

**REGIME SURVIVAL IN THE GAMBIA AND SIERRA LEONE : A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY (1965-1994) AND THE
ALL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (1968-1992).**

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ABSTRACT.

The People's Progressive Party of The Gambia and the All People's Congress of Sierra Leone provide two outstanding examples of regime survival. They form part of a select group of African states which, for many years, escaped the cycle of coup and counter-coup seen elsewhere on the continent. Africanist political scientists have neglected the phenomenon of political survival, concentrating instead on accounting for the frequency of military intervention. This study goes some way to redressing the imbalance. It explains the importance of studying survival and assesses the comparability of The Gambia and Sierra Leone. Despite the absence of an overarching theory of survival, elements of the conceptual literature (including the theory of personal rule, work undertaken on civilian control of the military, elections and international relations) provide a theoretical framework.

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INTRODUCTION.

Political survival constitutes a central concern of leaders throughout the world. In Africa, however, the preoccupation with survival and the will to survive has often assumed an intensity rarely seen in developed countries. Underpinning this intensity is the high-risk/high-reward nature of post-independence African politics. In a game of high stakes - where political defeat may, at worst, bring about death¹ and political office provides myriad opportunities, not least the chance to accumulate a personal fortune - it is perhaps hardly surprising that the survival imperative exerts a considerable pull.²

Of course, observing that survival is important to political leaders does not necessarily imply that it ought to detain the observer, and yet a comparative study of the longevity of the All People's Congress (APC) under the leadership of Siaka Stevens and Joseph Momoh in Sierra Leone, and the People's Progressive Party (PPP) under Dawda Jawara³ in The Gambia, is exactly what is attempted here. The factors governing such an attempt are three-fold.

The first is based on a recognition that the achievement of these two regimes (the APC survived for twenty-four years and the PPP, twenty-nine), though remarkable, is by no means as rare as the scholarly emphasis on regime overthrow implies. Admittedly, for the majority of leaders, the intensity of the survival imperative has been more than matched by its elusiveness, with the political histories of many African states punctuated by a series of successful coups d'etat. Unfortunately, however, the regularity with which regimes were overthrown worked to obscure the record of those regimes, not insubstantial in number and certainly too significant to be dismissed as mere aberrations, which overcame all difficulties to remain in power over a lengthy period.⁴ The current study aims to go some way to redressing the existing imbalance in the explanatory literature.

Secondly, the central importance of power-retention to leaders suggests the utility of viewing political and economic developments from the perspective of survival.⁵ Given the inherent

¹ See John A Wiseman, "Leadership and Personal Danger in African Politics," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 31, No 4, 1993, pp 657-60.

² It is important to explain, at this early stage, the frequent references to the survival of *leaders* as opposed to that of *regimes*. Although the aim of this study is to explain regime survival - with "regime" defined, very simply, as a party in government - in many African states the distinction between regime and leader is blurred. As the next chapter demonstrates, the actions of leaders are generally of crucial importance to the survival of "their" regime. The reason for adopting the label regime is to encompass events in Sierra Leone where the All People's Congress survived a leadership transition.

³ Known, until his reconversion to Islam in 1965, as David Jawara. He had originally converted to Christianity at university.

⁴ The problem of what constitutes a "lengthy period" need not detain us long. Anyone familiar with African politics would have no need of a (necessarily arbitrary) definition to identify the regimes of Mobutu Sese Seko (Zaire), Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Hastings Kamuzu Banda (Malawi) and Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Côte d'Ivoire) as among the long survivors. Lower down the scale, a definition positing ten years as a lengthy period would encompass many more regimes.

⁵ The validity of this assertion depends upon an acceptance of the fact that leaders - despite having to operate within certain constraints - do exert a significant impact upon the course of events within a state. This approach

difficulties of retaining office, "successful" leaders (those who retain power over a long period) are compelled to make a substantial proportion of their decisions with at least one eye on survival requirements. That is not to say one would expect successful leaders *always* to behave in ways conducive to survival, with conflicting goals, aspirations and desires at times overriding the survival imperative. If this occurs too often, however, a leader's downfall is the likely outcome. Successful leaders understand that the survival imperative logically precedes the benefits (the accumulation of wealth, the exercise of power etc) of holding office. Any explanation of the course of events in a particular state must take account of this fact.

Explanation rather than prescription, then, provides the central focus of this study. A brief glance at some of the long-surviving regimes suggests that political survival is not necessarily a positive "good"; indeed, the survival imperative has frequently ushered in a whole range of unsavoury tactics from coercion to the denial of human and political rights.⁶ Nor is it correct to suggest that these are necessary evils, that the end justifies the means. Thus, although some observers suggest that an element of political continuity may be necessary for economic development, one need look no further than the APC's abysmal economic record in Sierra Leone to discover that it is hardly sufficient.

The APC's economic failings highlight an important paradox of political survival. How, in the face of mounting economic difficulties and social unrest - and in defiance of conventional academic wisdom which posits a direct connection between political instability and socio-economic problems - did the APC manage to prolong its rule for almost a quarter of a century? An attractive "solution" to this paradox lies in suggestions that Sierra Leone is easier to govern than other African states. But how does one measure "governability"? If, for example, natural resources (in Sierra Leone's case, diamonds) signify governability then how is regime survival in resource-poor The Gambia explained? Or for that matter how are coups d'etat in oil-rich Nigeria explained? Perhaps state size provides the answer. Both The Gambia and Sierra Leone are small states which, it might be argued, promotes a greater sense of "community" and in turn governability. But in that case how does one account for events in Equatorial Guinea? Perhaps ethnic composition provides a clue, but again conventional wisdom suggests that regimes presiding over homogenous states face a simpler task than those (including the APC and PPP) which are forced to deal with an ethnically diverse populace. Variables such as domestic resources, state size or social composition (and the list might be extended much further) may well prove to hold some relevance but, taken alone, are insufficient to account for instances of political survival.

Clearly, then, there are no straightforward answers to the problem of why some regimes

is defended in Chapter one.

⁶ In this context see Percy C Hintzen, *The Costs of Regime Survival: Racial Mobilization, Elite Domination and Control of the State in Guyana and Trinidad* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989).

survive and others do not. In turn, this points to the third reason for studying the phenomenon of survival. Specifically, it is important to stress that the reasons commonly cited to account for the overthrow of regimes fail to explain the converse - regime longevity. This is particularly the case with those explanations which emphasise structural or environmental factors - both political and economic - to account for coups and coup-proneness. The problem with economic explanations has already been noted. Thus, while it seems reasonable to argue that economic decline may help in explaining some coups in the sense that it provides an opportunity and justification for military intervention (and equally if a country is economically prosperous it is much more difficult for the military to cite the economy as a reason for intervention) surely some additional explanation is needed to account for those cases in which the military fails to intervene despite being presented with the opportunity to do so.

A similar point may be made with reference to suggestions that Third World states are particularly susceptible to coups given their low or minimal levels of "political culture."⁷ This may seem a reasonable assertion and yet the point is that not all, or even most, of the states which have experienced prolonged civilian rule have enjoyed higher than average levels of political culture, and in some cases the levels have been somewhat lower than in coup-ridden states. Examining regime survival sensitises the observer to these anomalies and the limitations of existing coup theories, and highlights the need for an overarching theory capable of explaining cases of survival *and* non-survival. The current work - which represents little more than a starting point - is based on a recognition of the impossibility of producing such a theory in the absence of detailed case-studies.⁸

Nevertheless, it is important to stress that although existing theories of regime overthrow are unable to explain regime survival, this study was not tackled "blind." After all, the subject of political survival is by no means a new one, Niccolo Machiavelli's well known and persistently illuminating writings on the subject⁹ having been produced several centuries ago. In more recent times, a search undertaken by the author also revealed the existence of one study, written by Howard Wriggins, focusing explicitly on political survival in Africa.¹⁰ Unfortunately however the study, published in 1969, is not only dated¹¹ but also impaired by the scant attention paid to vital

⁷ See Samuel E Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976).

⁸ Any attempt to produce such a theory would be in danger of producing a set of erroneous explanations of survival equally applicable to cases of non-survival.

⁹ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and The Discourses*, With an Introduction by Max Lerner (New York, Random House, 1950).

¹⁰ W Howard Wriggins, *The Ruler's Imperative: Strategies for Political Survival in Asia and Africa* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1969).

¹¹ For example, Wriggins (*ibid.*, pp 18-20) posits the route to independence (whether or not it was achieved peacefully) as a significant factor in political survival. However, as Denis Austin has shown, cases of *both* survival and non-survival have since occurred in those states where the transition was peaceful *and* those where it was not. For further discussion of this and several other "obvious" but inadequate explanations of political survival see Denis Austin, *Politics in Africa* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1978), pp 20-24.

areas of political survival, most notably in the sphere of civil-military relations. Just four pages¹² are devoted to the military; a lapse the current study hopes to rectify. Added to this, the scale of the study (which encompasses both Africa and Asia) resulted in a tendency to over-generalise. Too often Wriggins' propositions fail to be placed in context; many are equally applicable to short-lived regimes.

Remaining in the sphere of African studies, informed accounts of post-independence political and economic developments, particularly those attempting to explain the course of events in a single state, have often had occasion to refer to the survival imperative. Added to this, the central importance of the survival imperative (in explaining why African political leaders behave as they do) renders a section of the existing conceptual literature of at least some utility to the current study. Work undertaken on leadership, civil-military relations and elections, though not *explicitly* concerned with survival, provides a useful starting point and is examined in detail in subsequent chapters.

The main interpretative approaches to African politics provide further insights while manifestly failing to *explain* instances of regime survival. The weaknesses of "grand theories" - in particular their frequent disregard for, or inability to explain, the complex reality of African politics - have been examined at length elsewhere,¹³ and simply reiterating such well-rehearsed arguments in full would serve little purpose. Nevertheless, it is worth clarifying the point of limited utility by examining one of the more important - and persistently discussed - approaches in greater depth.

Underdevelopment (or dependency) theory¹⁴ - selected here on the basis that it at least serves to highlight an important aspect of the circumstances under which African leaders have been compelled to operate - aims to explain the economic development of core capitalist nations with reference to the exploitative underdevelopment of peripheral nations. Incorporated into the capitalist mode of production, economically dependent upon foreign capital, unequal and unfavourable patterns of international trade - where primary exports consistently decreased in value, in contrast to manufactured imports - and hampered by foreign control over the transformation of raw materials which undermined sustained capitalist development, the core nations developed at the expense of the periphery. Economic surplus extraction benefited both the core nations and subordinate (dependent) local rulers with access to the state, but promoted economic

¹² Wriggins, *op. cit.*, pp 65-69.

¹³ See for example Patrick Chabal, *Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation* (London, Macmillan Press, 1992), pp 11-19 for a critical review of development theory and class analysis.

¹⁴ See, for example, Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (London, Monthly Review Press, 1967); Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment* (London, Monthly Review Press, 1974); Immanuel Wallerstein, "Dependence in an Interdependent World", *African Studies Review*, Vol 17, No 1, 1974; Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London, Bogle l'Overture, 1972) and Tony Smith, "The Underdevelopment of Development Literature", *World Politics*, Vol 31, No 2, 1979.

"underdevelopment."

The condition of dependence is real (and one with which African rulers have had to come to terms) and yet the theory's utility weakens with attempts to link political outcomes to patterns of economic underdevelopment. On a basic level dependency theory fails to explain why - under the same, or similar, circumstances - some regimes survive over many years whereas others fall; one would, for example, be hard put to envisage a more dependent economy than The Gambia's. This explanatory failure is rooted in the theory's inability to explain domestic politics with reference to its economic model. As Patrick Chabal¹⁵ observes,

"The fact that its conceptual model of politics is overdetermined by a prior teleological general macro-economic theory makes it difficult to provide a useful interpretation of contemporary politics in Africa. Its analytical framework is poorly equipped to account for processes other than state politics, particularly the politics of civil society. Furthermore it neglects to consider those specifically "African" aspects of politics - e.g., ethnicity, kinship, clientelism, witchcraft - which are self-evidently important to understanding politics in Africa."

In essence, the theory's inability to account for, or explain, the "real" world of African politics - the complex arena within which the struggle for political survival takes place - renders it of limited immediate value.

Threats, Resources and Strategies.

Given the failure of "grand" theories to explain incidences of political survival - not to mention the poor prospects for devising a viable replacement based on just two case-studies - this study rests upon a "lower level" conceptual framework, designed to illuminate and explain the actual course of events in The Gambia and Sierra Leone. The framework incorporates three main elements: threats, resources and strategies.

The first of these elements constitutes our starting point, for it is only through an understanding of the challenges, both general and specific, faced by African regimes - and the reasons why so many have enjoyed a comparatively short life-span - that we can begin to penetrate the problem of how and why some have managed to survive. Examining the broad, if changing, conditions under which leaders have operated should also provide some initial indications of the nature of the resources available to them.¹⁶ Hence, it is to an examination of those conditions that the discussion now turns.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p 23. For a more detailed critique see the papers collected in Colin Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory* (Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Strategies - necessary to cultivate resources and manipulate them to maximum advantage in response to myriad threats - are dealt with in subsequent chapters.

In Africa, rulers have frequently been compelled to confront a situation characterised by intense struggle for political power within the elite sphere. Explaining the genesis of this struggle - which emerged alongside the dissolution of the bond of opposition to colonial rule - it is necessary to understand both something of the nature of the post-colonial African state and, linked to this, the relationship between political power and wealth.

The nature of this relationship is perhaps most fruitfully understood against the widespread backdrop of meagre economic development and prevalent poverty in African states. The roots of this poverty have been examined at length by numerous scholars; important causal factors include the paucity of natural resources plaguing many African states (despite the existence of wide variations), a widespread failure to manage those resources productively through reinvestment, an unfavourable position in the world economy, ecological factors and political imperatives (examined in detail in due course).

In and of itself the prevalence of poverty explains little about the struggle for political power. Until, that is, one understands that for the great majority of individuals, escaping poverty and accumulating material power has been a function of gaining access to the resources of the state. Theorists of the useful, if flawed, concept of the overdeveloped state help to explain the genesis of this relationship.

According to its proponents,¹⁷ the "overdeveloped" post-colonial state assumed a central role in accordance with its antecedent, the colonial state. The new states, which at independence inherited the colonial state's powers (Alavi's "powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus") without the restraints of colonial political accountability, were deemed to be overdeveloped (using indicators of structure and size) in terms of the resources and requirements of the emergent nations. Overdevelopment, and the post-colonial state's centrality, may not have augured well for the future of African nations but did endow immense power and privilege, including access to material wealth, upon those who inherited the reins of state power. By virtue of their control of the state (which, as in the colonial period, was the dominant economic actor) the new political leaders enjoyed control of the economy. The post-colonial state was "not so much the political superstructure of a given economic order as the political infrastructure for economic hegemony."¹⁸

Although the standard account of the overdeveloped state retains some utility, it has been subject to much useful reinterpretation. For example, in an important work entitled *The State in Africa* Bayart¹⁹ stresses the importance of not overstating the relationship between power and wealth, arguing that it is "neither exhaustive (salaried positions in businesses or education were a

¹⁷ See Hamza Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies", *New Left Review*, No 74, 1972 and Colin Leys, "The 'Overdeveloped' Post Colonial State: A Re-evaluation", *Review of African Political Economy*, No 5, 1976, pp 39-48.

¹⁸ Chabal, *op. cit.*, p 81.

¹⁹ Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London, Longman, 1993), pp 91-99.

classic starting point for social improvement; the public sector is indissociable from private business and the "informal" economy), nor unequivocal (more and more, economic wealth opens the doors to power)." In this context Bayart questions the existence of a clear division between bureaucracy and bourgeoisie and replaces it with the concept of a "straddling class,"²⁰ characterised by "a network of closely meshed interests running back through time, through contracts, loans, acquisitions and marriages." African businessmen are frequently dependent upon government favour while many among the African bourgeoisie are keen to straddle between salaried jobs and private investment (in agriculture, transport property etc). The task of a political leader - seeking control - is one of supervising this fusion of interests.

Bayart further stresses the importance of not exaggerating the extent of state appropriation of the means of production and trade. Downplaying the effects of ideological differences, Bayart emphasises the importance of the "effects of scale" in contributing "to the formation (or not) of a true local private sector." Hence, demographic scale ("giants such as Nigeria or Zaire cannot be as easily controlled as micro-States of one or five million inhabitants"), economic scale ("solid financial circles separate from the banks can provide large entrepreneurs with the capacity they need") and historical scale ("some commercial networks are older than the postcolonial State, and this limits the State's capacity to disrupt them") are all deemed important.

Although Bayart's revisions facilitate a more finely-grained understanding of post-independence Africa than many earlier accounts, it remains important not to lose sight of the still crucial relationship between power and wealth (through access to state resources) and, central to leaders aiming to survive, the intense political competition it engenders. Power facilitates accumulation in a number of ways with political positions or jobs in the public sector endowing a salary, a range of perquisites (international travel, for example), access to loans and, perhaps most significantly, opportunities for corrupt accumulation.

In the context of widespread poverty it is hardly surprising that these benefits are widely sought after. Moreover, the "higher up" one's point of access to the state the greater the material rewards; political leaders, at the apex, enjoy the greatest opportunities and as such find their position coveted and subject to challenge. Important to an understanding of the nature of these challenges is some indication of the way this competition is played out in the real world, and in particular the central mechanism of political competition, factional conflict.

The more or less successful strategies utilised by political leaders to preclude overt challenge and cope with factional conflict - defined as the struggle for power or position - are the subject of Chapter one. Here it is sufficient to emphasise the difficult circumstances under which those leaders are compelled to operate. Thus, factional conflict - frequently rooted in ethnic, kinship

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 94-96.

or other ties - is not usually a problem that (in the absence of recourse to massive coercion, and not even always then) can be definitively "solved" by the efforts of political leaders. As Bayart²¹ notes, "In the absence of a true structuring of social classes, the predominance of the big men at the head of networks continues to be circumstantial and in large measure dependent upon the accomplishment of individual performances." Pre-eminence is rarely definitively won, but rather "earned week after week in this hard world of intrigue and "court politics.""

The centrality of "individual performances" has typically been ascribed to the absence of established constitutional rules, effective political institutions or widely-shared values which, to varying degrees, characterise African states. The "artificiality" of these states – as colonial constructs - is held responsible for the prevalence of non-institutionalised government, "where persons take precedence over rules,"²² and the accompanying problems. Unassisted by established rules or effective institutions to moderate and regulate political conflict, and in contrast to institutionalised political systems in which "fights are illegitimate by definition, and institutional rules and referees exist to prevent them from breaking out," in personal regimes "the dark side of political life" (coup attempts, conspiracies, plots) is more apparent.²³

In a recent work Bayart challenges this conception of African politics and seeks instead to apply the thinking of Fernand Braudel. Following Braudel, Bayart does not regard African states as the externally-imposed product of colonial rule. He emphasises instead the long-term - the "historicity" of the African state - and politics as a continuously evolving story. "Authentically African" states are the product of their own societies, the reflection of indigenous attitudes towards power (termed "governmentality") rooted in African history.

In contrast to many earlier theories (underdevelopment theory, for example) Bayart's analysis constitutes a successful attempt to enter and explain the "real world" of African politics, simultaneously serving as an important corrective to simplistic assumptions concerning the primacy of short term, external over long term, indigenous determinants. On the other hand it is arguable that the emphasis on continuity causes Bayart to understate the impact of colonial rule. Before examining this possibility in further detail, however, it is important to examine the challenge - often attributed, in part, to the impact of colonialism - civil society poses to regime survival. The discussion is not intended to provide a detailed analysis of the specific problems posed by civil society (see Chapter one) but rather to provide a broad overview of the changing problems leaders have been compelled to face.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp 217 and 224.

²² Robert H Jackson and Carl G Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982), p 10. Jackson and Rosberg's theory of "personal rule" is examined at greater length in Chapter one.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp 19-20.

Civil Society and Regime Legitimation.

An initial point to stress is that few African leaders have succeeded in cultivating a solid base of political legitimacy. While most independence leaders initially enjoyed widespread acceptability - a reflection of their nationalist success in winning control of the colonial state - sustainable support proved far more difficult to achieve. Where independence (and specifically, nationalist pledges) served to generate high expectations it frequently failed to provide a panacea. Widespread hopes that the colonial departure would result in a substantial and quickly realised material improvement in living standards were often dashed in the context of limited resources and conflicting priorities.

Equally problematic for many states was the creation of national unity (as a basis for political legitimacy). Arbitrary colonial territorial boundaries - which often encompassed heterogeneous groups divided along ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic and other lines - together with colonial rule and, most importantly, the process of decolonisation which often served to revive old rivalries (and in some cases create new ones), hence endowing these groups with political significance, appeared to account for this difficulty. There were, of course, wide variations between states with a number of factors - including the specifics of social composition (the number, size, historical "weight" of groups) and state size (with small state size enhancing the likelihood of communication and cross-cutting ties between groups) - affecting the ease or difficulty of constructing a nationality. These are best studied on a case-by-case basis.

Changing Responses: Co-optation and Coercion.

To illuminate the politics of civil society - defined as "'society in its relation with the state... in so far as it is in confrontation with the state" or, more precisely, as the process by which society seeks to "breach" and counteract the simultaneous "totalisation" unleashed by the state"²⁴ - theorists attempted a redefinition of the concept of the "overdeveloped" state. The state, once described by Bayart as an "excess" which had grown "on" as opposed to from or against civil society, was re-conceptualised as soft.²⁵ Lacking strong foundations and with limited regulatory and coercive capacity to enforce policies and programs, the state may have possessed a central role but was neither as powerful nor as clearly defined as originally believed.

Moreover, this lack of definition increased over time alongside the expansion of the already overdeveloped state. Accounting for this expansion was the perceived need of leaders to construct a support base in the context of the difficulties outlined above; providing state employment prevented

²⁴ Jean-Francois Bayart, "Civil Society in Africa," in Patrick Chabal (ed.), *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), p 111.

²⁵ See for example, Goran Hyden, *No Shortcuts to Progress* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983). For an alternative view see Robert Fatton Jr., *Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa* (Boulder, Co., Lynne Rienner, 1992), Chapter two.

the exclusion of those who might otherwise pose a threat to regime longevity. Hence, by 1970 over 60% of all African wage earners were government employees. By 1980, these employees' salaries accounted for at least half of all government expenditures.²⁶

However, this process could not continue indefinitely; as the state began to reach its limits and direct access to state resources for new aspirants became more difficult, many states saw the widespread establishment of patron-client relationships. The downward flow of patronage - through key intermediaries or middlemen - helped to establish support or acquiescence among those who successfully, albeit indirectly, gained access to state resources. In this way clientelism acted as both a mechanism of exchange and a system of political control.

It is useful to illuminate these processes in relation to ethnicity, frequently cited as the root of pervasive problems in post-colonial Africa. To place the discussion in its correct context, however, it is important to clarify the nature of ethnic identity.

Many observers now concur in an interpretation which places primary emphasis upon the "instrumental" rather than the "primordial" dimension of ethnicity.²⁷ Donald Rothchild²⁸ for example, stresses the "political, economic and social interests of categorical groups and their elites within the state, as opposed to their historical loadings or their intangible psychological or cultural "essence."" He adds that, "to the extent that overt, tangible interests - rather than an abstract sense of unique, fixed, and total identities - are involved, ethnic groups can be regarded as... responsive to the political exchange process."

In this context two additional points are worth noting. First, and as noted above, the influence of ethnicity is stronger in some states than others. In some states, factors such as historical contact and communication between peoples or cross-cutting lines of identification (religion, for example) have reduced the impact of ethnicity. Second, ethnicity is often of recent creation. While not all ethnic groups are the product of colonial rule there is no doubt that the uneven developmental impact of that period and colonial attempts to "order reality" - "by an authoritarian policy of forced settlement, by controlling migratory movements, by more or less artificially fixing ethnic details through birth certificates and identity cards"²⁹ - exerted a significant impact. The notion of ethnic group became "the means of affirming one's own existence" and, hence "the language of relationships between the subject peoples themselves."

²⁶ Donald L. Gordon, "African Politics", in April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon, *Understanding Contemporary Africa* (Boulder, Co., Lynne Rienner, 1996), p 75.

²⁷ These two interpretations of ethnicity originated in the works of an instrumentalist, Immanuel Wallerstein and a primordialist, Clifford Geertz. See, Immanuel Wallerstein, "Ethnicity and National Integration," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, No 3, October 1960, pp 129-39 and Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity* (New York, Free Press, 1963), pp 105-57.

²⁸ Donald Rothchild, "Interethnic Conflict and Policy Analysis in Africa," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol 9, No 1, January 1986, p 66.

²⁹ Bayart, *op. cit.*, 1993, p 51.

In contemporary African states groups and individuals have continued to use the language of ethnicity as a means of expressing grievances and shaping demands for access to state resources.³⁰ Thus, ethnic groups concentrated in a particular area might demand the redistribution of resources (in the form of infrastructure, services etc) to reverse developmental disparities between regions. More often than not, however, the substantial injection of resources this implied caused leaders to reject it as a viable route to support. As an alternative they often responded to individual claims, couched in the language of ethnic identity, to state employment³¹ or attempted to accommodate individuals' efforts to gain indirect access to state resources. Attention was increasingly focused on the elite sphere, where power sharing could operate not only to promote conciliation between elites but, to the extent that each ethnic group had its representatives in the cabinet and believed its interests were protected, extend to the wider society (hence lessening the threat posed by that group as a whole).

Comparatively cost-effective devices such as power sharing were rendered increasingly important as the problems associated with a clientelist route to cultivating support began to emerge, notably during the 1970s. The main problem facing leaders was an increasing scarcity of resources, attributable (in many states) to three factors. First was the fact of African states' precarious international position and in particular their vulnerability to exogenous shocks, beginning with the 1973 oil crisis. During the 1970s oil prices underwent an approximately six-fold increase alongside deteriorating terms of trade. As prices for agricultural and mineral commodities dropped so costs of imported goods rose, and for most states debt was the inevitable result. Second, domestic policies (state expansion, the maintenance of extensive patron-client links, the fostering of elite accumulation), though often intimately linked with the survival imperative, constituted a continual drain on scarce resources. Their failure to promote development (in part a reflection of the fact that accumulated wealth was rarely expended on capital investments) implied an inability to replenish these resources.

The third, related factor, centred upon the resistance of civil society, a development which both reflected and reinforced the scarcity of resources. Reflected because, as resources dried up, so patrons' ability to protect their clients was undermined. For those at the periphery of political networks, penetrating the state was rendered increasingly problematic. In turn this frequently reinforced the decline in resources. To explain this it is important to note the narrowing range of options open to the disaffected in the absence of genuine political choices. The widespread establishment of single-party states - designed to strengthen leaders' hold on power by channelling

³⁰ See Sandbrook for a discussion of ethnic politicisation during the first decade of independence. Richard Sandbrook, *The Politics of Africa's Economic Stagnation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp 77-81.

³¹ A refusal to conciliate could serve to reinforce ethnic divisions, enhancing the likelihood of a resort to coercion, itself expensive.

patronage and enforcing social control³² but justified in terms of unity and development - removed the option of legitimate political dissent, leaving the aggrieved and excluded to adopt a range of alternative strategies. Rural producers, usually lacking organisation or leadership and accordingly often the first to suffer in the context of limited resources, frequently opted for subsistence, migration to the towns, or the diversion of produce from the official economy. Undertaken *en masse*, these individual decisions to "disengage"³³ exerted an adverse impact upon the availability of domestic resources.

Of course it was not just individual rural producers who lacked both a political voice and, progressively, access to resources. Urban dwellers, too, increasingly found themselves among the excluded. The threat posed by generally better educated, organised and more politically aware urban dwellers is examined at length in Chapter one. Here it is sufficient to note three general points. First, some urban groups possessed a more effective range of resources than others, helping to ensure their collective "voice" would continue to be heard. Secondly, many leaders, facing a situation where the numbers of excluded, aggrieved individuals threatened to outnumber those with access to state resources increasingly opted for a coercive response - limiting or eliminating opposition through the expansion and deployment of the security forces - although the expense this involved³⁴ rendered it a far from satisfactory solution.

And finally it was, and is, not just organised groups which posed a threat to regime longevity. In this context Bayart notes the importance of banditry or delinquency - "the brutal conquest by an active and desperate minority of the riches of the State" and one of the principal "popular modes of political action." Arguing that elites "perceive banditry as a political threat to their absolute seniority, a threat which derives in the main from the 'youth', the 'juniors' and the 'little men'"³⁵ he suggests that "in many ways the juvenile underworld has succeeded where the peasant revolts and trade-union marches have failed. In many of the metropolitan areas of the continent, it has installed a veritable balance of terror and has left the rich with little choice but to resort to the systematic use of violence." Force has not provided a solution, however, with the "desperate minority" growing progressively larger.

³² For a detailed discussion of the influential factors explaining the moves towards political centralisation (including the colonial legacy and the influence of outside development consultants and donor agencies) see James S. Wunsch and Dele Olowu, *The Failure of the Centralised State: Institutions and Self-Governance in Africa* (Boulder, Co., Westview Press, 1990).

³³ On the notion of disengagement see Victor Azarya, "Reordering State-Society Relations: Incorporation and Disengagement", in Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan, *The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1988), pp 3-21.

³⁴ In financial terms and as a reflection of the survival related risks of utilising excessive coercion. I return to these issues in Chapter one.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, 1993, pp 240-41. According to one commentator, in 1988 one of every five Nigerian prisoners was a teenager. John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p 264.

Limits to the Threat of Civil Society.

Although post-independence African leaders undoubtedly faced a problematic set of circumstances, it is important not to exaggerate the significance of civil society as a threat to prolonged political survival. Two factors suggest the need for caution. First, although civil society possessed the potential to undermine state economic power, regimes also enjoyed access to external resources which served to compensate (albeit to varying degrees) for the decline in domestic production. Second, and perhaps more importantly, although civil society's efforts to find a voice may have exerted an indirect impact upon political leaders' survival prospects (albeit a differential one both in terms of the group involved, the tactics adopted and changes over time³⁶), they have rarely intended to bring about the overthrow of the existing political order. As Chabal³⁷ observes, even as the state grew progressively economically weaker and state penetration became increasingly difficult,

"appurtenance to the state [remained] a desirable individual option ... The state may be (relatively) poor but it is still, in most instances, the great enabler ... Because the state is neither monolithic nor stable and above all because it is so porous, the strategy of seeking access to it is (and is likely to remain) the most logical option for individuals. Indeed, it is the very softness and overdevelopment of the state ... which enables it to continue both to survive and to service so many in the community."

Such individual choices had a significant impact upon the threat posed by groups. For example, individuals have tended to regard ethnic identity as a means of shaping and channelling demands for resources; rarely has it served as the basis for a cohesive challenge to the existing political order. Likewise armed revolutionary movements have hardly featured heavily in post-independence Africa.

Having said this, it remains the case that popular dissatisfaction (focused primarily on the failures of the single-party state, particularly its failure to promote economic development) has consistently and progressively grown in many post-independence African states. Alongside the decision of large numbers to "disengage" (by, for example, resorting to subsistence or black market activities as noted above) there has been a resurgence and expansion of voluntary associations and organisations.³⁸ Widespread demands for a return to multi-partyism demonstrated the growing strength and assertiveness of civil society and, crucially, an issue on which vulnerable, disparate groups could find some common ground. Alongside international pressure for democratisation (as a

³⁶ These are examined in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp 228-232.

³⁸ On this, see John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan (eds.), *Civil Society and the State* (Boulder, Co., Lynne Rienner, 1994) and Michael Bratton, "Beyond the State: Civil Society and Associational Life in Africa," *World Politics*, No 41, 1989, pp 407-430.

pre-requisite for aid disbursements),³⁹ internal demands posed a threat to regimes whose perception of their own security was closely related to the workings of the single-party state. Nevertheless, of the majority of regimes who opted to return to multi-partyism, many faced a weak and divided opposition (itself subject to the diluting influences of factional conflict) while simultaneously retaining important comparative advantages, notably access to the coercive apparatus and material resources.

Resources:⁴⁰

To combat the myriad threats to political survival, a leader needs resources. Despite the existence of both state- and time-specific variations, it is possible to identify a range of resources leaders may employ to prolong their rule. *How* they are employed - an absolutely crucial aspect of regime longevity - is examined in subsequent chapters. Here, the emphasis is upon the "raw materials" of political survival.

From the above discussion it is clear that material or financial resources have proved crucial in shaping political outcomes. As a means of dealing with both elite-level challenges as well as those emanating from civil society, personal control of material resources - whether deployed to provide inducements, to maintain a significant level of coercion or even, particularly during the early post-independence period, to promote economic development - is crucial to a leader's survival. African rulers have access to two types of resources - domestic (by virtue of their access to the state) and external (aid, loans etc). Given states' widely disparate levels of domestic resources with some, for example, enjoying possessing valuable mineral deposits and others confined to agricultural production, generalisations are unwise, although an accurate case-by-case assessment of a leader's domestic resource base is clearly important to explaining political survival.

One generalisation it *is* worth reiterating centres upon the widespread decline in available domestic resources. The causes of this decline were touched upon above; the outcome saw political leaders increasingly looking to externally generated resources to fill the gap. Thus, economic dependency may be a simple fact of life for African states but has not precluded the mobilisation of external resources.

Of course, the observation that leaders have been able to adopt a proactive role in the mobilisation of external resources needs to be placed in context. Thus, some states - those possessing strategic importance or sought-after material resources for example - were no doubt more advantageously situated than others. Nevertheless all had the potential to diversify, to initiate

³⁹ It is possible to interpret international conditions not only as a constraint but also a resource. Bayart (*op. cit.*, 1993, p xiii) for example, suggests that "democratic discourse can... be seen as a new type of economic rent; aid to help pay for democratisation is always good to have".

⁴⁰ The importance of resources to political survival has been explicitly acknowledged in much of the above discussion. This section aims to provide a broad overview of the sources and range of these resources.

new contacts and alignments, even (in some cases) to exploit competition among donors. These processes may have been accompanied by domestic changes but, crucially, these were frequently recipient rather than donor-led. States were not simply pawns in a larger international game; their leaders operated, albeit with varying degrees of success, to maximise externally-generated resources.

Although it is important to emphasise relative state autonomy it remains the case that, from the mid-1980s, leaders enjoyed progressively less room for manoeuvre alongside the hardening of the IMF stance and the introduction of strict conditionalities.⁴¹ For many states, economic crisis implied a dependence on foreign aid to fund development or merely to function as a country. In turn, this new and severe form of dependence left many with little option but to adhere to IMF to conditionalities in order to access both international and bilateral assistance. By 1989, all but five of forty-four sub-Saharan African states had accepted IMF loans.⁴²

Despite Bayart's⁴³ (in some cases valid) assertion that "loans granted following long negotiations and ostensibly binding agreements seem to a significant degree to have been used for different purposes from what was intended," overall the medicine of structural adjustment served to lessen regimes' room for manoeuvre. The new emphasis on "rolling back" the state had clear negative implications for those individuals (from urban dwellers enjoying subsidised services to those in state employ) benefiting from the statist policies hitherto pursued.

If these changing circumstances hardly augured well for political leaders some nevertheless succeeded in clinging to power. Accounting for this is the task of subsequent chapters, yet it is worth noting two general factors which appeared to offer leaders some hope. First, was the very willingness of international financial institutions to continue to provide credits, albeit with conditions attached, to African states. This willingness - which probably stemmed, in part, from a desire to avoid state collapse and a concomitant end to repayments of debt - was undoubtedly central to leaders' survival prospects. They may have resented the imposition of conditionalities but nevertheless gained access to a source of resources they desperately needed and would not otherwise have had. Secondly, although the international financial community aimed to limit the state's economic reach, "the immediate and even long term consequences of the credit it grants is to provide additional revenues for the state."⁴⁴ In this context, and to reiterate, access to a diminished state may have been rendered increasingly problematic but nevertheless remained a viable individual option.

⁴¹ These are examined in greater detail in subsequent chapters. In most cases they included devaluation, privatisation (of state-owned enterprises); deficit reductions; an end to urban consumer subsidies; liberalisation of imports and increased interest rates.

⁴² John Kraus, "Building Democracy in Africa", *Current History*, No 90, 1990, pp 211-12.

⁴³ *Op. cit.*, 1993, p 27.

⁴⁴ Chabal, *op. cit.*, p 240

Although the manipulation of material resources no doubt plays a central role in explaining political survival, problems associated with maintaining the flow of resources suggests the potential importance of additional factors. In particular, one might expect the successful (long-surviving) leader to understand and exploit the political value of alternative, non-material, resources.⁴⁵

Subsequent chapters explore this possibility, and the range of possible resources, in detail. At this stage it is sufficient to float an initial idea, to hypothesise that - given the manifest difficulties of political survival - long-surviving leaders are those who possess the ability to play a bad hand well, to discern the positive potential (not just the problems) of a given situation. In the international context, for example, no leader welcomes a position of weakness and dependency and yet from this position some have proved able to extract not only money but a range of additional resources, notably military assistance and domestic political support, from the manipulation of external linkages. Resources can also be generated internally, often from less than promising situations: factional conflict, though undoubtedly problematic in many respects, may strengthen a leader's position should he succeed in playing one group against another while retaining the position of arbiter. Likewise, ethnic identity may serve as a useful mechanism for cultivating acceptability among a leader's peers and sections of civil society or maintaining civilian control of the military.

The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

Two factors influenced the selection of The Gambia and Sierra Leone, as opposed to some other instances of regime longevity. First, was the fact that, at the outset of the study, both the APC and the PPP were *ongoing* examples of regime survival. That this is no longer the case (both succumbed to military coups during the course of the research) does not, however, detract from the fact that they remain outstanding examples of regime longevity. Added to this, although I make no claim of having predicted the coups, research undertaken prior to their occurrence did suggest the spuriousness of suggesting that the two regimes had definitively "solved" the problem of how to survive in office. The fluctuating vulnerability of the two regimes is a factor elaborated upon in subsequent chapters; here it is sufficient to note that it was *in spite of* this vulnerability that they remained in power over many years.

A second influence upon the choice of states was the fact of their comparability, in terms of geographical location, historical and constitutional developments, social composition and levels of economic development. The following sections have a dual purpose; to expand upon the two states' comparability and to place each in their historical context. In particular, it is important to attempt a preliminary identification of the key sources of power, and threats to power, on the two regimes'

⁴⁵ The ability to do so implies the possession of "personal resources," analysed in Chapter one.

assumption of office,⁴⁶ as the basis for an in-depth analysis of regime survival. The discussion begins with a brief overview of events before the two regimes took power, subsequently focusing upon three key areas and their possible implications for the future of the two regimes: events in the military sphere, political developments (with particular emphasis on how they served to shape both elite and mass-based expectations) and resources, including access to international support.

Historical Overview.

The Gambia and Sierra Leone - situated in West Africa - were both British colonies.⁴⁷ In Sierra Leone a British coastal settlement, named Freetown, was established in 1787. Over a century later, in 1896, a Protectorate was declared over the Sierra Leonean hinterland. Unlike Freetown and the immediately surrounding area which was governed as a direct Crown Colony, the Protectorate was administered through the chiefs, according to the principles of Indirect Rule.

From its creation Freetown was inhabited by freed slaves and their descendants - a group known as the Creoles. The Creoles were identifiable through their religion (most became Christians), their education (provided by missionaries) and their gradual assimilation of British culture (language, style of living etc.). The Creole community included a number of prominent individuals - doctors, lawyers and journalists - and, during the late nineteenth century, some occupied senior government posts in Sierra Leone and other British colonies. Although Creoles were subsequently excluded from government positions, by the 1950's Africanisation of the civil service enabled them to reassume a significant role. Following independence, however, Creole dominance within the civil service was increasingly challenged by the recruitment of people from the hinterland. Politically, the salience of the Colony-Protectorate divide receded alongside the Creole failure - during the 1940's - to prevent the Protectorate gaining proportionate representation on the Legislative Council (see below).

Obvious similarities, even direct links, exist between the colonial history of The Gambia and Sierra Leone. The British settled in Bathurst (now Banjul⁴⁸) in 1816. From 1821 to 1843 and from 1866 to 1888 the Colony was administered from Freetown before reverting, finally, to a separate status. Even then, links with Freetown were maintained by a community of Freetonian Creoles and their descendants who had settled in Bathurst from the early nineteenth century. Known as Akus,⁴⁹ they adopted a similar lifestyle and occupied the same elite professional posts as their

⁴⁶ Changes over time are but touched upon; substantive discussion is provided in later chapters.

⁴⁷ On the history of Sierra Leone see Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London, Oxford University Press, 1962). For The Gambia see John M Gray, *A History of The Gambia* (London, Frank Cass, 1966) and Harry A Gailey, *A History of The Gambia* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

⁴⁸ The name change was effected in April 1973.

⁴⁹ For a study of the recent history of the Akus see Harold Aspen, "Ghost Corporations: The Gambian Akus, Responses to Dethronement" (Magister Artium Degree, University of Trondheim, 1986), Located in the Gambia Archives.

Sierra Leonean counterparts.⁵⁰ Certain Akus achieved a level of political prominence but, as in Sierra Leone, their political importance declined with the extension of representation to the Protectorate. In The Gambia, the Protectorate (essentially the banks of the River Gambia) had been declared in 1894; as in Sierra Leone it was governed according to the principles of Indirect rule with the assistance of the chiefs.

Both The Gambia and Sierra Leone enjoyed a mostly peaceful transition to independence although the rate of progress in the former was somewhat more leisurely. In The Gambia the principle of elective representation to the Legislative Council was not introduced until 1946 (prior to which date the inhabitants of Bathurst and, from 1932, the Protectorate population had had limited, unofficial representation on the Council). In Sierra Leone, however, limited elective representation had been introduced rather earlier, in 1924. Subsequent constitutional developments in the two states saw the enlargement of the Legislative Council and gradual increases in Protectorate representation. By 1956 Sierra Leone possessed an elected House of Representatives and The Gambia followed suit in 1959. A subsequent period of internal self government was followed by full independence for Sierra Leone on 27 April 1961 and for The Gambia on 18 February 1965.

A brief glance at the subsequent course of political development in each state reveals that Dawda Jawara and his protectorate-based PPP ruled The Gambia from independence in 1965. Throughout the period of PPP rule a multi-party system was maintained and a series of opposition parties were allowed to function and contest elections (held every five years), all of which the PPP won with large majorities. The Gambia became a Republic on 24 April 1970 - following a referendum defeat on the same issue in 1965 - with Jawara as executive President. On 30 July 1981 a coup attempt, led by Kukoi Samba Sanyang alongside a number of Field Force personnel, was defeated with the help of Senegalese troops. During the aftermath of the coup attempt, in 1982, The Gambia agreed to join with her neighbour to form the Senegambian Confederation, eventually dissolved in 1989. On 22 July 1994 the PPP regime was overthrown by a military coup headed by Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh.

In Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), led by Milton Margai, headed the first post-independence government. Following his death in April 1964 Milton Margai was succeeded by his brother, Albert. Albert Margai remained in power until the March 1967 general elections which were won by an opposition party - the All People's Congress - headed by Siaka Stevens. The hand-over of power was interrupted by a coup d'etat which in turn prompted a second coup just two days later. Following a period of military rule a third coup, in April 1968, restored the APC and Stevens to power. Major constitutional developments during Stevens' tenure included the

⁵⁰ As in Sierra Leone, Aku dominance of the civil service came under increasing threat following independence.

declaration of a Republic in 1971 and - as befitted an increasingly authoritarian and repressive political system - the establishment of a single-party state in mid-1978.⁵¹ Stevens remained in office until 1985. His choice of successor was Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh, the head of the armed forces and a minister of state. During his term of office Momoh was compelled to deal with entrenched economic problems as well as new challenges in the form of popular demands for a return to multi-partyism and a rebel insurgency. His eventual downfall, on April 30th 1992, was engineered by a group of soldiers headed by Captain Valentine Strasser.

Having sketched the major political developments in each state the intention is to isolate and expand upon the more influential developments which took place before the featured regimes took power. I begin with the armed forces on the basis that they have posed one of the most formidable and consistent obstacles to prolonged regime survival in African states

The Armed Forces.

In 1968, Stevens faced an unenviable situation. The legacy of Albert Margai's innovations - notably his attempts to forge new, reciprocal civil-military links alongside ethnically inspired alterations to the composition of the officer corps⁵² - was a politicised and divided army. The two coups perpetrated in March 1967 reflected these twin processes of politicisation and division. The first was carried out by Force Commander David Lansana, in support of Margai, following the SLPP's defeat in the 1967 general elections. The second, two days later, was engineered by Lansana's immediate subordinates - Majors Blake, Jumu and Kai-Samba - opting to remove a man they regarded as wholly inept. The result was a military regime, the National Reformation Council (NRC), established under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew T. Juxon-Smith.

The NRC's lack of judgement led directly to a third coup. Perpetrated by a group of army privates, frustrated at the disparity between their own circumstances and the increasingly extravagant lifestyles of their superior officers, the April 1968 counter-coup was designed to restore the APC, as the victor in the 1967 elections, to power. All army officers were arrested and an Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement, designed to oversee the return to civilian rule and the reinstatement of Siaka Stevens, established.

For Stevens, the implications of this route to office did not augur well. Immediate imperatives - ameliorating the condition of the privates and restoring the decimated officer corps - aside, he needed to confront the legacy of Albert Margai and devise a long-term strategy of civilian control. Clearly this would not be easy; soldiers' awareness of their political potential and the erosion of psychological barriers to further intervention (hence the frequently expressed observation

⁵¹ The contrast with Jawara's decision to retain a multi-party system is apparent; subsequent chapters examine how survival strategies were mediated through the different types of political system.

⁵² See Chapter two.

that the most likely result of one coup is another) constituted a highly unfavourable legacy.

Jawara's legacy was quite different and, at least on the face of it, comparatively favourable. As the first post-Independence leader he escaped both the fall-out of a predecessor's inept strategizing and the implications of a period of military rule. Indeed, he did not have to cope with a fully fledged army at all, as in 1958 economic problems in the UK had resulted in the unusual decision to disband the Gambia Regiment and establish a small, minimally-equipped para-military Field Force, endowed with comparatively modest "corporate" expectations and minimal awareness of its own political potential. Although, as later events were to demonstrate, this apparently favourable situation did not rule out the possibility of intervention, the important point to note is that at Independence and for many years after, few in (or outside) The Gambia believed in the likelihood of a coup. It seemed likely that this perception would produce a quite different civilian response than in Sierra Leone where a much greater awareness of military power prevailed.

That Stevens understood his control over the military was, at best, tenuous seemed likely to militate against the use of the army against domestic opponents. The risks of using the army internally are well-known (see Chapter two) and in the medium-term - following the dissipation of the APC's entrance legitimacy but prior to developing a strengthened grip on the military - it appeared inevitable that Stevens would have to be circumspect in his use of physical force. Thus, political power did not *automatically* endow the new President with established control over the instruments of coercion. Jawara - though apparently blessed with a greater degree of control - was subject to a different type of constraint, his two hundred strong, ill-equipped Field Force hardly constituting a potent coercive instrument. In the future Jawara could opt to strengthen the force but, even disregarding the accompanying risk of enhancing the Field Force's opposition potential, a paucity of resources militated against this route.

Observing The Gambia's relative poverty raises the question of resources and their deployment to counter the military threat. The resources at each regime's disposal - material resources, ethnicity and external security assistance - are detailed below. First, it is important to identify the key political events which occurred prior to each regime taking office. I begin with a brief description of each regime's route to office, followed by an analysis of the significant sources of power and threats to power, at both elite and mass levels, which that route helped to shape. How the two regimes won power inevitably had an impact upon subsequent efforts to consolidate their rule.

The Route to Power.

The PPP was created in 1959. Providing both the impetus for its formation and an extremely potent political resource was the Colony-Protectorate divide, and in particular differential rates of economic and political development with the Colony outstripping the Protectorate on both

scores. Economically, the extreme developmental neglect of the Protectorate provided the PPP with an obvious campaigning platform. Politically, and facilitating efforts to capitalise on Protectorate grievances, the PPP was blessed with a virtually blank canvas. Early political parties, conceived in response to political opportunities confined to the Colony, had made little effort to extend their activities to the Protectorate and, following the extension of the franchise in 1959, suffered accordingly.

A partial exception - and the PPP's main political foe - was the United Party (UP), established in 1954 by a Bathurst lawyer, PS N'Jie. Opting to make a greater effort to build a national constituency than its colony-based counterparts, and cognisant of the fact that it would inevitably be on the losing side of any polarisation of support along Colony-Protectorate lines, the UP attempted to supersede this distinction through the activation of Wolof ethnic identity. This was a natural extension of the UP's successful appeals to Wolofs in the Colony (they formed the largest single group in Banjul⁵³) and did enable the party to extend its base. Nevertheless one should not overstate either the utility of this approach or the threat to the PPP. Thus, in 1960 it was estimated that Wolofs comprised just 11% of the population with other groups including the Mandinka (44%),⁵⁴ Fula (26%), Jola (9%) and Serahuli (10%).⁵⁵

In response the PPP, too, narrowed its appeal to focus particularly upon the Mandinka community. Again this was a limited approach - Mandinkas did not form an absolute majority and were dispersed throughout the territory⁵⁶ - and yet it did make tactical sense. The strategy was complemented and strengthened by the preponderance of Mandinkas (including Jawara) holding PPP leadership positions, it ensured the PPP did not spread its minimal resources too thinly and, assuming Mandinkas responded favourably to "their" party, it guaranteed the PPP a substantial proportion of the vote.

During the 1960 (and 1962) elections the PPP relied heavily on a face-to-face campaigning style to capture this vote. In contrast to Sierra Leonean political parties (see below) the PPP did not rely to any great extent upon traditional authorities or support generated by competition for the chieftaincy, a wise decision given that Gambian chiefs (with a few exceptions) had simply not retained the level of authority and influence of their Sierra Leonean counterparts. Added to this, although the PPP was initially welcomed by many chiefs it failed to maintain a durable reciprocal

⁵³ In 1983 Wolofs formed 36% of the Gambians of Banjul. Nevertheless, most Wolofs lived in rural areas and predominated in certain districts in both Kerewan and Kuntaur.

⁵⁴ Subsequent and more reliable statistics (taken from the *Population and Housing Census, 1983, Provisional Report, 1986* (Central Statistics Department, Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development, Banjul, 1986), p 8) put Mandinkas at 44%, Fulas 26%, Wolofs 11%, Serahulis 10% and Jola 9%.

⁵⁵ Other groups include the Aku, Bambara, Serer and Manjago.

⁵⁶ All five divisions within the rural areas were multi-ethnic. Not only Mandinkas but also the other ethnic groups were dispersed, albeit to a lesser extent. The Fulas and Serahulis were most populous in the Upper River Division.

relationship with them, a failure partly explained by the fact that most PPP members were of significantly higher status than the chiefs in terms of income, education and occupation. The new party, pressing for a reduction in the role of chiefs, did little to allay fears of a popular alternative to chiefly authority.

These fears were to prove significant in the months following the 1960 elections⁵⁷ when chiefs opted to support PS N'Jie and his election as Chief Minister. Jawara and his colleagues responded by withdrawing from government, leaving the way clear for the UP to utilise its new found political and economic clout to extend the party's rural base. Exploiting fears of Mandinka "domination" the UP successfully cultivated links with smaller ethnic groups, notably the Fulas and Serahulis, but in 1962 this strategy failed to defeat the PPP which, though making its strongest showing in predominantly Mandinka areas, gained seats throughout the territory. Accounting for this was the PPP's decision to tone down its pre-1960 emphasis on ethnicity, opting instead to extend its organisational base and propound a message of "local equality," essentially the establishment of Area Councils to replace chiefs as the main unit of local government. This platform was well received at the local level and, perhaps more importantly, it was one which benefited the PPP alone since the UP, which had chosen to support the chiefs, was precluded from co-opting the issue as its own. As the victor in the 1962 elections the PPP assumed the reins of government at Independence in 1965.

Comparing these developments with the course of events in Sierra Leone, the first point to note is that the APC, unlike the PPP, was not the sole or even the first Protectorate-based party. In Sierra Leone the SLPP was the first party to champion Protectorate interests and, prior to Independence, gained support on that basis. It was only as Independence drew closer and the political relevance of the Colony-Protectorate divide - notably the supposed "threat" of Creole supremacy - receded that the APC, established in 1960, was given the opportunity to cultivate mass support.

Given that the SLPP was "first on the scene" in the Protectorate it was clear that the APC - far more than the PPP - would have to capitalise upon national and local-level divisions to accrue support. The SLPP's kin-based, reciprocal relationship with Sierra Leone's influential traditional authorities - whereby chiefs would deliver electoral support in return for both material benefits and help during periods of chiefdom political competition - indirectly furnished the APC with an opportunity to do just that. Thus, the SLPP's reliance on traditional authorities had rendered a strong organisation and the cultivation of party loyalties apparently unnecessary, leaving it vulnerable to opposition attempts to cultivate support along lines which divided, rather than unified, the mass of the population.

⁵⁷ Of the twelve Protectorate seats the PPP won eight, the remaining four being shared equally by the UP and Independent candidates. In the seven Colony seats, the UP won six and the DCA one.

At the national level, regional and ethnic divisions were a particularly important pillar of APC support - comparatively more so than for the PPP - with the APC predominating in the (mainly Temne and relatively deprived) North of the country and the SLPP in the (mainly Mende) South and East. In Sierra Leone, the Mendes and Temnes form the two largest ethnic groups with each group comprising approximately 30% of the population.⁵⁸ Albert Margai's rule, which saw an overall strengthening of the position of Mendes in the government and civil service, facilitated APC efforts to capitalise on Temne frustration and anxiety over resource-distribution.

Linked to these ethno-regional divisions were those based on class, Northern discontent with some aspects of chiefly behaviour - dramatically illustrated by riots in 1955-56⁵⁹ - providing an important initial source of popular support. The SLPP's dependence upon the chiefly structure for local electoral support rendered it powerless to counter the APC's politicisation of class divisions; curbing chiefly abuses such as extortion would have fatally undermined the reciprocal relationship between chiefs and party.

Reinforcing national level divisions as an important source of APC support were those at the local level. In part a function of the SLPP's flimsy party organisation, locally influential election candidates often relied upon the resources generated by local divisions, in particular those between rival chiefly families, with voters supporting the candidate aligned with the chieftdom faction they themselves supported. In the North, although the vast majority of Northern paramount chiefs were aligned with the SLPP, rival factions tended to coalesce around the APC in the hope of receiving central support should the party be elected. The strength of rival factions - which stemmed largely from the chiefs' growing unpopularity - was accordingly translated into support for APC candidates.

In the South, it was far more difficult for the APC to access local divisions. "Opposition" to the SLPP was provided not by the APC - which found it difficult to find well connected local candidates to stand on the APC ticket - but by Independents. Nevertheless Stevens did benefit from Albert Margai's mistakes. Whereas under Milton Margai Independents were not regarded as a

⁵⁸ The Limbas, another Northern group, are the third most populous and form approximately 8% of the total population. There are also numerous minor groups, including the Creoles who form approximately 2% of the population.

⁵⁹ Summarised in Martin Kilson, "Sierra Leone," in James S Coleman and Carl G Rosberg (eds.), *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1970), p 91. There were various reasons why popular discontent in the North was expressed much more clearly than in the South. King points to social upheaval (the most notable feature of which was the diamond rush of the 1950's) and the spread of the new money economy which, for a variety of reasons, affected more Temnes than Mendes, as well as the greater distance between Temne chiefs and their subjects as compared to that between Mende chiefs and their subjects. However, as King concludes, perhaps the most important explanation concerned the coincidence of class and regional factors. In his words, "the southerners saw themselves as an integral part of the political establishment and felt the need to confine their dissatisfaction within certain bounds. The northerners on the other hand felt no such reservations." Being "politically under-represented in the government" they "felt their grievances would not and could not be adequately settled within the established framework." Victor E King, "The Search for Political Stability in Sierra Leone 1960-1972" (PhD dissertation, Manchester University, 1975), pp 89 and 94-95.

challenge - by refusing to become embroiled in chieftdom conflicts he was able to simply co-opt victorious Independents after the election - following the accession of Albert Margai this arrangement broke down. In fact Albert Margai's interference in local disputes and direct sponsorship of candidates at the local level helped cost him the 1967 election.⁶⁰

The APC's ability to accrue political capital from both national and local-level divisions - combined with Margai's mistakes and his inept attempts at electoral manipulation - produced victory for the APC in March 1967. The results of the election reflected the APC's strength in the North and Western Area (a result of Creole and immigrant Temne support) as well as its weakness in the South. For the SLPP the results reflected exactly the reverse.

Future prospects.

This section attempts an initial assessment of the implications of each regime's route to power. It examines the two regimes' prospects for retaining and extending their support-base at the point they assumed office and incorporates an initial analysis of the two leaders' prospects for sustaining elite-level subordination - ultimately to prove even more crucial to their continued survival - in the context of events which occurred before they assumed office.

The Colony-Protectorate divide.

In The Gambia, the Colony-Protectorate divide exerted a greater impact on the framework of elite and mass expectations than in Sierra Leone. In particular, the pre-independence politicisation of the Colony-Protectorate divide, activated through promises of Protectorate development, had served to enhance rural expectations. Neglecting to honour these promises constituted a risky course - after all, the Protectorate formed the PPP's main support base,⁶¹ the source of the country's main income and the place of origin of the new political elite - and yet diverting the bulk of government spending to the countryside might prove equally dangerous.

For one thing, Jawara had to gain the confidence and co-operation of urban elites,⁶² particularly the Banjulian-dominated Field Force officer corps and UP-leaning civil servants. Since replacing the latter was not a realistic option - Mandinkas generally lacking the required skills and experience - Jawara had to make it clear that he did not harbour anti-Colony intentions. Added to this was the threat a deprived and restless urban populace might pose. In this context Jawara was fortunate that The Gambia lacked powerful, organised urban groups - there was no university and

⁶⁰ See Chapter three for further discussion.

⁶¹ Whereas (in 1969) the population of the Colony numbered only 32,941, the Protectorate population numbered 250,820.

⁶² Made easier by the fact that he already possessed some important connections in the urban areas. Jawara had been brought up and educated in Banjul under the guardianship of a Wolof family and his first marriage was to the daughter of a prominent Aku, parliament's first Speaker.

the efficacy of the main trade union, the Gambia Workers' Union, was constrained by the small work force - but unorganised, spontaneous and potentially very damaging protest could not be ruled out. In the context of limited resources Jawara was clearly faced with some difficult choices.

In Sierra Leone the legacy of events before the APC assumed office held rather different implications. That the party had originally gained support along lines of *division*, reduced the political importance of undifferentiated Protectorate underdevelopment. Within the Protectorate, Stevens' major challenge was to cope with the implications of the divisions his political machinations had helped to exacerbate (see below). APC supporters clearly expected some material reward for their allegiance, but Stevens (not unlike Jawara) could not afford to alienate the former Colony. Stevens certainly enjoyed much more substantial Colony-based support than his Gambian counterpart but it was crucial that this be maintained. This was true at both the elite and mass level. Regarding the latter, Sierra Leone possessed a university and a less fragmented, rather larger and hence more powerful labour movement than in The Gambia. These and other groups may have welcomed Stevens' ascent to office but their continued adherence would be a function of Stevens' performance.

Ethnicity:⁶³

The ethnic heterogeneity of The Gambia and Sierra Leone clearly implied that a narrow appeal to ethnic identity (and the distribution of resources on that basis) would fail to produce majority support and exclude a wide array of politicians - both established and aspiring - from accessing state resources. Let us take each of these points in turn.

In The Gambia, after 1962, the PPP's legitimacy had been based upon the claim to represent *all* Gambians. At independence, it was important that this claim be substantiated by appropriating UP support in the provinces; any narrow appeal to Mandinkas would preclude this outcome, enabling the UP to retain a significant level of popular support as the 'protector' of minority groups. In Sierra Leone the APC's legitimacy was less a function of claims to comprehensive representation, and yet continued sectional appeals (to Northern Temnes) appeared inadvisable. If the APC wished to avoid destabilising ethnic conflict, buttress its position and undermine the opposition, it clearly needed to make inroads into SLPP strongholds in the South.

⁶³ The focus here is upon ethnicity since other divisions appeared to hold a lesser political importance. Taking religion, for example, in The Gambia the Muslim Congress, formed in the 1960s and originally designed to protect and promote Muslim interests (Muslims constituted approximately 90% of Gambians, with the remainder adhering to either Christianity or traditional beliefs). The failure of an explicitly religious platform (the party was later forced to drop the word Muslim from its title to become the Gambia Congress party) reflected the political unimportance of religion, a by-product of Gambian religious tolerance. Future political leaders learnt from this mistake; the Muslim Congress was the last party to attempt to capitalise upon religious beliefs. In Sierra Leone, too, there was little to suggest the political salience of religion. Compared to The Gambia, there existed a more even spread of beliefs, with 52% of the population adhering to traditional beliefs, 39% to Islam and 8% to Christianity. *Keesing's Record of World Events* (London, Longman, 1991).

For both the APC and PPP, broadening their support base potentially implied a more or less equitable distribution of resources, both at the local and elite levels (to the extent that groups feel represented with some "of their own" in positions of power.) Nevertheless, the possibility existed that this approach would simply serve to alienate the two regimes' core supporters. Even more problematic, there existed a strong possibility that local-level dissatisfaction would coalesce with elite grievances. If the Mandinka elite in The Gambia or the Temne elite in Sierra Leone believed their position was being undermined or their influence diluted, the possibility of them attempting a coup – perhaps in concert with the armed forces - or forming a new political party (to successfully capture the support of the aggrieved) could not be ruled out.

The first of these possible outcomes appeared more likely in Sierra Leone, given the politicisation and divisions (some of which had ethnic overtones) plaguing the military. In The Gambia, by way of contrast, disaffected Mandinkas could perhaps expect to find minimal sympathy within a Field Force dominated at the elite level by Akus and urban Wolofs. Likewise, the second possible outcome, though not necessarily any more likely to occur in Sierra Leone, was perhaps invested with a greater chance of success in that state. Accounting for this was the possibility of a new party capitalising on local-level divisions (far more potent than in The Gambia) as the opposition APC had done. Although, as the ruling party, with the power of patronage and deposition, the APC would no doubt be able to attract some level of chiefly support, this would not preclude an opposition group aligning with rival factions.

If the APC's position appeared to be rather more vulnerable than that of the PPP, *both* regimes faced the problem of how to safely accommodate ethnically divergent elites and, linked to this, how to maintain and extend their popular support. Fortunately, several factors implied the possibility of a solution.

Taking the second half of the problem first, in The Gambia it appeared that several factors - notably Gambians' high levels of inter-ethnic contact and tolerance which stemmed from the country's small size,⁶⁴ a shared religion, Islam (which for many superseded ethnicity), common cultural values, and economic interdependence⁶⁵ - would continue to mitigate the political importance of ethnicity and prevent the withdrawal of ethnic communities into self-contained, mutually hostile groupings. In Sierra Leone, events prior to the APC's taking power - notably Albert Margai's neglect of the Temnes and the APC's subsequent appeals to that same group - and the comparatively greater regional concentration of ethnic groups, had resulted in ethnicity possessing a comparatively greater saliency. However, this did not rule out a change of course and Stevens' own multi-ethnic background - he was born among the Mendes (in Moyamba) to a northern Limba father and south-eastern Gallinas mother, educated (and later worked) in Freetown under the guardianship

⁶⁴ See below for details.

⁶⁵ See Chapter one for further details.

of a Creole family and married a Temne-Susu wife⁶⁶ - invested any such change with a good chance of success. Added to this, there was a strong likelihood that the APC would secure chiefly support, or at least the support of rival factions, in the SLPP's former strongholds, hence obscuring the North-South/Mende-Temne dichotomy which had hitherto precluded the extension of APC support.

At the elite level, two additional considerations suggested the viability of accommodating ethnically divergent individuals. First, it is important not to overstate ethno-regional identity as a source of cohesion among the founder members of either party. During its formative years the PPP was not exclusively Mandinka. Likewise, in Sierra Leone, there was little evidence to suggest that the APC founding members originally intended to form an exclusively Northern/Temne party. The People's National Party (PNP), the predecessor of the APC, had, as King⁶⁷ points out, been intended as a "liberal, anti-chief, Protectorate-oriented grouping - one that would encompass all the regional and tribal areas within the Protectorate. " It was only when Albert Margai (one of the founder members of the PNP) returned to the SLPP, taking most of the dissident Southerners with him, that it was left to a mainly Northern group to form the APC.

The second factor suggesting the viability of ethnic accommodation centred upon small state size. Both states can be classed as small although Sierra Leone - with a population of approximately 2.475 million in 1968 and a land area of 28,000 square miles - was the larger of the two. The Gambia had a population of approximately 315,4861 million (in 1963) and a land area of 4,300 square miles.⁶⁸ Consolidating amicable and conciliatory relations within a small elite - where individuals are more likely to possess reciprocal cross-cutting ties (perhaps based on familial links or attendance at the same school) and to engage in consensus seeking - was likely to prove a simpler task than within a larger elite.

Material Resources.

As already noted, Independence in The Gambia and re-civilianisation in Sierra Leone generated different sets of resource-related expectations on the part of the armed forces, civilian elites and the mass of ordinary citizens. To reiterate, in Sierra Leone, Stevens' tenuous grip on the military implied the necessity of meeting rank-and-file expectations of a prompt amelioration of their situation and, as the military elite returned to a semblance of normality, to divert substantial resources their way; Gambian Field Force expectations, at least initially, were much lower. In both states the core civilian members of each party naturally expected earlier political struggles to

⁶⁶ Siaka Stevens, *What Life Has Taught Me: The Autobiography of His Excellency Dr Siaka Stevens, President of Sierra Leone* (London, Kensal Press, 1984), pp 17-18.

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.*, p 84.

⁶⁸ For discussion of the 1963 census see PD Crampton, "The Population Geography of The Gambia," *Geography*, Vol 57, No 2, 1972, pp 153-58. By 1993 the Gambian population had grown to approximately one million (1993 census as reported in *The Gambia News and Report*, March 1993, pp 13-20.) A 1989 estimate for Sierra Leone put the population at four million. *Africa Today* (London, Africa Books, 1991), p 1633.

receive recognition and reward, added to which a strategy of accommodation would necessarily imply a more inclusive and hence more substantial diversion of resources at elite level. And finally, the mass of the population in each state expected a material improvement in living standards.

The two regimes' initial prospects for meeting these expectations were, in part, a function of their material resource-base. From this perspective, the PPP's future appeared highly questionable, not least due to The Gambia's small size. More often than not, size holds a number of negative economic implications for small states both in terms of available resources and prospects for economic growth. Examined at length by a number of scholars the drawbacks of small size may include a less diversified economic structure (although colonial rule also played a key role in producing minimal diversification in many states); small domestic markets, enhancing the importance of external trade; an enhanced vulnerability to exogenous shocks and a reduced likelihood of possessing minerals or other valuable resources.

The Gambia exhibited all these characteristics. Lacking minerals, the country possessed a predominantly agricultural mono-crop economy with groundnuts (first exported in 1835)⁶⁹ accounting for 95% of total exports by value at Independence. Other crops included millet, cassava, maize and the staple food crop, rice. Pre-Independence attempts at diversification - including cotton farming and an ill-fated poultry scheme - had failed to take off, and although the PPP could opt to resurrect these efforts⁷⁰ the inevitable medium-term reliance on a single crop (even with improved yields) rendered The Gambia vulnerable to rains, disease and price fluctuations.

Manufacturing in The Gambia was limited to groundnut processing in the form of three oil mills and two decorticating plants. Although there was some scope for expansion (in later years industrial activities included a brewery and the manufacture of soap, bricks and soft drinks, although the sector as a whole contributed only about 7% of GDP by the late 1980's) domestic demand was much too restricted for extensive industrial development. Minimal manufacturing activities necessitated the importation of most manufactured goods together with fuel and a substantial proportion of the country's food requirements.⁷¹

As in The Gambia, the bulk of the Sierra Leonean population were engaged in agriculture; in 1968 this sector accounted for approximately 38% of GDP and employed over 70% of the

⁶⁹ See George E. Brooks, "Peanuts and Colonialism: Consequences of the Commercialization of Peanuts in West Africa," *Journal of African History*, Vol XVI, No 1, 1975, pp 29-54.

⁷⁰ Indeed, in later years Jawara would make some attempts at diversification (both in agricultural sectors including crop production – cotton farming for example - and fisheries, as well as tourism which by 1989 contributed 4% to GDP) and come to rely more heavily on the re-export trade to Senegal and other countries in the region as a source of foreign exchange. Despite the fact that some of this trade evaded official channels reports suggest that by the late 1980's it constituted a more important source of foreign exchange than groundnuts.

⁷¹ The Gambia had been importing food since the mid-nineteenth century, a reflection of the specialisation in groundnuts. See A.A.O. Jeng, "An Economic History of the Gambian Groundnut Industry, 1830-1924: The Evolution of an Export Economy," (PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1978), p 369.

population. The main food crop was rice; cash crops - more diversified than in The Gambia - included palm products (the most important), cocoa and coffee.

As in The Gambia local food production had for some time failed to meet consumption requirements, necessitating substantial imports. The country was also forced to import all its fuel requirements and given the small-scale nature of the industrial sector (which in 1968 accounted for approximately 5% of GDP) most of its manufactured goods. The small domestic market for manufactures (perhaps £50 million in 1969)⁷² rendered industrialisation - as a route to economic development - as unrealistic as in The Gambia. Sierra Leone, like The Gambia, was heavily dependent on foreign trade; from 1966-67 to 1968-69 the import and export of goods and services was equivalent to about 55% of GDP.⁷³

Although both The Gambia and Sierra Leone were dependent upon the export of primary commodities, a crucial difference - and one which held important implications for the two regimes' survival prospects - centred upon the nature of those exports. Specifically, Sierra Leone was well endowed with valuable mineral resources; mineral production contributed about 15% of GDP in 1966-67 to 1968-69 and in 1967 earned almost 90% of total export receipts.

Diamonds, bauxite, rutile, iron ore and gold were all present in Sierra Leone. Of these, diamonds⁷⁴ were by far the most important but also the most difficult to "control." Unlike the other, bulkier, minerals which required a large, externally generated capital investment and involved a complex extraction process, diamonds were relatively easily mined and smuggled and hence vulnerable to illicit exploitation.⁷⁵ Clearly, if Stevens could exert personal control over this process he would win access to substantial resources and yet, compared to Jawara, he faced an uphill struggle. Whereas Jawara inherited control of agricultural returns alongside control of the Gambia Produce Marketing Board (his main concern was groundnut smuggling to Senegal, an activity often undertaken by farmers in response to price differentials but, crucially, one which did confer anything like the same opportunities for the accumulation of wealth as diamond smuggling) for Stevens, control over informal market opportunities was not automatic. William Reno⁷⁶ has shown

⁷² United Nations, 1970, *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, 1969*, New York.

⁷³ Tony Killick, "The Benefits of Foreign Direct Investment and its Alternatives: An Empirical Exploration," *Journal of Development Studies*, 1973, p 302

⁷⁴ Diamonds were discovered in 1927 and in 1935 Freetown signed an agreement with Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST) - formed by the Consolidated African Selection Trust, a subsidiary of London's Selection Trust - providing that company with exclusive, country-wide prospecting rights. In 1955 the SLST monopoly was broken and licenses issued to individuals to mine alluvial deposits in selected areas under the Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme (ADMS).

⁷⁵ Reflected in the fact that, during the 1970s diamonds' share of exports, averaging about 60%, declined steadily and from 1980-85 plunged to an average of approximately 9%. In the mid-1970s 1.5m carats per annum was exported; by 1983 the figure was a mere 210,000 carats. This decline is explained in greater detail in the following chapter.

⁷⁶ William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995).

how, in 1968, pro-SLPP Kono chiefs - benefiting from mining through their control over mining licenses, plot assignation and protection for those engaged in illicit activities - had no incentive to co-operate with State House to decrease illicit mining. Stevens was denied access to formal and informal revenues and faced the likelihood that chiefs would use illicit wealth to finance local opposition to his rule.

How Stevens tackled this problem is the subject of the following chapter. It is worth noting, however, that he possessed a potential resource in the resident Lebanese and Afro-Lebanese dealers. Most licensed dealers (68% by 1967) were Lebanese "strangers", their predominance reflecting a comparatively greater access to capital accrued from other, family oriented, business activities, to pay for licenses.⁷⁷ Many were also engaged in illicit activities. If Stevens could sever the link between these dealers and the chiefs and replace it with an APC-Lebanese relationship, by virtue of his control over sanctions (ultimately deportation) there was every chance that Stevens could begin to access and control the distribution of opportunity.⁷⁸

External resources.

Both The Gambia and Sierra Leone - lacking capital or technical expertise, and reliant on the export of primary commodities - clearly fall into the category of "dependent" states. From a comparative perspective, however, it is equally apparent that The Gambia was far more reliant on the external world than resource-rich Sierra Leone. Indeed, the extent of The Gambia's dependence was such that, at Independence, she was reliant on grants-in-aid from a single donor, Britain, to meet a shortfall in recurrent expenditures.

The Gambia's reliance on a single donor implied the desirability of diversification to maximise externally generated resources. Sierra Leone, though enjoying the advantages of a more substantial domestic resource base and aid receipts from a rather wider range of donors (the result of pre-1968 efforts in this direction), would also clearly benefit from diversification. Neither state could realistically hope to escape dependence but they could operate to increase the amount of resources at their disposal.

Small size was an important, if ambiguous, factor in the two states' aid prospects. On the one hand, as is frequently the case with small states, both The Gambia and Sierra Leone lacked

⁷⁷ See Reno, *op. cit.*, Ch 2 and Alfred Zack-Williams, *Tributors, Supporters and Merchant Capital: Mining and Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone* (Hants., Avebury, 1995), Ch 4.

⁷⁸ A second possibility was that Stevens would opt to act upon existing local resentment against foreign residents (including not only Lebanese diamond dealers but also Lebanese and Indian retailers – who dominated the retail trade – and West African petty traders, fishermen etc), using them as a scapegoat for prevailing economic problems, including unemployment. A similar possibility existed in The Gambia where the retail trade was also dominated by foreigners, particularly Mauritians. Equally, however, by maintaining the *status quo* each leader could avoid the creation of a potentially powerful body of indigenous traders. The two leaders' choices – and their implications - are analysed in Chapter four.

strategic importance, undermining their prospects for exchanging promises of alignment in return for assistance. On the other hand, observers have noted that, as a group, small states tend to receive an above average level of aid per capita.⁷⁹ Although reasons are rarely advanced to explain this phenomenon, the lower absolute amounts involved is probably significant. That donors can effect positive, readily visible improvements with minimum expenditure appears to encourage assistance.

If the PPP and APC could hope to benefit from small state size there were also alternative, less passive ways they could attempt to maximise aid. These are the subject of subsequent chapters; here it is sufficient to make two general comparative observations regarding the relationship between each regimes' domestic priorities and the receipt of aid. First, given The Gambia's comparatively greater need for external assistance (without which the country would have been rendered economically non-viable) it appeared that Jawara would necessarily be more constrained than Stevens to shape his domestic politico-economic priorities accordingly. However, it is important not to overstate this point; without automatic access to the distribution of diamond-related opportunities, external aid appeared to constitute a crucial source of resources for the APC.

This point in turn raises a second comparative observation centring upon the ease or difficulty with which each regime could hope to meet international expectations. Economically, if Stevens opted to attempt to exploit illicit diamond mining and smuggling rather than stamp it out (a seemingly impossible task) he could hardly hope to win international approbation. Jawara did not face this dilemma. Politically, each regime could seek international, particularly Western, approval through the retention of a free and fair multi-party system. Whether they would opt to do so partly depended upon domestic imperatives and real and perceived security levels. That Stevens perceived his position as less secure, both electorally and with regard to the military, than Jawara is a factor explored in subsequent chapters.

For both the PPP and APC regimes, the potential utility of the external world was not confined to the generation of material resources. Indeed there existed two additional possibilities, of military assistance and political capital.

In The Gambia, both these possibilities were inextricably linked to that state's location vis-à-vis Senegal, with just a narrow strip of Atlantic coast standing between The Gambia and enclave status, and the course of events which occurred prior to independence. Pre-1965 discussions about the future relationship between the two states reflected major doubts about The Gambia's ability to survive, economically, as an independent state. Integration - considered viable given the geographic, economic and ethnic congruence between the two states - was proposed as a solution.

Senegal was keen to integrate, believing it would put a stop to smuggling⁸⁰ and prevent The

⁷⁹ Edward Dommen and Philip Hein, *States, Microstates and Islands* (London, Croom Helm, 1985), pp 143-44.

⁸⁰ Which stemmed from The Gambia's lower import duties and liberal trade policy For further details on the causes of smuggling see, Catherine Boone, "Illusion of 'Relative Autonomy': the Frustrated Senegambia

Gambia becoming a base for Senegalese dissidents and/or subversive elements from a third state. For The Gambia, too, integration held the promise of economic reward⁸¹ and it is in this context one must examine Jawara's decision to go it alone. Domestic political imperatives were paramount. Integration, desired by no-one, was regarded with positive apprehension by politicians and civil servants who, as Proctor⁸² notes, "could not feel very optimistic about their chances of securing senior positions in a central government"; by Gambian chiefs who would have been relegated to the lowly status of their Senegalese counterparts; and by Mandinkas who would have lost their numerically dominant position.⁸³ Gambians wished to protect their distinctive way of life and to maintain a separate national identity⁸⁴ while living in the shadow of their far larger and more powerful Francophone neighbour. Unsurprisingly, few relished the prospect of higher living costs which looked inevitable if The Gambia decided to adopt Senegal's overvalued currency, the CFA franc, and protectionist trading policy.

The possible implications of the pre-independence state of relations between The Gambia and Senegal were three-fold. The first did not augur well and centred upon the fact that Senegalese economic and security interests were of potentially sufficient importance to persuade the Dakar authorities of the desirability of forcibly incorporating The Gambia and dismantling the PPP regime.⁸⁵

One response open to Jawara was to implement action designed to reassure Senegal that her interests were safe. If successful in this endeavour - and here we come to the second implication - there existed the possibility that Senegal would be willing to proffer military assistance (whether against internal or external security threats⁸⁶) to the PPP regime. Given the obstacles in the path of annexation and the extent of Senegal's interests in The Gambia, if Jawara could prove himself a useful ally he might well find a powerful friend.

Federation Project," Paper presented at the Thirty First Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Chicago, 28-31 October, 1988, pp 3-4. For a more general discussion of the benefits (to be gained by Senegal) of economic integration see Arnold Hughes, "The Collapse of the Senegambian Confederation," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol 30, No 2, 1992, pp 206-7.

⁸¹ Opening up a much larger internal market, for example. For further discussion see JH Proctor, "The Gambia's Relation's with Senegal: The Search for Partnership," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol 5, No 2, 1967, p 144-45. On the other hand integration would have resulted in a loss of customs duties on imports bound for Senegal and exports of Senegalese grown groundnuts.

⁸² *Op. cit.*, p 147.

⁸³ In 1973 Mandinkas comprised 42.3% of the Gambian population but only 6.4% in Senegal. If union had occurred the total Mandinka population of Senegambia would have been a mere 451,000 of a total population of 4,050,000. Statistics from Kalidu M Bayo, "Mass Orientations and Regional Integration: Environmental Variations in Gambian Orientations towards Senegambia" (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, Illinois, 1977), p 45.

⁸⁴ As Proctor (*ibid.*, p 145) notes, French colonial rule had produced "markedly different political, legal, educational, and economic institutions"

⁸⁵ Subsequent chapters assess how 'real' this threat was.

⁸⁶ Prior to Independence Senegal and The Gambia signed two agreements providing for consultation and co-operation on defence and foreign relations. The defence agreement provided for mutual assistance to secure "external security and defence against any form of threat."

On the other hand, by protecting Senegalese interests - hence appearing to compromise The Gambia's freedom of action - the PPP regime faced the likelihood of domestic disapproval. Pre-1965 doubts about The Gambia's ability to survive as an independent state and a concomitant high level of sensitivity over the issue of sovereignty was in that sense a constraint. Nevertheless, to the extent that the regime could demonstrate its ability to resist Senegalese encroachment it was a potentially crucial resource. How Jawara exploited this situation and attempted to reconcile the conflicting needs and expectations of neighbouring elites and his own people is the focus of subsequent chapters.

In 1968 Stevens, by way of contrast, faced a comparatively blank canvas and an external environment with apparently much less potential. Two factors accounted for this. First, Sierra Leone had existed as an independent entity since 1961. Moreover her viability as such had always been less questionable and questioned than that of The Gambia. Second, Sierra Leone appeared in a much less vulnerable position vis-à-vis her immediate neighbours, Liberia and Guinea. This was a function of the much smaller disparity in size between the three states⁸⁷ and the fact that Sierra Leone's geographical location did not impinge directly upon her neighbours' interests.

Taken together, these factors certainly rendered Sierra Leone's continued viability and existence as an independent state more promising than that of The Gambia, but at the same time reduced the importance of popular sovereignty concerns as a potential political resource. If Stevens was to benefit from sovereignty issues he would be forced to create "threats", or at least respond "creatively" to situations as and when they occurred. Only time would tell whether the benefits could or would be of the same order as in The Gambia. Likewise, the prospects of Sierra Leone receiving external military assistance appeared comparatively less bright, given that Guinea and Liberia's interests in that state were of a rather lower order than those of Senegal in The Gambia. Again, whether Stevens succeeded in cultivating external allies willing to proffer military assistance remained to be seen.

Personal Resources.

Given that the focus of this thesis is prolonged political survival under difficult circumstances one might expect the featured leaders to have possessed exceptional political skills and personal qualities. The following chapter examines this issue in detail. Here, as above, the emphasis is upon Jawara's and Stevens' prospects at the outset of their rule.

Within the elite sphere neither leader could be judged particularly secure at the apex of their respective parties. Nevertheless, Jawara did possess three advantages - the same advantages which had prompted his selection as party leader in 1959. First was the fact of his Protectorate birth

⁸⁷ For the population figures see p 353.

(he was born in MacCarthy Island Division) and Mandinka ethnic identity; Jawara personified the PPP's early electoral appeal to Protectorate, and specifically Mandinka, sensibilities. His personal connections in the rural areas - cultivated during travels as a senior Veterinary Officer during the second half of the 1950's - were seen as an additional electoral asset. Eclipsing both these attributes, however, was Jawara's graduate status. Whereas most PPP members shared the same ethnic background few could claim to have been educated beyond High School. Jawara's university education (he graduated from Glasgow in 1954) both distinguished him from his colleagues⁸⁸ and outweighed the fact that it was others who had initiated political activities within the Protectorate.⁸⁹

Against these advantages, however, Jawara possessed the decided disadvantage of low caste. As a member of the leather workers caste, Jawara's social standing was much lower than many of his colleagues which provoked doubt as to his suitability for the position of leader. According to informed local sources it prompted serious consideration of alternative candidates; some regarded caste as a more important consideration than education and lobbied for the selection of a chief's son.⁹⁰

Two incidents prior to independence demonstrated the vulnerability of Jawara's position. In one interview⁹¹ he recalled how, in 1960, "some prominent colleagues inside the PPP had been planning to ditch me ... and form a new party under a new leadership." The leader of this challenge, the higher caste Sanjally Bojang, was the founder and leader of the PPS, the PPP National President and a prominent political activist. Though illiterate (and not regarded as a possible leader) he was perhaps the single most influential figure within PPP circles and posed a significant threat to the fledgling organisation. His rapid expulsion from the party (an early indication of Jawara's ability to take firm and decisive action) ended the crisis but in 1964 Jawara's position came under attack a second time. According to Ba Tarawally,⁹² an early PPP adherent, the dissidence which emerged in that year was prompted by Jawara's willingness to work alongside the urban-based Democratic Congress Alliance, a departure interpreted by some as a betrayal of the PPP's Protectorate/Mandinka ideals. Abdoulie Fadia, the individual spearheading the move, was also expelled.⁹³

⁸⁸ According to local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-4) the only other Mandinka graduate within the party - Dr Lamin Marenah - was a serious contender for the post of leader but was reluctant to resign his civil service post.

⁸⁹ Jawara was not a founding member of the PPP's predecessor - the Protectorate People's Society (PPS). Even after his admission in October 1958 Jawara's position as a civil servant (prior to his resignation on being chosen leader) precluded active participation. On the PPS and early party organisation see pp 243-47.

⁹⁰ Although advanced years are frequently a source of respect in African states, Jawara's relative youth (he was then thirty-five) did not work to his disadvantage. According to early party activists (interviews with the author, 1993-94) most were agreed on the need for a young leader. This did not preclude age re-emerging as a source of legitimacy in subsequent years however.

⁹¹ *West Africa*, 12-18 February 1990, pp 264-65.

⁹² Interview with the author, 23 July 1993.

⁹³ Some local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94) report further, unconfirmed, attempts to displace

If, at Independence, Jawara appeared to face a difficult task in asserting his authority the same was true for Stevens in 1968. Stevens' positive attributes were quite different from Jawara's and centred upon his age (a source of respect) and political experience. Stevens, unlike Jawara, had founded his party and was by far the most experienced member.⁹⁴ His career had begun humbly enough as a dog-catcher in the police force but, in 1946, in his capacity as Secretary-General of the United Mine Workers Union (which Stevens had helped found among the Marampa iron-ore miners in the 1930s) he was nominated as an unofficial member of the Protectorate Assembly. In 1951 Stevens was a founding member of the SLPP and in 1952 - following success in the 1951 Legislative Council elections and in accordance with the gradual devolution of power - was appointed the first Minister of Lands, Mines and Labour. After the May 1957 elections Stevens resigned from the SLPP (and subsequently lost his seat due to an election petition). Further developments included the formation of the People's National Party, with Albert Margai, but in November 1960 the APC was born. Stevens spent the next seven years, including a brief period as mayor of Freetown in 1964, as leader of the opposition.

This wealth of experience contrasted with the shorter political life-span of many of Stevens' younger colleagues. This aside, however, he was hardly distinguishable from his subordinates. Unlike Jawara, Stevens was not highly educated or even "conspicuously able";⁹⁵ nor could he claim support on the basis of chiefly status or connections. In combination, these factors prompted a challenge to Stevens' position during the 1966 APC Convention.⁹⁶ Although, like Jawara in 1960 and 1964, Stevens survived this episode (the challengers backed down in view of the forthcoming general election) the problem of securing subordinates' loyalty remained.

Methodology.

The decision to limit the study to just two states was prompted by the need to remain sensitive to each state's unique conditions, to the ways in which survival strategies interact and change over time as well as to nebulous factors such as luck. At the same time, however, opting for a comparative approach focused attention on the possible emergence of patterns of explanation.

The study originated in a wide-ranging examination of the conceptual literature and the subsequent identification of a number of possible survival strategies. Although these propositions formed a useful starting point, in the absence of an over-arching - "testable" - theory of survival it was important to remain receptive to new ideas as they emerged. In that sense the study

Jawara; one even suggested, perhaps somewhat improbably, that there had been an attempt to poison him.

⁹⁴ For further details of Stevens' early activities as unionist and politician see Siaka Stevens, *op. cit.*

⁹⁵ Christopher Clapham, "The Politics of Failure: Political Instability and National Integration in Liberia and Sierra Leone," in Christopher Clapham (ed.), *Private Patronage and Political Power* (London, Frances Pinter, 1982), p 88.

⁹⁶ Christopher Clapham, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: An Essay in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), p 56.

encompassed a significant exploratory element. Multiple sources of evidence were used. For both states the secondary literature (books, articles, magazines etc.) was consulted as preparation for fieldwork and nine months (June 1993-March 1994) were subsequently spent in The Gambia, during which time local newspapers, government reports and archival records were examined. An extensive number of elite-focus open-ended interviews (with politicians, civil servants, journalists etc.) were conducted alongside numerous conversations with "ordinary" Gambians. Unfortunately, fieldwork could not be undertaken in Sierra Leone. Unforeseen circumstances - namely the bankruptcy of Air Gambia and the subsequent loss of purchased tickets - meant that only secondary sources, fortunately more plentiful for Sierra Leone than for The Gambia, could be consulted.

The study is divided into four chapters. Chapter one examines the role of The Gambia and Sierra Leone's respective political leaders, provides an outline of the nature of the threats they faced (at both the elite and mass level) and the coping mechanisms devised. Chapter two examines the specific threat posed by the military and compares the two regimes' strategies of civilian control. Chapter three analyses elections both as a threat to regimes and a political resource, and compares the relative merits (from a survival perspective) of a single and multi-party system. And finally, Chapter four considers how the two regimes' manipulated international linkages to their advantage, utilising the external world as a survival resource. The conclusion brings these themes together and provides an overview of regime survival in the two states.

CHAPTER ONE: STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL SURVIVAL.

The introduction provided a broad outline of the problematic circumstances confronting African political leaders and the resources at their disposal. Against this background, this chapter provides a closer look at specific threats and examines the range of survival strategies a leader might implement to overcome these and secure his,¹ and his regime's, political survival. This approach - specifically the focus on leadership² - is based on two key assumptions. First, it is assumed that long-surviving political leaders do think in strategic terms, that they have some sort of 'game plan' for pre-empting and countering threats to their position. That is not to downgrade the importance of less tangible factors - intuition for example - but simply to say that, on some level, successful leaders consider how they might prolong their rule and respond accordingly. Second, it is assumed that leaders possess sufficient authority to implement their chosen strategies and that the degree of skill they bring to bear on a situation will influence the outcome.

Accounting for the importance of leadership, scholars typically point to the absence of established constitutional rules, effective political institutions or widely shared values which, to varying degrees, characterise African states. The impact of these characteristics has been analysed in a study by Jackson and Rosberg. Adopting the classical concept of a political institution as "an impersonal system of rules and offices that effectively binds the conduct of individuals involved in them"³ they suggest that, in most African states, non-institutionalised government - "where persons take precedence over rules" - prevails.

Conceptualising African politics in this way caused Jackson and Rosberg to identify a distinctive type of political system which they labelled "personal rule." Subject to certain modifications, the theory of personal rule provides a useful (if partial) framework for the study of leadership and survival, not only explaining why leaders frequently play such a key role in the elite political sphere but also identifying the specific threats they might expect to confront. Unassisted by effective rules or institutions to moderate and regulate political conflict, leaders must face the prospect of politics - characterised by personal or factional struggles to control the government - degenerating into a fight. In contrast to institutionalised political systems in which "fights are illegitimate by definition, and institutional rules and referees exist to prevent them from breaking out" in personal regimes "the dark side of political life" is more apparent. Coup attempts, conspiracies, plots - all are regarded by Jackson and Rosberg as "generic to systems of personal

¹ Given the absence of female African political leaders, this gender-specific label is used throughout.

