their lives and the lives of their families and relations do not present any interference or imposition to the safeguarding of the Public Security to the nation;

WHEREAS the Liberian Constitution, at article 2, states "This Constitution is the supreme and fundamental law of Liberia and its provisions shall have binding force and effect on all authorities and persons throughout the Republic", and further "Any laws, treaties, statutes, decrees, customs and regulations found to be inconsistent with is shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void and of no effect...."; and

WHEREAS, certain sections of the Aliens and Nationality Law of Liberia, enacted prior to the coming into effect of the new (1986) Liberian Constitution, stand in contrast to provisions and intent of the Liberian Constitution, referenced above, thus defeating the objective of the provisions of the Constitution and the equal protection of the Law; and

WHEREAS, it has become imperative to amend certain Sections of the existing Aliens and Nationality Law of Liberia, consistent with current national realities and international best practices, to have them conform to the present Liberian Constitution, and as would grant to all Liberians the preservation of the right of citizenship guaranteed by the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, free movement of the individual and the creation of an environment free of intimidation and harassment are important conditions for long-term national and individual development, social progress, peace, unity and security:

NOW, THEREFORE, THE Liberian Senate and the House of Representatives in legislature assembled hereby amend certain Sections of the Aliens and Nationality Law of Liberia as follows:

## Part lll – NATIONALITY AND NATURALIZATION

Section 1: Chapter 20: Nationality at Birth, and specifically Section 20.1, Citizen of Liberia at Birth, which reads:

"The following shall be citizen of Liberia at birth:
A person who is a Negro, or of Negro descent, born in Liberia subject to the Jurisdiction thereof:

A person born outside Liberia whose father
(i) Was born a Citizen of Liberia;
(ii) Was a Citizen of Liberia at the time of the birth of such child, and
(iii) Had resided in Liberia prior to the birth of such child,

Is hereby amended to read as follows:

"The following shall be a citizen of Liberia at birth:
A person who is Negro, or of Negro descent, born in Liberia and subject to the Jurisdiction thereof:

A person born outside Liberia whose father *or mother*
   (i) Was born a citizen of Liberia;
   (ii) Was a citizen of Liberia at the time of birth of such child; and
   (iii) Had resided in Liberia prior to the birth of such child.

Section 2: **CHAPTER 22:  LOSS OF CITIZENSHIP, and specifically Section 22.1,** Acts Causing Loss of Citizenship, which reads as follows:

"From and after the effective date of this title, a person who is a citizen of Liberia whether by birth or naturalization shall lose his citizenship by:

   (a)  Obtaining naturalization in a foreign state upon his own application; upon the application of a duly authorized agent, or through the naturalization of a parent having legal custody of such person, provided citizenship shall not be lost by any person under this section as a result of naturalization of a parent or parents while such person is under the age of 21 years, unless such person shall fail to enter Liberia to establish a permanent residence prior to his twenty – third birthday; or

   (b)  Taking an oath or making an affirmation or other formal declaration of allegiance to a foreign state or a political subdivision thereof; or

   (c)  Exercising a free choice to enter services in the armed forces for a foreign sate unless, prior to such entry or services, such entry or services is specifically authorized by the President;

(d) Voting in a political election in a foreign state or voting in an election or plebiscite to determine the sovereignty of a foreign state over foreign territory; or

(e) Making a formal renunciation of Liberian Nationality in a court in Liberia or before a diplomatic or consular officer of Liberia in a foreign state in such form as may be prescribed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia

Is hereby amended to read as follows:

## 22. **LOSS OF CITIZENSHIP**

22.1 Acts causing Loss of Citizenship

(a) From and after the effective date of this title, no person who is a citizen of Liberia at birth shall lose his /her citizenship for reasons of marriage to a citizen of a foreign state; naturalization in a foreign state or naturalization of a parent or parents in another state; entering or serving in the armed forces for a foreign state or voting in a political election in a foreign state;

(b) From and after the effective date of this title, Liberian Citizenship by Birth is hereby restored to all persons who were citizens by birth and who lost citizenship as a result of the conditions laid out in the previous Aliens and Nationality Law;

(c) A person who is a citizen of Liberia at birth but who makes a free choice of a formal renunciation of Liberian nationality before a court in Liberia or before a diplomatic or consular officer of Liberia in a foreign state, in such manner as may be prescribed by the **Minister of Foreign Affairs** of Liberia, and not growing out of circumstances over which he or she has no control or is not in control of, shall lose his/her citizenship;

(d)  By the passage of this Act, the Republic of Liberia shall, within the limits prescribed herein and under the conditions stated hereinbefore, RECOGNIZE **"Dual Citizenship"** in which a citizen of Liberia at birth may become a citizen of another state without losing **HIS/HER** Liberian citizenship; and

(e)  This Law shall apply only to persons who are Liberian Citizens at Birth.