² Since the role of leadership recurs repeatedly in subsequent chapters the intention is to provide an overall conceptual framework as well as to examine some leadership strategies in detail.

³ Robert H Jackson and Carl G Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982), p 10.

rule."⁴

Without the backing of effective institutional rules a personal ruler is undoubtedly vulnerable.⁵ Nevertheless, if elites generally are unrestrained by rules the same is equally true of leaders. Constrained only by the power of other "big men," the political liberation supplied by a system of personal rule enables a leader to utilise strategies (designed to strengthen his grip) unthinkable in institutional systems. The political rules may be changed - as in the establishment of a single-party state - to suit a leader's personal political convenience. He may also utilise constituent components of the system of personal rule - including clientelism, patronage and purges - to perpetuate his rule (see below). Adopting these strategies a leader attempts to prevent politics deteriorating into a violent fight - a fight he may well lose. Whether or not he succeeds is primarily dependent upon political skill.

The utility of Jackson and Rosberg's framework to the present study lies in its identification and incorporation of potential threats to regime survival, possible strategies to deal with those threats as well as the defining factor - skill - which determines a leader's success or failure.

Before examining these components further it is important to stress a number of potential methodological problems. The first set of problems centre upon the theory's seemingly limited applicability to The Gambia. Whereas systems of personal rule lack effective institutions and are "inherently authoritarian," in The Gambia Jawara's adherence to democratic norms was responsible for both a non-authoritarian approach to power retention and a degree of institutionalisation.⁶

Although the theory of personal rule cannot be applied wholesale to the study of Gambian politics, subject to certain modifications it remains a useful model. The first, general point, concerns Jackson and Rosberg's depiction of African politics as an "institutionless" arena. Although this perspective illuminates central features of the African political process it is important not to lose sight of the variations between states. States other than The Gambia have, at different times, exhibited varying degrees of institutionalisation; some have undoubtedly enjoyed a "purer" form of personal rule than others and in this sense it is possible to envisage an abstract scale of personal rule. The Gambia - though necessarily occupying a low ranking - would not, during the years of PPP rule, have been off the scale altogether. President Jawara was, in many ways, a typical personal ruler; the pivotal political role he occupied, the threats he faced and the strategies he used attest to this.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 19-20.

⁵ As Jackson and Rosberg (*ibid*) observe, although "self-interested concerns ... for the retention of political order" are often sufficient to prevent fights (fighting may entail "loss of life, loss of personal freedom, loss of political privilege") the very fact that order ultimately rests upon persons rather than institutions renders systems of personal rule vulnerable to disruption and violence.

⁶ See for example John A Wiseman, "The Role of the House of Representatives in The Gambian Political System," in Arnold Hughes (ed.), *The Gambia: Studies in Society and Politics* (Birmingham University, African Studies Series 3, 1991), pp 80-91.

One strategy (or approach) Jawara failed to adopt was authoritarianism. Jackson and Rosberg⁷ - noting the "widespread removal of constitutional rights and protections from political opponents, the elimination of institutional checks and balances ... the termination of open party politics and the regulation and confinement of political participation - usually within the framework of a single party" - describe systems of personal rule as "inherently authoritarian." Jawara on the other hand retained a multi-party system, a choice which can be explained in one of two ways. First, it may have reflected Jawara's perception of the political advantages of a multi-party system.⁸ If so, the theory of personal rule retains its utility. Thus, Jackson and Rosberg argue that personal rulers only follow rules when they "have been changed ... to suit his ... personal-political convenience."⁹ In Jawara's case the rules were already "convenient" - there was no need to change them.

On the other hand it is possible to speculate that, had the rules become a hindrance (had an opposition party won a general election for example), Jawara's personal commitment to a multi-party system was such that he would have agreed to step down.¹⁰ Though hardly the action of a typical personal ruler this would nevertheless have been a personal decision. Thus, although Jawara may have adhered to the rules which - as a result of his personal political skill - had been retained, there was little to prevent him following the same route as other African leaders and instituting a series of authoritarian reforms. Indeed, many of his subordinates would have welcomed such a move. The element of restraint Jawara demonstrated with regard to political opponents was not *dictated* by fully-established institutional rules. Rather, he *chose* a non-authoritarian approach.

Jawara's choice held important implications for the PPP's survival. Perhaps most significantly it compelled the cultivation of popular support, a feature not incorporated into Jackson and Rosberg's theory of personal rule which suggests that mass support is of negligible importance to a personal ruler's survival. In these pages it is suggested that although popular support is not a *necessary* component of survival it may be a significant factor in the longevity of both single-party and multi-party regimes.

Looking at how popular support might be generated, it is necessary to reiterate the importance of leadership. This emphasis on leadership stems from an evaluation of the interrelated questions of state governability and leadership constraints. As stressed in the Introduction, although some states appear easier to govern than others, regime survival is not solely a function of governability. One might, for example, posit small state size or the possession of natural resources as indicators of governability and yet cases of both survival and non-survival can be found in small and "rich" (and large and poor) states. Similarly, in states which might be thought difficult to

⁷ *Op cit.*, pp 23-24.

⁸ See pp 267-74 for further discussion.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p 11.

¹⁰ Evidence to suggest that Jawara would have relinquished power in the face of electoral defeat is discussed on p 243.

govern - those with a plurality of ethnic groups for example - there are instances of both survival and non-survival.

Positing leadership as a potentially more rewarding avenue of research does of course assume that leaders have a significant influence within their respective states, that they possess a significant degree of freedom of action. Evidence to back up this assumption can be found in numerous accounts of post-independence African politics, studies of individual leaders and, of course, work undertaken on leadership. In the latter category Cartwright has convincingly demonstrated that leaders can and do have a significant impact upon the course of events within their respective states.¹¹

Two points require further elaboration. First, it should be stressed that there are certain constraints - economic dependency, resource shortages, external interference - which cannot be "solved" by the efforts of political leaders. However, despite providing the broad environment within which a leader is compelled to operate - and setting definite limits to what can be achieved - they rarely determine his survival prospects. Some leaders have coped better than others with "fixed" constraints. Equally, however, other constraints or problems - those "having to do with the quality and general conditions of public life ... can be decisively affected by the actions of rulers." As Jackson and Rosberg¹² note, "they have intervened, sometimes decisively, in the public life of African states, making some economically and socially unpromising countries disorderly and some otherwise promising countries disorderly and insecure. In the provision or the destruction of such "political goods" as peace, order, stability, and non-material security, the actions of Africa's rulers and other leaders have been more important than anything else."

Before examining the relationship between the provision of political (and economic) goods and popular support it is important to take a step back and say a few words on the relationship between popular support and political survival. Jackson and Rosberg suggest that political systems of personal rule are characterised by two related features. They "involve almost exclusively the activities of 'big men' who are a considerable distance from the ordinary people ... 'the people,' 'the public,' 'the nation,' 'the national interest,' 'public opinion,' and similar collectivities are abstractions that have little effect on public life."¹³ Stemming from this, "personal politics ... are not systems of public governance or of rationalist decision-making. A political system of personal rule is not a system which responds to public demands and support by means of public policies and actions."¹⁴

Up to a point the current study concurs with this analysis. African politics is primarily elitist and "asocial"; if forced to make a choice between political power imperatives at the centre

¹¹ John Cartwright, *Political Leadership in Africa* (London, Croom Helm, 1983).

¹² *Op. cit.*, p 3.

¹³ Robert H Jackson and Carl G Rosberg, "Personal Rule: Theory and Practice in Africa," *Comparative Politics*, Vol 16, No 4, July 1984, p 425.

¹⁴ Jackson and Rosberg, *op. cit.*, 1982, p 18.

and popular support a leader will almost always act upon the former, the immediacy of elite-based threats dictating his priorities. At the same time, however, by retaining popular support, or at least acquiescence, a leader may dissuade plotters (both civilian and military) from pursuing their goal of bringing down a regime. As Machiavelli¹⁵ observed, "one of the most potent remedies that a prince has against conspiracies, is that of not being hated by the mass of the people." Added to this, there exists the possibility that, even in the absence of multi-party elections, a disgruntled populace (or rather specific segments of it) will contribute directly to the downfall of a regime. This possibility is examined at length below.

The relationship between support and survival may not be a direct or immediate one - unpopular regimes have, after all, survived for many years. Nevertheless many leaders do regard popular support as useful and - assuming their elite-focused survival strategies are not thereby undermined - pursue it accordingly. The ways in which they do so will not necessarily be "rationalist" in the sense of "promoting, planning, guiding, managing and co-ordinating ... so as to move the country in the direction of greater national prosperity and welfare."¹⁶ Indeed such a strategy - in conflicting with other survival imperatives - may work to shorten rather than lengthen the life of a regime (see below). Fortunately for political leaders, alternative means of cultivating support exist.

Hitherto it has been argued that leadership plays an important role in securing political survival. Underpinning the emphasis on leadership is a recognition that leaders are capable of generating popular support and implementing strategies to counter potential threats from powerful individuals within the political elite.

From the wide range of available strategies each leader will produce his own unique combination. The circumstances, or environment, within which he operates will undoubtedly influence this choice but will rarely determine it - selecting the right strategies at the right time (and successfully carrying them out) requires political skill.

Skilful political leaders are those predisposed to learn from experience. That is not to say all the components of skill stem from experience; certain attributes (among them an acute sense of timing) cannot be learnt but may prove crucial to a leader's ability to survive crisis situations. On the other hand a crisis situation may be avoided altogether if a leader is sufficiently skilful or prudent. The notion of prudence - defined as acting with discretion, discernment and foresight - has been analysed by Nichols and White. Although, as they observe, foresight can never be total, and accidents happen, "chance and accident do not always intervene and it is often possible to guard

¹⁵ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and The Discourses*, with an Introduction by Max Lerner (New York, Random House, 1950), pp 67-68.

¹⁶ Jackson and Rosberg, *op. cit.*, 1984, p 428.

against them."¹⁷ Based upon past experience - and an acquired understanding of the opportunities and constraints that govern his, and others, political behaviour - the prudent leader will take "precautions against political mischance." Several centuries earlier, Machiavelli¹⁸ was of the same view. He compared fortune or chance "to an impetuous river that, when turbulent, inundates the plains, casts down trees and buildings, removes earth from this side and places it on the other; every one flees before it, and everything yields to its fury without being able to oppose it; and yet though it is of such a kind, still when it is quiet, men can make provision against it by dykes and banks, so that when it rises it will either go into a canal or its rush will not be so wild and dangerous."

The ability to learn from past experience requires political flexibility. As a rule, flexible, pragmatic leaders are more likely to be those who lack a comprehensive vision for the transformation of society. Unimpeded by a rigid ideological framework they can change political tack as often as is deemed necessary and "pursue conflicting policies in different areas in order to conciliate different interests."¹⁹ Even more importantly they are spared the need to devote significant amounts of time, energy and resources to achieving aims unrelated to political survival. The near-insurmountable difficulties (particularly in terms of resources) faced by ideological leaders in implementing their "vision" provides another good reason for favouring political pragmatism. As Jackson and Rosberg²⁰ (who label ideological leaders "Prophets") note, "If the government cannot implement his plans and designs the vision will remain just that, and prophecy will fail. If a prophecy fails, there is disappointment and cynicism, and opposition usually develops ... The result may well be the disarming of the Prophet and the toppling of his regime."

Weighing these drawbacks against the meagre advantages of an ideological approach, the need for political pragmatism emerges even more clearly. In his study of political survival Wriggins devotes much attention to the "functions" of political ideology.²¹ He suggests that ideologies are a "means of deepening identity"; that they may "contribute to greater unity"; "confirm the legitimacy of those who rule" and provide "guidelines to the populace on appropriate political behaviour."

Without suggesting that ideology can *never* fulfil significant political functions, it is important to note two weaknesses in Wriggins' argument. First, he appears to confuse the aims and effects of ideological exhortation. Take, for example, his suggestion that ideology can serve as a legitimating mechanism. While admitting that legitimacy is rarely derived from performance (given the unrealistic nature of the goals set), Wriggins²² suggests that it may be sought "by an all-inclusive political religion. This calls for a cessation of quarrelling and strife, an end to criticism of the

¹⁷ RL Nichols and DM White, "Politics Proper: On Action and Prudence," *Ethics*, Vol 89, July 1979, p 378.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p 91.

¹⁹ Cartwright, *op. cit.*, p 33.

²⁰ *Op. cit.*, 1982, p 80.

²¹ See W Howard Wriggins, *The Ruler's Imperative: Strategies for Political Survival in Asia and Africa* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1969), Ch 7.

²² *Ibid.*, p 135.

leaders who personify the state and society." Despite Wriggins' contention that the promotion of an ideology is a "strategy for aggregating power," it is often the case that ideologies often fail to filter down to the mass. If they do it is far from guaranteed that they will influence behaviour in the intended ways. When (for the reasons noted above) the government fails to deliver, ideological exhortation is unlikely to outweigh popular disappointment. Moreover, by interpreting ideology as a "strategy" rather than as a strongly-held set of beliefs, Wriggins fails to appreciate that an ideological leader will be unable to change political tack simply because political pressures appear to demand it. Ideological leaders are not primarily concerned with the survival benefits of an ideology but with the ideology itself.²³

Moral flexibility is equally important. As Cartwright²⁴ notes, a leader's "moral code" affects the ways in which he approaches problems, including the problem of survival. Some leaders will stop at nothing (even assassination) to permanently silence critics; others hold back from such extreme measures. "The extent to which a leader is prepared to refrain from pursuing ends because the means required violate his moral code will affect the range of 'thinkable' choices open to him."

Moral leadership is not *always* a disadvantage. For reasons to be discussed below, wholly amoral leadership may not be conducive to political survival and, at the other end of the scale, a ruler's scruples may be appreciated by the public and respected by (similarly scrupulous) opponents. More often than not, however, the struggle for power and position characteristic of African politics, dictates at least a *degree* of moral flexibility as a pre-requisite of survival. As Machiavelli²⁵ observed, "it is well to seem merciful, faithful, humane, sincere, religious, and also to be so; but you must have the mind so disposed that when it is needful to be otherwise you may be able to change to the opposite qualities."

Threats to Survival.

The previous chapter provided a broad outline of the problematic circumstances, including changes over time, confronting African regimes. This section identifies the specific threats to survival in greater detail as a precursor to examining possible responses.

One threat concerns the likelihood that, in systems of personal rule, the death or resignation of a political leader will endanger the continued survival of "his" regime. As Jackson and Rosberg²⁶

²³ Although some ideological leaders have been successful (in survival terms) this has had less to do with the ideology *per se* than the political leader who propagates it. As Jackson and Rosberg (*op. cit.*, 1982, p 79) note, "To pursue an ideological vision of a better world is the only valid justification of rule for the Prophet. It follows that ideology is not separate from prophetic rule but essential to it and contained by it, although in practice it is often the "charisma" of the leader - his charm, mystique, and personality - that counts most in a prophetic regime - that is, not ideology that he enunciates, but the fact that he enunciates it."

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p 34.

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, p 65.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, 1982, p 67.

note, the prospect of succession - in systems where "the regime is tied to the ruler" - "can provoke a climate of apprehension and even crisis." Since a change of leader will almost certainly involve changes at the elite level (within the cabinet for example) and will alter "at least some of the important relationships and standings among leaders and factions" the prospect of succession may have a profoundly destabilising effect.

Jackson and Rosberg²⁷ suggest two ways in which a transfer of power might be effected. Firstly, a leader may designate a successor, a solution which "is strongly characteristic of a stable ruler-dominated regime in which his decisions concerning not only the present but also the future have legitimacy and are assured of acceptance." Assuming the heir is acceptable regime survival will be secured. The second possibility (viewed as more likely) is that "the method of factional politics" will resolve the succession issue. If a single individual proves "capable of securing the support of other political big men and their factions as well as the support of the military" a regime will survive. Equally possible, however, is that some individuals - regarding their interests as irretrievably threatened - will resort to plotting and violence to achieve their ends. A likely, though not inevitable, outcome will be military intervention.

Military intervention constitutes one of the gravest threats to regime survival. The lack of institutional restraints combined with easy access to the coercive apparatus have resulted in the downfall of many African rulers and the means by which military coups might be pre-empted and/or defeated is sufficiently important to merit an entire chapter (see Chapter two). Nevertheless, threats are not confined to the military. Plots may also be hatched by members of the civilian political elite, often reflecting the failure of a leader to keep factional politics in check. Factionalism - the struggle for power and position, particularly political office - is integral to the system of personal rule and, although more prevalent in some states than others, "is the predominant type of political conflict which stops short of the use or threatened use or violence."²⁸ In multi-party states, although the existence of competition enables leading politicians to pursue their ambitions by forming or joining parties (rather than factions), factionalism may still prevail if the ruling party is sufficiently entrenched.

By itself, factionalism does not threaten the survival of a leader. Indeed, a leader may actively promote divisions among his key supporters to prevent any one individual accumulating too much power. However, when a leader fails to confine the politics of factionalism within relatively peaceful bounds, conspiracies, plots and coups - aimed not at influencing but removing the leader - are the likely result. Plots may be hatched in conjunction with the military but are not always initiated by the military and may involve little more than a plan to assassinate the leader. In contrast

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 70-73.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p 48. In addition to political factors Jackson and Rosberg note that factionalism "tends to be rooted in the kinship, clan, and ethnic patterning of social relations."

to institutionalised systems where "even a successful plot to kill a ruler may scarcely harm a regime" in systems of personal rule, the focus on the leader is often deliberately designed to bring down the regime.²⁹

As already noted, plotters (whether civilian or military) may be encouraged to pursue their goals if a regime is demonstrably unpopular. This and other factors which might persuade a regime to seek popular support (or acquiescence) are best explored through an examination of what may be loosely termed societal "groups." Societal groups constitute both a potential resource and a potential challenge to regimes aiming to survive.³⁰

Of course, some groups are more politically significant than others. This is true of all states, although a group of importance in one state may be of minimal significance in another. Similarly, within a single state, a group's political importance may change over time. Given these facts - together with the frequently changing and overlapping nature of group membership - the following is necessarily couched in general terms.

In most African states rural dwellers constitute a majority. However, numerical predominance has rarely been matched by effective organisation and as a result rural people have seldom posed an immediate political threat. Logistical difficulties, comparatively low political awareness and the pressures of simply making a living have all placed obstacles in the path of collective resistance.³¹

This aside, two factors may persuade a regime to focus at least some attention on rural areas. The first applies to multi-party systems and centres upon the necessity of winning sufficient votes to retain power. Even in single-party states, however, rural dwellers do possess certain means of expressing disapproval and making their voice heard. Individual acts of dissent (smuggling, a refusal to grow certain crops etc.) may have a cumulative, long-term impact upon a regime's survival prospects. Above all, they may pose problems for a regime seeking sufficient resources to placate other - more threatening - groups.

Urban dwellers pose a more significant threat than their rural counterparts. Generally better educated and more politically aware, they are capable of making their voice heard in a variety of ways. Spontaneous riots, protests and demonstrations - a feature of African politics even prior to the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p 58. Jackson and Rosberg also argue that plots are less likely in political systems which allow competition but do note that when individuals "believe they cannot win by open competition" they may resort to more extreme measures.

³⁰ The previous chapter outlined changes over time (particularly in terms of growing resource constraints and problems in gaining access to the resources of the state) and identified a number of factors which help to explain the growing strength of civil society as a whole, as well as the limits to the challenge it poses. I return to this discussion in the context of The Gambia and Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, this section is concerned with identifying the characteristics of specific groups as a means of assessing their potential to undermine regime survival.

³¹ For further discussion of these and other obstacles see James C Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985), pp 242-48.

events of the early 1990's³² - can prove extremely damaging to a regime. Whether or not directly politically motivated, riots and demonstrations may deflate the legitimacy of a regime to such an extent that the military is provided with an opportunity to intervene. Alternatively they may occur alongside an attempted take-over, compounding the problem of regaining control.

Some urban groups are more likely than others to resort to protest. The urban unemployed - though severely hampered by a lack of organisation and leadership - may temporarily coalesce in (possibly violent) protest.³³ Youth, whom Bayart³⁴ suggests are "the one social category most likely to resist state domination," may form a substantial proportion of the unemployed. Potentially more effective than the youthful unemployed is the, similarly youthful, student population - close proximity to one another greatly simplifying organisational difficulties. Nevertheless it is important not to exaggerate students' potential; as Bayart³⁵ notes, youth - by definition, a transient category - are not in a position to accumulate political resources over the long term. Wiseman³⁶ also makes the point that students lack an "effective strike weapon with which to bring pressure to bear on governments."

The latter problem is not one which (in the absence of government interference) hampers the activities of urban-based trade unions. The "strike weapon" - if combined with a substantial membership, an effective organisational structure and independent funding - invests trade unions with the potential to pose a serious political challenge. Strikes serve to undermine a regime's legitimacy by highlighting its incompetence and disrupting public services.

On the other hand Wriggins³⁷ suggests that in certain circumstances unions can prove useful to a regime, providing the "means for resolving workers' grievances without resort to strike" and (in a multi-party system) using their influence over members' voting behaviour. The media also constitutes a potential resource. Although much depends upon prevailing levels of popular cynicism the government-controlled press, radio and television may provide a useful medium for boosting a leader's image (reporting his speeches, trips abroad etc.), undermining opponents, emphasising a regime's successes and even explaining reverses. On the other hand, independent newspapers (whether legal or underground) may pose a significant challenge. Again, the perceived integrity,

³² See John A Wiseman, "Urban Riots in West Africa, 1977-85," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 24, No 3, 1986, pp 509-18. Mass (pro-democratisation) protests in the 1990's are also covered by John Wiseman in *The New Struggle for Democracy in Africa* (Aldershot, Avebury, 1996), Ch 3.

³³ This fact (together with those already noted) may convince a regime to pay some attention to the countryside, since those who migrate from the rural to urban areas often join the unemployed. For a useful discussion of the urban unemployed see, Peter CW Gutkind, "From the Energy of Despair to the Anger of Despair: The Transition from Social Circulation to Political Consciousness among the Urban Poor in Africa," *The Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol 7, No 2, 1973, pp 179-98.

³⁴ Jean-Francois Bayart, "Civil Society in Africa," in Patrick Chabal (ed.), *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), p 119.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, 1996, p 54.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp 82-84.

competence and honesty of a regime is at stake should journalists choose to expose instances of corruption, ineptitude, or "tribalism." The threat newspapers pose may be tempered by their lack of funds and mass illiteracy, but the former has perhaps proved more important since literacy levels are higher in the urban areas (where dissatisfaction is more likely to be collectively expressed) and many observers have noted the tendency - operative in rural as well as urban settings - for the verbal communication of news to the illiterate.³⁸

Other groups may also provide either support for, or criticism of, a regime. Religious leaders - whatever their stance³⁹ - are likely to possess an influential voice in deeply religious societies. Professionals may provide an important source of criticism, although as a group tend to lack effective sanctions. Individual professionals emigrating to work abroad may indirectly harm a regime if sufficient numbers choose to do so, and yet this is a personal as opposed to a group decision. Once abroad professionals (and others) may form opposition groups, although without direct access to the population their impact is likely to be limited. Traditional elites also form an important group, although if their position is dependent on the government they will be unlikely to adopt a confrontational stance and the same goes for businessmen who are likely to offer their support in return for permits, contracts or favourable governmental regulations. And finally, if a regime is to ensure its wishes are carried out, the support of civil servants must be secured.⁴⁰

Survival Strategies.⁴¹

1. Clientelism.

Patron-client relationships are based upon "mutually beneficial transactions"⁴² between actors "commanding unequal wealth, status or influence." At the apex of the clientelist "pyramid," a political leader creates reciprocal ties with his immediate subordinates who, in turn, act as patrons to their followers (or clientele) and so on to the base of the pyramid, that is the mass of the people.

Instrumental (or material) ties are often of primary importance in patron-client

³⁸ See for example Wiseman, *op. cit.*, 1996, p 56.

³⁹ They may, of course, remain politically neutral.

⁴⁰ Although to some extent this depends upon the role of civil servants *vis-à-vis* the party. It is certainly the case with those regimes which rely heavily on civil servants both in the devising and implementation of their programmes. For further discussion of this point see Humphrey N Nwosu, "Strategies of State Building: African Experience Reconsidered," *Civilizations*, Vol 28, Nos 1-2, 1978, p 47.

⁴¹ Whereas the previous chapter provided some brief indication of the ways in which political leaders' strategies were subject to changes over time (largely as a result of changes in their resource base) the following is more concerned to provide a cost-benefit analysis of specific strategies. The discussion returns to the importance of changing circumstances in the discussion of The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

⁴² René Lemarchand, "Political Clientelism and Ethnicity in Tropical Africa: Competing Solidarities in Nation-Building," in Steffan W Schmidt, James C Scott, Carl Landé, and Laura Guasti, (eds.), *Friends, Followers and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), p 100.

relationships. However they may also be distinguished along two further dimensions.⁴³ First, instrumental ties may be complemented and strengthened by affective ties. The nature of these vary both in strength and kind - they may be based on kinship, ethnic affinity or "interpersonal loyalty." When the instrumental component of patron-client relationships declines, affective ties enable the relationship itself to survive. The coercive aspect of patron-client relationships provides a second differentiating variable. Thus, although voluntarism is an important aspect of patron-client ties, some clients possess few options. As Scott⁴⁴ notes, "the greater the coercive power of the patron vis-à-vis his client, the fewer rewards he must supply to retain him. A patron in a strong position is more likely to employ sanctions - threats to punish the client or to withdraw benefits he currently enjoys - whereas a relatively weaker patron is more likely to offer inducements - promises to reward a client with benefits he does not now enjoy. In each instance, superior control over resources is used to gain the compliance of followers, but the use of sanctions indicates a higher order of power than the use of inducements."

To the extent that clientelism entails a chain of extensive and unbroken links between the central and local levels it provides a means of cultivating popular support. In both multi-party and competitive single-party systems - where candidates of the same party compete for support - votes may be exchanged for either community benefits (roads, schools etc.) and/or individual benefits (agricultural credit for example).⁴⁵ Nevertheless material reward is not always readily forthcoming. Resource shortages - a possible result of clientelistic politics⁴⁶ - will cause a reduction in the downward flow of services, sometimes causing the electorate to search for new patrons, sometimes enhancing the coercive aspect of existing ties. Thus, an individual is unlikely to withdraw from a patron-client relationship if so doing will jeopardise his access to residual or future benefits. In extreme circumstances a client's access to food aid (his or her means of survival) will depend upon the goodwill of a patron.

In a situation of declining resources patronage is increasingly directed towards the more threatening societal groups (particularly their leaders) and the political elite. Patron-client relationships at this level are frequently distinguishable from those lower down the structure. The coercive aspect tends to be less apparent - particularly between a leader and the political elite (since factions within the latter may resort to plotting if patronage is withdrawn) but also between a leader and other "big men" to the extent that they possess some form of sanction.⁴⁷ Given the danger of

⁴³ See James C Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in South-East Asia," *ibid.*, pp 130-31.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p 131.

⁴⁵ Electoral clientelism is discussed at length in Chapter three.

⁴⁶ Resources distributed according to the dictates of clientelistic politics do not, as a rule, contribute to economic development. However, clientelism does not necessarily result in precipitate economic decline. Much depends upon the extent to which a leader retains control over the distribution of resources and how far he is able to release patronage to be channelled downwards at specific times.

⁴⁷ Trade union leaders for example.

withdrawing rewards - and the resource shortages which plague many African states⁴⁸ - the importance of affective ties is also likely to increase. Jackson and Rosberg observe the need for "an allegiance that overrides dissatisfaction, disappointment, or disagreement and enables [rulers] to carry on during times of resource difficulty." Such allegiance, they suggest, is likely to be earned insofar "as rulers appear strong, decisive [and] confident."⁴⁹

If some leaders are better than others at establishing affective ties, all are likely to be engaged in at least some relationships where the continued flow of patronage constitutes the primary factor sustaining clients' adherence. Jobs (in the cabinet, civil service, party, parastatals, corporations, legislatures etc.) provide the main currency of political patronage, enabling an individual to benefit personally from a range of perquisites - a car, trips abroad - and, with control over the allocation of jobs, contracts, loans, licenses and foreign exchange, to create his own clientelist following.

Of course, these and other valuable commodities may be allocated in violation of formal regulations. Corruption can play an important role in the survival of a regime, providing a means of satisfying the wants and needs of the political and administrative elite. Recognising this, political leaders may indicate that corruption is an acceptable practice, both by engaging in corrupt activities themselves and failing to punish the guilty.

On occasion the corrupt might be exposed and banished by a political leader - a useful means of excluding a threatening or troublesome subordinate and one which will almost certainly prove popular in the wider society. Thus, corruption is not a phenomenon designed to cultivate popular support. Although the tolerance levels of societies vary, as a rule corruption engenders popular disillusionment, cynicism and a loss of regime legitimacy. The diversion of resources may also encourage military intervention, particularly if army personnel link it to their own difficulties (late wages for example). And of course corruption retards economic development and reduces the prospects for aid; the potential importance of these factors for political survival are explored below.

Linked to the drawbacks of corruption are the wider problems of relying too heavily on the distribution of patronage to secure political survival. The primary problem is limited resources. As Jackson and Rosberg stress, Africanisation of the civil service and the nationalisation of foreign industries (both important means of securing patronage resources) can take place only once.⁵⁰ Added to this, the limited number of jobs available for distribution to members of the political elite

⁴⁸ Generating resources is a crucial aspect of regime survival and yet the vast differences in states' resource-base renders any attempt at generalisation unwise. While some comments applicable to most African states are outlined below, the question of resources is examined at length for the specific cases of The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, 1982, p 41. Similarly Machiavelli (*op. cit.*, p 66) suggests that a leader "is rendered despicable by being thought changeable, frivolous, effeminate, timid, and irresolute" and must "so contrive that his actions show grandeur, spirit, gravity, and fortitude."

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, 1982, pp 43-44.

dictate that they be allocated wisely. Wriggins⁵¹ suggests that the *promise* of reward "may extend the period of a man's political 'loyalty', for so long as the favour is not granted it can still be withheld." And of course it is important that subordinates understand that their security is dependent upon securing their leader's goodwill. Frequent cabinet reshuffles help to underline ministers' dependent position. Expelling leading politicians from the ruling group altogether may be even more effective, particularly if combined with the possibility of future rehabilitation. As Jackson and Rosberg⁵² note, "if there is but one ruling group to which all leading politicians must belong, then the threat or use of expulsion may be a method of controlling them, while offers of rehabilitation may reduce their temptation to conspire against the regime from outside the ruling group." Although they suggest that purges and rehabilitation "are intimately associated with political monopoly" it may be the case that membership of an entrenched ruling group within a multi-party system is almost equally critical to an individual's political future.

2. Coercion.

There exists a range of coercive techniques⁵³ - from the withdrawal of rewards (discussed above) to imprisonment and ultimately liquidation - which leaders can use to control subordinates. Removing the critical or disloyal through a jail sentence or complete annihilation may prove an effective survival tool. As Machiavelli⁵⁴ observed, people "will revenge themselves for small injuries, but cannot do so for great ones." The withdrawal of rewards can provoke retaliation but more extreme sanctions preclude revenge.

It is however possible that others may attempt some form of retaliation on an injured party's behalf and for this reason extreme measures against individuals with strong support (perhaps as a result of family connections) in the military should be avoided. An individual's reputation in the wider society may also be an important consideration since a regime's legitimacy will suffer if too many popular politicians are the victims of coercion. Yet there is undoubtedly a "right" and a "wrong" way of removing opponents. The extent to which an intended victim can be discredited - through allegations of corruption or the discovery of a bogus plot⁵⁵ - can prove crucial. The selective imprisonment or execution of popularly discredited individuals as opposed to widespread and irregular killings will assist in the preservation of legitimacy.

Coercive techniques are rarely confined to the political elite. Most leaders, though stopping

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, p 146.

⁵² *Op. cit.*, 1982, p 52.

⁵³ To write about "techniques" implies that leaders possess the ability to use coercion on a calculating and rational basis as a response to specific threats, although some no doubt are more predisposed to resort to force than others.

⁵⁴ *Op. cit.*, p 9.

⁵⁵ Jackson and Rosberg (*op. cit.*, 1982, p 59) provide some examples of leaders who have used the discovery of "plots" to positive effect.

far short of tyrannical rule,⁵⁶ have used group-focused coercion as a survival mechanism. The nature and gravity of the threat posed (and changes over time) ideally determines the utilisation of force.

As Bayart⁵⁷ notes, the aim of coercive techniques - restricting access to the political system - involves "preventing the autonomous and pluralistic organisation of subordinated social groups." Accordingly, a group's organisational strength is an important consideration. Rural peasants, for example, are less often the victims of coercion, although this may have less to do with their minimal organisation than with the weakness of central structures. Some leaders have no doubt regretted their inability (stemming from a lack of coercive capacity) to force rural producers to grow and sell crops according to central direction.

In contrast, urban-centred groups may be subject to a range of coercive measures. Trade unions, when not banned altogether, have been subject to governmental rules and regulations forbidding or curtailing the right to strike, controlling the "arbitration" process and regulating funding. In some countries unions were incorporated into the single party and union appointments strictly controlled. Unofficial strikes, student protests, spontaneous riots - all may prompt a resort to force. The press too has been subject to coercion with papers banned or censored and journalists imprisoned, intimidated, harassed.

Coercive techniques appeal to political leaders since they appear to reduce the likelihood of overt group-based challenges and limit the number of supporters needed to maintain a regime. Thus, as resources decline leaders are increasingly compelled to prioritise in favour of more threatening elites. On the other hand a leader risks incurring heavy costs should he become over reliant on coercion. Using the army in a domestic capacity risks undermining civilian control, even to the extent of prompting intervention (see Chapter two), and although such an outcome will be less likely if sufficient resources are devoted to the military, this route to survival may itself prove prohibitively expensive, particularly since coercive techniques are likely to reduce aid receipts. Linked to this, although a resort to coercion in the first instance may reflect a decline in legitimacy, the use of force will accelerate the decline and dictate the need for further coercion (what Cartwright terms the "force-contempt-more force spiral"). Ultimately a regime may come to depend "solely upon bayonets, an uncomfortable posture to maintain for any length of time."⁵⁸

Of course the threat of coercion (much cheaper than the actual application of force) may prove sufficient to deter future dissidence. For example, if one strike or demonstration is mercilessly crushed it is likely that others will hesitate before taking similar action. Nevertheless, in a situation of declining popular support and legitimacy (which the use of coercion may have played

⁵⁶ Tyrannical rule lies beyond the scope of this discussion. For an analysis of the eight-year rule of Idi Amin in Uganda (which examines both the use and inherent contradictions of tyranny as a survival strategy) see Cartwright, *op. cit.*, Ch 10.

⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, p 113.

⁵⁸ Cartwright, *op. cit.*, p 22.

some part in producing), such an outcome cannot be guaranteed and the shrewd leader will take advantage of periods of relative peace to implement alternative, non-coercive survival strategies. Assuming he is able to differentiate between more and less serious forms of opposition⁵⁹ a leader may also allow a certain level of public debate or the occasional demonstration as a useful means of defusing tension. Both the use of non-coercive tactics and the authorisation of some criticism or protest demand skill and confidence. The skill lies in recognising the limits of coercion as a survival mechanism as well as what constitutes a "real" threat. Confidence implies the ability to rise above the feelings of insecurity which have plagued many leaders⁶⁰ and utilise alternative strategies, to which the discussion now turns.

3. Economic Development and Political Goods.

Most observers agree that economic development has some impact upon a regime's survival prospects and yet the nature of that impact constitutes a rather more contentious issue. Some observers, notably Samuel Huntington, have argued that economic development (and the accompanying social mobilisation) leads to greater political participation, higher expectations and instability.⁶¹ Cartwright⁶² on the other hand observes that "of the 14 African states listed by the World Bank as having a growth rate of 1% or less from 1960 to 1976, Senegal and Guinea are the only two which did not experience at least one forcible change of government."

Although Cartwright's statistics do not conclusively prove a positive link between development and survival, they do suggest a strong relationship between the two. How, then, might this be explained?

Apart from providing a regime with resources, economic development - insofar as it serves to raise living standards - is one route to popular support. Spectacular improvements in living standards are unlikely to be necessary (or indeed possible) to secure support. In urban areas observers have isolated cheap food as a priority, although increasing employment opportunities, higher wages and better amenities are also desired. In rural areas, reasonable producer prices and modest infrastructural developments may prove sufficient.

If some regimes have benefited from the widespread provision of modest improvements, many (among them some long-survivors) have singularly failed to raise living standards. Exogenous factors - among them fluctuating world prices for agricultural produce and the vagaries of the weather - have contributed in no small measure to this failure, but political considerations have also

⁵⁹ As already noted, some groups are more threatening than others. Linked to this it is worth re-emphasising that inter-group co-operation may not exist - Bayart (*op. cit.*, p 119) for example suggests that there may be few common interests between youth and other social groups - enabling a leader to draw on the support of different groups at different times, coercing some, but not others.

⁶⁰ Of course, over confidence may prove just as damaging as paranoia.

⁶¹ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968).

⁶² *Op. cit.*, p 292.

played a fundamental role. Despite the fact that economic growth may strengthen the position of a regime in the long term, short and medium term political imperatives often dictate an alternative route to political survival. As already noted, clientelistic politics is not conducive to the rational and effective distribution of resources or the fulfilment of long term economic development plans.

A further instance of the pre-eminence of political, as opposed to economic, considerations is the subject of a study by Robert Bates. Bates demonstrates how, in many African states, governments have appropriated funds generated by the export of agricultural produce.⁶³ By keeping the prices paid to farmers below world market prices, marketing boards (the sole buyers of agricultural produce) accumulate funds. These funds, instead of being used - as originally intended - to mitigate the adverse effects of low world prices upon farmers, were often diverted. Governments obtained loans (some of which were not repaid) from marketing boards, and used them to provide businessmen with funds or cheap raw materials. Meanwhile, civil servants responsible for the marketing of crops gained from the diversion of funds and urban areas in general from the provision of low-cost food. By maintaining an over-valued exchange rate (thus lowering the cost of food imports) or buying produce to sell at subsidised prices in the towns, governments aimed to provide cheap food and avoid urban unrest.⁶⁴

By giving priority to urban areas, governments were responding to the comparatively greater threat posed by urban residents as compared to their rural counterparts. In the longer term, however, problems arose. As noted above, while farmers rarely constitute an immediate political threat⁶⁵ they are willing and able to protect their position in adverse circumstances. Low producer prices may encourage smuggling and, if sufficient numbers by-pass official marketing channels, a regime will lose a major source of revenue to placate urban residents.

Finding solutions to this dilemma falls to political leaders.⁶⁶ If possible, they have to find ways of cultivating popular support or at least acquiescence without expending scarce resources.

One means of by-passing material considerations is to appeal to traditional values. However, since the majority of African states lack a single set of traditional values or norms this is

⁶³ Robert Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981), pp 12-28.

⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, pp 35-52 for further details. Urban areas aside, Bates notes that a share of agricultural revenues may be returned to the agricultural sector in the form of subsidised inputs (fertilisers, equipment, credit etc.). Given that these inputs can be directed to supporters and withheld from dissidents, Bates (p 114) suggests they are of greater political utility than raising producer prices - the benefits of which are shared by all farmers.

⁶⁵ In multi-party systems farmers are more politically "relevant" to a regime's survival prospects and one would expect them to benefit accordingly. However, this should not simply be assumed. In Botswana, for example, John Holm has shown how multi-party elections have failed to compel the government to launch major rural development programmes. John D Holm, "Liberal Democracy and Rural Development in Botswana," *African Studies Review*, Vol 25, No 1, March 1982.

⁶⁶ One partial solution centres upon the cultivation of external aid (discussed in Chapter four) By the mid-1980's, however, aid conditionalities and structural adjustment programmes introduced a new set of problems for regimes. The contrasting responses of the PPP and APC are analysed in subsequent sections.

a viable legitimating device in very few cases. More important are a leader's personal qualities.⁶⁷ Cartwright⁶⁸ identifies the ability of a leader to inspire trust - "essentially a feeling by followers that the leader knows their needs and is trying to meet them, a sense of empathy between leader and follower" - as of crucial importance.⁶⁹ He suggests that trust may stem from certain qualities - including age, intellectual ability, militance or familiarity - possessed by a leader and perceived by his followers. Whatever the particular quality or qualities possessed by a leader, it is important that they be used "for the benefit of the people as a whole." When a leader is perceived as benefiting himself at the expense of ordinary people he loses support; "a bond of trust" on the other hand gives a leader "a reservoir of acceptance that can sustain him over temporary setbacks."⁷⁰

A second, related, method of earning popular support is through the provision of "political goods." Among the most widely valued political goods are peace and political stability;⁷¹ if a leader is able to provide these he may acquire sufficient support to see him through periods of economic decline.

Since ethnic conflict constitutes a primary source of political instability,⁷² leaders may focus particular attention on this area. The assumption that political leaders are able to influence inter-ethnic relations is based on a view which places primary emphasis upon the "instrumental" rather than the "primordial" dimension of ethnicity. This view, discussed in the Introduction,

⁶⁷ This reference to "personal qualities" should not be automatically equated with charismatic leadership - defined by Weber as "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York, Free Press, 1947), p 358). Cohen has demonstrated the futility of "stretching" Weber's definition to cover non-charismatic leaders (which include those under discussion in this study) and with this in mind the emphasis here is upon personal qualities which, while important, are not the "rare and magical" qualities envisaged by Weber. See Denis L Cohen, "The Concept of Charisma and The Analysis of Leadership," *Political Studies*, Vol 20, No 3, 1972, pp 299-305.

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.*, p 37.

⁶⁹ In a different study Cartwright adopts a more comprehensive approach. Taking the notion of leadership "acceptability" he argues that legitimacy - which indicates "the capacity to elicit a moral commitment" - is the strongest form of acceptability. Moving down the scale one finds "non-moral though conscious bases of commitment" such as trust, to the weakest form of acceptability based upon the "habit of obedience." In this study the term legitimacy is used more widely as not, necessarily, involving a moral dimension. Nevertheless it remains useful to distinguish between the varying levels of commitment. As Cartwright notes, "a leader who has few ambitions to bring change to his state, and in consequence puts forward few policies requiring more than passive acquiescence from the bulk of the populace, can get by with little more than bare tolerance of his occupancy of the leader's role from most of the populace. By contrast, a leader who seeks to arouse a large part of the populace to seek change, and require the active support of many people, needs a much higher degree of commitment." John Cartwright, "Some Constraints Upon African Political Leadership," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol 11, No 3, 1977, p 438.

⁷⁰ *Op. cit.*, 1983, p 38. However Cartwright does stress that, in the long term, a leader will have to provide some material benefits.

⁷¹ Other political goods include the protection of sovereignty and political independence and are discussed in detail in Chapter four.

⁷² The origins of ethnic conflict - including the uneven developmental impact of colonial rule, improved communications and heightened expectations - have been discussed at length by other observers. Here the intention is to focus upon some of the ways in which political leaders might minimise conflict.

implies, as Donald Rothchild⁷³ observes, 'that ethnic groups can be regarded as ... responsive to the political exchange process'.

Of course there are limits to this ethnic "responsiveness." Thus, Rothchild suggests a further distinction between negotiable and non-negotiable ethnic demands.⁷⁴ The latter - which centre upon subjective issues such as "identity, survival or status" and which are likely to be perceived in zero-sum terms - are not at issue here. The response to this type of demand is usually suppression which may be important to political survival but which will not produce the political good of ethnic harmony. Negotiable demands, on the other hand, centre upon "power sharing, recruitment, and distributional issues" and, even in the absence of political competition, may be amenable to "group exchanges."⁷⁵

Negotiable demands may be dealt with in one of two ways.⁷⁶ The first, redistribution, is the least important for the purposes of this discussion. The focus here is upon the elimination or reduction of ethnic conflict as an alternative to economic development. Redistribution, which involves the allocation of resources (money, services etc.) to disadvantaged sub-regions within a state, is based upon reducing the developmental disparities between regions and requires surplus resources. Power sharing is a much cheaper (and more widely-used) device since it is generally confined to the elite representatives of ethnic groups. According to Rothchild, "ethnoregional actors can enter into informal exchange relationships, being linked together by well understood and predictable ties of reciprocity ... By quietly agreeing to informal principles of proportionality on such critical issues as coalition formation, elite recruitment and resource allocation, these state and ethnoregional actors are able to work out informal norms among themselves which, for a temporary period at least, promote conciliatory behaviour under conditions of economic scarcity." Conciliation is not confined to the elite but, to the extent that each ethnic group has its representatives in the cabinet and believes its interests are protected, may extend to the wider society.

Having examined some of the major conceptual issues surrounding the study of regime survival the following sections take a closer look at the specific cases of The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

⁷³ Donald Rothchild, "Interethnic Conflict and Policy Analysis in Africa," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol 9, No 1, January 1986, p 66.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 67-71.

⁷⁵ In a discussion of the impact of clientelism upon ethnicity (and vice-versa) Lemarchand stresses that conciliation will only be possible where political leaders are willing to compromise. Various factors - for example "perceptions of external threats that may submerge perceptions of local antagonism" - might work to produce this willingness. On the other hand, "where politically significant resources tend to become the monopoly of a particular ethnic or communal group, the clientelistic solidarities arising from the exploitation of these sources may possibly reinforce ethnic or communal solidarities." René Lemarchand *op. cit.*, p 112.

⁷⁶ Rothchild, *op. cit.*, pp 82-84.

Regime Survival in The Gambia.

In The Gambia the PPP regime's prolonged survival owed much to its leader, Dawda Jawara. There existed an intimate, almost inextricable link between the survival of the man and the survival of the regime, Jawara's apparent indispensability reflecting his uncommon ability to maintain subordinates' loyalty without forfeiting popular support. The following sections examine these two aspects of Jawara's rule, beginning with his efforts to create and sustain a predominant position within the PPP.

Jawara and the Political Elite.

The previous chapter assessed Jawara's precarious hold on power at independence, his low caste status constituting a grave handicap and one which threatened to overshadow his strengths (most notably a university education). The two pre-independence challenges to Jawara's position demonstrated his vulnerability, clarifying the fact that he could not rely upon the undivided loyalty of the party's founding members. At independence Jawara's lieutenants regarded him as their representative, almost a nominal leader, and clearly intended him to promote their personal advancement.

Given this, Jawara's task was to overcome his low caste status, assert his authority over the party and secure control over its political direction. It will be recalled that his approach excluded coercion. Politically inspired "disappearances" were never a feature of PPP rule; neither opponents nor supporters suffered harassment or periods of detention on fabricated charges.⁷⁷ That Jawara was able to eschew coercive techniques and still survive reflected an element of good fortune and yet his skilful political leadership was also crucial. Within his own party Jawara was fortunate to be surrounded by individuals willing to refrain from violence to achieve their goals⁷⁸ and yet much of the credit for this restraint must go to Jawara - his skilful manipulation of patronage resources, cultivation of affective ties and shrewd balancing of factions within the PPP.

Lacking the coercive option - and given that affective ties, which had to be "earned," were a medium to long-term resource - Jawara initially relied heavily on instrumental ties and the

⁷⁷ It is possible to envisage a situation in which Jawara's reluctance to use force would have proved disadvantageous to survival. Based on information provided by those acquainted with Jawara - both supporters and critics - it seems he would have been unwilling to change tack alongside a changing situation and in that sense appeared to lack flexibility. On the other hand Jawara's personal reluctance to resort to coercion was almost certainly reinforced by political calculation. Jawara's major political props - his reliance on legitimacy and popular support, his success in maintaining peace and stability (the widespread appreciation for which played a significant role in dissuading elites from disrupting the status quo) and the country's need for extensive foreign aid - were incompatible with the use of force.

⁷⁸ In turn, this may have reflected the small size of the political elite which, as John Wiseman observes, "makes conciliation and compromise rather easier to obtain than it would be among a much larger group." However, as Wiseman also notes the experience of other states demonstrates that small size alone cannot guarantee conciliation. John A Wiseman, *Democracy in Black Africa: Survival and Revival* (New York, Paragon House, 1990), p 61.

distribution of patronage. His limited resource-base posed an obvious, though not insurmountable, problem. Within the ruling group ministerial positions - which provided a generous salary, perks and for some, access to illicit wealth (discussed below) - constituted the most sought after form of patronage and yet, before 1970, the number of ministerial posts did not exceed seven. By 1992 the number remained a comparatively modest fourteen. This also extended to Parliamentary Secretaries of which, by 1977, there were nine.⁷⁹ Despite these limits Jawara skilfully exploited all the various permutations of patronage distribution (appointment, promotion, termination, demotion and rehabilitation) to dramatise his power over subordinates' futures and entrench himself as leader.

After independence, in response to the pre-1965 challenges to his authority, Jawara moved to reduce the size, cohesion and authority of the founder members as a group. Many of the party's earliest adherents (even those who showed no outward sign of disloyalty) lost ministerial posts during the early years of PPP rule. Jawara may not have used force but neither was he hampered by sentiment; his pragmatism and willingness to demote, or even drop, former supporters in order to strengthen his personal political position was apparent. Among the founding members, Jerreh Daffeh had begun promisingly as Minister of Health in the 1962 cabinet only to be demoted to Parliamentary Secretary in 1965. Yusupha Samba, also a minister in 1962, was demoted to minister without portfolio and then to parliamentary secretary. BLK Sanyang was appointed Minister of Local Government in 1966, only to be dropped two years later. Others forced to accept demotion included Musa Dabo (Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources in the 1962 cabinet), Paul Baldeh (removed as Education Minister in 1966) Sheriff Sisay and Lamin M'Boge.⁸⁰

Although it was conceivable that these casualties would coalesce in an attempt to oust Jawara the potential effectiveness of any intra-party rebellion was in doubt. One reason for this centred upon Jawara's successful promotion of divisions within the PPP. An obvious source of rivalry was that between the original members and more recent arrivals (see below) but Jawara also promoted competition among the party's founders. This was a shrewd tactic, reducing the likelihood of senior party members uniting against him and serving to divert attention from the top job.

The rivalry Jawara nurtured between Sheriff Sisay and Sheriff Dibba provides a clear example of this tactic. Both men were prominent founder members of the PPP; in 1962 Sisay had been appointed Finance Minister (the number two job) and Dibba, Minister for Local Government. After independence Jawara used the post of acting Prime Minister to establish a source of rivalry.⁸¹ Both enjoyed this honour until 1966 when, much to Dibba's chagrin, Sisay was appointed as acting

⁷⁹ To be eligible for a ministerial position individuals had to win a seat in the House of Representatives and electoral assistance provided a further source of patronage (discussed in Chapter three). An alternative route to Parliament was nomination but Jawara tended to use nominated seats to provide representation for societal groups rather than as a reward for loyal politicians.

⁸⁰ See below for further details on the careers of Sisay and M'Boge.

⁸¹ Throughout his rule Jawara rotated the post of acting Prime Minister and later acting President both to create a source of rivalry and to prevent any single individual consolidating too secure or powerful a position.

Prime Minister on at least five consecutive occasions. Just as it appeared that Sisay was consolidating his position Jawara - demonstrating an unpredictability which characterised his leadership style both then and subsequently - removed him from Finance, promoting Dibba in his place. Although Sisay's subsequent behaviour - culminating in the formation of the People's Progressive Alliance (PPA)⁸² - was probably not foreseen by Jawara, he did avoid the formation of a dangerous alliance between two of his foremost supporters. Personal rivalry overshadowed the fact that both Sisay and Dibba (who later went on to form a not dissimilar opposition party) resented Jawara's undermining of the PPP founder members. Dibba and his supporters remained within the PPP.

Most other PPP stalwarts also failed to join the PPA (and future opposition parties) realising that although Jawara's patronage distribution had failed to meet their expectations there was potentially even less to be gained by joining a party which might never form the government. Memories of the recent fate of Lamin M'Boge - an active member of both the PPP and its predecessor the PPS - reinforced their apprehension. An MP from 1962, M'Boge's vocal criticism of PPP policies had resulted in his expulsion from the party in May 1966.⁸³ As penance, M'Boge spent a year in opposition and suffered defeat as an Independent in the 1966 elections. Expelling M'Boge, Jawara not only neutralised a potential troublemaker but clearly demonstrated the difficulties of political advancement outside the PPP.⁸⁴ Given that he did not intend to eliminate political competition it was crucial that his subordinates learn this lesson by example.

The early casualties of Jawara's approach to political survival not only feared for their political future *outside* the PPP but were given good reason to hope that their careers would revive *within* the party. Thus, in 1967 M'Boge's "responsible" (non-critical) stance outside the party was rewarded with readmission and a post at the PPP bureau. In 1975 he was appointed Minister of Economic Planning and Industrial Development and following the 1977 elections was briefly elevated to Finance.⁸⁵ M'Boge's rehabilitation caused others to hesitate before leaving the party (or

⁸² The PPA is discussed at length in Chapter three but it is worth noting here that one reason for its formation were concerns over Jawara's caste status.

⁸³ See for example *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 9 January 1965, p 2 for M'Boge's criticism of educational and agricultural policy. According to local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94) M'Boge enjoyed close links with trade unions, enhancing his perceived disruptive potential.

⁸⁴ Jawara was also able to define what constituted unacceptable levels of criticism; the fine line between criticism and disloyalty had been drawn. That is not to imply the complete silencing of PPP MPs in the legislature; in subsequent years some no doubt operated under the constraint of self-censorship and yet many gave voice to a wide range of concerns. Nevertheless, criticism did not extend to Jawara himself and critics tended to follow his lead, particularly on subjects of a far-reaching nature. Attacks on corruption, for example, were far more likely to be heard following one of Jawara's orations on the subject.

⁸⁵ M'Boge's political fortunes (alongside those of many of his colleagues) continued to fluctuate. Dropped from Finance after a few short months M'Boge was appointed Parliamentary Secretary at Agriculture in 1978. Resurrected from 1982 to 1987 as Minister of Works and Communications he was finally dropped as the PPP Parliamentary candidate in 1992. In an interview with the author (19 October 1993) M'Boge, certainly in comparison to other PPP supporters, was extremely reluctant to say anything which could possibly be interpreted as criticism of the government. Self-censorship (a principle to which M'Boge had been adhering

plotting from within it) and in many cases continued loyalty was ultimately rewarded. Of the group cited above Jerreh Daffeh, having remained a Parliamentary Secretary (in different ministries) until 1978, was in that year elevated to Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources before being dropped in January 1981. BLK Sanyang was also resurrected as Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Tourism (in 1972) and as Minister for Works and Communications (in 1977). He was finally dropped in 1979. Even Sisay, following the PPA's collapse, was rehabilitated⁸⁶ and became one of Jawara's most loyal supporters. Rewarded with the governorship of the Central Bank (a post he held for a decade) Sisay's career finally came full circle when he was reappointed Minister of Finance in 1982. The cycle of demotion, rehabilitation and (for many) further demotion prevented individuals acquiring a sense of political security and aspirations to the top job. Jawara fully understood the benefits of promoting insecurity, in 1973 even stating that he was considering changing his ministers every six months.⁸⁷

Jawara further strengthened his personal position with the incorporation of new sources of support within the ruling group. His enthusiasm for political accommodation stemmed from the closely related imperatives of weakening the influence of the PPP's original members and avoiding political isolation. The original group resented the fact that newcomers had not participated in the early struggle for power and yet were now enjoying the fruits of their labour. The secondary factor of ethno-regional considerations compounded this resentment;⁸⁸ those who were co-opted came from all ethnic groups in the former colony and protectorate.⁸⁹

During the second half of the 1960's and the 1970's newcomers consistently and progressively outnumbered the founding members within the cabinet.⁹⁰ In 1966, for example, of a cabinet of seven (excluding Jawara) only Dibba, Sisay, Amang Kanyi and BLK Sanyang had been with the party from its earliest days.⁹¹ Among the co-optees were Andrew Camara,⁹² KCA Kah and

since the events of the 1960's) appeared to account for this.

⁸⁶ As a condition of his rehabilitation Sisay was compelled to tour the country confessing his errors and apologising for his mistakes. His role was to serve as an example to others and even in the 1990's memories of Sisay's "humiliation" are fresh in the minds of older politicians.

⁸⁷ Reported in *The Progressive*, 15 July 1974, p 1.

⁸⁸ It is important not to exaggerate ethno-regional identity either as a source of cohesion (among the founder members) or a source of division. During its formative years the PPP was not exclusively Mandinka (Paul Baldeh was a Fula and BLK Sanyang a Jola) and some members, including Jawara, had ties in Banjul. Equally, while Sisay's PPA experiment could (and to some extent should) be interpreted as a protest by the PPP's original Mandinka members over the diversion of resources to newcomers, one of its leading members - KCA Kah - had originally been co-opted into the PPP from the urban-based United Party. The factors governing the low salience of ethnicity in The Gambia are discussed below.

⁸⁹ Jawara's enthusiasm for co-optation was not based solely upon a desire to strengthen his personal position within the PPP; it also brought forth electoral support from minority and urban groups (see Chapter three) and reduced the likelihood of a coup d'etat inspired by disaffected urban politicians.

⁹⁰ Jawara's accommodationist stance also extended to the party structure. For details see Sulayman Nyang, "The Role of the Gambian Political Parties in National Integration" (PhD dissertation, University of Virginia, 1974), p 237.

⁹¹ It is important to note that many of Jawara's victims were not dropped immediately but rather gradually filtered out. At this stage for example, all six parliamentary secretaries were original, Mandinka party

AB N'Jie, all former members of the opposition. By 1972 Dibba and Sisay had departed leaving only Yaya Ceesay and BLK Sanyang (a Jola rather than a Mandinka) to represent the original members in an enlarged cabinet of nine. The co-optees included four urban Wolofs and two Fulas, all of whom had at one time been associated with the opposition. In subsequent years the fortunes of the founder members rallied slightly but the general trend remained the same. By the start of 1977 there were four founder members (Ceesay, Sanyang, Kebba Leigh, Lamin M'Boge) but they remained a minority in a cabinet which, some years earlier, had been expanded to eleven.

Although Jawara's accommodationist stance was not well received among the founder members the likelihood of an effective challenge to his position receded. The difficulties facing a would-be plotter involved securing support from other founder members (while Jawara retained his grip on the distribution of patronage) and convincing more recent arrivals that he would protect their interests. Unsurprisingly those who tried - notably Dibba, prior to the formation of his National Convention Party in 1975 - failed.

As individuals (for they did not really constitute a "group" as such), those who were co-opted generally demonstrated a greater degree of personal loyalty to their patron, Jawara, than those who predated his arrival on the political scene.⁹³ Nevertheless, their support could not simply be assumed and Jawara continued to use the tactics of demotion and rehabilitation to entrench his position. Naturally the ambitious received special attention. MC Cham, for instance, crossed the carpet (from the United Party) in 1972 to become a Minister of State. Shortly after he was promoted as Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture and from there to Economic Planning and then to Finance and Trade. By 1980 Cham was believed to be nurturing presidential ambitions and in January 1981 was dropped from the cabinet. He remained on the backbenches until 1987 when, having learned his lesson, he was rehabilitated as Minister of Works and Communications.⁹⁴

By the early 1980s the founder member-co-optee divide was increasingly overlaid and gradually superseded by alternative factional alignments.⁹⁵ Primary among them was that between the younger technocrats or reformers within the party and the "old guard." The old guard politicians were, somewhat confusingly, the original "newcomers" co-opted during the 1960's and early 1970's. The reformers emerged as a loose grouping in the early 1980's as a response to criticisms that the

members. Jawara's gradualism prevented potentially hostile forces coalescing against him and, to some extent, obscured his objectives.

⁹² Known from 1975 as Assan Musa Camara following his reversion to Islam.

⁹³ Newcomers often travelled a slower route to the top posts than those catapulted straight into ministerial positions as the British relinquished control. Jawara was able to distribute rewards in stages, extending the period of an individual's loyalty.

⁹⁴ Cham retained this post for three years at which point he made his final departure from the cabinet. He remained, however, a loyal Jawara supporter.

⁹⁵ Nevertheless it did retain some political significance, a point I return to below. Throughout the 1980's the original members continued to be represented in the cabinet by Sheriff Sisay (Minister of Finance from 1982 to 1989), Lamin Kitty Jabang (first at External Affairs and then at the Interior Ministry) and Lamin M'Boge.

"ageing" PPP was becoming increasingly complacent and unresponsive to the interests of youth.⁹⁶ These complaints were nothing new,⁹⁷ but the attempted coup of 1981 convinced Jawara of the need for a more thoroughgoing response.

The reforming group was headed by a Mandinka, Bakary Dabo.⁹⁸ Dabo was both well educated and highly experienced. He had worked for the Senegambian Secretariat and been both a manager of the Gambia Commercial and Development Bank and the High Commissioner in Dakar. In 1981, at thirty-five years of age, Dabo joined the PPP and was appointed as Minister of Information. During the 1982 elections he was sponsored for the safe seat of Kiang West and shortly after appointed to the Vice-Presidency. Dabo's rapid political ascent and the emergence of a younger, better educated cabinet in 1982⁹⁹ were unwelcome developments to those among the PPP's old guard. Assan Musa Camara had been dropped as Vice-President in 1982 to make way for Dabo. Lamin Saho, the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice - and, at least in his own view, a contender for the Vice-Presidency - was moved to Local Government (a post he rejected) and replaced at Justice by another reformer, Fafa M'Bai, while the following year Alieu Sulayman Jack was compelled to resign as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Nevertheless the reformers failed to gain the upper hand. Unforeseen events, notably the disgrace of M'Bai (see below), played some part in this failure but more important was Jawara's continued policy of balance and rotation. Throughout the 1980's the holders of the top posts of Vice-President (Dabo) and Finance (Sisay) remained the same but the holders of lesser posts were frequently reshuffled. Younger cabinet ministers received periodic promotion (for example Omar Jallow's move from Environment to Agriculture in 1988) but at the same time old-timers (MC Cham for example) were rehabilitated. Additionally, no one individual was allowed to consolidate too secure or powerful a position within the party. While Dabo remained Vice-President over an extended period he was not automatically designated acting President when Jawara was abroad.

Whilst these measures facilitated Jawara's survival they also threatened the long-term, post-Jawara, survival of the PPP regime. His very success in balancing the various factions within the party rendered it unlikely that any one individual possessed sufficient support to ensure a peaceful transition. Indeed, in 1991 when Jawara expressed his intention of stepping down¹⁰⁰ his preferred

⁹⁶ Among the changes implemented by the reformers was the revitalisation of the PPP's youth section.

⁹⁷ See for example the discussion of the 1972 Independent electoral challenge in Chapter three. Various, rather half-hearted attempts to respond to criticism included the reduction of the average age of the cabinet from sixty to fifty in 1978. *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1978-1979, B 609.

⁹⁸ Although Dabo's ethnic identity was one of the less important reasons for his elevation it did appear that Jawara wished to consolidate the PPP's Mandinka support following the abortive coup. Hughes notes that whereas in 1977 Mandinka membership in the cabinet was only five out of twelve, by 1982 their number had increased to a majority of seven out of thirteen. Arnold Hughes, "The Limits of 'Consociational Democracy' in The Gambia," *Civilizations*, Vol 32-33, 1982-3, p 77.

⁹⁹ In 1982 the average age of the cabinet was forty-five years and contained five university graduates.

¹⁰⁰ It was widely believed that Jawara genuinely wished to retire. Over the course of many interviews (1993-4) with opposition leaders, journalists and assorted critics it was not held that the retirement announcement

successor, Dabo, was strongly resisted. Fearing a decline in their political fortunes neither the founder members (most of whom favoured Lamin Kitty Jabang) or the other older members of the cabinet welcomed the prospect of a Dabo presidency.¹⁰¹ Jawara decided to stay on.¹⁰²

The shock which greeted Jawara's retirement announcement reflected his central position within the PPP. Attempting to disentangle the foundations of his support it is worth reiterating that, to many within the party, Jawara represented a crucial unifying force. Without his leadership it was commonly held that the party would disintegrate and certainly the aftermath of the retirement announcement did little to calm these fears. Linked to this, Jawara was widely regarded as an indispensable component of individual political success. Without his popularity in the wider society (an asset no other politician had been allowed to cultivate) many knew they would find it difficult to secure re-election in their constituencies.¹⁰³ Affective ties further bolstered politicians' loyalty. Talking to Jawara supporters the two aspects of his leadership style regularly mentioned were considered caution¹⁰⁴ and decision; once a path had been chosen Jawara was resolute. This confidence to choose, and ability to maintain, a course of action (for example multi-partyism or, in the second half of the 1980's, economic reform) in the face of opposition was a source of genuine respect. Political resolve, strength of character in inter-personal relations and a certain inscrutability¹⁰⁵ kept Jawara supporters guessing and for the most part loyal.

Jawara's popular support and cultivation of affective ties were crucial for easing the pressure on scarce patronage resources. Although the skilful distribution of patronage - and associated tolerance of corruption, discussed below - played an important role in the PPP's survival, Jawara did not rely on elite-level resource distribution as heavily as some of his counterparts (see for example Stevens and Momoh below). The reasons for this centred upon his disinclination to use force and consequent need for popular acquiescence together with The Gambia's shortage of

constituted a survival ploy, although one local source did suggest that Jawara wished to put his subordinates' loyalty "to the test." For an interesting account of the Mansakonko PPP Congress where Jawara made his retirement announcement see *Foroyaa*, 10 December 1991, p 42.

¹⁰¹ According to local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94) certain business interests were also apprehensive about Dabo's reputation as a "Mr Clean." They supported the more amenable Saihou Sabally but his unpopularity in Banjul rendered it unlikely he would be selected.

¹⁰² After the retirement announcement Jawara seemed intent upon reasserting his (temporarily weakened) authority over subordinates rather than making plans for a succession. In the 1992 cabinet Dabo was demoted to the Finance Ministry and Saihou Sabally elevated to Vice-President but few expected him to become President. For his part, Jawara explained in a radio broadcast why the official delegation of women's affairs to the Vice-President did not signal any real increase in his powers. *Foroyaa*, 25 May 1992, p 16.

¹⁰³ See Chapter three. Jawara's popular following (discussed below) was also crucial in dissuading would-be plotters.

¹⁰⁴ According to one local source (interview with the author, 14 October 1993) Jawara had been heard to tell Bakary Dabo that the way to approach political problems was to "touch them, then sit back and see how they react."

¹⁰⁵ As a journalist from *The Point* observed, "they get nothing from him ... they have to try and work out what he is thinking and fall in line." A second local source (interview with the author, 21 January 1994), elaborating on the same subject, suggested that Jawara was quite happy to sit back and "watch you flailing yourself to death looking for the right thing to say."

domestic resources and consequent need for foreign assistance, both of which were less likely to be forthcoming under a thoroughly corrupt regime.

Whereas in Sierra Leone the manipulation of domestic sources of wealth - to keep elites in check - took precedence over foreign aid (see below), in The Gambia rather different considerations prevailed. The nature of Jawara's priorities was revealed in 1985 when he was compelled to implement an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in response to the international community's insistence that further aid was dependent upon the introduction of fundamental reform. Jawara's need for foreign assistance caused him to embrace the ERP, despite its potential for undermining his rule at both the elite and mass levels. The ERP and the means by which Jawara managed to avoid popular protest are examined below; suffice it here to note that continued mass acquiescence - combined with affective ties - operated to keep elites in check, despite IMF conditionalities designed to tackle the political manipulation of resources.¹⁰⁶

Jawara and the Urban Elite.

Jawara's willingness to share the rewards of office with urban politicians (among others) had three advantages, helping to avoid a coup instigated by this group, aiding him to secure a pre-eminent position within the PPP and extending the party's electoral base. However, Jawara's accommodationist stance extended beyond the political sphere into other arenas, notably the public service. Prompting this was the need for a functioning bureaucracy and a smooth transition from the pre- to the post-independence periods. The wholesale replacement of existing bureaucrats - predominantly urban Wolofs and Akus - with inexperienced and less well educated Mandinkas would, as Arnold Hughes notes, "have been a disaster, leading to administrative chaos and the real possibility of large-scale communal strife."¹⁰⁷ Hence civil servants, despite their natural affinity to the opposition United Party, were retained and promoted.¹⁰⁸ Jawara's enthusiasm for accommodating the existing bureaucratic set-up was further strengthened by personal survival considerations. Hughes¹⁰⁹ suggests that the "reliance on ... less caste-conscious civil servants can be viewed as a way of minimising the President's own low caste." More generally, civil servants played a role complementary to that of their ethnic counterparts in the political sphere, providing an additional source of support for Jawara. They helped to shield him from political pressures and divisions within the party and constituted an independent source of advice and support with respect to policy.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ IMF-imposed financial discipline aside, selected members of the elite did continue to benefit from the diversion of funds even after 1985 (see below).

¹⁰⁷ Hughes, *op. cit.*, 1975, p 67.

¹⁰⁸ After ten years of PPP rule, the Aku and Wolof held twenty-seven of thirty-one senior posts. The Mandinka held just one. *Ibid.*, p 70.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p 69

¹¹⁰ On more than one occasion Jawara felt compelled to publicly refute allegations that "real" power lay with

After 1975 the public sector played an increasingly important role in Jawara's co-optation of the urban elite (and the provision of jobs for others lower down the clientelist chain). It was rapidly expanded; between 1975 and 1980 there was a 75% increase in government employment and the number of established posts doubled. From 1975 to 1985 the number of civil servants increased from 4000 to 10,700.¹¹¹ Parastatals - established in many areas including groundnut processing (with the acquisition of the country's two oil mills), trading (with the establishment of the National Trading Corporation), banking (with the creation of the Central Bank and the GCDB) and transport - also doubled in number between 1975 and 1982 and by 1983 government employees as a whole accounted for over two-thirds of recorded employment.¹¹² The wage bill increased accordingly; between 1975 and 1985 expenditure on wages and salaries increased by 57% in real terms.¹¹³ Much was directed to increasing the numbers in employment but public sector employees also enjoyed generous remuneration.

The introduction of the ERP in 1985 reversed the expansion of the public sector and targeted the loss-making parastatals.¹¹⁴ Some parastatals were sold or leased to the private sector¹¹⁵ and the civil service slimmed down. By 1990, 848 vacant positions had been eliminated and 2,625 temporary (daily paid) workers and 764 established workers retrenched.¹¹⁶ Those who remained suffered a reduction in income as a result of the devaluation of the dalasi.¹¹⁷

Although the ERP posed a significant threat to civil servants' privileged position - and Jawara's patronage network - there was a marked lack of protest. Radelet¹¹⁸ cites three factors to explain the absence of opposition: the lack of organisation among civil servants; the possibility that

civil servants and not ministers. Particularly influential was Eric Christensen, appointed in 1967 to the positions of Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office and External Affairs and Secretary to the cabinet. He retired in 1978.

¹¹¹ These figures do not include the large temporary staff which numbered 2000 and 5000 respectively. *IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes* (Macro Economic and Financial Analysis Unit, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Banjul, n.d.), p 45.

¹¹² *Quarterly Survey of Employment and Earnings, Third Quarter 1983* (Central Statistics Department, Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development, Banjul, 1984).

¹¹³ Steven Radelet, "Economic Recovery in The Gambia: The Anatomy of an Economic Reform Program" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1990), p 42.

¹¹⁴ Parastatal performance is detailed in successive budget speeches. For example, by 1982 the Gambia Utilities Corporation had accumulated losses of approximately D24m.

¹¹⁵ Of the six financial enterprises and twenty-eight non-financial enterprises (of which nineteen were fully government-owned), thirteen had been sold or offered for sale, four leased to the private sector and three liquidated by early 1992. Those which remained under government ownership were subject to staff retrenchment and other reforms, discussed below. Michael T Hadjimichael, Thomas Rumbaugh and Eric Verreydt, *The Gambia: Economic Adjustment in a Small Open Economy* (Washington DC, IMF, October 1992), p 35.

¹¹⁶ United Nations, *Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Country Presentation, 1990* (The Gambia Archives), p 6.

¹¹⁷ Despite higher prices, salaries were not adjusted until early 1989 when a general increase of 67% was announced. Thereafter successive annual budgets announced 6% salary increases although earnings generally failed to keep pace with consumer prices.

¹¹⁸ Steven Radelet, "Reform Without Revolt: The Political Economy of Economic Reform in the Gambia," *World Development*, Vol 20, No 8, 1992, p 1096.

troublemakers would be among the first to lose their jobs; and the absorption of civil servants into the manufacturing and construction sectors (which had grown rapidly in 1986/87) or into agriculture to take advantage of increased groundnut producer prices. One might add that selected senior civil servants and parastatal employees continued to benefit from access to illicit wealth (see below).

A third group to benefit from, and support, PPP rule were The Gambia's urban businessmen. From independence Jawara sought to establish close ties with individual businessmen as one aspect of his drive to win over the urban areas. Momodou Musa N'Jie, the Madis (of S Madi Ltd)¹¹⁹ and Solo Dabo (who later "defected" to the opposition) were all names closely associated with the regime. This mutually supportive relationship was occasionally formalised (for example in 1966 Joe Madi was nominated to the House of Representatives¹²⁰ and some twenty years later Saihou Ceesay - owner of two hotels and a construction company and closely involved in the re-export trade - was appointed chairman of the Gambia Utilities Corporation¹²¹) but was more often based upon an informal understanding of the mutual benefits to be realised. Businesses gained from cheap loans (see below) and the 1973 Development Act which provided substantial tax relief for those industries certified for "development" purposes.¹²² In return the PPP gained another "point of entry" into the urban areas, generous donations to party funds (useful for electioneering purposes) and opportunities for illicit accumulation on the part of bureaucrats and politicians.¹²³

Corruption and Political Survival.

For many years observers viewed corruption in The Gambia as significantly less prevalent than in many other African states. In retrospect this view appears overstated¹²⁴ though it is true that corruption did not reach the heights seen elsewhere. Jawara himself refrained from excessive self-enrichment¹²⁵ and many of his lieutenants followed suit. Conflicting survival imperatives - in particular the need for foreign aid¹²⁶ and popular support, both of which were unlikely to be forthcoming under a thoroughly corrupt regime - persuaded Jawara to set some limits to "allowable"

¹¹⁹ The Madis were of Lebanese origin, possessing Gambian citizenship.

¹²⁰ *The Gambia Echo*, 13 June 1966, p 1.

¹²¹ *The Nation*, 26 July 1986, p 3.

¹²² According to informed local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94) businesses were selected on the basis of their loyalty to the PPP regime or their willingness to provide bureaucrats and politicians with kickbacks.

¹²³ Significantly, those businessmen involved in the lucrative re-export trade were not averse to the implementation of the ERP since it entailed lower import duties.

¹²⁴ Although it may be correct to suggest that corruption increased in scope and intensity over the years.

¹²⁵ After the 1994 coup it was alleged that workers on Jawara's farms had been paid by the Ministry of Agriculture and that he had used state funds to export mangoes. *Daily Observer*, 27 September 1994, p 1. For comparative purposes see the discussion of Stevens and Momoh below.

¹²⁶ Although it should be pointed out that foreign aid simultaneously provided a source of resources for corrupt diversion. See Chapter four for further details.

corruption. The possibility of exposure in Parliament or the press provided a further constraint.

Nevertheless, events during the closing years of PPP rule together with post-coup revelations and enquiries¹²⁷ suggest that corruption was both a significant phenomenon and one which played an important role in the PPP's survival. Jawara understood the political advantages of corruption. Local sources agree that he possessed a fairly accurate picture of his lieutenants' dubious dealings, the implicit threat of exposure helping to ensure their loyalty. More fundamentally, corruption formed an important component of the patronage network, facilitating elite accumulation. It provided a means of creating and sustaining mutually beneficial and supportive relationships between PPP politicians (headed by Jawara), senior civil servants and Gambian businessmen.

The Gambia Commercial and Development Bank (GCDB), established in 1972 as an instrument of development,¹²⁸ was one of two key arenas for corruption. The second, the Gambia Co-operative Union (GCU), was the GCDB's largest single borrower. Apart from the extension of credit to the GCU (the implications of which are examined in due course) the GCDB extended politically motivated low-interest loans, guaranteed by the government, to key members of the rural and urban elites. Selected PPP politicians and businessmen were among the beneficiaries.

Failure on the part of debtors to meet repayments¹²⁹ caused the GCDB to incur heavy and increasing losses. The true extent of the debts - over D300m by the late 1980's - was revealed following an IMF investigation conducted in 1988¹³⁰ with just twelve borrowers accounting for over D100m of bad debts.¹³¹ The IMF report had demanded changes at senior management level as a precursor to the release of further funding and Ousainou N'Jie, the managing director (and, according to Ousman Mojang, Jawara's brother in law)¹³² was subsequently retired and replaced by an expatriate. Allegations of corrupt activities, levelled at N'Jie for some years, were substantiated further in 1993 when he appeared in court charged with the illegal use of the bank's foreign currency fund, misappropriating funds, and making payments without authorisation.¹³³ Attempts to

¹²⁷ Most of the evidence presented here was collected during fieldwork prior to the 1994 coup. Where available it is supplemented with that which came to light after the coup.

¹²⁸ The GCDB was established to finance small businesses and to act as a commercial bank and agricultural credit/ development finance institution. See *Budget Speech by the Honourable SM Dibba, Minister of Finance and Trade on Friday, 25 June, 1971 in the House of Representatives*, Sessional Paper No 3 of 1971 (Bathurst, Government Printer, 1971), p 9.

¹²⁹ According to local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94) all attempts at debt recovery were highly selective. In 1984, for example, the GCDB took several people to court and yet overlooked the debts of the S Madi company which in 1978 had been bought (with a GCDB loan) by several Gambians, among them a nominated MP, Dandeh N'Jie.

¹³⁰ According to *Foroyaa* (15 October 1988, p 2) the report was prompted by the government's decision, taken in 1987, to accept responsibility for D72m of unpaid debts.

¹³¹ "The State of The Gambian and International Economies. Analysis of the 1992 Budget Speech; The Final Battle with the PPP on Economics," *Foroyaa*, 12 August 1992, p 85.

¹³² *West Africa*, 6 April 1987, p 658.

¹³³ *Daily Observer*, 3 February 1993, p 1. The case was eventually settled out of court when N'Jie agreed to repay part of his illegal debt.

bring other debtors to book commenced following the privatisation of the GCDB (again on the instructions of the IMF) and the setting up of the Assets Management and Recovery Corporation (AMRC) in early 1993.¹³⁴ The AMRC made slow progress. Saihou Ceesay, for example, obstructed all efforts to recover his company's D127m debt.¹³⁵

The GCU was established in the late 1950's to represent the interests of local co-operative societies (of which, by 1988, there were almost 2000). Its functions were two-fold: to serve as a licensed buying agent (buying mainly groundnuts) for the Gambia Produce Marketing Board and to channel agricultural credit and other inputs to farmers. Funds for both these functions were provided, in part, by the GCDB.¹³⁶ Although the distribution of credit formed an important part of the PPP's clientelist network (see below) misappropriation at senior levels¹³⁷ meant a substantial proportion of GCU funds never reached farmers. Corrupt practices emerged into public view from the early 1970's. During the first half of the 1970's two commissions of enquiry were established, both of which uncovered evidence of misappropriation and both of which resulted in the removal of the Registrar and Secretary/Manager.¹³⁸ In 1985 a much larger scandal involving several million dalasis was uncovered resulting in many arrests including a number of senior GCU staff. Dilatory legal proceedings ensued. The 1985 audit (theoretically an annual event) which revealed this fraud was, with the exception of 1986, not repeated until some eight years later. During this time the Department of Co-operation, the government department responsible for conducting audits, was "reduced to an invisible institution in a dilapidated office."¹³⁹

At the prompting of the acting-registrar a further audit was conducted in 1993. The report, serialised in the local press,¹⁴⁰ revealed massive corruption in the GCU. Dubious transactions with a local trading firm, outright theft, inflation of travel expenditure (amounting to almost D4m, of which 5% was considered to be legitimate) were just some of the practices exposed. The union's three senior officials (including the general manager Momodou Dibba) were questioned by police but Jawara - perhaps in view of the fact that Vice-President Sabally was thought to be implicated - prevaricated and established a commission of enquiry. The report, submitted following the 1994 military coup, revealed the misappropriation of a total of D47m. Dibba alone was ordered to repay

¹³⁴ As a nominated MP, N'Jie had opposed the establishment of the AMRC in Parliament.

¹³⁵ Many Gambians believe that Ceesay would have been unable to evade the AMRC without the collusion of senior politicians.

¹³⁶ During the 1980's the GCU borrowed extensively from the GCDB. A large proportion of the loans were guaranteed by the government, although D30m was not. In January 1989 the government agreed to accept responsibility for this loan.

¹³⁷ Some funds were also lost to inefficiency although local sources suggest losses were inflated to disguise corruption.

¹³⁸ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Cooperatives*, Sessional Paper No 2 of 1972 (Bathurst, Government Printer, 1972), pp 6-8 and *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the Co-operative Movement in The Gambia*, Sessional Paper No 4 of 1975 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1975), p 4.

¹³⁹ *Foroyaa*, 15 September 1993, p 2

¹⁴⁰ See for example, *New Citizen*, February 1994.

over D12m.¹⁴¹

Although the GCDB and the GCU played a key role in elite accumulation, corruption also featured in the operations of other parastatals, notably the Gambia Utilities Corporation and the Gambia Produce Marketing Board. Government departments included on their pay-roll a substantial number of "ghost workers."¹⁴² Civil servants were known to benefit from "kickbacks" over the allocation of construction contracts. Customs fraud (particularly important because of the lucrative re-export trade of The Gambia) united businessmen, officials of the Customs and Excise Department and the Ministry of Finance in mutually beneficial corrupt practices involving the under-declaration and non-declaration of imported goods; scandals emerged in 1982, 1988 and 1993, the latter two involving top officials and multi-million dalasi sums.¹⁴³

Publicly of course Jawara condemned corruption and was quite willing to sacrifice a few individuals to appease popular resentment. Towards the end of the 1970's for example, as public and press criticism gained momentum, a number of civil servants and ministers (including BLK Sanyang, Kebba Leigh and Yaya Ceesay) widely rumoured to be corrupt, were dismissed. However, it is worth noting that the sacked ministers were all among the earliest members of the PPP. Their dismissal complemented aspects of Jawara's political strategy (described above) and in that sense corruption rumours simply provided a pretext for desired changes to the cabinet.¹⁴⁴ Affirming this interpretation, none of the men believed to be corrupt were investigated or charged. Indeed, Leigh was given a job in a public corporation while both Cham and Ceesay were eventually reassigned to the cabinet.¹⁴⁵

This mixture of tolerance and concern for popular support was further reflected in the fate of anti-corruption legislation.¹⁴⁶ During the 1970's three pieces of anti-corruption legislation found their way onto the statute books. Each was designed to appease public opinion and, in theory, to ensure the recovery of stolen funds; that of 1979 set up a Special Criminal Court to deal specifically with corruption cases and the restitution of funds. Each measure proved ineffective. Not only were

¹⁴¹ *The Gambia Weekly*, 25 November 1994, p 1 and *Daily Observer*, 28 November 1994, p 1.

¹⁴² In 1993 for example ghost workers were discovered at the Education and Accountant-General's Department.

¹⁴³ See *Foroyaa*, 15 October 1988, p 3 and *Daily Observer*, 11 October 1993, p 1. The importance of customs duties to government revenue had prompted a genuine attempt (under the close watch of the IMF) to clean up customs fraud after 1988; of the D25m tax revenue lost, all except D3.78m was recovered. (*Second Meeting of the House of Representatives, 1992/93 Legislative Session*, Parliamentary Questions, Question No 12/92/93 (Banjul, Government Printer), p 1). However the emergence of a second major scandal in 1993 suggests one of the ways in which elites continued to benefit, even after the implementation of the ERP. Despite the IMF's emphasis on financial discipline, inflating foreign travel expenses was believed to be another pervasive and lucrative activity.

¹⁴⁴ The same might be said of MC Cham's dismissal, also amidst allegations of corruption, in the early 1980s. As already noted Cham was believed to hold presidential aspirations.

¹⁴⁵ Civil servants were treated similarly leniently. In the early 1980's for example, a government report advised that FAB M'Boge (Project Manager) be held accountable for the abuse of funds destined for the Rural Development Project. Instead, M'Boge was honourably retired.

¹⁴⁶ For details of the legislation see, *Proceedings of the 5th meeting in the 1982/83 Legislative Session*, Sitting of Monday 20 December 1982 (Banjul, Government Printer), pp 13-18.

repayment provisions not applied in many instances, the cases of the well-connected tended to be subject to inordinately lengthy delays or, according to local sources, forgotten altogether. In 1982 a fourth piece of legislation was passed, this time setting up an Assets Evaluation Commission. The Commission, composed of three presidential nominees, was introduced as part of Jawara's attempts to consolidate the PPP's position following the attempted coup. Its brief was to investigate suspected instances of public sector corruption and convey any findings to the President. The Commission did not have the authority to initiate investigations; suspected instances of corruption were to be submitted by the public.

Prior to the establishment of the Assets Commission Jawara had expressed the hope that it would "substantially slow down the rat-race and the mad rush for the acquisition of more and more material goods."¹⁴⁷ One reason for its failure to do so centred upon the disgrace of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Fafa M'Bai. M'Bai, credited as the architect of the Assets Evaluation Commission, was, somewhat ironically, its first victim. Investigations centred on the transfer of D500,000 to London banks in breach of exchange control regulations, customs evasion and illegal foreign currency deals. Allegations that he had facilitated the purchase of a local hotel by a Nigerian, Chief Arthur Nzeribe, using a local car dealer as a front man also circulated in the local press.¹⁴⁸

These allegations undermined Jawara's enthusiasm for the Assets Evaluation Commission. Both the appointment of M'Bai and the creation of the Commission had been important aspects of Jawara's drive to improve the PPP's image. The investigation of one of his key reformers together with M'Bai's subsequent attempts to discredit the Commission¹⁴⁹ tarnished the entire exercise. Moreover, Jawara was reported to have come under intense pressure to abolish the commission. According to one report¹⁵⁰ several delegations of Gambian notables - including some managing directors of parastatals, no doubt nervous that their colleague in GPMB was being investigated - petitioned Jawara to abolish the commission. Although loathe to take such a drastic measure the commission was largely forgotten. By September 1984 eighteen complaints had been received (said to include former cabinet ministers and senior public officials) but were not pursued.

The notorious Sanna "Tix" Manneh case provides a final example of Jawara's attempts to protect his clients and balance the political advantages of corruption against popular resentment. In an article published in *The Torch* on October 6 1988, Manneh accused four ministers (Saihou Sabally then Minister of Agriculture, Landing Jallow Sonko, Lamin Saho and MC Cham) of

¹⁴⁷ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 31 March 1982, p 3.

¹⁴⁸ See in particular issues of *The Gambia Onward*, June-July 1984.

¹⁴⁹ M'Bai argued that the Commission's chairman (a Ghanaian judge) was not entitled to practice in The Gambia (since his name was absent from the roll of the Supreme Court) and thus was not eligible to serve as chairman. M'Bai's appeal was eventually rejected by the Appeal Court but rumours that certain "Old Guard" politicians had orchestrated his disgrace did little to enhance the Commission's image.

¹⁵⁰ *West Africa*, 2 September 1985, p 1833.

corruption. Jawara's oft-quoted promise that, if found guilty, the ministers would "face the music" was followed by a drawn-out legal battle. Three of the ministers (excluding Cham) accused Manneh of criminal libel. In April 1989 the court found Manneh guilty on just one count.¹⁵¹ Regarding Sabally's alleged "dubious rice deals" with Dibba, the GCU General Manager, and the issue of excessive petrol supply (provided by Dibba to Sabally in the form of fuel vouchers) the court ruled that the prosecution had failed to prove their case. Manneh was also acquitted of libelling Saho, accused of converting a West German gift of school buses into a private transport company (installing his wife as manager) and selling a consignment of German drugs intended for free distribution.

Following this judgement many Gambians believed the two ministers would be sacked. In the event, however, Jawara simply ordered an enquiry into the activities of Saho (not Sabally) and the legal process continued. The Attorney-General appealed against the decision, arguing that the magistrate had misdirected himself by placing the onus of proof on the prosecution. The Chief Justice ordered a retrial in the lower courts but Manneh objected and eventually won the day.¹⁵² These legal complexities failed to diminish public interest in either the case or the fate of the two ministers. There was little doubt in the popular mind that the ministers were guilty and Saho was eventually removed from office.¹⁵³ Sabally on the other hand not only remained but was promoted, first to finance and later to Vice-President.

Corruption played a significant part in the survival of the PPP, uniting political, bureaucratic and business interests in a series of mutually beneficial and supportive relationships. In the longer term, however, it served to undermine the regime. Perhaps the first indication of this occurred in 1981 when, during the coup attempt of that year, Kukoi Samba Sanyang cited "corruption and the squandering of public funds" as a primary motive for intervention.¹⁵⁴ No doubt there was a strong element of opportunism in Sanyang's words and yet the fact that he seized upon corruption as a suitable justification for his actions reflected increasing public awareness of the problem. Just a month prior to the coup Reverend Ian Roach had spoken out publicly against corruption,¹⁵⁵ the local press reported numerous instances of low-level bureaucratic theft, and higher up Jawara's leniency towards the ministers and civil servants sacked towards the end of the 1970's was widely resented.

¹⁵¹ The court ruled in favour of Sonko - Manneh had written that he should be sacked "like his other corrupt friends" - but simply cautioned and released Manneh.

¹⁵² Towards the end of 1992 Manneh sued Sabally for wrongful and malicious prosecution. The case was eventually settled out of court.

¹⁵³ Besides the Manneh case, Saho was said to have been irregularly issuing land around the Tourist Development Area.

¹⁵⁴ "Announcement read by Kukoi Samba Sanyang during the attempted coup in The Gambia on July 30 1981," transcribed by Dana Ott (Africa Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, Fajara, The Gambia). Corruption was a recurring theme of the broadcast.

¹⁵⁵ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 8 June 1981, p 1.

After the coup Jawara made some efforts to restore the PPP's image - notably with the prosecution of the Commissioner for External Aid, Ebou Taal (see Chapter four). Thereafter however, corruption - particularly during the late 1980's and early 1990's - emerged as an increasingly visible phenomenon. Given the problems of quantifying what is an essentially clandestine phenomenon it is difficult to state with any accuracy whether the incidence of corruption underwent any significant increase. What *is* certain is that popular awareness of the problem reached an all time high. The IMF revelations and the M'Bai and Manneh cases were all documented extensively in the local press. Regarding the latter, Jawara's decision to retain Saihou Sabally in government was deeply unpopular and for many Gambians served as stark reminder of his unwillingness to deal with the "big fish."¹⁵⁶ The press also played an important role in reporting the criticism of the opposition NCP¹⁵⁷ and, perhaps more importantly, that of religious leaders. During 1993/94 Bishop Cleary and the Imams of Banjul and Dippakunda all made strong speeches condemning corruption. The latter criticised what he called "the big thieves of the nation" who steal "millions of public money."¹⁵⁸

The increased public awareness of corruption weakened the PPP regime and furnished the 1994 conspirators with a suitable pretext for intervention.¹⁵⁹ Since many soldiers reportedly regarded their unsatisfactory living conditions as a manifestation of corruption it also gave them a motive (see Chapter two).