**ANY LAW TO THE CONTRARY IS NOTWITHSTANDING**

**SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN LEGISLATURE ASSEMBLED**

**SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTY – SECOND LEGISLATURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

**SPONSORED BY:**        **Cletus Segbe Wotorson**
                           **Senior Senator, Grand Kru County**

**CO-SPONSORED BY:**     **Sumo G. Kupee**
                           **Senior Senator, Lofa County**

                           **Jewel Howard-Taylor**
                           **Senior Senator, Bong County**

                           **Abel Massalay**
                           **Senior Senator, Grand Cape Mount County**

**CAPITOL HILL, MONROVIA**
**MONTSERRADO COUNTY**

**Appendix 2: Fieldwork Consent Form**

I, _____, agree to be interviewed by Ms. Robtel Neajai Pailey, a second year PhD student in the Department of Development Studies at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (http://www.soas.ac.uk/staff/staff71766.php), who is conducting research on the current and historical factors that have given rise to proposed dual citizenship legislation in Liberia and how these factors have affected on-going debates about the role of diasporas in Liberia's post-war reconstruction.

Given that dual citizenship is the first comprehensive policy mechanism that the Government of Liberia has ever introduced specifically to respond to diasporic claims, I understand that this study analyses the proposed legislation as a symbolic manifestation of Liberia's long-standing struggle to formalise its relationship with its diasporas. I understand that the contents of my interview will appear in a final thesis, and may be published at a later date.

I understand that by participating in this study, I will be contributing to the growing body of empirical research on Liberia's diasporas. I also understand that Ms. Pailey's Ph.D. research is part of a larger study on diasporas as 'neglected agents of change' funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in collaboration with the George Washington University and the Liberia Diaspora Policy Working Group, a collaborative of Liberian researchers institutionally affiliated with the University of Liberia IBB School of International Affairs.

I understand that I was selected through either Ms. Pailey's personal or institutional networks because I fit the criteria stipulated in the study. I understand that the interview will last up to one-hour in duration, and that I may be contacted by Ms. Pailey after the interview for follow-up clarification. I understand that I may withdraw at any time from the study by informing Ms. Pailey of my decision to do so. I also understand that I have the right to refrain from answering any questions that make me feel uncomfortable.

I have been informed that all interviews will be audio recorded, and I agree to be audio taped during the course of this interview. I understand that Ms. Pailey will be working with Liberian research assistants who will help to transcribe the audio-recorded interviews. I have been informed that Ms. Pailey and her research assistants will be the only ones with access to a password-protected electronic database of qualitative interviews as they are conducted in West Africa, Europe, and North America in "real-time." I understand that recorded interviews and transcripts will be stored in Ms. Pailey's electronic database as well as on the SOAS secure database for up to five years. I also understand that with the exception of policy-makers/government officials and the heads of Liberian diaspora regional organisations, all respondents will be anonymised.

I understand that I may contact Ms. Pailey at robtelneajai@gmail.com or r_pailey@soas.ac.uk if the need arises.

**Signed:** _____  **Date:** _____

**Witnessed:** _____  **Date:** _____

**Appendix 3: Interview Protocol-Liberian Proposed Dual Citizenship Bill Sponsors**

**Interviewee/Demographic Details:**

Interviewee Name: _____     Interview Date: _____

Interview Time: _____     Interview City: _____

E-mail Contact: _____     Telephone Contact: _____

**Questions:**

1. Why did you sponsor the proposed dual citizenship bill?

2. What impact will the proposed bill have on Liberia's development? What impact will it have on Liberia's diasporas?

3. How difficult or easy has it been to convince legislative colleagues to support the proposed bill?

4. Who are your allies/opponents (with respect to this bill) at 'home' and abroad?

5. Which diaspora groups have been the largest lobbying force? How have they been involved? Where are they located?

6. How have you educated the public about the proposed legislation?

7. Have you consulted counterparts in other countries about the proposed bill or about their experiences with similar legislation? What lessons can be learned from other contexts?

8. How do you define a 'Liberian citizen'?

9. In what ways are Liberia's diasporas involved in the country's development? How do you think this would be affected by the passage <u>or</u> the defeat of the bill?

**Appendix 4: Interview Protocol-Liberian Executive Policymakers in Monrovia**

**Interviewee/Demographic Details:**

Interviewee Name: _____      Interview Date: _____

Interview Time: _____      Interview City: _____

E-mail Contact: _____      Telephone Contact: _____

GoL Agency/Title: _____

**Questions:**

1. What have been the major development milestones in your sector in Liberia since 2003? What has been the role of diasporas in these milestones, if any at all?