Civil Society and Regime Survival.

Hitherto the discussion has focused on the ways in which Jawara sought to fashion an informal coalition of politicians, senior civil servants and businessmen whose adherence to the PPP was sustained, in part, by the receipt of material benefits. A second factor serving to discourage the withdrawal of elite support centred upon the legitimacy and popular support enjoyed by the PPP. The impact of popular support on intra-elite (and civil-military) relations provided Jawara with an incentive to extend his attention beyond the upper echelons.

Of course many African leaders are aware of the positive relationship between popular support and elite acquiescence. However, resource shortages have more often than not persuaded

¹⁵⁶ Conversing with "ordinary" Gambians on the subject of corruption, Sabally's name cropped up repeatedly. Why Jawara chose to retain such an unpopular individual remains unclear although Sabally's loyalty was clearly a factor.

¹⁵⁷ See, for example, *The Point*, 31 January 1994, p 12; *Foroyaa*, 30 September 1988, p 5; *Daily Observer*, 22 May 1992, p 5.

¹⁵⁸ *The Point*: 8 November 1993, p 1; 13 December 1993, p 1; 10 January 1994, p 1. The importance of religious criticism reflected the prestige attached to religious leaders in The Gambia. According to a survey undertaken by Peil, on a scale of occupational prestige imam was ranked second by adults (as compared to Ghana where religious leaders came in tenth). Margaret Peil, *Cities and Suburbs: Urban Life in West Africa* (New York, Holmes and Meier, 1981), p 260.

¹⁵⁹ Jammeh's take-over speech stressed "rampant corruption" within the PPP regime.

leaders to prioritise in favour of elites. In The Gambia two additional factors persuaded Jawara to pursue a somewhat different route to survival. For one thing the PPP needed to win successive multi-party elections. For another, Jawara's rejection of coercion as a survival technique meant that overt public challenges could not simply be suppressed; it was vital that the latent threat posed by specific societal groups remain dormant.

The public support enjoyed by the PPP regime stemmed, in part, from Jawara's personal popularity. A fundamentally pragmatic and flexible individual, Jawara was no ideologue¹⁶⁰ and did not possess a charismatic hold on the populace. However he did possess the ability to inspire trust. An important aspect of this was Jawara's accessibility (assisted by the small size of The Gambia). He undertook annual "meet the farmers" tours - during which he listened to people's problems and explained government policy¹⁶¹ - as well as periodic meetings with sections of the Banjul community. Despite the increased security surrounding State House after the 1981 coup attempt, Jawara remained available to individuals or delegations seeking an audience. Linked to his accessibility Jawara remained "in touch" with his people. His lifestyle, though obviously comfortable, did not feature the insensitive extravagance of some other African leaders. Whether distributing gifts or inspecting projects¹⁶² he demonstrated a seemingly genuine concern for his people. As time passed Jawara's longevity - and seeming invincibility¹⁶³ - also worked to his advantage. Many Gambians simply could not imagine life without him.

Gambians' trust in Jawara further reflected their appreciation of his peaceable nature. Jawara's magnanimity towards his enemies¹⁶⁴ and his ability to provide a stable and peaceful environment were a source of great satisfaction to most Gambians.¹⁶⁵ That ethnic conflict was largely absent reflected Jawara's willingness to share power; his efforts in this direction were greatly assisted by Gambians' high degree of inter-ethnic tolerance stemming from the country's

¹⁶⁰ Tesito (self help) was the closest Jawara came to anything resembling an ideology. For details see L Saho, *Tesito: A Grass-Roots Doctrine for National Development* (The Gambia Archives, 1979).

¹⁶¹ Some cynicism over the meet the farmers tours did exist - *The Nation* (19 October 1991, p 6) complained they had "turned into an annual jamboree for griots and praise-singers, yai compins and other party stalwarts" - and yet from the author's experience this rarely extended to the farmers themselves.

¹⁶² On one widely publicised occasion in 1976 Jawara stopped work on a health centre due to the lack of progress (*The Gambia News Bulletin*, 22 May 1976, p 1); on another he paid an unexpected visit to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Banjul (*The Gambia News Bulletin*, 8 June 1976, p 1) where a pile of rubbish (which he offered to clear up himself) incensed him so much he failed to get beyond the front door. This "hands-on" approach was welcomed by many Gambians.

¹⁶³ Jawara not only survived political challenges (such as the 1981 coup attempt) but also personal misfortune (notably a serious helicopter crash in 1982).

¹⁶⁴ Of a total sixty-four death sentences for treason only one was carried out. *The Gambia Weekly*, 19 March 1993, p 1. In conversation with the author some Gambians insisted that even this single death warrant was signed not by Jawara, but by one of his subordinates, demonstrating the resilience of Jawara's reputation as the "peaceful President."

¹⁶⁵ Jawara's ability to retain a multi-party system and his actions in the sphere of foreign policy constituted a further source of satisfaction (see Chapters three and four).

small size (which encouraged contact and tolerance between different groups),¹⁶⁶ a shared religion, Islam (which for many superseded ethnicity) and common cultural values.¹⁶⁷

Given The Gambia's limited resources, and elites' prior claim on those which were available, Jawara's ability to provide political goods was crucial. However, recalling Cartwright's suggestion that in order to retain support over the long term a leader must provide some material benefits, it is important to take a closer look at The Gambia's political economy.

Political economy and regime survival.

In The Gambia there existed an intimate relationship between the acquisition and distribution of resources and the PPP's survival. On the other hand there was no simple correlation between economic development and survival. To the extent that economic development provides a regime with resources these two observations seem at odds, but before explaining the relationship between them it is important to demonstrate the validity of the latter.

For the first ten years of independence, the absence of any immediate or direct relationship between development and survival remained hidden. Thus, the PPP enjoyed a stretch of virtually unchallenged pre-eminence alongside a period of modest economic growth. GDP per capita increased at an average rate of approximately 4% per annum, enabling the government to balance the recurrent budget and devote a small sum (D2m in 1974/75) to the development budget.¹⁶⁸ The annual rate of inflation remained below 4% and the external debt manageable (with servicing costs under 1.5% of export earnings). The balance of payments situation also remained healthy; by April 1972 external reserves had grown to the value of 13 months of imports.¹⁶⁹

From the mid to late 1970's, however, the economy began to decline. External factors - notably rising import prices¹⁷⁰ and declining export revenues caused by periodic drought¹⁷¹ and a

¹⁶⁶ This is true of both the rural areas (all divisions contain more than one ethnic group and single group villages are in close proximity) and the urban areas. For details of the latter see Margaret Peil, *op. cit.*, pp 116, 150.

¹⁶⁷ These factors are discussed in some detail by Hughes, *op. cit.*, 1982-83, pp 66-67, 81-82. Also see Peter M Weil, "Mandinka Mansaya: the Role of the Mandinka in the Political System of The Gambia," (PhD dissertation, University of Oregon, 1968).

¹⁶⁸ *Budget Speech by the Honourable IM Garba-Jahumpa, JP, Minister of Finance and Trade, in Parliament on Thursday 27th June, 1975*, Sessional Paper No 8 of 1975 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1975), p 1.

¹⁶⁹ *Budget Speech by the Honourable SM Dibba, Minister of Finance and Trade on Friday, 23 June, 1972 in the House of Representatives*, Sessional Paper No 5 of 1972 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1972), p 14.

¹⁷⁰ According to Radelet, *op. cit.*, 1990, p 40, import prices rose an average of 14.5% annually between the first oil shock in 1973 and 1985.

¹⁷¹ The drought (as well as the PPP's agricultural policies discussed below) caused groundnut production to fall to a low of 45,000 tons in 1981, compared to 120,000 tons in 1968/69. *Budget Speech by the Honourable SM Dibba, Minister of Finance, Trade and Development on Tuesday, 17th June, 1969 in the House of Representatives*, Sessional Paper No 3 of 1969 (Bathurst, Government Printer, 1969), p 2. The fall in 1981 coincided with a decline in the export price and exports valued at D52.8m were the lowest since 1973/74. In 1982/83 groundnut production increased to 128,000 tonnes but "the world market prices fell to such low levels that the substantial increase ... failed to register any significant impact." *Statement by His Excellency Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, President of the Republic of The Gambia on the Stabilization Programme for*

reduction in export prices - undermined the economy. Compounding these problems, the survival imperative - which dictated the expansion of the public sector and increased, primarily urban-directed, expenditure (see below) - failed to promote economic development. Increasingly undisciplined expenditure¹⁷² combined with a decline in groundnut exports resulted in revenues failing to keep pace with spending. By 1980/81 external reserves had declined to the value of one month's imports.¹⁷³ Compared to the first ten years of independence, 1975-1980 saw the GDP growth rate halve, the recurrent budget surplus disappear and the average annual rate of inflation more than double.

These developments coincided with the first major challenge to the PPP's survival, the 1981 attempted coup d'etat. Some observers suggest that the prevailing economic problems provided Kukoi Sanyang with the opportunity to intervene (his take-over speech stressed the "rapidly worsening economic situation") but the relationship between the two is not established. Even prior to mentioning the economy Sanyang cited the "terror" tactics of the PPP (akin, he suggested, to those perpetrated in South Africa) and Gambians' "perpetual state of fear" as prime reasons for the coup. The spurious nature of these claims suggest that Sanyang did not perceive the need for his interventionist excuses to be grounded in reality. The limited civilian participation in the coup attempt provides a second reason for questioning a positive correlation between economic decline and the coup attempt. Rural dwellers who had suffered most in the preceding years showed no sign of supporting Sanyang.¹⁷⁴

Subsequent developments also cast doubt on the relationship between development and survival. Until 1985 Jawara chose to continue with his pre-coup economic policies and despite a further economic decline¹⁷⁵ the PPP regime remained unchallenged (and in fact won a convincing electoral victory in 1982). In 1985, however, Jawara's economic approach underwent a significant change. Before examining the reasons for this (which were not directly related to economic development *per se*) it is necessary to explain the relationship between the acquisition and distribution of resources and the survival of the PPP regime prior to 1985.

1984/85, Sessional Paper No 2 of 1984 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1984), p 2.

¹⁷² For example, development expenditure from 1975-1980 was originally projected at D145m but eventually reached D350m (although the plan was extended for a year).

¹⁷³ *Budget Speech by the Honourable Sheriff Saikouba Sisay, Minister of Finance and Trade, in Parliament on Thursday 8th July, 1982*, Sessional Paper No 3 of 1982 (Banjul Government, Printer), p 11.

¹⁷⁴ The participation of a minority of urban dwellers is examined in detail below.

¹⁷⁵ Between 1980 and 1985 annual GDP growth fell to less than 1%. United Nations, *Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Country Presentation, The Gambia* (The Gambia Archives, 1990), p 2. For a detailed look at the economic decline between 1980 and 1985 - which saw budget deficits increase from an annual average of 2.8% of GDP between 1965 and 1975 to 15.4% of GDP between 1980 and 1985; increases in the rate of inflation; a decline in the volume of exports and an increasing external debt (which 1985 had reached the equivalent of 114% of GDP) - see Radelet, *op. cit.*, 1990, pp 33-36, 42.

The Rural-Urban Divide.

A difficult choice facing rulers is how to distribute resources between rural and urban groups. Although the survival imperative dictates the prioritisation of urban interests one means of achieving this - the taxation of rural farmers to fund urban spending - can prove self-defeating. The possibility exists that disaffected farmers will migrate to the city (resulting in overcrowding, a strain on existing services and a general deterioration in the quality of urban life) or smuggle their produce to a neighbouring country (thus denying the government of a source of revenue to divert to urban groups).

In The Gambia, the need to minimise both internal migration (see below) and smuggling into Senegal provided two reasons to cater to the rural areas. The government could not afford to lose its primary source of domestic revenue (groundnut receipts) and yet the porosity of the Senegal-Gambian borders provided farmers with a ready opportunity to respond to producer price disparities. A third factor suggesting the wisdom of striking a balance between urban and rural interests was the retention of a multi-party system.¹⁷⁶

If The Gambia's multi-party system posed problems it also provided partial solutions. Thus, Jawara's ability to maintain a competitive political system and his repeated election victories constituted a crucial source of legitimacy (see Chapter three). To the extent that urbanites regarded the government as legitimate they were less likely to resort to confrontation - a boon to a regime grappling with the problem of scarce resources and the need to pay at least some attention to rural interests.

If legitimacy helped ease the pressure on resources it did not wholly eradicate Jawara's perceived need to favour urban interests. That urban dwellers (the residents of Banjul and Kombo St. Mary) benefited more than their rural counterparts can be demonstrated in several ways. Taking income, for example, in the late 1970's urban incomes were estimated to be, on average, twice as high as those of rural dwellers.¹⁷⁷ Subsidies on rice, electricity and transportation also benefited the urban consumer. Public utilities, which at independence had been more or less confined to the urban areas, continued to be concentrated in and around Banjul. During the first ten years of independence almost three-quarters of the expenditure on electricity and water supplies was spent in the urban areas. Educationally, rural dwellers also lagged far behind their urban counterparts. For example, by the end of the 1970's 90% of children of primary school age attended school in the urban areas compared to a figure of less than 30% for the rest of the country. Approximately 50% of education

¹⁷⁶ Although some methods of cultivating electoral support, discrediting the opposition for example (see Chapter three) are non-resource related if Cartwright's argument that material benefits must be provided in the long run is correct, the problems of resource distribution remained. Added to this, there was little to stop farmers voting PPP but still opting to migrate to the city, a point I return to below.

¹⁷⁷ World Bank Country Study, *The Gambia: Basic Needs in The Gambia* (Washington, DC, The World Bank, 1981), pp 14, 17. A report in 1975 estimated a much higher income differential with average per capita urban income at D730 compared to D190 for rural areas, *The Gambia Weekly*, 26 January 1989, No 4, p 6.

expenditure was directed towards the urban areas.¹⁷⁸ The provision of health care also contained a strong element of urban bias, the rural system lacking vital inputs including drugs, equipment and medical personnel.¹⁷⁹ Reflecting this, in 1980 the rural infant mortality rate was estimated to be 217 per 1000 children under five years, decreasing to 53 per 1000 for the urban areas.¹⁸⁰

The resources to sustain the PPP's urban bias came from two sources. The first was rural taxation, effected through export taxes and the GPMB's monopoly on the groundnut trade. Prior to 1985 groundnut producer prices were consistently below the export selling price; during the years from 1965 to 1975, for example, the effective rate of taxation (even allowing for transport and handling costs) was greater than 50% in five out of the ten years.¹⁸¹ By the late 1970's the GPMB's reserves totalled over D100m.¹⁸²

Before 1970 these reserves remained largely untouched.¹⁸³ From then on however (and particularly after 1975) the government increasingly looked to the GPMB as a source of development funds.¹⁸⁴ Resources siphoned from the rural areas were not returned. For example, the first Five-Year Development Plan (1975-80) was portrayed by the government as a "plan for agriculture" and yet that sector - projected to receive 22.4% of total development expenditure - received only 16.4% (the majority of which was spent on infrastructural rather than directly productive projects) whereas transport and communications received approximately 44% (almost twice the original projections). Apart from development funding, the GPMB reserves were used to set up new parastatals,¹⁸⁵ fund subsidies,¹⁸⁶ fuel corruption and finance government budget

¹⁷⁸ Basic Needs, *op. cit.*, p 18.

¹⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, p 59.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations, *World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, 14-24 July, 1980* (The Gambia Archives), p 6.

¹⁸¹ Details on producer and world selling prices from "Agrarian Reform and Rural Development", n.d. (The Gambia Archives), p 26.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ It is worth noting agriculture's low priority prior to 1970. During the first development programme natural resources received 21% of total expenditure although only 4% of this was spent on agricultural projects, mostly on infrastructure. During the second programme natural resources received only 15%, 75% of which was spent on infrastructure. See *The Gambia Government Development Programme, 1964-67*, Sessional Paper No 10 of 1964 (Bathurst, Government Printer, 1964); *The Gambia Government Development Programme, 1967-68 to 1970/71*, Sessional Paper No 4 of 1967 (Bathurst, Government Printer, 1967) and *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 15 May 1979, p 2. As Jawara himself noted, these programmes "had virtually no impact on the alleviation of the rural-urban drift, the regional dispersal of the benefits of development projects, the development of income-yielding projects, or closing the rural/urban income gap." *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Successive budget speeches detail the amounts made available; during the 1970's they averaged approximately D2m a year.

¹⁸⁵ For example in 1973 the government borrowed D1,829,000 in order to set up the Fish Marketing Corporation and the Livestock Marketing Board. Shortly thereafter both were put into liquidation. Hazel R Barrett, *The Marketing of Foodstuffs in The Gambia, 1400-1980: A Geographical Analysis* (Aldershot, Avebury, 1988), p 85.

¹⁸⁶ In 1982 for example the GPMB subsidised the price of rice, fertiliser and oil to the tune of D10m. *Budget Speech by the Honourable Sheriff Saikouba Sisay, Minister of Finance and Trade, in Parliament on Thursday 8th July, 1982*, Sessional Paper No 3 of 1982 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1982), p 26.

deficits.¹⁸⁷ By 1982 this expenditure (combined with the drought and poor world prices noted above) caused GPMB reserves to be reduced to nought.

The second source of resources sustaining the urban bias was the external world. Most of the development budget - of which urban dwellers were the prime beneficiaries - was composed of foreign aid (see Chapter four). Equally importantly, externally-generated resources enabled Jawara to maintain an element of balance between the rural and urban areas, not only easing what would otherwise have been a much greater burden on farmers but also providing them with some modest improvements. Rice, cotton and cattle projects were developed. Inputs in the form of fertilisers, selected seeds and insecticides were provided, sometimes at subsidised prices. During the 1970s, when world prices for groundnuts remained high, producer prices did improve; in 1974/75 for example they were approximately double those in 1965/66.¹⁸⁸ Despite the urban bias some improvements were also made in the areas of health and education. By the late 1970's the rural health network consisted of Bansang hospital, ten health centres and sixty dispensaries and sub-dispensaries.¹⁸⁹ By 1976 there were 25,000 children enrolled in primary school; by 1984 this number had increased to 66,000 and by 1990 to 86,000. By 1992 the number of High School places in the rural areas had increased to 2000 (although the figure for the urban areas was over 5000).¹⁹⁰

Although these improvements fell short of rural expectations their distribution and role in sustaining the patron-client network were critical to the PPP's survival. Linking the PPP to the rural areas were a number of key rural leaders: chiefs, village heads, local co-operative chairmen, "rich" farmers etc.¹⁹¹ The benefits they enjoyed stemmed from the role occupied (although one individual might occupy multiple roles). Chiefs, for example, enjoyed preferential access to loans, a certain amount of prestige and the retention of their position (deposition being within the power of the ruling party); co-operative chairmen enjoyed similar benefits as well as possibilities for the corrupt diversion of funds; "rich" farmers were often given priority access to rural development schemes.¹⁹² In return these individuals operated to secure the support of those lower down the patron-client chain. For many ordinary farmers access to basic agricultural inputs or loans¹⁹³ necessitated that

¹⁸⁷ In the late 1970's the government extracted D40m from GPMB reserves for this purpose. Radelet *op. cit.*, 1990, p 45.

¹⁸⁸ "Agrarian Reform and Rural Development", n.d. (The Gambia Archives), p 26. Prices also rose after 1975 but the drought conditions (already noted) caused farmers' income to fall.

¹⁸⁹ Basic Needs, *op. cit.*, p iii.

¹⁹⁰ Behind the government statistics, however, very real problems remained. Not only were the facilities poor but, according to one government official (interview with the author, 5 November 1993), approximately half the primary school teachers were unqualified.

¹⁹¹ Radelet (*op. cit.*, 1990, p 199) also makes the point that some rural leaders (notably among the Fula) owned urban businesses and thus benefited from the PPP's urban bias.

¹⁹² See for example Peter M Weil, "Recent Agricultural Development Research in the Gambia." *Rural Africana*, No 8, Spring 1969, p 39.

¹⁹³ Co-operative loans were much cheaper than those provided by money-lenders. Providing loans and other inputs was a useful method of securing support for the PPP since they could be directed towards favoured individuals. High producer prices could not be selectively allocated in this way.

they become members of a co-operative. Co-operative chairmen - almost all of whom were members of the PPP - would distribute resources accordingly. Chiefs and village heads were responsible for the distribution of other resources (most "coercively" food aid) and would be prominent when schools or health centres were being built.¹⁹⁴

Although clientelism was important in securing the support of rural dwellers it did not necessarily preclude the problems of smuggling and rural-urban migration. People might vote for the PPP or turn out to cheer Jawara on his rural tours yet at the same time respond to poor economic returns on their produce by diverting their produce¹⁹⁵ or leaving for the towns (see below).

The Rural-Urban Divide After 1985.

In 1985 the PPP introduced the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP). Composed of several elements - notably reform of the exchange rate system and the public sector, the promotion of agriculture and other productive sectors, and the restructuring of the Public Investment Programme¹⁹⁶ - the ERP was designed to restore the economy to health.

The government's decision to introduce economic reform was not a direct result of the economic decline. As already noted, decline had set in prior to 1985 and yet the government had responded with only half-hearted attempts at economic reform (to persuade donors to continue providing financial assistance).¹⁹⁷ By 1985 however, The Gambia's economic problems - with external reserves equalling two weeks of imports, shortages of essential commodities, unprecedented inflation and debt arrears exceeding \$75m - assumed a different complexion with the international community's decision to cease funding in the absence of major reform.

Jawara faced stark choices. Should the international community carry out its threat to withhold assistance, "shortages of basic commodities would have increased in severity and duration; parallel market commodity prices, foreign exchange rates, and interest rates would have risen; more development projects would have been cancelled as debt service arrears mounted; both inflation and unemployment would have increased; and the quality of basic services would have

¹⁹⁴ The political advantages of "visible" projects caused them to receive the bulk of government expenditure. In the health sector, for example, the emphasis was upon curative rather than preventative medicine.

¹⁹⁵ It should be noted that, depending upon the comparative producer prices, Senegalese farmers would also smuggle their produce into The Gambia. Before 1974 the fact that Senegalese farmers did not receive immediate cash payments gave them an incentive to sell their groundnuts in The Gambia. Thereafter, prices were the most important consideration. In 1984/85 for example many Senegalese producers were believed to have resorted to smuggling. For details see Paul McNamara, "Welfare effects of groundnut pricing in The Gambia," *Food Policy*, Vol 17, No 4, 1992, p 289.

¹⁹⁶ For further details see *West Africa*, 7 July 1986, p 1416. The ERP was followed up, from 1990, with the Programme for Sustained Development (PSD).

¹⁹⁷ On the 1984/85 Stabilisation Programme (which included a 25% devaluation) see the *Statement by His Excellency Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, President of the Republic of The Gambia on the Stabilization Programme for 1984/85*, Sessional Paper No 2 of 1984 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1984). The government's failure to meet prescribed targets caused the IMF to cancel the programme.

continued to deteriorate."¹⁹⁸ On the other hand, structural adjustment would necessarily entail some loss of control over the distribution of resources, it carried the risk of popular protest and, if the experience of other countries was anything to go by, did not guarantee resumed economic growth.

After some hesitation Jawara opted for major economic reform. The success of the programme - assisted by generous donor support¹⁹⁹ and several lucky breaks (including better weather and a drop in the world price of rice) - was reflected in an improvement in the country's macroeconomic performance. During the six year period to 1991-92 GDP grew at an average rate of 3.4% per year.²⁰⁰ Inflation, at 46% in 1986-87, decreased to 13.2% by 1987-88 and 5.3% by May 1991.²⁰¹ External reserves, which had declined to the equivalent of a week's imports in mid-1986, increased to the equivalent of 4.7 months in 1991.²⁰² The budget deficit (excluding foreign grants) was reduced from a high of 17% of GDP in 1987/88 to 4.1% in 1990/91.²⁰³

Although The Gambia's economy underwent a quite impressive revival this does not in itself explain the PPP's survival. In particular these statistics say little about the social impact of structural adjustment. To take the rural areas first, a key element of the programme was to promote agricultural production and prevent smuggling to Senegal. To this end groundnut producer prices (facilitated by the depreciation of the dalasi²⁰⁴) were increased in 1986/87. Thereafter they were gradually decreased (alongside declining world prices) and in 1989/90 subsidies were ended.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁸ Malcolm F Mcpherson and Steven C Radelet, "Economic Reform in The Gambia: Policies, Politics, Foreign Aid and Luck" in Dwight H Perkins and Michael Roemer (eds.), *Reforming Economic Systems in Developing Countries* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Institute for International Development, Harvard University, 1991), p 122. Radelet, *op. cit.*, p 205, 1990 has calculated that without policy change (and a consequent reduction in foreign aid) total output would have fallen 2.7% over three years.

¹⁹⁹ On the provision of external assistance (which from 1986 to 1990 averaged approximately D25m per year) see Chapter four.

²⁰⁰ If one excludes the 1990-91 figures the GDP growth rate was rather higher. The slow-down in 1990-91 (the GDP growth rate was 2.1% compared to 5.6% the previous year) reflected a decline in the agricultural sector but was partly compensated for by a growth in re-exports. The ratio of re-exports to total exports increased to 84% in 1990/91 - an increase in value of 22.7% compared to 1989/90. *Central Bank of The Gambia, Annual Report 1990/91* (Banjul, Government Printer, 1991), p 1.

²⁰¹ *Budget Speech by the Honourable Sheriff Saikouba Sisay, MP, Minister of Finance and Trade in Parliament on Friday, 24th June, 1988*, Sessional Paper No 2 of 1988 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1988), p 25 and *Budget Speech by the Honourable Saihou Sulayman Sabally, MP, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs in Parliament on Friday, 21st June, 1991*, Sessional Paper No 3 of 1991 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1991), p 13. The following year inflation rose but by 1993 was back down to 6.5%. *The Gambia News and Report*, June 1993, p 25.

²⁰² Sessional Paper No 3 of 1991, p 12.

²⁰³ Reflecting the reduced wage bill and improved revenue collection. *Central Bank of The Gambia, Annual Report 1990/91* (Banjul, Government Printer), p 1.

²⁰⁴ It had been farmers who suffered most from the over-valued exchange rate since it restricted the GPMB's ability to offer a decent price for their produce. For a discussion of the changes to the exchange rate system see Hadjimichael, *op. cit.*, p 3.

²⁰⁵ Details of the producer price changes can be found in, United Nations, *Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Country Presentation, The Gambia*, 1990 (The Gambia Archives), p 5. The groundnut subsidy totalled D83m (8.8% of GDP) in 1986/87; D50m (4% of GDP) in 1987/88 and D13.2m (1% of GDP) in 1988/89. *Budget Speech by the Honourable Sheriff Saikouba Sisay, MP, Minister of Finance and Trade in Parliament on Friday, 24th June, 1988*, Sessional Paper No 2 of 1988 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1988), p 42. In 1989/90, despite the ending of the subsidy, increases in the international price of

During the first two years of the ERP higher producer prices (combined with better rainfall) did not end smuggling altogether - Senegal raised her prices beyond those of The Gambia²⁰⁶ - but did lead to increased agricultural production. More significantly real rural incomes increased by over 10%.²⁰⁷

It is important, however, not to overstate the benefits in the rural areas. The gradual return to low prices and poor rainfall levels saw agricultural production decline dramatically.²⁰⁸ Rural incomes declined accordingly; by the close of the 1980s an ILO report on poverty concluded that during the hungry season over three-quarters of rural dwellers were not consuming enough food to meet minimum calorific requirements.²⁰⁹ Radelet suggests that increased producer prices during the first year of the ERP produced the PPP's 1987 election victory but given that the PPP also won the 1992 elections when producer prices were down, other factors - including Jawara's continued popularity, the provision of political goods and the operation of patron-client networks²¹⁰ - were probably more important.

If the ERP produced mixed results for rural dwellers, urbanites suffered an unambiguous decline in living standards.²¹¹ A report²¹² published in 1993 placed 64% of urban dwellers under the overall poverty line and 33% under the food poverty line. As already noted, those on fixed incomes (who retained their jobs) received substantially less following the flotation. At the same time the mid-1985 removal of the GPMB's monopoly on rice importing and marketing and the ending of rice price controls and government subsidies resulted in greater availability but also increased prices. Prices of transport, water and electricity also increased alongside the parastatal reforms.²¹³

The important question, then, is how the PPP managed to implement the ERP without

groundnuts allowed producer prices to rise. Guaranteed producer prices were abolished from 1989/90 and in October 1990 the GPMB's export monopoly was ended.

²⁰⁶ For further details see McNamara, *op. cit.*, p 290.

²⁰⁷ Sessional Paper No 2 of 1988, p 2.

²⁰⁸ Groundnut production fell from 130,000 tons in 1989/90 to 55,000 tons in 1992/93. In 1991/92 producer prices were approximately 25% lower than they had been in 1982/83. *The Gambia News and Report*, June 1993, p 28.

²⁰⁹ *Report on Poverty in The Gambia* summarised in *The Gambia News and Report*, April 1993, p 32.

²¹⁰ Although some resources (fertilisers and other agricultural inputs, for example) were removed from government control, co-operatives continued to provide credit and, more coercively, to collect debts. The selective provision of services also continued although the need to adhere to IMF financial targets - combined with the continued, elite-level, diversion of government funds - caused health and education expenditure to be cut. For further details on the 1987 and 1992 election victories see Chapter three.

²¹¹ Although the decline was not as precipitous as it might have been had foreign assistance been less forthcoming. For further details see, Mcpherson, *op. cit.*, p 131.

²¹² *Report on Poverty in The Gambia* summarised in *The Gambia News and Report*, April 1993, p 32.

²¹³ See footnote 115 above for details on the sale and lease of parastatals to the private sector. For those that remained under government control various reforms were undertaken, notably the liberalisation of pricing policies. The financial position of most parastatals - including the Gambia Utilities Corporation (GUC) - improved on paper, but people were faced with higher tariffs and continued frequent interruptions to the provision of electricity (the GUC was known locally as "Gambians Use Candles"). In 1993 the GUC was leased to the private sector but the provision of services failed to improve.

provoking the mass protest seen in other African states undergoing structural adjustment. The factors already noted - including the regime's legitimacy, its longevity and continued ability to provide political goods - were all important. Radelet suggests that the way the reforms were introduced also contributed to the lack of overt resistance. Meetings were held with sections of the Banjul community and public awareness of the country's economic problems was enhanced by the ready availability of information.²¹⁴ The fact that reforms were introduced over a lengthy period also prevented opposition gaining momentum.²¹⁵ And finally, Radelet pinpoints "the nature of the opposition" as an important factor in the absence of protest. Although he goes no further than identifying the absence of organised opposition groups, the following sections take a closer look at this aspect of the PPP's political survival (both before and after 1985). In particular it is important to examine whether the lack of organised opposition reflected PPP strategy or simply the regime's good fortune.

Trade Unions.

Throughout the period of PPP rule trade unions failed to pose a serious challenge to the regime's survival. Accounting for this was the small size of the urban work force²¹⁶ (unions' main recruiting ground), the failings of the labour leadership and, to a lesser extent, government tactics. For the most part government tolerated unions and, in contrast to many African states (including Sierra Leone), allowed them to operate freely. Strikes were not banned and union leaders were not arbitrarily detained or even, for many years, co-opted. This "hands-off" approach did have limits and yet, so far as it was adhered to, the government was fortunate to preside over a small, fragmented and frequently disorganised labour movement.

At independence the Gambia Workers' Union (GWU)²¹⁷ - established in 1956 - had attracted the largest membership of any union to date. Its success in securing pay increases for members in the early 1960s accounted for this and yet, after 1965, the GWU suffered a loss of both momentum and members. Explaining this, David Perfect points to the union's abandonment of its previous political neutrality.²¹⁸ Thus, in 1965 it joined the United Party in opposition to the

²¹⁴ See Radelet, *op. cit.*, p 1096.

²¹⁵ Mcpherson and Radelet, *op. cit.*, p 131.

²¹⁶ See David Perfect, "Organised Labour and Politics in The Gambia: 1920-84," (PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1987), pp 9-10. The post-1975 increase in employment and the IMF-inspired retrenchment after 1985 are outlined above.

²¹⁷ On the GWU's early years (notably the successful strike action of 1960-61) see *ibid.*, pp 129-50. For a contemporary account of the 1961 strike see, *West Africa*, 28 January 1961, p 103; 4 February 1961, p 114 and 11 February 1961, p 151.

²¹⁸ See Perfect, *op. cit.*, pp 184-99. Perfect notes that the decline in GWU membership may have begun prior to independence with the union's affiliation to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in 1963. The ICFTU provided subvention in cash which both facilitated misappropriation and, by guaranteeing leaders' salaries, reduced their commitment to resolving members' grievances. The rank-and-file began to abandon the GWU; in October 1964 it claimed 3,224 paying members, a figure reduced to 1,800 by the end of

introduction of a Republican constitution and in 1966 the GWU Secretary-General, ME Jallow,²¹⁹ contested the Bathurst North election (spectacularly unsuccessfully as it turned out) against the UP leader, PS N'Jie.²²⁰ These departures alienated pro-PPP and pro-UP union members respectively. Some simply ceased to belong to a union, others joined the National Farmers and General Workers' Union (created in 1964 with the encouragement of certain PPP politicians) or the UP-backed Gambia National Union formed in 1966.²²¹

Faced with a declining membership Jallow moved to restore his union's supremacy by calling a general strike over pay in February 1967. Both this strike and a second (also over pay) called in January 1970 ended in failure.²²² Poor organisation in 1967 and internal labour divisions in both years undermined the strikes; each was opposed by the GLU and NFGWU.²²³ The PPP - which apparently played some role in dissuading these unions from strike action - exploited the prevailing disunity. In 1970 Jawara even went to the extent of suggesting that as only one union and "a minority" of workers had gone on strike employers could justifiably hire "alternative workers." This threat (not carried out) was combined, in both years, with persuasion. Arguments relayed by Jawara and other PPP members concerning the vulnerability of the economy and the selfishness of striking workers²²⁴ played a part in undermining the strikes.

From 1970-75 the PPP's approach remained static. No attempt was made to co-opt or coerce labour leaders; indeed, any such departure was unnecessary since Jallow - cowed by the humiliation of two failed strikes - chose to concentrate on restoring the GWU's viability and expanding its

1965. What these figures fail to reveal is whether the decline in membership occurred before or after independence, though it was probably continuous. On the adverse impact of subvention see also Christopher Allen, "African Trade Unionism in Microcosm: The Gambia Labour Movement, 1929-67," in Christopher Allen and RW Johnson (eds.), *African Perspectives* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp 420-21.

²¹⁹ On Jallow see *West Africa*, 2 May 1964, p 481.

²²⁰ For some reflections on why Jallow chose to stand and why he lost (with just 3.5% of the vote) see Perfect, *op. cit.*, pp 195-98. Many among the GWU rank-and-file feared that, if elected, Jallow would neglect their interests as IM Garba-Jahumpa and JC Faye (both involved in trade unionism prior to their election to Parliament) had done.

²²¹ On these unions see Perfect, *op. cit.*, pp 190-91, 198-99. and Allen, *op. cit.*, pp 422-23. Neither was to play an important role; the NGFWU remained inactive and the GNU collapsed in 1967. What impact they did have was primarily negative causing further disunity (and rank-and-file alienation) within an already divided labour movement. Their creation alongside the GWU and the Gambia Labour Union (GLU) - established in 1935 - resulted in an excessive four general workers' unions. Although the GNU and the NGFWU were largely ineffective and the GLU had long been overtaken by the GWU (and failed to increase its membership thereafter) many workers responded to the divisions by ceasing to be members of any union. According to Perfect (p 200) the GWU had a membership of just 1112 by the end of 1996.

²²² Both attracted a meagre number of workers and failed to win government concessions. For details see Perfect, *op. cit.*, pp 200-3 and 215-18. On the 1967 strike see also Allen, *op. cit.*, p 424.

²²³ With the GLU General-Secretary even suggesting, in 1967, that striking workers might be forced to sacrifice their jobs. The leaders of the GLU and the NFGWU (as well as the Gambia Motor Drivers and Mechanics Union) were actively opposed to both strikes reflecting both their support for the PPP and personal rivalries within the union movement.

²²⁴ See *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 28 January 1967, p 1; 17 January 1970, p 1 and *West Africa*, 21 February 1970, p 184.

membership. Understandably apprehensive about calling a third unsuccessful general strike and the damage it might do to his own position, Jallow hesitated to respond to signs of increasing rank-and-file frustration. The increased cost of living resulted in a series of single-sector strikes (primarily in 1973-74) initiated by workers themselves.²²⁵ They were dealt with through a mixture of negotiation and compromise and posed little threat to the government's survival.

In 1975 a rather more dangerous situation arose when the GWU once more called a general strike.²²⁶ Although the exact extent of the strike is unknown it was believed to have encompassed most daily paid workers in the public and private sectors. Lasting five days and winning a further pay increase,²²⁷ the strike's success was attributable to workers' readiness for action. Unlike the two previous strikes the impetus came from the rank-and-file rather than the leadership,²²⁸ with Jallow recognising that to retain his influence and position he must respond to demands for action. Equally important to the strike's success was its element of surprise, leaving the government unable to make adequate counter preparations. Unlike previous occasions when the GWU had put its case in the Joint Industrial Councils and given notice of its intention to strike this time there was no formal negotiations.

After 1975 government-union relations entered a comparatively coercive phase, albeit one with a healthy element of restraint. In October 1976 parliament passed an amendment to the Trade Union Act requiring that strikes be preceded by fourteen days notice or, for essential services, twenty-one days; the maximum penalty for failing to comply was D1000 and two years imprisonment.²²⁹ Although almost all other African states had enacted similar (and often more restrictive) legislation, this was a new departure for The Gambia. It seems that Jawara perceived the newly enlarged GWU²³⁰ as a significant political (rather than purely economic) threat. Perceiving the GWU leadership's "irresponsibility" - demonstrated by their willingness to strike rather than negotiate - Jawara appears to have believed in the possibility of a dangerous convergence of opposition between the union and the recently created NCP. Perfect notes the possibility that these two opposition groups (both of whom "appealed to the same potential support"²³¹) might form some sort of alliance, with the GWU using strike action to weaken the PPP and perhaps even donating resources to the NCP's forthcoming election campaign.²³² Although in retrospect Jawara's belief in the possibility of an alliance appeared unduly pessimistic (there were good reasons why the GWU

²²⁵ Although the GWU did assist in negotiations. See Perfect, *op. cit.*, p 225.

²²⁶ On the strike see *ibid.*, pp 225-32; *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 12 August 1975, p 1 and *The Progressive*, 31 July 1975, p 1 and 7 August 1975, p 1.

²²⁷ *West Africa*, 18 August 1975, p 975. The increase was in addition to that promised before the strike began.

²²⁸ Belying Jawara's suggestion that workers were "coerced" into taking strike action. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 29 July 75, No 89, p 1.

²²⁹ *West Africa*, 15 November 1976, p 1734.

²³⁰ After the successful strike GWU membership increased. See Perfect, *op. cit.*, p 228.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p 230.

²³² GWU funds had swelled alongside its increasing membership.

would choose to maintain a distance from the NCP²³³) his overall reluctance to suppress sources of opposition suggests that it was at least genuine.

Jawara's belief in the GWU's irresponsibility was confirmed in November 1976 when, despite the new legislation, it chose to support striking GUC employees without giving the requisite notice.²³⁴ Two months later the GWU was de-registered. The circumstances of the de-registration were interesting, revealing not only the PPP's wish to suppress the GWU but also the union's own failings which facilitated a legal ban. The reason given for the de-registration was the GWU's failure to submit its accounts as required by the Trade Union Act. As Perfect notes, late submissions were common throughout the labour movement; most unions had at one time received warnings of de-registration and some had actually had their certificates withdrawn.²³⁵ Although the GWU was the first fully functioning union to suffer this fate - and the PPP's intention was undoubtedly political - this was not simply a case of a government arbitrarily banning a union. The GWU, regularly late in submitting its accounts, had been warned on two separate occasions of its imminent de-registration but had failed even to respond. Perfect²³⁶ cites various possible explanations of this failure, most persuasively pointing to the GWU leadership's fear that it would be discredited once the government uncovered "the undoubted irregularities in the GWU's financial administration." Certainly there was no move to challenge the decision in court, itself an indicator that the leadership feared close scrutiny and possible embarrassing disclosures.

Following the GWU's removal and prior to the 1981 attempted coup, government-union relations took on a new complexion. The PPP adopted a somewhat more interventionist approach, first pursuing the idea of a pliant trade union centre to replace the GWU²³⁷ and, when this had failed, promoting single-sector "industrial" (as opposed to general workers') unions to limit the spread of future industrial unrest. Internal division and rivalry within the labour movement undermined government efforts to create a trade union centre but invested the creation of single sector unions with a much greater chance of success.²³⁸

²³³ See *ibid.*, pp 231-32.

²³⁴ The GWU was reportedly divided over whether to support GUC employees (dissatisfied with their exclusion from the 1975 pay increases and the subsequent dismissal of the most vocal members of their middle-management "Bargaining Committee") in an illegal strike, with Jallow and others counselling caution. In the event the strike was held but suffered from poor organisation, the detention of some key GWU leaders (excluding Jallow), and the disinclination of many workers to participate. Dockworkers stayed at work believing they had little to gain and - with the government threatening to replace those on strike - much to lose by participating. The situation quickly returned to normal. For further details see *ibid.*, pp 241-52 and the November 1976 issues of *The Gambia Onward* and *The Gambia News Bulletin*.

²³⁵ All were defunct at the time, as were the four banned alongside the GWU.

²³⁶ *Op. cit.*, p 256.

²³⁷ For earlier attempts (on the part of both government and union leaders) to establish a trade union centre see *ibid.*, pp 268-73. The failure of these attempts reflected the rivalry between unions and the refusal of general workers' unions to cede ground. In 1973, for example both the GWU and GLU refused to join the short-lived formed Gambia Trade Union Congress. For a list of those who did join see, *The Gambia Onward*, 22 January 1973, p 2.

²³⁸ Perfect, *op. cit.*, pp 274-76 examines the creation of the Gambia Dock Workers' Union in 1978-80.

These efforts alongside the removal of the GWU (which does not appear to have boosted the membership of its former rivals), the 1976 legislation and continued labour disunity meant that in spite of the increased economic pressure on workers there were few strikes; those which did occur were small-scale (not to mention illegal) and posed little or no threat to the regime.

The 1981 coup attempt altered this state of affairs. Although trade union leaders did not support the attempt²³⁹ some workers were believed to have participated,²⁴⁰ suggesting the need for an effective union to communicate with workers, to channel their grievances into peaceable channels and avert violence. Despite the introduction of some coercive measures Jawara knew that his hold on power rested not with the possession of superior force but with the legitimacy generated by the retention of peace and stability. Accordingly, in 1982, it was decided that the ban on the GWU should be lifted, albeit on a provisional basis. Unfortunately things did not go the PPP's way. The GWU's militancy had not abated; it was involved in a strike at the Jahally-Pacharr rice project at Sapu and the proposed trade union centre - which was intended to incorporate the GWU and dilute its influence - failed to materialise due to continued rivalries between unions. In June 1983 the government refused to grant the GWU its certificate proper.²⁴¹

In September 1985 a trade union centre, the Gambia Workers' Confederation (GWC), was finally established.²⁴² Jallow - possessing few options - agreed to become the Secretary-General although some of his more militant colleagues remained outside the existing set-up. Jallow's cautious leadership facilitated the introduction of the ERP without provoking the mass strikes witnessed in some other African states. There remained the possibility that workers - under increasing economic pressure - would launch strikes on their own initiative and yet this did not occur on any significant scale. The factors already outlined, the detention of illegal strikers in previous years and Jawara's decision to co-opt union leaders accounted for this. In 1987 Jallow's appointment as a nominated MP was announced, partly as a reward for his restraint during the previous two years and as an inducement to continue in this vein, and partly to reassure workers that their interests would be catered for. Clearly if workers' grievances were not resolved - and the regime's continued adherence to IMF conditionalities suggested this was unlikely - appeals for patience would progressively lose their force. By appointing Jallow to Parliament, Jawara was attempting to extend the period of workers' acquiescence and, failing that, to ensure that the GWC

²³⁹ The reasons for this are outlined in Perfect, *op. cit.*, p 276.

²⁴⁰ Although, as already noted, urban dwellers as a group were comparatively better off than their rural counterparts it has been estimated that in 1981 approximately 20% of urbanites - "at the bottom end of the scale" - received incomes as low as the average rural income, their standard of living "if typical urban expenses - such as rent and transport - are taken into account" possibly being lower than that in the rural areas. (Basic Needs, *op. cit.*, pp 17 and 20). This group at least had a clear incentive to participate in the coup attempt.

²⁴¹ The government argued that the names of de-registered unions could not be used, even though no ruling on this issue was contained in the Trade Union Act. Jallow refused to rename his organisation.

²⁴² Apparently at the prompting of the Senegalese trade union centre as detailed in *West Africa*, 16 September 1985, p 1940.

hesitated to back an illegal strike.

Unfortunately, Jallow died before taking up his seat and was replaced as GWC Secretary-General by Pa Modou Faal (leader of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union). Faal, like Jallow, erred on the side of caution. That he appeared unlikely to call a general strike (stressing that the "maintenance of industrial peace is necessary for the promotion and sustenance of economic growth"²⁴³) or back an illegal wildcat strike was perhaps a factor in Jawara's decision to choose not him, but Araba Bah, as labour's representative in Parliament in October 1987. If workers regarded the GWC as failing to protect their interests it was quite possible they would turn to alternative leaders such as Bah for guidance. Bah had been a prominent militant (as Deputy Secretary-General) in the former GWU and it remained possible that he would attempt to exploit workers' grievances to boost his own position.²⁴⁴ With his appointment to Parliament, however, Bah had much to lose and in the event chose to support the ERP.²⁴⁵ Prior to the PPP's downfall strikes which did occur tended to be small-scale, illegal²⁴⁶ and easily dealt with - through conciliation where possible - although, had the PPP survived, this situation might not have continued indefinitely. Even in the continued absence of a militant leadership more worker-initiated (illegal) strikes - such as that by taxi-drivers in April 1993²⁴⁷ - may well have emerged.

Urban Youth.

Compared to trade unions, a much greater challenge to the PPP's survival was posed by radical urban youth in The Gambia.²⁴⁸ Youthful alienation from mainstream politics had its source

²⁴³ *Daily Observer*, 23 December 1993, p 6.

²⁴⁴ According to local sources he was also popular among sections of urban youth. For obvious reasons Jawara wished to avoid a convergence between these two groups.

²⁴⁵ During his first speech to Parliament Bah suggested that the minimum wage was too low but that this was understandable "in an austerity condition." Likewise in 1990 he congratulated the government on the success of the ERP while expressing the hope that retrenchment measures were at an end. (See *Proceedings of the 3rd Meeting in the 1987/88 Legislative Session* (Banjul, Government Printer), pp 27-29 and *The Gambia Weekly*, 4 May 1990, p 6). Seemingly reassured by this "responsible" stance the GWU was granted government recognition towards the close of the 1980s with Bah as Secretary-General and another former GWU militant, Matarr Ceesay, his deputy. Suggestions of friction between the two men were apparently confirmed when, following the PPP's downfall, Ceesay criticised Bah for his role as a "praise singer of Jawara." *The Point*, 7 November 1994, p 10.

²⁴⁶ In October 1990 a new Industrial Relations Act was passed. It retained the fourteen day strike notice for unions intent on industrial action but increased the period from twenty-one to twenty-eight days for essential services. It also enabled the Supreme Court (on the application of an employer) to prohibit strikes called in pursuit of a political objective. Union leaders were unwilling to contravene these provisions; in 1993 Pa Modou Faal welcomed the Act for promoting peaceful industrial relations and called upon workers not to take the law into their own hands. *Daily Observer*, 23 December 1993, p 6.

²⁴⁷ Taxi-drivers were dissatisfied by their lack of facilities, what they described as "police harassment" and the failure of their union - the Gambia Motor Drivers' and Allied Workers Union - to protect their interests. The union Secretary-General, Saul Coker, was widely regarded as a "PPP man."

²⁴⁸ It is worth noting that The Gambia lacked a university as a source of organised opposition. Some critics of the PPP regime (interviews with the author, 1993-94) interpreted Jawara's refusal to establish a university as a deliberate ploy to prolong his rule - and it certainly worked to his advantage - but the country's small size and lack of resources appeared to rule out such a departure. In place of university students, High School pupils and

in both political and economic dissatisfaction. Politically, youths became increasingly disenchanted throughout the 1970s with the insufficiently radical stance of the PPP (and the opposition NCP) as well as their own failure to make progress within the ranks. Not only did youths frequently fail to gain sponsorship for elections,²⁴⁹ they also lacked an alternative point of access to the decision-making machinery. The Gambia National Youth Council (founded in 1963 as an umbrella organisation for youth groups) was beset by internal division - and had actually split in two, with the disaffiliation of the National Union of Gambian Youth (NUGY) in May 1969 - undermining its ability to provide youths with a participatory and constructive role.

In 1975, government apprehension over links between the NUGY and the NCP²⁵⁰ prompted the Minister of Education, Youth Sports and Culture to form a "committee of ten" (five from each group) to draw up a constitution for a reunified youth organisation. The Gambia National Youth Organisation was officially formed but no real consensus prevailed and the government - perhaps influenced by a UN report²⁵¹ suggesting that any attempt to impose a unified organisation "would reinforce political polarisation" and cognisant of youths' increasing dissatisfaction with the NCP as a vehicle for their views²⁵² - did not push the matter. Initiatives such as the creation of a (reputedly underfunded and understaffed) Department of Youth, Sports and Culture and the inauguration of an annual National Youth Week in 1974²⁵³ failed to appease young people. Likewise, the reorganisation of the PPP youth wing and the appointment of a rather younger cabinet in 1977 (see above) fell short of expectations.²⁵⁴

Economic dissatisfaction compounded youthful disenchantment with the existing political set-up. That many youths failed to "make it" economically reflected the problems caused by the

students of the Gambia College launched periodic protests but these were small-scale and, for the most part, easily dealt with. The most serious College protest occurred in March 1981 when students, aggrieved primarily by their lack of transport, launched a violent protest in the process damaging a number of vehicles. Perhaps influenced by the protest's apparent political overtones (with some student placards reportedly denouncing the government) Jawara tended towards a coercive response. One hundred and twenty five students were arrested and charged (although the charges were later dropped), the college was closed for six months and some students subsequently expelled. Although coercion cannot account for Jawara's prolonged survival, isolated incidents such as this suggest he was not wholly averse to its use. For the official account of the protest see the *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Gambia College Crisis, HE the Vice-President and Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, 25 February 1982* (State House, Banjul, 1982).

²⁴⁹ See Chapter three.

²⁵⁰ According to local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94) the original 1969 split had been encouraged by Sheriff Dibba - then a PPP minister - and in the early 1970s, the NUGY affiliated with the PPP youth wing (the GNYC refusing to "compromise its independence" by doing the same). However, with Dibba's departure from the PPP some NUGY leaders chose to follow suit in the belief that he would provide a political platform for their views.

²⁵¹ United Nations, *Report of a Mission to The Gambia, 11-30 October 1976* (United Nations, New York, 1977), p 6.

²⁵² See Chapter three. Most youths favoured the formation of a Youth Council independent of all parties.

²⁵³ From 1976 the Youth Week was held every two years to reduce expenses.

²⁵⁴ According to one former PPP youth leader (interview with the author, 9 January 1994) some members of the PPP youth wing were dissatisfied with the reorganisation, feeling it to be "overly controlled and directed" by senior members of the party.

drift of provincial youths to the urban areas and the resulting levels of unemployment. Between 1963 and 1973 Banjul's population increased by 41%.²⁵⁵ During the next ten years, this figure declined to 12.8% but did not reflect a real decrease in the drift to the towns as most new arrivals were absorbed into the surrounding areas; Kombo St. Mary Division's population increased from 39,000 to 104,000 in these years.²⁵⁶ Although estimates of urban unemployment vary, by the mid-1970s most sources place it at approximately 10%.²⁵⁷

Finding themselves unemployed (and in some cases unemployable²⁵⁸) as well as politically excluded, urban youths increasingly turned to radical politics as a means of expressing their resentment. Arnold Hughes has examined this development in some detail,²⁵⁹ noting the early emergence of radical neighbourhood associations - known as *vous* - and, towards the end of the 1970s, more threatening organisations including the short-lived National Liberation Party (NLP),²⁶⁰ the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) and the Gambia Socialist Revolutionary Party (GSRP). Neither group possessed a large following; apart from dissatisfied youths, Hughes suggests the organisations attracted "disaffected minor intellectuals such as teachers, junior civil servants and students at the Yundum Teacher Training College ... secondary school pupils and elements of the semi-literate unemployed."²⁶¹

Alongside the emergence of these groups other developments were giving the government cause for concern including the publication of a highly critical, Marxist oriented underground paper advocating revolution (*The Voice of The Future*), the appearance of politically inspired graffiti (primarily in support of MOJA) and the burning of the presidential yacht. Then, in October 1980, the Field Force Deputy Commander Emmanuel Mahoney was murdered. The shooting was officially depicted as the outcome of a dispute between Mahoney and a sentry (caught smoking

²⁵⁵ MA Gibril, "Population Impact Upon National Economic and Social Development," *Report of National Tripartite Seminar on Population and Nation Building* (Banjul, Government Printer, 1976), p 106.

²⁵⁶ *The Gambia News and Report*, March 1993, p 17.

²⁵⁷ Though Jawara was aware of the drift to the towns and the problems this raised, short of radically improving rural living conditions there was little he could do. Responding to the short and medium term imperative of maintaining a level of urban bias generated longer term, survival related, problems in the towns.

²⁵⁸ A situation Jawara attributed to the decline in educational standards. At the PPP's National Congress in 1979 he observed that increases in school enrolment had "not been matched by the quality of teachers [many of whom were unqualified] and the availability of physical facilities" resulting in a "growing number of unemployable youth ... They apply for all jobs going and in most cases are suitable for none. These youths end up a frustrated and alienated section of the population ... Most of them are dissatisfied with the Party and Government simply because we have not been able to help them." *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 22 May 1979, p 2.

²⁵⁹ See, "The Attempted Gambian Coup d'Etat of 30 July 1981" in Hughes (ed.), *The Gambia: Studies in Society and Politics* (Birmingham University, African Studies Series 3, 1991), pp 94-97.

²⁶⁰ On the NLP see p 253-54.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p 97. One of MOJA's representatives, Ousman Mojang, later claimed that MOJA was formed - on 12 December 1979 - "by trade unionists, politicians, Gambian returnees from abroad, also some overseas Gambians and other representatives of mass organisations." Interview in *The Gambia Newsletter*, March-June 1993, p 25.

cannabis) but reports elsewhere²⁶² suggested it was connected to a coup plot, now to be staged during Mahoney's funeral. The validity of these reports remain unconfirmed but received some backing when the government appealed to her neighbour for assistance in the form of one hundred and fifty Senegalese troops. The day after their arrival (they stayed a week) Jawara opted to ban MOJA and the GSRP on the grounds that they were advocating violence.²⁶³

A short time later - in July 1981 - an attempted coup materialised.²⁶⁴ The plot was hatched by the GSRP and implemented by one of its members, Kukoi Samba Sanyang, alongside elements of the Field Force.²⁶⁵ Fortunately for the PPP the attempt was both ill-conceived and poorly executed. The plotters failed to maintain control of events; the near random distribution of rifles and the release of prisoners from Mile Two resulted in widespread killings (leaving 500-800 dead, possibly more) and looting. This degeneration combined with the plotters' Marxist rhetoric and decision to take hostages - including one of the President's wives and eight of his children - caused a rapid dissipation of what popular sympathy they had. The plotters failed to receive the expected external backing with foreign forces (primarily the Senegalese) operating on behalf of rather than against the PPP.²⁶⁶

Although the coup failed it did serve to highlight the PPP's then vulnerability. Following the rebellion, participating elements among the urban youth²⁶⁷ continued to harbour grievances but lacked an established organisational outlet.²⁶⁸ Even more importantly (given the fact that an underground group had planned the events of 1981) they lacked access to the coercive apparatus.

²⁶² Primarily in Senegal, published in *Le Monde*.

²⁶³ Koro Sallah - MOJA's main spokesperson - and several fellow members were arrested and charged with managing an illegal society and possessing arms and ammunition. All except two were subsequently acquitted and Sallah received only a fine. Interestingly (and according to the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (US Department of State, 1991), p 4) the law was subsequently amended, transferring the responsibility for banning organisations from the President to the judiciary.

²⁶⁴ It is not intended to provide a blow by blow account of the coup - there is little to add to Hughes' detailed account (*op. cit.*, 1991, pp 98-104) - although certain points are worth reiterating.

²⁶⁵ Field Force participation is examined at length in Chapter two.

²⁶⁶ See Hughes, *op. cit.*, p 102 on the rebels' failure to win external backing. Senegalese assistance is examined at length in Chapters two and four.

²⁶⁷ Apparently including some MOJA members, despite Manjang's later denunciation of Sanyang's coup as "bloody and mindless." *The Gambia Newsletter*, March-June 1993, p 25.

²⁶⁸ The GSRP (whose founder was killed during the course of the coup) disintegrated after 1981. Sanyang himself departed to Libya. According to one observer he became closely involved with the Liberian NPFL - even to the extent of being officially listed (under the pseudonym "Dr Manning") as Charles Taylor's Vice-President - but subsequently retired to run a bar in Ouagadougou. (Stephen Ellis, "Liberia 1989-1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence," *African Affairs*, Vol 94, No 375, April 1995, pp 168-69.) MOJA leaders would later claim to have been active cultivating support in the countryside after 1981 but there was little evidence to substantiate this and Jawara's decision, taken in 1993, to un-ban the organisation suggests the opposite. When Ousman Manjang (among other MOJA leaders) returned from exile in 1993 he gave several remarkably restrained interviews, even to the extent of citing his former inspiration in "an international atmosphere when human rights, freedom and democracy were put into the forefront by the then American President, Jimmy Carter" (*Newsmonth*, May 1993, p 2). In 1986, a new radical socialist movement - PDOIS - emerged. Unlike its predecessors PDOIS was firmly committed to electoral victory, not revolution, as the route to power and as such is discussed at length in Chapter three.

With Senegalese troops stationed in The Gambia it was extremely unlikely that the fledgling army would attempt to intervene militarily either on their own behalf or as part of a radical, civilian-inspired, rebellion.

Although Senegal's troops guaranteed Jawara's security his lack of enthusiasm for some aspects of the Confederation rendered it unlikely they would remain indefinitely and indeed, in 1989, the troops departed. Prior to that date, and notably in the immediate aftermath of the coup attempt, Jawara had made some concessions to youth - appointing a younger cabinet (see above) and co-opting a youth leader into Parliament - and yet rather greater efforts were made from 1989. In that year a National Youth Policy was formulated; aimed at enhancing "youth participation in decision-making"²⁶⁹ it instituted a biennial Youth Conference, first held in 1990, a seven person National Bureau (to serve as youth's representative body between conferences) and a National Youth Service Scheme.²⁷⁰ Other developments included the revival of the National Youth Week (which had lapsed in 1983) now renamed the National Youth Festival, and in 1992 the revival of the PPP Youth Wing.²⁷¹

Although these efforts were welcomed by Gambian youth a strong undercurrent of dissatisfaction remained. Some continued to feel politically excluded (in spite of the emergence of PDOIS²⁷²) but economic issues formed an even greater preoccupation. The PPP's tolerance of corruption heightened youthful alienation and increasing levels of unemployment - reflecting the continued rural-urban drift (standing at approximately 7% per year) and the implementation of the ERP²⁷³ - posed a continuing threat to the PPP's survival.²⁷⁴

The Press.

Jawara's non-authoritarian approach to political survival encompassed the press; eschewing the tactics favoured by many other African leaders he allowed newspapers to operate free of

²⁶⁹ *A National Youth Policy for The Gambia* (Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, Banjul, 1989), p 8.

²⁷⁰ This was designed to provide youths (particularly school "drop-outs") with job experience. A pilot scheme was launched in 1991. *The Gambia Weekly*, 14 June 1991, p 4.

²⁷¹ The Youth Wing was neglected following the 1981 coup attempt (even to the extent of being temporarily dropped from the list of official PPP affiliates) perhaps reflecting the fact that it had tended to serve as a source of opposition.

²⁷² PDOIS's electoral shortcomings (discussed in Chapter three) caused some youths - less patient than the new party's leaders - to reject it as a viable route to political participation. Others expressed unhappiness that the Youth Conference was, as they perceived it, organised and dominated by PPP militants (not all of whom were particularly youthful).

²⁷³ In 1993 total unemployment was estimated at 16-17%, with the highest rate (23%) for young males under twenty years of age. World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993, *Memoranda by the Republic of The Gambia*, p 52 and *The Gambia Weekly*, 4 June 1993, p 5.

²⁷⁴ As before, Jawara was aware of this problem but could risk neither devoting more resources to the rural areas nor defying the IMF by creating additional public sector employment. Fortunately, the continued acquiescence of the urban areas removed the necessity of making difficult choices although - in the absence of military intervention - this situation may not have prevailed indefinitely.

coercive legislation, police harassment or frequent court appearances.²⁷⁵ Jawara's tolerance reflected his readiness to risk legitimacy-deflating exposés in order to sustain his legitimacy-inducing reputation (both at home and abroad) as a peaceable democrat. The risk was lessened by Jawara's ability to keep corruption within limits, mass illiteracy and newspapers' perennial lack of resources for investigative journalism or even producing issues on a regular basis.²⁷⁶

Towards the end of PPP rule the risk grew, as an apparent upsurge in corruption was seized upon by a substantially enlarged and increasingly vocal press. During the 1990s the existing press was joined by better quality newspapers such as *The Point* and the *Daily Observer* (The Gambia's first daily) as well as monthly productions, such as *The Gambia News and Report*, which offered in-depth analysis of major events. All were more than willing to criticise the government, detail corruption scandals and report opposition viewpoints.

This challenge to the PPP's legitimacy (which, as noted above, arguably played a role in the regime's downfall) was not met with any drastic increase in censorship; interviews with journalists during 1993/94 confirmed that they continued to enjoy an unusual degree of freedom. Nevertheless, concern was expressed about the attitude of some ministers (not, it seems, replicated by Jawara) towards the press. Journalists pointed to the alleged difficulties experienced by a new student paper, *The Student's Outlook*, when trying to register (although this paper did appear for sale at least once in December 1993); an incident during which *The Point* editor was interviewed by the National Security Service concerning a critical letter he opted to publish; written reminders to civil servants that they were not allowed to talk to the press without permission and, in December 1993, verbal attacks on *The Point* and the *Daily Observer* made by some ministers and MPs in Parliament (from which Jawara was careful to dissociate himself).²⁷⁷ Some also objected to the National Press Council Act (1991) despite the fact that it originated with journalists' demands for legislation to govern press affairs. The Act allowed the establishment of a Council for the purpose of drawing up a code of conduct, judging breaches of the code and imposing fines upon the offending journalist. Some journalists suggested that the new legislation not only failed to give legal backing to the freedom of the press, as requested, but appeared to curtail it. *The Nation*, for example, argued that the Minister of Information's power to nominate the council chairman as well as six of the

²⁷⁵ According to local journalists (interviews with the author, 1993-94) there were just three occasions on which editors had appeared in court for writing critical articles, one of whom (Dixon Colley, editor of *The Nation* - was cleared). For details of the Manneh libel case see p 70 above. Both cases demonstrated a further point, namely Jawara's reluctance to place political constraints on the operation of the judiciary.

²⁷⁶ Although the achievement of some journalists in producing basic but informative and critical weekly newspapers ought not to be overlooked.

²⁷⁷ Prominent among the critics was the Minister of External Affairs, Omar Sey, who criticised the press for lacking objectivity and being "amateurish, biased and inefficient." In particular he objected to a November issue of the *Daily Observer* which had led with coverage of an NCP rally in preference to a story about the forthcoming IDB conference. Sey's views were reportedly echoed by the Minister of Information and Tourism, James Alkali Gaye, who promised tougher action on the press. See *Newsmonth*, January 1994, p 2 and the *Daily Observer*, 4-6 February 1994, pp 1, 17.

remaining nine members gave him "a lot of indirect control over the council."²⁷⁸

Despite journalists' concerns over the Press Act - subsequently heightened when Gaye threatened tougher action²⁷⁹ - it was never used to promote censorship. The other incidents, too, were isolated events rather than part of an orchestrated attack on press freedom. Almost certainly some ministers wished to see what one local observer described as a more "respectful" press but as long as Jawara retained his commitment to press freedom a change of direction remained unlikely.

Of course the press was not only a source of threat to the PPP but also served as a useful survival resource. Government controlled newspapers and even more so Radio Gambia²⁸⁰ served as a useful communication and legitimisation tool during elections or periods of difficulty for the regime, including labour unrest and the introduction of the ERP. While opposition groups were not denied all access to the radio during elections and most major events in between received coverage, broadcasts were primarily a government tool²⁸¹ and a degree of self censorship was practised. During the Manneh corruption trial, for example, radio reports dried up after a few days and a much-talked about incident at the 1982 independence anniversary celebrations - when a sole anti-government protester interrupted the festivities - failed to receive a mention.

Having examined some of the factors contributing to the PPP's prolonged survival, the following sections aim to explain the APC's longevity and to compare the strategies pursued by each leader.

Regime Survival in Sierra Leone.

In some respects Siaka Stevens' route to political survival resembled that of Jawara, with both leaders selecting at least some of the same survival strategies and implementing them with a comparable degree of skill. More striking, however, were the dissimilarities in approach. Stevens was a more "typical" personal ruler; increasing authoritarianism underlined by a willingness to resort to coercion was one factor differentiating his and Jawara's hold on power.

Accounting for this divergence necessitates some mention of the two leaders' contrasting "moral codes." If, as suggested previously, Jawara was irrevocably committed to non-coercive

²⁷⁸ *The Nation*, 25 May 1991, p 3. Apart from the chairman and three representatives of the Gambia Press Union (nominated among themselves) the Council consisted of two representatives from the advertising and broadcasting sectors, one from the Gambia Bar Association, two from the general public and two from the government. *The Gambia Weekly*, 10 May 1991, p 3.

²⁷⁹ Some journalists (interviews with the author, 1994) believed Gaye might use the Act to suppress the press but were unclear as to how this might be achieved.

²⁸⁰ Although broadcasts declined in quality the further one travelled from Banjul (and in some areas were not received at all) they did reach a greater number of people than the press.

²⁸¹ Complaints about this as well as - largely unsubstantiated - allegations of government censorship of the independent press were voiced during a 1993 conference, organised by PDOIS and entitled, Symposium on Media and the Democratization Process in Africa. I am indebted to Dana Ott for providing me with a copy of the transcript.

tactics, Stevens clearly possessed a wider range of "thinkable" survival options. In turn this raises the question of whether Stevens could have survived using the same approach as his Gambian counterpart. Undoubtedly the inherent logic of Stevens' chosen survival strategy required the means to suppress popular participation and protest; less apparent is whether the logic of his *situation* required the same.

Looking at Stevens' situation it appears that his approach to political survival did reflect both the vulnerability of the APC regime - which stemmed from the greater likelihood of military intervention than in The Gambia, the electoral threat posed by the SLPP (which exceeded that of the urban-based UP) and, though less immediately apparent, the complications posed by Sierra Leone's possession of diamond wealth²⁸² - as well as the apparent inadequacy of his own personal "qualifications" for the position of leader (outlined in the previous chapter). The following section examines Stevens' solutions to the problem of securing subordinates' loyalty.

Stevens and the Political Elite.

In The Gambia it will be recalled that three factors - the need to secure urban support, to weaken the authority of the PPP's founding members and to win elections - persuaded Jawara to pursue a strategy of political accommodation. In Sierra Leone - where APC supporters consisted primarily of Northerners (Temnes and other minority groups) and urban Creoles²⁸³ - rather different considerations prevailed. Although maintaining the support of the Creoles was clearly desirable as part of a wider strategy to secure the adherence of the urban elite (and perhaps as a counterweight to potentially disloyal Temne ministers) the advantages of cultivating support among the Southern Mendes were less clear-cut. Co-opting defeated Mende politicians might undermine the SLPP and facilitate election victories in the South and yet Stevens (unlike Jawara) was willing to employ force to achieve the same ends. Added to this, distributing rewards too widely had the potential to alienate Stevens' Temne subordinates, a particularly unwelcome prospect alongside a politicised army.

How Stevens would choose to secure his position was not immediately apparent since his first cabinet - composed of four Mendes, four Temnes, three Creoles, two Limbas and two Konos,²⁸⁴ of which four were SLPP MPs and two Independents²⁸⁵ - was formed in response to military demands for a "national government." Before long, however, Stevens' hostility towards the SLPP

²⁸² Military and electoral threats are discussed in detail in Chapters two and three. On the politics of the diamond trade see below.

²⁸³ The APC's route to political power is sketched in detail in Chapter three.

²⁸⁴ Excluding junior ministers and paramount chiefs. The ethnic composition of all cabinets up to December 1971 can be found in Victor E King, "The Search for Political Stability in Sierra Leone 1960-1972" (PhD dissertation, Manchester University, 1975), pp 205, 228-29, 287-88.

²⁸⁵ These were former SLPP members who had split from the party to stand as Independents in the 1967 elections. See Chapter three for further details.

(see Chapter three) caused the coalition to disintegrate and in December 1968 the SLPP formally reverted to the role of opposition.

The enlarged April 1969 cabinet incorporated three Mendes, seven Temnes, two Limbas, four Creoles, one Koranko and one Kono. Stevens' decision to retain the two Mende Independents²⁸⁶ was designed to prevent their defection to the SLPP and, alongside the third, to secure a broader support base. As already noted, Stevens was not unwilling to employ coercion and yet, understanding its disadvantages as a survival technique, his rule was characterised by a mix of strategies of which force was just one (see below). At the same time, the fact that Mendes were heavily outnumbered and the two Independents demoted (from External Affairs to Health and Agriculture to Resident Minister) reflected Stevens' perception of possible future disloyalty from that quarter.²⁸⁷ Clearly he had no intention of relying upon Mendes to secure his position.

Much greater trust was placed in the Creoles - heavily over-represented in the cabinet - whose numbers increased from four in 1969 to six by 1973.²⁸⁸ Creole support strengthened Stevens' hand, facilitating various measures - notably the declaration of a Republic - which Albert Margai had failed to achieve and, in combination with other minority groups, serving as a counterweight to Stevens' less than reliable Temne subordinates. In the cabinets up to and including the May 1971 reshuffle Temnes only slightly exceeded the number of Creoles and other Northern minority groups (including the Limba, Koranko, Susu and Yalunka) combined.

As in The Gambia, Stevens' (admittedly less comprehensive) accommodation policies were not universally welcomed with some Temne ministers resentful of his "over-reliance" on Creoles²⁸⁹ and Northern minority groups. Perceiving this, Stevens' focused on strengthening his own position - clarifying his subordinates' dependence with cabinet changes and centralising political power through interference in the operations of individual ministries - and waited for the enemy to strike. He did not have to wait long. In September 1971 a group of Temnes - prompted by a mixture of fear (over Stevens' increasing personalisation of political power) and resentment (over their personal setbacks and, linked to this, Stevens' accommodation policies) - formed the United Democratic Party (UDP).

The nature of the UDP challenge and Stevens' coercive response are examined at length in Chapter three. Suffice it here to note that the UDP (much like the PPA in The Gambia) was

²⁸⁶ *West Africa*, 19 April 1969, p 450. One of the Creoles was also an Independent. The other Mende in the cabinet was Cyril Foray, a member of the APC.

²⁸⁷ Both were eventually dropped from the cabinet (in 1973 and 1976) as was Cyril Foray following his alleged (but unproved) involvement in the 1971 coup attempt (*West Africa*, 1 October 1971, p 1155). Nevertheless, Stevens continued to co-opt SLPP members, often with offers of diplomatic posts (from which they could not make trouble) or jobs in public corporations. In 1971, for example, SL Matturi joined the board of the Diamond Corporation. *West Africa*, 14 April 1972, p 463.

²⁸⁸ That is, approximately 22% and 26% of the two cabinets compared to the Creole proportion of the population at 2%. Details on the 1973 cabinet are from Clapham, *op. cit.*, 1976, p 48.

²⁸⁹ Together with their dominant role in the civil service.

constrained by further splits within the cabinet. For many Temnes, ethnic identity was outweighed by the fact that the UDP leaders were both comparatively youthful and not among the original APC members; party stalwarts were unlikely to forego patronage opportunities to join these comparative newcomers. Meanwhile, others rejected the UDP's suggestion that Stevens' avowed intention to declare a Republic was designed to strengthen his personal position and welcomed it as a "radical" departure.²⁹⁰

Perhaps more importantly, the new party and related coup attempt of March 1971 (see Chapter two) provided Stevens with a clear opportunity to further strengthen his position, furnishing him with an excuse to introduce Guinean troops to the country which in turn facilitated the safe declaration of a Republic²⁹¹ and his own installation as executive President. These manoeuvres, together with Stevens' success in protecting the regime (from both the UDP and an attempted coup) promoted the desired image of a strong and decisive leader, disproving those who had doubted his abilities and laying the foundation for the establishment of affective ties.²⁹²

Stevens' uncompromising response to the UDP also sent a clear warning to other prospective intra-party rebels, giving him a much freer hand in composing the cabinet. Though wisely opting to appease Temnes in the immediate aftermath of the UDP affair²⁹³ Stevens continued to employ his considerable powers of persuasion, alongside a constant expansion of patronage opportunities, to incorporate loyal representatives from all ethnic groups (including SLPP defectors²⁹⁴). Despite the drain on the economy the cabinet was increased from twenty ministers and

²⁹⁰ The declaration of a Republic and the take-over of the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (outlined below) served to appease the APC's radical faction and strengthen Stevens' personal position. From this position Stevens felt sufficiently confident to tackle his opponents (many radicals were removed in the 1973 elections) and enjoy the flexibility of a non-ideological approach to political survival.

²⁹¹ Stevens' successful introduction of a Republican constitution (the very same that Albert Margai had tried, and failed, to impose) reflected his superior political skill and willingness to learn from others mistakes. Stevens' gradualism - the intention to declare a Republic had been announced as early as January 1969 - and attention to legal niceties conveyed the impression that he was less power hungry than Margai. Nevertheless with the UDP "legitimately" crushed (see Chapter three) and Guinean troops stationed in Sierra Leone, Stevens grasped his opportunity. These two aspects of Stevens rule - gradualism and decision - featured again during the change-over to a single-party state (see Chapter three). On the change to a Republican constitution see *West Africa*, 11 January 1969, p 51; 3 October 1970, p 1170; 30 April 1971, pp 465-66; 7 May 1971, p 522.

²⁹² Stevens' image as a strong leader capable of protecting his regime differed from Jawara's claim to political strength on the basis of pursuing a chosen course of action but the result was similar.

²⁹³ Among other changes SI Koroma (then believed to be a Temne) was appointed Vice-President, Prime Minister and, in December 1971, Minister of Interior. The December 1971 cabinet included eight Temnes, five Creoles, three Mendes, two Limbas, one Kuranko, one Kono and one Susu.

²⁹⁴ In 1973, for example, Francis Minah joined the government and other SLPP supporters continued to be appointed to posts in the public sector. Stevens' willingness to accommodate a limited number of former opposition members continued even after the declaration of a single-party state. By the end of 1978 five former SLPP members were in possession of government posts, albeit low-ranking ones. MS Mustapha, a former SLPP leader, was made a Minister of State (and also acting second Vice-President in early 1979) and PP Kebbie, Resident Minister Eastern Province. Three others were appointed Parliamentary Special Assistants. Both Mustapha and Kebbie were dropped in 1981 but in 1982 the former SLPP leader, Salia Jusu-Sheriff, eventually agreed to become Finance Minister. This appointment was a testament to Stevens' powers of persuasion - extensive talks were reported to have taken place - and reflected his willingness to make

junior ministers in 1968 to forty-three ministers, deputy ministers and ministers of state by 1973.²⁹⁵

Ministerial "loyalty" was based upon access to both legitimate benefits - generous salaries,²⁹⁶ pensions, car loans and allowances - and illicit wealth. Corruption in Sierra Leone extended far beyond that in The Gambia with Stevens tolerating (and engaging in²⁹⁷) corrupt practices to a far greater extent than Jawara. His primarily elite-focus approach to political survival both facilitated and necessitated this tolerant stance. A willingness to neglect economic development combined with a readiness to suppress popular disaffection - and undermine the vitality of elections, the press and parliament as possible restraints on corruption (see below) - removed the immediate contradiction between corruption and survival present in The Gambia. At the same time, the withdrawal of popular support (which in The Gambia served as one restraint upon ambitious elites) necessitated that the opportunities for corrupt accumulation be maintained, if not extended.

Political office afforded three main avenues for corrupt accumulation depending upon one's position in the political hierarchy and ultimately, Stevens' favour. For some it provided access to illicit business deals, particularly in the diamond trade.²⁹⁸ Others, with influence over the allocation of goods - import licenses, contracts, foreign exchange etc. - could distribute them (usually to foreign businessmen) in return for bribes.²⁹⁹ Even rice, the staple food, was transformed into a valuable political commodity particularly following the "privatisation" of the rice trade in the 1980s.³⁰⁰ At different times under Stevens politicians were entrusted with rice distribution and, with chronic revenue shortfalls in the 1980s, were paid in kind with heavily subsidised rice. By selling at

concessions (or at least appear to do so) to achieve his objectives. Stevens wanted the widely-respected Jusu-Sheriff in the cabinet, not least to provide a much-needed boost to the APC's ailing image, and was said to have promised him a free hand in dealing with the country's economy. Jusu-Sheriff's appointment as acting Vice-President in late 1982 may also have been a factor in his acceptance of the post. (*West Africa*, 5 January 1981, p 44; 24 April 1982, p 1363; 13 December 1982, p 3249 and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1981-1982, B 552.) Other factional interests - based on region, generation etc. - were also represented in the cabinet. Factions at the local level are discussed at length in Chapter three.

²⁹⁵ In 1973 the SLPP's decision to boycott the elections and the enlargement of the House of Representatives (from sixty-six to eighty-five) had caused the demand for government posts to increase. Less than half of all MPs remained on the backbenches and, with so many posts available, even they had good reason to believe they would be promoted during the next reshuffle. In subsequent years some new ministries were created including, in the early 1980's, the Ministry of Food Affairs. Established to appease popular resentment over rice prices and shortages the ministry was reported to fulfil no meaningful function apart from that of "rice distribution depot inside State House for party hangers-on and relatives and friends" (*West Africa*, 15 December 1986, p 2622). Other ministries - including Tourism, Establishment (created in 1984) and Energy - were reported to be similarly unproductive.

²⁹⁶ When Stevens acceded to office ministerial salaries were actually reduced but by 1972 had increased to a level above that of 1968 (*West Africa*, 4 May 1968, p 526 and 15 September 1972, p 1211).

²⁹⁷ See for example the disclosures of the Beccles Davies Commission of Inquiry (established after the 1992 military coup) in *West Africa*, 30 November 1992-6 December 1992, p 2068.

²⁹⁸ The role of diamonds - which lay at the heart of APC corruption, providing Stevens with a crucial source of reward for clients - is examined at length below.

²⁹⁹ Often in concert with civil servants as outlined below.

³⁰⁰ See footnote 406 below.

prices far above the controlled price they made a healthy profit.³⁰¹ Alternatively, state revenue might be diverted directly into individual pockets. Large fraudulent claims for fuel purchases and travel expenses were revealed by the Auditor-General's report on the period 1978/79 to 1981/82.³⁰²

As in The Gambia, the threat of disclosure undoubtedly enhanced clients' loyalty towards their patron. To drive home the fact that his goodwill could be withdrawn Stevens punctuated his generally tolerant approach by periodically isolating then "discovering" a corrupt individual. In 1984 for example Chernor Maju, minister of state in the office of the First Vice President, was arrested and later dismissed (though not prosecuted) for attempting to smuggle gold and foreign currency.³⁰³

Before examining the role of corruption further it is important to stress that facilitating individual accumulation and ensuring the continued flow of resources were not, by themselves, sufficient to secure Stevens' position. Like Jawara, Stevens distributed rewards in conjunction with a range of techniques designed to constrain ambitious subordinates. Coercion, not favoured by Jawara, played some role - notably in preventing individuals leaving the APC - but was rarely used to obtain lieutenants' obedience *within* the party.³⁰⁴

As already noted Stevens aimed to concentrate power in his own hands - appropriating the final say in all important decisions and consolidating his control over the distribution of patronage - and to ensure no-one else built up a comparable position. To this end he undertook frequent cabinet reshuffles³⁰⁵ which not only promoted feelings of insecurity among ministers (and drove home the

³⁰¹ The importance of rice in sustaining Stevens' network extended beyond the political elite. According to Reno top civil servants also received vouchers, in lieu of payment, enabling them to purchase heavily subsidised rice; in 1982 each had access to 350 100kg bags of rice at one-seventh the official price (selected MPs had access to as many as 500 bags and some ministers, 1000). Subsidised rice also helped maintain the acquiescence of the military (see Chapter two) and the adherence of selected rural leaders and petty traders. The latter were provided with cheap rice and, in return, their politician suppliers gained a source of support and a cut of the profits. See William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp 144-46.

³⁰² For details of this report (which also covered instances of corruption in Freetown City Council and the provincial administration) see *West Africa*, 10 October 1983, p 2380.

³⁰³ See *West Africa*, 27 August 1984, p 1754; 3 September 1984, p 1764 and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1984-1985, B 592. Reflecting the political nature of Maju's arrest one senior customs officer noted that he had long been suspected of smuggling but they had no powers to "search let alone arrest a minister unless with specific instructions which is very rare."

³⁰⁴ Nevertheless, that prospective intra-party rebels had witnessed how Stevens dealt with his opponents presumably played some part in their calculations. Thus, two of the UDP leaders were executed alongside six others for their alleged involvement in the 1974 coup attempt (see Chapter two). In 1971 four military personnel had been executed giving a total (low by the standards of some African states) of twelve. The only other apparent instance of elite-level coercion occurred with the death of Sam Bangurah, Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone, in December 1979. Bangurah was allegedly murdered as a result of his opposition to the numerous corrupt deals during preparations for the OAU conference (see below) and his obstructionist stance towards providing State House with foreign exchange. Four people (including the Governor's niece) were tried for the murder but later released. See *West Africa*, 24 November 1980, p 2396; 1 March 1982, p 825 and 7 March 1988, p 435.

³⁰⁵ According to Reno, *op. cit.*, p 132 ministers' average tenure declined from three years in 1967, to twenty-five months by 1973, and nineteen months in 1983.

fact that personal loyalty was the only route to political advancement) but prevented them amassing a fixed pool of indebted clients attached to a particular ministry. At the same time Stevens' skilfully nurtured his lieutenants' ambitions. By frequently expressing a wish to retire Stevens kept both the succession issue and his subordinates' aspirations alive. Crucially, however, he was sufficiently inscrutable to keep even his closest colleagues guessing about the identity of his favoured successor.³⁰⁶ Raising the hopes of various individuals - usually by appointing them to serve in an acting Vice-Presidential capacity³⁰⁷ - convinced them of the wisdom of remaining loyal. That it promoted conflict among his subordinates (vying for the position of successor) further enhanced Stevens' security.

Like Jawara, Stevens exploited conflict among his supporters when he perceived it as working to his advantage. Throughout the 1970s, for example, he cultivated the friction between his two senior colleagues, SI Koroma and CA Kamara-Taylor, a Limba. Stevens probably regarded Koroma - who had strong support at the local level³⁰⁸ and within the party (particularly among Temne MPs, many of whose elections he had personally supervised) - as the greater threat. Accordingly, he encouraged Koroma to hold presidential aspirations, while nurturing his awareness that any attempt to hasten the desired outcome would face strong opposition from a second presidential candidate, the APC Secretary-General Kamara-Taylor. The rivalry between the two men stemmed from their presidential hopes and a difference in political style (Koroma was labelled a radical compared to the moderate Kamara-Taylor). Looking at Stevens' distribution of cabinet posts gives some clues as to how it was maintained. In 1971 Koroma was appointed Vice-President, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; Kamara-Taylor to the powerful Finance ministry. A couple of years later the scales were even more finely balanced when Koroma lost Interior. Then in 1975 Kamara-Taylor took over at Interior and replaced Koroma as Prime Minister. Meanwhile he relinquished the Finance Ministry to Koroma who also remained Vice-President. In 1977 both men were effectively demoted with Koroma losing Finance (which was replaced with State Enterprises) and CA Kamara-Taylor, Interior (replaced with Housing and Country Planning). On the declaration of a single-party state the two men became First and Second Vice-President respectively.

By the late 1970s Kamara-Taylor's ill health (and frequent absence from office) rendered him increasingly ineffective as a counterweight to Koroma and Stevens began casting around for a replacement.³⁰⁹ For some time Abu Kamara, a Temne from Port Loko, appeared to be his first

³⁰⁶ As Francis Minah observed, "Anyone ... who tells you that the President has discussed with him his plan for retirement is definitely not telling you the truth." *West Africa*, 22 August 1983, p 1935.

³⁰⁷ According to a report in August 1983 (*ibid.*) the previous two years had seen a total of eight different people appointed as acting first or second Vice-President during the Vice-Presidents' trips abroad or (increasingly in the case of Kamara-Taylor) periods of ill-health.

³⁰⁸ On Koroma's grassroots support and his links with Sekou Touré (which prevented Stevens dropping Koroma while he continued to need Guinean troops) see Reno, *op. cit.*, pp 84-85, 97-98, 100.

³⁰⁹ Kamara-Taylor was ill for most of 1982-83 (during which time Stevens took over as APC Secretary-

choice. His elevation to Finance and acting Second Vice-President in the late 1970s encouraged Kamara to believe in his prospects as an alternative Northern successor and resulted in a public estrangement from his former patron, Koroma.³¹⁰

Stevens also encouraged non-Northern subordinates to regard themselves as possible successors, in the process nurturing further divisions. For example, during the early 1980s two Mendes (and former members of the SLPP) Francis Minah, from Pujehun in the South, and Salia Jusu-Sheriff, from Kenema in the East, emerged as possible presidential candidates. In 1979, Minah (a cabinet member since 1973) was, for the first time, elevated to the position of acting second Vice-President and in 1980 appointed Finance Minister. Minah's presidential ambitions received a set-back towards the end of 1980 when he was demoted to Health and his position at Finance occupied by Sama Banya.³¹¹ In 1982 Jusu-Sheriff was appointed Finance Minister and Minah, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice,³¹² but in 1984 Kamara-Taylor's resignation signalled a reordering of the two men's relationship. Just as it appeared that Jusu-Sheriff was gaining the upper hand Minah was appointed to the position of second Vice-President; in September 1984 Jusu-Sheriff was demoted to the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning.³¹³

Although Jusu-Sheriff's demotion was an obvious setback to his presidential aspirations he had no cause to despair. Throughout his rule Stevens, like Jawara, proved willing to rehabilitate those whose careers had taken a downward turn, thus keeping individual hopes alive.³¹⁴ As he put it,³¹⁵ "Politics is in large measure the art of conciliation and co-operation. If charity does not prevent you from developing inflexible enmities, then sheer common-sense should." Those who spent an enforced period in the political wilderness - and had learnt, as Koroma was later to observe, "that people who fall foul of the President find few friends and very little mercy"³¹⁶ - tended to

General) but was not compelled to resign until mid-1984. By this stage Stevens was confident there would be no backlash among Kamara-Taylor's increasingly divided Limba supporters. See *West Africa*, 22 August 1983, p 1934.

³¹⁰ In 1984 reports suggesting Kamara had joined a campaign requesting Koroma's retirement emerged. In an interview with the *New Shaft* Kamara denied this but did confirm the depth of the division between the two men. Accusing Koroma of starting "a campaign of hate" against him, Kamara suggested that Koroma's animosity reflected his belief "that the Pa is grooming me to take over from him." See *West Africa*, 21 May 1984, p 1097; 11 June 1984, p 1243; 18 June 1984, p 1256.

³¹¹ Before his demotion to Interior in 1982, Banya (from Kailahun in the East) was also tipped as a likely successor.

³¹² Symptomatic of the rivalry between the two men was their quarrel over the 1982 Pujehun election. Jusu-Sheriff resented Minah's role in the defeat of one of his strongest supporters, Mana Kpaka, and each reportedly blamed the other for the violent aftermath of the elections. See *West Africa*, 18 June 1984, p 1256 and 22 August 1983, p 1934.

³¹³ Jusu-Sheriff's plans for the economy - said to involve reducing corruption and devaluing the leone - clashed with Stevens' survival imperative and were one cause of his demotion.

³¹⁴ For instance, in May 1984 Abu Kamara was demoted from the Ministry of Trade and Industry to the Ministry of Justice but in June was appointed acting second Vice-President. Numerous other examples could be cited.

³¹⁵ Stevens, *op. cit.*, p 179.

³¹⁶ *West Africa*, 29 July 1985, p 1565.

demonstrate considerable loyalty if allowed to return.

Stevens' uncommon ability to raise subordinates' aspirations to the presidency posed the problem of dealing with the inevitable deluge of disappointment should he choose to step down. The following section examines how, in 1985, Stevens resolved this problem to ensure a smooth succession.³¹⁷

The Succession.

When Stevens decided to make way for a successor three factors caused him to overlook all the leading candidates. First was the extent of his own unpopularity. To enhance the APC's survival prospects - and protect it through a potentially destabilising succession - the new leader needed to be both popular and not too closely associated with the existing President. The first requirement alone ruled out most of Stevens' lieutenants. Francis Minah, for example, had been widely disliked since the OAU summit when, as Finance Minister, he was allegedly implicated in a range of illicit deals. SI Koroma - though not generally associated with large-scale corruption - was ruled out by Stevens' need to create the illusion of change.

Considerations of trust and control also played a role in the rejection of Koroma. There were suggestions that, as President, he might order Stevens before a commission of inquiry to boost his own popular standing.³¹⁸ Linked to this, Koroma's long time political experience rendered it likely that he would forge an independent role as leader; as it later emerged Stevens wished to retain a degree of control over his successor.

A final factor governing Stevens' reluctance to select any of the leading presidential candidates was their lack of solid support from within the political elite. Stevens wanted, above all, to avoid a military coup (and the inevitable commission of inquiry) but the rivalry between his subordinates - and the nature of the "prize" - rendered it unlikely that the losing side(s) would simply accept their fate. Of all the "big men," no single individual appeared to command sufficient support to hold the APC together. Overlaying this there existed a distinct possibility that, in the inevitable "climate of apprehension" surrounding the succession, ethnic identity would re-emerge as a significant factor. Selecting any of the Mende or Temne candidates seemed likely to unleash hitherto subdued ethnic jealousies.³¹⁹

If there were good reasons for by-passing all the leading candidates, imposing an "outsider" was equally, if not more, problematic. Dealing first with the second Vice-President, Stevens

³¹⁷ The successful transition owed much to Stevens' choice of Momoh, examined at length in Chapter two. Here the focus is upon Stevens' efforts to ensure that his choice was accepted.

³¹⁸ *West Africa*, 19 August 1985, p 1684.

³¹⁹ This was perhaps one reason for SI Koroma's remarkable announcement that far from being a Temne (as hitherto claimed) he was actually a Mandingo. A second theory (noted in *West Africa*, 29 April 1985, p 820) suggested Koroma's switch was designed to secure the support of Jamil Said Mohammed, a powerful Afro-Lebanese businessman.

promised him the First Vice-Presidency in return for his (and his supporters) public endorsement of Momoh, as well as assistance in pushing through the required constitutional changes. Not wishing to risk the prospect of high office, and the possibility of yet higher things to come, Minah acceded to Stevens' wishes.³²⁰

Koroma posed a much greater challenge. Should Momoh take over (and with the first Vice-Presidency promised to Minah) his political career would be at an end - indeed, Stevens stated publicly that he intended Koroma to retire. The first Vice-President was not enamoured of this prospect; after years of loyal service, and despite his much talked about ill-health,³²¹ Koroma believed the presidency was his due.

Stevens' response was to isolate him. As already noted, the northern parliamentary group was deeply divided, with leading northerners - notably Abu Kamara and Sheka Kanu, Foreign Minister³²² - at odds with their former ally, Koroma. However, emerging signs that political divisions were narrowing caused speculation that, if it came to it, Kamara and Kanu would support Koroma in preference to Momoh. Accordingly, Kamara was demoted from Justice to Health³²³ while a delayed 1982 election petition against Kanu was quickly heard; Kanu lost his seat alongside SAT Koroma - a vocal back-bencher and Koroma ally. Others who looked to be siding with Koroma were also disposed of. Prominent among them were Abdulai Conteh, appointed Finance Minister in September 1984, and the Interior Minister Sama Banya (both of whom had at one time been tipped for the presidency). In June 1985 Conteh had voted against, and Banya had abstained, on a private member's motion to amend sections of the Constitution to set up a Presidential Council.³²⁴ Both were swiftly dropped from the cabinet (Conteh, just twenty-four hours before he was due to deliver his budget to Parliament.)

Meanwhile Koroma, declaring his intention to "fight to the finish," was targeted by senior level delegations and put under close surveillance. In Parliament he complained he was "suffering a very trying time ... CID and MIB Military Intelligence Branch men have been put in my house to see who goes there"³²⁵ and eventually, after consultations in his Port Loko constituency (where he was believed to be losing support) Koroma conceded defeat. His ordeal, however, was not yet over.

³²⁰ In June 1985 he was appointed Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, mirroring the events of some seven years earlier when, in the same post, Minah had helped Stevens impose a single-party constitution. His reward then had been the acting Vice-Presidency and later the Finance ministry.

³²¹ Koroma went to great lengths to disprove Stevens' claims that he was ill, even walking eight miles at the head of Kamara Taylor's funeral procession in April 1985. *West Africa*, 29 April 1985, p 820.

³²² Like so many others, Kanu - at one time Koroma's "chief political ally and adviser" - had been allowed to nurture presidential ambitions. See *West Africa*, 17 September 1984, p 1881.

³²³ Kamara was said to have been using his position at Justice to delay necessary changes to the constitution.

³²⁴ This motion - discussed at length in *West Africa*, 8 July 1985, pp 1356-57 and 29 July 1985, p 1565 - was designed to further reduce the constitutional powers of the first Vice-President. Other changes to the constitution included provisions enabling Momoh - as a nominated MP and member of the armed forces - to "contest" the presidential election.

³²⁵ *West Africa*, 29 July 1985, p 1565.

At a carefully orchestrated national delegates convention - held just three days later - Koroma was instructed to nominate Momoh. According to one observer: he "declared "I, Sorie Ibrahim Koroma, hereby nominate Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh to be ..." The audience gazed up fervently like stricken souls awaiting their saviour. Stevens beamed a broad smile and the party faithful cheered."³²⁶

Stevens and the Urban Elite.

Unlike Jawara, Stevens inherited a partially politicised civil service from his civilian predecessor, Albert Margai. In 1968 many civil servants welcomed the new Prime Minister but it was vital that this support be maintained. Margai - gravely undermined by civil servants' readiness to leak information about corruption and mismanagement to the APC³²⁷ - had paid the penalty of failing to do so.

Initially, Stevens took measures to weed out those believed to be disloyal. His intention was two-fold: to avoid the difficulties experienced by Margai and to demonstrate where real power lay.³²⁸ Thus, in 1968 several senior civil servants - including Abu Koroma, Sheikh Daramy, Thomas Decker and John Kallon - were charged with treason for their alleged role in the events following the 1967 elections. Of these, Decker was sentenced to death and Kallon and Daramy to seven years imprisonment.³²⁹ All three successfully appealed their sentences, all were kept in detention until 1971 when - having made his point - Stevens sanctioned their release.

Subsequently, Stevens moved on two fronts. To consolidate and extend his patronage network the civil service was greatly expanded. By 1985 approximately half of all wage-earners (60% including parastatal employees) were employed by the government;³³⁰ the salary bill increased from Le8m in 1969-70 to an estimated Le90m by 1980,³³¹ a much greater increase than over the ten year period, 1975-1985, in The Gambia. Appointments below the level of Permanent Secretary were made by the Public Service Commission - gradually filled with APC loyalists³³² - and, higher up, by Stevens who hand-picked individuals on the basis of their personal loyalty.³³³ The politicisation of

³²⁶ *West Africa*, 12 August 1985, p 1633.

³²⁷ Fred M Hayward, "Political Leadership, Power and the State: Generalizations From the Case of Sierra Leone," *African Studies Review*, Vol 27, No 3, 1984, p 29.

³²⁸ Necessary since some civil servants had occupied powerful positions under the military regime.

³²⁹ *West Africa*, 25 April 1970, p 475. Koroma was acquitted and subsequently "rehabilitated" with his appointment as a Director of the National Diamond Mining Corporation. In 1976 he was appointed managing director. *West Africa*, 17 October 1970, p 1230 and 21 June, 1976, p 895.

³³⁰ SM Funna, "Sierra Leone: Economic Structure and Recent Performance," *Sierra Leone Studies at Birmingham* (Birmingham University, 1985), p 16.

³³¹ *West Africa*, 28 January 1972, p 93 and J Barry Riddell, "Internal and External Forces Acting Upon Disparities in Sierra Leone," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 3, 1985 p 401, footnote 1. Much of the increased expenditure was devoted to expansion although senior civil servants also enjoyed generous remuneration and, as revenues declined, access to subsidised rice.

³³² See Clapham, *op. cit.*, 1976, p 53.

³³³ Loyal Creoles, willing to use their previously acquired skills to Stevens' advantage, continued to hold

the civil service became more explicit with the introduction of the single-party state when top civil servants were formally required to become members of the APC - a step taken to obtain "their unqualified loyalty."³³⁴ By 1980 Stevens was pointing to the appointment of senior civil servants to diplomatic posts as indicative of his government's policy of "integrating" civil servants into the political structure.³³⁵

Top civil servants' loyalty, like that of politicians, was based upon their ability to accumulate personal wealth. Generous salaries and allowances were supplemented by the misappropriation of state resources - often in concert with politicians. Two prominent scandals were the so-called Vouchergate and Squandergate Affairs.³³⁶ The former,³³⁷ discovered in 1981 by the then Minister of State at Finance Alfred Akibo-Betts, revealed the misappropriation of millions of leones³³⁸ through the issuing of forged vouchers (purchase orders) to fictitious companies for imaginary services. Subsequent arrests included three ministers (at Interior, Development and Economic Planning, and Energy and Power), an MP, four Permanent Secretaries and a number of businessmen.

Vouchergate disclosed one way in which civil servants, businessmen and politicians co-operated to their mutual benefit. Equally significantly it demonstrated Stevens' tolerance of public office corruption. Whether or not he sanctioned the initial revelations³³⁹ Stevens proved willing and able to protect his clients. At the High Court the Minister of Energy and Power and several civil servants were speedily released due to lack of evidence.³⁴⁰ The remaining cases suffered

important positions. According to official lists, by 1979 the top posts were held by fifty-two Creoles, twenty-one Mendes, eleven Temnes and six "others." *West Africa*, 3 September 1979, p 1623.

³³⁴ Noted by the first Vice-President in the House of Representatives (*West Africa*, 14 August 1978, p 1619). In 1981 the APC Central Committee reportedly established an office to persuade *all* civil servants to join the party. The privileges of so doing were listed as "participation in the President's delegation to foreign countries during which allowances and free accommodation are normally given, the opportunity to travel to other countries at the invitation of these countries ... priority in the award of scholarships for their children as well as employment." *West Africa*, 17 August 1981, p 1906.

³³⁵ *West Africa*, 18 August 1980, p 1580. For example Victor Sumner - former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - was despatched as High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. *West Africa*, 8 September 1980, p 1737.

³³⁶ Although these scandals revealed some of the ways in which funds were misappropriated they almost certainly represented a mere fragment of the overall corruption picture.

³³⁷ Details from *West Africa*, 23 February 1981, p 411; 2 March 1981, pp 429, 461; 9 March 1981, p 495; 1 June 1981, p 1213; 8 June 1981, p 1325 and 2 April 1984, p 748.

³³⁸ In the immediate aftermath of the revelations it was reported that daily government expenditure decreased from approximately Le2m to Le800,000 per day.

³³⁹ It is quite possible that he did, given the benefits of periodically reminding clients of his power to withdraw rewards.

³⁴⁰ Two of the three ministers implicated in Vouchergate (SB Marah and HT Williams) were returned unopposed in the 1982 elections and subsequently reassigned to the cabinet as Minister of Interior and Minister of Establishment. In stark contrast Akibo-Betts - by now deeply unpopular among all sections of the urban elite - was "advised to withdraw" from the 1982 elections, briefly detained, physically assaulted and eventually forced into exile. Stevens - apprehensive about Akibo-Betts' new-found populist credentials and his support among Fourah Bay students - was not averse to this outcome. For further details of Akibo-Betts' rise and fall see *West Africa*, 14 June 1982, p 1578 and 21 June 1982, pp 1630-31, 1676.

interminable delays - the court reportedly adjourned twenty-four times over three years "due to the failure of the prosecution to offer evidence" - and were eventually dropped. In 1984 the accused were discharged.

Towards the end of 1981 Stevens further revealed the diversion of Le40m from the Consolidated Revenue Fund³⁴¹ and the misappropriation of millions of leones of remittances to the provinces. In January 1982 numerous civil servants were briefly detained then suspended, and three commissions of inquiry (for the Northern, Eastern and Southern Provinces) established. The Commissions uncovered extensive evidence of corruption with funds misappropriated in a variety of ways including the issuing of forged vouchers, the payment of ghost workers and the diversion of revenue collections.³⁴² As a result, ninety-five civil servants (some at the level of Permanent Secretary) were sacked.

While Stevens' "tough action" helped appease public opinion in the short term³⁴³ the sacked civil servants in the Northern and Eastern Provinces were not prosecuted and, according to some reports, were later reinstated in their former posts.³⁴⁴ Possible ministerial collusion in the misappropriation was not investigated³⁴⁵ and corrupt practices continued. In 1984 ministerial supervision of salary payments in the provinces revealed "discrepancies in pay vouchers, improper record of time sheets, unauthorised recruitment of workers and the payment of salaries and wages to non-existent workers."³⁴⁶

Corruption also continued at the very highest level. Abdul Karim, the head of the civil service and Secretary to the President, had been discredited during the Squandergate hearings when he was reported to have "instructed his subordinates to prepare monthly "die-man" lists for fraudulent salary payments, inflate expenditure votes [and] falsify documents ... [He] also demanded payments from all top provincial administrators as a bribe for appointments and promotions. To be appointed a provincial commissioner an official had to remit Le10,000 as down-payment then monthly tributary payments of Le5000 to guarantee security of tenure."³⁴⁷ Karim was retired in September 1983 (after five years in office) and replaced by James PA Koroma. Following

³⁴¹ *West Africa*, 14 December 1981, p 3021.

³⁴² See *West Africa*, 20 June 1983, p 1450 and 4 April 1983, pp 830-31.

³⁴³ The Inquiries and Stevens' "tough action" were given widespread publicity.

³⁴⁴ The report of the Bo-based Tejan Commission of Inquiry - described by one judge as "the most unserious document in the judicial history of Sierra Leone" - had recommended the reinstatement of all thirty-two civil servants due to lack of evidence. Disturbed by increasingly vocal allegations that Tejan had been bribed, Stevens let it be known that the government was intending to "pursue administrative action as specified in the General Orders governing the Civil Service Code of Conduct." Once the fuss had died down these plans were apparently laid to one side. *West Africa*, 2 April 1984, p 748 and 12 November 1984, p 2253.

³⁴⁵ Civil servants constituted a "softer" target than politicians.

³⁴⁶ *West Africa*, 21 May 1984, p 1097.

³⁴⁷ Jimmy D Kandeh "Dynamics of State, Class and Political Ethnicity: A Comparative Study of State-Society Relations in Colonial and Post-Colonial Sierra Leone, 1896-1986" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987), p 168.

the APC's downfall a commission of inquiry revealed that Koroma possessed "huge resources" (including twenty properties and substantial investments) and noted that the practice of receiving "gifts" had not ceased after Karim's downfall.³⁴⁸

The expansion of the public sector provided Stevens with a further source of patronage for urban elites and aspiring provincials. Some parastatals were inherited from the previous regimes and subsequently expanded, others were created under Stevens and were located in all sectors including agriculture, mining, transport, banking, trading and insurance. In reward for their loyalty post-holders enjoyed generous remuneration, perquisites and opportunities for corrupt diversion.³⁴⁹

Resources.

Perhaps Stevens' greatest challenge was generating sufficient and sustainable resources to maintain his political network. Rather more dependent than Jawara on the continued flow of resources to control elites, Stevens was even less able to maintain his clientele with resources generated from economic growth. If in The Gambia the relationship between regime survival and economic growth was far from established in Sierra Leone it was almost non-existent. Sierra Leone's economic decline³⁵⁰ (though partly attributable to external factors, notably the rising costs of imports, particularly oil, in 1973-74 and 1979-80³⁵¹ and declining export prices³⁵²) was primarily a by-product of the survival imperative. The corrupt diversion of funds and excessive government spending (used not to stimulate the economy's productive base but as fuel for the maintenance and expansion of Stevens' patrimonial network) were incompatible with economic growth.

With public expenditure increasing at a faster rate than revenues³⁵³ budget deficits - averaging 17% of GDP from 1980-85 - were inevitable. Financed by domestic credit and external

³⁴⁸ White Paper on the report of the Justice Laura Marcus-Jones Commission of Inquiry in *West Africa*, 15-21 March 1993, p 242.

³⁴⁹ See for example Luke's discussion of the Sierra Leone Ports Authority in David Fashole Luke, "The Political Economy of an African Enterprise: a Longitudinal case study of the Administrative and Economic Operations of the Sierra Leone Port Organization," *Administration and Development*, Vol 4, No 2, 1985, pp 171-86. Also see below for some observations on the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board.

³⁵⁰ Real GDP per capita grew at an annual average of 0.1% between 1971 and 1981 Economic statistics (though subject to the problems, outlined in the previous section, of accuracy and reliability) are taken from annual budget speeches and Central Bank reports (covered in various issues of *West Africa*). and the International Monetary Fund, *International Financial Statistics Yearbook*, 1987 (Washington DC, IMF, 1987). Also see Kelfala M Kallon, *The Economics of Sierra Leonean Entrepreneurship* (USA, University Press of America, 1990), Appendix A, pp 239-274 and SM Funna, *op. cit.*, 1985, pp 14-37.

³⁵¹ In 1974 oil imports (at Le21.6m) cost almost three times as much as the previous year. In 1981 they cost Le91m.

³⁵² For example, the international price of a ton of cocoa decreased from £3,000 in 1977 to £600 in 1986. Alfred B Zack-Williams, "Sierra Leone: Crisis and Despair," *Review of African Political Economy*, No 49, 1990, p 24.

³⁵³ From 1969-75, for example, current expenditure grew at about 11.5% per annum while government revenues increased by 4% a year. Thereafter the gap grew wider reflecting, in part, the escalating demands upon Stevens' discretionary expenditure. According to Reno (*op. cit.*, p 134) Stevens' non-budgeted spending reached 60 percent of operating budgets by 1979.

borrowing,³⁵⁴ the former saw constant increases in the money supply - from Le27.5m in 1968 to Le899.8 by 1985³⁵⁵ - and the latter increases in the foreign debt which, as a percentage of exports, grew from 60.5 in 1970 to 399.8 in 1985.

Before examining the importance of foreign borrowing at greater length it is necessary to take a closer look at the APC's domestic resource-base, beginning with agriculture. Under Stevens the agricultural export sector³⁵⁶ suffered an overall decline. Exogenous factors (worsening world prices, erratic rainfall etc.) and more importantly, the government's emphasis on extraction accounted for this. The methods of extraction resembled those in The Gambia.³⁵⁷ Apart from the taxation of agricultural exports (primarily cocoa, coffee and palm kernels), the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB) - which enjoyed a monopoly - generated a rural surplus by paying the farmer less than the world price for his produce.³⁵⁸ By 1973-74 the SLPMB had built up capital reserves of over Le12m; by 1976-77 the Capital Account totalled Le25.1m.³⁵⁹

From its reserves the SLPMB contributed funds (approximately Le1/2m annually by the mid-1970s³⁶⁰) to the APC's development budget and loaned the government much larger amounts.³⁶¹ The funds thus acquired were simply diverted or spent on survival inducing projects (sustaining the urban bias, establishing new parastatals etc.). Farmers received little for their efforts with even the small amounts marked out for agriculture often diverted to line individual pockets. The much vaunted mechanisation project floundered just a few years after its introduction in the early 1970s, in part due to the shortage of foreign exchange for maintenance, but also because many tractors were diverted to assist politicians' diamond mining operations.³⁶² Inputs such as fertilisers were reportedly smuggled abroad by the Ministry of Agriculture.³⁶³

³⁵⁴ On the contributions of each see Kallon, *op. cit.*, p 254.

³⁵⁵ The increases rose sharply towards the end of the 1970s. According to one Central Bank report domestic borrowing to finance the budget increased by almost 300% between 1978/79 and 1982/83. The impact of this trend on inflation is examined below.

³⁵⁶ On food production, which occupied at least 80% of farmers, see below.

³⁵⁷ Although in Sierra Leone agriculture was a much less important source of resources.

³⁵⁸ Although annual statistics are not available the 1974/75 - 1978/79 National Development Plan document noted that during the period 1969-73 producer prices were at least 50% below world prices (*West Africa*, 11 November 1974, p 1368). In an article written in 1985 Riddell stated that producer prices had remained at approximately 45% of world prices (J Barry Riddell, "Internal and External Forces Acting Upon Disparities in Sierra Leone," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 3, 1985 p 402). Although in some years (for example 1976/77) producer prices were raised and farmers responded accordingly (see *West Africa*, 24 April 1978, p 795) these were the exception rather than the rule. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly what prompted these increases (although IMF pressure was one factor after 1979); what is clear is that, unlike in The Gambia where increased prices were usually announced around election time in response to rural voting strength, a similar mechanism did not operate in Sierra Leone.

³⁵⁹ *West Africa*, 22 July 1974, p 991 and 23 June 1980, p 2214. These reserves had developed from a deficit of Le1m in 1966. On the causes of the deficit see *West Africa*, 9 August 1982, p 1038.

³⁶⁰ *West Africa*, 22 July 1974, p 911.

³⁶¹ J Barry Riddell, "Urban Bias in Underdevelopment: Appropriation From The Countryside in Post-Colonial Sierra Leone," *Tijdschrift voor Economie en Sociale Geografie*, Vol 76, No 5, 1985, p 379.

³⁶² *West Africa*, 5 May 1986, p 939,

³⁶³ *West Africa*, 4 November 1985, p 2301. As already noted, the diversion of funds destined for agriculture

Farmers also subsidised the, predominantly Lebanese, SLPMB buying agents³⁶⁴ - who often short-changed farmers by paying them less than the prescribed price for produce³⁶⁵ - and SLPMB public sector employees. Under the early management of Akibo-Betts "most of the two thousand people who had been sacked by the military government got back their jobs and many more who had worked vigorously to oust the Albert Margai government were rewarded by being offered jobs at the SLPMB ... the board was soon turned into some kind of political haven where ministers could easily send anyone with a note to get a job."³⁶⁶ The Managing Director of the SLPMB, Musa Suma, allegedly acquired considerable personal wealth.³⁶⁷

As already noted, the likely long-term effects of a policy of extraction are declining agricultural returns and this is precisely what occurred in Sierra Leone³⁶⁸ as farmers resorted to subsistence farming, to smuggling their produce to Liberia or migrating to the towns (see below). In turn, the APC was compelled to rely on alternative sources of funds.

Minerals (not found in The Gambia) constituted a crucial element of the APC's resource base, serving both as a prop to the formal economy and a source of illicit reward for APC supporters. Since the proceeds of illicit mining necessarily bypass the formal economy these two survival related functions inevitably clash, and in Sierra Leone this was reflected in the fact that mining's share of GDP fell from 20% in 1971 to less than 6% in 1981.³⁶⁹ Nevertheless it is important to distinguish between different types of mineral. In contrast to diamonds (see below) the proceeds of bulky minerals - which required a large capital investment (supplied by foreign companies) and involved a relatively complex extraction process - remained within the formal economy although were often diverted thereafter. The APC's task was to maximise returns.

Sierra Leone's mineral resources included iron ore, bauxite and rutile. Iron ore was originally mined by Delco (a subsidiary of William Bairds of Glasgow). In 1973 the government -

was also practised in The Gambia but certainly did not reach Sierra Leonean levels.

³⁶⁴ See Neil O Leighton, "The Political Economy of a Stranger Population: The Lebanese of Sierra Leone," in William A Shack and Elliott P Skinner (eds.) *Strangers in African Societies* (USA, University of California Press, 1979), p 91.

³⁶⁵ Identified as a problem by the Governor of the Central Bank. *West Africa*, 15 February 1982, p 444.

³⁶⁶ *West Africa*, 9 August 1982, p 2040. Similarly, the Hunting Report noted that the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Natural Resources had fourteen thousand employees, 80% of whose "functions are ill-defined and whose contribution to development is negative." *West Africa*, 15 February 1982, p 444.

³⁶⁷ Suma (Managing Director from 1978 and deputy Managing Director from 1974) was eventually compelled to retire in 1984 following increasingly vocal allegations of corruption. His ability to hang on for so long reflected his close personal relationship with Stevens and possibly his rumoured willingness to provide, on behalf of the SLPMB, selected individuals with loans and foreign exchange. This allegation was raised in an interview with Suma in *West Africa*, 20 February 1984, p 379.

³⁶⁸ Although periodically better prices resulted in a fluctuating output, overall SLPMB purchases declined (see, for example, Zack-Williams, *op. cit.*, p 24). According to Reno, *op. cit.*, p 152 coffee prices in 1985 stood at a third of world market prices resulting in a decline of official exports of more than 90%.

³⁶⁹ SM Funna, "Structure and Performance of the Sierra Leone Economy 1971-1981," *Sierra Leone Studies at Birmingham* (Birmingham University, 1983), p 25.

having dropped a proposal to take a 51% controlling interest in the company - negotiated a new agreement, raising taxes and providing for two Sierra Leonean directors on the company's board.³⁷⁰ In 1975, however, increasing losses (a result of declining export prices) caused the mines to close;³⁷¹ with Austrian investment they reopened in 1981 but much lower than predicted production levels³⁷² caused mining to cease once more in 1985. In contrast bauxite, mined by Sieromco (a subsidiary of Alusuisse of Switzerland), constituted an increasing (if unspectacular) proportion of total exports from a 1.5% annual average during 1963-69 to 5.3% in the 1970s.³⁷³ Rutile mining - interrupted in 1971 when meagre production levels caused Sherbro Minerals to transfer its assets to an American-controlled company, Sierra Rutile - restarted in 1979 and, after further interruptions in 1982 (when Bethlehem Steel Corporation pulled out transferring its assets to the minority partner, Nord Resources), contributed increasing amounts to the treasury. Export values increased from Le31.5m in 1983 to Le55m. in 1984.³⁷⁴

By way of contrast, diamonds³⁷⁵ - relatively easily mined and smuggled - were subject to great depredations. During the 1970s diamonds' share of exports, averaging about 60%, declined steadily and from 1980-85 plunged to an average of approximately 9%. In the mid-1970s 1.5m carats per annum was exported; by 1983 the figure was a mere 210,000 carats.³⁷⁶

The relative ease with which diamonds can be illicitly mined and smuggled both facilitated and complicated Stevens' route to political survival. The complications (not faced by Jawara) were most apparent during the initial years of APC rule when illicit diamond mining not only threatened state revenues but, more importantly, Stevens lacked control over the distribution of "informal market" opportunities.

William Reno³⁷⁷ has shown how, in 1968, (pro-SLPP) Kono chiefs - benefiting from mining

³⁷⁰ *West Africa*, 5 March 1973, p 303. The government's decision to abandon its take-over proposal (similar proposals, also dropped, had been outlined for bauxite and rutile mining) was said to stem from a lack of funds although 'Frank Ly' observes 'the payment of "huge bribes" to avert nationalisation. Frank Ly, "Sierra Leone: The Paradox of Economic Decline and Political Stability," *Monthly Review*, Vol 32, No 2, 1980, p 25.

³⁷¹ See *West Africa*, 29 April 1974, p 506 and 6 October 1975, p 1191.

³⁷² Production was approximately 350,000 tons in 1983 and 1984 compared to a predicted target of 1 million tons annually (*West Africa*, 8 December 1986, p 2501). Even this target was less than half the production levels regularly achieved prior to the first closure in 1975.

³⁷³ Kallon, *op. cit.*, p 170.

³⁷⁴ *West Africa*, 24 June 1985, p 1282.

³⁷⁵ Diamonds were discovered in 1927 and in 1935 Freetown signed an agreement with Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST) - formed by the Consolidated African Selection Trust, a subsidiary of London's Selection Trust - providing that company with exclusive, country-wide prospecting rights. In 1955 the SLST monopoly was broken and licenses issued to individuals to mine alluvial deposits in selected areas under the Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme (ADMS). The next major departure occurred under Stevens when, in 1969, he announced his intention to nationalise diamond mining by taking a 51% stake in SLST to form the National Diamond Mining Company (NDMC).

³⁷⁶ Similarly gold (which in 1979 began to be mined seriously for the first time in almost twenty years as a response to world price increases) largely by-passed formal channels. See *West Africa*, 5 May 1986, p 947.

³⁷⁷ *Op. cit.* Although many observers have noted the political importance of diamond mining (and the associated role of the Lebanese) Reno's study - to which the following discussion is greatly indebted - provides

through their control over mining licenses, plot assignation and protection for those engaged in illicit activities³⁷⁸ - had no incentive to co-operate with State House to decrease illicit mining. Stevens, denied access to formal and informal revenues and faced with the likelihood that chiefs would use illicit wealth to finance local opposition to his rule, approached this problem on several fronts. Aiming to rupture the mutually beneficial relationship between local chiefs and diamond dealers, in 1968 the authority to issue diamond licenses was removed from the chiefs and invested in the Ministry of Mines. The intention was to create a direct link between Freetown and the diamond dealers; that most new licenses were issued to "politically safe" Lebanese or Afro-Lebanese dealers³⁷⁹ served to strengthen this link. The Lebanese (many of whom were also engaged in illicit activities) were dependent on Stevens for protection against legal sanctions, local harassment³⁸⁰ and ultimately deportation.

At the same time Stevens moved to install allies (three between 1969 and 1972) as Kono chiefs. Their loyalty and willingness to co-operate with Stevens' attempts to bring both legal and illicit diamond mining under his personal control stemmed from their dependence on presidential favour. Without a local political base they were "cut off from seeking an independent accommodation with miners or dealers"; their remuneration came direct from Stevens in the form of an NDMC management position.³⁸¹

Having laid the basis for control Stevens, confronting the need for greater resources to maintain and extend his political network, announced a new departure in diamond mining.³⁸² From 1974 the Cooperative Contract Mining Scheme (CCMS) allowed private mining on land previously

by far the most detailed and well informed analysis. Other useful sources (though in the main focusing upon the pre-Stevens era) include Alfred Zack-Williams, *Tributors, Supporters and Merchant Capital: Mining and Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone* (Hants., Avebury, 1995); Aliphas G Mukonoweshuro, *Colonialism, Class Formation and Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone* (Maryland, University Press of America, 1993) and HL van der Laan, *The Sierra Leone Diamonds: An Economic Survey Covering the Years 1952-1961* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965).

³⁷⁸ Kono chiefs had been given the task of issuing licenses and land on the introduction of the ADMS. The question of protection was pertinent since most licensed dealers (68% by 1967) were Lebanese "strangers" who relied upon chiefly goodwill for their continued presence. The Lebanese predominance reflected their greater access to capital (accrued from other, family oriented, business activities) to pay for licenses. See Reno, *op. cit.*, Ch 2 and Zack-Williams, *op. cit.*, Ch 4.

³⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, p 107.

³⁸⁰ Reno (*op. cit.*, pp 124-26) observes how Kono residents - the victims of "vigorous anti-smuggling efforts" on behalf of private plot-holders - were forced to sell diamonds to available dealers in return for leones. Despite their enforced accommodation with the private market, miners' resentment (focused particularly on the "exploitative" Lebanese) was periodically expressed in violent action. Anti-Lebanese riots occurred in 1977 and 1985 (see *West Africa*, 8 April 1985, p 662 and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1977-1978, B 782). Local resentment was useful to Stevens since it reinforced Lebanese dependence on his access to coercion. More generally the tendency for Sierra Leoneans to focus upon foreigners as the source of their problems - a tendency which the APC did not discourage, in 1977 the party paper (quoted in *ibid.*) accusing them of "strutting across the country with an air of ... contempt for its people" - served to ease the position of the APC. On Stevens' scapegoating tactics see Chapter four.

³⁸¹ Reno, *op. cit.*, pp 95-96 notes that chiefs also benefited from "local extractions" with police protection from disaffected Kono residents provided by State House.

³⁸² Details from *ibid.*, pp 105-8 and Zack-Williams, *op. cit.*, pp 164-66.

controlled by the NDMC. Mining plots were distributed to loyal allies - chiefs, senior party members and key politicians. Their continued loyalty was based upon direct access to legal private diamond mining and illicit diamond wealth.³⁸³ Local chiefs and politicians also received dealers' licenses (which gave them a means of converting leones - often corruptly acquired - to foreign exchange via diamond purchases and sales) as a further source of reward.

Partnering the politicians, Lebanese diamond dealers organised mining operations and marketed diamonds, both legal and illicit, overseas. To this end, in 1974, De Beers' monopoly of overseas marketing was ended and five individuals, including the prominent Afro-Lebanese dealer Jamil Said Mohammed, were given licenses to export 20% of Sierra Leone's diamonds (with a 7.5% levy).³⁸⁴ In theory, all privately marketed diamonds were to be valued by the newly-created Government Diamond Office (GDO) which also oversaw the deposit of foreign exchange earnings in the Central Bank. In practice, however, the GDO - with both Stevens and Jamil Mohammed as directors - allowed exporters to undervalue diamonds and private mining operators to retain foreign exchange earnings abroad. This operation enabled selected exporters and plot holders (enjoying Stevens' favour) and their patron to accumulate considerable wealth, particularly since far more than the original 20% of diamonds were exported through Lebanese channels. Dealers increasingly used Lebanese exporters - notably Jamil Mohammed and Tony Yazbeck who utilised their long standing connections in Lebanon and elsewhere to finance diamond purchases³⁸⁵ and provide access to diamond markets - to export diamonds.³⁸⁶

Lebanese services also extended to arranging loans to assist Stevens' efforts to continue financing a large budget deficit. The following section examines the question of foreign borrowing in greater detail.

Private loans and the IMF.

By the mid-1970s declining domestic revenues increasingly threatened the maintenance of a high level of government expenditure (both budgeted and supplementary) necessary to appease elites, the security forces and urban groups. Lebanese businessmen, notably Jamil and Yazbeck,

³⁸³ Reno (*op. cit.*, pp 106, 114) estimates that legal private mining was worth approximately \$60-70m per year by 1980. Illicit export values he puts at approximately \$100-120m.

³⁸⁴ That Stevens regarded this new arrangement as crucial to his survival was reflected in his willingness to sacrifice the benefits associated with the De Beers' monopoly. Apart from a tax on exports and, from 1968, the payment of a yearly exporters' fee (*West Africa*, 7 December 1968, p 1458) De Beers' Central Selling Organisation (CSO) had opted to cushion the impact of periods of depressed world prices. See *West Africa*, 22 April 1974, p 475.

³⁸⁵ This service assumed great importance as many foreign banks hesitated to extend credit to Sierra Leone. For details of Lebanese connections abroad (including Jamil Mohammed's shares in two Lebanese banks) see Reno, *op. cit.*, p 132.

³⁸⁶ Reflected in the fact that many small dealers cited addresses connected to the exporters. See *ibid.*, pp 112-13.

came to the rescue³⁸⁷ using long-standing contacts with foreign banks in Lebanon and elsewhere to arrange high-interest private supplier loans. These loans, guaranteed by illicit diamond exports, increased from SDR9.2m in 1976 to SDR80.5m in 1980,³⁸⁸ enabling Stevens to continue financing a large budget deficit, in the process maintaining his clientelist network. The loans were usually free of conditions and could be used at Stevens' discretion, not least to finance unproductive projects arranged by the Lebanese in association with foreign contractors and local politicians to their mutual benefit.³⁸⁹

However, towards the end of the 1970s a fall-off in private loans³⁹⁰ prompted Stevens to look to the IMF as a source of resources.³⁹¹ Knowing that an agreement would provide much-needed credits, the likelihood of debt rescheduling and access to other foreign assistance, Stevens (like Jawara) could not afford to overlook the IMF.³⁹² Equally, however, he could not afford any wholesale implementation of IMF conditionalities. Stevens needed resources to meet the rising costs of his clientelist network, to appease urban dwellers and provide material benefits to the army. The IMF appeared to require that he neglect these basic survival imperatives as a precondition for releasing resources.

IMF reforms - which involved suppressing informal markets and compelling exporters to surrender foreign exchange earnings, slashing excessive extra-budgetary expenditure, reducing the size of the cabinet, reforming the public sector, devaluing the leone and ending subsidies - threatened the survival of the regime on two levels. Should Stevens lose the ability to distribute extra-budgetary largesse, official position and informal market opportunities his network would disintegrate. At the same time, ending subsidies would harm not only those clients enjoying control over commodity distribution but also the consumer. Those on fixed incomes would be further hit by devaluation, possibly leading to mass urban unrest.

In his study Reno focuses exclusively upon the threat IMF reforms posed to Stevens' elite network, rejecting the suggestion that he was unwilling to face "the SAP riot" consequent upon structural adjustment.³⁹³ Clearly, when forced to prioritise, Stevens' favoured elite interests and yet

³⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, pp 135-37.

³⁸⁸ For further information on the sources of deficit financing see Kallon, *op. cit.*, p 254.

³⁸⁹ In this context Reno (*op. cit.*, pp 136-37) notes the construction of a police barracks and the purchase of vehicles and an aircraft as well as the numerous contracts necessitated by the staging of the OAU conference in 1980 (see Chapter four).

³⁹⁰ Reno (*op. cit.*, p 136) notes private creditors' increasing reluctance to extend new loans given the "dwindling prospects for repayment."

³⁹¹ He also considered other possibilities. In *The Washington Post* (recounted in *West Africa*, 11 February 1980, p 242) it was reported that Stevens was contemplating issuing a licence (costing \$25m) to a US company to dispose of hazardous waste in Sierra Leone. Domestic protest caused him to abandon this idea and concentrate on accommodating the IMF - a less politically risky (albeit far from universally popular) course.

³⁹² Stevens' willingness to oversee the massive diversion of Sierra Leone's natural resources rendered the need for IMF assistance almost as pressing as in resource-poor Gambia

³⁹³ See for example Reno, *op. cit.*, p 11.

he appears to have paid rather more attention to the urban populace than Reno suggests. Stevens perceived a relationship between elite support and urban acquiescence. Elites desired a strong leader - with at least every appearance of a firm grip on society - to protect their interests and future security.³⁹⁴ While urban acquiescence does not necessarily reflect contentment, urban protest serves as a highly visible (though not necessarily accurate) warning that a leader's grip on power is wavering. It might in turn be argued that as long as Stevens had - and was seen by his subordinates to have - recourse to coercion, urban protest offered little real threat. However, while coercion played an important role in Stevens' overall strategy he desired to keep its use to a minimum, fearing both a descent into the "force-contempt-more force" spiral and the repercussions of using security forces in a domestic capacity (see Chapter two).

That Stevens was concerned about the destabilising potential of urban protest was suggested both by his willingness to simulate a commitment to reforms as well as to abandon them mid-way. As already noted, IMF resources were needed for a range of reasons not least to maintain urban acquiescence.³⁹⁵ IMF-inspired reforms released these resources and yet at the same time caused suffering among the urban populace, causing them to be halted. Subsidies, though cut, were never withdrawn completely and currency devaluation's allowed to erode. The leone was devalued by 5% in November 1978³⁹⁶ (when the exchange rate link with sterling was ended and the Leone was linked to the SDR); by 100% in December 1982 with the introduction of the IMF approved two-tier system;³⁹⁷ in 1983 following the collapse of the two-tier system and the reunification of the exchange rates at the higher level; and by 58% in February 1985.³⁹⁸

Though partial, these efforts (and the IMF's willingness to accept them as a sign of good faith³⁹⁹) alongside small arrears payments⁴⁰⁰ enabled Stevens to access IMF resources. In 1979 a

³⁹⁴ Security was a particularly prevalent concern following the 1980 coup in Liberia when some members of the elite had been summarily executed.

³⁹⁵ External resources enabled Stevens to keep inflation down and to continue to provide a basic level of services (see below for further details).

³⁹⁶ This was intended to constitute the first of a four stage 20% devaluation to be completed by the end of December 1978. However, price increases of approximately 20% after the first stage caused the government to suspend further action.

³⁹⁷ The two-tier system - designed, in theory, to suppress informal markets - aimed to appease the IMF following the collapse of the 1981 programme (due to the government's failure to control expenditure, devalue the leone, remove subsidies or keep up with arrears payments). It consisted of an official exchange rate (fixed by the Central Bank) and a commercial market rate (based on supply and demand). The commercial exchange rate was Le2.47 to \$1 compared to Le1.2 previously. Reportedly subject to political manipulation the new system failed to eliminate informal markets and was abandoned in mid-1983. See *West Africa*, 7 February 1983, p 315 and 4 July 1983, p 1567.

³⁹⁸ *West Africa*, 4 March 1985, p 420.

³⁹⁹ The IMF did not harden its stance (demanding meaningful reform prior to the release of funds) until Stevens' rule was drawing to a close. Stevens stepped down in 1985, the very year the PPP regime finally opted to implement the ERP. Thus, both Stevens and Jawara were able to continue receiving IMF funds by effecting a commitment to economic reform over an extended period.

⁴⁰⁰ Citing a Ministry of Finance official, Reno (*op. cit.*, p 140) suggests that the IMF wished to impress on larger, more "important" African states, "that everyone has to pay something someday" and to this end

stand-by arrangement authorising purchases of SDR17m over a twelve month period was agreed.⁴⁰¹ This in turn led to an agreement under the IMF's Extended Fund Facility in March 1981, allowing the government to purchase approximately SDR186m (\$230m) over three years.⁴⁰² Although this programme was rendered inoperative by the end of 1981 about \$38m had been drawn.⁴⁰³ Moreover, its cancellation did not signal the end of IMF assistance. In 1983 and 1984 further loans were approved of which Sierra Leone eventually received at least \$20m in each year.⁴⁰⁴

Alongside the continued receipt of external credits Stevens exploited every opportunity to extend his political network. For example, IMF demands for the privatisation of parastatals caused the sale of over half Sierra Leone's public enterprises; according to Reno⁴⁰⁵ many "were sold (or given) to Lebanese businessmen and their politician partners" providing a new source of resources for clients. With privatisation such partnerships became involved in virtually every sector of the economy. Using the resources generated from diamond sales, Jamil Mohammed in particular extended his economic reach becoming the managing director of the Sierra Fishing Company, the International Bank for Trade and Industry, and the National Trading Company (NTC).⁴⁰⁶ Many privatised enterprises benefited from a continued monopoly on imports (dependent on Stevens' continued favour and presumably a share of the profits). The NTC, for example, retained exclusive import rights for eighty-seven commodities.⁴⁰⁷

With privatisation Stevens was able to accede to IMF conditionalities (thereby increasing likelihood of receiving further credits) while simultaneously extending the APC's domestic resource base. Unfortunately, however, his room for manoeuvre progressively narrowed. Towards the end of Stevens' rule the IMF demanded a greater commitment to reform prior to the release of funds and, though reluctant to sacrifice IMF resources, Stevens could not risk threatening elite interests. His increasing reliance on the Lebanese both reflected and compounded the IMF's displeasure.

"payments on arrears amounting to about 5 percent of overdue obligations usually enticed the IMF into further negotiations for credit." As long as Stevens continued to escape full repayments on these and other loans he was able to continue financing a large budget deficit.

⁴⁰¹ In turn, this enabled Sierra Leone to benefit from Paris Club rescheduling of debts worth Le120m and other external assistance (detailed in Chapter four).

⁴⁰² *West Africa*, 15 February 1988, p 262.

⁴⁰³ According to a Central Bank Report. *West Africa*, 6 February 1984, p 263.

⁴⁰⁴ It is important to note that accounts of how much Sierra Leone received (as opposed to the original offers) vary. The figures cited here are from *West Africa*, 9 July 1984, p 1397, 25 February 1985, p 348 and 15 February 1988, p 262.

⁴⁰⁵ *Op. cit.*, p 138.

⁴⁰⁶ James D Fearon, "International Financial Institutions and Economic Policy Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26, No 1, 1988, p 131. Reno (*op. cit.*, p 142) suggests it was Yazbeck who purchased the NTC with Jamil controlling the privatised International Trading company. Whichever version is correct, Jamil was certainly involved in the import trade and numerous other sectors. See for example Fearon, *op. cit.*, p 131 (quoting *Africa Confidential*). On the privatisation of trade in agricultural products - which operated to provide a further source of reward for politicians in association with Lebanese importers and which enabled Stevens to strengthen his control over the distribution of rice - see Reno, *op. cit.*, pp 143-44.

⁴⁰⁷ Fearon, *op. cit.*, p 131.

A particular bone of contention was the establishment, in October 1983, of a new foreign exchange committee following the collapse of the two-tier system. Responsible for the allocation of foreign exchange, the committee was comprised of representatives from both the public and private sectors;⁴⁰⁸ Jamil Mohammed and Tony Yazbeck were both members. In mid-1984 Stevens appointed himself chairman and, at the same time, the Precious Minerals Marketing Company (PMMC) - a private company with the government, Mohammed (the managing director) and Yazbeck, owning a 65% stake⁴⁰⁹ - was formed. Shortly thereafter British Petroleum sold its 49% stake in the NDMC⁴¹⁰ to the PMMC.⁴¹¹ The PMMC - officially designed to minimise smuggling and maximise foreign exchange⁴¹² - was allowed to retain a portion of its gold and diamond foreign exchange earnings rather than surrendering them to the Central Bank,⁴¹³ with the remainder allocated by the foreign exchange committee. This arrangement gave immense power to what the IMF regarded as "a small interest group which had usurped the functions of the central bank."⁴¹⁴ In essence, the committee and the PMMC - the Jamil-Stevens partnership - were responsible for mining diamonds, allocating foreign exchange and determining imports.

Reno suggests two, survival related drawbacks to the APC's dependence on the Lebanese for the provision of resources and services.⁴¹⁵ The first centres upon Lebanese businessmen's increasing autonomy and ability to pursue private interests at odds with those of the APC leadership. Supporting this contention Reno cites an incident during which Jamil Mohammed's personal army⁴¹⁶ attacked the house of a politician (with whom he was in dispute) belying "the president's claim to exclusive control over the dispensing of favor and punishment as a means of political control."⁴¹⁷

Since Stevens was soon to step down, assessing the exact extent of the Lebanese "threat" is problematic. However (the apparently isolated shooting incident aside) it seemed unlikely that the Lebanese would opt to deliberately and consistently undermine Stevens' authority given the advantages they enjoyed. Reno stresses the possibility of a "conflict of interests" but does not

⁴⁰⁸ The Central Bank, the commercial banks, the Chamber of Commerce, manufacturing industry and the Sierra Leone Labour Congress. *West Africa*, 3 October 1983, p 2324.

⁴⁰⁹ See *West Africa*, 5 May 1986, p 947.

⁴¹⁰ *West Africa*, 5 November 1984, p 2205.

⁴¹¹ The PMMC also took over BP's refinery and marketing activities. For full details of BP's interests in Sierra Leone see *West Africa*, 5 November 1984, p 2207.

⁴¹² See *ibid.*

⁴¹³ This decision was rescinded in February 1985 (at the IMF's behest) but exporters, with unofficial approval, failed to comply with the new surrender obligations. See *West Africa*, 8 April 1985, p 662.

⁴¹⁴ *West Africa*, 25 February 1985, p 349.

⁴¹⁵ Including oil imports by Cevil Trading (controlled by Jamil Mohammed) in 1984. See *West Africa*, 23 March 1987, p 583.

⁴¹⁶ According to one observer Jamil's army constituted five hundred, primarily Palestinian, soldiers. Jimmy D Kandeh, "Sierra Leone: Contradictory Class Functionality of the 'Soft' State," *Review of African Political Economy*, No 55, 1992, p 39.

⁴¹⁷ Reno, *op. cit.*, p 151. Unfortunately Reno provides no details of the shooting incident.

explain the circumstances in which such a conflict might arise. Certainly Stevens' successor, faced with a different set of circumstances, had grounds to tackle the Lebanese as part of an overall drive to assert his political authority (see below) but Stevens himself showed no desire for confrontation. Indeed, the very advantages Stevens accrued from the Lebanese presence suggested he would operate to avoid conflict arising. This might involve giving some political ground - in the sphere of cabinet appointments for example⁴¹⁸ - and yet Reno cites no evidence to suggest that politicians had begun to look to Jamil Mohammed rather than Stevens as the source of authority and reward.

Posing a greater threat to Stevens' longevity was the need for resources. While "privatisation" provided a continued flow of resources to selected beneficiaries, by facilitating the diversion of funds to the non-formal sector it placed an ever greater strain on state revenues.⁴¹⁹ This held important implications for Stevens' continued survival, not least in terms of his relationship with non-elite Sierra Leoneans.

Civil Society.

In 1968 Stevens' accession to office as the rightful, elected leader was widely welcomed as an end to the military "aberration."⁴²⁰ Bolstering this source of legitimacy - and extending its duration - were Stevens' personal qualities, notably his age (a source of respect) and familiarity (as a long-time actor on the political scene). Stevens, like Jawara, was no ideologue⁴²¹ but did enhance his acceptability through his ability to communicate with, and his accessibility to, ordinary people of all backgrounds. As Hayward⁴²² notes, "he made himself available to anyone who wanted to see him. And people came from all over the country: farmers, workers, chiefs, the unemployed, office seekers, students ... Most eventually gained audience and, in the early days in particular, usually came away satisfied or content to have been heard."

⁴¹⁸ Kande (op. cit., p 39) suggests that Jamil Mohammed "had a say in cabinet appointments" but Stevens did not automatically bow to his demands. Rather, Stevens used his leadership skills to subdue emergent rifts between Mohammed and individual politicians. The conflict between Mohammed and Finance Minister, Abdulai Conteh (see *West Africa*, 4 February 1985, p 240) for example, did not lead to Conteh's immediate dismissal but rather a "hurried meeting" between the men concerned. Admittedly, Conteh later lost his job but this had more to do with his opposition to Stevens' succession plans (noted above) than his dispute with Mohammed. On the subject of Stevens' political skills it is worth noting their probable application to the Lebanese. Clearly Mohammed (as the most prominent "stranger") wielded immense economic power but was not thereby rendered immune to Stevens' powers of persuasion and negotiation. Nor - as one among a group of powerful foreigners - was he above the application of sanctions. Stevens may have been dependent upon the Lebanese as a group but still possessed a certain leverage; Jamil's subsequent departure (under Momoh) demonstrated that other Lebanese were willing to provide resources and services in his place.

⁴¹⁹ See Reno, op. cit., p 139.

⁴²⁰ On the background to Stevens' accession to office see Chapter three.

⁴²¹ Though temporarily bolstered by measures such as the SLST take-over, Stevens' pre-1967 radical credentials (see Chapter three) were soon compromised in favour of political pragmatism.

⁴²² Fred Hayward, "State Consolidation, Fragmentation and Decay" in Donal B Cruise O'Brien, John Dunn and Richard Rathbone (eds.), *Contemporary West African States* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), p 167.

Stevens' ability to maintain political stability (with a few notable exceptions) further enhanced his acceptability. That major ethnic unrest was avoided reflected, in part, Stevens' skilful manipulation of his own multi-ethnic background. Born among the Mendes (in Moyamba) to a northern Limba father and south-eastern Gallinas mother, Stevens was educated (and later worked) in Freetown under the guardianship of a Creole family and married a Temne-Susu wife.⁴²³ According to one observer, "when you saw Stevens travelling around the country and meeting the people, it often looked as if the man had cast a spell over his people. In one town in Pujehun, he would tell how his mother and parents worked in the area and the next day you would hear him claiming in Binkolo, how his mother looked after him and how his grand parents were a pillar of strength to the Limba community in the area."⁴²⁴ Reinforced by a willingness to share the rewards of office, Stevens' successful projection of his multi-ethnic background helped prevent the crystallisation of ethnic identity as a basis for mass disaffection.

On those occasions when unrest did occur it tended to stem from elite-mass distributional issues rather than the suffering of one particular group.⁴²⁵ Indeed, the inequitable distribution of resources - involving the massive diversion of funds, on a far greater scale than that witnessed in The Gambia, to satisfy elites - constituted the major stumbling block to maintaining popular support. Stevens' initial acceptability may have exerted a lingering beneficial effect, but increasingly failed to compensate for his inability to provide the mass of Sierra Leoneans with material goods.⁴²⁶ Compounding this failure was the increasing insensitivity of the APC regime as the privileged few flaunted their wealth and state resources were dissipated on luxury projects.⁴²⁷ This insensitivity was not, for the most part, evident in The Gambia and although many Gambians were extremely poor Jawara was able to point out, with some degree of justification, that poverty levels reflected the country's paucity of natural resources. Stevens had no recourse to the same argument; as Sierra Leoneans frequently noted, the country had "no reason to be poor."

Though willing to forego support it is important to examine how Stevens managed to prolong popular acquiescence. Mass upheavals - for the most part avoided - would have been inimical to his rule, sending the wrong message to his political subordinates (who desired a strong leader to ensure their personal and political safety), foreign donors and investors.

Stevens was particularly adept at political diversion as a means of promoting acquiescence

⁴²³ Siaka Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp 17-18.

⁴²⁴ *West Africa*, 2 December 1985, p 2513. 'Frank Ly' (*op. cit.*, p 23) suggests Sierra Leoneans feared a future without Stevens "when they all agree there will be no one to take his place without massive tribal unrest."

⁴²⁵ Although there is some evidence to suggest that the North benefited more than other regions from APC rule (see p 337), elite demands increasingly took precedence over ethno-regional considerations and the few instances of major provincial unrest encompassed all three provinces.

⁴²⁶ APC rhetoric which indicated projects such as the Sports Stadium as "proof" of economic development fell on increasingly stony ground.

⁴²⁷ In 1982 (to give one of numerous examples) it was announced that two presidential helicopters were to be purchased. *West Africa*, 27 September 1982, p 2533.

to his rule. Both elections and foreign policy were skilfully exploited to divert attention from Sierra Leone's economic and political decline⁴²⁸ and the continuous circulation of rumours⁴²⁹ - whether they concerned the likelihood of constitutional change or simply an imminent cabinet reshuffle - fulfilled a similar function. Stevens exploited the widespread desire for change; observing that "everywhere in the world people like change, they like new things"⁴³⁰ he nurtured people's hopes for a better future with frequent indications of a wish to retire⁴³¹ and reports of impending economic salvation.⁴³²

Although economic salvation was not realised, the allocation of resources did play a role in maintaining the acquiescence of selected sections of society. While elite-mass inequalities were a defining characteristic of Sierra Leone - rather more so than in The Gambia - distinguishing between different elements of the mass remains important. In Sierra Leone the effects of the economic decline were not uniformly felt.

Rural dwellers suffered more than their urban counterparts. In 1980 urbanites earned an estimated three times as much as rural inhabitants⁴³³ and disparities in access to basic services such as education and health care prevailed. For example, in 1973 there were 293 people per hospital bed in the Western Area, compared to 2277 in the Provinces.⁴³⁴ Reflecting this (and other factors such as drugs shortages and lack of access to safe drinking water⁴³⁵) the rural infant mortality rate (1978) was 33% for rural dwellers compared to 20% in Freetown.⁴³⁶ The government's rice policy - whereby farmers were offered low prices for their produce to subsidise consumption in the towns - helped sustain the urban bias.⁴³⁷ When farmers responded by resorting to subsistence farming or

⁴²⁸ See Chapters three and four.

⁴²⁹ Stephen Riley and Trevor W Parfitt note the importance of rumours in "Party or Masquerade? The All People's Congress of Sierra Leone," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol 25, July 1987, p 170.

⁴³⁰ *West Africa*, 9 September 1985, p 1849.

⁴³¹ The first hint of retirement appears to have occurred in 1976 (*West Africa*, 23 February 1976, p 255), to emerge repeatedly (alongside Stevens' increasingly unpopularity) in 1979, 1980, 1981 and throughout 1983.

⁴³² For a typical presidential speech placing heavy emphasis on "indications of off-shore oil deposits," gold prospecting, and the "big revenues" which might be realised from kimberlite diamond mining see *West Africa*, 22 June 1981, p 1392.

⁴³³ International Labour Office, *Ensuring Equitable Growth: A Strategy for Increasing Employment, Equity and Basic Needs Satisfaction in Sierra Leone* (Addis Ababa, 1981), in Riddell, *op. cit.*, 1985, p 391.

⁴³⁴ For further details see Zack-Williams, *op. cit.*, 1995, p 187.

⁴³⁵ In 1982 it was estimated that 1% rural and 75% urban dwellers had access to safe drinking water. Riddell, *op. cit.*, 1985, p 375.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p 392. Regarding education, despite large apparent increases in the provision of places at both primary and secondary levels (see *West Africa*, 2 May 1986, p 995) a subsequent report cast doubt on the reliability of these figures. The Tucker report (outlined in *West Africa*, 11 April 1988, p 633 and 18 April 1988, p 711) noted the existence of numerous non-functioning schools which nevertheless continued to receive government funds for the payment of salaries. Others inflated the number of pupils - one school was reported to have eight and yet was claiming for four hundred. Schools inspectors and the Ministry of Education colluded in the diversion of funds.

⁴³⁷ Together with the siphoning of funds from cash crop production, noted above. Rice policy has been discussed at length by a number of observers; see in particular John FS Levi, *African Agriculture: Economic Action and Reaction in Sierra Leone* (Slough, Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, 1976).

smuggling their produce⁴³⁸ the government offset the shortfall with subsidised imported rice. As long as sufficient quantities of imported rice were available (and given the existence of vested interests in the rice import trade) there was no reason to offer higher prices to farmers. The urban bias inherent in this policy became starkly visible in 1979 when the Rice Corporation was dissolved⁴³⁹ and the responsibility for importing rice handed to the SLPMB. The SLPMB financed imports from its own reserves, accumulated from the sale of cash crops.

Stevens' neglect of the rural areas did not threaten the APC's survival. Farmers were not politically organised; any groups with the potential to represent rural interests, such as co-operatives or farmers' associations, were deliberately undermined.⁴⁴⁰ Although patronage was distributed to some key rural leaders, notably chiefs,⁴⁴¹ the clientelist "chain" increasingly - and certainly more so than in The Gambia - tended to stop there. Without elections or the means of organisation, ordinary farmers only means of making their collective voice heard was through spontaneous violent protest, but of course Stevens possessed far superior coercive capabilities. Not that he had to employ force on a regular basis. Most violence occurred during elections, usually at the instigation of competing politicians rather than as an expression of rural grievances (see Chapter three).

Urbanites posed a greater threat, particularly as the advantages of residing in the towns grew increasingly indistinct. One estimate, in 1979, put 65.1% of the urban population living below the poverty line.⁴⁴² Among these were the unemployed whose increasing numbers⁴⁴³ reflected, in part, the movement of disaffected farmers to the towns. The preliminary report of the 1985 census⁴⁴⁴ estimated that the urban population had grown from 18.9% of the total population in 1963, to 31.9% in 1985. Most migrants moved to Freetown; in 1985 the population of Freetown numbered approximately 600,000, over double the 1974 figure, with 70% of the increase attributed to migration. The result was a serious strain on the provision of services, adversely affecting all but the wealthiest urban dwellers. Shortages of housing, water, electricity and health care were endemic.⁴⁴⁵

⁴³⁸ Excepting a brief period in the mid-1970s (when rice prices were increased) production declined during APC rule. With state corporations purchasing a mere 5-10% of locally produced rice (Riddell, *op. cit.*, 1985, p 377) imports costing \$30m had to be purchased in 1985. *West Africa*, 11 August 1986, p 1673.

⁴³⁹ Mismanagement and corruption had caused the Rice Corporation to incur heavy losses.

⁴⁴⁰ Hayward, *op. cit.*, 1989, p 168.

⁴⁴¹ See Chapter three. Some "rich" farmers also benefited disproportionately from externally financed development programmes (see Chapter four) and access to state-sponsored tractorisation schemes and credit. On the latter see, Alberto DK Agbonyitor, "The Informal Money Market in Rural Sierra Leone," *Africana Research Bulletin*, Vol 7, No 1, 1976, pp 32-33, 44-45.

⁴⁴² Franklyn Lisk and Rolph van der Hoeven, "Measurement and Interpretation of Poverty in Sierra Leone," *International Labour Review*, Vol 118, 1979, p 720.

⁴⁴³ By 1990 official estimates suggested a figure of 50% of the labour force. *West Africa*, 12-18 March 1990, p 408.

⁴⁴⁴ *West Africa*, 29 October-4 November 1990, p 2739.

⁴⁴⁵ See Joe Doherty, "Housing and Development in Freetown, Sierra Leone," *Sierra Leone Studies at Birmingham* (Birmingham University, 1983), p 282.

Within the urban areas the greatest potential threat to the APC regime lay with organised groups, notably the trade union and student movements, although the potential for group protest to serve as a mechanism for the release of wider frustrations, particularly among the unemployed, also provided cause for concern.⁴⁴⁶ To prove his political strength (and ability to protect clients' future security) Stevens was compelled to demonstrate a firm grip on civil society but at the same time understood the dangers of slipping into a cycle of escalating violence. The following sections examine how Stevens dealt with the problem of organised opposition to his rule.

Trade Unions.

In 1968 Stevens' background as a union organiser and his pre-1967 pledge to protect workers' interests augured well for trade unions, which duly welcomed the new leader. Had Stevens been intent on a non-authoritarian approach to political survival he would, no doubt, have worked to maintain and extend this support; as it was he concentrated upon cultivating union acquiescence. This lesser goal was shaped by Stevens' perceived need to cater to elite interests - urban workers were not last on his list of priorities but neither were they at the top.

Stevens' elite-focus together with the existence of a less fragmented, rather larger (and hence more powerful) labour movement than in The Gambia necessitated a more thoroughgoing approach than that adopted by Jawara.⁴⁴⁷ Whereas Stevens embraced the three strategies of clientelism, compromise and coercion to promote union acquiescence, by way of comparison Jawara's use of at least the first and last of these was minimal.

Stevens incorporated union leaders as privileged members of Sierra Leone's elite, creating a gulf between them and the rank and file and compromising their ability and resolve to adopt a confrontational stance. Those who were co-opted into Parliament (for example AW Hassan of the Motor Drivers' and General Workers' Union in 1977⁴⁴⁸) became increasingly closely associated with the APC and estranged from their membership. Others, such as MI Mansaray, Secretary of the Dock Workers Union and appointed Director of the Ports Authority in 1968, were equally dependent on Stevens for the retention of their posts and access to material rewards.⁴⁴⁹ Reluctant to rely on clientelism alone, Stevens also established a coercive framework. The 1971 Industrial Relations Act

⁴⁴⁶ Particularly since unorganised protest was not generally amenable to compromise and negotiation (Stevens' preferred response) in the same way as group demands.

⁴⁴⁷ Compared to Jawara, Stevens was not only compelled to face a more powerful union movement but also the potential opposition of university students (see below). To this extent he was less fortunate than his Gambian counterpart but it would perhaps be wrong to suggest that Stevens' response to the threat of civil society was *solely* determined by the nature of the threat faced. Stevens' elite-focus approach to political survival caused him to perceive the necessity of suppressing societal groups as the safest route to power-retention. Whether he was correct in this perception - and to what extent he faced an alternative - is extremely difficult to discern.

⁴⁴⁸ *West Africa*, 16 May 1977, p 973.

⁴⁴⁹ On the case of Mansaray see David Fashole Luke, "Dock Workers of the Port of Freetown: A Case Study of African Working-Class Ambivalence," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol 19, No 3, 1985.

prohibited strikes in five "essential services" (including public utilities such as water and electricity⁴⁵⁰) and, for other sectors, increased the statutory strike notice period from fourteen to twenty-one days. Perhaps equally important, the Act also laid down a procedure by which trade disputes would be settled by the Minister of Labour and, only in the event of him failing, by the Industrial Relations Court. This provision formalised the APC's preferred means of dealing with strikes "whereby informal political channels are used to influence the outcome of bargaining by the unions and the employers alike."⁴⁵¹

Throughout the 1970s these tactics, together with Stevens' success in keeping inflation below the levels seen elsewhere,⁴⁵² proved effective and strikes which did occur were limited in focus and scope. Aimed at securing incremental wage increases or improvements in working conditions they were easily dealt with and threatened neither Stevens' authority nor the APC's survival. Indeed, drawing on his own experience as a union leader, Stevens' personal intervention helped to contain disputes.⁴⁵³

In 1981, however, neither Stevens' negotiating skills nor his enthusiasm for co-optation were sufficient to prevent a general strike. The strike originated in a memorandum, issued in June 1981, by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC).⁴⁵⁴ Its significance lay in the fact that it was presented to government following pressure from SLLC members. Workers' increasing impatience with their leaders' failure to protect living standards was apparent, and could not be ignored indefinitely. By doing so, union leaders would risk losing control over the direction of protest - the basis on which they received material reward from the APC. The scope and focus of the memorandum also rendered it significant.⁴⁵⁵ For the first time APC policies - including mismanagement of foreign exchange, "the absence of an efficient expenditure scrutinising system," inadequate remuneration for farmers and miners, "the cumbersome, overstaffed and inefficient civil services" and "vast expenditure on overseas representation" - were identified by unions as responsible for the economic decline. Various solutions were proposed. After some weeks and little response by a seemingly complacent government, the SLLC presented a second document, this time listing eight demands - lower rice prices; price control; a reduction in unemployment; rent

⁴⁵⁰ Short-lived strikes by electricity workers in 1969 (see *West Africa*, 5 April 69, p 394 and 4 October 1969, p 1195) may have prompted the Act.

⁴⁵¹ David Fashole Luke, *Labour and Parastatal Politics in Sierra Leone: A Study of African Working-Class Ambivalence* (Lanham, Maryland, University Press of America, 1984), p 203.

⁴⁵² During the 1970s foreign borrowing enabled Stevens to limit the amount of domestic deficit financing which in turn kept inflation down to approximately 10%.

⁴⁵³ In 1974, for example, he met with the executive of the United Mine Workers' Union causing the suspension of a strike notice served on Diminco. See *West Africa*, 21 October 1974, p 1303.

⁴⁵⁴ The SLLC was originally formed in 1966. Subsequent internal disagreements caused the secession of the Council of Labour but in 1976 the rift was healed and the SLLC re-formed (*West Africa*, 27 September 1976, p 1429). According to its Secretary-General, James Kabia, the SLLC represented "about fifteen" unions and most of the country's work force, *West Africa*, 4 January 1982, p 24.

⁴⁵⁵ Details of the memorandum are from *West Africa*, 10 August 1981, pp 1821-22.

subsidies, rent reduction and the construction of low-cost housing; improvements to hospital facilities and roads; the elimination of wage payment delays and controls over the cost of transport in the provinces - in order of priority.⁴⁵⁶ A strike was threatened unless all the demands were met.

When asked whether it was right that unionists should exert political pressure on the government (rather than confining themselves to wages and working conditions) Stevens' characteristically pragmatic response was that he did not "have a proper definition of right and wrong in these industrial matters. Where you have the right pressures and the numbers, right can be called wrong and vice versa. For me when these things are going, I decide to meet the people and talk things out with them."⁴⁵⁷ Unfortunately, however, workers were in no mood for negotiation, all offers of talks were rejected and on August 14 union leaders called for a mass meeting and strike action. Stevens remained conciliatory. Despite an earlier ban on the meeting and the strike both were allowed to go ahead without interference,⁴⁵⁸ reflecting Stevens' reluctance to use force before the possibility of a peaceful settlement had been exhausted. Police action could only have heightened the tension surrounding the reported meeting of "thousands of workers, students, market women and others who gathered outside the Labour Congress building."⁴⁵⁹ The following day Stevens finally managed to engage the SLLC in talks and promised a reduction in the price of rice - together with plentiful supplies - and negotiations on the remaining demands. Despite some reservations among sections of both the SLLC leadership and striking workers, the strike (which was only partially successful)⁴⁶⁰ was called off.⁴⁶¹

While defusing the immediate tension Stevens' actions proved insufficient, even in the short-term, to appease workers. According to the SLLC the government was "unable to effectively implement" rice price reductions and this, together with the re-emergence of rice shortages and government inaction on the workers' other demands, prompted a further strike threat.⁴⁶² Once more Stevens attempted to negotiate himself out of trouble⁴⁶³ but this time he failed, leaving only the coercive option. Facing an increasingly confident labour leadership - which duly called a general strike on September 1 - together with signs of a further convergence of disaffection between

⁴⁵⁶ *West Africa*, 24 August 1981, p 1913.

⁴⁵⁷ *West Africa*, 31 August 1981, p 1973.

⁴⁵⁸ Kabia, almost certainly correctly, attributed this directly to Stevens observing that, "If he [Stevens] had been away, the other bunch would have arrested me." *West Africa*, 24 August 1981, p 1914.

⁴⁵⁹ *West Africa*, 24 August 1981, p 1913.

⁴⁶⁰ See *Ibid.*

⁴⁶¹ It was later rumoured that members of the executive had been "bought off." *West Africa*, 7 September 1981, p 2030.

⁴⁶² Stevens' willingness to make promises (in order to defuse protest) and later renege on them was further revealed on the question of housing. During the 1981 strike Stevens committed his government to providing all workers with low cost housing. In 1983 some houses were duly built but since the project was financed and controlled by Jamil Mohammed the government lacked the power to fix low rents. Jamil (and probably his local associates) profited but the houses - reportedly let according to clientelist considerations - were beyond the reach of ordinary workers. See *West Africa*, 7 November, 1983, pp 2560-61.

⁴⁶³ Described by Stevens in *West Africa*, 7 September 1981 p 2089.

workers and fellow-sufferers (housewives and students)⁴⁶⁴ - Stevens declared a state of emergency.⁴⁶⁵ Union leaders (including Kabia) were immediately arrested *en masse*;⁴⁶⁶ threats were issued against anyone "interfering" with "workers willing to work" or "students preparing for school" and "stern disciplinary measures" promised against civil servants and public corporation employees failing to report for work. Paramilitary personnel were highly visible and, on September 2, the prevailing atmosphere of tension and intimidation heightened with the appearance of armed youths on the streets of Freetown.⁴⁶⁷ These tactics caused the strike to collapse within a few days.⁴⁶⁸

After the strike Stevens' main priority was to prevent a reoccurrence. To facilitate the election of a more amenable SLLC leadership he established the Taju-Deen Commission of Enquiry which, even prior to submitting its report, duly ordered that the SLLC executive be dissolved and Kabia suspended from office.⁴⁶⁹ In October 1982 the SLLC delegates convention reappointed Kabia as Secretary-General⁴⁷⁰ but the following day Ibrahim Langley, the re-elected President of the SLLC, sacked him on the grounds of "financial and administrative lapses." A few days later Stevens appointed Langley as an MP.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁴ In a statement (*West Africa*, 7 September 1981, p 2030) the government noted that the SLLC was encouraging this process and later, at the Taju Deen Commission of Enquiry (*West Africa*, 4 January 1982, p 24) Kabia admitted that his organisation had issued a release inviting students and housewives to a meeting. The SLLC's objective was to increase its leverage through numbers. Thus, the annual average wage employment for 1970-81 has been estimated at a mere 14% of the labour force. Funna, *op. cit.*, 1983, p 23.

⁴⁶⁵ On the rather flimsy pretext that the Congress, as an advisory body rather than a registered trade union, had "no bargaining certificate to bargain for improved wages and conditions for workers" and was trying to "usurp the functions of the unions" (*West Africa*, 7 September 1981, p 2030). However as the counsel for the SLLC pointed out at the Taju Deen Enquiry (*West Africa*, 1 March 1982, p 579) "it was the Head of State himself who conceived the idea of the present status of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress" and was present at its inauguration in 1976. Moreover, even after Stevens had questioned the SLLC's right to bargain with the government, "government continued to bargain or negotiate with congress right up to August 31." Strengthening Stevens' hand, however, was the fact that unions had not given the requisite strike notice.

⁴⁶⁶ In all, one hundred and seventy nine people were arrested and released a month later. *West Africa*, 12 October 1981, p 2422.

⁴⁶⁷ For details see *West Africa*, 7 September 1981, p 2089. It was reported that the youths' vehicles were later "seen parked outside the APC headquarters building." At least five people died on September 2 and the violence later spread to Makeni in the North. See *West Africa*, 28 September 1981, p 2280 and 5 October 1981, p 2357.

⁴⁶⁸ Civil servants were among the first to return to work on September 2. For details of other sectors see *West Africa*, 7 September 1981, p 2089. To some extent the strike suffered (and Stevens benefited) from disunity within the labour movement. At least two unions - the Motor Drivers' and General Workers' Union and the Union of Mass Media, Financial Institutions, Chemical Industries and General Workers - dissociated themselves from the strike call, partly due to internal squabbles revealed during the Taju Deen Enquiry (see *West Africa*, 4 January 1982, p 27 and 1 February 1982, p 301).

⁴⁶⁹ This decision was justified on two grounds: first was Kabia's critical New Year Message to SLLC affiliates (see *West Africa*, 22 March 1982, p 770), regarded by the government as "inciting, provocative [and] inflammatory." Second was the fact that the SLLC executive's term of office had expired in October 1981. However, as the counsel for the SLLC pointed out, holding a delegates conference would have been problematic since many of the SLLC executive members were then in detention.

⁴⁷⁰ *West Africa*, 1 November 1982, p 2816. A new constitution was reportedly imposed on the SLLC giving the executive the power to make this appointment.

⁴⁷¹ Stevens' belief in the utility of co-optation was confirmed with the appointment of Gbassy Kanu, Secretary-General of the Motor Drivers Union and Emmanuel Fatoma, Secretary of the Sierra Leone Teachers Union as nominated MPs in 1982 and 1983. *West Africa*, 14 March 1983, p 700.

Kabia's interpretation of these manoeuvres as "a carefully calculated and orchestrated move by Stevens to have a docile and ineffective union"⁴⁷² was undoubtedly correct and henceforth no further general strike was called. Worker dissatisfaction did not evaporate and by 1984-85 strikes re-emerged on a regular basis but, generally confined to a single-sector, and often initiated by workers themselves, they posed little immediate threat. Nevertheless, from a longer term perspective, Stevens' increasing reliance on coercion and progressive inability to negotiate (alongside chronic resource shortages⁴⁷³) did not bode well. This tendency was also apparent in Stevens' dealings with the students.

Students.

Compared to the unions, Sierra Leone's student body maintained a relatively autonomous status throughout the 1970s. Student leaders' apparently superior ability to resist co-optation provides a partial explanation and yet, at the same time, the APC's drive to incorporate them was less than determined. This in turn reflected the fact that, prior to the demonstrations of 1977, students did not pose a major threat to the APC's (or prior to that the SLPP's) survival. The few protests that did take place were small-scale, narrowly focused and easily (and for the most part peacefully) dealt with.⁴⁷⁴

The absence of a major student protest prior to 1977 stemmed, in part, from Stevens' deliberate downgrading of the university's two constituent colleges (Njala and Fourah Bay) with inadequate facilities, shortages of equipment and frequent interruptions to water and electricity supplies characterising campus life. Admittedly, deteriorating standards constituted a possible cause of unrest but at the same time worked to confine student concerns to their individual welfare and struggle to survive.

The January 1977 protest⁴⁷⁵ was indicative of students' increasing assertiveness (or perhaps desperation), their disruptive potential as well as the limits to their power. On January 29 students demonstrated at the University Convocation ceremony, displaying banners demanding Stevens' resignation and economic reforms.⁴⁷⁶ Two days later hundreds of APC supporters staged a counter-demonstration at the university and a fight with students on campus ensued. Unrest spread within the capital⁴⁷⁷ and beyond. During February, opponents of the APC (though not students) staged

⁴⁷² *West Africa*, 1 November 1982, p 2860.

⁴⁷³ Many of the strikes and related protests were caused by late salary payments. See *West Africa*, 22 October 1984, p 2148; 1 April 1985, p 618 and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1985-1986, B 165.

⁴⁷⁴ For details of two such protests in the early 1970s see *West Africa*, 17 December 1971, p 1494; 24 December 1971, p 1528 and 25 December 1972, p 1736.

⁴⁷⁵ Details from *West Africa*, 7 February 1977, p 305 and 14 February 1977, p 349.

⁴⁷⁶ Stevens was there in his capacity as University Chancellor, a post he held from 1972. *West Africa*, 24 March 1972, p 371.

⁴⁷⁷ With the participation of schoolchildren. According to one scholar approximately ten students and schoolchildren died at the hands of the police. George O Roberts, *The Anguish of Third World independence:*

demonstrations in all three provinces. Unorganised but powerful indicators of provincial disaffection included attacks upon public offices and the houses of Stevens and some of his ministers.⁴⁷⁸

The spread of dissent to the provinces demonstrated students' disruptive potential - their ability to act as a catalyst for the release of growing tension. While this hardly augured well for Stevens he retained a firm grip on power. Students may have been able to spark dissent but lacked an organisational apparatus beyond the confines of the university. The near anarchic unrest in the provinces was easily crushed by the security forces and in the capital, too, Stevens moved quickly to repress the students⁴⁷⁹ (through selected arrests) and, perhaps more importantly, to isolate them. All schools and colleges were closed, the ISU deployed within Freetown and the SLLC placed under pressure not to support the students.⁴⁸⁰ Without union support the students lacked an effective strike weapon.

Despite the limits to students' power Stevens perceived the dangers of descending into a "force-contempt-more force spiral" and did not rely on coercion alone. Rather than heighten tension (by using more force than "necessary") he operated to defuse it by demonstrating a flexibility and willingness to compromise. The arrested students were released after a few days; a commission was established to investigate the ISU's strong-arm tactics; Stevens promised that the government would pay for repair work to damaged student buildings and - most importantly - he pledged to hold an early general election.⁴⁸¹

Though shrewd, Stevens' willingness to negotiate with - rather than decisively crush - the students, left the way open for further protests. Stevens prepared for this eventuality, moving to isolate the student community from other urban dwellers by portraying them as a privileged and ungrateful minority. This was in spite of the fact that both living conditions and the opportunity for meaningful academic study (with chronic shortages of books and facilities) deteriorated further after 1977. The vibrancy of the intellectual community was progressively undermined by successful attempts to co-opt senior academics (thus silencing the co-optees and removing one source of critical inspiration for the students) which increased in intensity with the 1977 elections⁴⁸² alongside

The Sierra Leone Experience (Washington, DC, University Press of America, 1982), p 262.

⁴⁷⁸ See *West Africa*, 28 February 1977, p 441; 7 March 1977, p 485 and 14 February 1977, p 349.

⁴⁷⁹ Some students went into exile; it was later reported that they were participants in the incursions from Liberia in March 1991. *West Africa*, 21-27 September 1992, p 1608.

⁴⁸⁰ The SLLC originally put out a statement criticising the counter-demonstration and calling for the release of the students. According to *West Africa* (14 February 1977, p 349) the statement was withdrawn after a meeting between SLLC leaders and S I Koroma.

⁴⁸¹ The success of this diversionary tactic is discussed in detail in Chapter three. The other student demands, about which Stevens declared he could do nothing without an election and which included a reduction in the size of the cabinet and expenditure on defence, a reduced role for the Lebanese and the disbandment of the Internal Security Unit, conflicted head-on with the APC survival imperative. For the text of the student statement outlining their demands see Roberts, *op. cit.*, Appendix A, No 3, pp 324-25.

⁴⁸² During the 1977 elections many educated people were nominated - and subsequently returned for - the

offers of posts in state corporations or the diplomatic service. In 1978 Jusu-Sheriff complained that the university was merely a "special source of ambassadors."⁴⁸³ For those who resisted co-optation and chose to remain in Sierra Leone (many opted to work abroad) the opportunities to criticise diminished. According to *West Africa*, the radio broadcast *Forum* "in which dons had the opportunity to discuss current issues and trends" was effectively censored, "hand-picking those academics ... who could be relied on to sing the government's praises."⁴⁸⁴ *The Tablet* (a local newspaper) which was believed "to receive covert support from the dons and to have become their mouthpiece"⁴⁸⁵ was forced to close in 1981 (see below). And, according to Sesay,⁴⁸⁶ "Student Unions were infiltrated by government supporters and a system of informants thrived on the campus."

Despite these constraints, sporadic student protests continued. Stevens' response was a mixture of coercion and restraint. His willingness to give ground - as in February 1980 when Njala students' decision to boycott classes in protest at their "appalling and degrading conditions"⁴⁸⁷ was met with a speedy (if temporary) restoration of electricity and water supplies to the college - prevented student disaffection gaining momentum. To give another example,⁴⁸⁸ in November 6 Fourah Bay students (led by their Vice-Chancellor, reportedly under duress) attempted to march from their campus to State House. The root cause of the protest was a two week old lecturers' strike but other concerns (including corruption, mismanagement, the state of the economy and the denial of the right to free speech) quickly emerged. The students had not got far when they were stopped by police⁴⁸⁹ who made approximately fifteen arrests (most of whom were members of the student executive). In Freetown several days of unrest ensued, with students and schoolchildren engaged in a "free-for-all fight" against police. Stevens exploited the protest to his own advantage. Overseas during the entire episode he not only escaped blame for the violence perpetrated against the students but gained credit for his restraint. Thus, on his return Stevens let it be known that he was displeased with Acting President Koroma's handling of the incident and ordered that the students (who had already appeared in court of charges of possessing cannabis and offensive weapons) be released with no case to answer. The striking lecturers were lured back to work with promises of improved

APC. Originally flagged as a means of introducing "brains" into the cabinet (thus appeasing both students and academics) many of the co-optees simply colluded in Stevens' corrupt system.

⁴⁸³ *West Africa*, 22 May 1978, p 967.

⁴⁸⁴ *West Africa*, 17 November 1980, p 2277.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶ Amadu Sesay, "Betrayal of an Ideal: The Transformation of Sierra Leone from a Multi-Party to a Single-Party-System under the All People's Congress (APC) 1968-1985," in Peter Meyns and Dani Wadada Nabudere (eds.), *Democracy in the One-Party State in Africa* (Hamburg, Institut Fur Afrika-Kunde, 1989), p 216.

⁴⁸⁷ *West Africa*, 4 February 1980, p 229.

⁴⁸⁸ Details from *West Africa*, 17 November 1980, p 2278 and 24 November 1980, p 2355.

⁴⁸⁹ According to a student statement armed police had been "camping at the foot of the Fourah Bay College Mount Aureol since October 24 1980."

conditions and it was announced that seventy Fourah Bay students would benefit from a new Special Fund.⁴⁹⁰

A final major protest in January 1984 precipitated some changes in Stevens' approach to the student community. On this occasion Fourah Bay students (with a list of grievances including their lack of transport, the high cost of living, shortages of essential commodities, corruption and "disturbing" rumours that Stevens was about to be elected Life President⁴⁹¹) aimed at disrupting the APC's National Delegate's Conference being held at the City Hall. Their action sparked off a major riot in Freetown with students (some of whom were subsequently arrested) confronting the police and unemployed youth cashing in on the confusion to loot shops. Further riots and looting were reported from the headquarter towns of all three provinces.⁴⁹²

Stevens' response was less conciliatory than previously. With the APC's standing at an all-time low Stevens could not allow the opposition to gain momentum. Arguing that the students had been involved in looting and the destruction of property (a charge they vehemently denied) Stevens closed down Fourah Bay for the first time.⁴⁹³ Twelve months hence he embarked on a new coercive strategy, focused on the permanent removal of "troublemakers." In February 1985 thirty-six students at Njala were recommended for suspension (from periods of one to twelve months)⁴⁹⁴ and it was announced that the parents of all students would be required to sign declaration forms accepting responsibility for damage done to college property.⁴⁹⁵ When Fourah Bay students - denouncing this "instrument of coercion" - staged a protest in March, Stevens grasped the opportunity to suspend the union executive (who headed the protest)⁴⁹⁶ and announce that all students would be "screened" before being reaccepted for the Easter term. Forty-two students were declared ineligible to register,⁴⁹⁷ a further protest (swiftly suppressed by the police) ensued⁴⁹⁸ and five students, including the student leader, arrested and placed in court.⁴⁹⁹

The inherent logic of Stevens' approach to political survival - which demanded an increasing reliance on coercive tactics - was particularly apparent in the case of the students. That Stevens successfully limited the use of coercion over an extended period of time reflected his skills of negotiation and persuasion and delayed the onset of a complete breakdown in communication and trust. By 1985, however, it was difficult to envisage how the students' confidence could be

⁴⁹⁰ *West Africa*, 15 December 1980, p 2543.

⁴⁹¹ *West Africa*, 23 January 1984, p 181.

⁴⁹² See *West Africa*, 30 January 1984, p 196.

⁴⁹³ *West Africa*, 23 January 1984, p 151. It was reopened two months later.

⁴⁹⁴ This was following a separate incident in December 1984. See *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1984-1985, B 591.

⁴⁹⁵ *West Africa*, 4 February 1985, p 241.

⁴⁹⁶ *West Africa*, 15 April 1985, p 753.

⁴⁹⁷ *West Africa*, 13 May 1985, p 928.

⁴⁹⁸ *West Africa*, 6 May 1985, p 911.

⁴⁹⁹ *West Africa*, 10 June 1985, p 1184.

regained, This task Stevens left to his successor.

The Press.

During the 1960s - when critical newspapers (including *We Yone*, the APC paper) had contributed to both the declining credibility of the SLPP and the increasing popularity of the opposition - Stevens learnt valuable lessons about the power of the press. After 1968 he utilised this knowledge, denying the opposition advantages he himself had enjoyed and working to avoid legitimacy-deflating articles appearing in the independent press.⁵⁰⁰

Complementing his overall approach to political survival Stevens was content to proceed gradually and selectively. He did not attempt to reverse Sierra Leone's long press history overnight⁵⁰¹ and in the early days rarely banned independent papers outright.⁵⁰² Even towards the end of his rule Stevens opted, where possible, to induce self-censorship. His preferred method of silencing critical editors was to bring them to State House, read the riot act and briefly detain them, often without charge. In 1984, for example, *West Africa* reported on the case of Ebenezer Ogunade (acting editor of the *New Shaft*) who was "scolded by The Pa" [Stevens] for suggesting that the government was "broke." Ogunade then spent four days in Pademba Road Prison, pondering Stevens' reprimand and his own future.⁵⁰³ Many others received similar treatment; in 1983 alone the editors of *Progress*, *Sabanoh*, and the *Weekend Spark* were all briefly detained.⁵⁰⁴ Others were the subject of libel cases (brought by the Attorney-General) the end result being a jail sentence (as in 1968 when the editor of the *Express* was imprisoned for nine months⁵⁰⁵ for publishing a "seditious" article about Stevens) or sometimes a fine. Since all newspapers were plagued by scarce resources a hefty fine (or the prospect of one) was an effective tactic.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁰ Stevens was perhaps less concerned with using the press as a resource than Jawara. Both *We Yone* and the government-controlled *Daily Mail* increasingly suffered from a lack of resources (*We Yone* was not produced for eight months in 1983) and credibility. The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) lacked spare parts to repair transmitters and broadcasts were increasingly irregular and limited in geographical scope.

⁵⁰¹ Sierra Leone was the first West African state to publish a newspaper. For a history of the press see *West Africa*, 7 February 1977, pp 248-51.

⁵⁰² Exceptions include *The People*, the SLPP paper banned in 1968, and *The Express* - also an SLPP supporter (*West Africa*, 14 December 1968, p 1490). That Stevens was apprehensive about the potential for newspapers to strengthen opposition party appeal was confirmed in 1971 when several papers were banned alongside the formation of the UDP. Nevertheless many banned papers (including *The People*) later re-emerged.

⁵⁰³ *West Africa*, 12 November 1984, p 2253. Christopher Coker, acting editor of the *New Shaft* prior to Ogunade, suffered a similar fate in late 1984 when he was detained for eighty-two days without charge. The original editor, Franklyn Bunting-Davies, had been arrested and detained following a libel suit brought by the former Ambassador to France (*West Africa*, 22 October 1984, p 2148). He was later released only to be rearrested in November for contempt of court in connection with the libel case. See *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1984-1985, B 593.

⁵⁰⁴ See *West Africa*, 14 March 1983, p 700 and 25 July 1983, p 1733.

⁵⁰⁵ *West Africa*, 16 November 1968, p 1359.

⁵⁰⁶ Newspapers also suffered from Sierra Leone's increasing foreign exchange shortage which resulted in a newsprint shortfall. That which was available was beyond the reach of many papers with prices more than trebling between 1974 and 1980. *West Africa*, 20 October 1980, p 2093.

Should editors refuse to play the game of self-censorship (and some were admirably resilient) Stevens resorted to alternative silencing tactics. As Fred Hayward⁵⁰⁷ notes, "contracts were withdrawn from publishers who printed the independent and opposition newspapers. Import licences for newsprint and other supplies were denied those papers with their own presses." A more extreme approach saw party thugs (with Stevens' tacit consent) carrying out raids on newspaper's offices.⁵⁰⁸ This tactic manifested itself as early as 1968 with attacks on *The Express* and *The People*⁵⁰⁹ and recurred periodically in subsequent years. In 1981 for example, *The Tablet* (a notably outspoken paper) was removed from the streets with the complete destruction of its printing presses. The paper's editor, Pios Foray, deemed it wise to leave the country.⁵¹⁰

Towards the end of the 1970s Stevens signalled his intention of reinforcing the *ad hoc*, informal approach to curbing press freedom hitherto pursued. Although this approach had proved largely effective, giving rise to an intermittently produced and limited press, the appearance of *The Tablet* in 1977 apparently convinced Stevens of the need for a change of direction. Accordingly, the Newspapers (Amendment) Bill 1980 - known locally as the "Killer Bill" - was approved in Parliament.⁵¹¹ In brief, the Act compelled all newspapers to register with the Minister of Information. The latter was empowered to refuse any newspaper a certificate of registration, to withdraw the certificate or to refuse to renew it (an annual event). Equally daunting, papers would be compelled to raise an initial Le2000 registration fee and thereafter a further Le1000 every year. Failure to comply with these provisions could mean a year long jail sentence and a fine.

Presented as a means of improving the standards of journalism and restoring "vibrancy" to Sierra Leone's newspapers, this act provided Stevens with a legal coercive instrument. Typically, however, he was in no hurry to use it. Stevens was quite willing to wait until the fuss surrounding the Act subsided⁵¹² - a process assisted by the removal of the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Thaimu Bangura (who had enthusiastically promoted the bill and piloted it through parliament) to a different ministry. Bangura's transfer was widely interpreted as a "punishment" and

⁵⁰⁷ *Op. cit.*, 1984, p 31.

⁵⁰⁸ Although Stevens may not have instigated these attacks the fact that the culprits were not punished suggests he approved. Indeed, in 1984 an attack on the premises of *For Di People* was said to have been carried out not by unidentifiable party thugs (often recruited from the ranks of the unemployed) but by the paramilitary Special Security Division. *West Africa*, 22 October 1984, p 2148.

⁵⁰⁹ *West Africa*, 9 November 1968, p 1331. The intention was to silence the immediate victims of the attacks and to induce other editors to censor themselves.

⁵¹⁰ *West Africa*, 13 April 1981, p 840. An earlier attack on *The Tablet* and a member of staff in 1980 signalled the beginning of the end of Stevens' patience (he had earlier referred to *The Tablet* as proof of press freedom) but had failed to silence the paper. *West Africa*, 7 July 1980, p 1219.

⁵¹¹ For details of the bill and its implementation see *West Africa*, 10 December 1979, p 2268; 14 January 1980, p 88; 22 September 1980, p 1870; 21 January 1980, p 99.

⁵¹² On the criticism generated by the Act see *West Africa*, 14 January 1980, p 88. Sierra Leoneans were under no illusions as to Stevens' intentions, particularly given the recent banning of two plays, both political satires, and an order that all scripts should henceforth be submitted to the Ministry of Education prior to being staged. (See *West Africa*, 29 October 1979, p 2013 and 19 November 1979, p 2164.)

a sign that the government intended to back down from implementing the bill.⁵¹³ Meanwhile *The Tablet* - whose appearance on the news-stands had prompted the act - was, as noted above, forced out of business in 1981.