2. What have been some of the major challenges in Liberia's post-war reconstruction drive? Have returnees/diasporas/homeland Liberians mitigated these challenges or compounded them? How?

3. How has the government of Liberia engaged diasporas in its reconstruction efforts?

4. Why did the government hold townhall meetings in key population centres in the US, Europe and West Africa, as a part of the *Liberia Rising 2030* initiative?

5. What are the challenges of being a returnee/homeland Liberian in government?

6. What is the percentage of returnee Liberians currently holding key government positions in your sector? What are the advantages/disadvantages of this trend?

7. Who do you consider to be a 'Liberian citizen'?

8. What do you know about the proposed dual citizenship legislation for Liberia? How did you hear about it?

9. Do you support dual citizenship for Liberia? Why or why not?

10. Is there a role for diasporas in Liberia's development? If so, what is that role? If not, why not?

**Appendix 5: Interview Protocol-Liberian Ambassadors**

**Interviewee/Demographic Details:**

Interviewee Name: _____     Interview Date: _____

Interview Time: _____     Interview City: _____

E-mail Contact: _____     Telephone Contact: _____

Mission Abroad: _____

**Questions:**

1. What is the population of Liberians in your country/regional jurisdiction and how did most of them get there? When did they get there? Does the embassy keep a database of Liberians within your jurisdiction? If so, how does one register with the database?

2. How does your mission engage with diaspora Liberians within your jurisdiction?

3. What are the major challenges/concerns of Liberians within your jurisdiction? How does the embassy assist in mitigating these challenges/concerns?

4. What is the nature of Liberia's diplomatic relationship with the host country? Have Liberians residing in the host country affected this relationship (negatively or positively)? How?

5. How does your mission verify 'Liberian citizenship' within your jurisdiction or when issuing travel documents? How does your mission define a 'Liberian citizen'?

6. What are the various legal residence options for Liberians in your jurisdiction?

7. What is the percentage of Liberians in your jurisdiction who have naturalised? Why do you think they have?

8. What is the percentage of Liberians in your jurisdiction who have retained their legal 'Liberian citizenship'? Why do you think they have?

9. What are the immigration challenges in your jurisdiction for Liberians who do not or cannot naturalise?

10. Do you believe dual citizenship will help or hinder Liberia's reconstruction process? Why or why not? Do you believe dual citizenship will improve the conditions of Liberians within your jurisdiction? Why or why not?

**Appendix 6: Interview Protocol-Liberian Diaspora Heads of Regional Organisations**

**Interviewee/Demographic Details:**

Interviewee Name: _____        Interview Date: _____

Interview Time: _____        Interview City: _____

E-mail Contact: _____        Telephone Contact: _____

Name of Regional Organisation: _____

**Questions:**

1. In what ways is your regional organisation active in Liberia?

2. In what ways is your organisation active in the host nation?

3. How has the government of Liberia (or the Liberian embassy in your region) engaged your organisation's support in the reconstruction process?

4. How has your organisation engaged the Liberian government (or the Liberian embassy in your region) in your projects in Liberia and abroad?

5. How many members does your organisation have? Do they all live locally?

6. How many Liberians reside in your city/region? How involved are they in your organisation/or in other Liberian organisations?

7. What are the major challenges of Liberians in your city/region/or in your organisation?

8. What is the citizenship status of the vast majority of your members?

9. Who do you consider to be a 'Liberian citizen'? How does your organisation define a "Liberian citizen'?

10. What do you know about the proposed dual citizenship legislation for Liberia? How did you hear about it?

11. What is your position on the proposed dual citizenship legislation? Why do you support or oppose dual citizenship for Liberia?

**Appendix 7: Interview Protocol-'Homeland' Liberians**

**Interviewee/Demographic Details:**

Interviewee File #: _____     Interview Date: _____

Interview Time: _____     Interview City: _____

E-mail Contact: _____     Telephone Contact: _____

Age: _____     Gender:     M _____     F _____

Educational level: _____     Profession: _____

Annual Income: _____     Citizenship status: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Migration History: _____

**Questions:**

1. Have you ever resided outside of Liberia for longer than one year since 1997? For how long? Where? Why?

2. What was the nature of your engagement with Liberia when you resided abroad?

3. How have you contributed to Liberia's post-war reconstruction efforts?

4. Do you have Liberian relatives abroad? What is the nature of your relationship with them?

5. How often have you benefited from remittances sent by relatives abroad within the past year? What is the total amount you received (in USD) within the past year?