Stevens prudently bided his time safe in the knowledge that the new Act could be put to work at any time. In September 1982 - apparently in response to an increasingly vocal and critical press⁵¹⁴ - newspapers were at last required to apply for registration. Of those which applied (a total of fifteen) the Newspaper Advisory Committee recommended the approval of four: the government-controlled *Daily Mail*, the APC paper *We Yone, Progress* (primarily a sports paper) and *Flash*. After further delays, in July 1983 the Minister of Information approved these recommendations.⁵¹⁵ Even then, however, it was reported that various independent papers re-emerged "without registration or much official hindrance."⁵¹⁶

In sum, although Stevens did much to curb press freedom in Sierra Leone he never entirely extinguished it. In line with his overall strategy Stevens resorted to a directly coercive approach only when editors were deemed to have exceeded certain boundaries.

Other Groups.⁵¹⁷

Hitherto the discussion has focused on Stevens' attempts to control the three most apparent sources of opposition to his rule but neither opposition, nor Stevens' measures to circumscribe it, were confined to these groups. As he saw it, consolidating power in his hands necessitated placing limits on the autonomy of all sections of civil society.

The judiciary, for example, came under sustained political pressure.⁵¹⁸ The drive to create a pliable judiciary was based upon two considerations: the need to avoid judicial challenges to government (i.e. Stevens') measures and to reinforce Stevens' ability to protect his clients. The latter consideration emerged with particular clarity during the Vouchergate trial (see above); tactics to stifle this and other cases included "frequent adjournments at counsel's request, absences at hearing of one or other of the parties involved, absences of the trial judge for various reasons ranging from illness, unavailability of transport, unavailability of court rooms, non-appearance of witnesses [and]

⁵¹³ Keeping his distance, Stevens waited six months to put his signature to the Act.

⁵¹⁴ According to *West Africa*, 27 September 1982, p 2531 "in recent months papers such as the *Oracle*, *Globe*, *Sabanoh*, *Watch* and *The Voice*, have been very vocal in their condemnation and exposure of corruption and nepotism in government and have repeatedly called for a change of leadership in Sierra Leone."

⁵¹⁵ *West Africa*, 18 July 1983, p 1687. In November it was reported that five more papers had been recommended for publication. *West Africa*, 28 November 1983, p 2776.

⁵¹⁶ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1982-1983, B 577.

⁵¹⁷ This section does not discuss externally based groups. During Stevens' rule political exiles in both the UK and USA formed several opposition groups but internal disputes, organisational problems and geographical distance ensured that their impact on Sierra Leonean politics was minimal. For an outline of the various groups see *West Africa*, 15-21 April 1991, p 553.

⁵¹⁸ Further evidence on the politicisation of the judiciary came to light following the 1992 coup d'etat (see below).

misplacement of exhibits or court files."⁵¹⁹ The judiciary was compromised in various ways. From 1978 the single-party constitution enabled Stevens to remove Supreme Court judges over the age of fifty-five. In 1985 the Bar Association noted that this provision "hangs like Damocles' sword over the heads of judges particularly when they adjudicate on matters of special interest to the executive."⁵²⁰ Members of the judiciary would reach politically favourable decisions in return for bribes, promotion, or the application of political pressure in other cases.⁵²¹

Stevens also reduced the effectiveness of a second potential check on his power, Parliament. The creation of a single-party state played an important part in this process, ridding Parliament of the remnants of formal opposition. Within the APC itself, both prior to and after 1978, Stevens used elections to create a dependent, personally obligated body of MPs (see Chapter three). Since absolute loyalty was the route to political advancement it was hardly surprising that "banal speeches and sycophantic commentary"⁵²² dominated the proceedings. When criticisms were voiced it was usually by those bowing out of the political scene (whether through choice or necessity).⁵²³ Important issues were frequently passed over altogether,⁵²⁴ legislation approved without question.

Of the remaining groups, the United Christian Council (UCC) perhaps retained the most consistently independent voice,⁵²⁵ expressing reservations about the introduction of a single-party-state - the only group to do so *after* the referendum⁵²⁶ - and the state of the economy. In 1983, for example, a study commissioned by the UCC attributed the causes of poverty to foreign "exploitation" and "high-level corruption."⁵²⁷ Silencing the country's churches was not an easy task

⁵¹⁹ *West Africa*, 27 May 1985, pp 1038-39.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ According to one observer, "certain counsel tend to solicit political support to influence the outcome of court proceedings ... there have been cases in which counsel has sought the assistance of persons of influence in the society ... to put in a word with the judge on behalf of their clients." *West Africa*, 27 May 1985, p 1039.

⁵²² Hayward, *op. cit.*, 1984, p 31.

⁵²³ In 1981 for example it was reported (*West Africa*, 17 August 1981, pp 1905-6) that some MPs had voiced strong criticisms of the 1981/82 Development Estimates. Prominent among them was the Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, D Shears, whose ministerial career came to an end shortly thereafter. Reports suggested he had been looking to retire for some time but for others criticism prompted an enforced end to their political career. Hayward (*op. cit.*, p 215, footnote 48) cites the case of SGM Fania (the leader of the intermittently vocal Back-Benchers' Association) who was denied the party nomination in 1977 following criticism of the moves towards a one-party state.

⁵²⁴ Three days after the August 1981 general strike MPs reportedly "spent a whole morning discussing nothing but whether the fees for coroners should be increased." *West Africa*, 31 August 1981, p 1975. Another report noted MPs failure (during the 1982/83 parliamentary session) to debate "the two tier arrangement, the implementation of the press bill, the non release of the much promised development plan, the escalating high cost of living ... the continuing post election violence in many parts of the country ... and a host of problems pertaining to the rural areas." *West Africa*, 27 June 1983, p 1505.

⁵²⁵ Given the constraints of space not every group can be examined at length. Nevertheless it is worth noting that, within the general drive to weaken the autonomy of civil society, some groups (other than those already mentioned) were left with enough political space to occasionally express dissent. The Chamber of Commerce provides one example.

⁵²⁶ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1978-1979, B 772.

⁵²⁷ *West Africa*, 5 September 1983, p 2088.

and yet with less than 10% of Sierra Leoneans adhering to Christianity their impact was necessarily limited.

The following section examines how Stevens' chosen successor - Joseph Saidu Momoh - attempted to cope with his predecessor's legacy and prolong the APC's survival. His was far from an easy task despite the initial advantage of support from within the armed forces⁵²⁸ and the wider society.⁵²⁹ Keeping pace with popular expectations required, at the very least, the restitution of basic services and the will to tackle corruption but any such departure would necessarily undermine established elite interests. Should Momoh choose to side-step this conflict (risking popular unrest) and prioritise in favour of elites, he would still face the problem of finding sufficient resources to win their quiescence. With illicit sources of wealth outside Momoh's personal control, the formal economy in decline and the IMF pushing unwelcome reform and arrears payments as a precondition for the release of funds, he faced a formidable challenge.

Momoh and the Political Elite.

In 1985 Momoh's most pressing task was to establish his authority as leader of the APC. Unfortunately, others were equally keen to prevent or at least control this process, not least among them his predecessor.⁵³⁰ From his newly-created position of APC Chairman it quickly emerged that Stevens, having selected an apparently amenable successor, was intent on retaining significant influence. For Momoh this posed grave problems. Should he be perceived as little more than Stevens' front-man Momoh's credibility among Sierra Leoneans would, by virtue of the former President's unpopularity, be speedily reduced to nought. Although popular disaffection could be dealt with by force, too rapid a loss of support could only work to Momoh's disadvantage, compounding the insecurities of an elite already anxious about their respective positions following the transfer of power. Any additional confusion as to where *real* power lay could only cause politicians to hesitate before transferring their loyalty, perhaps even provoking a direct challenge to Momoh's authority.

To become undisputed leader of the APC the new President was compelled to tackle his predecessor. Proving equal to this early task, Momoh distanced himself from Stevens and, just as importantly, was seen to do so. He proceeded gradually⁵³¹ but effectively on several fronts. Some

⁵²⁸ Undoubtedly one reason governing Stevens' choice of Momoh. See Chapter two for further details.

⁵²⁹ Momoh's initial popular support (examined at length below) reflected the widespread relief at Stevens' departure and the new President's "clean" reputation. Momoh's mixed ethnic background (which mirrored that of his predecessor) also enhanced his acceptability. He was born in Binkolo to a Limba father and Temne mother, raised in Wilberforce among the Creoles and married to a Creole-Mende wife. *West Africa*, 29 July 1985, p 1534.

⁵³⁰ Prior to his death in 1988.

⁵³¹ It was important that Momoh avoid precipitate action, incensing Stevens to such a degree that he would

measures - issuing invitations to exiles to return home,⁵³² releasing political prisoners, decreeing (in January 1987) that Sierra Leone's "national day" would henceforth revert to April 27 in a celebration of independence rather than the declaration of a Republic⁵³³ - were designed primarily for public consumption, to reinforce Momoh's message of renewal and change. Others were designed to isolate Stevens and demonstrate exactly who held the reins of power. In 1986 the APC's governing council meetings were moved from Stevens' residence on Juba Hill to the Miatta Conference Centre; Stevens responded by refusing to attend.⁵³⁴ Momoh enthusiastically endorsed certain policies despite Stevens' obvious unhappiness⁵³⁵ and, to avoid giving Stevens a platform (he was reported to be "angling for a show-down"), refused to stage a national delegates' conference.⁵³⁶

While these measures enabled Momoh to assert some authority over Stevens and his associates they did not preclude the possibility of a challenge emanating from the so-called "old order."⁵³⁷ Momoh understood this, even going so far as to publicly identify "categories" of people - including those who had "hoped to assume the presidency," those who were hesitating to transfer their loyalty from the old order to the new regime and those "who grew fat during the old order, but are now no longer enjoying certain privileges"⁵³⁸ - who were "working against" him.

Momoh was undoubtedly wise to question the loyalty of former presidential hopefuls. In 1986 his two Vice-Presidents and Finance Minister were Francis Minah, Abu Kamara, and Sheku Kanu, all of whom had aspired to the presidency.⁵³⁹ Momoh had no reason to believe (and perhaps good reason to doubt) that their hopes had simply evaporated. Those lower down the ministerial chain were affected by the prevailing uncertainty, professing their loyalty but hesitating to take sides given the real possibility of a successful plot. As Momoh observed, "there are some people who feel that my administration is yet very young and are adopting wait and see attitude. They are

attempt to retake power or replace Momoh. Although Stevens was probably hesitant to reverse his legacy of a successful succession, reports in 1986 suggested he was considering these possibilities. See *West Africa*, 5 January 1987, p 7.

⁵³² Among others, Sir Banja Tejan-Sie, a former Governor-General and vocal critic of Stevens and John Karefa-Smart, former UDP leader accepted the invitation.

⁵³³ Thus reinvesting the role of "Father of the Nation" on Milton Margai rather than Stevens who had formerly appropriated the title. It appears that, by honouring Margai's rather than Stevens' achievements (at successive independence ceremonies in 1987 and 1988 photographs of Margai were displayed and a statue unveiled) Momoh hoped to symbolise his ties to a fondly remembered past, implying that he would continue in Margai's footsteps. Details of the independence anniversary celebrations are from *West Africa*, 27 April 1987, p 344 and 2 May 1988, p 810.

⁵³⁴ *West Africa*, 1 February 1988, p 170.

⁵³⁵ Noted, with reference to Momoh's dealings with the IMF, in *West Africa*, 1 December 1986, p 2500.

⁵³⁶ *West Africa*, 1 February 1988, p 170. For further details see, *West Africa*, 1 December 1986, p 2501. Some observers suggest that Momoh remained deliberately aloof from the party in order to distance himself from Stevens.

⁵³⁷ Momoh termed his administration the "New Order."

⁵³⁸ *West Africa*, 15 September 1986, p 1914.

⁵³⁹ Despite rumours that he intended standing for re-election SI Koroma chose to end his political career (as Stevens had intended) and turned to farming.

not convinced that this government has come to stay."⁵⁴⁰ Momoh needed to convince his subordinates that he was indeed there to stay and - by asserting his control over resource distribution - that he had the power to reward the loyal (see below).

Momoh's attempts to assert control over members of the old order as opposed to simply removing them from office reflected the inherent dangers of the latter course. Any concerted attack on entrenched elite interests may well have boosted Momoh's popularity⁵⁴¹ but would almost certainly have caused hostile forces to coalesce against him.⁵⁴² Accordingly, Momoh proceeded with caution, gradually replacing some members of the old order but retaining many.⁵⁴³ His first cabinet removed only about a quarter of Stevens' ministers⁵⁴⁴ and, as already noted, all the top posts continued to be held by individuals closely associated with the Stevens regime. Even after the 1986 elections which many regarded as Momoh's clearest opportunity to make a "clean sweep" - and which did see the defeat of several ministers and former ministers at the polls⁵⁴⁵ - old order politicians retained their grip on all the key ministries.

In 1987, however, a change to the existing power structure occurred with Francis Minah's alleged involvement in the coup attempt of that year.⁵⁴⁶ It remains unclear whether the charges brought against Minah were genuine, although his presidential ambitions and fears that he was being sidelined by Momoh (who had been busily, perhaps not altogether wisely, making statements about his uncooperative lieutenants and publicly considering the abolition of the Vice-Presidential posts) suggests that they may have been.

Whether Minah was genuinely involved in the coup attempt or whether Momoh simply seized his chance to remove - once and for all⁵⁴⁷ - a skilful and potentially dangerous rival, the

⁵⁴⁰ Interview in *West Africa*, 1 December 1986, p 2495.

⁵⁴¹ At least during the early days of Momoh's rule people tended to overlook the fact that their new President was himself a participant in the old order.

⁵⁴² Moreover, Momoh's failure to use the 1986 elections to create a personally obligated body of MPs (discussed in see Chapter three) raised doubts as to whether replacements would prove any more loyal.

⁵⁴³ In retrospect he probably moved too gradually. Momoh's regime was plagued by an air of indecisiveness which damaged his standing both with the public and some within the political elite. Momoh's tendency to waver (in stark contrast to Jawara's ability to stick to a course of action) extended to other areas, adding to the air of indecision. For example, having expressed displeasure about the existing Vice-Presidential set-up - in the process sparking intense speculation over the possibility that one or both of the posts would be abolished - Momoh failed to deliver any changes (*West Africa*, 15 December 1986, p 2622). Again in 1988 Momoh established a committee to investigate activities at the APC headquarters. This was expected to recommend the replacement of some entrenched party stalwarts as part of Momoh's drive towards improved accountability. Although the committee's report "recommended drastic changes" and "heard evidence of various misdemeanours ... including party privilege being abused for personal gain and electoral malpractice" it prompted no major departures (*West Africa*, 1 February 1988, p 169 and 12-18 September 1988, p 1669). In both these instances Momoh was wise not to risk alienating powerful interests but at the same time was left looking unsure as to what political route to take.

⁵⁴⁴ Notable among those removed were two widely unpopular individuals, Edward Kargbo and Abass Bundu.

⁵⁴⁵ See Chapter three.

⁵⁴⁶ The coup attempt is discussed at length in Chapter two.

⁵⁴⁷ Minah was eventually hanged in 1989. *West Africa*, 16-22 October 1989, p 1720.

episode worked to Momoh's advantage, strengthening his image as a strong President and serving to warn other old order politicians of the dangers of opposing their new leader. It was important that Momoh drive this lesson home since he continued to show little inclination to radically restructure the cabinet. After the coup attempt AB Kamara was moved up a notch and in his place Minah's old rival, Jusu-Sheriff, was appointed second Vice-President.⁵⁴⁸

Although by making an example of Minah Momoh discouraged further overt challenges, reports of disloyalty continued to abound⁵⁴⁹ and in late 1988 Momoh felt compelled to warn his lieutenants to "either resign or desist from any covert intrigue."⁵⁵⁰ Rumours of military involvement in the alleged intrigue⁵⁵¹ invested it with greater seriousness and perhaps prompted the November 1988 reshuffle which saw the removal of Joe Amara-Bangali, an old order politician and Minister of Trade and Industry, and the promotion of some newcomers.⁵⁵²

Though willing to make some changes to the cabinet, Momoh's main response to the problem of disloyal subordinates was to establish his own, inner core of supporters. This signalled something of a departure from his predecessor's approach. Indeed, whereas Stevens (and Jawara) had led very much from the front - shaping and manipulating his lieutenants' ambitions and skilfully exploiting divisions between them, all the while retaining power in his own hands - his successor was a less instinctive politician. Often appearing at a loss as to how to deal with rivals Momoh chose instead to rely on a hopefully loyal - and ultimately very powerful - coterie of personal friends. The ethno-regional exclusivity of this group signalled a further departure. While the cabinet as a whole continued to represent all ethno-regional groups,⁵⁵³ albeit with a Northern bias,⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁸ Jusu-Sheriff's ethnic identity was probably an important factor in his appointment (see below). Other minor cabinet changes were also implemented, notably Sheka Kanu's demotion from Finance to Development and Economic Planning. One observer (see *West Africa*, 13 April 1987, p 700) saw this as an attempt by Momoh to distance himself from a former presidential hopeful aspirant and yet the re-emergence of Jusu-Sheriff and Abdulai Conteh (himself a former aspirant, dropped by Stevens in 1985) as Attorney-General and Minister of Justice casts doubt on this interpretation. Kanu's demotion probably had more to do with his handling of the economy.

⁵⁴⁹ In general (and in contrast to both Stevens and Jawara) Momoh conveyed an impression of weakness rather than strength. According to one account this stemmed, in part, from his willingness to devolve real power upon his ministers. Thus, Momoh reportedly "told his ministers that if they cannot take decisions on their own behalf of government then they must resign and hand him back the portfolio." In stark contrast to Stevens this left him looking "like a prisoner in his own house, removed from various decisions that are being taken secretly and some times embarrassingly in the name of his government." *West Africa*, 10 August 1987, p 1523.

⁵⁵⁰ *West Africa*, 7-13 November 1988, p 2081.

⁵⁵¹ Noted in *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1988-1989, B 175.

⁵⁵² *West Africa*, 28 November-4 December 1988, p 2264. At the same time the two Vice-Presidents lost the portfolios of Labour and State Enterprises, a move designed to limit their power.

⁵⁵³ Early indications suggested Momoh intended to reduce the size of the cabinet. His 1985 cabinet merged several ministries (Finance and Planning and Economic Development; Works and Energy and Power; Mines and Labour) and numbered thirty-two, including thirteen ministers of state (*West Africa*, 9 December 1985, p 2564). However the size of the cabinet increased alongside the pressure for political favours and the need to incorporate a range of interests. By mid-1986 it numbered thirty-nine, including nineteen ministers of state (*West Africa*, 16 June 1986, p 1249). In 1987 at least one new ministry (Rural development, Social services and Youth) was created. *West Africa*, 13 April 1987, p 700.

⁵⁵⁴ In 1988 the cabinet consisted of five Mendes, twelve Temnes, four Limbas, three Creoles and three "others"

Momoh increasingly looked to his Limba kinsmen (often members of Ekutay, a Limba friendship association) for support.⁵⁵⁵ Key figures⁵⁵⁶ included Ben Kanu (a millionaire rice dealer and Industry Minister from 1988), AK Turay⁵⁵⁷ (a close presidential aide), ET Kamara (Minister of State for Party Affairs), Bambay Kamara⁵⁵⁸ (the Inspector General of Police) and the Paramount Chief of Safrokoh chieftdom, Bombali, Alimamy Dura.

Even assuming the "inner circle" could be trusted - and of that there was no guarantee - Momoh's narrow political base rendered him vulnerable to a concerted political challenge, possibly with an ethnic component.⁵⁵⁹ That such a challenge failed to materialise was partly attributable to Momoh's ability to maintain the opportunities for corrupt accumulation - both within and outside the inner core - and, more importantly, to select the beneficiaries. The following sections examine the evidence of continued corruption, and how Momoh managed to both generate, and control the distribution of, sufficient resources to sustain a political network.

The Role of Corruption.

That illicit accumulation continued after 1985 was revealed by the commissions of enquiry established following the APC's downfall. The Beccles-Davies Enquiry⁵⁶⁰ discovered that Momoh himself had accumulated a considerable fortune⁵⁶¹ through the diversion of foreign aid and domestic resources; his involvement in numerous lucrative deals included the illicit sale of a 24.3 inch gold

(Jimmy D Kandeh, "Politicization of Ethnic Identities in Sierra Leone," *African Studies Review*, Vol 35, No 1, April 1992, p 92). Despite the North's over-representation Momoh wished to convey an impression of balance and used the Vice-Presidential posts to this end. Held initially by Abu Kamara (Temne) and Minah (Mende) and then Kamara and Jusu-Sheriff (Mende) changes by 1991 saw the two top posts given to Abdulai Conteh (Temne) and JB Dauda (Mende). *Africa Confidential*, 25 October 1991, p 7. The changes were necessitated by Kamara's ill-health and subsequent retirement and Jusu-Sheriff's decision to rejoin the SLPP (see Chapter three.)

⁵⁵⁵ The rivalry associated with the succession appears to have heightened the political importance of ethnicity and yet Momoh's leadership was the primary cause. According to one source he "urged every Sierra Leonean to form ethnic fraternities." A Zack-Williams and Stephen Riley, "Sierra Leone: the Coup and its Consequences," *Review of African Political Economy*, No 6, March 1993, p 93.

⁵⁵⁶ Details from *West Africa*, 1 September 1986, p 1823; *Africa Confidential*, 8 May 1992, p 3.

⁵⁵⁷ Turay was not a Limba but he did come from, Binkolo the President's home town. According to Kandeh, *op. cit.*, p 92, some Sierra Leoneans referred to Momoh's inner cabinet as a "Binkolo mafia."

⁵⁵⁸ During the last few months of Momoh's rule Kamara was reported to be "virtually running the country." *Africa Confidential*, 8 May 1992, p 3.

⁵⁵⁹ When Momoh eventually bowed to demands for a return to multi-partyism (see Chapter three) the APC split along ethnic lines. Many Mendes and Temnes departed to form their own parties, narrowing Momoh's ethno-political base even further.

⁵⁶⁰ All the Enquiries were reported in detail in various issues of *West Africa*, 1992-94. For the Beccles-Davies Enquiry see in particular 20-26 December 1993, p 2295; 27 July-2 August 1992, p 1242 and 27 December 1993-9 January 1994, p 2347. For the Laura Marcus-Jones Enquiry see 8-14 February 1993, p 198; 15-21 March 1993, p 242; 1-7 March 1993, p 328 and 5-11 October 1992, p 1656. On the Lynton Nylander Commission of Enquiry see 24-31 May 1993, p 877; 5-11 October 1992, p 1656 and 7-13 September 1992, p 1531. Also see *Africa Confidential*, 9 October 1992, p 5.

⁵⁶¹ According to one report, compiled by a group of Sierra Leoneans residing in Britain, Momoh had almost £170m in just one UK bank. John Sarr Kpundeh, *Politics and Corruption in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone* (Lanham, Maryland, University Press of America, 1995), p 73.

bar (from which his Minister of Mines and the NDMC managing director also benefited). Numerous disclosures about ministers included the former Minister of Transport and Communication, Michael Abdulai, who was implicated in a corrupt deal with a German port management company (Hamburg Ports Consultancy); in 1987 he had reportedly secured an agreement guaranteeing himself \$100,000 per year (payable to his next of kin on his death) in return for the contract to manage the Sierra Leone Ports Authority. Abdulai was also alleged to have received 10% commission on all overseas purchases, and to be involved in lucrative mining operations and the issuance of fake contracts. AK Turay, Minister of State, Presidential Affairs from 1986 to 1992, was found to have almost Le9m in a local bank account (and many properties) despite the fact that his emoluments for this period totalled just over Le415,000; he was ordered to pay Le150m compensation to the state. Abdulai Conteh, the former Vice-President, was ordered to pay Le100m.

Senior civil servants and public officers also continued to benefit from corruption.⁵⁶² The Laura Marcus-Jones Commission of Enquiry revealed the complicity of twenty-five top public servants including the former Secretary to the President - who possessed wealth (including twenty properties and substantial investments) vastly disproportionate to his income - and several Permanent Secretaries. One Permanent Secretary declared five modern houses and Le6m in two bank accounts. Another - with a salary of Le41,722 a month - possessed a house under construction on which he had spent Le17m, a satellite dish worth Le2m and shares in several local enterprises. The Permanent Secretary at Education had paid Le1.4m - intended as an allowance for an official visit to Senegal - into his savings account. His expenses had been paid by the host organisation.

Parastatals fared no better under the scrutiny of the Lynton Nylander Commission of Enquiry. The White Paper on the Enquiry ordered fourteen senior officials of five parastatals and five contractors to repay billions of leones. An investigation into the collapse of the SLPMB revealed mismanagement and corruption on a massive scale with the Managing Director (on a salary of Le500,000 a year) reportedly spending an annual sum of Le20m on his children's education abroad. Government predations also played a role in the SLPMB's collapse with funds reportedly diverted to political supporters and Le600m borrowed (but not repaid) to provide rice for the armed forces.

Although public office corruption played a crucial role in Momoh's political survival he did institute some measures ostensibly designed to tackle it. By so doing Momoh hoped to minimise public disaffection, improve relations with the IMF and impress upon the elite his power to punish as well as reward. Prominent among the ministerial scapegoats were Suffian Kargbo, the Minister

⁵⁶² Kandeh, *op. cit.*, p 94 also notes Momoh's "Limbazation of ... bureaucratic appointments" as a means of securing senior officers' loyalty. However, since Kandeh provides no evidence to confirm this trend the current discussion is necessarily limited to their continued access to wealth.

of Agriculture⁵⁶³ Christie Greene, Minister of State (Finance) and Shamsu Mustapha, Minister of State (Development and Economic Planning). Both Greene and Mustapha were found guilty of fraud.⁵⁶⁴ Nor did civil servants escape all scrutiny. One high-profile case involved John Massaquoi, senior accountant at Information and Broadcasting (alongside ten others); he was found guilty of heading a syndicate, involving bank officials and responsible for the embezzlement of millions of leones through the fraudulent inflation of a series of cheques paid into a fictitious account. Massaquoi was sentenced to ninety-nine years in jail.⁵⁶⁵

Having established the prevalence of illicit accumulation the following section looks at where Momoh generated the resources to fuel corrupt activities as a precursor to examining how he established control over their distribution.

Domestic Resources.

Despite significantly increased producer prices for export crops⁵⁶⁶ (at the IMF's behest) agricultural production under Momoh continued to decline. Accounting for this was the continued absence of a "viable mechanism ... to ensure that these increases reached the producers,"⁵⁶⁷ spiralling inflation which minimised their impact, as well as an extreme shortage of agricultural inputs.⁵⁶⁸ Those farmers continuing to produce non-subsistence crops frequently smuggled their produce to Liberia causing SLPMB purchases to decline. Coffee exports, for example, almost halved between 1984/85 and 1986/87 with a total of 5,663 tons being exported; in 1988/89 the figure plunged to 1,600 tons. During the next two years, agricultural exports as a whole declined 30% and 42%, reaching an all time low in 1990/91.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶³ In 1987 rumours concerning the management of the Magbass sugar factory (which included allegations that 12,000 bags of sugar had been removed without payment) led to the resignation of the agriculture minister, as well as a request that he repay Le6.4m to the treasury. Although Kargbo was reported to have repaid at least some of the money he was not charged. *West Africa*, 20 July 1987, p 1388 and 31 August 1987, p 1683.

⁵⁶⁴ For details of both cases see *West Africa*, 5-11 September 1988, p 1648; 17 August 1987, p 1606; 24 August 1987, p 1668 and 1 August 1988, p 1415. Apropos the Greene case - which centred on the manipulation of government contracts - it is worth recording the comments of Hassan Gabassay Kanu on his appointment as Finance Minister. Kanu, observing the prevalence of "ghost" contractors noted that "This place was like an auction ground ... The corridors were packed full everyday with people who claimed to be businessmen coming to see me ... when I started to uncover the kind of business some of them were to be paid for by government, they disappeared. I have refused to pay some of the contracts because I consider them not genuine." *West Africa*, 10 August 1987, p 1524.

⁵⁶⁵ *West Africa*, 20 September 1987, p 1942 and 5 October 1987, p 2000. Other cases in which charges were successfully brought involved Abu K Jawara (the sub-accountant at Information and Broadcasting) and Brima Sawi, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Works. For details see *West Africa*, 14 September 1987, p 1816 and 5-11 December 1988, p 2309.

⁵⁶⁶ See *West Africa*, 22 February 1988, p 313.

⁵⁶⁷ Zack-Williams, *op. cit.*, p 29.

⁵⁶⁸ According to *West Africa*, (30 October-5 November 1989, p 1800) by 1989 pesticides had been unavailable for five years and fertilisers for two years.

⁵⁶⁹ Details from *West Africa*, 30 October-5 November 1989, p 1800; 17-23 July 1989, p 1164; 6-12 August 1990, p 2238 and 22-28 July 1991, p 1209. The decline of 42% (which saw the value of exports plunge to a meagre \$10m) was a comparison between the eight months of the fiscal year (July 1990-April 1991) and the

Meanwhile, systematic corruption within the SLPMB (noted above) continued and government demands on SLPMB resources intensified. Agricultural exports were increasingly "mortgaged" to pay overseas debts⁵⁷⁰ and purchase imported rice.⁵⁷¹ The government's Le600m debt to the SLPMB combined with the 1989 decision (again, taken at the IMF's insistence) to remove the SLPMB's export monopoly eventually caused the institution's collapse.⁵⁷² In 1990 it was unable to export sufficient produce as payment for imported rice provided by the Phillip Brothers-Seyle Yorfendeh group. The latter took legal action, freezing the SLPMB's assets.⁵⁷³

Official gold and diamond production also continued to decline.⁵⁷⁴ In 1987 recorded diamond output was reported to be fifteen to eighteen carats a day compared with approximately two hundred and fifty carats five years earlier.⁵⁷⁵ According to Reno⁵⁷⁶ during the first four months of 1989 a mere twelve carats were exported through formal channels (0.0003% of figures from the mid-70s). Figures provided by Zack-Williams⁵⁷⁷ suggest that gold exports suffered a similar decline from 19,000oz in 1984 to 689oz in 1988. Bauxite production, too, was reported to have slumped although rutile continued to provide an important source of foreign exchange.⁵⁷⁸

Falling agricultural and mineral exports - which contributed to a further decline in GDP⁵⁷⁹ - did not prompt expenditure cutbacks. In 1989/90, for example, the budgeted provision for goods and services was Le2.016bn for the whole year; in the event spending reached Le2.044bn in just six months. According to the finance minister,⁵⁸⁰ much of the excess went on "fictitious contracts, procurement of unbudgeted goods, over-pricing of goods purchased, payment for goods that were not delivered and excessive overseas travel." Sierra Leone's balance of payments position worsened - reaching a deficit of \$90.3m by 1987/88⁵⁸¹ - as did the country's indebtedness. By the end of 1987

same period in 1989-90. Agricultural exports from 1991 were badly hit by the rebel war as detailed in *West Africa*, 22-28 July 1991, p 1203.

⁵⁷⁰ Noted by the President of the Chamber of Commerce, *West Africa*, 22-28 January 1990, p 91.

⁵⁷¹ In 1988 the President of the Chamber of Commerce noted that the SLPMB's foreign exchange earnings were used to "import rice for private businessmen to make exorbitant profit." *West Africa*, 11 January 1988, p 13.

⁵⁷² Having operated at a loss for some time it was formally closed in July 1992. See *West Africa*, 20-26 July 1992, p 1215.

⁵⁷³ See *West Africa*, 22-28 January 1990, p 91 and 7-13 September 1992, p 1531.

⁵⁷⁴ Apart from a brief revival, discussed on p 141 below.

⁵⁷⁵ *West Africa*, 12-18 September 1988, p 1669.

⁵⁷⁶ William Reno, "Sierra Leone: Structural Adjustment From Underground," in Lual Deng, Markus Costner, Crawford Young (eds.), *Democratization and Structural Adjustment in Africa in the 1990s* (Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1991), p 193.

⁵⁷⁷ *Op. cit.*, p 25.

⁵⁷⁸ In 1989 a new rutile agreement - enabling the government to receive a greater share of revenue should rutile profits rise, and increasing taxes and rents - was signed. The new agreement reportedly guaranteed government a total annual revenue of \$10m compared to an annual average of \$2m for the previous six years. *West Africa*, 11-17 September 1989, p 1527.

⁵⁷⁹ By 1989 GDP had declined to 74% of the 1980 level. Zack-Williams and Stephen Riley, *op. cit.*, p 92.

⁵⁸⁰ *West Africa*, 12-18 March 1990, p 408.

⁵⁸¹ *West Africa*, 11 July 1988, p 1247.

total external medium and long term debt stood at \$787m⁵⁸² (over 100% of GDP), increasing to \$1060m by 1991.⁵⁸³

If domestic production in the formal economy was incapable of generating sufficient resources to sustain Momoh, externally generated resources assumed a more significant role.

Externally Generated Resources

When Momoh acceded to office he set great store by the possibility of a new deal with the IMF. To this end he repaid \$3m in overdue arrears,⁵⁸⁴ cut the subsidies on petrol and rice,⁵⁸⁵ floated the leone (resulting in an immediate devaluation from Le6 to Le24 to the dollar)⁵⁸⁶ and moved to boost government revenue.⁵⁸⁷ In November 1986 the IMF approved a twelve month standby programme worth SDR23.16m and a three-year structural adjustment facility worth a further SDR27.2m.⁵⁸⁸

This package represented a significant source of resources for the new leader but in the event he was able to draw just SDR12m before the agreement was cancelled in mid-1987. The cancellation ensued from the government's failure to maintain arrears repayments or adhere to IMF conditionalities (by imposing fiscal discipline, insisting on the surrender of foreign exchange earnings, further devaluation etc.). Unlike Jawara, Momoh could not contemplate the political consequences of full adherence to an IMF-inspired reform programme. This was true both at the elite and the popular level. Thus, although "ordinary" Sierra Leoneans did suffer the impact of reform (see below) Momoh was unwilling to completely abandon his search for popular acceptance so soon after the transfer of power. He possessed neither the legitimacy reserves nor the elite-level instrumental and affective ties which, accrued over a long period, had enabled Jawara to ensure acquiescence to the ERP.

Following the cancellation of the 1986 programme Momoh continued to try and accommodate the Fund - notably by implementing the first Economic Emergency⁵⁸⁹ - but his partial

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*

⁵⁸³ *Africa Confidential*, 25 October 1991, p 7.

⁵⁸⁴ *West Africa*, 31 March 1986, p 656.

⁵⁸⁵ Petrol prices were increased three times in 1986 (*West Africa*, 8 December 1986, p 2554).

⁵⁸⁶ In June 1986. *West Africa*, 1 December 1986, p 2502.

⁵⁸⁷ By tackling the Lebanese (see below) and bringing importers - well practised in the art of customs evasion - under closer scrutiny. For details see *West Africa*, 13 January 1986, p 54.

⁵⁸⁸ *West Africa*, 28 March 1988, p 576. The agreement facilitated the rescheduling of debts with Sierra Leone's Paris Club creditors and provided access to further multilateral and bilateral credits (see Chapter four), albeit not at the same generous per capita levels received in The Gambia soon after the implementation of the ERP.

⁵⁸⁹ Welcomed by the IMF, the Economic Emergency introduced a range of measures designed to suppress the parallel market including tougher penalties for those caught hoarding (currency, diamonds or essential commodities) or attempting to smuggle agricultural produce or minerals, and the suspension of all diamond and gold exporters' licenses with exports henceforth to be the sole responsibility of the recently established Government Gold and Diamond Office and the Bank of Sierra Leone respectively. *West Africa*, 9 November 1987, p 2198.

reform efforts failed to compensate for the continued failure to meet arrears repayments and reluctance to meet IMF conditionalities, notably a further devaluation. In April 1988 Sierra Leone was declared ineligible for further support; ongoing efforts to convince the IMF of the government's good faith included the elimination of ghost workers,⁵⁹⁰ further cuts to the fuel subsidy,⁵⁹¹ retrenchment in some parastatals,⁵⁹² devaluation⁵⁹³ as well as the 1991 appointment of a respected technocrat, Jim Funna, as Minister of Finance.⁵⁹⁴ The major problem (though by no means the only one⁵⁹⁵) remained arrears payments, totalling over \$100m by 1991.⁵⁹⁶

Although, towards the end of Momoh's rule, an agreement with the IMF appeared to be drawing closer, funds were not forthcoming prior to the coup d'etat and resources to create and sustain the new President's political network were necessarily found elsewhere. The process of creating a network - which involved establishing control over the distribution of resources - compelled Momoh to confront the Lebanese. Lebanese economic power, advantageous to the APC under Stevens, now posed a threat with existing Lebanese-politician partnerships owing no debt of loyalty to the new President. The possibility existed that former presidential hopefuls and other aspiring politicians - possessing a source of wealth independent of the new leader - would attempt to fulfil their ambitions at Momoh's expense. Since (as noted above) Momoh was reluctant to tackle members of the old order head on he was left with little choice but to remove their access to resources (via the Lebanese) as a means of establishing his authority. Once this had been achieved resources could be redistributed according to presidential favour.

Clearly this was a risky strategy. Even if the Lebanese chose not to defend their interests

⁵⁹⁰ Resulting in a 40% saving in the government wage bill. The census report of May 1988 disclosed that of a total of 74,699 people listed as employed by government departments and parastatals almost 10,000 were not found or accounted for (see *West Africa*, 30 May 1988, p 994 and 17-23 July 1989, p 1164). Further disclosures later the same year included the fact that 75% of the listed staff of one government department (Works) were found to be non-existent (*West Africa*, 5-11 September 1988, p 1648). Despite immediate savings to the treasury ghost workers were soon to reappear. See for example *West Africa*, 18-24 June 1990, p 1047.

⁵⁹¹ See *West Africa*, 17-23 July 1989, p 1164 and 1-7 July 1991, p 1097.

⁵⁹² In 1990 it was reported that 3,500 parastatal workers had lost their jobs (*West Africa*, 16-22 April 1990, p 621), likewise a further 500 SLPMB employees the following year (*West Africa*, 23-29 September 1991, p 1608). In 1992 plans for a 30% reduction in the civil service were interrupted by the military coup. *West Africa*, 30 March-4 April 1992, p 559.

⁵⁹³ The leone was adjusted on several occasions, in January 1990 to Le120 to the dollar. For further details see, *West Africa*, 6-12 August 1990, p 2238 and 1-7 May 1989, p 696.

⁵⁹⁴ Funna had been sacked from his post as Governor of Central Bank by Stevens, just prior to his departure from office. Funna had reportedly "been at odds with powerful economic interests as well as the authorities for his uncompromising stand for a more effective enforcement of surrender obligations of export proceeds particularly from gold and diamonds and for a revamping of retention facilities." *West Africa*, 25 November 1985, p 2502. On Funna also see *Africa Confidential*, 25 October 1991, p 6.

⁵⁹⁵ The government's failure to adhere to spending targets, for example. Thus in 1990 Momoh admitted that government over-spending was estimated at Le3bn for each of the previous two years. *West Africa*, 8-14 January 1990, p 24.

⁵⁹⁶ *Africa Confidential*, 25 October 1991, p 7. Small repayments were made in 1988 and 1989, and in August 1991 Funna offered a further \$10m to be paid in stages up to March 1992. However, the IMF reportedly requested payments of a further \$15m for the period prior to July 1991.

with force, removing them would simultaneously remove the major source of APC patronage resources leaving Momoh with little to redistribute. The need to generate fresh resources under his personal control caused Momoh to turn to foreign investors.

First on the scene was LIAT Finance and Construction Company controlled by Shaptai Kalmanowitch, a Russian émigré with Israeli citizenship. According to Reno, Momoh agreed to give LIAT a monopoly over diamond exploitation with the intention of increasing formal diamond exports at the expense of informal market operators, in the process decreasing their economic power and, with access to diamond revenues,⁵⁹⁷ increasing his own. The agreement also provided that LIAT would use a portion of its foreign exchange earnings to import rice, sidelining the Lebanese-politician enterprises and enabling Momoh to distribute heavily subsidised rice as a means of constructing his own support base.⁵⁹⁸ In return LIAT gained "a base from which to export and transship diamonds to Europe and reexport goods to South Africa in contravention of existing trade sanctions."⁵⁹⁹

LIAT's emergence and the implementation of the Economic Emergency (which, as already noted, was designed to suppress informal markets) were obviously unwelcome developments to the Lebanese and their political associates. A shooting incident perpetrated by Jamil's security force against a local pro-LIAT politician, Daramy-Rogers,⁶⁰⁰ provided one very visible sign of resistance. Reno interprets the 1987 coup attempt as another, citing allegations that Minah, other old order politicians involved in diamond mining and Jamil were implicated. Unfortunately Reno does not discuss the evidence against these men - which some local observers suggested was inconclusive⁶⁰¹ - and it is entirely possible that Momoh simply chose to use the occasion of a primarily military-police inspired coup attempt to effect the safe removal of his rivals.⁶⁰²

However one interprets the coup attempt it remains the case that Momoh was soon

⁵⁹⁷ According to Reno, (*op. cit.*, 1995, p 158) official diamond exports rose 280% in 1986-87 compared to the previous years figures. Government revenues increased accordingly, providing Momoh with a new source of resources to distribute to allies, finance imports and repay arrears to the IMF (which, as already noted, was an important consideration in the introduction of the 1986 structural adjustment agreement).

⁵⁹⁸ By 1986 the subsidised rice price was reportedly one-fortieth of market values (*ibid.*, p 144). According to *West Africa*, (1 December 1986, p 2505) MPs each received two hundred and fifty imported bags of rice, although it is likely that selected individuals received rather more.

⁵⁹⁹ Reno, *op. cit.*, 1991, p 192. For further discussion of LIAT's South African links see Trevor W Parfitt, "Sierra Leone: Wide Open to South Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, No 38, April 1987, pp 86-89. For its part LIAT denied links with South Africa (other than entirely respectable ones, see *West Africa*, 8 June 1987, p 1126) and engaged in various public relations measures designed to enhance its acceptability to a sceptical Sierra Leonean public. The latter - which included contributions to hospitals and the construction of low-cost housing - are outlined in *West Africa*, 8 September 1986, p 1897. Also on LIAT see *Africa Confidential*, 17 September 1986 and 7 January 1987.

⁶⁰⁰ See *West Africa*, 4 August 1986, p 1619 and 11 August 1986, p 1702.

⁶⁰¹ See *West Africa*, 26 October 1987, p 2109.

⁶⁰² The events of the coup are discussed at greater length in Chapter two but it is worth noting that no member of Jamil's security force was charged. The warrant for Jamil's arrest was only issued after Kaikai (the coup leader) alleged, during his trial, that the arms at his house belonged to Jamil by which time the latter had departed to London. Minah, as already noted, was less fortunate.

compelled to cease attacking the Lebanese and their associates. Thus in May 1987 Kalmanowitch's dealings in Sierra Leone came to an abrupt end when he was arrested in Britain to face extradition charges to North Carolina where he was accused of fraud.⁶⁰³ LIAT's departure removed Momoh's weapon for tackling the power of his rivals. Without the resources to reward associates and construct a solid political base Momoh dare not risk tackling his rivals for fear of retaliation. Informal markets re-emerged at Momoh's expense⁶⁰⁴ at the same time as cutting subsidies (to appease the IMF) undermined a further source of reward.

Faced with few choices Momoh continued to look to foreign investors as a source of resources. In early 1989 the emergence of a second Israeli company - NR SCIPA - provided Momoh with another chance to replace the Lebanese, reward his own supporters and re-establish a hierarchy of control. SCIPA, controlled by Nir Guaz, provided resources and services - including rice imports, which could then be distributed to loyal allies,⁶⁰⁵ and funds for small arrears payments - in return for lucrative mining rights. Reno argues that Momoh was compelled to accept this trade-off despite Guaz's disturbing propensity to select influential politicians (and Momoh's rivals) as allies, as well as SCIPA's poor formal market performance.⁶⁰⁶

How long Momoh might have continued in this vein in the absence of the 1991 rebel invasion was unclear. The IMF's proposal that the task of revenue collection be contracted out to foreign firms - which Momoh acceded to - generated some money for arrears payments (as well as access to illicit wealth for a favoured few⁶⁰⁷) but creditors remained wary of extending further loans. Without further resources Momoh would have found it ever harder to meet basic survival imperatives, notably maintaining the flow of material rewards to the army. The rebel invasion simply enhanced Momoh's problems, placing even greater pressure on scarce resources and threatening to sever his access to the diamond mines.

The increasing scarcity of resources for distribution also exerted an impact upon Momoh's relationship with non-elite Sierra Leoneans. The following sections examine this impact and the President's response in greater detail.

⁶⁰³ *West Africa*, 8 June 1987, p 1126. Kalmanowitch was later jailed in Israel, reportedly on charges of acting as a Russian spy (*West Africa*, 9 May 1988, p 854).

⁶⁰⁴ According to Reno, *op. cit.*, 1995, p 160, official diamond exports in 1987-88 were just 5.3% of the previous years figures. For 1988, the President of the Chamber of Commerce (*West Africa*, 22-28 January 1990, p 91) observed that whereas overseas statistics put diamond exports at \$200m official exports amounted to just \$4m.

⁶⁰⁵ See *West Africa*, 15-20 August 1989, p 1327 and Reno, *op. cit.*, 1995, p 163.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 164-66.

⁶⁰⁷ See for example *West Africa* (7-13 January 1991, p 3155) on the Specialist Service International (SSI) - responsible for pre-shipment inspection of exports and imports - which some believed was benefiting selected politicians with "personal foreign exchange pay-offs." Also see the case of Michael Abdulai, noted on p 136 above.

Civil Society.

When Momoh acceded to office the APC regime received a huge injection of popular support. Momoh exploited Sierra Leoneans' optimism that real change was now a possibility, successfully using the presidential and subsequent general elections as a legitimating mechanism (see Chapter three) and propounding a series of upbeat slogans. His "New Order" administration was set to usher in a corruption-free era of "constructive nationalism," "military discipline" and "restored accountability."

Popular support provided Momoh with a useful crutch during the early part of his rule but could not be sustained for long. In the short term he was plagued by the widespread anticipation of an immediate change for the better. In the medium and longer term Momoh was not in command of sufficient resources to reconcile popular expectations with elite-level demands. The survival imperative dictated Momoh's priorities; new slogans, appeals for patience and (towards the close of 1986) progressively bold attacks on Stevens' disastrous economic legacy failed to disguise this fact.

Far from improving, most peoples' living standards deteriorated under Momoh. Intent upon coming to terms with the IMF as a source of resources but unwilling to dismantle the entrenched system of elite privilege and associated public office corruption, Momoh implemented partial economic reform (described above) as a means of appeasing creditors. The victims of reform were ordinary Sierra Leoneans. Periodic currency flotations and subsidy cuts operated to increase prices and shortages of essential commodities (notably, rice and fuel) prevailed.⁶⁰⁸ In 1986 the IMF-inspired programme caused the cost of living to increase 300%⁶⁰⁹ and, although this programme was soon abandoned, living standards failed to improve thereafter. Rising salaries,⁶¹⁰ when they were paid at all, failed to keep pace with rising prices, particularly as inflation took hold.⁶¹¹ In the countryside an estimated 65% of the rural population were living below the poverty line, contributing to Sierra Leone's last place ranking (of 160 states) in the United Nations Development Programme's "Human Development" report.⁶¹²

Meanwhile, services were subject to unprecedented levels of decay. In 1990 the President of the Chamber of Commerce observed the "continued decline in the infrastructure, poor roads, hardly any electricity, frequent breakdown of communication [and] shortage of water."⁶¹³ In 1989 it

⁶⁰⁸ Shortages stemmed from a lack of foreign exchange for imports and hoarding (whether in anticipation of flotation and higher prices or to create an artificial shortage as a means of increasing prices on the black-market). Meanwhile domestic rice production declined. Failing to match words with resources, Momoh's much publicised "Green Revolution" - intended to increase rice production - did not materialise. The Green Revolution is discussed at length in *West Africa*, 11 August 1986, p 1673 and 2-8 October 1989, p 1633.

⁶⁰⁹ *West Africa*, 1 December 1986, p 2501.

⁶¹⁰ Wages and salaries were increased substantially in 1987, 1989 and 1990.

⁶¹¹ Under Momoh the paucity of foreign borrowing opportunities caused the government to rely more heavily on the Central Bank which in turn caused a rapid increase in the money supply and spiralling inflation, reaching 124% in 1989-90. *West Africa*, 28 January-3 February 1991, p 106.

⁶¹² United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report*, 1991.

⁶¹³ *West Africa*, 22-28 January 1990, p 91.

was estimated that 70% of Freetown's population lacked adequate housing⁶¹⁴ and the provision of education contracted. By 1990 primary enrolment figures⁶¹⁵ in the rural areas had reached a low of 20% of the eligible age group. Although this rose to 73% for urban children, all suffered from the negligible resources devoted to education and the demoralisation of underpaid, and frequently unpaid, teaching staff. In 1990 literacy levels were estimated at an extremely low 15%.⁶¹⁶ The population's health also suffered, although once again rural areas - receiving just 11% of health expenditure⁶¹⁷ - were hit hardest. Hospitals lacked equipment, qualified staff, electricity and drugs (subject to diversion to the private sector). By the late 1980s life expectancy was estimated at a short 40 years and the infant mortality rate - at 180-200 deaths per 1000 live births - was the highest in the world.⁶¹⁸

Amidst this suffering the privileged elite continued to flaunt their wealth and the government to expend scarce resources on luxury items. To give just one example, the President of the Chamber of Commerce observed "the proliferation of extremely expensive, top of the range and high fuel consumption SLG [Sierra Leone Government] number plate vehicles that ply the streets during and out of official hours." Between fifty and one hundred Pajeros had been imported at exorbitant cost in 1989.⁶¹⁹

Dealing with the resultant, primarily urban, disaffection (rural fragmentation continued to work to the regime's advantage) Momoh embraced and extended Stevens' pre-1985 tactics, albeit with an increasing emphasis on coercion.⁶²⁰

Trade Unions.⁶²¹

When Momoh acceded to office government-union relations improved, as workers willingly conceded a truce, a temporary breathing space for Momoh to revive the economy and ameliorate their suffering. However, as living standards continued to decline and workers' patience ran out, Momoh increasingly relied upon his predecessor's framework of control. The SLLC's emasculation

⁶¹⁴ *West Africa*, 26 June-2 July 1989, p 1070. The continued drift to the towns (which saw the population of Freetown grow from 127,000 to 0.5m in the two decades prior to 1989 (*West Africa*, 16-22 October 1989, p 1720) contributed to the housing shortage.

⁶¹⁵ From *West Africa*, 18-24 June 1990, p 1033.

⁶¹⁶ World Bank, *World Development Report 1992* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), p 218.

⁶¹⁷ See *West Africa*, 11-17 September 1989, p 1507.

⁶¹⁸ United Nations, *United Nations Development Programme, Fourth Country Programme for Sierra Leone*, (New York, 1987), p 2.

⁶¹⁹ *West Africa*, 27 March-2 April 1989, p 474 and 4-10 February 1991, p 147.

⁶²⁰ Momoh, like his predecessor, was not hampered by a stringent moral code.

⁶²¹ As before, the discussion focuses upon internal rather than external groups. However it should be noted that external groups played a more important role under Momoh than Stevens. The SLDP was allegedly involved in the "Silver Sea Affair" in February 1986 (see Chapter four) and, more seriously, Sierra Leonean dissidents abroad formed the Revolutionary United Front (See Chapter four). External groups - notably the Sierra Leone Multi-Party Campaign Organisation, formed in Britain - might also be credited with some slight influence on the emergence of the multi-party debate although internal events were far more significant.

endured with the continued co-optation of Ibrahim Langley to Parliament.⁶²² Langley confined himself to expressing periodic concern over low wages and high prices⁶²³ and it was left to individual unions to attempt to protect workers' interests. Few of these attempts (including a wave of strikes in 1989) threatened Momoh's survival. Strikes were quashed through a mixture of promises (albeit rarely fulfilled) and coercion; most failed to spark unrest in Freetown.

The most serious incident occurred in May 1990⁶²⁴ when the National Movement of Teachers - protesting over the non-payment of salaries⁶²⁵ and allowances - moved to disrupt GCE examinations at the Albert Academy. Their actions, reportedly resisted by the school's staff and students, sparked unrest and the destruction of property in Freetown. Unemployed youths cashed in on the crisis, looting shops and market stalls and several people died before the situation was eventually brought under control.

This protest, like the general strike of 1981, demonstrated the limits to co-optation and the underlying importance of superior force in Momoh's continued survival. Although the SLLC condemned the action, the teachers involved denounced the SLTU saying it had become too "political" with Fatoma's nomination to Parliament. Many within the SLTU (rather than the dissident National Movement of Teachers), though not taking an active part in the protest, reportedly agreed that Fatoma had failed to defend their interests. Teachers in Freetown and the provinces continued to strike for a further four weeks, only returning to work when Fatoma agreed to resign.⁶²⁶

The return to work did not signal the end of Momoh's problems with the teachers. The underlying causes of the strike - inadequate salaries, increasingly in arrears - remained, and further prolonged strikes in 1991 and 1992 ensued. Although these (and others, including a drivers' strike in 1990⁶²⁷) highlighted Sierra Leone's desperate economic plight they failed to pose an immediate threat to Momoh's survival. The ineffectiveness of the SLLC, divisions within individual trade unions, a seeming absence of co-operation between workers and other sources of societal opposition, and the APC's coercive machinery accounted for this.

Students.

Towards the close of Stevens' rule it will be recalled that the APC-student relationship had deteriorated into a cycle of protest and coercion. Momoh's accession broke the cycle as students -

⁶²² Emmanuel Fatoma, the Secretary-General of the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU), also remained a nominated MP (the number of which was increased from seven to ten in 1986. *West Africa*, 17 February 1986, p 378.

⁶²³ See for example, *West Africa*, 28 August-3 September 1989, p 1442.

⁶²⁴ Details from *West Africa*, 4-10 June 1990, p 954 and 11-17 June 1990, p 998.

⁶²⁵ According to a member of the SLTU salaries were two years in arrears.

⁶²⁶ *West Africa*, 2-8 July 1990, p 2034.

⁶²⁷ See *West Africa*, 12-18 November 1990, p 2815.

like the unions - waited for their circumstances to improve. Student disillusionment was not long in coming; neither was the APC's return to coercion.

Under Momoh, universities continued to be starved of funds for basic equipment and facilities. Students also continued to suffer from the range of problems experienced by other urban dwellers, notably rising food prices. Indeed, it was inadequate food allowances which lay at the root of the first major student protest under Momoh.⁶²⁸ In January 1987 students of all three university colleges staged a class boycott and Njala students travelled to Bo, Kenema and Freetown, spreading unrest in their wake. In Freetown the disturbances were speedily dealt with but in Bo, government buildings were attacked and in Kenema the APC headquarters burnt down. Momoh responded by closing all three colleges and, following their reopening in March (together with promises of improved food allowances), banning student unions.

This departure did not solve the problem of student grievances⁶²⁹ but did hamper their ability to organise and articulate dissatisfaction. Not until November 1989 did significant unrest on campuses re-emerge.⁶³⁰ The focus of the unrest (which included demonstrations and a boycott of classes⁶³¹) was the ban on student unions. It clearly demonstrated the catch-22 situation in which students found themselves. Agitation to get the ban lifted was in itself, according to the government, "in violation of the ban" and all the colleges were re-closed only to be opened in January. Prior to the closure Momoh, in a show of compromise, had accepted that student unions would be un-banned on the condition that they operate according to a new pro-government constitution, drafted by the university authorities. Students, arguing that it undermined the autonomy of the unions and did not address issues such as food and transport rejected it, proposed an alternative, and started the boycott.

In mid-1990 Momoh relaxed his coercive approach, student unions were un-banned under a constitution agreeable to the students and improved conditions promised. This departure formed part of Momoh's attempts to contain student demands for multi-partyism (examined, alongside Momoh's response, in Chapter four). The multi-party issue provided a rallying point not only among students but also between students and other societal groups and consequently held a far greater disruptive potential than dissent over internal student issues. By conceding unions' right to organise Momoh hoped (wrongly, as it turned out) to defuse the multi-party issue. For the remainder of APC rule the student-government relationship remained uneasy (punctuated by sporadic arrests⁶³²) but

⁶²⁸ Details from *West Africa*, 2 February 1987, p 237 and 9 February 1987, p 250.

⁶²⁹ It was reported that food allowances were continually in arrears and, when they did arrive, remained insufficient to cover the cost of food.

⁶³⁰ No doubt students' reluctance to protest also reflected the fate of "troublemakers" over the years. The APC's increasingly coercive stance (some elements of which had been carried over from Stevens' rule) left students under no illusion as to the sanctions - including detention, de-registering etc. - attached to protest.

⁶³¹ For details see *West Africa*, 18-24 December 1989, pp 2095-96.

⁶³² Towards the end of 1990, for example, the student union President and two other executive members were

relatively calm.

The Press.

In 1985, journalists - seemingly reassured by Momoh's utterances on the subject of press freedom⁶³³ - joined the queue of delegations lining up to congratulate him on assuming the presidency. The appointment of the *New Citizen* editor to Parliament - reportedly regarded by journalists as "recognition and reward for the press by the new order"⁶³⁴ - further extended the honeymoon period of government-press relations. For some time it appeared as though Momoh intended to pursue a rather more liberal line than his predecessor. The main constraints on the press were the costs of production, which rose dramatically during Momoh's first year of power.⁶³⁵ Rising costs were said to have compromised some newspapers' independence; politicians were reported to "sponsor" papers to print favourable stories or attacks on their rivals.⁶³⁶

In 1987 Momoh opted to introduce new press measures⁶³⁷ (including a provision allowing journalists to be sentenced for up to five years for publishing "false statements calculated to bring another person into disrepute or any statement that is likely to alarm the public, disturb the peace or stir up feelings of ill-will among ethnic minority groups regardless of whether it is true or not") as part of the economic emergency regulations. Clearly these measures had great coercive potential and yet Momoh, much like his predecessor, hesitated to implement them unnecessarily.⁶³⁸ The press was not eliminated entirely, but rather periodic clamp-downs silenced the most critical and served as a warning to others. As Momoh's problems - the economic decline, multi-party demands and later

briefly detained for "incitement and loitering." The trouble stemmed from a student boycott of classes in support of the reinstatement of expelled colleagues. Momoh's response illustrated his priorities and his fear that student disaffection would converge with popular dissatisfaction outside the university. He noted that if the boycott was "restricted to college campuses alone, my government wouldn't mind but if it spills over to the towns I will bring ... the full force of the law enforcement institutions to restore order." *West Africa*, 3-9 December 1990, p 2964.

⁶³³ And not put off by a widely publicised incident in July 1981 when Momoh lodged a complaint, in Parliament, that his parliamentary privilege had been breached by an article which had appeared in *The Tablet*. For details see, *West Africa*, 6 July 1981, pp 1526-28 and 13 July 1981, pp 1562, 1571.

⁶³⁴ *West Africa*, 23 June 1986, p 1340.

⁶³⁵ This was reflected in rising newspaper prices, reported to have increased from between 20-50 cents in 1986 to 5-10 leones in 1987. *West Africa*, 28 September 1987, pp 1886-87. Getting hold of newsprint also posed an increasing challenge for newspaper proprietors.

⁶³⁶ *West Africa*, 28 September 1987, p 1944. As for Momoh, he appeared as unconcerned as his predecessor about using the media as a resource. There was little attempt to rehabilitate either the government paper or the SLBS. In January 1991 Le66m was reportedly paid to SIEMENS as a down-payment for the rehabilitation of the SLBS but, by the time of the APC's downfall, work had not started. The Minister of Information and Broadcasting was alleged to have been the main beneficiary of this "contract." See *West Africa*, 5-11 October 1992, p 1656.

⁶³⁷ Outlined in *West Africa*, 16 November 1987, p 2251.

⁶³⁸ Indeed, during 1987 Momoh seemed to be trying to project an image as protector of the press, intervening to secure the speedy release of at least two detained journalists. One case involved the acting editor of *Progress* whose arrest was ordered by the first Vice-President, A B Kamara, following speculation that he was soon to be retired. The journalist was released on Momoh's orders after twenty-four hours in detention. *West Africa*, 28 September 1987, p 1886.

the rebel war - mounted, so did his tendency towards coercion. He feared press revelations on corruption and particularly the poor handling of the rebel war which, in serving to confirm people's worst fears, could spark dissent.

In 1989 warnings to the press included a reminder of the government's power to withdraw newspapers' certificate of registration (in accordance with the Newspapers Amendment Act)⁶³⁹ and the jailing of both the editor and acting editor of the *Chronicle*.⁶⁴⁰ In March 1990 intimidation levels increased when police reportedly "launched a wave of arrests and house searches of journalists"⁶⁴¹ following the publication of a series of "sensitive" articles. Franklyn Bunting Davies - as the editor of Freetown's most popular paper, *New Shaft* - continued to receive as much attention (in the form of police harassment, court appearances and brief periods in jail) as he had under Stevens.⁶⁴² Others targeted included the respective editors of the *New Nation* (attacked by hired thugs), the *Observer* and the *New Breed* (both of whom were detained and charged with libel).⁶⁴³ Shortly before the 1992 coup three papers lost their registration papers due to certain "inconsistencies."⁶⁴⁴ The cumulative impact of these measures was to undermine the press as a source of opposition to APC rule.

Other Groups.

Although, as previously, the Bar Association voiced occasional criticisms of APC rule⁶⁴⁵ - and supported calls for multi-partyism - many within the judiciary continued to do the party's bidding. Revelations following the APC's downfall confirmed widespread suspicions concerning the partiality of Sierra Leone's justice system. The executive of the Bar reportedly confessed "that corruption and bribery are rampant among some judges who decide cases not on their merits but on the highest bidder" and that "some promotions in the judiciary are not based on merit, ability and experience, but on tribalism and political expediency." A "prominent legal practitioner" further revealed that a network known as the Conclave "had profound influence on the dispensation of justice. Decisions were made by the conclave which worked for the toppled APC regime before

⁶³⁹ Five newspapers had their certificates withdrawn for printing "defamatory and libellous articles" although they were later allowed to re-register. See *West Africa*, 8-14 May 1989, p 772 and 5-11 June 1989, p 942.

⁶⁴⁰ For details of these cases see *West Africa*, 11-17 December 1989, p 2055 and 15-21 January 1990, p 74. The editor, Roy Stevens, was jailed for three years and his deputy, two. They were both released in 1990.

⁶⁴¹ *West Africa*, 23-29 April 1990, p 687.

⁶⁴² For details see, *West Africa*, 7-13 May 1990, p 759. Bunting-Davies was rearrested in 1991 after publishing an article criticising the police response to the incursions from Liberia, *West Africa*, 1-7 July 1991, p 1097.

⁶⁴³ The *Observer* editor had been detained before he could publish a promised exposé of one individual's "dubious gold and diamond activities" whereas the *New Breed* editor had written an article suggesting the APC wished to prolong the rebel war in order to delay multi-party elections. See *West Africa*, 3-9 September 1990, p 2410; 27 May-2 June 1991, p 876 and 20-26 January 1992, p 120.

⁶⁴⁴ *West Africa*, 16-22 March 1992, p 476.

⁶⁴⁵ Perhaps most strongly in 1990 when it expressed concern at the "devastated economy, disintegration of education, corruption, shortage of essential commodities and devaluation ... leading to national disunity, tribalism, mistrust and poverty." See *West Africa*, 30 July-6 August 1990, p 2210.

cases came up in court."⁶⁴⁶

By way of contrast, Parliament underwent a brief revival during the first part of Momoh's rule. This was partly attributable to the new leader's reluctance to intervene on behalf of individuals during the 1986 elections. MPs - notably members of the Back-Benchers' Association - saw themselves as possessing greater freedom to criticise and in February 1987, for example, objected to Sheka Kanu's decision to present his mini-budget in the form of a statement rather than a Parliamentary Bill. MPs wanted a debate and, threatening to block the budget, demanded Momoh's presence resolve the issue. Momoh reportedly spent "an unscheduled three hours in Parliament trying to reach a compromise" and the following month a debate was held during which MPs were given a chance to voice their objections.⁶⁴⁷ Though willing to tolerate a degree of criticism, the emergence of an over-confident body of MPs - undermining presidential authority, perhaps even to the extent of defeating legislation - was at odds with Momoh's survival imperative. Shortly after the budget debate two prominent members of the Back-Benchers' Association were appointed Ministers of State⁶⁴⁸ and the following year Bash-Taqi was appointed Minister of Agriculture.⁶⁴⁹ Reinforcing these efforts, loyalty to Momoh and his cohorts - in the hope of a better position or access to imported rice - became increasingly imperative as backbenchers were subjected to the late payment of salaries and allowances.⁶⁵⁰

Comparative Overview.

Comparing the prolonged political survival of Jawara, Stevens and Momoh several questions need to be addressed. What were the nature and intensity of the challenges faced, including changes over time? What resources were available to counter those challenges? Did this resource base expand or contract over time? What strategies did each leader employ to reap maximum dividends from their resource base?

One of the most consistently significant challenges facing each leader was that emanating from within the political elite. Combating this threat involved the deployment of a range of resources. Of these, material resources were of critical importance in both states, though comparatively more so in Sierra Leone. Before examining this broad difference of overall strategy, however, it is worth reiterating some of the tactical similarities and differences in each state, relating to the *nature* of rewards, *to whom* they were distributed and *how*.

⁶⁴⁶ *New Shaft*, 5 June 1992, p 4 and *New Breed*, 10-16 June 1992, p 1 in Kpundeh, *op. cit.*, pp 74-75.

⁶⁴⁷ For example, MO Bash-Taqi - the leader of the Back-Benchers' Association - elaborated on the "wrong fiscal policies of our government." See, *West Africa*, 2 March 1987, p 410 and 30 March 1987, p 633.

⁶⁴⁸ *West Africa*, 13 April 1987, pp 700-1.

⁶⁴⁹ *West Africa*, 5-11 December 1988, p 2284.

⁶⁵⁰ In March 1989 salaries and travel allowances were several months in arrears. MPs responded by pursuing other activities and Parliament was reported to be finding it increasingly difficult to field a quorum. *West Africa*, 27 March-2 April 1989, p 474.

The nature of rewards in each state featured at least some similarities. Beyond the legitimate rewards of public office in each state (a salary, perks, opportunities to travel etc), these centred upon the types of corruption occurring in ministries, departments and parastatals. Detailed above, corrupt practices in both states ranged from outright theft to the payment of ghost workers. Two important differences, however, centred upon range and reach: the fact such practices were pursued on a far more blatant and all encompassing scale in Sierra Leone, and the crucial addition of illicit diamond opportunities, unavailable in The Gambia (see below).

Over time some changes in the scale and nature of rewards occurred, although it is important not to overstate these. In both The Gambia and Sierra Leone those members of the elite enjoying presidential approval continued to reap the rewards of access to the state. In The Gambia, the implementation of the ERP adversely affected numerous people, not least those middle income groups deprived of public sector employment, but individuals at the upper end of the scale remained largely protected. The range of illicit opportunities may have diminished, but for those favourably situated (with, of course, Jawara's approval) loopholes could always be found. Likewise, in Sierra Leone, opportunities for the elite-level diversion of domestic resources were largely maintained. The ravages of economic mismanagement and Momoh's reluctance to implement IMF reforms (leading to a suspension in aid receipts) held disastrous implications for the majority of Sierra Leoneans and yet the favoured few continued to reap massive material reward.

Further similarities characterised each leaders' choice of beneficiaries. All three leaders appreciated the advantages of political accommodation as one method of securing the support of potential rivals. Thus, Jawara opted to accommodate a range of groups to reinforce his initially quite vulnerable position within the party (diluting his dependence on the party's founding members), to reduce the likelihood of a coup d'etat engineered by aggrieved urban politicians and to undermine the opposition. Likewise Stevens (and later Momoh⁶⁵¹) shared power, albeit on a less comprehensive basis, to secure a broader, more dependable, support base within the political elite and, prior to 1978, to undermine the efficacy of the SLPP.

In both states political accommodation facilitated the formation of disaffected factions. Inspired by ethnic and personal grievances these factions opted to establish formal opposition splinter parties, threatening to undermine the APC and PPP's "traditional" support. In neither state, however, did the leaders' choice of beneficiaries undergo any radical change. Accounting for the ability of both regimes to continue to pursue their chosen course it is necessary to focus upon the different resources available to factions-turned-parties in each state. In The Gambia the weaknesses of the opposition and the strengths of the regime are examined at length in Chapter three; suffice it here to note that potential defectors - divided among themselves and unwilling to foreclose the

⁶⁵¹ Although see p 135 above.

possibility of access to state resources - demonstrated an unsurprising reluctance to join an untested opposition. A pervasive fear of political obscurity, and all that implied, endowed Jawara with considerable personal freedom to select patronage beneficiaries. Stevens enjoyed similar leeway, albeit for different reasons, his coercive response to the UDP sending an unmistakable warning to prospective intra-party rebels. Accounting for the two leaders' divergent response to a nominally similar challenge it is important to highlight Stevens' perception of the resources available to the UDP, in particular the possibility of UDP-military links⁶⁵² and the UDP's greater electoral potential in comparison to the Gambian opposition. Both these factors are examined at length in subsequent chapters.

The final question - the "how" of distribution - reveals further similarities. In both states the distribution of rewards underscored politicians' dependence upon presidential goodwill. Frequent cabinet reshuffles, demotions, even exclusion were tactics employed by Stevens and Jawara to inculcate feelings of insecurity among their subordinates, to emphasise the fact that personal loyalty was the only route to political progress, and to prevent individuals consolidating their own following of grateful clients. The danger that the demoted, excluded or insecure might coalesce to form a potent opposition force was mitigated by three further factors. As noted above, each leader nurtured divisions between prominent supporters, each exploited the tactic of rehabilitation and each operated to maintain a *balance* between different factions.

Although it is important to highlight similarities in the nature of rewards, the selection of beneficiaries and the methods of distribution, one must not allow this focus on specifics to obscure the wider differences characterising each leader's approach to political survival. These differences stemmed, in part, from the contrasting worth, and nature of, domestic resources in each state with The Gambia's reliance on groundnut production standing in marked contrast to Sierra Leone's wealth of mineral resources, most importantly (from a survival perspective) diamonds. This difference held important ramifications for the two regimes' overall survival strategy.

For one thing, it played a role in the differential importance of material resources to political survival in each state. Within the elite sphere, the control and distribution of economic resources was absolutely central to the APC's prolonged survival. In The Gambia, resource distribution was also important although, in comparative terms, less so.

Accounting for this difference it is important to reiterate the contrasting difficulty of *controlling* resource distribution in each state. Thus, in The Gambia, control over groundnut receipts (and external aid) was far easier to achieve than control over diamond wealth in Sierra Leone. Groundnuts may have been subject to the depredations of some sections of civil society (via smuggling to Senegal) but this hardly compared to the ease with which diamonds could be

⁶⁵² Stevens' legacy of a politicised and divided army - which aggrieved factions or parties could potentially access - placed him in a more vulnerable position than Jawara. See Chapter two for further details.

smuggled or, crucially, the wealth they conferred upon the smugglers. Groundnut smuggling was a means by which farmers could achieve an often marginal increase in income; diamond smuggling constituted a route via which elites could independently accumulate massive wealth, wealth which might be used to oppose the APC.

Given the near insurmountable difficulties of *eradicating* illicit mining and smuggling, in order to survive Stevens had little choice but to attempt to place himself at the apex of existing structures of accumulation. Meeting this imperative was hardly likely to enhance his popularity among "ordinary" Sierra Leoneans, deprived of the benefits of their country's wealth. Nor, indeed, were Stevens' methods, in particular his decision to utilise the widely resented, "exploitative" Lebanese and Afro-Lebanese community.

Illicit diamond wealth and the Lebanese role (outlined above) were of central importance to Stevens' survival. They did, however, preclude any prospect that he would be able to utilise popular support as a buffer against elite conspiracy. This remained the case during Momoh's presidency. To survive, Momoh needed to assert personal authority over pre-existing, entrenched factional networks, a process which required him assert personal control over the distribution of resources. The ways in which Momoh set about this task (notably his ongoing struggles to undercut powerful Lebanese-politician partnerships) were outlined above. Here the important point to note is Momoh's limited freedom of action. Relying on public support to restrain conspirators was almost certain to fail in a situation where elites had long become accustomed to the rewards of political office. Likewise, undercutting existing and potentially threatening Lebanese-politician partnerships necessitated that the Lebanese be replaced and yet it was always unlikely that new foreign investors - prepared to take their chances in Sierra Leone - would be willing to operate entirely legitimately.

In contrast to his Sierra Leonean counterparts, Jawara enjoyed a far more realistic prospect of maintaining popular support as one method of securing his position within the elite sphere. Whereas Stevens and Momoh were compelled to exert control over *pre-existing* structures of illicit accumulation, in The Gambia no comparable structures existed. On taking office Jawara was not faced with the same choice of controlling and redistributing illicit opportunities or risking probable overthrow. Gambian elites certainly benefited, often illicitly, from PPP rule but did not enjoy the same potential opportunities to accumulate *independent* sources of wealth as their Sierra Leonean counterparts.

If the two states' quite different resource base played a central role in shaping the leaders' survival strategies, it is also important to place due emphasis on the significance of their divergent *choices*. For example, Jawara's personal reluctance to employ coercion implied the need to maintain the PPP's acceptability which in turn precluded massive corruption. In terms of volume, the diversion of resources could never have reached Sierra Leonean heights - there was obviously less to divert - but could certainly have been pursued much more wholeheartedly than was the case. In

Sierra Leone, by way of contrast, extensive elite accumulation was quite compatible with Stevens' and Momoh's willingness to employ coercion as one method of prolonging popular compliance.

Jawara's disinclination to engage in, or facilitate, massive corruption implied the need to cultivate non resource-related survival tactics and in this context affective ties progressively assumed central importance. As noted above, Jawara's political strength, widespread popularity and ability to hold the party together were crucial factors in his hold over the political elite. Stevens, too, promoted an image of a resolute, able leader although in contrast to The Gambia, where affective ties assumed more importance over time, Stevens' need to facilitate massive corruption progressively undermined their significance. In the context of entrenched expectations Stevens' abilities and political strength were valued to the extent that they safeguarded elites' continued accumulation but would have probably failed to compensate for any prolonged downturn. This set of circumstances appears to have facilitated a successful transfer of power. Whereas Jawara's retirement announcement raised fears about the difficulty of finding a comparable replacement (one, for example, who was equally popular in the wider society), in Sierra Leone attention was more clearly focused upon the new president's ability to control and redistribute resources. Though a comparatively weak, indecisive leader, Momoh's political survival nevertheless remained a viable prospect alongside the maintenance of accumulation opportunities.

Jawara and Momoh's different *resource base* and different *choices* also exerted an important, two-fold, impact on their approach to accessing external resources.⁶⁵³ First, Jawara's meagre domestic resources and concomitant dependence upon external financial assistance rendered him more inclined to comply with international conditionalities than Momoh. The risks of implementing the ERP - which entailed some loss of control over the distribution of resources - were certainly serious, but the possibility of a cessation of aid receipts and probable economic collapse even more so. In Sierra Leone the choice was less stark, a larger domestic resource base and reduced dependence on externally generated resources giving Momoh greater leeway. Although Momoh was willing to implement limited reforms in order to receive assistance (and ultimately may have been compelled to make rather more significant concessions) domestic resources served to buy the APC time.

Second, and linked to this, although the international community exerted greater leverage over The Gambia, in one sense externally generated conditionalities were less problematic in that state than in Sierra Leone. In part, Jawara's continued survival reflected the fact that he was less reliant on those aspects of the system that the IMF wished to "correct." Affective ties and popular support helped to safeguard his position. For the most part Momoh lacked these assets and, as a result, could not afford to implement reforms which would inevitably undermine his influence over

⁶⁵³ This point is examined in further detail in Chapter four.

the allocation of domestic resources.

Moving on from the threat posed by elites to that emanating from civil society, three factors - centring on each leader's insight into the nature of the resources at their and other's disposal - helped to shape the two regimes' divergent approach. The first was closely related to the higher order imperative of maintaining elite level subordination. Thus, Jawara's understanding that limited domestic wealth would restrict the cultivation of elite loyalty solely through resource distribution encouraged him to cultivate popular support as a restraint on elite aspirations. In Sierra Leone, a comparative abundance of domestic wealth rendered the prospects for sustaining elite subordination through resource distribution more promising. Stevens and Momoh desired popular acquiescence - partly to assure elites of their continued security - but were willing to forego mass support.

Second, Jawara's prospects for maintaining popular support were comparatively favourable. This partly reflected the two states' differential resource base (see above), but other factors including the divergent strengths of the formal opposition (analysed in Chapter three) were also important.

And third, the fact that Jawara needed to minimise groundnut smuggling into Senegal militated against neglect of the rural areas⁶⁵⁴ whereas in Sierra Leone the agricultural sector constituted a far less important source of resources. It is important not to overstate the significance of this factor - the PPP did not rely solely upon agricultural extraction but also had access to a, crucially important, external resource base - but from a comparative perspective the distinction is worth making.

Jawara's ability to retain high levels of rural support was, in part, a function of the distribution of resources. Although the volume of these resources rarely satisfied rural expectations, clientelist methods of distribution convinced many ordinary Gambians of the wisdom of continued adherence to the PPP. The pervasive need to gain access to residual resources was critical to the PPP's retention of popular support. This remained the case alongside the implementation of the ERP. Following a temporary surge in rural incomes (a function of increased producer prices which, non-selectively distributed, failed to reinforce patron-client networks) rural dwellers continued to look to their patrons for protection.

In Sierra Leone, by way of contrast, the massive diversion of resources to elites progressively undermined the possibility of maintaining extensive vertical networks. Over time, fewer and fewer resources reached the base of the clientelist "pyramid." IMF-inspired producer price increases, which could not be distributed selectively, failed to revitalise patron-client networks. Indeed, and unlike in The Gambia, they had little impact on rural incomes at all given

⁶⁵⁴ Likewise the decision to maintain a multi-party electoral system.

Sierra Leone's spiralling inflation and extreme shortage of agricultural inputs. Despite this, however, rural acquiescence continued to prevail. As in The Gambia this partly reflected rural dwellers' need to retain the possibility of accessing (even minuscule levels of) state resources, but their lack of political organisation or a collective voice was also crucial.

Although, thus far, the discussion has emphasised the real difference in the nature and extent of resource distribution in Sierra Leone and The Gambia, it is important to stress that neither the PPP nor the APC managed (or even intended) to fully satisfy rural expectations. In this context it is important to reiterate the importance of alternative, non resource-related, methods of securing mass support in The Gambia and mass acquiescence in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leoneans' lack of political space was crucial in maintaining acquiescence but additional factors had at least some role to play.

Important in both states were the personal resources of each leader and their ability to provide political goods. In The Gambia, however, these factors retained comparably greater significance, over a longer period, than in Sierra Leone. Whereas Jawara's personal popularity and largely unblemished reputation remained immensely valuable PPP assets throughout his rule, Stevens' qualities (his age, familiarity and flair for communication) greatly diminished in importance against a background of increasing economic hardship. Likewise, Momoh's initially "clean" reputation achieved little more than a short-lived boost to the APC's popularity.

The overwhelming predominance of elite interests and the concomitant neglect of "ordinary" Sierra Leoneans further undermined the APC's efforts to provide political goods. The political good of ethnic peace, for example, was inevitably devalued against a background of precipitate economic decline. In comparison, although Jawara's ability to provide political goods (notably ethnic peace and the protection of sovereignty⁶⁵⁵) may have been taken increasingly for granted, it certainly retained greater political force than in Sierra Leone.

The differential importance of material resources, leadership qualities and political goods also prevailed in the urban areas of each state. As in the rural areas, the two regimes' different requirements influenced their divergent approach. Thus, while all three leaders needed urban acquiescence to reassure elites of their future security, Jawara also needed urban support in order to retain the PPP's claim to legitimacy as the representative of *all* Gambians.

The need for urban acquiescence convinced both regimes of the wisdom of sustaining an urban bias and, as far as possible, protecting urban living standards. As resources declined, however, so the strategy of the PPP and APC diverged. In The Gambia, Jawara opted to implement the ERP despite its adverse effect on urban dwellers. In Sierra Leone, Momoh failed to replicate this course of action. The principle factor explaining this divergent approach - namely the two states'

⁶⁵⁵ See Chapter four.

differential dependence on externally generated resources - was outlined above. Here, however, it is important to stress the logic behind Jawara's faith in the compatibility of structural adjustment and his continued survival. In contrast to Sierra Leone, the lesser vigour of organised opposition groups and the PPP's success in securing urban support (in part a function of the provision of political goods) enabled the regime to survive the implementation of the ERP. Urban attitudes were not solely a function of continued access to resources.

In Sierra Leone Momoh was far more reluctant to implement structural adjustment given the likelihood that it would undermine his hold on power at both the elite and urban mass levels. Nevertheless it is important to stress that his attempts to convince the IMF of his serious economic intent, and his failure to do so, exerted a *more* deleterious impact upon urban interests than was wrought by the ERP in The Gambia. Urban living standards may have been compromised in both states, but the continued receipt of external assistance meant they remained higher for longer in The Gambia.

Nevertheless, the APC needed only acquiescence to survive and, for the most part, urban dwellers' continued focus on accessing residual state resources, combined with an increased use of force on the part of the APC, proved sufficient. One should not overstate the use of coercion (which was relatively restrained in comparison with many other African states) and yet the APC approach stood in stark contrast to that of the PPP, a contrast which became more pronounced over time as the APC struggled to find resources to divert beyond the elite sphere and the above-mentioned tactics (notably political diversion) progressively failed to compensate for this failure. In retrospect the APC regime's increasing reliance on coercion signalled the growing vigour of civil society, a vigour manifested in the convergence of groups to demand a return to multi-partyism. This threat to the APC's survival is examined in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY.

The question of civil-military relations, and in particular the development of civilian control, is one of the most significant aspects of regime survival. In the absence of effective mechanisms of control - and given that the army, in contrast to other potential opposition groups, has access to the coercive apparatus - military intervention has time and again resulted in the downfall of regimes. In The Gambia and Sierra Leone, too, both regimes *eventually* succumbed to successful military coups d'etat; the purpose of this chapter is to explain, with reference to existing theories, how the PPP and APC succeeded in avoiding this outcome over a prolonged period.

Military intervention and its consequences for post-independence African politics has perennially attracted a huge amount of scholarly attention.¹ An extensive body of work exists which attempts both to explain the causes of military coups and to evaluate the performance of military regimes. This interest appears to have originated in the fact that the likelihood of military intervention had been largely unforeseen.² Thus, when coups began to occur on a regular basis there was a quite natural desire on the part of political scientists to try and explain why. Interest has been sustained by the undoubted importance of coups in terms of their impact on policy, regime structure and the lives of individual citizens.³ Perhaps an equally important factor (though one rarely acknowledged) is the very nature of military intervention; the speed, secrecy, suddenness, even the potential violence⁴ associated with coups rendering them of compelling interest to the observer. A final "attractive" quality concerns the possibility that coups - certainly in comparison to cases of civilian control - can be logically explained. As Goldsworthy⁵ notes, "there are difficulties in the path of anyone who would seek to explain non-events ... a coup is a distinct, sharp-focused event, whereas civilian control is a set of relationships - a much less clearly-defined phenomenon."

These factors go some way to explaining the imbalance in the literature on civil-military relations, specifically the scarcity of material on civilian control.⁶ Reference to the predominant

¹ For a recent review see Robin Luckham, "The Military, Militarization and Democratization in Africa: A Survey of Literature and Issues," *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, No 2, September 1994, pp 13-75.

² This oversight is explained in Roger Charlton, "Predicting African Military Coups," *Futures*, Vol 15, No 4, August 1983, pp 283-84.

³ For further discussion of these themes see Eric A Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp 6-7.

⁴ Nordlinger, *ibid.*, p 5 comments upon the "commonly experienced attraction to force and violence. Although guns are only fired in a small proportion of cases there is always the possibility that they may be."

⁵ David Goldsworthy, "Civilian Control of the Military in Black Africa," *African Affairs*, Vol 80, No 318, 1981, p 49.

⁶ African examples of control have been particularly neglected. Claude Welch for instance, in his capacity as editor of a collection of essays on civilian control of the military published in 1976, deliberately excluded African case-studies on the grounds that "newly independent African countries have yet to establish means of civilian control that have stood the test of time." Preface in Claude E Welch Jr. (ed.), *Civilian Control of the Military: Theory and cases from Developing Countries* (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1976), p

analyses of coups which began to emerge towards the end of the 1960's provides further enlightenment. Thus, the widely accepted interpretation that coups were random phenomena, "likely to occur *anywhere* ..." ⁷ in the region resulted in coup-free states being regarded as either freak exceptions to the rule or coup states in the making, excusing observers from devoting any special attention to them. Although it would be foolhardy to predict, with any degree of certainty, the indefinite survival of civilian control in any one state, on a lesser, non-predictive, level some states *have* experienced extended periods of civilian control - an experience which merits attention and explanation beyond that offered by the "random" theorists.

The "coup literature" is also deficient in a second respect. In many cases of civilian control it would appear that, according to the general propositions of at least some existing studies, a coup "should" have occurred. Structural or environmental ⁸ factors sometimes put forward as explanations of intervention have been present to an equal extent in coup-free states. To give just one example, economic decline is frequently associated with the occurrence of coups ⁹ and yet some of the states which have avoided coups have suffered similar, if not more serious, economic deterioration than their coup-ridden counterparts. While it seems reasonable to suggest that economic decline may help to explain some coups in the sense that it provides an opportunity and justification for military intervention (and equally, prosperity removes this excuse) some additional explanation is needed to account for those cases in which the military fails to intervene despite being presented with the opportunity to do so. ¹⁰ Goldsworthy ¹¹ has argued that "such explanations have an empirical-cum-logical flaw in that they fail to differentiate the more coup-prone from the less." Certainly they do not seem to provide an answer to the problem of why coups occur in some states and not in others.

In his study of civilian control Goldsworthy ¹² notes the problem of "producing lists of 'factors' and 'variables' which, without too much stretching, might well seem applicable in varying

xi. The "test of time" seems now to have been well and truly passed by several African states, certainly in comparison to some of the case studies in Welch's collection.

⁷ Charlton, *op. cit.*, p 284 quoting from Aristide R Zolberg, "Military Intervention in the New States of Tropical Africa," in Henry Bienen (ed.), *The Military Intervenes* (New York, Russell Sage, 1968), p 72.

⁸ See Claude E Welch Jr. and Arthur K Smith, *Military Role and Rule: Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations* (California, Duxbury Press, 1974), pp 24-30.

⁹ See for example Rosemary HT O'Kane, "Coups d'Etat in Africa: A Political Economy Approach," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol 30, No 3, 1993, p 251. O'Kane focuses specifically upon "specialisation in, and dependency on primary goods for export" which, she argues, renders "even the most responsible governments open to accusations of incompetence and corruption, so inviting coups d'etat."

¹⁰ It is not suggested that structural factors are of no relevance to the study of civilian control (a prosperous economy may, for example, enable the government to boost military expenditure) but simply that by themselves they fail to explain non-intervention. Goldsworthy makes a similar point with reference to factors such as neo-colonialism, dependency, ethnic patterns etc. As he argues, such variables do not have "much general explanatory power" but they do "determine the broad ambit of the political game." David Goldsworthy, "Armies and Politics in Civilian Regimes" in Simon Baynham (ed.), *Military Power and Politics in Africa* (London, Croom Helm, 1986), p 116.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, 1981, pp 50-51.

¹² *Ibid.*, p 51.

degrees to polities where armies have in fact intervened, and thereby doing little to *differentiate* the cases." Although problematic, this forms the basis of his approach; for almost every technique of civilian control described by Goldsworthy (and others) it is possible to cite a state where such a technique has been used and which has experienced military intervention. Quite clearly then, existing theories of civilian control have some way to go. One way of making progress is to narrow the parameters and conduct a detailed comparative study of the kind attempted here.¹³ For obvious reasons such an approach cannot provide a "grand theory" of civilian control. The conclusions reached will not necessarily be transferable to other states or provide definitive lessons on the "best" way of achieving control. Nevertheless, in adding to the few empirical studies already undertaken, it may at least help provide the basis for wider comparisons thereby moderating the decidedly speculative nature of existing theories.

Theories of Civilian Control.

This section reviews the existing conceptual literature concerned with civilian control of the military with the aim of constructing a broad theoretical framework in which the specific cases of The Gambia and Sierra Leone can be examined. The intention is to concentrate upon the mechanics of civil-military relations. Non-military factors, notably leadership skill, are also of fundamental importance with most of the techniques of civilian control requiring careful handling if they are not to backfire. In one sense, then, this chapter simply provides an in-depth look at one aspect of leadership (discussed in Chapter one). Nevertheless the emphasis on leadership skill will be largely implicit to avoid repetition.

Most studies of civilian control are based on the premise that armed forces in developing countries are not, to borrow Huntington's phrase, "politically sterile and neutral."¹⁴ Observers stress that almost all armies are actors on the political scene, although the roles they enact clearly differ in both substance and degree. Using Finer's terminology,¹⁵ the problem for civilian regimes is to limit military intervention to either "influence" (for example in the preparation of budgets) or "pressure" (similar to influence but with the "threat of some sanction"). "Displacement" (the removal of one set of leaders for another) or "supplantment" (the establishment of a military regime) must be

¹³ As Valenzuela notes, "in case studies it is difficult to judge the relative strength of civilian institutions and procedures vis-à-vis the military institution for lack of an appropriate comparative referent. Case studies can bring to bear illustrative material which appears to either support or reject propositions derived from the more theoretical literature - they rarely can test the validity of such propositions and their general applicability." Furthermore "broad-scale cross-national comparisons ... often fall prey to poor data and questionable assumptions about the comparability of key indicators." Arturo Valenzuela, "A Note on the Military and Social Science theory," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 7, No 1, January 1985, pp 137-38.

¹⁴ Samuel P Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1957), p 84.

¹⁵ Samuel E Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976), pp 77-8.

avoided.¹⁶

The starting point for most theories of civilian control is Huntington's distinction between "subjective" and "objective" control.¹⁷ Objective control is distinguished by, and dependent upon, the existence of independent spheres of civilian and military authority demarcated by clearly defined "integral" boundaries. The military does not participate in politics and in return civilians accept military autonomy in their own affairs.¹⁸ The "officer corps is disciplined by its own professionalism" which is characterised by "skill, social responsibility and corporative loyalty."¹⁹

Critics of Huntington point to his near tautological concept of professionalism (particularly the "social responsibility" dimension) which, it is argued, precludes intervention by definition. Social responsibility to a client - that is towards the government as the agent of the state - implies, in Wiking's words, "that no officer corps which intervenes in politics *can* be fully professional."²⁰ Recognition of this problem has prompted attempts to redefine the concept of professionalism by excluding the element of social responsibility. Nordlinger,²¹ for example, focuses instead on the dimensions of "autonomy, exclusiveness and expertise." Although the first and last of these overlap with Huntington's view of professionalism, Nordlinger adds exclusiveness and advocates that "the military is not to have any serious functional rivals, namely, national militias."

Significantly, a number of scholars have pointed out that professionalism (particularly "expertise"), far from acting to restrain soldiers may actually prompt them to intervene. While Nordlinger suggests that officers "who are primarily devoted to the attainment of military expertise are concomitantly less interested in political issues" and "concerned that intervention will lower the standards of military excellence," he simultaneously recognises a possible drawback. Specifically, it is suggested that officers with a high level of expertise may be persuaded that they are capable of governing more effectively than civilians.²²

Concerning the other dimensions of autonomy and exclusiveness it is difficult to envisage circumstances in which either would serve to promote intervention. At issue, however, is not their

¹⁶ Henceforward the term "intervention" will be used to denote a coup attempt, not influence or pressure.

¹⁷ See Huntington, *op. cit.*, pp 80-85 and Samuel P Huntington, "Civilian Control of the Military: A Theoretical Statement," in Heinz Eulau, Samuel J Eldersveld and Morris Janowitz (eds.), *Political Behaviour: A Reader in Theory and Research* (Glencoe, Free Press, 1956), pp 380-84.

¹⁸ Clearly this is a form of control which conflicts with the observation that almost all armies are actors on the political scene. However it is worth a mention since some African regimes have introduced *elements* of objective control in an attempt to avoid intervention. I return to this point below.

¹⁹ Quoted in Staffan Wiking, *Military Coups in Sub-Saharan Africa: How to Justify Illegal Assumptions of Power* (Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1983), p 58.

²⁰ *Ibid.* Also see Bengt Abrahamsson, *Military Professionalization and Political Power* (London, Sage Publications, 1972), p 159.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, pp 47-50.

²² For further details see *ibid.*, pp 49-53. There are numerous variations on this theme. Wiking (*op. cit.*, p 59) for example suggests that professional interests may not be confined to purely military concerns but may encourage an officer corps to demand increased budgetary allocations on the basis of national security. If these are denied intervention may result.

desirability but their applicability to African states. Very few civilian governments have refrained from interfering in military affairs or creating a functional rival to the army. Whatever the reason for this (Goldsworthy suggests it may be due to low levels of legitimacy and the ineffectiveness of civil institutions) it appears to be the case that, where civilian control exists, it is more often of a subjective than objective type.²³

The essence of subjective control, as defined by Huntington,²⁴ is the "denial of an independent military sphere." It stems from a similarity of outlook between civilian and military groups and results in the military having no real need to challenge civilian supremacy. The military is, to use Finer's language, "disengaged." Finer²⁵ suggests that in certain cases, despite the fact that the military has the capacity to intervene, it lacks volition. The military is not neutral, it is "temporarily uninterested" in intervention.

Some of the ways in which a regime might attempt to establish and maintain this lack of interest (a subject upon which Finer is largely silent) are the focus of the next section. Some objective methods of control are also discussed in recognition of the fact that some regimes have attempted to introduce techniques apparently aimed at achieving both types of control. Techniques directed towards the officer corps may be different to those directed towards the rank-and-file.

Techniques of Civilian Control.²⁶

Military Roles.

A vitally important choice for civilian governments is whether to direct the military solely towards countering external threats or whether to combine this with responsibility for internal security. Much will depend upon the type of control - objective or subjective - to which a regime aspires. For obvious reasons the integral boundaries of objective control are put under considerable strain when an army is used internally, even more so if it used against a regime's political

²³ Similarly, Nordlinger's "Liberal Model" of control (*op. cit.*, p 13) has not been the predominant form of control in African states. This model bears many similarities to objective control but also follows Finer in stressing the importance of military acceptance of civilian supremacy. In his words, soldiers "imbued with ... the civilian ethic ... are attitudinally disposed to accept civilian authority and to retain a neutral, depoliticised stance even when in sharp disagreement with the government." In a minority of states civilian governments have attempted to exert control through the maximum politicisation of the military. Tactics may include the placement of reliable party activists in the military establishment, the involvement of military personnel in party activities or the setting of ideological criteria to be met by those aspiring to promotion. For further discussion see Elise Forbes Pachter, "Contra-Coup: Civilian Control of the Military in Guinea, Tanzania and Mozambique," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 20, No 4, 1982, pp 595-612.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, 1957, p 83.

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, p 284.

²⁶ One "technique" which I do not intend to cover in any detail is that of legal and constitutional constraints (see Welch *op. cit.*, 1976, p 6) since the determined plotter is seldom, if ever, deterred by the written word alone.

opponents. Domestic duties also threaten military professionalism. As one observer²⁷ notes, "trained, organized and equipped to fight similarly prepared enemies, the officers' professional standing, martial qualities and heroic image can only suffer when they act as policemen."

Of course, if external threats are minimal or non-existent and domestic problems (secessionist movements or mass riots) are beyond the capabilities of the police or gendarmes, a regime may be left with few choices concerning deployment.²⁸ It may in fact put itself at greater risk by responding inadequately to domestic crises than by using the army to quell them. Added to this, domestic duties may be useful as a means of keeping the military occupied. A restless army with time on its hands poses a clear danger to civilian control. In the absence of significant domestic crises an army might be set to work on constructive projects, such as the building of bridges or roads. The danger is that by involving the military "more deeply with domestic issues"²⁹ civic action may actually encourage intervention.

Creating a Functional Rival.

The advantages of creating a functional rival to the military are, at least in theory, quite straightforward. A military monopoly on the instruments of coercion is avoided and the organisational difficulties involved in creating a successful coup coalition are multiplied.³⁰ At the same time, however, many observers of civil-military relations contend that the establishment of a rival has in some cases acted as a catalyst to military intervention. Thus, the army's sense of exclusivity or in more extreme cases its very survival is placed under threat. Danopoulos emphasises the factor of timing, suggesting that "If a national guard or a militia predate the creation of the regular army, or the two emerged concomitantly, the level of fear by military officers regarding their corporate interests is likely to be less intense."³¹ While this may be true it is an "option" open to very few African states, almost all of which inherited an army at independence.

Military Satisfaction.

Material satisfaction is perhaps the most obvious means of keeping the armed forces content in a subordinate position and enhancing subjective civilian control. It may include

²⁷ Nordlinger, *op. cit.*, p 90.

²⁸ A further ambiguity is worthy of mention. Thus, although Welch and Smith's hypothesis (*op. cit.*, p 11) that "the likelihood of military intervention diminishes with the emergence of a clear-cut focus for national defence" appears quite straightforward, in another publication Welch (*op. cit.*, 1976, p 24) suggests that the greater the likelihood of invasion, the larger may be the expenditures and political significance of the military and vice-versa.

²⁹ Welch and Smith, *op. cit.*, pp 11-12.

³⁰ The same may hold true when the military itself is organisationally divided, perhaps through separate command structures, and dispersed throughout the country. This point is discussed in Constantine P Danopoulos (ed.), *Civilian Rule in the Developing World: Democracy on the March?* (Oxford, Westview Press, 1992), p 17.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p 18.

favourable budgetary allocations, generous salaries and substantial fringe benefits.³² The provision of sophisticated equipment, even expansion of the army itself, may also serve to maximise military satisfaction.³³ A regime's task is to maintain established levels of expenditure, even during periods of economic decline. A failure to do so may prompt military intervention.

Of course, even a consistently high expenditure will in no way guarantee civilian control. There is always the possibility that soldiers, having had a taste of the good life, will want more and will be prepared to resort to intervention to get it.³⁴ A second problem with material reward concerns the likelihood that, in a situation of scarce resources, benefits will be directed towards the officer corps. This hardly guarantees the subordination of the lower ranks - increasing salaries or allowances for the higher ranks may even heighten perceptions of neglect.³⁵ A less risky, much cheaper, though almost certainly less effective control device centres upon symbolic satisfaction.³⁶ Symbolic recognition of the military's invaluable role in society may involve regular presidential references to the army's efficiency or loyalty.

A final possible method for "rewarding" the military is the incorporation of military representatives into government, perhaps even as cabinet ministers. The rationale is that as long as the military is involved in decision-making they will be deterred from staging a coup. As Goldsworthy³⁷ notes, the co-optation of military personnel is a far cry from Huntington's integral boundaries.

Military Composition.

Designing a military in the hope of enhancing its loyalty frequently involves the manipulation of ascriptive factors. The manner of such manipulation is dependent on, and must be preceded by, a decision on the issue of military "integration" with versus "separation" from existing social forces. Integration can be achieved in either of two ways. Recruitment and promotion policies

³² In this context it could be argued that economic deterioration is detrimental to civilian control. However, given the evidence which suggests that economic deterioration *per se* does not result in coups (see for example, William R Thompson, "Regime Vulnerability and the Military Coup," *Comparative Politics*, Vol 7, 1975, pp 459-487) it can be argued that civilian control will not suffer so long as leaders ensure that economic problems do not adversely affect the material well-being of the armed forces.

³³ Providing better equipment and increasing the size of the army does not necessarily increase the likelihood of successful intervention. Small armies possessing outdated equipment have proved perfectly capable of overthrowing governments. In fact, Feit has argued that the smaller the army the greater the likelihood of intervention. Sigelman disputes this, however, and most would agree that size *per se* is not a significant factor determining coup-proneness. Edward Feit, "A Comment on Sigelman's Military Size and Political Intervention," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol 3, Spring 1975, pp 101-2 and Lee Sigelman, "Research Note: Military Size and Political Intervention," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol 3, Spring 1975, pp 95-100.

³⁴ This helps explain Welch's observation (*op. cit.*, 1976, p 9) that "developing countries with high levels of military expenditure have customarily manifested less civilian control than countries with lower allocations."

³⁵ Goldsworthy, *op. cit.*, 1981, p 61.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p 59.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p 61.

may be biased to favour those individuals with ethnic and/or familial backgrounds similar to those in power. Alternatively, an effort may be made to ensure all ethnic groups are more or less equally represented.

The aim of the former is to achieve ethnic congruence or convergence between the officer corps and the regime. Horowitz³⁸ has argued that "almost by definition" it is "a very effective strategy of prevention." At the same time, however, it is extremely risky. In most circumstances officers will have to be purged to make way for others and, threatened with displacement, may be tempted to intervene. The aim of the latter - ethnic balancing - is to render coup plots more difficult to organise and more readily detectable, with officers providing a counterweight to one another. Of course this strategy will not necessarily prove any less risky than the previous one, especially in the implementation stage.³⁹

The isolation of the military from existing social forces - by recruiting soldiers from a territory other than that which they are to defend or from peripheral regional or ethnic groups within the state - has been dismissed by most observers as a viable option only during colonial days. In Kenya for example the British neglected to recruit the Kikuyu into the army rank-and-file, concentrating instead on those ethnic groups (the Kamba for example) it considered least politically threatening.⁴⁰

A final aspect of military composition centres upon the choice, confronting regimes, between maintaining continuity of leadership and frequent purges and reshuffles of senior military personnel to ensure they do not become entrenched. Both strategies have been used with beneficial results in different circumstances.⁴¹

Invoking External Assistance.

Assistance may be received in the form of military equipment or grants to build new barracks, thus enhancing an army's sense of professional pride and enabling a regime to channel more funds towards pay and benefits. The effects of training assistance are rather more ambivalent. While some observers have argued that training abroad may encourage the military to internalise a "self-concept ... that is subordinate to the government" it may equally convince soldiers that they would be more effective than civilians in government.⁴² What can be argued with certainty is that

³⁸ Donald L Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985), p 539. For a discussion of how this technique can facilitate patronage between the army and a regime see Cynthia H Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in a Divided Society* (Harmondsworth, Penguin books, 1980), pp 174-76.

³⁹ See Horowitz, *op. cit.*, pp 535, 541.

⁴⁰ Enloe, *op. cit.*, p 229.

⁴¹ See for example, Pachter, *op. cit.*, p 606 for an analysis of frequent reshuffles in the Tanzanian military. An outstanding, albeit non-African example of leadership continuity is provided by the Jordanian military. See John Damis, "Sources of Political Stability in Modernising Monarchical Regimes: Jordan and Morocco," in Danopoulos, *op. cit.*, p 30.

⁴² Welch and Smith, *op. cit.*, p 18.

soldiers who have received training at Sandhurst, for example, have participated in coups. Thus, even if training abroad is beneficial it is clearly not sufficient to prevent military intervention.

Finally, external assistance - either international or regional - may be invoked to counter attempted coups or even to deter such attempts by installing a foreign military presence on the ground.⁴³ This is a virtually risk-free strategy since foreign troops are unlikely to conspire with coup plotters to overthrow a regime.

A Note on Attempted Coups d'Etat.

In The Gambia and Sierra Leone both the APC and PPP regimes were compelled to overcome coup attempts. Subsequent sections will attempt to identify why these attempts occurred (as a means of assessing the efficacy of control strategies) and why they failed, devoting particular attention to whether failure was a function of the coup-makers' incompetence or a reflection of civilian control strategies (or, perhaps, a mix of both). If incompetence was a key explanatory variable the importance of luck, highlighted in Chapter one, will re-emerge as a significant factor, although it remains important to distinguish between straightforward incompetence and problems induced by control strategies; as noted above, organisational and spatial divisions between different military units may, for example, render the planning process problematic.

If defeat was a function of control strategies the attempted coups should serve as a useful tool for isolating the variable importance and efficacy of these strategies. Thus, explaining prolonged periods of military acquiescence (in other words non-events) is no easy task but an analysis of why coups occurred and why they were defeated should help shed some light upon the extended periods of control. Examining the successful coups may serve a similar purpose, illuminating the changing nature of, and requirements for, civilian control.

Overview of Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone and The Gambia.

This section provides the background to the conduct of civil-military relations in The Gambia and Sierra Leone. For the latter this includes a brief review of the army in the colonial period, civil-military relations under the Margai brothers and the period of military rule. The intention is to uncover those factors, if any, which influenced the conduct of civil-military relations under the APC. In The Gambia the colonial period had a decided impact, if only in the negative sense that a decision to disband the army resulted in a belated start to civil-military relations. The history of The Gambia Regiment, as well as its successor - the para-military Field Force - is discussed. This section also provides a broad chronological outline of important events pertaining to

⁴³ For further discussion see O'Kane, *op. cit.*, pp 259-60.

the conduct of civil-military relations under the APC and the PPP.

The Gambia Regiment, West African Frontier Force (WAFF)⁴⁴ - originally the Gambia Company - was established as a separate unit in 1902.⁴⁵ Composed of one hundred and twenty men at its inception,⁴⁶ the *raison d'être* of the force was to uphold colonial rule.⁴⁷ In practice, however, the Regiment was preoccupied with ceremonial duties and training exercises, interspersed with only very occasional operations in support of the civil power, notably in 1904 - when a detachment marched into Foni to punish a town for shielding a murderer - and in 1929 when soldiers were called to Bathurst to reinforce the police on the occasion of a labour strike.⁴⁸ The infrequent use of the Regiment can be attributed to the infrequency of major threats to internal security coupled with the fact that problems that did arise were usually well within the capabilities of the police force.⁴⁹

The low-profile of the Regiment further reflected its humble image (see below) and the slow pace of Africanisation. Even after the Lagos conference of 1953, which set forth recommendations "to provide for an increasing flow of African officers into the West African forces,"⁵⁰ The Gambia had no places reserved at Sandhurst. Moreover, although the conference's plans for the distribution of officers allocated to The Gambia two regular commissioned officers and two short service commissioned officers, by 1955 no progress had been made.⁵¹

The low-profile and near-redundancy of the Gambia Regiment undoubtedly contributed to

⁴⁴ The West African Frontier Force was created from pre-existing irregular police forces in the British West African colonies and included troops from The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Gold Coast.

⁴⁵ From 1901 to 1902 the Gambia Company had formed part of the Sierra Leone Battalion. Although this arrangement did not last long - Ordinance No 20 of 1902 separated the force entirely - there were other points of contact between the two states. In 1938, for example, arrangements were made for an interchange of companies. After World War II the two Gambia battalions were reduced to one company and once again became part of the Sierra Leone Battalion. Historical Records of The Gambia Regiment, n.d., File K/132, Reference 2, Piece No 2863, The Gambia Archives, pp 1-2.

⁴⁶ This number was subject to only small fluctuations during the following decades. The only exception occurred during the two World Wars. During World War I, for example, the force was expanded to two companies. Immediately after the war No 2 company was disbanded and one hundred and seventy one rank-and-file transferred to the reserve. *Ibid.*, p 6.

⁴⁷ The only exception was the Gambian participation in the two World Wars. For example, troops participated in the Cameroon's campaign in 1915 and in 1917 the company went to German East Africa. For further details see *West Africa*, 30 November 1918, p 745 and JJ Crooks, *Historical Records of the Royal African Corps* (Dublin, Browne and Nolan, 1925), pp 41-46.

⁴⁸ For details of both incidents see Historical Records of The Gambia Regiment, *op. cit.*, p 2.

⁴⁹ By the 1940's plans were underway to remedy deficiencies within the police force (Memorandum on the Expansion and Reorganisation of the Police Force for Consideration in Connection with the Preparation of the Estimates for 1951, 29 July 1948, File No 52434C, Vol 1, The Gambia Archives) and by 1954 the force, at a total strength of approximately two hundred, outnumbered the Regiment. Moreover, as the Superintendent of Police noted in 1948 "The Gambia Police Force is officially described as a semi-military unit. At first sight the military aspect of training and organisation appears to have precedence over the usual civil police duties which predominate in other forces." Reorganisation and Expansion of the Gambia Police Force, 14 August 1948, File No 52434C, Vol 1, The Gambia Archives.

⁵⁰ Colonial Office, *Report of the West African Forces Conference*, Lagos, 20th-24th April 1953 (London, HMSO, 1954), p 6.

⁵¹ Commissioning of Africans as Officers, Paper Prepared by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, West Africa Command (WAC), 11 January 1955, Appendix A (unfiled in The Gambia Archives).

the decision - unique in West Africa - to disband it. The decision was not, however, a foregone conclusion. Indeed, at the beginning of 1957 discussions concerning the hand-over of the Regiment to local government control (due to take place on the 1 January 1958) were being held. Economic constraints, however, prompted a change of heart. Thus, it was in September 1956 that formal proposals for the transfer of the Regiment to local control had been presented. These proposals sought a long term financial undertaking from the UK and the response of the Secretary of State - received in March 1957 - agreed that due to the special circumstances of the Gambia's financial situation the country could not be asked to increase its contribution until "revenues show the necessary improvement."⁵² Economic problems experienced in the UK, however, prompted a reassessment and later that year the Treasury let it be known that, irrespective of economic improvement in the Gambia, she would be expected to assume full responsibility for the army within three years. The prospect of maintaining the Regiment in the context of limited resources proved decisive. At a recurrent cost of £65,000, with capital expenditure estimated at £14,000 for 1958, it was argued that a cheaper and therefore more sensible security option would be an armed police wing, the recurrent cost of which was estimated at less than £30,000.⁵³

The proposal to disband the army was not seriously challenged in The Gambia. Few among the country's elite aspired to a military career and there were no important individuals within the army to cause a fuss. The press - reflecting popular feeling - hardly deigned to mention the issue at all and the emerging political elite did not object. In the absence of any immediate and obvious external threat politicians regarded the army as little more than a ceremonial body. There was no obvious role for the Regiment which could not be undertaken equally effectively by a paramilitary force.⁵⁴

The armed police wing - known as the Field Force - was created in 1958. Consisting of approximately one hundred men⁵⁵ and a minimal amount of equipment⁵⁶ its role was essentially the same as its predecessor's, to assist the police in dealing with problems of internal security. In the

⁵² The Gambia Regiment and Internal Security, Memorandum No 151/57 for Executive Council, n.d., File No S.2434C, Vol III, The Gambia Archives.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ If an army was regarded as dispensable it was nevertheless believed (at least by the then Governor Percy Wyn-Harris) that a paramilitary force was needed. Thus, at one stage the Colonial Office suggested that instead of creating a para-military force the police force should simply be expanded by adding to it a "Police Mobile Reserve Unit." Wyn-Harris objected to this on the grounds that a separate force with a separate identity was necessary "so that, when the Force is called upon it can be clearly known that a certain stage of disorder has been reached and that Government is prepared to take drastic measures to restore order." He also believed in the possibility of Senegalese infiltration from the Protectorate. Letter from Percy Wyn-Harris to the Colonial Office, 13 March 1958 (unfiled in The Gambia Archives).

⁵⁵ By 1964 the force had more than doubled in size to two hundred and twenty-six. Gibril Mohammed Savage, "The Interactions between the Political and Economic Development in Independent Gambia" (Pro-Gradu Thesis, University of Helsinki, 1975), p 57.

⁵⁶ Equipment consisted of "three riot vehicles, one 3 ton lorry, one 30 cwt. pick-up, two landrovers and two motor bicycles." Memorandum No 190/57 for Executive Council, n.d., File No S.2434C, The Gambia Archives.

event, however, it was hardly overworked. One incident in which there could conceivably have been a part for the Field Force to play - a disturbance during the Gambia Workers' Union general strike in 1960 - the acting governor KGS Smith issued a proclamation empowering police to prohibit processions and regulate meetings. These powers enabled police to disperse crowds with the use of tear-gas.⁵⁷ There were other similarities with the former Regiment. Regarding personnel for example, twenty-one NCO's and sixty-one men serving with the Regiment elected to join the Field Force, constituting approximately 85% of its initial strength. These men wore the same uniforms (slightly modified for working purposes)⁵⁸ and used the same facilities as they had before 1958.

Nor did the advent of independence usher in any significant departure. The government devoted minimal attention to the Field Force; it was never mentioned in party manifestos and rarely merited more than the briefest of mentions in speeches. In part, this reflected the force's inherited lowly status. Local sources suggest that most of those recruited had received little or no education⁵⁹ and the ambitious continued to seek out more promising avenues of advancement, often in the civil service.

Government indifference to the Field Force also reflected Jawara's approach to regime survival. He neither wished to use the force as an instrument of coercion nor, apparently, feared the possibility of a coup d'etat. The increasing incidence of coups in the sub-region does not appear to have induced apprehension in The Gambia. For many years it was widely believed, by politicians and observers alike, that a coup was extremely unlikely. A report in *West Africa* in 1970 stated that it was "hard to imagine" the Field Force becoming involved in a coup.⁶⁰ More than once Gambian politicians boasted of how the problem of coups had been "solved" with the disbanding of the army.⁶¹ The widespread surprise that greeted the 1981 coup attempt demonstrated the extent to which the idea that a coup was unlikely had taken hold.

Non-interference in the affairs of the Field Force was manifested in several ways. Perhaps the starkest illustration was the continuity in role. After independence the Field Force continued to fulfil the nominal function of guaranteeing internal security should the police fail to contain a given situation. In practice, however, the peaceable nature of The Gambia prior to 1981 rendered the force largely redundant. This was particularly so given the emphasis placed upon developing the police force proper (as opposed to its armed wing) for the purpose of internal security. This emphasis was illustrated both by the size of the respective forces - by 1970 the total strength of the police was five

⁵⁷ *West Africa*, 28 January 1961, p 103.

⁵⁸ Memorandum No 190/57 for Executive Council, n.d., File No S.2434C, The Gambia Archives.

⁵⁹ Entry requirements were often relaxed given the shortage of new recruits.

⁶⁰ *West Africa*, 21 February 1970, p 184.

⁶¹ MC Jallow, the Gambian delegate to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Kuala Lumpur in 1971, made this claim during a speech on military intervention. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 23 October 1971, No 92, p 1.

hundred and sixty, of which number the Field Force accounted for some one hundred and fifty⁶² - as well as the direction of expenditure. In 1971/72, for example, the total spent on the police was D859,003 compared to D332,687 for the Field Force. The respective figures for 1975/76 were D1,602,271 and D657,328 and for 1980/81 D3,172,073 and D1,133,288.⁶³

For these reasons the Field Force played a marginal role in internal security. During the first five years of independence it was called upon only once to intervene in the maintenance of law and order. This was in 1969 when the Field Force intervened with tear-gas to disperse demonstrators protesting against the Senegalese stance on smuggling between the two countries (see Chapter four). For much of the time the Field Force was preoccupied in fulfilling ceremonial duties (participating in independence anniversary celebrations for example) and undertaking training exercises. The latter were little more than time-fillers - in 1977 Jawara visited the British army training camp near Keneba to watch a demonstration of "guerrilla warfare" by the British unit and members of the Field Force.⁶⁴ Rather more productively the British were involved, from 1977, in the creation of an Engineering Unit to undertake civic action programmes including bridge and road construction⁶⁵ but, this minor innovation aside, the authorities made no attempt to provide a constructive role for the Field Force.

Nor was there any concerted attempt to manipulate the ethnic composition of the Field Force, at least not in the sense of packing senior levels with individuals of the same ethnic background as the regime in power or attempting to achieve balanced representation of all groups. According to local sources, senior Police and Field Force posts continued to be held mainly by Banjulians - both Aku and urban Wolof - after independence. The position of Inspector-General of Police, for example, was held for nine years (1967-1976) by an Aku, Harry Lloyd Evans. He was the first Gambian to fill the post and was succeeded in 1976 by his deputy, Alhaji Abdoulie M'Boob - an urban Wolof, who remained at the post for the next five years. As part of his overall strategy of elite co-operation (discussed in Chapter one) Jawara made no attempt to replace senior officers from minority groups with Mandinkas and was rewarded with their loyalty.⁶⁶

⁶² Richard Booth, "The Armed Forces of African States, 1970," *Adelphi Papers*, No 67, May 1970, p 10. After 1970, estimates of the size of the police and Field Force are widely divergent but reliable local sources suggest that the Field Force numbered approximately four hundred and fifty men by 1980, with the police exceeding this number by at least several hundred.

⁶³ Abstract of Actual Expenditure, 1968/69 - 1971/72, *Estimates of Recurrent Revenue and Expenditure with the Development Expenditure 1973/74* (Banjul, Government Printer); Abstract of Actual Expenditure, 1972/73 - 1975/76, *Estimates of Recurrent Revenue and Expenditure 1977/78* (Banjul, Government Printer); Abstract of Actual Expenditure, 1977/78 - 1982/83, *Estimates of Recurrent Revenue and Expenditure 1982/83 with Estimates of Development Expenditure 1982/83* (Banjul, Government Printer).

⁶⁴ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 15 February 1977, p 3.

⁶⁵ The Engineering Unit later became known as the Pioneer Unit.

⁶⁶ According to one early party activist (interview with the author, 23 July 1993) some members of the PPP had protested over the appointment of Harry Lloyd Evans, requesting that a Mandinka be appointed instead. Jawara allegedly replied that Lloyd Evans was "the right man for the job since he has no strong base in the country," presumably a reference to his Aku ethnic identity.

Since Jawara perceived no need to radically restructure the senior levels of the security forces he was content with a steady, even slow, pace of Africanisation. A year after independence, the head of the police force and three other senior officers were non-Gambian. In the Field Force four senior officers were non-Gambians.⁶⁷ Over a decade later the Field Force, although it came under the overall control of the Commissioner of police, still had a British Commander. It seems plausible to suggest that the retention of a British commander (acting as a "buffer") was a deliberate tactic on the part of Jawara to avoid politics from infecting the Field Force as it had the armed forces of other African states. In 1972 *The Progressive* newspaper stated that, although there were suitably qualified Gambians to fill the post of Field Force commander, "with the coups elsewhere the authorities are hesitant."⁶⁸

Given that the loyalty of the Field Force was not generally perceived to be in doubt, there appeared to be no need to "buy-off" the force. Living conditions were quite poor and wages meagre, at least for the rank-and-file. For his part, Jawara ruled out the possibility of substantial salary increases for the lower grades of the police and Field Force arguing that, as part of the unified civil service structure, they deserved "no special consideration."⁶⁹

On July 30 1981 the prevailing, generally peaceful, state of affairs was interrupted by the first coup attempt in the nation's history. It is important not to exaggerate the extent of the Field Force's involvement in the coup; participation was restricted to the lower ranks and even then some remained loyal⁷⁰ while many were not actively involved in the fighting on either side. Nevertheless, Field Force participation was a vital element of the coup plot. Without it, civilian plotters lacked the means (namely access to the Field Force armoury) to attempt a violent overthrow of the Jawara regime.

Looking at what prompted Field Force participation in the coup attempt it is important to rule out ideology. As Hughes has noted, "it is doubtful that mutinous policemen understood, let alone shared, the ideological views of civilian malcontents."⁷¹ In fact political issues - radical or otherwise - do not appear to have been among the participants' primary motivations. Jawara's refusal to interfere in the affairs of the Field Force had, to a large extent, avoided the politicisation of the

⁶⁷ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 12 March 1966, p 2.

⁶⁸ *The Progressive*, 26 June 1972, p 2.

⁶⁹ Prime Minister's Question time reported in *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 27 June 1967, p 3. One local source (interview with the author, 8 August 1993) suggested that the rank-and-file's poor living conditions rendered them "demoralised ... and readily dictated to" by the PPP, but ultimately the lack of attention to their well-being caused disaffection rather than unquestioning obedience. Those at the senior levels received much better treatment (though still nothing approaching the continued flow of privileges enjoyed by their counterparts in some other African states) which helped to ensure their loyalty.

⁷⁰ The reasons for this, and the role of loyal officers and men in defeating the rebels, is examined in further detail below.

⁷¹ Arnold Hughes, "The Attempted Gambian Coup d'Etat of 30 July 1981" in Hughes (ed.), *The Gambia: Studies in Society and Politics* (Birmingham University African Studies Series 3, 1991), p 97. Also see *ibid.*, p 99 for some comments on the nature of the Field Force participation.

force and in this sense he had instituted an incipient (if extremely partial) form of objective control.

One possible exception to this general picture concerns the ethnic strategy pursued at the senior levels of the police and Field Force. Hughes suggests that one consideration which may have encouraged participation in the coup attempt was the perceived "urban-Wolof/Aku ... domination of the security forces."⁷² The importance of this factor is, however, difficult to assess. Thus, while Jawara's policy of co-opting Banjulians to the senior levels of the security forces was not specifically designed to secure the loyalty of the rank-and-file (who were drawn mainly from the provinces) the resentment it engendered is difficult to measure. Certainly, ethnic and/or regional factors had not become issues of over-riding importance within the Field Force and yet it is possible that the disparity in background between the men and their officers compounded the existing resentment of the former towards the latter. The basis for this resentment was highlighted in an article in *The Nation* in 1979 which commented that, "what seems to worry many members of the police is what they consider to be the indifference to their progress by their seniors ... It would appear that the gist of dissatisfaction within the police force is that there lacks a medium through which individual grievances of the police or Field Force can be channelled."⁷³

This generalised resentment, combined with the seeming indifference of the government to improving the salaries and living conditions of the men, generated disaffection within the Field Force. Jawara's increasing complacency about the possibility of para-military intervention was reflected in his neglect of subjective techniques of control (maximising satisfaction, for example). At the same time, the incipient - almost accidental - form of objective control was not sufficiently developed to prevent a coup. The Field Force lacked the "expertise" and clearly-defined role of a fully professional force. Undoubtedly, those who joined the coup felt they had little to lose.⁷⁴ Perhaps some "action" came as a welcome and exciting distraction to the monotony of barracks life.

After 1981 Jawara was compelled to devote an unprecedented amount of attention to matters of security. Security arrangements entered a new and much more complex phase which was to last until 1989. A decision was made to disband the Field Force⁷⁵ and, together with the retention of the police force, to replace it with an army and a gendarmerie. For obvious reasons these changes could not be instituted immediately - recruits had to be selected and trained - but meanwhile the government did establish a formal system of civil-military relations. In 1982 a Ministry of Defence

⁷² *Ibid.*, p 98.

⁷³ *The Nation*, 29 September 1979, p 2.

⁷⁴ At the same time, it is unclear what the Field Force rebels expected to gain had the coup been successful. Although Kukoi had perhaps made promises to individuals, his only public pledge was to raise the Field Force to "the ranks of the People's Liberation Army." Announcement Read by Kukoi Samba Sanyang During the Attempted Coup in The Gambia on July 30, transcribed by Dana Ott.

⁷⁵ Some loyal Field Force applied, and were accepted, into the gendarmerie. There were other minor elements of continuity with the pre-1981 system. For example the Farafenni-based Pioneer Unit (later transformed into the Engineering Corps) remained in place and formed the core of the army to which new recruits were added.

was established, and Jawara himself assumed the Defence portfolio. In addition The Gambia Armed Forces Act, 1985⁷⁶ made provision for an Armed Forces Council to consist of the Commander-in-Chief (i.e. the President); the Chief of Defence Staff; the Minister of Defence; the Commanders of the army and gendarmerie and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Defence. In 1984 Lieutenant-Colonel N'Dow N'Jie (later promoted to Colonel) was moved from his post as Commander of the gendarmerie (he handed over to a Senegalese colleague) to become Commander of the army.

It was also in 1984 (November) that the first recruits of the army, trained by Britain, passed out.⁷⁷ However it was not until February 1989 that the first battalion was ready to receive its colours from the President.⁷⁸ As a result, for much of the 1980's The Gambia was heavily dependent for her internal security upon the Senegalese. Following the attempted coup the two states signed a confederal agreement and henceforth assistance was provided within the framework of the Senegambian Confederation (discussed at length in Chapter four) which allowed for the raising of a confederal army and gendarmerie.

Following the dissolution of the Confederation in September 1989 the confederal forces were disbanded and the Senegalese troops (which had numbered approximately three hundred) withdrawn. As the dissolution resulted primarily from Jawara's less than enthusiastic approach towards some aspects of the Confederation one can only conclude that he believed his country ready to assume sole responsibility for internal security. Thus, by 1989 the gendarmerie was firmly established and the army had, for the first time, reached battalion strength (approximately eight hundred men). Added to this, the fledgling army had shown no particular inclination for a wider political role.⁷⁹ The only security threat during these years emanated not from the army but from civilians. Thus in January 1988 approximately twenty Gambian and Senegalese citizens were arrested. Although most were quickly released, four Gambians - Musa Sanneh, Amadou Badjie, Adrian Sambou and Ousman Sanneh - were charged with conspiring with Kukoi Samba Sanyang and others, between January 1984 and January 1988, to overthrow the government. During the trials it was alleged that emergency travel documents had been illegally issued to both Gambians and Senegalese with a view to them receiving military training abroad. The plotters were said to have had links with Casamance separatists in Senegal and claims were made by the Attorney-General that both Libya and Ghana were involved in the plot. Musa Sanneh and Badjie were subsequently

⁷⁶ Gambia Armed Forces Bill, 1985, Supplement B to *The Gambia Gazette*, No 13, 20 March 1985 (Banjul, Government Printer). Recruitment into the army actually began before the bill was passed in the House of Representatives. The Vice-President, in introducing the bill, said its finalisation had been delayed by other urgent legislation. *Proceedings of the 3rd meeting in the 1984/85 Legislative session, 27 March 1985* (Banjul, Government Printer).

⁷⁷ At this stage the army consisted of one hundred men.

⁷⁸ *The Gambia Weekly*, 9 June 1989, p 3.

⁷⁹ Although it could be argued that this was *because* of the Senegalese presence (see below).

sentenced to thirty years in prison, Ousman Sanneh to nine years, while Sambou was acquitted and discharged.⁸⁰

Less than two years after the dissolution of the Confederation the government's security concerns extended, for the first time, to the army itself. Thus on June 13 1991, sixty of the soldiers who had been serving in the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the peace-keeping force in Liberia, staged a protest in Banjul. The soldiers had requested an audience with the Force Commander in order to discuss their concerns (see below). The Commander's refusal, on the grounds of security, was followed by an order to the Quick Reaction Force to surround the soldiers. After a brief scuffle the soldiers broke the cordon, took control of a bus and travelled to Banjul where they assembled outside State House. After being met by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Saihou N'Jie and the Secretary General in the President's Office, talks were held in State House with senior military and government officials.⁸¹

One result of the protest was the resignation of the Force Commander, Colonel N'Dow N'Jie. Although he was replaced *ad interim* by another Gambian, Major Maba Jobe, it was not long before the government once again turned to an external power to boost its security.⁸² Thus in 1992 Colonel Abubakar Dada (later promoted to the rank of Brigadier General) was appointed Commander. In addition sixty-nine officers and men of the Nigerian Armed Forces Training Group were assigned to assist in the command, training and development of the Gambian army. A second attempted protest in February 1993, when thirty-five ECOMOG soldiers once again attempted to reach Banjul, was thwarted by a combined team of police and gendarmes.⁸³

Final changes included the integration of the gendarmerie into the police force on July 1 1992. The new police force was to carry out normal police duties as well as the paramilitary security duties of the former gendarmerie. The former gendarmerie officers, who continued to be armed, were to work as a Tactical Support Group (TSG) undertaking border patrols and giving specialist support to the rest of the force in the event of serious public disorder. These arrangements remained in place until a successful military coup toppled the PPP regime on 22 July 1994.

The Sierra Leone Regiment (WAFF) was formed in 1901 upon the disbanding of its predecessor, the Frontier Police Force. As in The Gambia, the Regiment - which consisted of a single battalion⁸⁴ - maintained a low profile. It made only sporadic forays into the realm of internal

⁸⁰ See *Foroyaa*, 30 January 1988, p 2; 30 March 1988, pp 1-2; 15 April 1988, p 3. The court held that allegations that the Senegalese opposition leader Abdoulaye Wade was involved in the plot, were unfounded.

⁸¹ Based on information provided by local sources and an account in *Foroyaa*, 15 June 1991, p 2.

⁸² Rumours of coup plots, which emerged on an annual basis after 1989, possibly influenced the decision to bring in external assistance. However the rumours, particularly those of 1990 and 1991, seemingly held little or no substance.

⁸³ Nine privates were dismissed as a result of this protest. *The Point*, 1 April 1993, p 3.

⁸⁴ During the two World Wars the Regiment was temporarily expanded. For details of the army's participation

security: in 1919 to suppress riots against Syrians; in 1926 to provide a show of force against striking railway workers; and in 1931 to suppress the armed followers of a Mahdi (Muslim saviour) called Haidara Kontorfili.⁸⁵ For much of the time troops were occupied with rather more mundane training duties and ceremonial exercises. They were even called upon to combat a local elephant infestation.⁸⁶ After World War II this low-profile was maintained. Only in 1955, when troops were involved in suppressing the riots and strikes of that year, did the Regiment assume a really activist role. Both the rural unrest of 1956 and the problem of illicit diamond mining in Kono were dealt with mainly by a strengthened police force.⁸⁷

As in The Gambia, two further factors contributed to the low-profile of the Regiment. The first concerned the slow pace of Africanisation; even after the Lagos conference of 1953 entry into Sandhurst or for short-service commissions into Mons Officer Training School or Eaton Hall was minimal.⁸⁸ The second concerned the fact that few individuals of any note aspired to a military career (although there were important exceptions). Prejudice against soldiers as "a bunch of illiterates"⁸⁹ was rife and the ambitious sought out more rewarding careers in civilian life. In consequence, neither the press nor public figures took an interest in military affairs. The SLPP, meanwhile, was preoccupied with what were regarded as more pressing matters.

In April 1961 the Regiment (subsequently known as the Royal Sierra Leone Military Forces) became an independent organisation. However, as Cox⁹⁰ notes, this date signalled few immediate changes. Military expenditure, equipment, the size of the army as well as its role remained essentially unchanged. This "hands-off" approach reflected the continuing elite disinterest - even distaste - for all things military. As with the Gambian Field Force, the Sierra Leonean army was not regarded as either a potentially useful or destructive force.⁹¹ Accordingly there were no significant attempts to alter the state of civil-military relations. Africanisation proceeded slowly⁹² and there was no serious attempt to manipulate the ethnic composition of the officer corps.⁹³ By

in the wars see EDA Turay and A Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army: A Century of History* (London, Macmillan, 1987), Chs 4 and 6.

⁸⁵ He had been urging villagers in the Kambia district not to pay house tax. For details of this and the other operations see *ibid.*, pp 52-60.

⁸⁶ *West Africa*, 12 August 1961, p 889.

⁸⁷ Cox suggests that it was the police rather than the army which was strengthened because "the costs involved could be charged entirely against the Sierra Leone vote without subventions by the British taxpayer." Thomas S Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of African Soldiers in Politics* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1976), pp 30-31.

⁸⁸ In 1956 Major David Lansana was granted a regular commission. For four years he was the sole Sierra Leonean officer. By 1961 only four Sierra Leoneans had been granted a regular commission. *West Africa*, 21 February 1964, p 315.

⁸⁹ *West Africa*, 12 August 1961, p 889.

⁹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p 44.

⁹¹ As one observer commented, "nobody can believe that Sierra Leone is in the slightest danger of political trouble from its army. *West Africa*, 21 March 1964, p 315.

⁹² By 1964 Africans constituted 68% of the officer corps. Cox, *op. cit.*, p 45.

⁹³ See *ibid.*, p 54 for a detailed breakdown of the ethnic composition of the officer corps.

1964 Milton Margai had instituted (though seemingly not consciously) an incipient form of objective control, at least insofar as the "integral boundaries" between the civilian and military spheres had remained largely intact. His restraint - or rather lack of interest - concerning military affairs was reciprocated by the army.

During his years in office Albert Margai relied increasingly upon subjective control techniques. Facilitating this change was the increased pace of Africanisation. As Cox notes, at the time of Milton Margai's death the officer corps, which comprised fifty-four men, included sixteen British officers. By mid-1967, however, only three British in an officer corps totalling eighty-eight remained.⁹⁴ These changes enabled Albert Margai to forge new links between the civil and military spheres. These links, typified by the relationship between Margai and the Force Commander David Lansana, and based, at least initially, primarily on extended familial ties⁹⁵ represented the basis of a new reciprocal relationship between civil and military elites. Officers received material benefits and a heightened social status in return for an implicit undertaking to guarantee the political survival of the SLPP regime.

In 1966 events in West Africa (particularly the coups in Nigeria and Ghana) resulted in a heightened awareness of the dangers of military intervention and prompted a new approach to civil-military relations based, for the first time, primarily upon ethnic considerations. According to Cox by mid-1967 Mendes constituted approximately 52% of an enlarged officer corps.⁹⁶ Of the forty-five officers who were granted commissions under Albert Margai, 64% were Mendes.

As Cox⁹⁷ points out, the system of control instituted by Albert Margai was "theoretically programmed to accommodate a coup d'etat in support of the civilian group." Equally, however, the system of control was not sufficiently effective to rule out the possibility of intervention *against* the SLPP regime. Margai made no attempt to supplement ascriptive techniques with material reward.⁹⁸ Even the strategy of ethnic manipulation would perhaps have been more effective (though more risky in the short-term) had it been approached with greater thoroughness. As it was it certainly could not ensure the loyalty of the remaining non-Mende officers.⁹⁹

Further problems, which had begun to emerge by 1966, centred upon Lansana's inability to command the respect of his fellow officers. Personality differences, "petty jealousies" and "frustrated expectations" rather than ethnic affiliation created conflict within the officer corps.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Moreover, the British who did remain occupied relatively minor posts such as army bandmaster. *Ibid.*, p 61.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 65-66. Until 1966, ethnic and regional ties were of secondary importance.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 75.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p 77.

⁹⁸ According to *West Africa* (30 April 1966, p 1340) Sierra Leone had been spending less on its defence forces than any other West African states, excluding The Gambia.

⁹⁹ For example John Bangura (Temne-Loko) and Andrew T Juxon-Smith (Creole-Sherbro). Moreover as Cox (*op. cit.*, pp 77-78) notes, Mende dominance did not extend to middle-ranking officers: of the thirteen who held combatant commissions only four were Mende.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 82, 88.

Notable among the "anti-Lansanites" were Lieutenant-Colonel John Bangura and Major Andrew T Juxon-Smith. Following their removal¹⁰¹ others moved quickly to fill their place, as illustrated by the second coup of 1967 (see below).

The first "successful" coup of 1967 was carried out by Lansana in support of the civilian group. Lansana's pretext for intervention centred upon the Governor-General's decision that Siaka Stevens should be sworn in as Prime Minister following the 1967 elections. Lansana condemned the decision as unconstitutional on the dubious grounds that the Governor-General had failed to wait for the results of the elections for the chiefs' representatives. On this basis Lansana arrested Stevens and the Governor-General and proclaimed martial law.

After a period of just two days Lansana's immediate subordinates - Majors Blake, Jumu and Kai-Samba - engineered his downfall. Although they shared with him a common ethnic and regional background, "Lansana's poorly disguised attempt to rescue the Margai regime afforded an ideal opportunity for the only remaining group of anti-Lansanites in the army to rid themselves of a man they considered a total incompetent." On March 23 Lansana was arrested and a military regime established.

The National Reformation Council (NRC), composed of eight men, was formally established on March 25 1967 under the leadership of the Chairman, Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew T Juxon-Smith.¹⁰² Two points concerning the period of NRC rule are worth recalling.¹⁰³ The first concerns the dismal performance of the regime. Aside from some success in the economic sphere the military leaders not only failed to eradicate "tribalism" and "corruption" (their self-proclaimed primary objectives) but were also unsuccessful in cultivating anything more than grudging acquiescence to their rule. The NRC's lack of entrance legitimacy,¹⁰⁴ its austerity measures and the temperament of Juxon-Smith¹⁰⁵ negated the regime's numerous attempts at legitimisation. Particularly vocal in opposition were the teaching and legal professions. In later years, during the period of APC rule, the loyalty of certain army factions were to contribute to the defeat of a series of coup attempts. It is conceivable that unpleasant military memories of NRC rule gave some

¹⁰¹ In February 1967 eight officers (including Bangura) were arrested on suspicion of a coup plot. See Cox, *op. cit.*, pp 99-104 for further details. Prior to the alleged plot Lieutenant-Colonel Ambrose Genda, who had also fallen out with Lansana, had been posted abroad to a job in the UN. Juxon-Smith was also abroad for military training.

¹⁰² For two days Lieutenant-Colonel Ambrose Genda was named as chairman. The abrupt change of leader is discussed in *West Africa*, 20 September 1976, pp 1365-67.

¹⁰³ The period of NRC rule is covered in detail in MJ Balogun, "Military Rule and Demilitarization: The Experience of Sierra Leone, 1967-68," *Quarterly Journal of Administration*, Vol 9, No 1, 1974 and Anton Bebler, "The African Military, Nationalism and Economic Development: The Case of Sierra Leone, 1967-68," *Journal of African Studies*, Vol 1, No 1, 1974, pp 70-86.

¹⁰⁴ In some African states military intervention has been welcomed as a means of ousting an unpopular leader in the absence of elections. Sierra Leoneans, however, had had the opportunity to express their wishes in the 1967 election.

¹⁰⁵ These factors - as well as the widely-held belief that Juxon-Smith was determined to hang on to power for as long as possible - are discussed in *West Africa*, 27 April 1968, p 477.

sections of the army cause to hesitate before repeating the performance.

The second point worth recalling - one with a direct bearing on civil-military relations under the APC - concerns the demise of the NRC. The counter-coup¹⁰⁶ was the brainchild of Morlai Kamara, a radio operator in the army. On a brief mission to Daru, just before Easter, Kamara joined with army privates to plan a course of action. On April 17 and 18 1968 the plan was executed. As agreed, once the men at Daru had arrested their officers they informed Wilberforce barracks by radio and a group of privates (including Kamara), having enlisted the help of Sergeant-Major Patrick Conteh, a Warrant Officer in charge of education, and Sergeant-Major Amadu Rogers, an administrator, arrested all army officers and police officers above the rank of Assistant Superintendent.¹⁰⁷ The formation of an Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement (ACRM) was announced and Colonels Bangura and Ambrose Genda invited to return, the former as head of the National Interim Council (the ACRM's successor) to oversee the return to civilian rule and the reinstatement of Siaka Stevens, and the latter as acting Force Commander.¹⁰⁸

The soldier's resentment of the NRC stemmed from frustrated expectations. Pay rises and improved living conditions had not been forthcoming. In a broadcast after the coup Rogers complained that "the-rank-and file of the police and army have been ignored ... They [the NRC] have failed to fulfil their boastful promises to both civilians and members of the armed forces."¹⁰⁹ Neglect of the rank-and-file was compounded by the glaring disparity between the lifestyle of ordinary soldiers and members of the NRC. Despite promises to the contrary, rapid promotions (and concomitant salary increases) within the NRC occurred soon after the assumption of office. NRC members allocated themselves generous allowances, flashy cars and frequent trips abroad. According to one source many soldiers believed that officers were funding their extravagant lifestyle by diverting money and assets confiscated by the Commissions of Enquiry.¹¹⁰

When Stevens acceded to the Presidency in April 1968 he faced two immediate problems. Demanding prompt attention were the privates whose support could at best be regarded as conditional upon an immediate amelioration of their situation. Linked to this was the urgent need to restore the army to some semblance of normality, a pre-requisite of which was the release of some of the detained army (and police) officers. Clearly Stevens could not rely indefinitely on an officer

¹⁰⁶ The following account is based on reports in *West Africa*, 27 April 1968, p 479 and 4 May 1968, pp 507, 530.

¹⁰⁷ The privates associated even junior officers with the NRC; according to Balogun *op. cit.*, pp 33-34 there existed a widely-held belief that junior officers had collaborated with the NRC in the hope of attaining the council's junior position which held a different occupant every three months. The only officers who were not arrested were those out of the country and Lieutenant-Colonel Jumu who escaped to Liberia.

¹⁰⁸ After the NRC coup Bangura had been released and given a job with the UN. Later in 1967 he had joined Stevens in Guinea. Genda, meanwhile, had been in Liberia as Sierra Leone's ambassador. *West Africa*, 10 May 1969, p 539.

¹⁰⁹ *West Africa*, 27 April 1968, p 498. According to Turay and Abraham, (*op. cit.*, p 133) the NRC even refused to agree to "a wage demand as low as 20 cents a day."

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

corps composed solely of two men and a police force with just one senior officer,¹¹¹ and yet there was no guarantee that the privates would accept the release of the men they had so recently detained. In the longer term Stevens would be compelled to confront the legacy of Albert Margai and devise some positive means of civilian control. The politicisation of the officer corps and the fragmentation of the integral boundaries of objective control precluded a return to the days of Milton Margai and his *laissez-faire* approach. If anything, after the period of NRC rule officers were more conscious of their potential political power.

One of Stevens' first actions was to persuade the privates (through a combination of negotiation and incentives) to release the majority of imprisoned officers.¹¹² The selective reinstatement of nineteen officers helped restore a semblance of normality. Meanwhile Lansana, William Leigh (the former commissioner of police) and the other members of the NRC (including Juxon-Smith, Blake and Kai-Samba)¹¹³ were charged with a variety of treasonable acts.¹¹⁴ By bringing these individuals to book Stevens intended to set an example to others. As Solomon Pratt, the Development Minister, put it, "Sierra Leone wants to be the first country in Africa to let the military know it is treasonable to take over power because you have a gun."¹¹⁵ Ultimately however all the accused, though originally sentenced to death, were freed following the quashing of their convictions by the Appeal Court. The court stated that, for most of the men, the charges had been improperly drawn up. It did rule that they could be retried but most, including Leigh, Blake and Kai-Samba were freed at the end of 1971. Lansana and Juxon-Smith remained in detention until mid-1973¹¹⁶ when they too were released. The need to make an example of these particular individuals had been overtaken by events; the dangerous nature of coup-plotting in Sierra Leone had already been starkly illustrated by the fate of four men implicated in a separate coup attempt in 1971.

The 1971 coup attempt¹¹⁷ was instigated by the Force Commander, Brigadier Bangura. On the morning of March 23, at approximately 1.30am, Major Falawa Jawara the battalion's adjutant led an attack on Stevens' residence. Stevens' guards returned fire and the soldiers, having run out of

¹¹¹ Malcolm Parker, a former police officer, was recalled from retirement to serve as Commissioner of Police. *West Africa*, 27 April 1968, p 479.

¹¹² By November 1968 thirty-four officers had been released, followed by a further thirty-two in March 1969. The majority of police officers had been released by late September 1968.

¹¹³ But excluding Jumu (by this time in Ghana where the authorities refused all attempts at extradition) and Alpha Kamara, the former Assistant Commissioner of Police, who was cleared and released.

¹¹⁴ See *West Africa*, 3 August 1968, p 906 and 5 October 1968, p 1182.

¹¹⁵ *West Africa*, 24 August 1968, p 996.

¹¹⁶ The Appeal Court had ruled that Lansana could not be retried. He had won his appeal on the grounds that his charges did not match those for which he had been extradited from Liberia. Juxon-Smith had won his appeal against the death sentence in a separate trial in September 1971. *West Africa*, 15 October 1971, p 1218.

¹¹⁷ Unless otherwise stated the following is based on reports from *West Africa*. See in particular, 23 April 1971, p 443, 25 June 1971, p 734. For an interesting account from Stevens' perspective see, Siaka Stevens, *What Life Has Taught Me: The Autobiography of His Excellency Dr Siaka Stevens, President of Sierra Leone* (London, Kensal Press, 1984), Ch 16.

ammunition, retreated.¹¹⁸ Later that morning Bangura is reported to have addressed troops at Wilberforce barracks and urged them to continue. Accordingly, at around 12.30pm on the same day, soldiers converged on Stevens' office in Freetown. They engaged in an unsuccessful gun battle with Stevens' guards (by now backed up with reinforcements) lasting several hours. Meanwhile Bangura's men had seized control of the radio and, at 3pm, Bangura announced his take-over. It proved to be the shortest "take-over" on record, beating even Lansana's two days. Thus, by 8pm Lieutenant-Colonel Sam King was heard on the radio announcing that "a large percentage" of the army wished to dissociate themselves from the coup. Bangura was subsequently arrested and, on June 29, executed alongside three of his co-conspirators.¹¹⁹

Following the coup attempt, in September 1971, Colonel Joseph Saidu Momoh replaced Bangura as Force Commander. His former post of Deputy Force Commander, which he had held since 1969, was filled by Lieutenant-Colonel Sam King and Lieutenant-Colonel Sheku Tarawalli was appointed First Battalion Commander. These men retained their positions for the remainder of Stevens' rule.¹²⁰ Alongside these changes Stevens introduced new components to his strategy of control. Of these, the most visible were the request for Guinean troops to be stationed in Sierra Leone (they departed in 1973) and the creation of a para-military force, the Internal Security Unit (ISU), subsequently renamed the Special Security Division (SSD).

On July 30 1974 a further coup attempt occurred.¹²¹ Fortunately for Stevens it surpassed even the 1971 attempt in terms of incompetent execution. It consisted of a single explosion at the residence of the acting Vice-President and Prime Minister, CA Kamara-Taylor. He emerged unscathed. The men responsible for assassinating the other targets - the Acting President SI Koroma (Stevens was on a tour of Hungary and Romania) and Brigadier Momoh - reportedly "abandoned their plans on hearing the blast from Kamara-Taylor's residence."¹²²

Early government statements, the initial arrests and subsequent treason trials all suggest that the coup attempt was viewed as a civilian-inspired affair. The fifteen who were charged did not include any soldiers¹²³ although the former Commander, David Lansana, and an ex-Lieutenant, Habib Lansana Kamara,¹²⁴ were among those accused as were a sub-inspector of the ISU and a

¹¹⁸ This version of events was provided by Jawara at his subsequent court martial. Jawara also confessed to being drunk at the time of the attack - a quite credible admission given the incompetence with which it was carried out.

¹¹⁹ *West Africa*, 9 July 1971, p 790. For details of the prison sentences imposed upon the other conspirators see *ibid.*, and *West Africa*, 5 May 1972, p 959.

¹²⁰ In April 1973 Momoh was appointed to Brigadier and King and Tarawalli were promoted to full Colonels. In 1983 Momoh was promoted to Major-General and King and Tarawalli to Brigadier. In that year Tarawalli was also promoted to the newly created position of Chief of Staff. Turay and Abraham, *op. cit.*, p 157.

¹²¹ See *West Africa*, 12 August 1974, p 1006 and 23 September 1974, p 1177.

¹²² Turay and Abraham, *op. cit.*, p 159.

¹²³ The civilians included Ibrahim Taqi and Mohamed Forna.

¹²⁴ Kamara had been detained in October 1970, retired from the army while in prison and released in July 1973.

police sergeant. However, during the treason trials (which resulted in all fifteen being sentenced to death) evidence was heard which implicated the army. Evidence provided by prosecution witnesses suggested that the plotters had "received assurances that elements of the army were prepared to provide tactical and material support for the coup"¹²⁵ and that the rebels had intended to establish both a civilian and a military council to prepare for a return to civilian rule. Towards the end of 1974 nine soldiers (including three warrant officers, four sergeants, a lance corporal and a private) were accused of complicity in the attempted coup, apparently at the behest of ex-soldiers Lansana and Kamara. At the subsequent court martial one of the warrant officers was found not guilty and there was one recommendation for mercy. Of the remaining seven, five had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. Warrant Officer Yaya Seidy Kalogh, the alleged ringleader of the soldiers, and Sergeant Thomas Davies were executed alongside six of the civilians (including Lansana and Kamara).

Following the coup attempt, on October 28 1974, Stevens announced that Brigadier Momoh and the Commissioner of Police, Prince Claudius Kaetu-Smith had been appointed Members of Parliament and were soon to become Ministers of State. As a testament to the efficacy of this measure (though other factors were also important) there were no further substantive attempts at military intervention under Stevens. Rumours of plots did occasionally surface but were probably little more than a cover for measures Stevens wished to undertake. In 1982, for example, rumours of a plot¹²⁶ resulted in the dismissal of five officers (two majors and three captains) but the fact that four were retired on full benefits suggests a lack of evidence against them.

Stevens' decision to hand over the presidency to Major-General Momoh in 1985 was influenced by the need to maintain civilian control. He feared a coup (particularly the prospect of being investigated by a military regime) and regarded the accession of Momoh, who was popular with both the officer corps and the rank-and-file, as a means of avoiding military intervention. In one sense co-opting Momoh to the presidency was simply an extension of the hitherto effective strategy of co-opting him to the cabinet. The destabilising potential of a leadership succession necessitated this extension.

One threat to the success of Stevens' strategy stemmed from the soldiers' heightened expectations. Many had believed that Momoh was forming a military regime¹²⁷ and were disappointed when he clarified matters and relinquished command of the army to Brigadier MS Tarawalli (previously Chief of Staff).¹²⁸ Although this mini-crisis quickly passed, Momoh was left

¹²⁵ Cox, *op. cit.*, p 228.

¹²⁶ See *West Africa*, 1 March 1982, p 621.

¹²⁷ This misunderstanding is discussed by Momoh in an interview with *West Africa*, 12 August 1985, p 1634.

¹²⁸ *West Africa*, 9 December 1985, p 2612. The obvious candidate for Force Commander - Deputy Commander Brigadier Sam King - had earlier retired to become Momoh's Presidential aide. *West Africa*, 16 December 1985, p 2668.

with the problem of living up to the army's expectations now that "one of their own" was in power.

Although the accession of Momoh helped protect against instability during the leadership succession, it was not long before a coup plot was discovered.¹²⁹ In the early hours of 24 March 1987, SSD and army personnel raided a house in Freetown where it was suspected a coup was being planned. Following a gun battle lasting several hours (during which a member of the SSD was killed) the men gained entrance to the house and, according to a government statement, "retrieved a large quantity of arms and ammunition." Fourteen people, including army personnel, were arrested at the scene although this number soon swelled to over sixty. According to the subsequent trials¹³⁰ the plan had been to kill Momoh later the same day, target the two Vice-Presidents and cabinet ministers, announce the dissolution of parliament and the suspension of the constitution and proclaim the formation of a National Reformation Council.

Early government announcements designating the plot "a revolt by senior police officers" appeared to confirm Gabriel Mohammed Tennyson Kaikai, the owner of the raided house, as the ring-leader of the plot. Under Stevens, Kaikai had risen rapidly through the ranks of the police force to become Superintendent of police attached to State House. According to *West Africa*, he had "acted as one of Stevens' chief aides and bodyguards, wielding enormous influence and power."¹³¹ After 1985, however, Kaikai's ascendancy was abruptly curtailed. Despite Stevens' personal recommendation, Momoh moved him from State House to head the newly-formed anti-smuggling squad, a post Kaikai was reluctant to accept. While there he continually clashed with senior police officers who regarded him as arrogant and resented his over-zealous insistence on "rigorous searches of prominent businessmen and government officials." In 1986 Kaikai was demoted to assistant superintendent of police but his hold, even on this lesser post, remained under threat. Reports that he was soon to be charged with electoral intimidation in Bo West¹³² would have given his superiors the chance to rid the force of him altogether.

In retrospect, then, the coup attempt was less a revolt by senior police officers (who were among those arrested but later freed) than, from Kaikai's perspective, a pre-emptive strike against them. Kaikai's take-over speech - relayed during the subsequent treason trials - protested that senior army and police officers had been protecting Momoh and mentioned the arrests of all senior officers and the executions of some in both forces.

Kaikai apart, many prominent civilians were arrested and questioned soon after the plot was uncovered. Most suffered only a brief period of detention, although two major names continued to

¹²⁹ Details of the coup and its aftermath can be found in *West Africa*, 30 March 1987, p 663; 6 April 1987, p 684; 13 April 1987, p 701; 27 April 1987, p 843; 25 May 1987, p 1002 and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1986-1987, B 146-8 and 1987-1988, B 147-8.

¹³⁰ See *West Africa*, 8 June 1987, p 1090; 15 June 1987, p 1141, 13 July 1987, p 1367; 7 September 1987, p 1735; 14 September 1987, p 1776 and 21 September 1987, p 1841.

¹³¹ *West Africa*, 30 March 1987, p 663.

¹³² Incriminating evidence had been heard during the election petition hearing of his wife, Amy Kaikai.

be implicated. The first was Jamil Said Mohammed at whose residence police discovered "huge amounts of weapons." During his trial Kaikai said the arms at his house also belonged to Mohammed and a warrant was issued for his arrest. By that time, however, Mohammed had moved to London. Less fortunate was Vice-President Francis Minah.¹³³ Detained on April 4, Minah was charged with inciting Kaikai to overthrow the government. Alongside these two, fourteen others were accused of treason.¹³⁴ After a five month trial all sixteen were sentenced to death although at appeal in September 1988 four were freed.¹³⁵ In September 1989 the Supreme Court confirmed the remaining convictions although six of the twelve had their sentences reduced to life imprisonment.

Of the twelve whose sentences were confirmed most were soldiers.¹³⁶ However one should take care not to overstate the scope of military disaffection. For one thing, complicity was limited to low ranking NCO's and privates. The highest ranking officer implicated in the plot was Sergeant-Major Raymond Dowrie and he was one of those freed on appeal.¹³⁷ Moreover, of the six eventually executed (apart from Minah and Kaikai himself) all except one had direct family ties with Kaikai. Lance Corporal Deen Kaikai and Daniel Kaikai were his brothers and Joseph Harding (of the naval wing) a nephew. In his police statement Harding said he had joined the coup because he had been brought up by Kaikai who had been responsible for his enlistment in the army. That Momoh discovered the plot before it could be implemented, together with the prompt response of loyal soldiers, also suggest the limits to military disaffection.

The final major feature of Sierra Leone's military history under the APC regime was the prosecution of the rebel war in the early 1990's. The war was an indirect result of Momoh's decision of August 1990 to provide support for the ECOMOG peace-keeping force in Liberia. Sierra Leonean support included the provision of troops (an estimated seven hundred by 1991)¹³⁸ and the use of Freetown's airport as the base for ECOMOG planes raiding positions held by Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

Infuriated, Taylor pledged to seek revenge on Sierra Leone. He first threatened to destroy the airport¹³⁹ but in the event retaliation took the less dramatic form of incursions across the

¹³³ For further details on Minah, Jamil Mohammed and their alleged role in the attempted coup see Chapter one.

¹³⁴ Two were also charged with misprision of treason and eventually sentenced to life imprisonment. They were Benjamin Taylor (Assistant Superintendent of Police) and Sheku Deen Kamara (a soldier).

¹³⁵ These were Augustine Francis Ensah, a former private; Patrick Kaikai; Kazim Allie, Jamil Mohammed's former accountant and Sergeant-Major Raymond Dowrie.

¹³⁶ The exceptions were Haruna Vandi Jimmy, former MP for Bo South, Minah and Kaikai.

¹³⁷ According to evidence which emerged at the trials one of the soldiers had threatened to withdraw unless Kaikai consulted military officers to lead the coup. Kaikai apparently promised to consult his personal friends, a Lieutenant-Colonel, a Colonel and a Major, but later told the plotters that they were abroad so he had consulted Dowrie instead. Given that Dowrie was subsequently released it is possible that Kaikai's claim to have contacted him was untrue and designed to allay fears that he was to head the post-coup regime.

¹³⁸ The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1991-92* (London, Brassey's, 1991), p 42.

¹³⁹ *West Africa*, 3-9 December 1990, p 2955.

border.¹⁴⁰ On March 23 1991 thirteen people, including an army major and Lieutenant, were killed as a result of the first incursion into the Kailahun district. In response Momoh sent troops to the border where, on March 27, they clashed with Liberian rebels on another raid at Koindu. Meanwhile Taylor had been arming and organising Sierra Leonean dissidents¹⁴¹ in Liberia under the leadership of Foday Sankoh.¹⁴² Sankoh's organisation, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), announced its intention of bringing down the APC, invaded Sierra Leone's Eastern Province and rapidly advanced. Facing minimal resistance from the army (there were reports of soldiers fleeing and even defecting) RUF forces had, by the end of April 1991, captured several key towns including Daru (an important military base), Koindu, Kailahun and Pendembu. The rebels then advanced to Pujehun and Kenema, Even Bo (the provincial capital) appeared under threat.¹⁴³

Sankoh's progress was halted by the arrival of Guinean and Nigerian troops. Together with the Sierra Leonean army they successfully recaptured some of the rebel-held areas¹⁴⁴ and, at one stage, reportedly succeeded in pushing the RUF back into Liberia. Henceforth, the war was characterised by frequent rebel raids in the southern and eastern provinces countered by government troops, with neither side gaining the upper hand. By March 1992 it was estimated that the rebels were active in more than 20% of Sierra Leone's land mass.¹⁴⁵ The following month APC rule came to an abrupt end with the intervention of Captain Valentine Strasser.

Having provided a brief overview of civil-military relations in The Gambia and Sierra Leone the intention is to examine the specific control techniques pursued in each state.

Military Roles in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

In The Gambia the fact that Jawara made a conscious decision to *create* an army (as opposed to most other leaders who simply inherited the former colonial army) renders the question of military roles rather unusual. Whereas most African leaders who tackled the problem of providing a suitable role did so, in part, as a response to the increasing incidence of coups in the region, in The Gambia the question of role was not regarded as a technique by which military intervention could be avoided but actually preceded the creation of the army itself. The dangers of

¹⁴⁰ Details can be found in *West Africa*, 1-7 April 1991, p 492 and 15-21 April 1991, p 572. Although Taylor denied his organisation's involvement he was contradicted by his foreign minister who told reporters that "some of our boys ... went over into the Sierra Leone section and perhaps overindulged." *Ibid.*, p 560.

¹⁴¹ According to one observer these included those "with a background as student dissidents exiled for their opposition in 1977 ... or as fugitives from the rough justice of the Sierra Leonean diamond fields." Paul Richards, "Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Crisis of Youth?" in Oliver Furley (ed.), *Conflict in Africa* (London, Tauris Academic Studies, 1995), p 141. For details of the further assistance provided by the NPFL and Burkinabe mercenaries see Chapter four.

¹⁴² Sankoh was an ex-army corporal who had served five years in detention following a conviction for complicity in the 1971 coup attempt. *West Africa*, 27 May-2 June 1991, p 863.

¹⁴³ For details of the rebel advance see *West Africa*, 13-19 May 1991, p 754 and 20-26 May 1991, p 817.

¹⁴⁴ *West Africa*, 27 May - 2 June 1991, p 863.

¹⁴⁵ *West Africa*, 23-29 March 1992, p 494.

possessing an army - repeatedly illustrated by coups elsewhere - suggests that Jawara envisaged it fulfilling a crucial role.

The reasoning behind this view is not immediately apparent. Given the events of July 1994 Jawara's suggestion that the role of the army would be to prevent a further coup attempt was, to say the least, ironic. In theory, the role of coup deterrent had both internal and external components. Regarding the latter, Jawara's claims of external involvement in the abortive coup were accompanied by statements placing responsibility for safeguarding The Gambia from future external aggression squarely on the shoulders of the army. He argued that "it would be naive to assume that the enemies of the country would not wish to make a second attempt to destabilise the country's constitutional government."¹⁴⁶

The idea of an external role for the Gambian army was never entirely convincing. For one thing, the claims upon which it was based - external involvement in the coup attempt - were never substantiated. For another, The Gambia, a small strategically unimportant state, never seemed an obvious target for future external aggression. Even had it been, the army was far too small to have a realistic chance of repelling foreign forces.¹⁴⁷ In later years Jawara partially acknowledged this fact but still maintained that, "we have to make sure we have sufficient strength to defend our nation, at least for a period." He added, "In this day and age, national defence is a very complex matter, and it is sufficient for any nation to hold its own until the complexity of international relations is sorted out."¹⁴⁸ In the face of determined aggression however it is doubtful whether the army could have performed even this lesser role.

Neither was the army more fully employed for the purposes of internal security. Although part of its mandate was to intervene in the event of widespread disorder, in the event its services were never required. Indeed it seems doubtful, given the creation of the gendarmerie, whether Jawara ever intended to use it for this purpose. Widespread disorder was simply not a predominant feature of Gambian politics¹⁴⁹ and any problems that did arise were dealt with quite adequately by the police, or if they failed to cope, by the gendarmerie. The gendarmerie specialised in dealing with civil disorder¹⁵⁰ as did its successor, the Tactical Support Group. The fact that the army was not used for the purposes of internal security enabled Jawara to avoid the risks associated with such operations.

¹⁴⁶ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 3 February 1982, p 1.

¹⁴⁷ In an interview (with the author, 20 December 1993) Halifa Sallah suggested that the army was raised as a result of fears of Senegal's annexationist designs. However, it is unlikely that the Gambian authorities believed that their army would ever be large enough to repel the Senegalese. Nevertheless, Senegal did influence the decision to create an army, a point I return to below.

¹⁴⁸ *West Africa*, 12-18 February 1990, p 265.

¹⁴⁹ As Jawara was fond of pointing out, the vast majority of Gambians had been quick to disassociate themselves from the violence of 1981.

¹⁵⁰ In 1987, for example, they were called in to disperse protesting schoolchildren.

The official justification for the army did not rest solely on security imperatives. Jawara also stated that an army was required to comply with the Senegambia Confederation, specifically the protocols on defence.¹⁵¹ He insisted that The Gambia had to be able to contribute troops to the confederal army. Although there was an element of truth to this - with the very nature of a "confederal" army appearing to require Gambian participation - Jawara was hardly a captive of the Confederation. In other areas of supposed co-operation (economic for example) he proved himself perfectly capable of prolonged prevarication.

Instead it seems probable that Jawara's decision to create an army was made in an effort to pre-empt charges that he was surrendering his country's sovereignty to Senegal. Without a Gambian component the confederal forces would have looked suspiciously like occupation forces.¹⁵² Linked to this, as one observer of the parade marking the departure of Colonel N'Gom (Commander of the intervention force) put it, the new force had to be composed of "fighters to reduce the contrast between themselves and the Senegalese ... A simple visual comparison showed the Field Force men as comparatively older, and prettily dressed for the parade ground with what appeared to be bolt-action rifles. Meanwhile the tall, rangy Senegalese in camouflage outfits carrying better guns, looked a totally different proposition: these boys were fighters."¹⁵³ This was more than just a public relations exercise, however. Jawara's insistence that the national army should be raised and trained by the British was widely perceived as a means by which he could contain Senegal's influence in the internal security affairs of his country (see below).

To some extent, then, the army was created with political and symbolic rather than military or security functions in mind, and in this sense it resembled other West African armies at independence, also assigned a symbolic role. However as states elsewhere had discovered, a symbolic role was not designed to keep the army occupied and unconcerned with politics.

The need to create a constructive role for the army did not assume any great urgency for much of the 1980's. The fact that it was being developed from scratch meant new recruits were busy with training programmes both at home and abroad; even ceremonial duties took time to learn and perfect. Added to this, various security scares helped keep the forces alert. The plot of 1988 provides the obvious example but there were also a number of unsubstantiated reports of external "threats." In April 1992, for example, a statement from the President's Office announced that Sanyang was poised to attack the country with "a group of Gambians and West African nationals trained and equipped in Libya."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ In an interview with the author (6 January 1994) the Permanent Secretary of Defence, Sulayman A Jack, argued that the *sole* reason for the creation of an army was because the "Confederation demanded it."

¹⁵² Even with the raising of the army there were some who argued that The Gambia had been "occupied" by the Senegalese. No doubt such criticism would have been much louder without it.

¹⁵³ *West Africa*, 15 February 1982, p 423.

¹⁵⁴ The only evidence which came to light was that provided by Ebrima Jammeh, a collaborator who reportedly defected from Sanyang's group. According to him the rebels were trained in Libya, based in Burkina Faso and

After 1989 (the year that the army reached battalion strength and the Senegalese departed) Jawara began to pay greater attention to providing a role for the army. One idea he flirted with at this time derived from the concept of self-help. Thus, in 1989 Jawara proposed a number of projects to be undertaken by the army, including the refurbishing of the Farafenni barracks and the construction of twelve blocks of quarters and other buildings for army staff.¹⁵⁵ According to local sources, however, such projects were never realised. Neither was the army used in civic action programmes, the only exception being a small Engineering Corps¹⁵⁶ based at Farafenni which occasionally called on ordinary soldiers as an extra source of manpower in construction projects. By 1993 the realisation of the army as an "engine for economic development" was still being described by the Permanent Secretary of Defence as a "major hope for the future."¹⁵⁷

A radical departure after 1989 was the army's participation in a foreign mission. It was in August 1990 that the first one hundred and thirty-six man contingent (including four senior officers) was sent to Liberia, to participate in the ECOMOG peace-keeping operations.¹⁵⁸ According to Claude Welch¹⁵⁹ the use of troops for just such a purpose "facilitates disengagement." In the special circumstances of The Gambia it achieved just the opposite. Thus, while it certainly provided the soldiers with a much needed sense of mission and purpose, an offshoot of this was the enhancement of the soldiers' self-image and the heightening of expectations. The significant gap between expectations and reality once the soldiers returned home was one cause of the 1991 protest. Two other factors contributed to the soldiers' incipient politicisation. First was the fact that the soldiers had, for the first time, been exposed to a potentially dangerous situation; two soldiers from the first contingent sent to Liberia were killed. Secondly the soldiers, while in Liberia, had come into contact with the Nigerian and Ghanaian contingents serving there. It is probable that this contact led Gambian soldiers to compare their own army with the much superior ones (in terms of size and equipment, for example) of other West African states.¹⁶⁰

Ultimately, then, Jawara's search for a constructive role for the army backfired. The army was too "young" and inadequately professionalised to participate in such a venture. In the absence

had links with Charles Taylor. It was presumably his evidence which prompted Jawara's comment at a press conference that Libya was seeking "to destabilise the sub-region through Charles Taylor and Kukoi Samba Sanyang." *The Point*, 6 April 1992, p 1. Various arrests were made on 31st March and 21st April, and a warrant issued against Sanyang. *The Point*, 4 January 1993, p 3 and 6 April 1992, p 1.

¹⁵⁵ *The Gambia Weekly*, 9 June 1989, p 3.

¹⁵⁶ This was the former Pioneer unit - it consisted of approximately twenty five men. Permanent Secretary of Defence, interview with the author, 6 January 1994.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with the author, 6 January 1994.

¹⁵⁸ *The Gambia Weekly*, 17 August 1990, p 1. The first contingent returned home in April 1991. Contingents were rotated every eight months.

¹⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*, 1987, p 23.

¹⁶⁰ Jawara's enthusiasm for such ventures does not appear to have been dampened by the ECOMOG protest. Troops continued to be sent to Liberia and by 1992 Jawara was voicing his willingness for the army to participate in UN peace-keeping operations "around the world." *Foroyaa*, 30 November 1992, p 3.

of a tradition of professionalism the factor of army satisfaction gained in importance; Jawara's neglect of this factor is discussed below.

The problem of defining a suitable role for the Sierra Leonean army was regarded by the APC regime as a high priority. Stevens in particular, having witnessed the dangerous potential of a bored and restive army under Albert Margai, perceived the importance of keeping the army occupied. With typical perspicacity he balanced this awareness with the need to respond to changing local circumstances. The resulting approach, though occasionally risky, was both pragmatic and flexible.

In Sierra Leone, as in The Gambia, the possibilities for keeping the army focused on external threats were severely circumscribed. The likelihood of invasion by Guinea or Liberia, or indeed any other country, was very remote. Nevertheless Stevens was fully aware of the potential of an external "threat" to divert the army's attention from events in Freetown, and in June 1968 he introduced the notion of "mercenaries" operating abroad. In a broadcast to the nation Stevens expressed fears of an invasion from Liberia, orchestrated by approximately two thousand pro-SLPP mercenaries, with the aim of returning Albert Margai to power.¹⁶¹ Although no evidence was produced to substantiate these allegations¹⁶² they provided a suitable pretext for the deployment of troops along the Liberian border. The allegations continued to be resurrected at various intervals in subsequent years. In October 1972, for example, the Vice-President stated that "the government had received information that people were being trained outside Sierra Leone and that the country would be invaded in December."¹⁶³

Using troops to protect Sierra Leone from "external subversion" was a virtually risk-free, if partial, solution to the problem of how to occupy the army. External security scares could only be invoked intermittently. Concern to provide a more continuous role encouraged Stevens to experiment, in 1969, with the creation of joint police and army units (AMPOL) to deal with violent crime in Freetown and other urban areas. According to Cox¹⁶⁴ it was these units which were later employed in Kono against illicit diamond miners.

The decision to deploy troops internally on a much grander scale was taken in response to two main factors. First was the fact that politics in Sierra Leone, certainly in comparison to The

¹⁶¹ Abraham and Turay, *op. cit.*, p 138.

¹⁶² The isolated arrests carried out hardly amounted to evidence of external subversion on a grand scale. For example at the end of 1968 two Swedish pilots were arrested at the airport having landed without prior warning. A taxi-driver had apparently reported that they had made enquiries about the strength of the army. *Ibid.*, p 139.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p 154. References to the threat of invasion were not made solely for the purposes of civilian control. On this occasion for example the Vice-President was speaking in Parliament where he was seeking a pretext for the continuation of the state of emergency.

¹⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, p 208.

Gambia, demonstrated a greater tendency towards violence. Second was the comparative importance of coercion as a means of securing political survival.

The army's first major internal operation was occasioned by unprecedented outbreaks of violence during the by-election campaigns in the SLPP strongholds of Bo and Kenema in 1968.¹⁶⁵ The police force's failure to contain the situation¹⁶⁶ prompted the deployment of troops to make arrests and restore law and order.¹⁶⁷ Though risky, there were cogent reasons for the action. Stevens wished to stop the violence from spreading¹⁶⁸ and - as a part of the means to this end - grasped the opportunity to crush the opposition (many prominent SLPP supporters were arrested) and strengthen his political hold on the country. In the event, the action did not have a detrimental effect on civilian control. The risks of using the army against their compatriots were significantly lessened by the deployment of selected Northern troops in the Mende-dominated districts of Bo and Kenema.¹⁶⁹

Stevens again ordered the use of troops in 1970. This time the targets were the leaders and supporters of the banned UDP opposition party.¹⁷⁰ In all, thirty-one arrests were made. Although the soldiers were again carefully selected (according to Cox¹⁷¹ Stevens chose Limba, Yalunka and Koranko troops to arrest the mainly Temne UDP leaders) this operation was much riskier than the previous one, in part because it was more transparently designed to crush Stevens' political enemies. Even if Stevens' allegations of UDP involvement in violent activities¹⁷² were genuine they were only isolated incidents and hardly comparable to the violence in Bo and Kenema. This blatantly political operation had repercussions in the form of an attempted coup. According to several sources the attempted coup, instigated by Bangura, was prompted in part by the arrests of the UDP leaders with whom his sympathies lay.

During the initial years of his rule Stevens' approach to the question of military roles involved a delicate balancing act between his perceived need to rid himself of opposition to his rule and a recognition of the dangers of using the army for this purpose. In 1970 this balance was tilted too far in the direction of the former and the result was an attempted coup. Stevens' solution to this dilemma involved the creation of the ISU which, after 1971, and working alongside a newly strengthened police force, assumed the bulk of the responsibility for internal security operations.

¹⁶⁵ The by-elections, which were eventually postponed, are discussed in detail in Chapter three.

¹⁶⁶ The police had been weakened by the detention of their officers during the counter-coup. Moreover operations in Kono to eject illicit miners had reduced the numbers available elsewhere.

¹⁶⁷ *West Africa*, 5 October 1968, p 1182

¹⁶⁸ Riots in Sefadu, Kono district, were thought to have originated in Bo and Kenema.

¹⁶⁹ The fatalities provoked the SLPP MP for Kenema to accuse the army of genocide against the Mende people. *West Africa*, 19 July 1969, p 847.

¹⁷⁰ On the UDP see Chapter three.

¹⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, p 211.

¹⁷² He referred specifically to "an incident at Devil Hole on the outskirts of Freetown in which a man was killed." *West Africa*, 17 October 1970, p 1230.

The creation of the ISU enabled Stevens to avoid the risks associated with using the army internally but at the same time the need to provide the latter with a constructive role assumed a new urgency.

After 1971 the lack of any obvious role for the army was reflected in the insistent rumours of imminent disbandment. However, it is unlikely that Stevens genuinely considered such a move (it would almost certainly have prompted military intervention) and in the event moved in the opposite direction with an announcement that the army was to be enlarged by the creation of a second battalion.¹⁷³ The official statement outlining the plans for a second battalion gave a clear indication of one of the ways in which Stevens intended to occupy the army. It was stated that some of the new recruits would be "artisans or men with special skills" who would assist in developing the army as "an economic and productive unit equipped to help itself with repair and construction work and to participate in national development programmes."¹⁷⁴

Participation in self-help and civic action programmes, although never reaching the levels of some other African states, did help to preoccupy the soldiers. They became involved in various construction projects in the first half of the 1970's, one of the most prominent being the conversion of the Moa Railway bridge into a road bridge.¹⁷⁵ Later examples included the building of a military hospital in Daru¹⁷⁶ and participation in the preparations for the hosting of the OAU summit in Freetown. Soldiers also participated in rural development programmes, particularly rice cultivation. The most impressive example of this was the two hundred-acre farm at Teko, near Makeni. Such programmes do not appear to have threatened the durability of civilian control. If anything they improved the image of the force and, not wishing to be outdone, both the police and ISU soon became involved in similar projects.¹⁷⁷

Civic action was not the only activity filling the soldiers' days. In addition to various training programmes the army played a very active role in sporting activities of various kinds. Soldiers also continued to be responsible for security on the frontiers¹⁷⁸ and assisting the police against armed robbery and illicit mining in Kono. Only on very few occasions did Stevens deem it necessary to interrupt this routine and deploy troops for higher-profile security activities.

¹⁷³ Given the fact that Stevens was unable to take the major step of disbandment it was imperative that he make equally grand gestures of appeasement. Half-measures are rarely effective in the maintenance of control.

¹⁷⁴ Abraham and Turay, *op. cit.*, p 164. To an extent the new emphasis on civic action was designed to deflect criticism of the cost of the expansion. Thus in 1969 Dr. Forna, the acting Prime Minister, suggested that if the army could change its role and work for economic development it might become "the saviour of Sierra Leone." He said that "an enlarged army of two or more battalions which simply carried out the traditional military function would simply be a burden reducing the country to poverty." *West Africa*, 7 June 1969, p 658.

¹⁷⁵ *West Africa*, 9 June 1975, p 672. Other examples, noted by Abraham and Turay, (*op. cit.*, p 163) were "the erection of a new wing of the Government Hospital at Port Loko in the north ... and the construction of the Madina Agricultural Secondary School in the Kambia District."

¹⁷⁶ *West Africa*, 16 April 1979, p 694.

¹⁷⁷ Abraham and Turay, *op. cit.*, p 164.

¹⁷⁸ In 1983, for example, strained relations with Liberia caused the deployment of troops to the borders. *West Africa*, 25 June 1984, p 1301.

One such occasion was in 1977 when widespread electoral violence once again erupted in Bo District. The violence, a result of clashes between the APC and the SLPP (the latter alleging that its candidates had been prevented from presenting their nomination papers by APC thugs), prompted the authorities to postpone the elections and send in troops.¹⁷⁹ The success of this operation was summed up by Turay who noted that the army "proved able to put an end to the protracted violence to such effect in favour of the government, that in September 1977 ... no opposition candidate was allowed to contest any of the eight seats"¹⁸⁰ The fourth and final major military operation under Stevens occurred in 1983 in the Pujehun District. Violence originated in the 1982 elections and subsequently escalated beyond the capabilities of the police or SSD. Armed gangs and bandits committed murder and arson on a grand scale¹⁸¹ and chaos reigned in the previously peaceful district. Despite reports that senior military men opposed intervention Stevens sent in troops. At the time one observer, regarding this operation, wrote that "Stevens has always been a man who gambles on intuition and might come out of this one successfully."¹⁸² In actual fact this operation - when viewed in conjunction with Stevens' progress in implementing various other control techniques (see below) - was less of a gamble than it appeared.

After 1985 and Momoh's accession to office the role of the army underwent a significant expansion. During his first months in power Momoh repeatedly signalled his intention to involve the army in government affairs "over and above normal duties like security."¹⁸³ He specifically mentioned the possibilities for using the army to combat smuggling and corruption and to enforce price control. On balance this departure appears to have had less to do with a desire to keep the army busy than with a concern about economic problems. With his military background it is perhaps unsurprising that Momoh sought military solutions to economic problems.

Deliberately expanding the role of the army, particularly when it is not strictly necessary, is the very antithesis of all that scholars recommend. Welch's contention¹⁸⁴ that role expansion may result in the military developing "vested interests in political action" which could dispose it to assume a wider political role is typical. However such theory is not particularly illuminating in the special circumstances of Sierra Leone after 1985. The army, by virtue of the fact that one of their own was now President (albeit as a civilian), *already* had a vested interest in political affairs. Momoh could not ignore this fact and instead chose to accentuate it. He explicitly linked his political success with the standing of the army; as he put it, "it should be their bounden duty to ensure that I succeed. If I fail then it will cast a slur on the reputation of the army. If I succeed it will

¹⁷⁹ *West Africa*, 13 June 1977, p 1180.

¹⁸⁰ *Op. cit.*, p 166.

¹⁸¹ The cause and implications of the violence are discussed in more detail in Chapter three.

¹⁸² *West Africa*, 21 November 1983, pp 2660-61.

¹⁸³ *West Africa*, 9 September 1985, p 1848.

¹⁸⁴ *Op. cit.*, p 31.

be a feather to their cap."¹⁸⁵

Soon after coming to power Momoh set up various units - the most prominent of which were the anti-smuggling and anti-hoarding squads - to impose discipline and reduce corruption within the economy.¹⁸⁶ This was followed in 1987 by the announcement of economic emergency measures which, among other things, empowered police and army personnel to enter premises suspected of hoarding foreign currency, diamonds and essential commodities such as petrol and rice.¹⁸⁷ A joint army and police team was deployed throughout Sierra Leone to implement the measures.

In the event both measures singularly failed to achieve the desired results.¹⁸⁸ The anti-smuggling squad, for example, ceased to function in all but name a few weeks after its inception. Moreover in 1988 Momoh himself admitted that the army's enforcement of the economic emergency measures had failed. The reasons he gave concentrated, in part, on "human failure" on the part of the police and army.¹⁸⁹ By this, Momoh appears to have been referring to those instances where soldiers exceeded their mandate, prompting complaints from around the country. One delegation from Kono, led by the then Minister of Information and Broadcasting and including Paramount Chiefs and elders of the district, called on the first Vice-President to protest against "molestation, undue harassment and arbitrary arrests of innocent people."¹⁹⁰ Moreover, many soldiers became involved in the very practices they were supposed to be eliminating. Reports were rife of soldiers taking bribes, colluding with smugglers, stealing and a variety of other fraudulent practices.

The results of this phase of role expansion had mixed results from the perspective of civilian control. In one sense it was damaging to army morale. Thus, Momoh had made it more than clear that the success of the measures depended on the army's ability to carry out investigations based on "sincerity of purpose, honesty and dedication to their duty without bias."¹⁹¹ On the other hand this failure was more than offset by the "unprecedented access to bribes and backhanders" resulting in "unprecedented incomes."¹⁹²

After 1988 the army largely reverted to its traditional (non) role.¹⁹³ Aside from policing the

¹⁸⁵ *West Africa*, 12 August 1985, p 1634.

¹⁸⁶ See *West Africa*, 1 December 1986, p 2501.

¹⁸⁷ *West Africa*, 9 November 1987, p 2198.

¹⁸⁸ This was despite the fact that, in the short term, there were several well-publicised arrests and in many cases goods suspected of being smuggled or hoarded were confiscated.

¹⁸⁹ *West Africa*, 18 July 1988, p 1326.

¹⁹⁰ *West Africa*, 21 December 1987, p 2515.

¹⁹¹ *West Africa*, 23 November 1987 p 2324.

¹⁹² *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1987-1988, B150, 153.

¹⁹³ However Momoh did continue to bring selected officers into the administration - almost all committees and commissions of enquiry included at least one army representative. An example of the latter was the seven man commission of enquiry to investigate the working of the National Power Authority in 1987. Lieutenant-Colonel AB Koroma was one of the seven. *West Africa*, 28 December 1987-4 January 1988, p 2565.

borders and participating in an occasional civic action programme¹⁹⁴ soldiers once again faced a period of relative inactivity. In August 1990, however, Momoh announced that Sierra Leone would be contributing troops to ECOMOG. With the benefit of hindsight it is easy to condemn this decision as unwise. Perhaps Momoh would have been better advised to keep his troops out of Liberia, particularly given reports of dissension within the officer corps concerning the advisability of participation.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand Sierra Leone did have a vested interest in peace and there was no guarantee that, had the troops stayed out, the instability in Liberia would have stopped at the border.