6. Generally, do you believe Liberians abroad have helped or hindered the reconstruction process? How? Please provide examples.

7. Does the government of Liberia treat Liberians abroad (or Liberian returnees) differently from Liberians at home?  What evidence do you have of this?

8. Who would you consider to be a 'Liberian citizen'?

9. What do you know about the proposed dual citizenship legislation for Liberia? How did you hear about it?

10. Do you support dual citizenship for Liberia? Why or why not?

11. Is there a role for diasporas in Liberia's development? If so, what is that role? If not, why not?

**Appendix 8: Interview Protocol-'Circular' and 'Permanent' Liberian Returnees**

**Interviewee/Demographic Details:**

Interviewee File #: _____     Interview Date: _____

Interview Time: _____     Interview City: _____

E-mail Contact: _____     Telephone Contact: _____

Age: _____     Gender:     M _____     F _____

Educational level: _____     Profession: _____

Annual Income: _____     Citizenship status: _____

Place of Birth: _____     Residence Abroad: _____

Migration History: _____

**Questions:**

1. Is this a temporary or permanent move back to Liberia? Why?

2. Did you secure immigration status in your country of settlement before moving back to Liberia? Why or why not? What status do you have abroad, if any at all?

3. What were the circumstances that brought about your permanent/temporary return to Liberia? When did you move back? From where? When do you intend to return to your country of settlement, if at all?

4. What were you doing before moving back to Liberia? What are you currently doing in Liberia?

5. How did you (do you) remain engaged with Liberia while abroad?

6. What kind of support do you receive from Liberian relatives abroad, if any?

7. What is the nature of your investments in the country in which you settled abroad, if any? What is the nature of your investments in Liberia, if any?

8. How do you define a 'Liberian citizen'?

9. What do you know about the proposed dual citizenship legislation for Liberia? How did you hear about it?

10. Do you support dual citizenship for Liberia? Why or why not?

11. Would you seek dual citizenship if the bill were passed? Why or why not?

12. Is there a role for diasporas in Liberia's development? If so, what is that role? If not, why not?

**Appendix 9: Interview Protocol-Liberian Diasporas**

**Interviewee/Demographic Details:**

Interviewee File #: _____       Interview Date: _____

Interview Time: _____       Interview City: _____

E-mail Contact: _____       Telephone Contact: _____

Age: _____       Gender:       M _____       F _____

Educational level: _____       Employed? __ Y       _____ N

Profession: _____       Annual Income: _____

Country of Citizenship: _____       Immigration Status: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Migration History: _____

**Questions:**

1. Are you involved at all in Liberia's reconstruction process? If so, how?

2. Has the government of Liberia engaged your support in the reconstruction process? If so, who and how?

3. How involved are you in Liberian organisations where you reside? What do these organisations do (community development in the host country? engagement with Liberia? etc.)?

4. How engaged are you with the host nation?

5. How do you define a 'Liberian citizen'?

6. Why did you naturalise elsewhere/or why did you retain your legal 'Liberian citizenship'?

7. What have been the major challenges of naturalisation/or of retaining your legal 'Liberian citizenship', if any?

8. What have been the major benefits of naturalisation/or of retaining your legal 'Liberian citizenship', if any?

9. What do you know about the proposed dual citizenship legislation for Liberia? How did you hear about it?

10. Do you support dual citizenship for Liberia? Why or why not?

11. Would you seek dual citizenship if the bill were passed? Why or why not? What if the proposed bill is rejected?

12. Is there a role for diasporas in Liberia's development? If so, what is that role? If not, why not?

**Appendix 10: Interview Protocol-Sierra Leonean Policymakers in Freetown**

**Interviewee/Demographic Details:**

Interviewee Name: _____     Interview Date: _____

Interview Time: _____     Interview City: _____

E-mail Contact: _____     Telephone Contact: _____

GoSL Agency/Title: _____

**Questions:**

1. What were the factors that led to your country's introduction of dual citizenship legislation? What were the factors that led to the passage of dual citizenship legislation?

2. How involved were you in dual citizenship advocacy, if at all?

3. How long did it take to enact dual citizenship?

4. Who were the major supporters/opponents of dual citizenship? Why did people support or oppose the bill?

5. How has your government instituted/implemented dual citizenship?

6. How has your government engaged with Sierra Leonean diasporas before, during and after the war?

7. What have been some of the outcomes (negative and positive) of that engagement?

8. How does your government define a 'Sierra Leonean citizen'? Who do you consider to be a 'Sierra Leonean citizen'?

9. Has dual citizenship helped or hindered your country's post-war development? How?