In any case, and as outlined in the previous section, troops soon became involved in serious fighting in the southern and eastern provinces of Sierra Leone. It is futile to discuss the wisdom of Momoh's policy of directing troops to counter the RUF threat since in practice he had no option. The use of troops for this purpose was not in itself detrimental to civilian control. If Momoh had been able to prosecute the war to the army's satisfaction it may even have proved beneficial in the sense that soldiers were, for the first time, engaged in a fully professional fighting capacity. The dangers lay not in the role *per se*, but in Momoh's inability to maintain the high level of satisfaction soldiers had hitherto enjoyed (see below).

Military Satisfaction in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

In The Gambia, for much of the 1980's, minimal attention was devoted to the question of military satisfaction at least with regard to the rank-and-file. Soldiers' living conditions, equipment, pay and accommodation all remained at basic levels. The military barracks at Yundum was the former Teacher Training College - even then some soldiers were forced to live in rented accommodation (with meagre rent allowances) due to shortage of space. Indeed shortages, even of rudimentary items such as uniforms, were a perennial problem.

At first sight the statistics on defence expenditure belie this picture of relative neglect. Though starting at a low level - in 1982/83 defence expenditure came to a mere 1.6% of current expenditure - by 1985/86 the total reached a high of 4%.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless it is doubtful whether these increases had much impact upon the welfare of individual soldiers since it was during these years that the army was constantly expanding; the wages of new recruits alone absorbed much of the defence budget.

Accounting for the government's indifference to military satisfaction was the Senegalese

¹⁹⁴ In 1992 for example army engineers completed a primary school in Freetown. *West Africa*, 2-8 March 1992, p 384.

¹⁹⁵ One military officer was reported as saying, "take ECOMOG out of Liberia and the war will be over. *West Africa*, 3-9 December 1990, p 2995.

¹⁹⁶ *Estimates of Recurrent Revenue and Expenditure 1984/85 with Estimates of Development Expenditure 1984/85* (Banjul, Government Printer, 1984) and *Estimates of Recurrent Revenue and Expenditure 1987/88 with Estimates of Development Expenditure 1987/88* (Banjul, Government Printer, 1987).

presence which, by greatly reducing the likelihood of military intervention, minimised the need to "buy" the army's loyalty. The soldiers were undoubtedly resentful¹⁹⁷ - many left the army¹⁹⁸ - but were in no position to make demands backed up with a realistic threat of intervention. The same can be said of the officer corps although those at the senior levels did enjoy better treatment than their men, receiving decent salaries, a certain amount of status, the occasional trip abroad and other perks.

After 1989 and the departure of the Senegalese Jawara began to take the issue of military satisfaction more seriously. Defence expenditure which had reached a low of 3% of total current expenditure in the 1987/88 budget increased to 6.9% by 1989/90. The following year the total was 9% and in 1994, 14%.¹⁹⁹ For the first time after 1989 expenditure on defence exceeded agricultural spending.²⁰⁰ Again, not all of this expenditure was channelled directly to improving the material position of the rank-and-file. Some was necessitated by the gap in security arrangements left by Senegal²⁰¹ and yet there was a clear attempt to better the lot of the soldiers. The need for a new approach was reinforced by the first ECOMOG protest in June 1991.

The official version of events placed the sole cause of the protest in the late payment of allowances. The soldiers were part of the ECOMOG contingent which had returned home in April and who, by mid-June, were understandably aggrieved by the non-payment of their \$3 a day hard living allowance. Other grievances high on the soldiers' agenda were unsatisfactory living conditions, low quality food and the need for adequate compensation of soldiers killed or injured in Liberia.²⁰² It appears to have been these issues, combined with N'Dow N'Jie's refusal to meet with them, which sparked the protest. During the protest, however, other concerns emerged. Although the official version of the talks in State House denied that any representation concerning army leaders had been made, according to some eye-witness reports the protesters had been chanting slogans demanding the dismissal of N'Jie and the reinstatement of Major Omar Faye, recently dismissed.

Local sources offer contrasting explanations of rank-and-file resentment against N'Jie.

¹⁹⁷ This resentment stemmed partly from the high expectations of new recruits who had joined the army at its inception. Many had been relatively well educated and, according to local sources, some had even left jobs in other sectors.

¹⁹⁸ Soldiers continued to leave up until the time of the 1994 coup. In 1993 Colonel Dada described it as "unfortunate" that young men were abandoning service in search of an "imaginary better life in the open market" (*Daily Observer*, 23 August 1993, p 3) although departure was clearly preferable to attempted intervention.

¹⁹⁹ Michael T Hadjimichael, Thomas Rumbaugh and Eric Verreydt, *The Gambia: Economic Adjustment in a Small Open Economy* (Washington DC, IMF, October 1992), p 25.

²⁰⁰ For example in 1990/91 defence received 9% of total current expenditure and agriculture 5%.

²⁰¹ Although the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence was quick to point out that the government did not accede to officers' requests for an increase in the size of the army after 1989. According to him the army would have expanded to "well over one thousand had the military boys got their way." Interview with the author, 6 January 1994.

²⁰² *Foroyaa*, 15 June 1991, p 2.

Some suggest it had an ethnic component (see below), others refer to unsubstantiated rumours of corruption on his part. The extent to which corruption prevailed at the senior levels of the army (in return for continued loyalty) is difficult to verify. The only case to extend beyond supposition centred upon a non-commissioned officer. Thus, in 1993 there was an inquest into the death of Sergeant Major Edward Jow, the army cashier, who had apparently committed suicide when it was discovered he had (since September 1992) been paying the salaries of men previously discharged from the army into his account.²⁰³ Unfortunately this case revealed little about the activities of Jow's seniors but at the very least suggested that opportunities for the diversion of funds existed. As in the civilian sphere corruption in the army does not appear to have reached the levels of some African states (see for example Sierra Leone below) but in all probability - and allowing that the proliferating rumours contained an element of truth - played some role in securing officers' loyalty.

Whatever the extent of corruption the rank-and-file perceived it as a factor contributing to their own unsatisfactory conditions.²⁰⁴ Following the June 1991 protest the soldiers involved were suspended; seven were subsequently discharged from the army following the findings of a commission of inquiry.²⁰⁵ These measures were combined with incentives to greater loyalty. Funds for the unpaid allowances were released immediately, followed soon after by a pay increase.²⁰⁶ However these "rewards" (together with the Nigerian presence from 1992) proved insufficient to subdue the now emboldened rank-and-file, as illustrated by the second attempted protest in February 1993. Jawara, convinced of the need to do more, introduced a new package of incentives which included an increased rent allowance for those not accommodated at the barracks in Yundum or Farafenni, a travel allowance and improved salaries.²⁰⁷ He also promised that shortfalls in vehicles, uniforms, equipment and accommodation were being addressed, the latter with the help of China who had promised to assist in the construction of a new barracks.

These measures were supplemented with the institution of a board to work out the terms and conditions of service for officers and men, with a view to promoting their career prospects. In 1993 fifteen officers (including three acting majors and eight acting captains), and seventy-seven soldiers were promoted.²⁰⁸ Dada insisted that the promotions should be seen as an indication of the government's interest in the army's professional development and explicitly linked the

²⁰³ According to the *Daily Observer*, 31 May 1993, p 18, a discrepancy of D1m was discovered - quite a hefty proportion of the annual defence budget of approximately D30m.

²⁰⁴ This provided one possible reason why corruption in both the military and civilian spheres (the latter also perceived as working to their disadvantage) was not allowed to escalate to the levels witnessed elsewhere.

²⁰⁵ *The Gambia Weekly*, 7 February 1992, p 1.

²⁰⁶ *The Nation*, 20 July 1991, p 4.

²⁰⁷ Sulayman Jack (interview with the author, 6 January 1994) insisted this package was put together in response to people leaving the army, rather than the ECOMOG protests, although this raises the question as to why it was not introduced earlier.

²⁰⁸ *Daily Observer*, 30 August 1993, p 3.

"government's huge investment" with the need to "remain unflinchingly loyal."²⁰⁹ Alongside these efforts, indeed ever since the departure of the Senegalese, symbolic satisfaction assumed a much greater role. For example, the army was prominent during the 25th anniversary celebrations in 1990. Also in that year the army participated in its first trooping the colour ceremony and an Army Day was instituted to be observed annually.²¹⁰

In spite of these efforts military dissatisfaction was still a major problem by the time of the 1994 coup. Having started from such a low level and in a situation of scarce resources the government found it difficult to resolve all the soldiers' grievances to their satisfaction.²¹¹ They regarded the government's measures as too little too late. Despite all the promises many plans remained on the drawing board. A case in point was the much vaunted new army barracks at Yundum. At the end of 1992 the Minister of Defence promised that problems of accommodation would soon be a thing of the past and assured soldiers that a modern barracks would be completed by the end of 1993.²¹² By 1994, however, feasibility studies were still in progress.²¹³

In Sierra Leone the cultivation of military satisfaction was much higher on the agenda of the civilian elite. Stevens and Momoh were both strong believers in the utility of material satisfaction as a means of civilian control.²¹⁴

Stevens' attempts to "buy" the army's loyalty were a new departure in civil-military relations and stemmed from the circumstances surrounding his return to power in 1968. Specifically, Stevens could not run the risk of disappointing the privates who had engineered his return to power. His desire to restore some order to the chaotic state of security arrangements - particularly with regard to the imprisoned officers - depended heavily on the goodwill of the rank-and-file. Accordingly Stevens hastened to reassure them that their "interests would never be forgotten."²¹⁵ Words were soon followed by action. Initially Stevens promised a 15% wage increase for all privates, warrant officers and NCOs, and the provision of new uniforms. Parliament ratified the extra expenditure for these items in the 1968/69 budget session.²¹⁶ In August 1968, in a move designed to demonstrate

²⁰⁹ *The Point*, 6 September 1993, p 5.

²¹⁰ The regime's use of symbolic satisfaction fluctuated in accordance with perceived levels of security. It was used a great deal in the years immediately after 1981 (the army was mentioned in flattering terms in almost all of Jawara's speeches) then declined, only to be resurrected after 1989.

²¹¹ The regime's difficulties must be viewed in the context of economic austerity measures discussed at length in Chapter one. Thus, Jawara needed IMF credits and other external aid in order to meet a range of basic survival imperatives (including paying soldiers) and yet IMF conditionalities dictated that he demonstrate "financial discipline," precluding the diversion of huge amounts of resources to the military as an "unproductive" institution.

²¹² *The Point*, 9 November 1992, p 8. Previously, in 1989, Jawara had put the expected completion date at some time in 1990. *The Gambia Weekly*, 22 December 1989, p 1.

²¹³ Sulayman Jack, interview with the author, 6 January 1994.

²¹⁴ The source of resources is examined in detail in Chapter one.

²¹⁵ Turay and Abraham, *op. cit.*, p 137.

²¹⁶ Cox, *op. cit.*, p 206.

government appreciation and at the same time fill some of the existing gap in the officer corps, twenty-one warrant officers were promoted to the rank of second-lieutenant.²¹⁷ These policies necessitated a larger defence budget. In fact, given that Stevens perceived the need to "buy-off" the entire army, rather more money had to be expended than in those states which concentrate mainly on the officer corps. In 1968-69 the defence budget was some 28% higher than actual expenditure in 1966-67.²¹⁸

Even after Stevens had negotiated the release of many of the detained officers he showed no inclination to reverse this trend. He knew that, once begun, there was no way to decrease expenditure without risking the survival of his regime.²¹⁹ By 1970 the purchase of modern weapons, the construction of new barracks and the establishment of a second battalion had all been pledged by the government.

Although immediate progress was made on the weapons front - in 1970 armoured cars were purchased on pre-finance terms - the realisation of the other plans was delayed by the 1971 coup attempt. In the immediate aftermath of the rebellion Stevens was more intent upon putting the army in its place than attempting to purchase its loyalty. However, this proved to be more of a temporary blip than a permanent policy change. As discontent began to grow (alongside plans to create the ISU and rumours that the army was to be disbanded) further increases in expenditure were announced.²²⁰ Stevens gave an extra month's salary to the army²²¹ and, from 1974, both the army and police became entitled to a pension after ten years of service.²²² The army also acquired yet more new equipment including, in 1973, two naval patrol boats provided by the Chinese together with two helicopters and three small aircraft.²²³ These acquisitions were followed by modern troop carriers in 1974.²²⁴ Three years later the new barracks at Wilberforce had been completed and a second battalion established at Teko, near Makeni.²²⁵ And finally Stevens worked to promote the belief that adequate career progress could be made within the army without recourse to intervention in politics. In 1978, for example, two-hundred and sixty promotions were confirmed in the ranks of

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p 207. According to Turay and Abraham, *op. cit.*, p 137, five of those promoted were former members of the ACRM.

²¹⁸ Richard Booth, "The Armed Forces of African States, 1970," *Adelphi Papers*, No 67, May 1970, p 13. The figures for 1966-67 were taken from Cox *op. cit.*, p 207. Cox has also shown that by 1970-71 the increase in expenditure from 1966-67 had reached 45%

²¹⁹ The fact that Stevens was at this time using the army for internal political purposes rendered increases in expenditure to secure the army's loyalty particularly imperative.

²²⁰ According to Zack-Williams, expenditure on defence rose to 20% of estimated expenditure in the 1979/80 recurrent budget. AB Zack-Williams, "Sierra Leone 1968-85: The Decline of Politics and the Politics of Decline," *Sierra Leone Studies at Birmingham* (Birmingham University, 1985), p 206.

²²¹ Turay and Abraham, *op. cit.*, p 157. In 1974 personal emoluments are reported to have accounted for Le1.9m of a total defence expenditure of Le3.1m. Irving Kaplan, *Area Handbook for Sierra Leone* (Washington DC, 1976), p 343.

²²² *West Africa*, 29 April 1974, p 507.

²²³ *West Africa*, 2 July 1973, p 897.

²²⁴ *West Africa*, 19 August 1974, p 1031.

²²⁵ *West Africa*, 14 November 1977, p 2331.

NCOs and twenty-one officers promoted.²²⁶

Nor was it only on an official level that the army benefited. Officers in particular were able to augment their salaries by obtaining loans. In 1983 the Auditor General's report covering 1978/79 and 1981/82 revealed that outstanding loans totalled Le821,610. According to *West Africa*, "these advances were approved without the knowledge of the Minister of Finance of the Accountant-General, a contravention of Section 2 and 217 of the Financial Orders."²²⁷ It should be recalled that these "loans" were being made at a time when government was finding it increasingly difficult to pay civil servants and teachers even their basic salaries on time.

The final means by which Stevens sought to ensure maximum military satisfaction was through co-optation. Thus in 1974 Momoh and Prince Claudius Kaetu-Smith, the Commissioner of Police, were appointed as MPs and Ministers of State.²²⁸ Stevens believed that co-optation would satisfy military aspirations for a political role. Commenting on the benefits of co-optation after his retirement he argued that "they [the army] are like children. You tell them 'You can't go in there,' into the government, and they want to go in."²²⁹

Of course there was no guarantee that, having had a taste of political power, officers would remain satisfied with this limited involvement. In the context of economic decline it was possible they would regard themselves as able to do a better job than the civilians. Dixon-Fyle, however, has suggested that it was the economic decline itself which rendered officers less than enthusiastic for more direct political involvement. They were in the attractive position of having "involvement without responsibility."²³⁰ Perhaps, having been given an insight into the complexities of the political and economic process, top officers became less rather than more confident of their ability to do a better job.²³¹

While binding the senior levels of the civil and military elite into a close, almost symbiotic, relationship, co-optation did not automatically secure the loyalty of the army's junior officers or the rank-and-file. Nevertheless, co-optation indirectly conferred greater status on all soldiers, whatever their rank. Moreover, the fact that the army now had a "direct line to the dispensers of largesse"²³² persuaded soldiers that their interests would be catered for. For the most part, and in spite of the

²²⁶ One from Major to Lieutenant-Colonel, thirteen from Captain to Major and seven from Lieutenant to Captain. *West Africa*, 1 May 1978, p 864.

²²⁷ *West Africa*, 10 October 1983, p 2380. Financial malpractice within the army undoubtedly extended far beyond that revealed by the Auditor-General's Report.

²²⁸ The police did not play a major role in the conduct of civil-military relations although there were instances where police officers colluded with rebellious elements in the army. See Cox, *op. cit.*, pp 125-6, 129. Both Stevens and Momoh used co-optation in an attempt to keep the police on side.

²²⁹ *West Africa*, 18 November 1985, p 2448.

²³⁰ Mac Dixon-Fyle, "Reflections on the Role of the Military in Civilian Politics: the Case of Sierra Leone," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 35, No 2, 1989, p 215.

²³¹ This view is strengthened by reports which suggested Momoh was initially unenthusiastic about taking over as President.

²³² Dixon-Fyle, *op. cit.*, p 215.

economic crisis, their expectations were not disappointed. Stevens knew that the loyalty he had generated was dependent upon a continual supply of material benefits²³³ and, as other government employees suffered, soldiers remained more or less content with the status quo.²³⁴

Following Momoh's nomination for the presidency in 1985 military satisfaction reached an all time high. Soldiers were jubilant and the reason was clear: if Momoh as a Minister of State had been able to protect army interests, Momoh as President could surely do even more.²³⁵ As noted in the previous section these heightened expectations were a mixed blessing. The gratification of the soldiers was certainly welcome and yet in the longer term, if Momoh failed to live up to expectations, the disappointment of the soldiers would be proportionately intense.

Momoh moved swiftly to assure the army of his good intentions. He repeatedly promised that "no effort will be spared to make things better for personnel of the armed forces"²³⁶ and in return soldiers assured Momoh of their loyalty. At the end of 1985 officers and men of the first battalion even participated in a "solidarity march" in honour of the President.²³⁷

Momoh's approach to military satisfaction closely resembled that of his predecessor.²³⁸ The ordinary soldier was assured of a regular supply of rice at subsidised rates, cheap accommodation and prompt payment at the end of the month. In the context of precipitous economic decline these were valued privileges and jealously guarded by soldiers. They reacted strongly to any threat to what were regarded as their entitlements. In 1987 for example when electricity at the Murray Town barracks was switched off by the National Power Authority in an attempt to distribute supply fairly, soldiers from the barracks attacked staff at the compound and headquarters of the NPA.²³⁹

Senior officers also continued to benefit from APC rule. They indulged in extravagant lifestyles, pampered by generous salaries, allowances and loans. Meanwhile, corruption and financial malpractice within the officer corps continued to flourish. Some senior officers reportedly

²³³ This was illustrated by an incident in 1980 when army personnel reportedly received an extra month's salary "following threats to 'cause trouble' if their salary was not increased by September." *West Africa*, 18 August 1980, p 1580.

²³⁴ Stevens decision to retire in 1985 (the very year Jawara was compelled to come to terms with the IMF and introduce the ERP) enabled him to avoid economic austerity measures - which would have adversely affected military interests - and at the same time continue to receive funds from the IMF which assisted his attempts to maintain military satisfaction. Had Stevens remained in office it is unlikely he would have chosen to pursue the risky course of reducing military expenditure, despite the increasing need for external resources. Compared to Jawara, Stevens both perceived the military as a greater threat to his survival and relied more heavily on maintaining military satisfaction as a means of coping with that threat. Cutting back on military expenditure was not a viable option; finding sufficient resources to maintain it was a problem he left to his successor and is discussed at length in Chapter one.

²³⁵ In addition Momoh continued to co-opt the Force Commander and the Inspector-General of Police as MPs and Ministers of State. (Stevens had upgraded the head of the police from Commissioner to Inspector-General during his final days as President.)

²³⁶ *West Africa*, 9 December 1985, p 2612.

²³⁷ *West Africa*, 16 December 1985, p 2667.

²³⁸ Military expenditure continued to rise. For details see *World Yearbook 1991: World Armaments and Disarmaments*, (Oxford University Press, 1991), Appendix 5A.

²³⁹ *West Africa*, 12 October 1987, p 2052.

supplemented their incomes by illegally constructing buildings on state land "to be rented out to foreign embassies and companies."²⁴⁰ The Beccles-Davies Commission of Inquiry set up by the military regime which ousted Momoh found that Tarawalli, the Force Commander, owned many properties and had bank accounts worth Le88.2 m.²⁴¹

As long as the interests of junior officers and the rank-and-file were also catered for, corruption among the senior ranks did not have a detrimental effect upon civilian control. However increasing resource shortages²⁴² - compounded by the need to fight the rebel war - placed the system of mutual benefits under a great deal of strain. Under this strain, intra-military splits began to emerge. During the war junior officers and the rank-and-file became increasingly disillusioned with the APC regime. Dissatisfaction emerged at a very early stage as it became all too clear that, whatever the destination of the huge amounts allocated to defence during Momoh's years in power, very little had been expended on equipment.²⁴³ Everything was in short supply from vehicles to communications equipment. Even the soldiers' guns, which apparently sometimes jammed, were wholly inadequate.²⁴⁴ It must have been disconcerting (to say the least) for the soldiers to discover that the rebels - who were fighting with AK47s - were comparatively better armed.

Although the soldiers' discomfiture was eased slightly by the arrival of assistance from friendly countries (notably Nigeria and Guinea) problems continued to be experienced. In January 1992 Momoh announced that over Le1 billion a month was being spent on the war but there was little evidence of this at the front where soldiers continued to engage in frustrating action. Before long the government found itself unable to pay the men's salaries and even food rations were in short supply.²⁴⁵ The resentment this engendered was directed not only towards the APC regime but also towards senior officers. Junior officers and ordinary soldiers felt their interests were, for the first time, being ignored. The civil and military elites, still engaging in a mutually supportive, reciprocal relationship back in Freetown appeared indifferent to their plight and the result was a successful coup d'etat.

Checks and Balances in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

In 1984 *The Nation* newspaper commented that in a "small and impoverished country such

²⁴⁰ A Zack-Williams and Stephen Riley, "Sierra Leone: the Coup and its Consequences," *Review of African Political Economy*, No 56, March 1993, p 92.

²⁴¹ Sahr John Kpundeh, "Limiting Administrative Corruption in Sierra Leone," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 32, No 1, 1994, p 145.

²⁴² Reflecting the range of factors discussed in Chapter one, notably Momoh's failure to come to terms with the IMF.

²⁴³ According to one report, from 1983-1987 Sierra Leone had spent approximately \$5m on military equipment - mostly in 1983 - but since then had not imported any arms. "Sierra Leone (Market Overview)," *DMS Market Intelligence Reports*, Middle East/Africa, p 1.

²⁴⁴ *West Africa*, 13-19 May 1991, p 754.

²⁴⁵ *West Africa*, 23-29 March 1992, p 495.

as The Gambia, to have an army, a police force and a gendarmerie is not only excessive, but a luxury the country can ill-afford."²⁴⁶ Criticisms such as these, though infrequent,²⁴⁷ centred on the gendarmerie. Some believed that a gendarmerie was, quite simply, surplus to requirements and it is easy to sympathise with this view. After all, the new security arrangements were quite a leap from the small para-military Field Force which the government had hitherto maintained was all the country could afford.

The decision to create a gendarmerie was not motivated solely by the desire to provide a check on the power of the, as yet non-existent, army. Rather, it was based primarily on the same considerations as the decision to create an army; to forestall charges of foreign "occupation" and contain Senegal's influence. Added to this was the government's concern for internal security. Jawara - perhaps envisaging the day when The Gambia would no longer be able to rely on Senegal to guarantee internal security (given his distinct lack of enthusiasm for some aspects of the Confederation) - wished to establish an effective and independent para-military force for the purposes of internal security.²⁴⁸ The government's concern for internal security after 1981 was illustrated by the emphasis placed on the development of the gendarmerie as compared to the army. Thus in the 1982/83 budget D2053444 was allocated to defence. Of this the gendarmerie received approximately 54% and the army 9%.²⁴⁹ Moreover Colonel N'Dow N'Jie - perhaps the most important military man in The Gambia - was originally assigned as head of the gendarmerie and retained this post for two years before becoming commander of the army.

Although the concern for internal security outweighed the perceived need to provide a counterweight to the fledgling army,²⁵⁰ from the perspective of civilian control the reasons for the creation of a gendarmerie were of less significance than the outcome. In effect, Jawara had created a system of checks and balances. Not only that, he had done so without jeopardising the survival of his regime. The concurrent development of the two forces (with the gendarmerie, if anything, having a head start) precluded military intervention on the grounds of a threat to the army's

²⁴⁶ *The Nation*, 20 October 1985, p 3.

²⁴⁷ Most Gambian citizens, having suffered the ordeal of 1981, were all too willing to accept the government's provisions for future security. A typical observation was that from Foday Makalo, the opposition member for Lower Baddibu, who stated in the House of Representatives that, "there will be no opposition to this bill nor to any other bill in fact that deals with security. What it means to be secure and not to be secure has been experienced by most of us in those traumatic days." *Proceedings of the 3rd meeting in the 1984/85 Legislative Session*, 27 March 1985 (Banjul, Government Printer), p 34.

²⁴⁸ The police force remained unarmed.

²⁴⁹ Even if one adds to the latter figure the amount allocated to the Engineering Corps, the resulting total of 33% still falls well short of the gendarmerie's share. *Estimates of Recurrent Revenue and Expenditure 1984/85 with Estimates of Development Expenditure 1984/85* (Banjul, Government Printer, 1984), pp 25-26. In subsequent years however expenditure priorities were partially reversed. In 1985/86 for example the army received 53% of the total budget and the gendarmerie 37%. *Estimates of Recurrent Revenue and Expenditure 1987/88 with Estimates of Development Expenditure 1987/88* (Banjul, Government Printer, 1987), p 24.

²⁵⁰ Some local sources even suggest that the decision to create a gendarmerie was made *prior* to the decision to create an army.

"corporate interests."

The effectiveness of Jawara's system of checks and balances was not put to the test during the 1980's. The role of counterweight to the army was occupied not by the several hundred strong gendarmerie but by the Senegalese who in theory could have brought in reinforcements of up to seventeen thousand men (the size of their army and gendarmerie combined). After 1989, however, the gendarmerie's potential effectiveness in the role of counterweight gained new relevance.

The two criteria commonly applied to judge the effectiveness of para-militaries centre upon their ability to deter potential plotters and, failing that, their ability to defeat an attempted coup. Whereas the second of these can be measured by simple observation the first is, for obvious reasons, more difficult to assess. One method of "measuring" the utility of a para-military in the role of deterrent is to compare the relative strength of the two forces. Thus, an army will be less inclined to intervene if it anticipates resistance from an equally powerful source. One indicator of strength is size, another is fire-power. In The Gambia, after 1989, the army did outnumber the gendarmerie though the disparity was not great. They numbered approximately eight hundred and six hundred respectively. Concerning weaponry a lack of detailed information precludes any definite conclusion. What is certain, however, was the rather feeble nature of the equipment of both forces rendering it probable that a potential coup plotter would not have been unduly discouraged by the prospect of fierce para-military resistance.

A more impressionistic approach reinforces this conclusion. Returning briefly to the theoretical literature it will be recalled that one advantage of a para-military force is to place organisational difficulties in the path of a coup. In The Gambia the two branches of the armed forces were distinct from one another in that they were assigned separate roles and trained by different countries. Nevertheless, and particularly at the senior levels, there existed a relatively high level of co-operation between the two forces. Some officers even transferred from one to the other.²⁵¹ The rank-and-file also came into frequent and (aside from a few very minor clashes) amicable contact. Organisational questions aside, one could argue that the lack of overt hostility was in itself indicative of the minimal effectiveness of the gendarmerie as a counterweight force.²⁵² As Horowitz²⁵³ observes "if they [the paramilitary] are adequately manned trained and equipped to defeat a coup attempt, they are probably also so strong as to be regarded with great hostility by the army. If they are not, they are easily brushed aside or persuaded to stand aside in the event of a coup."

Evaluating the utility of the gendarmerie as a deterrent to coups is rendered problematic by

²⁵¹ *Foroyaa* 15 August 1991, p 14. Examples include Captain M N'Jie and Lieutenant-Colonel PS Jagne (Commander of the gendarmerie).

²⁵² Although it is worth reiterating that the gendarmerie did play a useful counterbalancing role during both ECOMOG protests which might otherwise have spiralled out of control.

²⁵³ *Op. cit.*, pp 547-48.

the force's short life-span after 1989. After just three years the gendarmerie merged with the police, thereby ceasing to be part of the armed forces. It now came under the overall control of the Inspector-General of Police. There were two main reasons for this departure. First, Jawara appeared to feel that, after 1989, a gendarmerie (being a French innovation existing in Senegal and other Francophone states) was no longer appropriate for The Gambia. In addition, and probably more importantly, there existed a significant level of police resentment towards the gendarmerie. Since independence the police had enjoyed a virtual *carte blanche* with respect to matters of internal security. Unsurprisingly then, problems emerged when the gendarmerie began to encroach upon their traditional areas of responsibility.²⁵⁴ According to local sources the police resented what they perceived as the priority treatment gendarmes received from the government²⁵⁵ and believed they had a "superior" attitude. For their part the gendarmes argued that the police felt threatened by them and complained of harassment. Conflict between the two forces resulted.²⁵⁶

The subsequent decision to merge the two forces had a significant and unfavourable impact upon civilian control. The government attempted to minimise this impact by replacing the gendarmerie with an armed police wing, the Tactical Support Group (TSG) and in practice there was a strong element of continuity between the two forces. Many former gendarmerie officers (wearing the same uniforms) continued at the TSG; even the change of name was not always adhered to by members of the press and public who continued to refer to the gendarmerie.²⁵⁷ Perhaps the greatest change centred upon the functions of the TSG which was far more specialised than its predecessor and engaged in less general police work.

Despite the continuity there is reason to believe that the TSG was a less effective counterweight to military intervention than the gendarmerie. In addition to the force's inherited deficiencies including shortages of adequate equipment,²⁵⁸ amicable relations with the army etc., there was less reason for the men of the TSG to intervene - perhaps even risk their lives - on behalf of a President who had downgraded the status of their organisation from a para-military to an armed

²⁵⁴ The gendarmerie's police duties - which included maintenance of law and order, criminal investigations, traffic control and intelligence gathering - took precedence over military duties.

²⁵⁵ The gendarmerie had, for example, taken over the police's training facilities.

²⁵⁶ One well-publicised incident occurred in 1991 when gendarmes attacked Bakau police station and engaged in a fight with the police. The fight had apparently been caused by the detention of a gendarme at the police station. *The Gambia Weekly*, 5 April 1991, p 1. Local sources also related the existence of personal hostility between the Inspector-General of Police and the Commander of the Gendarmerie (interviews with the author, 1993-94).

²⁵⁷ Likewise the soldiers' first decree on taking power in 1994 was one merging the gendarmerie with the army. *West Africa*, 8-14 August 1994, p 1388.

²⁵⁸ Illustrating the TSG's lack of readiness for action was a much publicised incident in 1993 (of which soldiers must have been aware), during which the home of an expatriate, Stig Bengtson, was attacked by armed robbers. According to Bengtson the TSG had been called to assist and yet there was nothing they could do since they had no transport or guns. During a second attack some time later the TSG did arrive, armed with Kalashnikov rifles, but were too late since they again lacked transport. *Newsmonth*, Vol 1, No 5, August 1993, pp 1, 8.

section of the police.²⁵⁹ Accordingly, the TSG remained virtually invisible during the 1994 coup. Although soldiers did perceive the possibility of resistance from the TSG (their headquarters in Bakau was one of the first targets) this did not materialise and apart from reports of a few shots being fired the TSG men were quickly disarmed.²⁶⁰

In Sierra Leone the decision to create an armed para-military unit was taken with a view to promoting civilian control. This clear focus contrasted with the comparatively diffuse objectives behind the creation of the Gambian gendarmerie and as such invested the experiment with a greater chance of success. The catalyst for the creation of the ISU was the abortive coup of 1971. It was designed as a deterrent to future coup plotters or, failing that, as a means of defeating attempts at intervention and provided a means of breaking the military monopoly on the instruments of coercion and putting the army "in its place." As Stevens noted, he intended to "put an end to this nonsense" (of attempted coups) by rapidly reducing the importance of the army.²⁶¹

Stevens' enthusiasm for the ISU was understandable.²⁶² The loyalty of the force was largely guaranteed²⁶³ by Stevens' liberal dispensation of largesse and, more importantly, its composition. The ISU was dominated by young, mostly Northern APC supporters, many of whom were linked to the party's leadership through kinship ties. According to Horowitz many ISU personnel came from Kambia, Stevens' home district.²⁶⁴ Some reports even suggest that the bulk of its membership was provided by APC "guerrillas" who had been trained in Guinea before 1968 with the intention of

²⁵⁹ Training facilities which (as noted above) had been a subject of contention between the police and gendarmes when the former had had to make way for the latter were now to revert to the police. This was widely interpreted as a loss of privilege for the former gendarmes.

²⁶⁰ The perpetrators of the coup had the additional advantage of ready access to both the armoury and transport. Thus, on the day of the coup Gambian officers were due to participate in joint training exercises with the marines on board a US tank landing ship.

²⁶¹ *West Africa*, 16 April 1971, p 413. Before examining the ISU in more detail some mention should be made of the various options facing Stevens. For a while he flirted with the idea of creating a popular militia, composed of young men and women, to function as a counterweight to the regular army. Thus in 1971 the National Congress of Sierra Leone women formed a Women's Volunteer Force, soon followed by the creation of the National Youth Volunteer Force (*West Africa*, 11 June 1971, p 675). Neither force was in existence long but there are indications that some members of the Youth Force were subsequently recruited into the ISU. Pursuing a second idea, in October 1972 Stevens announced that fifth and sixth form students were to receive military training on Saturdays in Freetown and the provinces to prepare them to assist in "emergencies" (*West Africa*, 9 October 1972, p 1371). In the event, however, the plan was never implemented and Stevens' enthusiasm for a militia soon waned in favour of the ISU.

²⁶² This enthusiasm centred not only upon the ISU's counterweight role but also upon its utility as an instrument of coercion. Stevens could use the ISU to suppress opposition to his rule and at the same time avoid the risks associated with using the army internally.

²⁶³ Although the guarantee was not absolute. Thus, by creating an alternative organisation Stevens had also created an alternative source of potential coup plotters and in 1974 a sub-inspector of the ISU, Mohammed Mansaray, was charged with treason for alleged complicity in the coup attempt of that year. Nevertheless the risks of para-military intervention were reduced by the composition of the force (see below) and the fact that the two forces counter-balanced *each other*.

²⁶⁴ Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p 552.

overthrowing the NRC.²⁶⁵

In Sierra Leone the risks associated with the creation of a functional rival were minimised by Stevens' acute sense of timing. As Wiking²⁶⁶ notes, the likelihood of military intervention is greatest during the actual creation of an alternative organisation. Thereafter the prospect of a coup diminishes as the new organisation becomes established as an effective deterrent. With this in mind Stevens delayed making any changes until the presence of Guinean troops enabled him to do so without the risk of a coup. At the same time he undertook a number of reconciliatory gestures including a public statement of the supremacy of the army in relation to the ISU, huge increases in military expenditure and the co-optation of the Force Commander.

Despite these measures the military resented its new rival and frequent conflict between the two forces ensued. One notable incident occurred as late as 1985 when a member of the newly-named Special Security Division (SSD),²⁶⁷ on duty at the gate of the football stadium, refused an army officer free entrance. The ensuing scuffle quickly escalated into a violent confrontation between SSD and army men within the stadium and the following day "each side attacked each other wherever they met in the city" until the soldiers were eventually confined to barracks.²⁶⁸ This hostility was not detrimental to civilian control. As noted above the greatest risk for a civilian regime occurs during the actual creation of an alternative organisation. Thereafter military dissatisfaction may linger (or even, as seemed to happen in Sierra Leone, increase) but is unlikely to prompt intervention.

The hostility displayed by the military suggests that it regarded the ISU as an effective deterrent. This view was based on the two factors of size and firepower. Thus, by 1974 the ISU was thought to be as large as the army²⁶⁹ and both forces were subsequently expanded at approximately the same rate.²⁷⁰ Moreover the ISU was heavily armed and, according to Ly (and others) outstripped the army in ammunition.²⁷¹

²⁶⁵ The existence of such a force was always officially denied and is difficult to prove since any action that may have been taken was pre-empted by the privates' coup of 1968. Moreover, there is disagreement on what became of the force (assuming it did exist) after 1968. Lavalie, for example suggests it was absorbed into the regular army. Alpha M Lavalie, "Government and Opposition in Sierra Leone, 1968-1978," *Sierra Leone Studies at Birmingham* (Birmingham University, 1985), p 86.

²⁶⁶ *Op. cit.*, p 52.

²⁶⁷ The new name was adopted in 1979 when the ISU officially became part of the police force. However, the new force continued in the same role and with the same personnel as its predecessor. The renaming appears to have been no more than a cosmetic attempt to overcome the poor image of the ISU which had become known as the "I Shoot You's" among Freetonians. The attempt failed - thus the SSD became known as Siaka Stevens' Devils." Stephen Riley, "Sierra Leone Politics: Some Recent Assessments," *Africa*, Vol 52, No 2, 1982, p 109, footnote 4.

²⁶⁸ *West Africa*, 8 April 1985, pp 708-9.

²⁶⁹ Abraham and Turay, *op. cit.*, p 158.

²⁷⁰ According to Zack-Williams, (*op. cit.*, 1985, p 206) in 1977 the army numbered 2,200 and in 1978 the para-military numbered 2,500.

²⁷¹ Frank Ly, *op. cit.*, p 14. Some observers have also suggested that the ISU received better training (provided by Cuba and China) than the army. See John Keegan, "Sierra Leone," *World Armies* (London, Macmillan,

Despite these factors, the existence of the ISU failed to prevent the 1974 coup attempt. Although there is evidence to suggest that the plotters were aware of the ISU's potential to frustrate their plans (at the treason trial there were allegations that soldiers had bribed ISU personnel not to challenge them)²⁷² they were not deterred from carrying them out. From 1974 however, the ISU gained in confidence and strength and assumed an increasingly important deterrent role.

In 1985 the accession of Momoh (as a former military man) caused the prevailing balance of power to tilt in favour of the army. Significantly however it did not cause the SSD to be disbanded. In the short term any move towards disbandment might have prompted the SSD to attempt a coup. Thus, by 1985 the SSD had been in existence for nearly fifteen years; it was a powerful force, possessing "corporate interests" comparable to those of the army. In the longer term, Momoh's initial support within the army could not protect him indefinitely from the prospect of military intervention. Consequently there remained a useful counterweight role for the SSD to play.

Despite the enduring *potential* utility of the SSD to civilian control there are reasons to believe that its effectiveness as a deterrent declined after 1985. SSD personnel were, first and foremost, Stevens' men. Stevens had spent both time and money raising a force that was personally loyal to him - there was no guarantee that this allegiance would automatically transfer to the one-time Commander of a rival force. Compounding this problem, Momoh - mindful of both military and public sensitivities - moved to reduce the SSD's autonomy and influence. He integrated the SSD further into the main body of the police force and attempted to tone down some of its more flagrant excesses.²⁷³

In spite of these moves the SSD - at least until 1987 - continued to play an important role in the maintenance of civilian control. Although the force failed to deter the 1987 coup attempt Kaikai's take-over speech included a warning to SSD personnel to "lay down their arms and surrender themselves peacefully"²⁷⁴ which suggests that, at the very least, Kaikai and his cohorts had considered the possibility of resistance. More importantly, the SSD's significant role during the shoot-out at Kaikai's house helped to defeat the coup attempt. It also sent others a clear message about the risks of intervention.

After 1987 however the clarity of this "message" continued to be obscured. While on the one hand the SSD continued to be better equipped than the army, on the other Momoh took two further measures to "domesticate" the force. In 1988 he replaced Mohamed Dumbuya, the head of the force since its earliest days, with TK Mansaray, a former Assistant Commissioner of police. The

1983), p 517.

²⁷² Abraham and Turay, *op. cit.*, p 159.

²⁷³ See *West Africa*, 3-9 October 1988, p 1834.

²⁷⁴ *West Africa*, 7 September 1987, p 1734. The take-over speech was heard as evidence during the coup trials.

same year, following the Magazine Cut affair,²⁷⁵ the Inspector-General ordered all members of the SSD to wear identity badges.²⁷⁶ Compounding these measures it is unlikely that the SSD escaped the consequences of economic deterioration (coupled with the cost of fighting the war), which caused such suffering among army personnel. All in all then, the SSD's vested interest in the survival of the APC regime was at an all time low. During the 1992 coup attempt the force chose to remain neutral.

Military Composition in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

African political leaders have traditionally concentrated much time and energy (albeit often unsuccessfully) on the question of military composition and civilian control. Particular attention has been devoted to creating an officer corps either ethnically akin to the regime in power, or (less often) ethnically balanced and representative of the population as a whole. President Jawara, however, adopted neither strategy. Even though, as a new force, the army was amenable to the ethnic configuration of his choosing Jawara made no attempt to either fill the officer corps with Mandinkas (the regime's traditional supporters) or to ensure ethnic balance as a means to civilian control.

From this it should not be assumed that Jawara overlooked the relationship between composition and control. Officers were appointed on the basis of political reliability and, in assessing reliability, Jawara did not ignore ethnic factors. As Enloe²⁷⁷ has noted, "the military will be designed by the state elite in such a fashion that it is consonant with that inter-ethnic boundary pattern which makes elites feel most secure." In The Gambia ethnic accommodation rather than ethnic congruence was perceived as one route to security and civilian control. Jawara's policy of ethnic accommodation (discussed at length in Chapter one) prevailed in both the civilian and military spheres. Indeed, the success of this policy in the former meant that packing the officer corps with Mandinkas would have failed to produce ethnic congruence with the PPP regime.²⁷⁸ Rather than adopting a distinctively military policy towards the question of military composition Jawara extended his accommodationist approach to the army and appointed Banjulians - Akus and urban Wolofs - to senior posts. In 1990 the heads of the army, gendarmerie, police force and national security service were all from Banjul. According to informed local sources, Wolofs also dominated the officer corps as a whole.

²⁷⁵ On August 4 1988 SSD men sealed off the Magazine Cut area of Freetown for three days after the alleged murder of an SSD officer there. According to *West Africa*, one hundred people were arrested and "residences were forced into and their occupants brutalised; petty traders were attacked and their wares looted." It later became known that the SSD officer had died of tuberculosis. *West Africa*, 3-9 October 1988, p 1834.

²⁷⁶ *West Africa*, 21-27 November 1988, p 2185.

²⁷⁷ *Op. cit.*, p 21.

²⁷⁸ Leaving aside considerations of civilian control Jawara presumably wished to avoid a situation in which the military would "operate so as to reinforce ethnic saliency." *Ibid.*, p 12.

Jawara's approach was based upon the success of accommodation in the political sphere (where it had produced a body of comparatively loyal supporters) and his experience of civil-paramilitary relations prior to 1981. Thus, although elements of the Field Force had joined in the 1981 coup attempt, the predominantly urban officers had remained loyal. Moreover there was little evidence to suggest that rank-and-file resentment of their ethnically dissimilar superiors was a major cause of the coup. In essence there appeared to be no good reason for Jawara to change his approach.

At the senior levels this approach continued to be effective but within the rank-and-file there is some evidence to suggest that Mandinkas believed their interests were being neglected.²⁷⁹ The soldiers participating in the 1991 ECOMOG protest, for example, were mainly Mandinkas and a clear focus for their dissatisfaction was N'Dow N'Jie, an urban Wolof. On the other hand, not all the soldiers involved in the protest were Mandinkas and local sources agree that military grievances were not primarily ethnic ones.²⁸⁰ For those participating Mandinka soldiers the ethnic factor probably did little more than compound existing resentment towards N'Jie.²⁸¹ The 1994 coup, instigated by soldiers of mixed ethnic background, further demonstrated that generalised rather than specifically ethnic resentment was a much greater threat to civilian control (see below).

With this in mind it is worth noting that, although Jawara's assessment of the political reliability of officers did not preclude ethnic considerations, other factors were equally if not more important. His choice of Colonel N'Dow N'Jie, for example, was undoubtedly influenced by N'Jie's character and history of loyalty. He was a non-populist,²⁸² fairly unobtrusive figure, untainted by any prior coup activity. In 1981 N'Jie had been Deputy Commander of the Field Force - he had joined from school and was commissioned in 1976 - but there was no indication of involvement in the rebellion.²⁸³ On August 1 1981 he was appointed Field Force Commander and then went on to command the army from 1984 to 1991 (following a two year stint at the gendarmerie), during which time he showed no desire for a wider political role.

N'Jie's resignation in 1991 was one result of the ECOMOG soldiers' protest. The reason given was that he had lost the confidence of his men; according to witnesses of the protest soldiers had chanted slogans demanding his dismissal. The immediate cause of their disenchantment with N'Jie had been his refusal to meet with them to discuss their grievances. However, reports that the

²⁷⁹ To the extent that ethnic loyalty was a source of dissent, the possibility of a convergence of Mandinka disaffection in the military and civilian spheres could not be ruled out.

²⁸⁰ Similarly not all the protesting soldiers were from the rural areas which suggests that they were not united on the basis of antipathy against the primarily urban army leadership.

²⁸¹ In this sense there were clear parallels between the attitude of the soldiers and that of the Mandinka Field Force personnel prior to the 1981 coup attempt. In 1980 the focus of resentment - Deputy Commander Bojang - was retired early. In 1991 N'Jie's military career came to a similarly abrupt end.

²⁸² One can speculate that this was partly due to the fact that his father was not Gambian but Senegalese.

²⁸³ N'Jie had been Jawara's ADC in London at the time of the coup attempt.

soldiers were heard demanding the reinstatement of Major Omar Faye,²⁸⁴ whom N'Jie had recently discharged, suggested that their resentment ran rather deeper. The dismissal of Major Faye alongside Lieutenant-Colonel Gaye, N'Jie's deputy, in January 1991 was never officially explained and even "unofficially" remains something of a mystery. One tentative explanation centres upon the possibility of a split between those officers who had served in Liberia and N'Jie, who had not. Gaye and Faye had been two of the most senior officers of the ECOMOG contingent. The fact that they had been in Liberia alongside ordinary soldiers appears to have boosted their popularity with the rank-and-file. N'Jie, apparently feeling threatened by his increasing isolation and the growing popularity of his subordinates moved to discharge them. In the event, however, the action served only to further damage N'Jie's standing.

Although N'Jie's resignation was officially voluntary some Gambians suggest he was forced to leave and he had certainly become something of a liability to the civilian leadership. In the short term Jawara's response was to appoint Major Maba Jobe (Commander of the First Battalion) as temporary Force Commander.²⁸⁵ The fact that he had served in Liberia and was comparatively popular within the army temporarily relieved both the emerging divisions at senior levels and irritation from within the ranks. Jawara's reinstatement of Omar Faye (in January 1992)²⁸⁶ was another measure designed to placate the rank-and-file.

Even as Jawara implemented these measures, however, he was clearly hankering after some form of external security guarantee and it was not long before the Nigerians were brought in to fill senior army posts. While this enabled Jawara to side-step some of the complexities of army design it was not without risks (see below).

A final point worthy of mention concerns Jobe's resignation from the army in July 1992. Following the precedent set by Gaye and Faye the circumstances surrounding his departure remain obscure. Suggestions that Jobe had clashed with Dada over certain aspects of military organisation appeared insufficient to account for the retirement of yet another young (he was twenty seven) and accomplished officer, especially given the army's shortage of senior personnel.²⁸⁷ It is possible that Jobe's popularity with the rank-and-file - combined with his demotion from Force Commander²⁸⁸ - prompted fears that he would become a focus for military discontent. Certainly Jawara was quick to remove Jobe from the political scene, posting him as an Administrative Officer to The Gambia's High Commission in London.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ *Foroyaa*, 15 November 1991, p 2.

²⁸⁵ Jobe was also a Wolof - another indication that the soldiers' grievances against N'Jie had not been primarily ethnic ones.

²⁸⁶ *The Point*, 4 January 1993, p 3.

²⁸⁷ Moreover, some local sources deny that there had been tension between Jobe and Dada.

²⁸⁸ Although Jobe's posting had only been a temporary one he had still been effectively demoted.

²⁸⁹ *The Point*, 9 November 1992, p 8. N'Dow N'Jie had previously left The Gambia when he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France.

In contrast to The Gambia, both Stevens and Momoh adopted a more typical approach to the question of military composition. In 1968, the year Stevens came to power, the rank-and-file of the army was heavily dominated by northerners, especially Temnes, and by way of contrast the officer corps contained a disproportionate number of Mendes.²⁹⁰ Accordingly, it was upon the latter which Stevens concentrated his attention. His aim was to replace Mende officers with those more ethnically favourable to the APC regime.

Although ascriptive manipulation is a high-risk strategy - involving a real possibility that those officers threatened with displacement will be tempted to intervene - in 1968 Stevens enjoyed an unusual amount of room for manoeuvre. The fact that almost the entire officer corps was in detention enabled Stevens to selectively release and reinstate those he believed to be loyal.²⁹¹ Even prior to releasing any officers Stevens had clearly signalled his intention of redesigning the officer corps. Alongside the promotion of loyal NCOs Stevens purged most remaining Mendes. Lieutenant-Colonel Ambrose Genda, a Mende, was retired.²⁹² Even Patrick Conteh and Emadu Rogers, two of the Mende warrant officers who had assisted in the overthrow of the NRC, were not exempt. They were arrested shortly after Stevens return to power on the pretext that they were involved in "stirring up trouble"²⁹³ and later dismissed from the force. By 1970, then, only one of the top ten officers and less than a third of the entire officer corps was Mende.²⁹⁴

Of the remainder, the Temnes constituted 35% and minority northern tribes, particularly the Korankos and Yalunkas, 29%.²⁹⁵ With the neutralisation of the Mende threat (at least at the senior levels) this division between Temnes and other Northern groups - typified by the split between Bangura, a Temne-Loko and Momoh, a Limba - increased in importance. It emerged when Stevens began to pass over Bangura, consulting instead his immediate subordinates including Momoh (now Deputy Force Commander), Sam King (a Creole) and MS Tarawalli (a Koranko). The split reflected a similar division in the civilian sphere. The break-away UDP party is discussed at length in Chapter three; suffice it here to say here that one reason for its creation was the Temne belief that they were being overlooked in favour of Creoles and to a lesser extent other Northern minority groups. Rumour had it that Bangura and the UDP members were in contact;²⁹⁶ whether or not these rumours were true Stevens had good reason to fear a convergence of disaffection in the civil and military spheres.

²⁹⁰ The former was to some extent a hang-over from colonial days (Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p 447) and the latter a result of Albert Margai's policies.

²⁹¹ Not all of those released were reinstated. Some Mendes were apparently "simply pensioned off without explanation." Cox, *op. cit.*, p 209.

²⁹² *West Africa*, 31 August 1968, p 1028.

²⁹³ See *West Africa*, 15 June 1968, p 702.

²⁹⁴ Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p 477. The one Mende was Major DDK Vandi who had family connections in Stevens' cabinet. He was later arrested after the 1971 coup attempt. *West Africa*, 9 July 1971, p 790.

²⁹⁵ Cox, *op. cit.*, p 209.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 212.

Given the hazards of dismissing Bangura outright²⁹⁷ Stevens' response was to isolate him as far as possible. Not only did he bypass Bangura in favour of his immediate subordinates Stevens discharged two of his closest allies, both senior Temne officers, Major Benedict Kargbo and Major Yankay Sesay on the pretext that they were involved in a coup plot.²⁹⁸

On the heels of this affair twelve, mainly Temne, Warrant Officers and NCOs were arrested and accused of violent mutiny on the night of October 13. During the court martial one of the accused, Alex Conteh, admitted taking ammunition from Wilberforce barracks arguing that it was to allow Temne soldiers to "defend themselves" from Koranko and Yalunka troops during an expected "tribal fight."²⁹⁹ However Conteh then went on to implicate Bangura in an alleged coup plot which he said was to have been carried out on October 13. According to Conteh, Bangura had planned the coup "because he anticipated being arrested by pro-APC officers" and "because two of his best officers had been retired."³⁰⁰ Whether or not Bangura was involved it was not long before a coup attempt materialised.

Stevens' enthusiasm for redesigning the officer corps, which had rendered Bangura little more than a figurehead leader, was undoubtedly a primary cause of the coup. Nevertheless, as Cox points out, the perpetrators of the coup were of diverse ethnic backgrounds consisting of "five Mendes (all but one junior officers), a Kono, a Koranko, and two Temnes." Perhaps the most significant aspect of this group was the number of junior Mende officers - "yet to reconcile themselves to a Stevens government"³⁰¹ - willing to combine with Bangura, a Temne, to overthrow the APC.³⁰²

The coup attempt illustrated the mixed results of Stevens' initial attempts to redesign the officer corps. On the one hand civilian control had been more or less institutionalised at the senior levels. This was an important factor in the defeat of the coup attempt and, in recognition of this, Stevens moved to strengthen his hold further, promoting Momoh to Force Commander and King and Tarawalli to Deputy Commander and Commander of the First Battalion respectively. Momoh's ethnic identity was not the only factor to recommend him. His reputation as an able soldier³⁰³ and the widespread approval he enjoyed in the army precluded a repetition of the events of 1967 when

²⁹⁷ Bangura's popularity within the army might have prompted intervention on his behalf. In 1970 the government had seen fit to issue a statement refuting a rumour that he was to be retired. *West Africa*, 19 September 1970, p 1098.

²⁹⁸ *West Africa*, 17 October 1970, p 1230. It seems unlikely that the government had any evidence linking the two officers with a plot since they were never brought to trial.

²⁹⁹ Cox, *op. cit.*, p 212.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p 213.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p 216.

³⁰² The motivations of the other plotters remain obscure although Cox's suggestion that Bangura could attract support due to his "popularity among some junior officers" is a reasonable one. *Ibid.*

³⁰³ At both the Nigerian Military Training College in Kaduna, Nigeria and the Mons Officers Cadet School Momoh had won the Baton of Honour as the most outstanding overseas cadet. *West Africa*, 21 November 1983, p 2708.

Lansana's incompetence and unpopularity had provoked a coup d'etat. Equally significantly, Momoh was untainted by any prior coup involvement and had even provided Stevens with intelligence during the 1971 attempt.³⁰⁴

Stevens' success in promoting civilian control at the senior levels was more difficult to reproduce throughout the officer corps. Nevertheless, Stevens moved to implement a further purge of the officer corps, targeting the Temnes in particular. The coup attempt provided him with a pretext for the purges and the presence of the Guineans enabled him to undertake them with a minimum of risk. Horowitz has argued that the effectiveness of these moves could be found in the fact that although "ethnic grievances" among the Mende and Temne population still existed, thereafter "the means of expressing them through the officer corps" were "not readily accessible."³⁰⁵ He illustrates this point with reference to the 1974 coup attempt. Thus although Temne disaffection in the civilian sphere did find some support from (mainly Mende) soldiers, none of them was an officer and the attempt was easily thwarted.

Once implemented,³⁰⁶ Stevens' redesign paid useful dividends during the remainder of his rule even though his survival was not thereby guaranteed. There remained at least *some* junior Mende or Temne officers whose loyalty had not been assured and, despite the fact that coups have usually had their source in the officer corps, intervention from the (mainly Temne) rank-and-file could not be ruled out. Nevertheless, and in combination with other control techniques, Stevens had succeeded in significantly reducing the likelihood of military intervention.

When Momoh assumed power in 1985 the situation he faced was in no sense as problematic as that confronting his predecessor in 1968. The existing composition of the officer corps - dominated by Limbas and other Northern minority groups - was not the focus of drastic restructuring. Dissent within the army (as manifested in the 1988 coup attempt) continued to lack ready access to the officer corps. The only reports of dissent among senior officers occurred in 1988 when Momoh reportedly contemplated sacking Ahmed Toronka, the Deputy Force Commander. Toronka was apparently on bad terms with the Force Commander, Sheku Tarawalli, and rumours circulated that he had been fomenting discontent within the army.³⁰⁷ Some reports placed an ethnic slant on this episode suggesting that Toronka, though a Limba, was not a member of Momoh's "Binkolo hegemony"³⁰⁸ and as such had a motive for intervention. From this perspective, however,

³⁰⁴ David Fashole Luke, "Continuity in Sierra Leone: from Stevens to Momoh," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 10, No 1, 1988, p 76.

³⁰⁵ Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p 479.

³⁰⁶ Although Stevens did continue to undertake periodic purges of the officer corps (for example in both 1980 and 1982 officers were retired after allegations of plotting) they were minor compared to the drastic restructuring implemented during his first few years in power.

³⁰⁷ See *Africa Confidential*, 26 August, 1988. In the event it was judged too risky to sack Toronka and he remained as Deputy Commander until the 1992 coup.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.* See Chapter one for further discussion of Momoh's reliance on the Binkolo group.

it would be difficult to explain the continued loyalty of the Force Commander, himself a Koranko (from Koinadugu). Nor was ethnic loyalty an organising principle of discontent among junior officers. The two leading perpetrators of the 1992 coup were Strasser, a Creole, and Captain JB Bio, a Mende.³⁰⁹ However the fact that both had been engaged in frustrating action against the RUF was a far more important source of cohesion and dissatisfaction than ethnic identity.

External Assistance in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

One result of the unusual circumstances in which the Gambian armed forces were created was the special significance of external assistance. Senegalese military assistance was, until 1989, the single most important factor contributing to the success of civilian control.³¹⁰

The assistance was received in two phases. Phase one occurred immediately after the coup attempt when those Senegalese soldiers involved in quashing the rebellion were ordered to remain until more permanent security plans could be devised. They were stationed in Banjul, Brikama and Farafenni and, among other duties, were responsible for guarding State House and providing security for Jawara, his ministers and other "selected people."³¹¹ Phase two began in February 1982 with the creation of the Senegambian Confederation. The Confederation provided for the raising of confederal armed forces (an army and gendarmerie), to be composed from members of the armed forces of both states.³¹² The primary purpose of the forces, as laid out in the Defence Protocol, was the defence of "the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the independence of the two confederated states against all forms of external and internal subversion."³¹³

At least in the early years confederal security arrangements were characterised by Gambian dependence disguised as Senegalese-Gambian co-operation. The protocols clearly spelt out the leading role Senegal was to play with the size of the forces, their composition and type of equipment to be decided by the President of the Confederation (the Senegalese President) "in agreement with" the Vice President (the Gambian President). Supreme authority for the forces laid with the President of the Confederation. It was he who had responsibility for (in "consultation with," as opposed to in "agreement with," the Vice President) the deployment of the forces.³¹⁴ He

³⁰⁹ *Africa Confidential*, 8 May 1992.

³¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Senegalese presence was not the sole reason for the success of civilian control. On a simple level this is illustrated by the fact that a coup did not occur immediately after the troops' departure. Senegal's willingness to play the role of protector as well as the reasons for her withdrawal are examined in Chapter four.

³¹¹ For example Momodou Musa N'Jie, businessman and father-in-law of the President. *West Africa*, 15 February 1982, p 423.

³¹² This was only a partial integration. Both states retained, or in the case of The Gambia created, their national army and gendarmerie.

³¹³ Protocol on Confederal Defence and the Integration of the Armed Forces of the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal for the Establishment of the Armed Forces of the Senegambia Confederation, Part 1, Article 1. Reproduced in *The Gambia Onward*, 9 February 1983, p 3.

³¹⁴ They could "be deployed and stationed throughout the territories of the confederated states." *Ibid.*, Part 2,

was even given the power to declare a State of Emergency throughout the Confederation. The security Protocol presented a similar picture. Thus, the confederal security forces - composed of men and equipment of the police and gendarmerie of the two states and responsible for "public security" and to "prevent internal and external subversion" - were under the command of the Senegalese President.³¹⁵

In practical (as opposed to legislative) terms Senegal's predominance was even more apparent. It was, for example, agreed that The Gambia should contribute one-third and Senegal two-thirds of the army rank-and-file. Even then, The Gambia was unable to make any contribution until late 1985. By the end of 1987 the confederal army - which consisted of one Infantry Battalion - comprised four hundred and fifty Senegalese and one hundred and fifty Gambians. Similarly, the gendarmerie comprised two hundred and seventy three Senegalese and one hundred and ten Gambians.³¹⁶

In spite of a decision (taken in 1985) to divide Senegambia into six strategic zones, of which Dakar and Banjul were to form two,³¹⁷ confederal troops were never operational in Senegal. In The Gambia, units of the Senegalese army and gendarmerie were stationed at numerous posts including State House, the ports, airport, Oyster Creek Bridge, Kartong, Kudang and Basse.³¹⁸ Senegalese gendarmes also constituted the bulk of the Presidential Guard and the Security Brigade which was established in Banjul.

In leadership terms not only was the Senegalese President - Abdou Diouf - the permanent Commander-in-Chief of the forces but both the Confederal Minister of Defence and the Confederal Minister of Security were Senegalese.³¹⁹ Throughout the period of the Confederation all senior officers of the confederal army and gendarmerie were also Senegalese.³²⁰ Senegal was also the major contributor to the confederal budget, a large proportion of which was allocated to defence. In 1987 for example the total confederal budget - of which 70% spent on defence - was D78m. Of this The Gambia's contribution was D26m.³²¹

Jawara's willingness to relinquish control of The Gambia's internal security reflected the

Article 2.

³¹⁵ Protocol on Confederal Security and the Integration of the Security Forces of the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal for the Establishment of the Security Forces of the Senegambia Confederation. Reproduced in *The Gambia Onward*, 9 February 1983, p 3.

³¹⁶ *Foroyaa Supplement*, 30 December 1987, p 24.

³¹⁷ *West Africa*, 7 January 1985, p 35.

³¹⁸ *The Gambia Weekly*, 8 September 1989, p 4.

³¹⁹ The former post was initially held by Mr. Daouda Sow (who held the same portfolio in Senegalese cabinet) and the latter by Mr. Medoune Fall (Minister of Interior in Senegalese cabinet.)

³²⁰ According to *Foroyaa*, "the special Chief of Staff of the President of the Confederation, Inspector General of the Confederal armed forces, Commander of the Confederal Gendarmerie, Chief of Staff of the Confederal armed forces, Commander of the military zone No 2 in The Gambia and Head of the unit of the Confederal battalion stationed in The Gambia are all Senegalese." *Foroyaa Supplement*, 30 December 1987, p 25.

³²¹ *Foroyaa Supplement*, 30 December 1987, pp 17-18.

utility of the Senegalese presence as a mechanism of civilian control. Soldiers were unlikely to attempt a coup faced with the virtual certainty of immediate Senegalese retaliation. The likelihood that Senegal would, if necessary, send reinforcements provided a further disincentive to intervention.

In the longer-term, however, Senegal's assistance had mixed results. On the positive side Welch's suggestion that the longer the duration of control the more likely the army will be "to internalize the belief that their subordination is appropriate and should not be lightly set aside," is apposite.³²² That soldiers did not rebel immediately after Senegal's departure can be partly attributed to the lingering effects of several years of control. On the other hand, Welch's argument that the longer the period of control the better civilian institutions can "exercise control, their members having gained experience and expertise," is less relevant.³²³ During the 1980's the Gambian leadership failed to gain experience, the presence of Senegalese troops more or less precluding the possibility of military intervention. If anything, the years of control produced complacency rather than expertise on the part of Jawara.

One issue upon which Jawara could not be accused of complacency concerned the extent of Senegal's influence in The Gambia.³²⁴ In spite of Senegal's objections Jawara was determined to retain the maximum possible control over security matters and set about achieving this by courting alternative sources of external assistance. He insisted that The Gambia would continue to co-operate with her "traditional" friends - as early as November 1981 Jawara stated that he "envisaged an important role for British and Commonwealth training even where a good deal of harmonisation would exist with the Senegalese army in the Confederation."³²⁵ In the event the British were charged with responsibility for the training of the army while the Senegalese were confined to the gendarmerie.³²⁶

³²² Welch, *op. cit.*, 1976, p 27.

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ By requesting Senegal's assistance, Jawara gave his critics ample opportunity to charge him with compromising The Gambia's sovereignty and accordingly took great pains to portray the Confederation as a desirable and logical "next-step" in relations with Senegal. He denied that The Gambia's sovereignty had been compromised, indicating the existence of certain European nations who could not maintain their security without the help of federal troops: "One example that comes to mind is the Federal Republic of Germany and Eastern Germany. In each country you have powerful foreign troops there to maintain security" (*West Africa*, 18 January 1982, p 137). Jawara also attempted to show that he was taking concrete steps to protect The Gambia's interests. Thus, towards the end of 1985 it became known that he wanted a change in the confederal defence arrangement which, as he put it, "still calls for a great deal of work." He particularly objected to the clause which enabled the Senegalese President to declare a State of Emergency throughout the Confederation "in consultation with" the Gambian President. It was reported that, since the Gambian constitution stated that only the Gambian President could declare a State of Emergency in the country, Jawara wanted his agreement to be a precondition. *West Africa*, 18 November 1985, p 2445. Jawara's attempts to contain Senegal's influence and appease public opinion concerning non-military matters are covered in Chapter four.

³²⁵ Interview with the *Glasgow Herald*, reported in *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 30 November 1981, p 129.

³²⁶ Jawara also deliberately excluded the police from the confederal arrangements, despite the fact that the Senegalese were desirous of their inclusion. In the House of Representatives, nominated member Alhaji Alieu Badjie noted that they had "stood firm" to keep the police out of the Confederation. *Minutes of the*

The agreement on British military assistance was reached in 1983 and the first army recruits were trained by a team of four trainers³²⁷ known as the British Army Training Team (BATT).³²⁸ Britain also donated uniforms and equipment to the GNA and Gambians were offered training in various British institutions including Sandhurst³²⁹ and the Royal Military Academy Centre. The British government continued to provide training for senior army officers even after the departure of BATT in October 1992.³³⁰ Particularly during the late 1980s and early 1990s Jawara also sought, and received, aid from other sources. The USA, Pakistan, Ghana and the PRC all provided places in their military academies for officers. The latter also sent a Weapons Training Team to work in The Gambia. Training for gendarmerie officers was provided by Morocco and Turkey (who also provided training assistance within The Gambia).³³¹

An important question is whether the division of training, particularly between Britain and Senegal, aided civilian control. As noted previously, training by different countries may serve to fragment the armed forces rendering them less knowledgeable about each other and hence more manageable. However, the small size of The Gambia - particularly Banjul and its environs where the army and gendarmerie were based - hindered any complete division of the forces. The applicability of the proposition that external assistance enables domestic funds to be directed towards pay and benefits is also in doubt. In The Gambia external assistance was less an added bonus than a precondition for creating the armed forces. A potential exception was the generous assistance provided by the PRC. Apart from donating two mobile armouries and a mobile magazine for storage of ammunition and light weapons, worth approximately D1m,³³² in 1991 China approved an interest free loan of D13.5m for the Yundum Barracks Project. As noted above, however, progress on the project was too slow to appease the army.

From the perspective of civilian control, then, the utility of external assistance prior to 1989 was more or less confined to Senegal's presence. Reflecting the perceived benefits of external protection, in 1992 Jawara announced the imminent arrival of a Nigerian training team. The Nigerian Armed Forces Training Group (NATAG), which originally comprised sixty-nine officers and men (increased to eighty by 1993), arrived in May 1992. The original length of stay was to be two years although Jawara later stated that this could be extended. The team consisted of four

Proceedings of the House of Representatives in the 1991/92 Legislative Session, 11-13th February 1991 (Banjul, Government Printer), p 52.

³²⁷ Including two officers and two NCOs led by Major Kenneth Wright, a Quartermaster from the Royal Electrical Mechanical and Engineering Corps.

³²⁸ In 1987 *West Africa* also reported the presence of "a special crack force of British SAS rather permanently stationed here." *West Africa*, 23 March 1987, p 554. It has, however, been impossible to verify this.

³²⁹ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 3 April 1985, p 1.

³³⁰ *Records of the House of Representatives, The sitting of Thursday 26th November 1992 in the Second Legislative Session, 1992/93, Question No 2/92/93* (Banjul, Government Printer).

³³¹ Details of external assistance were provided by the Permanent Secretary of Defence, Sulayman A Jack (interview with the author, 6 January 1994).

³³² *The Gambia Weekly*, 17 January 1992, p 1.

Lieutenant-Colonels, five Majors, three Captains and Colonel Abubakar Dada (promoted to Brigadier-General in January 1993) who was appointed Force Commander.

Jawara's request for Nigerian assistance stemmed from his perceived need to boost civilian control.³³³ At the first sign of trouble (namely the first protest over late payments) he fell back on the tried and trusted technique of an external security guarantee. In retrospect however, the request proved a serious miscalculation. For one thing it was a blow to the soldiers' professional integrity. Many felt that Jawara's actions indicated a lack of trust; the fact that the army had been functioning without external help for some time only served to reinforce this feeling. In this sense the Nigerian presence was far more provocative than that of the Senegalese with which the army had "matured." It was also more of an irritant than the British presence since, with the British, issues of rank seniority had not arisen. Prior to 1992, the very "newness" of the army (and the concomitant absence of a pre-existing hierarchy) convinced many soldiers that their future was potentially bright. The arrival of the Nigerians, who filled all the top ranks, removed this source of optimism (and civilian control) as middle-ranking officers in particular felt their promotion prospects were bound to suffer.

The extent of Jawara's miscalculation did not end here. Presumably he was depending on the Nigerian presence to deter prospective coup plotters or, failing that, to assist in defeating any attempt at intervention. In the event he was wrong on both counts. Significantly, the Nigerian presence was far smaller and much less intimidating than the Senegalese presence prior to 1989. Moreover when a coup did occur Nigeria remained strictly neutral.³³⁴ This is perhaps hardly surprising when one considers that she had little to gain (certainly much less than Senegal) by propping up Jawara's regime.

The Gambia's experience of external assistance illustrates both the efficacy of an external guarantee and the dangers of engaging in half measures. Quite simply, Nigeria's deterrent potential failed to outweigh the irritation her presence produced. Jawara - having enjoyed the benefits of Senegal's much greater deterrent potential - placed too much faith in external assistance as a means to civilian control and to some extent neglected other potentially rewarding control techniques.

In Sierra Leone external military assistance played a much less important role in the maintenance of civilian control although it was, on occasion, used to complement other strategies. The most important instance of foreign assistance was that rendered by Guinea in the early 1970's.

³³³ Publicly, government officials argued that the Nigerian presence was unavoidable given a shortage of suitably qualified Gambians. However, as local sources point out, this was hardly convincing especially given that the highest post, that of Force Commander, had previously been held by two Gambians. In theory Lieutenant-Colonel Chris Davies, who was senior to the previous commander Maba Jobe, could have been recalled from the ECOMOG contingent in Liberia to fill the position of Force Commander.

³³⁴ Several local observers predicted this eventuality; one (in conversation with the author) questioning whether Jawara was wise to believe he could "count on Nigeria in times of crisis." Undoubtedly those soldiers who perpetrated the 1994 coup had made similar calculations.

On March 28 1971 Guinean troops were flown in to Sierra Leone and in the space of a few days over two hundred had arrived and assumed responsibility for security at Pademba Road Prison, State House and Stevens' residence and office.³³⁵

Stevens' public insistence that assistance was needed to restore law and order and protect lives and property³³⁶ following the attempted coup of March 23 provided a suitable pretext for the introduction of Guinean troops. Uppermost in his mind, however, was the deteriorating state of civil-military relations. Thus, Stevens had been hankering after an external security guarantee even prior to the attempted coup. On December 22 1970, during an emergency meeting of Parliament, a motion had been approved giving Stevens the authority to enter into discussions with Guinea and Liberia on the possibility of common defence arrangements.³³⁷ Early in February a delegation was dispatched to Guinea to begin negotiations, followed soon after by a joint Sierra Leone-Guinea delegation to Liberia.³³⁸ Then, on March 17, Stevens himself visited Conakry to have discussions with Touré on matters including defence arrangements.³³⁹

The urgency with which Stevens approached the matter of a common defence pact³⁴⁰ must be viewed in the context of his relations with the military, in particular the Force Commander. The strained nature of the Stevens-Bangura relationship rendered an extra security guarantee a very attractive proposition. At the same time, however, it was imperative that Stevens should proceed with caution. Even entering into negotiations would have a damaging effect on army morale if it appeared that Stevens lacked trust in his own troops. Accordingly, Stevens portrayed the negotiations as designed to protect Guinea rather than Sierra Leone. The opportunity to do so was provided by the Portuguese inspired invasion of Guinea on November 22 1970. Following the invasion the government had announced its willingness "to consider any suggestion from the President and Government of Guinea as to ways and means of giving effective support to the people of Guinea in their hour of need."³⁴¹

Despite Stevens' caution some observers suggest that the impending defence agreement³⁴² was one cause of the 1971 coup attempt. If anything however it probably explained little more than

³³⁵ *West Africa*, 30 April 1971, p 490.

³³⁶ *West Africa*, 9 April 1971, pp 385-86. Stevens' defence of his decision to request assistance was belied by the fact that, by the time the troops arrived, Freetown was relatively calm. After the coup and the arrest of the main protagonists he admitted more freely that the defence pact had been signed partly due to "a terrible rift in our armed forces."

³³⁷ *West Africa*, 2-8 January 1971, p 23.

³³⁸ Tubman's involvement did not extend beyond agreeing "in principle" to the pact.

³³⁹ *West Africa*, 9 April 1971, pp 385-86.

³⁴⁰ The pact, eventually signed by Stevens on March 26 provided for the co-ordination of the armed forces to secure the joint defence of peace and security and the combining of all means of defence to allow any attack "from wherever it came" to be faced. *West Africa*, 9 April 1971, pp 385-86. It is worth noting that Stevens had not been given the authority to conclude a defence pact - it was not ratified in Parliament until after Guinean troops had arrived in Sierra Leone.

³⁴¹ Abraham and Turay, *op. cit.*, p 146.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

the timing of the attempt. Thus, Bangura may have wished to strike before Stevens had been given the chance to install Guinean troops. Nevertheless the defence pact did perhaps provide a partial explanation for the defeat of the coup with loyal troops' awareness of the possibility of Guinean intervention³⁴³ strengthening their resolve.

Guinean soldiers remained in Sierra Leone until March 1973.³⁴⁴ During this period they constituted an effective deterrent to further coups. Thus, although there were only about three hundred soldiers stationed in Sierra Leone (and even this number was reduced before long) the Guinean army numbered approximately five thousand and Touré promised to place them all at the government's disposal if necessary. As Stevens put it, the government "could now meet force with treble force so let no-one venture."³⁴⁵

Adekanye has suggested that the utility of Guinean assistance extended far beyond March 1973. He argues that, but for the use or "threat of" this factor, it is "almost certain" that civilian control would have "foundered ... not just at the time of the abortive coup attempts of March 1971 and July 1974 ... but also during any of those general elections of May 1973, 1977, and 1982 held to date."³⁴⁶ However, several factors cast doubt on this conclusion. First, if the simple "threat" of Guinean intervention was so effective one wonders why there was a coup attempt at all in 1974. Second, Stevens realised that the constant threat of external intervention would damage army morale and never gave any indication that he intended recalling Guinean troops. Even when troops were present Stevens deliberately restricted their use³⁴⁷ and made it clear their stay was only temporary. And finally, Stevens only felt sufficiently secure to "go it alone" after he had implemented alternative techniques of control - particularly the establishment of the ISU. The Guinean presence was crucial in enabling Stevens to establish the ISU "safely" and in that sense did have a long-term, albeit indirect, impact upon civil-military relations. Nevertheless the very fact that Stevens perceived the need for a para-military organisation suggests that he was not willing to rely upon the "threat" of Guinean intervention to maintain civilian control.

Apart from the Guinean intervention, external assistance played a minor role in civilian control under both Stevens and Momoh (until 1991). Both were more than willing to devote a hefty proportion of the budget to defence (and within that to pay and benefits) which rendered the need for extensive foreign help less pressing.³⁴⁸ It was, then, not until the 1990's that external assistance

³⁴³ Lieutenant-Colonel Sam King, who led the loyalists, had been one of the members of the final Sierra Leonean delegation to Conakry

³⁴⁴ The reasons Guinea was prepared to send troops, as well as the limits to this willingness to assist are discussed in Chapter four.

³⁴⁵ *West Africa*, 9 April 1971, pp 385-6.

³⁴⁶ J Bayo Adekanye, "Politics in a Post-Military State in Africa," *Politico*, Vol 49, No 1, 1984, p 55.

³⁴⁷ By January 1972 troops numbered just eighty-five and were stationed at State House, Stevens' residence and the prison. *West Africa*, 14 January 1972, p 31.

³⁴⁸ Having said that, the army did receive assistance both in training - for example from Nigeria, Tanzania, Egypt, South Korea and Britain (*West Africa*, 10 July 1978, p 1364 and 16 October 1978, p 2068) - and the

re-emerged as an important factor in the maintenance of control.

Following the initial rebel raids, as it became clear that the army was wholly unprepared to defend its country, Momoh requested assistance from a wide variety of sources. Immediately responsive were Nigeria and Guinea who promised to send troops to be deployed alongside the Sierra Leonean military.³⁴⁹ These troops, which arrived during April and May and numbered approximately fifteen hundred,³⁵⁰ rescued the army from total humiliation at the hands of the rebels. Further assistance, of the "non-lethal" variety, was provided by the USA - including much needed medical supplies, communications equipment³⁵¹ and vehicles - and Britain. According to the Sierra Leonean High commissioner in London, by June the government had received support from the US, Britain, the USSR, Saudi Arabia, Iran, China, Ghana and Egypt.³⁵²

This assistance helped delay Momoh's downfall. The troops from Nigeria and Guinea were vital in halting the rapid progress of the rebels across Sierra Leone and the shortages of equipment and medical supplies, prominent among the soldiers' initial grievances, were partially eased. In the longer term however, and despite Momoh's continuing enthusiasm for courting foreign assistance, it failed to compensate for his failure to make progress on the economic front (notably in terms of a new deal with the IMF, as detailed in Chapter one) or his resulting inability to feed the soldiers or pay their wages. It was this failure which eventually proved decisive.

The Coups d'Etat.

Before drawing the themes of this chapter together it is important to provide some additional analysis of the failed coups in each state, as well as those which eventually succeeded in defeating the two regimes. Regarding the former, the aim is to explain why the coups failed as well as to shed light upon the relative (if changing) importance of civilian control strategies during those periods in which the armed forces deferred to civilian supremacy. This objective should also be furthered through an examination of the successful coups, looking particularly at those factors which facilitated military success in comparison to previous years.

In Sierra Leone the causes and failure of the 1971 coup attempt highlighted two important points about the state of civilian control during the early years of Stevens' rule. These were his failure to establish loyalty *throughout* the officer corps (with the Force Commander, Brigadier Bangura leading the coup) and the dangers of a convergence of elite-led civilian and military

provision of hardware. In 1973, for example, China provided two patrol boats for the army (*West Africa*, 2 July 1973, p 897). Under Momoh a new package was agreed with China, part of which provided for the construction of a new military headquarters in Freetown (*West Africa*, 16 March 1987, p 536).

³⁴⁹ *West Africa*, 22-28 April 1991, p 625. They were concerned about the possible spread of instability in the region, particularly Guinea because of her geographical proximity to Sierra Leone.

³⁵⁰ Nigeria provided twelve hundred and Guinea "several hundred" *West Africa*, 27 May-2 June 1991, p 863.

³⁵¹ *West Africa*, 24-30 June 1991, p 1034.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p 940.

disaffection. Reported links between Bangura and the UDP leaders - all of whom resented Stevens' perceived over-reliance upon Creoles and Northern minority groups in both the civilian and military spheres - appear to have been one cause of the coup when Stevens opted to arrest the latter. That he chose to use the army against domestic political opponents was a further, related, factor in the intervention.

The failure of the coup was attributable to two main factors, incompetent planning and execution on the part of the perpetrators (see p 179 above) and the loyalty of a majority of senior officers. Regarding the latter, the existence of intra-military divisions was crucial. Stevens' tendency to by-pass Bangura in favour of his subordinates had played an important role in producing these divisions; they were one cause of the coup but also a factor in its defeat. Added to this was the threat of the Guinean factor. The impending defence agreement with Guinea may have encouraged Bangura to intervene *when* he did but, more importantly, also served to strengthen the resolve of those predisposed to remain loyal.

The causes and failure of the coup exerted a significant impact upon Stevens' subsequent approach to civilian control. That most senior officers had opted to remain loyal demonstrated the utility of his initial attempts to redesign the officer corps; in purely ascriptive terms there appeared no reason for Stevens to change tack. Nevertheless, officer loyalty was in part a function of material satisfaction - both hitherto, and a belief this would continue in future. Strained relations between Bangura and other officers convinced the latter they had potentially more to gain from APC rule than a military regime headed by a snubbed and resentful rival officer, Bangura. Stevens understood the importance of meeting officer expectations.

The need for continued senior-level loyalty as a counterweight to alternative sources of opposition was revealed with particular clarity in 1971. Bangura aside, the perpetrators of the coup were mainly junior officers of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Clearly, Stevens' success in promoting civilian control at the senior levels had been, and would continue to be, more difficult to reproduce throughout the officer corps. Although he moved to implement a further purge of the officer corps, reducing the likelihood of a further convergence of military and civilian disaffection, there remained at least *some* junior Mende or Temne officers whose loyalty had not been assured. Equally, intervention from the mainly Temne rank-and-file could not be ruled out.

These remaining "gaps" in Stevens' attempts to establish civilian control caused him not only to continue to rely heavily on the provision of material satisfaction (for all ranks) but also to innovate. The ISU was designed as both a counterweight to the army and, in recognition of the recently revealed dangers of using the army internally, as an instrument of coercion.

In the light of Stevens' efforts one can begin to understand the failure of the 1974 coup attempt. The spectacular incompetence of the attempt was indubitable, and yet equally significant was the limited extent of military involvement. Civilian malcontents received some support from

the rank-and-file but failed to replicate this within the officer corps. Disentangling the reasons for this failure - which no doubt contributed to the speedy collapse of the attempt - is problematic. Whether ascriptive manipulation or material satisfaction assumed *prime* importance in assuring officer loyalty is difficult to tell, although the impact of the combination of the two was clearly significant.

Stevens' need to continue to pursue these tactics was apparent. Regarding alternative strategies, however, the coup attempt relayed mixed messages. For example, although there was evidence to suggest the plotters' awareness of the ISU's potential to frustrate their plans they were not thereby deterred from carrying them out. This development hardly validated Stevens' apparent belief in the utility of a counterweight. On the other hand it could be argued that the coup attempt was, in part, a function of the incompleteness of Stevens' strategy rather than an indication of failure. Certainly from 1974 the ISU gained in confidence and strength and alongside this development no further coups were attempted. Given this, one can speculate that the ISU assumed an increasingly important deterrent role although in the final analysis (and here we return to the ever-present problem of explaining "non-events") such informed guesswork is the most that is possible.

The same problem applies to the factor of material satisfaction. Thus, both the 1971 and 1974 coup attempts could be interpreted in one of two (not necessarily mutually exclusive) ways. First they appeared to show that maintaining material satisfaction would not, by itself, guarantee military acquiescence. That Stevens absorbed this lesson was demonstrated by his willingness and ability to pursue complementary control techniques. Second, it is possible that the coups reflected the fact that Stevens, despite significant efforts in this direction, had not done enough to enhance military satisfaction. Once again, in his efforts to close all loopholes, Stevens took this lesson on board with increasing allocations to the military and a decision to co-opt Brigadier Momoh as a Minister of State. As argued above, this move was designed not only to reinforce elite-level loyalty but to reassure *all* soldiers that their interests would be protected.

The 1974 coup attempt was the last to materialise under APC rule prior to the overthrow of the regime in 1992. The 1987 *plot*, as noted above, featured only limited military disaffection and revealed little about the overall control strategies of the APC other than that, for the most part, they were working. Hence Momoh's early discovery of the plot together with the prompt response of loyal soldiers. Perhaps most significantly the plot highlighted the fact that although Momoh's position was vulnerable (see Chapter One) political rivals enjoyed minimal support among the officer corps; complicity was limited to low ranking NCO's and privates.

If, in one sense, the absence of coup attempts from 1974 onwards renders it difficult to disentangle the reasons behind the APC's continued ability to maintain civilian control, the successful coup of April 29 1992 helps to shed some additional light. The coup was headed by 27

year old Captain Valentine Strasser who, together with a group of junior officers, attacked Momoh's residence and seized control of the radio station. They apparently met with minimal resistance; Momoh himself escaped over the border to Guinea.

The primary motive for intervention was military dissatisfaction and to that extent the coup affirmed the vitally important place held by military satisfaction in the APC's maintenance of civilian control hitherto. There were two inter-linked aspects to the prevailing dissatisfaction. First, the increasing disillusionment of junior officers and rank-and-file soldiers, being asked to fight a war with grossly inadequate equipment, late or non-existent wages and insufficient food rations. Strasser himself had been severely injured during the fighting but had apparently been refused the money to seek medical attention overseas.³⁵³ Second, the inevitable readiness of these men to compare their situation with that of the senior ranks, still living a life of comparative luxury back in the capital. The apparent indifference of civil and military elites, still engaging in a mutually supportive, reciprocal relationship was key to explaining the events of 1992.

Whereas the APC's tolerance of senior-level military corruption and its decision to direct increasingly scarce resources to the military's immediate consumption needs (regular wages and subsidised food) as opposed to equipment had in previous years constituted important aspects of the regime's survival, they now served to undermine civilian control. The war was key to explaining both these reversals, though much more so in the case of minimal expenditure on equipment which would not otherwise have emerged as a problem. Resentment of elite-level corruption was undoubtedly enhanced in the context of suffering engendered by the war although, even had it not occurred, it is likely that increasing resource shortages would ultimately have undermined intra-military cohesion and the system of mutual benefits. It is unlikely that Momoh would have opted to halt military elite accumulation in favour of the rank-and-file given the risks involved.

The success of the 1992 coup in contrast to previous attempts was attributable to various factors. Better executed (if hardly better prepared), the 1992 coup also stemmed from a more widespread and determined base of disaffection. Resource shortages were key to explaining this disaffection and served to undermine alternative control strategies. Ethnicity, for example, was not an organising principle of discontent among junior officers (see above). That the perpetrators of the coup had been engaged in demoralising and frustrating action against the RUF overrode their ethnic diversity. This should not be taken to imply that ascriptive techniques played no role in Momoh's survival - if, for example, he had opted to restructure the senior officer corps intervention from that quarter might have resulted - but it does suggest the centrality of material satisfaction. A similar point applies to the counterweight strategy of control. Whereas in previous years the SSD had played an important role in safeguarding the regime it is highly unlikely that the force remained

³⁵³ Alfred Zack-Williams and Stephen Riley, "Sierra Leone: the Coup and its Consequences," *Review of African Political Economy*, No 56, March 1993, pp 94-95.

untouched by the overall decline in available resources which caused such suffering among army personnel. This, combined with the measures undertaken by Momoh to domesticate the force (see above), meant the SSD's vested interest in the survival of the APC regime was at an all time low; during the 1992 coup it chose to remain neutral.

One final observation centres upon the relationship between the overall standing of the APC regime in 1992 and the military coup. Two factors suggest a positive, causal, relationship. Thus, it is quite clear that the progressive weakness of the regime's economic resource-base was an important factor in the coup, motivating the perpetrators and, perhaps, encouraging Momoh's speedy exit. Added to this, the APC's growing unpopularity among "ordinary" Sierra Leoneans probably played some part in Strasser's calculations; he could at least be reasonably confident that intervention would not precipitate national outrage. That is not to say all Sierra Leoneans desired military intervention. Some no doubt would have preferred to wait for the outcome of multi-party elections, though it should be stressed that peoples' faith in Momoh's willingness and ability to preside over free and fair elections was waning.

If one can discern a relationship between the overall standing of the APC and the military coup it is important not to overstate its causal importance. This coup (and those attempts which had gone before) were, primarily, the result of intra-military dissent. In terms of popular support the APC had grown progressively weaker over the years and yet it is pertinent to note that coup attempts had been more prevalent not towards the end, but during the early part, of Stevens' rule. Mass civilian disaffection was not the key to explaining Sierra Leone's fluctuating civil-military relations. It was only when the causes of the APC's unpopularity (declining resources, widespread corruption, inability to prosecute the war etc) began to materially affect some sections of the military that a successful coup occurred.

In The Gambia, by way of contrast, the July 1981 attempted coup was closely linked to events in the non-military sphere; indeed, the intervention was inspired and led by civilians. Nevertheless Field Force participation - crucial to the potency of the attempt - was not prompted by the radical politics of disgruntled civilians, nor did it reflect the *failure* of civilian control strategies *per se*. Rather, the intervention had its origins in the PPP's noticeable failure to *pursue* control strategies; the neglect of rank-and-file material satisfaction simply provided the clearest and most damaging example of this tendency. Rank-and-file grievances - possibly imbued with ethnic overtones - focused upon the apparent indifference of both PPP and Field Force elites to their inadequate salaries, living conditions and career structure. This resentment found expression and release in 1981. Given a chance to escape from the tedium of barracks life and perhaps make a material difference to their lives, some Field Force men seized the day.

Nevertheless, by no means all did and here we begin to understand part of the reason for the failure of the coup. The failure was rooted in both internal and external factors. The latter -

assistance proffered by the Senegalese³⁵⁴ - was clearly crucial to the PPP's survival; without it the coup may well have succeeded. Nevertheless the fact that Senegal was willing and able to intervene also reflected the state of play in The Gambia. Clearly Senegal had her own reasons for wishing to uphold PPP rule (see Chapter four) and yet would have been far more reluctant to do so had the coup plotters enjoyed greater domestic support. The limited support among "ordinary" Gambians is explained elsewhere.³⁵⁵ Field Force support, expressed as active participation, was restricted to the lower ranks and even then some remained loyal while many were not actively involved in the fighting on either side.

Before accounting for this limited support it is important to stress its two-fold role in the collapse of the coup. First, to reiterate, it is unlikely that Senegalese intervention would have been encouraged by the prospect of mass armed resistance by Gambian Field Force personnel. Second, and linked to this, the successful efforts of some senior officers and elements of the rank-and-file to create and maintain a "defence zone" within the Central Police Station, thus ensuring a safe haven for the Vice-President and other ministers "to claim to the outside world, as well as reassure the wavering President in London, that the Government still existed"³⁵⁶ provided a basis for the Senegalese intervention.

The loyalty of senior officers was based upon the range of factors outlined above, notably their relatively privileged position and Jawara's strategy of elite accommodation which, if he could be restored to power, offered greater future security than life under Sanyang. In the immediate term, and according to the then Vice-President,³⁵⁷ officers as well as civilians present in the Police Station were well aware they would be arrested (at the very least) by rebel forces even had they not opted to resist. The loyalty of some elements of the rank-and-file is less amenable to explanation although it was certainly far from clear what exactly they had to gain from Sanyang's rule. Fear of the unknown, fear of defeat and subsequent punishment and, possibly, loyalty to the person of Jawara all constituted possible determinants of individual behaviour.

That no further coup attempts occurred after 1981 was attributable to the Senegalese presence until 1989. However, this observation leaves a number of questions unanswered. Would, for example, a coup have occurred in the absence of the Senegalese? If the Senegalese presence was all-important why did a coup not occur soon after her departure? What were the internal bases for civilian control? Some attempt to answer these questions has already been attempted. This section considers whether an analysis of the successful coup of 1994 can shed any further light.

³⁵⁴ See Chapter four.

³⁵⁵ See Chapters one and three which posit the plotters' incompetence as one explanation. This incompetence also helped to account for Senegal's willingness to intervene as detailed in Chapter four.

³⁵⁶ Arnold Hughes, "The Attempted Gambian Coup d'Etat of 30 July 1981" in Hughes (ed.), *The Gambia: Studies in Society and Politics* (Birmingham University African Studies Series 3, 1991), p 99.

³⁵⁷ Interview with the author, 24 August 1993.

A hastily planned affair,³⁵⁸ the Gambian coup d'etat of 1994 took place during the morning of 22 July when soldiers, led by Lt Yaya Jammeh, seized key installations including the airport and radio, disarmed the TSG in Bakau and marched upon State House. The take-over apparently met with little resistance, despite Jammeh's claims to the contrary; Jawara himself, along with various government officials, escaped to *La Moure County*, a US tank landing ship moored off the coast. Following an unsuccessful broadcast from the ship, appealing to soldiers not to destroy democracy in The Gambia, Jawara was taken to Senegal.

Analysing the causes of the coup it would be unwise to place too much emphasis upon the inevitably altruistic public statements offered by the coup leaders. Their justification for intervening - and promises of change - contained three components, centring upon the prevalence of "rampant outrageous corruption",³⁵⁹ the flaws of the political system and inadequate levels of economic development. Nevertheless it is only the first of these that can be seen, in retrospect, to have had a significant impact upon the decision to intervene. Even so, it did not reflect a genuine desire to halt the incidence of corruption but rather reflected the soldiers' belief that the perceived increase in corruption was operating to their detriment. As in Sierra Leone, intra-military grievances rather than the overall standing of the regime *per se* were crucial to explaining intervention.³⁶⁰ The occurrence of corruption since the coup appears to affirm that the soldiers were more interested in gaining access to the economic rewards of political control than introducing a new economic probity.

The soldiers' avowed intent to introduce a "genuine" democratic system was even less convincing,³⁶¹ and in retrospect appears to have been little more than a publicity stunt designed to maximise support - or at least minimise overt hostility - from both Gambians and the international community. Events in the years since the coup serve to affirm this interpretation.³⁶² Events also serve to confirm early suspicions - roused by Jammeh's initial failure to present a critique of previous economic policies or to produce credible alternatives - that future economic development was not at the forefront of the soldiers' minds when they decided to intervene. In the event Jammeh's vague promise to introduce "our own programmes" did not precipitate any radical change of approach in economic development. What, then, were the real causes of the coup?

Examining the coup in the light of the above discussion, it is possible to identify its causes

³⁵⁸ It appears to have been planned the previous night. For further details see John A Wiseman and Elizabeth Vidler, "The July 1994 Coup d'Etat in The Gambia: The End of an Era," *The Round Table*, No 53, 1995, pp 56-57.

³⁵⁹ *Daily Observer*, 25 July 1994.

³⁶⁰ Although, as in Sierra Leone, non-military factors (notably the impact of structural adjustment upon urban dwellers) may have helped persuade the rebels that intervention would not be widely resisted.

³⁶¹ Indeed it was rather ironic that The Gambia - once more bucking the general trend - embarked on her first experience of army rule in the period when most other African states were returning to some form of multi-party system.

³⁶² See John A. Wiseman, "Military Rule in The Gambia: an Interim Assessment," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 17, No 5, 1996, pp 917-40.

in Jawara's failure to pursue key mechanisms of civilian control sufficiently thoroughly. Particularly important was the continuing absence of military satisfaction - notably the late payments and poor living conditions outlined above.³⁶³

The fact that military grievances constituted a primary cause of the coup highlights an important aspect of Jawara's search for civilian control, confirming that, in contrast to the situation prevailing in Sierra Leone, the search was not - and never had been - based upon ensuring military satisfaction, at least within the lower ranks. In spite of the ECOMOG payments debacle, the army which perpetrated the 1994 coup was not, in general terms, noticeably worse (perhaps slightly better³⁶⁴) off than that which had remained quiescent over a lengthy period. Day to day living conditions - though never especially good - had not noticeably deteriorated in the weeks or months prior to the coup.

This observation begs the question as to why intervention had not occurred previously. The importance of external assistance prior to 1989 has already been sufficiently emphasised, but why wait five years to act upon by then long-term dissatisfaction? Several possible explanations can be identified. First, the military appeared willing to wait, at least for a time, for PPP pledges (of which there was no shortage) to be fulfilled. This patience was reinforced by psychological barriers to intervention on the part of a force which had remained loyal since its inception. The ECOMOG protests - which demonstrated the military's power to win concessions from the PPP regime - were the first sign that these barriers were beginning to be breached. The gradual nature of this process partly reflected the fact that the army had suffered relative hardship over many years in contrast to Sierra Leone where the army had enjoyed a privileged position over an extended period. In Sierra Leone the *downturn* in living standards was keenly felt, serving as a catalyst for intervention. In The Gambia long-held grievances provided the context for intervention but not, by definition, the catalyst.

Nevertheless it is possible to identify several catalysts prompting the 1994 coup: participation in the ECOMOG peace-keeping operations which served to heighten expectations;³⁶⁵ the much resented Nigerian presence and, more immediately, an incident which took place at Yundum Airport on the day prior to the coup, when Jammeh and a number of other soldiers - there to greet Jawara from his annual leave - had been disarmed and sent back to barracks under suspicion of plotting a coup.³⁶⁶ From statements made by Jammeh in the aftermath of the coup it was clear he felt this personal slight keenly. A final possible causal factor was contagion, the Sierra Leonean

³⁶³ Following the coup, Jammeh opted to increase military spending. See *ibid.*, p 923.

³⁶⁴ As noted above, after the initial ECOMOG protest Jawara had begun to pay more attention to the issue of military satisfaction.

³⁶⁵ See above.

³⁶⁶ It was the Presidential Guard which performed the disarming of the soldiers. According to Wiseman, *op. cit.*, p 920, in 1989 Jammeh had served as Commander of the Presidential Guard "and was known to be resentful of the fact that he had been transferred from this position after around four months".

coup having clearly demonstrated what low-ranking, young soldiers could achieve.³⁶⁷ Unfortunately there is little firm evidence to either confirm or repudiate this possibility.

The success of the 1994 coup - in contrast to the failure of the 1981 coup - was primarily attributable to the virtual absence of resistance, both internally and externally. Regarding the latter, not only did Senegal fail to replicate her crucial offer of assistance in 1981, that country's supposed "replacement" - Nigeria - similarly opted for a neutral stance. Senegal's decision to stay out of The Gambia was hardly surprising. The benefits she had hoped to accrue from closer association after proffering assistance in 1981³⁶⁸ had not materialised, and there was no reason to believe things would be different this time around. Meanwhile, Nigeria's interests in The Gambia had never reached anything like the scale or nature of Senegal's. Essentially, she had little to gain by upholding PPP rule. Other states likewise failed to proffer assistance. The USA for example - who one presumes would have had little difficulty in halting the intervention - appears to have briefly considered the possibility of supporting Jawara when the Captain of *La Moure County* contacted his superiors in Washington, but in the event assistance was not forthcoming. Part of the reason centred upon Jammeh's apparent moderation and willingness to co-opt civilian politicians (notably the widely respected Bakary Dabo who was invited to continue as Minister of Finance) which served to placate international opinion. In adopting this strategy it is possible that Jammeh was consciously imitating Strasser who had retained both the Finance Minister, Jim Funna, and Foreign Minister, Ahmed Dumbuya.

Although it was always unlikely that the PPP would find external salvation, the pre-existing reluctance of states to intervene was reinforced by the lack of internal resistance to the coup. "Ordinary" urban dwellers - who had no doubt suffered in previous years as a result of structural adjustment - appeared willing to see what the "new boys" could do, particularly (and in contrast to 1981) given the comparative absence of violence and the reassuring, moderate statements emanating from their direction.

Even more importantly there was minimal armed resistance to the coup. For the reasons outlined above the TSG opted to remain very low profile. Among the GNA senior ranks, who had hitherto demonstrated considerable loyalty, the lack of resistance is more difficult to explain although there is little doubt that the speed of events, Jawara's hurried departure and the rebels' access to both transport and the armoury (given planned joint training exercises with marines on board *La Moure County*) were important factors. Lower down the hierarchy, the factors which had encouraged Jammeh to intervene - notably material dissatisfaction and the Nigerian presence (particularly resented by middle-ranking officers who felt their promotion prospects were bound to

³⁶⁷ Jammeh and the other members of the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council were all of lieutenant rank and under thirty years of age.

³⁶⁸ Which had resulted in the death of thirty Senegalese soldiers.

suffer) - rendered others unwilling to resist the attempt. As in Sierra Leone this generalised resentment overrode ethnicity. The apparent Mandinka belief that their interests were being neglected may have played some role in their unwillingness to support Jawara, but the coup itself (instigated by soldiers of mixed ethnic background³⁶⁹) demonstrated that factors other than specifically ethnic resentment constituted a much greater threat to civilian control.

Comparative Overview.

This section draws together the major themes of the chapter in order to compare the different routes to civilian control pursued in Sierra Leone and The Gambia.

As should by now be clear there is no simple, "right" or guaranteed route to civilian control. Producing a mechanistic, blanket formula is simply not possible given that both the choice, and success of, civilian control mechanisms are shaped by local factors and circumstances. Control strategies utilised in Sierra Leone were unlikely to have worked equally well if superimposed on to The Gambia and *vice-versa*.

Local circumstances include those "givens" of a state beyond the scope of a leaders' manipulation. In Sierra Leone and The Gambia some "givens" were similar and hence produced similar effects. For example neither state, given their small size and scarce resources, could realistically adopt an aggressive foreign policy designed to focus their army's attention on an external mission. In certain fundamental respects however, the two states' respective leaders faced quite different circumstances.

Although the colonial regiments of each state displayed a number of similarities, notably in terms of their low profile, infrequent deployment and slow pace of Africanisation, in retrospect these characteristics had a minimal impact upon civil-military relations under the PPP and APC; far more important were specific *events* (or in Sierra Leone a series of events) occurring at different historical junctures and yet in each case outside the two regimes' control, prior to their assuming power. In The Gambia, the key event took place during colonial rule when the army was disbanded. In Sierra Leone it is more difficult to pinpoint a specific event. Nevertheless the first coup d'etat, resulting from Albert Margai's politicisation of the armed forces, was an undoubted turning point in civil-military relations.

The implications of each regime's quite different legacy centred upon the ease or difficulty of maintaining civilian control. Thus, for the APC the military threat was initially far more acute than for the PPP, a situation graphically illustrated by the fact that Stevens faced an initial coup attempt after just three years, in contrast to Jawara who remained unchallenged until 1981. The army Stevens inherited - politicised, divided, endowed with high corporate expectations and prior

³⁶⁹ Jammeh is a Jola, Singateh a Christian Mandinka and Sabally a Fula. Hydera, who died in jail in June 1995, was a Moor (of Mauritanian extraction).

experience of successful intervention - bore little resemblance to the comparatively inexperienced and neutral Field Force bequeathed by the colonial power.

Viewed from a long term perspective, however, the picture increases in complexity. In The Gambia, somewhat paradoxically, the disbandment of the army was not necessarily a positive development in maintaining civilian control. Thus, although many observers - both within and outside the country - believed that the problem of coups had been solved, this was patently not the case as the 1981 coup attempt demonstrated. Even more significantly the origins of Field Force participation in the - very nearly successful - coup attempt lay in this very complacency. Events prior to Stevens' ascent to power worked in the opposite direction, producing a very different, more aware, set of attitudes among the elite to maintaining civilian control. Stevens (and later Momoh) were alert to the possibility of a coup and expended a good deal of time, energy and money on avoiding such an eventuality. In contrast, Jawara appeared less sensitive to the dangers an army represents.

These different attitudes were central to the course of civil-military relations. Thus, although each regime initially inherited a more or less favourable set of circumstances, from that point on leadership strategies and the optimum exploitation of available resources were key to explaining the course of civil-military relations. The situation in which each regime was placed had an important impact upon the nature of those strategies but certainly did not determine either them, or the subsequent level of military threat. Jawara may have enjoyed a rather greater freedom of action, a reflection of his more favourable legacy, but neither leader was a prisoner of circumstance. Stevens' innovative approach - notably the introduction of the Guinean factor, the creation of the ISU and the co-optation of the army Force Commander - helped to ensure the APC's survival but did not constitute an historically predetermined course. Likewise, although circumstances enabled Jawara to adopt a significantly less proactive approach to maintaining Field Force subordination, and still survive, a different response from Jawara could quite easily have transformed the course of civil-military relations.

In Sierra Leone the absence of attempted coups after 1974 (and before Momoh assumed office) suggest a progressive lessening of the military threat. Thus, it was during the early years of Stevens' rule that he operationalised potentially risky strategies and tactics (such as establishing the ISU); once in place the APC's vulnerability lessened. Nevertheless, it is worth reiterating that, throughout the entire period of APC rule, military subordination remained conditional upon the continued allocation of material reward. From this perspective, the military threat was continuously growing alongside the continuously declining availability of resources. Stevens' ability to sustain the flow of resources was crucial to his survival. His successor's inability to do likewise eventually proved fatal.

Before 1981, and in contrast to Stevens, Jawara neglected to implement innovative tactics,

enabling the PPP to avoid replicating the APC's phases of vulnerability. On the other hand, the 1981 coup attempt seemed to imply that Field Force frustration and resentment had been quietly growing for some time. Jawara's misplaced belief that the disbandment of the army had somehow solved the problem of civilian control lay in stark contrast to the more realistic anxieties of his Sierra Leonean counterpart. After 1981 The Gambia had an army for the first time and yet, unlike the early Sierra Leonean coup attempts, the Field Force intervention did not prompt innovative solutions, the Senegalese presence obviating the need for a change of tack. Following Senegal's departure, however, Jawara faced his biggest challenge - in the sense of searching for innovative solutions - to date. This provided a clear contrast with Sierra Leone where the APC faced such a challenge at the outset, the difficulty thereafter lying in the *maintenance* of strategies.

Comparing the two regimes' prolonged success in coping with the changing military threat it is important to highlight the successful manipulation of a range of resources, including material resources, ethnicity, external assistance and location.³⁷⁰ In Sierra Leone, of all the strategies pursued by Stevens and Momoh, maximising military-wide satisfaction was the most important. In The Gambia, by way of contrast, military satisfaction was far less central to the PPP's survival. Senior ranks did not lack certain privileges but these were hardly comparable to those enjoyed by their Sierra Leonean counterparts, and the rank-and-file were largely neglected. Despite minor innovations after 1989 this situation remained largely unchanged until 1994.

The two regimes differential dependence on material satisfaction reflected differing perceptions of the military threat, the PPP's greater reliance on alternative strategies (external military assistance and legitimacy cultivation) and the different resource-base of the two regimes. The Gambia's paucity of domestic resources and heavy reliance on external aid (in contrast to Sierra Leone's comparatively manipulable diamond wealth) rendered it unlikely that Jawara would have been able to get away with devoting comparatively large amounts to an unproductive institution. Nevertheless, he almost certainly could have done more than he did.

If the question of military satisfaction was never seriously tackled in The Gambia it was never fully resolved in Sierra Leone. As noted above, whereas the Gambian coup reflected Jawara's *misplaced* (from a survival perspective) priorities,³⁷¹ the Sierra Leonean coup stemmed from Momoh's inability to *maintain* his priorities. Momoh understood the need to maintain military satisfaction more clearly than his Gambian counterpart and yet failed to do so - at least at the lower levels - given the squeeze on resources.

³⁷⁰ It is also worth reiterating the importance of another variable - luck. Thus, it is important not to 'over-explain' the absence of successful military intervention; both regimes were, at different times, presented with extremely ill-planned and incompetently executed coups d'etat. Equally it is possible to discern an element of bad luck in the events surrounding the successful coups; in The Gambia for example the plotters were undoubtedly fortunate in having access to the armoury given the imminence of planned training exercises.

³⁷¹ Despite a lack of resources Jawara could have done more to maximise material satisfaction.

The divergent availability of resources in the two states had a further impact upon each regime's approach to civilian control. Compared to Jawara, Stevens' access to resources - and greater freedom to manipulate them as he so desired - enabled him to establish and maintain an effective and loyal counterweight to the military, the ISU (later re-named the SSD). The ISU's loyalty was guaranteed, in part, by the generous distribution of largesse. Stevens' enthusiasm for the force reflected his fears of military intervention and desire for a coercive instrument but, crucially, his ability to maintain it was a function of his continued access to resources. Momoh - though no doubt less enthusiastic about a one-time rival force - was progressively hampered by resource-constraints and almost certainly cut allocations to the SSD. As noted above, the force chose to remain neutral in 1992.

In The Gambia, lack of resources caused Jawara to turn to the outside world as a counterweight to the military. Prior to 1989 the counterweight role of the gendarmerie paled into insignificance against Senegal. Indeed, whereas domestic resources constituted Stevens' most potent weapon, externally generated resources in the form of Senegalese military assistance was Jawara's. Thus, although external assistance played some role in the APC's survival, just as the diversion of resources to the senior ranks of the army played some role in the PPP's survival, the fundamental strategy of each regime was quite different. Both, however, were ultimately flawed.

Just as the APC's reliance on domestic resources eventually hit problems, so the PPP's reliance on externally generated resources encountered difficulties. After 1989, Jawara may have continued to benefit from the effects of "the psychological fact of inertia"³⁷² on the army's part, but had singularly failed to learn any "lessons" of civilian control. He had not been forced, as Stevens had, to experiment with the whole range of control techniques. Admittedly, as Stevens himself had demonstrated, experimentation is risky and yet it was only through a process of trial and error he made headway. For instance it was only after the risks of using the army for domestic political purposes had been illustrated by the 1971 coup attempt that Stevens developed the ISU and narrowed the army's role. Moreover, in The Gambia the risks of experimentation and implementation would have been considerably reduced, if not completely negated, by the fact of the Senegalese presence. Unlike Stevens who opted to establish the ISU while Guinean troops were present, Jawara failed to appreciate the long-term advantages of external assistance.

When the Senegalese departed the PPP regime was rendered extremely vulnerable. Jawara (opting to effectively downgrade the gendarmerie by merging it with the TSG) turned once again to external assistance, but this time with disastrous results. Jawara's request for Nigerian assistance stemmed from his perceived need to boost civilian control and his faith in the tried and trusted technique of an external security guarantee.

³⁷² Welch, *op. cit.*, 1976, p 27.

External assistance, though regarded by scholars as a risk-free method of control, can be hazardous. This was demonstrated both by the detrimental effect of the Nigerian presence in The Gambia and the role played by the threat of Guinean intervention in the 1971 coup attempt in Sierra Leone. Horowitz,³⁷³ with reference to the effectiveness of "compositional strategies" of control, has argued that "what evidence there is seems to favor the extremes - delicacy on the one hand, thoroughness on the other." This point applies equally well to external assistance. Jawara's invitation to the Nigerians displayed neither quality. He was neither sufficiently sensitive to how the Nigerian presence would be received (as a blow to the soldiers' professional integrity and promotion prospects) nor sufficiently thorough to render the reception irrelevant. Compared to the Senegalese presence, the Nigerian contingent was not large and, more importantly, Nigeria had not committed herself to supporting Jawara during a coup. By way of contrast, in Sierra Leone Touré's promise of the use of his entire army should the need arise drastically reduced the likelihood of a coup. In essence, the deterrent effect proved stronger than the provocation.

The need for either "delicacy" or "thoroughness" is relevant to the entire range of control techniques. To take another example from Sierra Leone, the creation of a paramilitary force proved effective since Stevens approached it with such obvious enthusiasm. He developed a force strong enough to deter plotters, however much they resented their new rival. It was only when the strength of the SSD was compromised, albeit in relatively minor ways, under Momoh that the deterrent role of the force weakened.

Unfortunately, even if the correct balance between delicacy and thoroughness is achieved a leader is not thereby guaranteed control. There exists an enormous potential for miscalculation in almost every area of civil-military relations. Even apparently innocuous techniques such as the Gambian soldiers' participation in a peace-keeping force, a role which by all accounts "should" have served to keep the army occupied and out of politics, may have negative repercussions. Nevertheless if leaders remain aware of the relationship between various techniques the likelihood of military intervention may decline. If, for example, Jawara had devoted greater attention to military satisfaction alongside the deployment of troops to Liberia, the benefits of creating a professional role for the army might have been realised. Of the three leaders Stevens possessed the greatest insight into the relationship between control techniques, increasing defence expenditure alongside both the deployment of soldiers to suppress domestic political opposition and the creation of the ISU, and building up the ISU while the Guineans were present.

If obtaining the correct balance between various control strategies is extremely problematic, further difficulties centre upon the choice and "mix" of strategies. Some strategies are inherently incompatible. Thus to a certain extent, even after 1989, Jawara relied upon "objective" control

³⁷³ *Op. cit.*, p 555.

strategies in his attempt to avoid a coup. He emphasised the need for the army to be well-trained and motivated, even to the extent of providing it with a professional external role, and did not create a serious functional rival. However, the potential benefits of this approach were negated when Jawara, ignoring perhaps the most important dimension of professionalism, autonomy, imposed the Nigerians at the apex of the military leadership. By ignoring notions of civilian restraint fundamental to objective control Jawara eliminated the basis for reciprocal military restraint.

The reciprocal relationship under Stevens was of a different kind. It encompassed two main elements, neither of them designed to induce self-restraining military professionalism. Firstly Stevens interfered in military affairs, most obviously through ascriptive manipulation. In return, however, he allowed the army a say in government affairs through co-optation. Secondly he expected army loyalty (or at least acquiescence) in return for his attempts to maximise military satisfaction. Although these policies, in contrast to those pursued in The Gambia, were not inherently incompatible they did contain certain contradictions. Thus, although Stevens refused to rely upon a single control technique, ascriptive manipulation and the creation of the ISU would almost certainly have proved insufficient in the absence of continuing military satisfaction. The 1992 coup, when individuals of different ethnic backgrounds joined together to oust the APC regime as a means of redressing their grievances, affirms this interpretation. Stevens was perhaps wise to get out while the going was good. His legacy - an economy in decline and an army with entrenched corporate interests and high expectations - was, to say the least, unfavourable.

Is it possible to conclude, then, that Jawara was at least on the right tracks in his attempts to introduce some elements of objective control as a means to long term civilian control? The answer is not clear-cut. On the one hand objective control techniques, if in themselves not wholly risk-free, constitute the most effective route to permanent civilian control. On the other hand most African regimes simply do not have the option of objective control. Stevens for example assumed power at a time when the army was already politicised and it is unlikely that objective control techniques would have guaranteed his survival for long. Even in the special circumstances of The Gambia, objective control techniques appeared insufficient. Jawara's decision to introduce the Nigerians was not based on a whim but was a specific response to the ECOMOG protest. This protest was prompted, in part, by the soldiers' experience in Liberia where they had been given a chance to compare their own force with the bigger and better armies of other West African states. The reasons Jawara had been able to minimise defence expenditure throughout the 1980's centred upon the army's lack of political clout, yet when he introduced a professional external role for the army it was this very lack of expenditure which served to damage the army's professional standing and self-image. One might conclude that regimes should attempt to nurture professionalism combined with high defence expenditure, although indefinitely financing such expenditure is likely to be problematic.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE OF ELECTIONS.

Until recent years the study of African elections - at least in terms of "winners" and "losers" - had been rendered almost wholly redundant. How a regime "survived" elections was, for obvious reasons, an inappropriate question in the majority of states where political competition had been replaced by a single party or military regime. The specifics of this study however, and in particular the inclusion of The Gambia (where multi-party competition operated continuously under the PPP regime) and Sierra Leone (where multi-partyism remained a feature of the political system until 1978), prompts investigation into the reasons for electoral success. The functional aspects of both multi-party and single-party elections - as a legitimating mechanism or simply a source of diversion - provides the second theme of the chapter.

Two justifications for positing a significant relationship between regime survival and election victory require elaboration. The first rests upon a demonstration of the possibility of regime defeat. An examination of the formal or visible workings of an electoral system - encompassing the election rules, voter registration, candidate nomination, the conduct of campaigns and the computing of results - constitutes a preliminary step. Thus, if elections are demonstrably free of coercion, rigging and other obvious excesses it seems reasonable to assume that an opposition victory is possible.¹ Qualifying this point, it may be the case that the very factors which explain a regime victory (the advantages of incumbency for example) at the same time render an opposition victory - in the real world - unlikely (see below).² Nevertheless such factors are rarely static. Access to patronage, for instance, will not guarantee an election win if inexpertly handled. A second, related proviso concerns the need to hesitate before disregarding the possibility of a relationship between survival and those elections in which rigging and other irregularities prevail. As the 1967 elections in Sierra Leone (see below) amply demonstrate, victory is by no means guaranteed simply because a regime is willing to distort the electoral process. The effective conception and execution of extra-legal tactics is crucial.

The second justification for positing a significant relationship between regime survival and election victory is necessarily speculative and rests on the assumption that, in the face of electoral defeat, a regime would agree to hand over power.³ Clearly such a scenario (or its opposite) cannot

¹ It is not suggested that elections which fulfil these requirements are democratic - nothing has been said about policy alternatives, for example, which some observers would argue are essential to a democracy - but simply that they appear to allow for an opposition victory.

² Added to this, the critical relationship between elections (and election strategies) and regime survival will obviously be much weaker in those cases where the opposition is feeble and presents little or no challenge to the ruling party. However one must take care to distinguish between internally generated opposition weakness and that which stems from regime-inspired techniques, co-optation for example.

³ Although - as the outcome of the 1967 Sierra Leonean elections (discussed below) showed - a refusal to hand over power may not be sufficient to save a regime.

be predicted with any degree of certainty; an informed guess - based upon other aspects of a regime's (or political leader's) behaviour - is the most that is possible.

Having established a significant relationship between election victory and political survival it is important to note some of the ways a regime might approach elections. Given the wide variations between countries - dictated in part by country-specific constraints - and to avoid generalisations, the following purports to be little more than a tentative outline of the major possibilities.⁴

Observers frequently cite the importance of group or community-based voting in African elections. The relevant community for an individual might be any of a number (religious, regional, linguistic, clan-based, etc.) but that most frequently cited is the ethnic community. As Cohen notes, "most observers have seen this group identity as determining the individual's choice; electoral contests as being a vying for ethnic community support; and electoral success as usually based on ethnic coalition building."⁵

If one accepts that ethnicity operates as an important determinant of voter choice the implications for regime survival are clear. A regime which is able to capitalise upon ethnic loyalty will not only have a more or less ready-made basis of support, but one which will be delivered at election time irrespective of actual (policy) performance. In practice however the relationship between ethnicity and electoral success may prove rather less straightforward. The reason relates to the wealth of evidence (discussed in Chapter one) which suggests that an ethnic community is not a fixed and reliable reservoir of support upon which politicians can periodically draw but an adaptable phenomenon, capable of responding to changing circumstances. It has been observed that individual choices have in some cases been determined, not by ethnic ties *per se*, but by a recognition that the ethnic community provides "the most stable source of material benefit and security."⁶ In turn, a regime attempting to promote and retain ethnic identity as a source of electoral control may be compelled to allocate resources on an ethnic basis.

Depending in part upon a regime's overall survival strategy, the selective allocation of resources may prove less than straightforward. Hintzen⁷ for example has noted that in order to accommodate elite interests and perform "at least a minimal level of state functions" a regime may have to "act against the interests of its mass followers while allocating state resources in ways that visibly benefit other communal groups." This in turn may encourage an opposition party - of similar

⁴ The discussion focuses on the determinants of voter *choice* and is therefore based on an assumption that the electorate is not coerced into voting for the regime. The intimidatory, often violent, tactics prevalent in Sierra Leone are discussed in further detail below.

⁵ Denis L Cohen, "Elections and Election Studies in Africa," in Yolamu Borango (ed.), *Political Science in Africa: A Critical Review* (London, Zed Press, 1983), p 80.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 82.

⁷ Percy C Hintzen, *The Costs of Regime Survival; Racial Mobilization: Elite Domination and Control of the State in Guyana and Trinidad* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), p 9.

ethnic composition yet under no obligation to reach compromises with other groups - to "outbid" the regime, that is to make promises to its followers in order to gain their support.

While Hintzen's argument is one which admits the possibility of choice within the parameters of ethnic identity, what it fails to explain are those cases in which voters appear to have transcended ethnic ties. Pending further country-based research one can suggest various possible explanations for these cases. It may be, as Cohen has argued, that where resources have not been allocated on an ethnic basis "voters of the same ethnic community but different socio-economic status have been able to perceive their [individual] interests differently and have voted accordingly."⁸ Alternatively it may be that the salience of ethnicity in a particular system is, for whatever reason, at a low level or that the government has chosen to downplay the importance of ethnicity, perhaps because of the absence of any one dominant ethnic group or the presence of cross-cutting ethnic and regional ties, precluding appeals to a single group.

A second, related explanation of voter behaviour at the polls revolves around the operations of clientelistic politics.⁹ Although the relationship between clientelism and communal identity may not be a direct one (appeals on these two bases may not be explicitly combined) most observers have regarded the former as operating within the wider parameters of the latter. In other words clientelistic politics emerges not in Cohen's society - where emerging common socio-economic interests were seen as a possible determinant of voter choice - but in Alain Rouquié's "authoritarian contexts," characterised by the absence of such interests.¹⁰

In essence, then, Rouquié returns to a situation in which "votes are more collective than individual" and societies are "marked by the preponderance of relationships founded upon vertical solidarity based upon economic, social or ethnic sources." Within these societies "non-competitive" elections - in which clientelist control prevents the majority of voters from rejecting "the leaders proposed by the governing power, whatever the freedom of the vote and despite the existence of alternative and competing candidates" - may emerge. The element of control is based upon the unequal nature of the exchange relationship between patron and client.

Briefly then, varying degrees of voter autonomy account for two "ideal types" of clientelist vote. Firstly there is the "sold vote"; the vote is exchanged for money or scarce goods (a job, agricultural credit etc.) and, as noted by Rouquié, it "is not a free vote. The monopoly purchaser exercises dominance over the citizen who sells ... A clientelist network is founded upon a continuing grant of personal favours, but favours that can always be revoked by the patron." Secondly there is the "gregarious vote"; voters are organised ("transported, lodged, fed,

⁸ Cohen, *op. cit.*, p 82.

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of clientelistic politics see Chapter one.

¹⁰ See Alain Rouquié, "Clientelist Control and Authoritarian Contexts," in Guy Hermet, Richard Rose and Alain Rouquié (eds.), *Elections Without Choice* (London, Macmillan Press, 1978), p 22.

entertained") by local patrons who then effectively sell their votes to "the parties and governing power."¹¹

The type of clientelist vote which emerges in a given situation depends, in part, upon the structure of the patronage network. This in turn may depend upon the organisational structure and strength of the political party (which might or might not be responsible for patronage distribution).¹²

Early work on political parties tended to draw a fairly distinct line between those parties described as "weak" and those as "strong." Morgenthau¹³ for example distinguished between the so-called "patron party" - essentially a conglomeration of notables, ethnic and traditional leaders etc., all with the ability to deliver the support of their followers - and the "mass party," based not upon patronage networks but upon the direct mobilisation of large numbers of people.

Subsequent criticism of Morgenthau's typology - particularly on the grounds that it had overdrawn the differences between strong (mass) and weak (patron) parties - resulted in a number of, rather less ambitious, reformulations.¹⁴ Particularly prevalent was that which identified characteristics of American "machine politics" in the African electoral process.¹⁵ Machine politics revolves around the operation of decentralised local political machines under the control of local "bosses." The latter cultivates electoral support on the basis of local rather than national issues; elections are won and lost on the basis of a candidate's demonstrated ability (or future potential) to deliver benefits - roads, hospitals etc. - to the local community.¹⁶ In a multi-party system (as

¹¹ See *ibid.*, pp 22-24 for further details.

¹² As Rouquié, (*ibid.*, p 25) notes the 'gregarious vote' emerges in a situation in which parties compete for the support of the patron who controls the votes. This is what he calls traditional patronage and "rests on a system of domination exercised by local notables over protected and obligated clients." This type of clientelist structure may be integrated into the party organisation but more frequently is not.

¹³ Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, "Single-Party Systems in West Africa," *American Political Science Review*, Vol 55, June 1961, pp 244-307. For further work on a similar theme see James S Coleman and Carl Rosberg, *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966).

¹⁴ I have noted Morgenthau's typology not simply to provide some indication of how the conceptualisation of political parties evolved but because it may provide some insight into (at least) early election victories. Various points are worthy of note. Firstly the widespread decline of mass participation in the years following independence was not a reason - as some observers have suggested - to argue that it never existed at all. Where it did exist it is important to examine what role it played in elections. Secondly, the decline of mass participation was not necessarily a function of the weakness of mass parties, as suggested by Zolberg (see Aristide Zolberg, *Creating Political Order: The Party-States of West Africa* (Chicago, Rand McNally, 1966), p 34). As Fred Hayward ("Political Participation and its Role in Development: Some Observations Drawn from the African Context," *Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol 7, 1973, pp 591-611) points out it may have been that leaders saw a positive value in de-participation, a point I return to below. Thirdly, although observers were correct to stress the structural weaknesses prevalent in all parties it did not follow that all parties were uniformly weak. And finally - a more general point - the criticisms of the typology as a whole do not preclude the observer from extracting certain elements in an attempt to illuminate election victories, albeit taking into account that such elements may change over time or may even co-exist; in other words they do not necessarily add up to a specific party "type."

¹⁵ See for example Henry Bienen, "One-Party Systems in Africa," in Samuel P Huntington and Clement Moore (eds.), *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems* (London, Basic Books, 1970), pp 113-120.

¹⁶ Depending upon local circumstances local machines may be based upon and related to the "traditional" loyalties outlined above. See for example, Barkan and Okumu's discussion of early machine politics in Kenya.

opposed to a multi-candidate single-party system) the candidate of the ruling party is blessed with an in-built advantage to the extent that he is perceived as being more likely to deliver resources to his constituency. On the other hand there is no guarantee that, if he fails to do so, he will be returned at the next election.

Before moving on it is important to emphasise that the preceding discussion is not an exhaustive account of all the possible factors which might work to produce an election victory, but rather a brief examination of some of those areas which have received the most scholarly deliberation. Alternative factors (the popularity of the national leadership, the personality of individual candidates, even policy, come immediately to mind) have received much less attention despite their importance in particular contexts. Such factors - not easily subject to generalisation, particularly in relation to a specific event such as an election - are perhaps most effectively studied on a case by case basis; such is the intention in the present study.

Although up to this point the discussion has centred upon some of the likely reasons for electoral success in a multi-party context, the relationship between elections and regime survival is not one-dimensional. Elections should not simply be regarded as obstacles to be overcome but as a political resource for regimes (whether single or multi-party) looking to extend their period in office. That political leaders themselves regard elections as a political resource is suggested by the simple fact that, even prior to the events of recent years, electoral processes remained a feature of the African political scene. As noted by Guy Hermet, "a government calling an election that it is not obliged to hold must expect such an event to have very specific functions or consequences."¹⁷

The legitimisation of regimes is a function frequently ascribed to both multi-party and single-party elections. The difference between election types - as far as their efficacy in generating legitimacy is concerned - is dependent upon the source of the legitimacy. Simply speaking there are a number of quite different sources of electoral legitimacy; some are independent of election type while others are not. That multi-party elections tend to generate legitimacy from a wider variety of sources than their single party counterparts is one reason why competitive systems accord a regime comparatively greater legitimacy.

The sources of legitimacy can be divided into three categories. Initially there are those which flow specifically from the operation of a multi-party system. To give an example, legitimacy may be generated by a belief - on the part of the populace - that their electoral system is the "best" way of conducting political affairs. The ways in which this belief is internalised will vary. It may,

Joel D Barkan and John J Okumu, "'Semi-Competitive' Elections, Clientelism, and Political Recruitment in a No-Party State: The Kenyan Experience," in Hermet et al, *op. cit.*, pp 88-107.

¹⁷ Guy Hermet, "State-Controlled Elections: a Framework," *ibid.*, p 13. Although Hermet is referring specifically to single-party states the same point applies to multi-party states. In The Gambia, for example, President Jawara was not compelled to hold competitive elections and yet he chose to, presumably because he believed they served a useful purpose.

for instance, be that voters are encouraged by their government to perceive a link between democratic elections and other widely valued ends - social peace for example.¹⁸ Alternatively it may be that voters appreciate the system in and of itself as the fairest way to make decisions. Whatever the cause, the important point to note is that it is not simply the electoral system which is legitimised but also the regime which proves itself willing and able to maintain it. Public appreciation for a regime is, moreover, likely to be heightened if a country is surrounded by neighbours demonstrating the ease with which multi-party structures can be dismantled.

The second category includes those sources of legitimacy which may flow from both single and multi-party states but which are more effectively provided by the latter. The legitimising effect of participation is a case in point. In a multi-party system the very act of voting may serve to confer upon participants some sense of obligation to accept those who are elected (as well as their subsequent decisions) whether they voted for them or not; this aspect of elections may be particularly important in cultivating the acceptance of potential troublemakers within society.

Although the benefits of participation within a multi-party framework are, in part, a function of choice (of future leaders), even single-party electoral participation may have beneficial effects for a regime. The type of single-party election is, however, important.¹⁹ Plebiscitary elections, for example²⁰ may prove a rather dubious means of legitimisation. The problem lies in the quality of participation; indeed one might argue that participation (defined as action directed at influencing policy making and/or execution in a political structure)²¹ has not taken place at all. Nevertheless the motive for holding an election of this type seems to lie in the hope that it will confer, on the part of the voters, a "feeling" of participation and hence obscure the lack of any real influence.

Single-party elections which allow some degree of choice, however, undoubtedly confer superior legitimating benefits upon a regime.²² As in multi-party elections, voters' choice of candidates and consequent "responsibility" for the outcome of elections may induce them to accept

¹⁸ A similar effort was made by the leadership in single-party states - particularly in the transition period - but the generally unfavourable consequences of single-party rule nurtured disappointment, not acclaim.

¹⁹ It may also be important to examine how the single-party state was created. Collier, for example, has noted that single-party regimes based upon "the total electoral success of a leading party" or "the merger of parties" are likely to have greater legitimacy than those achieved through coercion. Ruth Berins Collier, "Parties, Coups, and Authoritarian Rule: Patterns of Political Change in Tropical Africa," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol 11, No 1, April 1978, p 73.

²⁰ Plebiscitary elections are those which, as Chazan notes, "do not purport to do more than permit some carefully controlled expression of the popular will ... the expected 99% majorities for the ruling parties are returned on a regular, almost tedious basis." Naomi Chazan, "African Voters at the Polls: A Re-examination of the Role of Elections in African Politics," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol 17, No 2, 1979, p 137.

²¹ From Hayward, *op. cit.*, p 594.

²² Collier, *op. cit.*, p 78 outlines the various types of competition which may obtain in a single-party election. They include competitive primary elections, the selection of more than one party candidate to stand in the election, or a combination of the two.

the final result, even though their choice was confined to a single-party. However, perhaps the most important source of legitimacy in this type of election can be found not in the act of participation but in what may be loosely termed their representative function. Voters' ability to choose their representatives - and punish those who have performed below expectation - may, as Chazan²³ notes provide "some meaningful avenues for linking the bulk of the population to the political process."

The final category includes those sources of legitimacy which are not dependent upon the type of election held. In both single and multi-party elections observers have noted the vast amounts of time, energy and money expended at election time. Whether or not regimes consciously calculate the effect of this expenditure the available evidence suggests that it goes some way to persuading voters that the causal event - the election - must be important. In turn the product of the election - the regime - may be accorded greater significance and legitimacy.

A second reason to hold elections centres upon their diversionary function. On one level elections (particularly those which contain some element of competition) may serve to defuse mounting tension within a society, providing an occasion for the release of political energies. The fact that these energies are likely to be carefully channelled and controlled by the regime will not necessarily detract from this function. As opposition groups throw themselves into the electoral campaign divisive issues may fade in to the background or be (albeit superficially) "resolved" by the election.

Secondly - and this applies particularly to multiple candidate single party elections - elections may serve to focus attention on local issues thus diverting attention away from a regime's, possibly inadequate, performance nationally. Linked to this is what various observers have termed the 'anaesthetising' role of clientelist elections. In effect, however, this role runs parallel to the role of clientelism as a whole and as such is discussed in Chapter one. Here it is sufficient to point out the role that elections play in perpetuating the system of clientelist control. As Rouquié²⁴ notes, "The electoral exchange reinvigorates the vertical solidarities that otherwise lose their edge. If the notable, the machine or the party and its parallel hierarchies guarantees a minimum of social protection, the election enables the client, by paying his debt, to deserve a patronal largesse once again."

To conclude this section it is necessary to say a few words on party systems with particular reference to whether (and if so, why) party system type has any impact upon a regime's prospects for survival.²⁵

²³ Chazan, *op. cit.*, p 138.

²⁴ Rouquié, *op. cit.*, p 34.

²⁵ While recognising the obvious overlap between party-system type and the preceding discussion of electoral functions, the two have nevertheless been separated for the purpose of clarity. The breadth of disagreement which prevails in the literature on party systems renders any firm conclusions impossible; the purpose of the following is simply to sketch the broad outlines of the debate as a prelude to examining the specific cases of The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

One of the most important factors prompting African political leaders to establish single-party systems was the belief that it would consolidate their hold on power. This belief was based, in part, upon the presumed benefits of "departicipation"²⁶ - getting people out of politics. Thus, apart from the immediate attraction (from a survival perspective) of ruling without an official opposition it was widely, though not universally, held by scholars and political leaders alike that departicipation would facilitate control of ethnicity. Jackson and Rosberg for example have argued that "if all rival political organisations are abolished, then ethnic cleavages are less likely to be politicised and stability will be easier to achieve and maintain."²⁷

On a more general level the relationship between political stability and departicipation has been the focus of much scholarly debate.²⁸ Huntington for example argued that - in the absence of strong institutions - political participation should be limited since political competition (and its accompanying promises, designed to cultivate support) raises expectations. When these expectations fail to be met, mass instability results.²⁹ Others, meanwhile, argued that participation and political competition has little impact upon expectations and does not, therefore, promote instability³⁰ Subsequent, empirically based studies also failed to agree on the role of party system. While Jackman³¹ for example believed that multipartyism is particularly destabilising when coupled with the presence of a dominant ethnic group, Mckown and Kauffman³² argued that party system is not an illuminating variable for the comparative analysis of African politics. They found that while "multiparty states seem to be slightly more unstable," "one-party states appear to be equally stable and unstable at the mass level."

Disagreement also characterised the question of elite instability and party system type. Whereas Mckown and Kauffman³³ argued that there was no apparent relationship between the two, others disputed this. They pointed out that single-party states led, not to increased stability (as might

²⁶ A term coined by Nelson Kasfir in, *The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African Politics with a Case Study of Uganda* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976), p 1. The establishment of single-party rule formed a central element of departicipation and was closely related to several of the other components - "the decreased notice taken of legislatures" for example.

²⁷ Robert H Jackson and Carl G Rosberg, "Popular Legitimacy in African Multi-Ethnic States," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 22, No 2, 1984, p 188. Also see Aristide Zolberg, *op. cit.*, pp 21-22 for an earlier study which suggested that, within a competitive framework, the frequent coincidence of party and societal cleavages served to politicise ethnic (and regional) divisions.

²⁸ While noting the obvious fact that many single-party states have not been stable, the cause of such instability is frequently much less clear. In this chapter the intention is to isolate the party system in an attempt to identify whether it had any impact upon political stability and hence regime survival.

²⁹ Samuel P Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," in Claude E Welch (ed.), *Political Modernization* (California, Wadsworth, 1967). It should be noted that Huntington's concern was not for political leaders' retention of office but for order and development.

³⁰ Hayward, *op. cit.*, pp 601-603.

³¹ Robert W Jackman, "The Predictability of Coups d'Etat: A Model with African Data," *American Political Science Review*, No 72, 1978, p 1273.

³² Roberta E McKown and Robert E Kauffman, "Party System as a Comparative Analytic Concept in African Politics," *Comparative Politics*, No 6, 1973, p 68.

³³ *Ibid.*, p 69.

have been expected) but to intra-party factionalism. All "the tensions and conflicts of the society," far from disappearing, were likely to be manifested "in the struggles of the upper hierarchy of the party."³⁴ These "struggles" could, in turn, crystallise into plots against an existing political leader possibly even succeeding in removing him (and his regime) from power.³⁵ On the other hand it is reasonable to assume that in multi-party states plots and conspiracies will be less prevalent, the existence of a legal opposition providing an outlet - or safety-valve - for the politically ambitious.

Elections in The Gambia.

In The Gambia, one aspect of the relationship between elections and regime survival concerned the means by which the PPP achieved successive post-independence election victories. To warrant examination this aspect must (as noted above) be preceded by a demonstration of the possibility of opposition victory. In The Gambia there was, at the very least, nothing in the rules which precluded opposition success. Over and above basic requirements such as universal suffrage (for citizens over the age of 21) the rules allowed for an unlimited number of parties and placed no unnecessary obstacles around their formation. Beyond the formal rules the regularity of elections; the peaceful conduct of campaigns; the absence of undue interference in the nomination of opposition candidates, voting, or the computing of results plus a virtually foolproof voting system³⁶ were just some of the features which led observers to label The Gambia's electoral system as essentially "free and fair."

Over the years the testimony of the various opposition parties provided a further potent indicator of the possibility of regime defeat. During interviews with opposition leaders and other party members in 1993/94, for example, although various grievances (both past and present) were raised, all remained optimistic about their prospects for eventual electoral success. While some aspects of the system were seen as working to the advantage of the PPP (see below), it was not suggested that these had denied them the chance of victory or indeed would in the future. Thus, both Sheriff Dibba (NCP) and Assan Musa Camara (GPP) clearly enunciated their belief that the political scales were beginning to tip in their favour while Halifa Sallah (of PDOIS) regarded political education as the long term route to political power.³⁷ This strong and apparently sincere

³⁴ W Arthur Lewis, *Politics in West Africa*, (London, 1965), quoted in Jackson and Rosberg, *op. cit.*, p 189.

³⁵ A point noted by Robert A Jackson and Carl G Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982), pp 48-49. However, in "Popular Legitimacy in African Multi-Ethnic States" *loc. cit.*, p 189 they note the possibility that in single-party states which allow a degree of competition "at least some of the pressures from within a single-party regime could be alleviated by democratic instead of violent means."

³⁶ The mechanics of this system have been well documented elsewhere. See for example Marion Foon, "Operation Ping-Pong to Beat Votes Fiddlers," *Journal of African Administration*, Vol 13, No 1, 1961, pp 35-37.

³⁷ Interviews with the author: Sheriff Dibba, 21 June 1993; Assan Musa Camara, 24 August 1993; Halifa Sallah, 16 July 1993.

conviction that power was attainable was complemented by a belief that, following electoral defeat, the PPP would agree to hand over power.³⁸

If an opposition victory was possible, how then did the PPP successfully avoid just such an eventuality? Before attempting to answer this question it is useful to set down a framework for discussion - in this case a brief outline of The Gambia's electoral and party political history. Although in a discussion of regime survival it is obviously important to distinguish between those elections which brought the PPP to power and those held after the party was installed in office, a brief review of the former is important if only to place subsequent elections in context.

The Protectorate People's Party (subsequently renamed the Peoples Progressive Party) was created in 1959. Within the space of a few years the party was transformed from a loose conglomeration of "mutual assistance" groups³⁹ with scattered support, into a viable political organisation commanding majority support in The Gambia. The effective exploitation of existing political realities - in particular the Colony-Protectorate divide - went a long way towards explaining this transformation. It not only provided the impetus for the formation of the PPP⁴⁰ but supplied it with an extremely potent political resource. Differential rates of economic and political development - with the Colony outstripping the Protectorate on both scores - were particularly crucial. The relative economic neglect of the Protectorate (in terms of health or education facilities, for example) provided the PPP with an obvious campaigning platform; the implications of differential rates of political development, if less immediately apparent, were equally important.

Political parties, conceived in response to political opportunities confined to the Colony, had been formed as early as 1951. The Democratic Party and the Muslim Congress⁴¹ were established to promote the electoral efforts of their leaders (the Rev. JC Faye and IM Garba-Jahumpa) who were competing for positions on the Legislative Council. Elitist in nature, and built upon the pre-existing support base of their leaders, these parties made no effort to extend their activities to the Protectorate. Indeed there seemed little point in doing so given that the franchise

³⁸ While some opposition members foresaw reluctance on the part of PPP adherents, it was widely believed that Jawara himself would relinquish power in the face of electoral defeat and that his supporters would be forced to follow suit.

³⁹ These had been formed to promote the welfare of protectorate-born citizens living in Bathurst. The Protectorate Peoples Society led by Sanjally Bojang - an influential labour contractor in the groundnut industry - formed the core of the PPP. For one account of how Sanjally was persuaded to transform his society into a political party see, *The Voice of The People: The Story of the PPP 1959-1989* (Banjul, Barouelli Publications, 1992), pp 10-14.

⁴⁰ See Arnold Hughes, "From Green Uprising to National Reconciliation: The People's Progressive Party in The Gambia 1959-1973," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol 9, No 1, 1975, p 64.

⁴¹ Although early party political developments have been discussed at length elsewhere (see for example AJ Fletcher, "Party Politics in The Gambia," (PhD dissertation, University of California, 1978)) one point worthy of reiteration concerns the Muslim Congress, a party originally designed to protect and promote Muslim interests. The failure of an explicitly religious platform (the party was later forced to drop the word Muslim from its title to become the Gambia Congress party) reflected the political unimportance of religion, a by-product of Gambian religious tolerance. Future political leaders learnt from Jahumpa's mistake and his was the last party to attempt to capitalise upon religious beliefs.

was restricted to the capital and its environs until 1959. When the franchise was extended, however, they inevitably suffered. Inhabitants of the Protectorate, faced with a choice between these parties - which not only were strongly identified with the Colony but had to some extent been compromised by their association with the Colonial administration - and the PPP, formed in explicit recognition of their interests, unsurprisingly plumped for the latter.⁴²

A more enduring challenge was provided by the United Party (UP), established in 1954 by a Bathurst lawyer, PS N'Jie. Although it too had been formed primarily as a response to political developments in the capital, once the franchise had been extended the party made a much greater effort than its colony-based counterparts to create a national constituency. Since it would inevitably be on the losing side of any polarisation of support along Colony-Protectorate lines, the UP attempted to supersede this distinction through the activation of - specifically Wolof - ethnic identity. This was a natural extension of N'Jie's tactics in the Colony where an appeal to Wolofs (and particularly his own kinsmen, the Saloum-Saloum Wolofs) had given him 58% of the vote in the very year the party was formed. Although the limited number of Wolofs in The Gambia as a whole⁴³ precluded the replication of such success in the provinces, by focusing upon those areas with a Wolof majority (the Saloum districts of Kuntaur for example) the UP was able to extend its provincial support base.

The PPP meanwhile - severely lacking in resources - was forced to narrow its appeal and focus particularly upon The Gambia's Mandinka community. The pro-Protectorate message was partly superseded by a pro-Mandinka message (although the two did overlap to some extent given the small number of Mandinkas residing in the Colony). The PPP's ethnic strategy was one with obvious limits. For one thing Mandinkas did not form an absolute majority of the Gambian population. Compounding this was their dispersal throughout the territory. Thus, in those constituencies - forming a substantial proportion - where Mandinkas were in a minority, support for the PPP was not translated into seats.

On the other hand it was imperative that the PPP did not spread its minimal resources too thinly and in that sense the exploitation of ethnic identity, as opposed to a blanket appeal, was an obvious route to take. Not only was it complemented and strengthened by the preponderance of Mandinkas holding PPP leadership positions⁴⁴ but, assuming Mandinkas responded favourably to

⁴² In the 1960 elections the Democratic Party and the Muslim Congress had formed an electoral coalition - the Democratic Congress Alliance - but won only a single seat in Bathurst. This scenario was repeated in 1962, this time in alliance with the PPP. In 1965 the DCA - minus Jahumpa - and the PPP formally merged. Jahumpa (having failed to be elected in 1962) had withdrawn from the DCA in 1964 to set up the Gambia Congress Party in support of the UP. His subsequent election in 1966 prompted the offer of a cabinet post, and in 1968 Jahumpa disbanded his party and joined the PPP.

⁴³ See p 21.

⁴⁴ According to one early PPP activist (interview with the author, 23 July 1993) some of these leaders were very much in favour of an appeal to Mandinkas as a sign of "ethnic solidarity" irrespective of resource shortages.

"their" party, it guaranteed the PPP a substantial proportion of the vote.

All that remained, then, was to deliver the PPP message to the electorate. With the party's organisational structure still very much in its formative stages the PPP relied heavily upon individuals to spread the word. Spearheaded by Sanjally Bojang's work in the Kombos⁴⁵ and the semi-covert operations undertaken by colonial employees throughout the Protectorate, the party proved adept at manipulating rural, particularly Mandinka, discontent. Protectorate born Bathurst residents - garbed in blue - travelled throughout the country, meeting with local notables and holding informal gatherings in a relaxed setting.⁴⁶

The PPP's success in 1960 owed much to the party's face-to-face campaigning style. In contrast to Sierra Leonean political parties (see below) the PPP did not rely to any great extent upon traditional authorities or support generated by competition for the chieftaincy.⁴⁷ There were two reasons for this difference in approach. First, and most fundamentally, Gambian chiefs (with a few exceptions) had simply not retained the level of authority and influence of their Sierra Leonean counterparts. While they still held some sway, Gambian parties - in contrast to the SLPP for example - could not rely upon traditional authorities or local opposition to deliver a majority vote. In most areas chiefly support provided no more than a useful adjunct to a party's existing electoral strategies. Second, the PPP, although initially welcomed by many chiefs,⁴⁸ failed to maintain any durable reciprocal relationship with them. As early as 1960 the party's more militant, younger members had been heard threatening and insulting some chiefs;⁴⁹ the following year relations deteriorated much further (see below).

Of greater importance than traditional authority (though in some cases including ruling family connections) were the resources at the disposal of local Parliamentary candidates. The PPP's fragile financial base and rudimentary organisational framework rendered candidates' financial position and local following extremely important.

Although suitable candidates were often hard to find the PPP chose carefully and, in combination with the grassroots activities already noted, managed a respectable result in 1960. Of the twelve Protectorate seats the PPP won eight, the remaining four being shared equally by the UP and Independent candidates. In the seven Colony seats, the UP won six and the DCA one.

Subsequent months saw the schism in PPP-chief relations, signs of which had emerged during the 1960 campaign, widen. The emergence of the PPP (most of whose members were of

⁴⁵ See *The Voice of The People*, p 18.

⁴⁶ Unsurprisingly, those areas in which non-Mandinkas predominated were reportedly much less welcoming.

⁴⁷ Nevertheless, exceptions to the rule existed both then and in subsequent years. Chieftaincy competition in Basse, for example, had a significant impact upon the 1960 election. See *ibid.*, pp 37-78.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p 27.

⁴⁹ *West Africa*, 19 May 1962, p 535. Also see *Foroyaa*, 10 December 1991, No 22/91, p 51, for Sanjally Bojang's recollections of quarrels with the chiefs.

significantly higher status than the chiefs⁵⁰) as a popular alternative to traditional authority was naturally greeted with trepidation. The new party, pressing for a reduction in the role of chiefs, did little to allay their fears. The upshot was chiefly support for PS N'Jie and his election as Chief Minister. N'Jie's election and the subsequent withdrawal of Jawara and his colleagues from government⁵¹ held serious implications for the development of party and electoral politics in The Gambia.

Following the constitutional revisions of 1961 and the increase in the number of seats apportioned to the provinces (twenty-five of a total of thirty-two) the UP's electoral strategy was placed under great pressure. The only way the party could hope to survive the next elections was by extending its rural base. Consequently a new electoral strategy was devised. The new strategy, contrived around, and to a large extent dependent upon, the UP's role in government revealed the party's limited grasp on political reality. If, as actually happened, the strategy failed to defeat the PPP at the next elections the UP - denied of a role in government - would thereby be denied its major electoral prop. Little attempt was made to prepare for such an eventuality by extending the party's organisational structure.

Nevertheless, in the short term, the UP did succeed in extending its support base. Using the political clout a role in government conferred, the party pledged support for the institution of chieftaincy in return for chiefly support at the local level. In addition, access to governmental resources facilitated the transmission of the UP message to the provincial public. This "message" contained a clear ethnic component intended to consolidate and widen the party's support base. The limited number of Gambian Wolofs noted above, combined with the changes to District Boundaries which, as Fletcher notes, precluded reliance on a single ethnic group,⁵² prompted a slight change of tactics. Exploiting fears of Mandinka "domination" the UP successfully attempted to cultivate links with smaller ethnic groups, notably the Fulas and Serahulis.

The PPP too, in an attempt to extend its rural influence, toned down its pre-1960 emphasis on ethnicity. Instead, the party extended its organisational base and increasingly relied upon a message of "local equality"⁵³ which, it was argued, necessitated the establishment of Area Councils to replace chiefs as the main unit of local government. This platform was well received at the local level and, perhaps more importantly, it was one which benefited the PPP alone since the UP - which had chosen to support the chiefs - was precluded from co-opting the issue as its own. Again, in contrast to the UP, the PPP - without access to governmental resources - continued to rely upon

⁵⁰ As Fletcher observes, the income, educational and occupational backgrounds of PPP leaders tended to rank significantly higher than those of the chiefs. See Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p 82 for details.

⁵¹ See *West Africa*, 25 March 1961, p 327 and 1 April 1961, p 339.

⁵² See Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p 113.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp 112-16 provides further details. This issue was one of the few which distinguished the two major parties. In the crucial area of economic policy, for example, both were offering similar prescriptions for development.

face-to-face campaigning in the provinces.

These efforts paid dividends in the 1962 elections with the PPP winning eighteen of the thirty-two elected seats, the UP thirteen and the DCA (in alliance with the PPP) one. The distribution of votes reflected the two parties' distinctive electoral strategies. The PPP, while making its strongest showing in predominantly Mandinka areas, gained seats throughout the territory.⁵⁴ The UP's support was less national in scope and reflected the party's urban support - it won five of the seven Colony seats - as well as its appeal to rural Wolofs, Fulas and Serahulis. In the Upper River Division (where Serahulis and Fulas predominate) for example, it gained four of the available six seats.

1965-1975.

The PPP victory in 1962 brought forth a new era of opportunity and constraint. The opportunities were easily discernible; the constraints less so. Clashing survival imperatives - which had remained buried until the PPP came to power - formed the basis of the latter, threatening to compromise the party's major electoral props.

Before 1962 the politicisation of the Colony-Protectorate divide - activated through promises of rural development - had produced widespread support for the PPP. Keeping these promises - by diverting the bulk of government spending to the countryside - constituted an obvious method of retaining and extending the party's rural base. After all, the PPP did not need the urban vote in order to win elections. Jawara's rejection of this strategy was, however, attributable to two alternative considerations. First, although the PPP's pro-Protectorate message had contained an explicit anti-Colony component Jawara was well aware of the (non-electoral) threat a deprived and restless urban populace might pose. Second, he was equally aware of the need to gain the confidence and co-operation of urban elites.⁵⁵ Doing so required a show of moderation; Jawara had to make it quite clear that he did not harbour anti-'colony' intentions.

Rather different considerations shaped Jawara's approach to the PPP's Mandinka support.⁵⁶ Although Jawara could not afford to alienate those who readily identified with his party, he was compelled to incorporate new sources of support. Mandinkas did not form an absolute majority of the population; protecting their interests alone would not have guaranteed electoral victory and would almost certainly have created other problems.

⁵⁴ See *West Africa*, 9 June 1962, p 619.

⁵⁵ Without their co-operation Jawara would have found it extremely difficult to govern. Most civil servants, for example, were natural UP supporters. Replacing them was not an option since, as Hughes, *op. cit.*, 1975, p 67 observed, "skilled manpower ... was one commodity in short supply among the Mandinka." Some of the ways in which Jawara won the co-operation of urban elites are discussed in Chapter one; the important point to note here is that the need to so impinged upon the PPP's electoral strategy.

⁵⁶ Though there was obviously an overlap. The need to gain support among the urban, predominantly non-Mandinka elites precluded exclusive ethnic appeals.

Precluded from any large-scale diversion of resources or exclusive ethnic appeals Jawara had to find some alternative means of retaining as well as extending the party's rural base. Before examining the means chosen two final points are worth stressing. First, although Jawara's decision to depoliticise ethnicity threatened to compromise his party's traditional support - particularly if a third party emerged to "outbid" the regime - the risk was a calculated one. As stressed in Chapter one, several factors worked to mitigate the political importance of ethnicity in Gambian politics. Inter-communal marriage, social interaction, economic interdependence, geographical proximity - all prevented the withdrawal of ethnic communities into self-contained, mutually hostile groupings. Jawara's electoral strategy complemented these circumstances. The second point to note is that, despite the overall de-politicisation of ethnic divisions, they continued to form one part of the political framework - a part that Jawara was not afraid to use (whether to boost his own position or to discredit the opposition) when necessary.

In 1966 the PPP faced its first electoral test as the ruling party. In one sense the 1966 elections presented much less of a challenge than all subsequent contests. The relative newness of the regime obscured definitive judgements concerning resource allocation and ensured that the sole opposition challenge was provided by the UP. The election bore some similarities to the previous two with the important difference that this time around it was the PPP, not the UP, which could exploit its position as the ruling party.

From 1962, Jawara's willingness to extend the coalition of interests which had brought him to power had served to undermine the UP. The co-optation of UP support was prompted partly by the above-mentioned need to swell the number of PPP supporters. This aside, the intention was two-fold with an eye on the party's medium and long term electoral prospects. Since 1962 Jawara had been basing much of his claim to legitimacy upon the fact that his party was representative of *all* Gambians.⁵⁷ It was now important that this claim be substantiated by making some incursions, if not into the urban areas, then at least into UP support in the provinces. Looking ahead, moreover, as long as the UP retained a significant level of popular support there remained the possibility of it joining forces with a rurally-based party to form a substantial challenge to the PPP.⁵⁸

The appropriation of UP support in the provinces was made possible by the ruling party's access to patronage. Those groups (notably the Fula and Serahuli) which had previously backed the UP now turned to the PPP as a positive step towards protecting their interests. The appointment of men such as Andrew Camara (a Fula and former UP member) to cabinet positions undermined the

⁵⁷ From December 1964 to June 1965 there had even been a UP/PPP coalition. See Sulayman S Nyang, "Politics in Post-independence Gambia," *A Current Bibliography on African Affairs*, Summer 1975, pp 115-17.

⁵⁸ The UP/PPP coalition collapsed not because N'Jie opposed the principle of urban-rural co-operation but because of the contempt in which he held Jawara. In an interview (with the author, 12 August 1993) almost thirty years on, N'Jie's antipathy towards "that scallywag" Jawara, was undiminished. N'Jie claimed he had never agreed to the coalition in the first place, having been in London at the time.

UP's earlier claim to be protecting minority groups from Mandinka supremacy, and at the same time strengthened the PPP's national support. Between 1963 and 1965 Michael Baldeh, IBI Jobe, HO Semega-Janneh, Demba Jagana, KCA Kah and Mafoday Sonko all responded favourably to the lure of cabinet posts and other rewards; by 1966 the number of UP MPs had been reduced to five.

District Chiefs, responding to the PPP's control over both sanctions (including deposition) and rewards, also began to abandon the UP. This was an ongoing process. A number of chiefs remained persistently loyal to the UP; some were removed,⁵⁹ others were gradually persuaded of the error of their ways as the UP's promise of protection - lacking the credibility of an early return to power - was revealed as worthless. Chiefly defections undermined the UP's organisational strength in the provinces and, at the same time, gave the PPP greater "access" to opposition supporters. Alongside local party leaders - who received rewards commensurate with their ability to deliver votes - chiefs also helped compensate for the PPP's declining emphasis on grassroots participation.⁶⁰

PPP tactics aside, the UP did little to improve its chances of winning in 1966. Preoccupied with an (ultimately futile) attempt to overturn the 1962 provincial elections,⁶¹ it achieved little in organisational terms in the years prior to independence. The party also failed to produce a convincing set of alternative policies. Whereas by 1966 the PPP could point to concrete achievements in the foreign policy sphere as well as its success in "winning" independence for The Gambia, the UP proffered only vague commitments and unconstructive criticism.⁶²

The election results reflected the two party's variable efforts during previous years, the PPP gaining 65.3% of the total vote and twenty-four seats, and the UP/GCP alliance 33.4% of the vote and eight seats.⁶³ The remaining 1.3% was the aggregate score of the five Independents. Excluding the three Bathurst seats,⁶⁴ the PPP won seats throughout the territory. Particularly significant were the results in the Upper River Division (URD) where the PPP's capture of four of the six seats (an exact reversal of the 1962 results) reflected the party's efforts to win the allegiance of numerically smaller ethnic groups.

A reasonable showing in 1966 did little to halt the UP's inexorable decline. The PPP's

⁵⁹ Those removed in 1965 included Seyfo Omar M'Bake of Sami, Sekouba Jarjussey of Jarra West, Koba Leigh of Fulladu West, Seni Biyai of Foni Bintang, Famara Singhateh of Lower Baddibu and Njundu Touray of Kombo South. Prior to 1965 chiefs had been "retired" in Wuli, Fulladu East, Jarra East, Kiang East, Upper Baddibu, Central Baddibu and Kombo Central. *Ibid.*, p 67.

⁶⁰ The decline of the PPP's organisational apparatus is discussed in Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp 152-55.

⁶¹ The attempt was based upon a claim that the elections had been based on an invalid voters register. It was a costly and time-consuming affair which ended, in July 1964, in defeat at the High Court in London.

⁶² In their respective election broadcasts (the UP was allowed two fifteen minute slots and the PPP three) for example, the N'Jie offered "freedom from fear to your personal liberty and hunger and shelter" while Jawara stressed the achievement of independence, the joining of international organisations, his plans for agricultural development etc. See *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 5 May 1966, p 3 and 14 May 1966, p 1.

⁶³ Results from *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 28 May 1966, p 1.

⁶⁴ The Bathurst seats had been reduced from five although there was still thirty-two seats overall since the Kombos had been further divided and Jarra split in two.

relentless tactics continued apace. In 1968, Jawara's marriage to the daughter of Momodou Musa N'Jie⁶⁵ - a staunch UP supporter and its wealthiest backer - caused N'Jie to switch sides. The withdrawal of N'Jie's financial support as well as his favourable influence in parts of Bathurst and the Upper River Division was a severe blow to the floundering UP. The defection of UP MPs - which gathered momentum following the ruling party's referendum victory in 1970⁶⁶ - also continued to weaken the party. Significantly, the party's two remaining URD MPs - MC Cham and MC Jallow - defected to the PPP.⁶⁷ Equally damaging was the desertion of the influential UP Secretary-General, IAS Burang-John.⁶⁸ His change of allegiance was prompted, in part, by the prevailing disillusionment with PS N'Jie's leadership.⁶⁹ N'Jie's refusal to co-operate with the PPP combined with his lack of enthusiasm for exploring new means of cultivating support rendered the UP a spent force and in subsequent elections it posed little challenge to the PPP hegemony.

Meanwhile, however, in October 1968 a new political party - the Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) - was established by the former Finance Minister, Sheriff Sisay. Although the PPA was disbanded shortly before the 1972 elections it nevertheless exposed the risks inherent in Jawara's electoral strategy. From the early 1960's Jawara (as noted above) had been incorporating new elements into his ruling coalition. His original supporters - those who had "grown-up" with the PPP - resented this process, interpreting his actions as both an abandonment of the Mandinka cause and a dilution of their influence in the upper reaches of government. Jawara's increasingly firm grip on power - itself a reflection of his refusal to depend upon the PPP's founder members for his position (see Chapter one) - rendered the dissenters impotent to reverse the turn of events from within the PPP.⁷⁰ They resorted instead to forming a new party.

The PPA's founding members were almost all men who had been associated with the ruling party from the start and whose political careers had taken a downward turn.⁷¹ Sheriff Sisay (MP for Niamina) had been demoted from Finance to External Affairs while Paul Baldeh (MP for Lower Fulladu West), KCA Kah (MP for Jokadu and a more recent co-optee) and Yusupha Samba (MP for Sabach-Sanjai) had all lost cabinet posts - in Education, Health and Labour respectively - at one time or another. The threat posed by these disgruntled individuals operated on a number of levels

⁶⁵ N'Jie is profiled in *West Africa*, 13-19 August 1990, p 2272.

⁶⁶ The UP's failure to thwart the introduction of a republic the second time around undermined party morale.

⁶⁷ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 27 August 1970, p 1 and 24 October 1970, p 1.

⁶⁸ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 21 April 1970, p 1.

⁶⁹ According to N'Jie (interview with the author, 12 August 1993) it was his refusal to co-operate with the new Republican government which led, in May 1970, to his temporary removal as leader of the UP. The death of the new leader, his brother ED N'Jie, in October of the same year resulted in PS N'Jie's reinstatement. Defections from the party subsequently resumed.

⁷⁰ Jawara's refusal to tolerate dissent was illustrated a month prior to the formation of the PPA. The party's four founder members (named below) had voted against the government on a key piece of legislation designed to increase the number of nominated members in Parliament. They were abruptly removed from the party.

⁷¹ Details from *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 6 January 1968, p 2; 3 September 1968, p 1; 9 April 1968, p 1 and *The Voice of The People*, p 123.

and compelled the PPP to take the new party seriously.

For one thing, Jawara knew - from his own party's recent history - how effective an appeal to ethnic sensibilities might prove. Ethnic resentment, together with emergent constituency-level dissatisfaction (see below), presented a potentially lethal combination. Regarding organisation Sisay was reportedly confident that his high caste would stand him in good stead among provincial elders and chiefs.

This confidence turned out to be misplaced. The advantages of incumbency accruing to the PPP - its access to both patronage and sanctions - prevented the PPA from gaining a foothold in the provinces. Local elites remained loyal to the PPP and the mass of the population followed suit. Lacking both resources and policies the PPA's failure to make headway rendered the party vulnerable to Jawara's assault upon its leadership. In 1969 the PPP's readmittance of KCA Kah together with his public denunciation of the PPA greatly undermined the PPA's credibility and morale. The death of another founding member, Paul Baldeh, weakened the party further and in 1972 the whole experiment was abandoned with Sisay's return to the PPP. He was duly "rewarded" (and neutralised) with the governorship of the Central Bank.⁷²

The disappearance of the PPA did not, however, reflect a resolution of the issues which had prompted its formation. Ethnic dissatisfaction and disquiet over the President's powers persisted⁷³ and, in 1972, combined with new concerns to produce a fresh challenge to the PPP. Nineteen Independent candidates - almost all Mandinkas and former PPP members - stood in sixteen constituencies (country-wide) in the 1972 elections. Ethnic background and political affiliations aside, the dissidents were characterised by their relative youth and inexperience.⁷⁴ Their quarrel with the party was based partly upon policy - viz. Jawara's ethnic balancing act as well as his disappointingly unadventurous approach in the economic and foreign policy spheres - and partly upon personal interest. Jawara's decision to renominate all except three incumbent MPs was naturally resented by youthful political aspirants, many of whom had applied for the party nomination.

This resentment was mirrored by constituency-level disenchantment with the performance of many incumbents. Thus, for the mass of voters, elections were regarded primarily as a means of accessing the patron-client network. The electoral prospects of "effective" patrons - those who had brought resources (in the form of roads, schools or wells etc.) into the area - were good.⁷⁵ Others, however, were regarded as having failed their constituents; it was this failure which gave substance

⁷² Sisay retained this post for a decade before being nominated to Parliament. He was reappointed minister of finance in 1982.

⁷³ And, as Hughes, (*op. cit.*, 1975, p 72) observes, was reinforced by the change-over to a Republic.

⁷⁴ Some candidates (notably those standing in Bathurst North, Niumi and Kantora) had more political experience than others but most were quite new to the game.

⁷⁵ Although ministers were often in the best position to serve their people, ordinary MPs - through lobbying and repeated parliamentary requests - could make a difference in their constituencies.

to the Independent threat. The Independents cultivated support by pledging to hasten development in their constituencies. Many had locally influential backers and some a substantial personal following.

It is important not to exaggerate the threat Independents posed to the PPP's survival. The fragmented nature of the challenge, the candidates' inexperience and the fact that most regarded their candidature as an expression of dissatisfaction rather than an irrevocable break with the PPP, minimised the overall risk. Nevertheless Jawara was loathe to oversee any weakening of his support base, particularly in those areas where the PPP was traditionally strong. His response to the Independent electoral challenge (which operated simultaneously to erode the UP's residual provincial support) took place on a number of levels.

Of particular importance was Jawara's hugely successful attempt to exploit his personal popularity.⁷⁶ Taking full advantage of his country's small size Jawara (assisted by his ministers) undertook an extensive tour. In those constituencies where local grievances threatened electoral defeat Jawara undertook to persuade the electorate that a vote against their representative was a vote against him and vice-versa. By explicitly linking his continuation in office with the return of PPP MPs Jawara ensured the loyalty of many would-be dissenters.⁷⁷

Presenting PPP candidates as "his" men also proved important in counteracting the impression that a vote for an Independent was a vote for the PPP. During the early part of the campaign many voters apparently regarded the Independents as "unofficial" PPP candidates. This perspective worked to allay fears over the unfavourable implications of casting an anti-PPP vote. These implications centred upon the workings of the patron-client network and in particular the fact that the bulk of governmental resources, distributed as they were through loyal agents - the chiefs and village heads - often found their way to PPP supporters. Jawara's task was to make it clear that a vote for an Independent was not a vote for the PPP and, by implication, that "opposition" supporters would suffer. Linked to this it was often far from clear whether Independents would prove to be more effective representatives (in terms of resource distribution) than their PPP counterparts.

A third aspect of the PPP electoral campaign was designed to prevent the Independents from splitting the Mandinka vote and, in the process, undermining the PPP's traditional support base. In selected areas Jawara's message of national unity was buttressed by his depiction of the PPP as the party of the Mandinka. Village elders also played a significant role in promoting a favourable consensus at the village level.⁷⁸ Youths, who in the early stages of the campaign constituted some of

⁷⁶ Although, on a fundamental level, popular dissatisfaction stemmed from Jawara's refusal to preside over a large-scale diversion of government spending to the rural areas, he was rarely a target of blame. People focused their resentment on the local party representative rather than the President.

⁷⁷ During a tour of the Kombos, for example, Jawara announced his presidential candidacy and stressed that a vote for the PPP candidate was also a vote for him. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 15 January 1972, p 1.

⁷⁸ For a comprehensive discussion of consensual decision making in Mandinka villages see Peter M Weil, "Mandinka Mansaya: the Role of the Mandinka in the Political System of The Gambia" (PhD dissertation,

the Independents most ardent supporters, were often brought into line by election day.⁷⁹

And finally some of the less reputable tactics employed by the PPP are worthy of mention. Although the elections were in no sense rigged it was nevertheless apparent that the PPP capitalised upon its access to governmental resources. The use of government vehicles for campaigning (and, some suggest, for transporting voters), unfettered access to the radio⁸⁰ as well as the open support of supposedly neutral traditional leaders all worked to the PPP's advantage.

The election results which gave the PPP twenty-eight seats (seven of which had been unopposed) and the Independents one⁸¹ vindicated the party's electoral campaign. The UP, meanwhile, having fielded fourteen candidates was reduced to three seats⁸² (two in Bathurst and Serekunda). The PPP not only confirmed its displacement of the UP in the Upper River Division but, in winning Bathurst South, succeeded in encroaching upon the party's urban support.⁸³ Although it is important not to underestimate the threat posed by the opposition - the Independent/UP combined vote amounted to approximately 37% of the total - the PPP victory was emphatic.

1975-1985.

In 1975 two new political parties were created. By far the least threatening of the two was the National Liberation Party (NLP) led by a Banjul lawyer, Pap Cheyassin Secka. The NLP's failure to pose a serious challenge to the PPP was attributable to a number of factors. Firstly, the party's broadly socialist doctrine (emphasising, in particular, economic independence) contained little appeal for rural voters whose primary concern was the search for an effective go-between capable of accelerating the flow of resources to their constituency. Secondly, the NLP's emphasis on grassroots participation was not matched by an extensive party apparatus at the local level, the perennial problem of resource shortages hampering organisational efforts. And finally the party

University of Oregon, 1968), especially pp 252-57. See also pp 261-62 for how the decision making process worked to the electoral benefit of the PPP.

⁷⁹ *The Voice of The People*, p 126 suggests that many of the Independents' supporters were actually too young to vote, a point confirmed by local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94).

⁸⁰ In addition to official election broadcasts the PPP benefited from coverage of government and party activities.

⁸¹ The sole Independent winner was Batapa Drammeh in Sandu (Basse). Drammeh subsequently lost his seat on health grounds, a by-election was held and won by the PPP candidate. *The Voice of The People*, p 129. It is important to note that neither the Independents or the UP suffered to any great extent from contesting the same constituencies. As Hughes (*West Africa*, 28 April 1972, p 511) observed it was only in one constituency that the PPP won on a minority vote.

⁸² Reduced, that is, from the previous election. Thus the UP's parliamentary strength had dwindled to three MPs in the previous Parliament.

⁸³ Bathurst South was won for the PPP by Garba-Jahumpa. The ruling party was given a chance to build upon this victory when, in August 1972, N'Jie lost his seat in Bathurst North for absenting himself from the House. However in the subsequent by-election Musa Jobe (UP) retained the seat with a small majority. For further details see *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 19 August 1972, p 1 and 5 December 1972, p 2.

lacked a receptive audience. Eschewing ethnic appeals in favour of ethnic balance⁸⁴ rendered the party, in one sense, a pale imitation of the PPP. The fact that the ruling party was already catering for minority groups, combined with its support among the Mandinkas (a group unlikely to turn to Secka, an urban Wolof, for greater protection) left the NLP without an obvious constituency.

The NLP's failure to gain ground reflected Secka's limited grasp of prevailing political realities. The party's poor showing in the 1977 elections⁸⁵ demonstrated its failure to tap into existing dissatisfaction with PPP rule. Many of the NLP's original supporters eventually defected to the National Convention Party (NCP), a party destined to provide a more realistic political challenge.

The NCP's immediate origins lay with the personal resentment and ambition of its founder and leader, Sheriff Dibba. Prior to 1975 Dibba had had a somewhat chequered career. A former Vice-President, during the early 1970's he had been exiled in Brussels as Ambassador to the EEC following his brother's involvement in a smuggling scandal, the notorious "Butut affair." Having lost the political momentum Dibba, on his return to The Gambia, attempted to use his new position as Minister of Planning and Industrial Development to create a personal support-base. His - rather unrealistic - intention appears to have been to cultivate sufficient support to win a vote of no confidence against the President.

In July 1975 Jawara responded to a deluge of reports concerning Dibba's activities by dismissing him from the cabinet. He hesitated, however, to expel Dibba from the party, presumably regarding his continued membership as conducive to greater control. Nevertheless, by August Dibba's decision to go public - with calls for a "more enlightened and dedicated leadership"⁸⁶ - gave Jawara little choice but to expel him and in September the NCP was formed.

Like the PPA before it, the NCP was based upon mutually reinforcing cleavages within the ruling party. Jawara's insistence upon distributing patronage among Mandinkas and non-Mandinkas/Banjulians and provincials alike was clearly resented by some of his original supporters. Disappointment was particularly prevalent among those Mandinkas who had been with the party since its inception and who felt they deserved the lion's share of available resources. Employment opportunities in general and cabinet positions in particular constituted an important focus for their displeasure. Jawara's 1972 cabinet included many newcomers including, for example, MC Cham, Garba-Jahumpa and AB N'Jie. Even Assan Musa Camara - though he had been with the party for many years - was still regarded as a newcomer by some party stalwarts and his elevation to the Vice-Presidency resented in certain quarters.

Although in subsequent years Dibba was to shy away from using an ethno-regional strategy

⁸⁴ The members of the Central Committee included a Wolof, a Serahuli, a Serer and a Fula.

⁸⁵ All five NLP candidates were roundly beaten.

⁸⁶ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 26 August 1975, p 2.

to win elections (see below) he did manipulate intra-PPP divisions along these lines in order to establish initial support from within the political elite.⁸⁷ This tactic, alongside Dibba's personal support-base among his fellow Baddibu Mandinka and, most importantly, his determination to establish a well-organised countrywide network of NCP branches posed a serious threat to the PPP hegemony.

The PPP's response was immediate and operated continuously from Dibba's initial announcement to the 1977 elections. The first, crucially important, line of attack centred upon Jawara's denunciation of the NCP as a sectional party and Dibba as an individual with "tribal and regional tendencies."⁸⁸ The significance of this approach was three-fold. Firstly, by painting the NCP as a "tribal" Mandinka party, Jawara helped to ensure the continued adherence of other ethnic groups whose support he had been assiduously cultivating since 1962. The PPP, meanwhile, was portrayed as the party of national unity; a party which, in Jawara's words, believed it would be "unfair to dish out all the good things in the country to one tribe."⁸⁹ Appeals on the basis of national unity were similarly employed to bolster the PPP's "traditional" support base. The NCP, so the argument went, was "pitting Mandinkas against Mandinkas."⁹⁰ Jawara's depiction of the party as a *Baddibu* Mandinka party - in contrast to the all-encompassing PPP - helped to contain its appeal beyond Dibba's place of origin. In the Baddibu region itself he adopted a rather more positive approach, citing examples of Mandinkas in top governmental positions, in an attempt to counter the charge of his presiding over a "Wolof government."⁹¹ Concerns over resource allocation aside, Jawara - in an appeal to *all* Gambians - raised the spectre of ethnic conflict. His warning that a vote for the "tribalist" NCP would threaten the country's peace and stability⁹² was not taken lightly by the Gambian electorate.

The second line of attack concentrated upon undermining Dibba's personal reputation. Dismissing his claim of policy differences,⁹³ Jawara portrayed Dibba as a man consumed by personal ambition and self interest.⁹⁴ He recalled Dibba's familial connection to the Butut affair - "a shameful and embarrassing activity" - and its aftermath. He stressed the ingratitude and disloyalty

⁸⁷ Though it should be stressed that, while Dibba had the sympathy of some politicians, most hedged their bets not wishing to jeopardise their own positions should he fail. The only MP to join him was Kebba Bayo (Saloum).

⁸⁸ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 26 August 1975, p 1.

⁸⁹ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 14 February 1976, p 1.

⁹⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 5 March 1977, p 2.

⁹¹ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 3 February 1976, p 2.

⁹² See for example Jawara's interview in *The Progressive*, 4 August 1975, p 3.

⁹³ Although Dibba claimed his departure was prompted by disagreements over policy - in particular the pace of agricultural development - the NCP failed to produce innovative policy ideas. Its first publication, "The Birth of a New Political Party," might almost have been a PPP manifesto with its emphasis upon the need for integrated rural development and infrastructural improvements. Almost twenty years later Dibba admitted that a difference of "emphasis" was all that distinguished his party from the PPP. Interview with the author, 21 June 1993.

⁹⁴ See *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 14 February 1976, p 2.

which met his own magnanimous response to the scandal, namely a job in Brussels with emoluments "far higher than those of a minister."⁹⁵ The theme of ingratitude and betrayal on the part of a man who, as Dr Lamin Saho argued had been "plucked from obscurity"⁹⁶ by the President, was subsequently adopted by other ministers and MPs.

Publicising NCP defections constituted a third aspect of the PPP assault. Although defections from the opposition did not gain any real momentum until after the 1977 defeat, local NCP supporters and officials willing to stand up and publicly confess their sins could always be found. According to reports of a rally in Banjul Central, for example, Abdoulie Sowe (an NCP propaganda secretary) "went down on his knees and begged forgiveness."⁹⁷ Typically, Jawara made the most of these occasions. The defectors' discomfiture served as an example to anyone considering a similar route. Their ritualised denunciations of the NCP served to undermine the party's credibility. And of course, by granting absolution Jawara was able to demonstrate his personal magnanimity.

Tactics designed to undermine the fledgling opposition were complemented by those designed to boost the standing of the PPP. As in previous elections Jawara played a significant role in re-establishing links with the rural areas. Undertaking several tours he emphasised and explained the PPP's positive performance at the national level, simultaneously displaying a personal interest in parochial concerns. As in 1972 Jawara stressed that voting for a PPP MP was a means of expressing support for the President; in some areas he blessed candidates with a personal introduction, thus driving home the link between them.⁹⁸

Attempts to maintain popular support did not, however, begin and end with the exploitation of Jawara's personal popularity. As in 1972 the PPP's financial clout (stemming from its access to governmental resources and the backing of prominent urban businessmen⁹⁹) enabled it to conduct an extensive electoral campaign. Most traditional leaders, village elders and district commissioners willingly used their influence in favour of the ruling party and, of course, the forces of inertia were on its side.¹⁰⁰ Unlike 1972 however - and reflecting the comparative seriousness of the NCP challenge - the PPP placed great emphasis upon rural development. The government's hitherto

⁹⁵ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 21 October 1975, p 1.

⁹⁶ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 28 October 1975, p 3.

⁹⁷ *The Progressive*, 11 November 1975, p 3.

⁹⁸ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 6 March 1977, p 2.

⁹⁹ In an interview (with the author, 21 June 1993) Dibba claimed his party had always been at a serious disadvantage given the tendency of businessmen to "gather round" the PPP. Though no doubt a fair observation, Dibba himself was not slow to woo those businessmen (admittedly much smaller in number) who, for whatever reason, had fallen out with the ruling party.

¹⁰⁰ During an interview (with the author, 15 October 1993) Dixon Colley, editor of *The Nation*, emphasised above all else the importance of "habit" in explaining the PPP's electoral success in the rural areas. This view was echoed by numerous others; even Momodou Gaye, the Assistant Secretary at the PPP's Banjul headquarters, admitted that rural inhabitants tended to "reject the unknown." Interview with the author, 1 February 1994.

lackadaisical approach to the implementation of the first Five-Year Development Plan was transformed.¹⁰¹ Rural development schemes aimed primarily at infrastructural improvements (particularly the construction of access roads and new buildings) were introduced into the URD and MacCarthy Island Division (MID) several months prior to the elections.

The ruling party's multiple efforts to win the 1977 elections were facilitated by the response of the NCP. Significantly, the party failed to repudiate PPP allegations of "tribalism." While Dibba understood that an ethnically-based electoral strategy would at best be limited and at worst counter-productive - and consequently eschewed ethnic appeals - the composition of the NCP belied his national aspirations. These aspirations were illustrated by Dibba's decision to field thirty candidates in 1977; they were at odds with the fact that twenty-five of these were Mandinkas.¹⁰²

Of course, had Mandinkas actually voted *en masse* for the NCP - which was after all being touted by the PPP as a Mandinka party - Dibba would have won substantial support at the polls. That they did not was attributable to a number of factors. The relatively low salience of ethnicity in The Gambia was clearly important. Electoral outcomes throughout the period of PPP rule were often influenced but never determined by ethnicity. Where it did play a role PPP tactics (referred to above) made certain that it worked to the ruling party's advantage. The PPP's extensive electoral campaign and superior organisation ensured that its message about ethnicity (and other concerns) was heard above all others. In contrast, Dibba's organisational efforts were hampered by shortages of time, money and able secondary leaders.

Whether his efforts were undermined by electoral "irregularities" is more debatable. Over the years of PPP rule allegations of irregularities centred upon two main aspects; voter registration and vote-buying. To take registration first, it was claimed - by opposition parties¹⁰³ and many more "neutral" observers alike - that underage citizens and aliens were given voters cards in order to boost the PPP's final tally. Yai Compins and other local notables (whose access to loans etc. depended, in part, upon the number of voters they could mobilise) presented the would-be voters for registration, their influence and authority ensuring the compliance of the registering officer. Indebted to their sponsor, foreigners would vote accordingly.¹⁰⁴

Although concrete (as opposed to anecdotal) evidence is virtually impossible to obtain, the

¹⁰¹ Noted by Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp 248-49.

¹⁰² *West Africa*, 18 April 1977, p 743.

¹⁰³ During interviews with opposition leaders all except Camara (who remained in government until the mid-1980's) suggested that fraudulent registration and vote-buying stemmed back at least as far as 1975. However the following account most accurately reflects the views of Halifa Sallah and Sam Sarr (PDOIS) since they were willing to provide by far the most detailed account of how, in their view, electoral irregularities were manifested. Interview with the author, 16 July 1993.

¹⁰⁴ Their gratitude stemmed from the fact that a voters card was a claim to citizenship. It gave them access to certain benefits - cheaper hospital fees, for example. Halifa Sallah (interview with the author, 16 July 1993) claimed that Gambians too, in spite of their right to a voters' card, frequently felt indebted to PPP "agents" for their assistance in filling out the registration forms, having their photographs taken etc. Whether this gratitude extended to a favourable vote is, however, much more difficult to ascertain.

very least one can say is that opportunities for fraudulent registration did exist. The absence of proper records (of births for example) rendered the system vulnerable to abuse. The same was true of the porosity of the Senegal-Gambian borders.¹⁰⁵ Whether these opportunities were exploited - and if so, to what degree - is a different matter. Significantly however few Gambians venture to argue that problems in the system of registering voters had any serious impact on election results overall. In later years PDOIS - among the most vehement and consistent of electoral critics - argued that elections reflected the "will of the people."¹⁰⁶ Registration irregularities may have boosted the ruling party's final vote-count, but did not prevent the opposition winning seats in areas where it had significant popular appeal. Much the same conclusion may be applied to allegations of vote buying.¹⁰⁷ Indeed the fact that charges of this type tended to predominate in Banjul - where the PPP found it hardest to win seats - suggests that vote-buying was either inoperative, limited or simply ineffective.

Taken as a whole the 1977 elections results reflected not electoral fraud but the range of factors outlined above. The PPP won 69.6% of the votes and twenty-seven seats throughout the territory. The NCP won 27.7% of the vote and five seats, three in the Baddibu district,¹⁰⁸ one in Bakau and one in Serekunda West. The NCP's superior organisation (compared to some other parts of the country) and the "substantial" number of Baddibu Mandinka living in the south west of Banjul helped explain the latter two victories.¹⁰⁹

In Banjul itself, the NCP allied with the leaderless UP candidates. Despite N'Jie's refusal to participate in the elections four UP candidates stood (three in Banjul) and two won. Although the PPP narrowly won Banjul North (PS N'Jie's former constituency) for the first time, the UP managed to retain Banjul Central and regain Banjul South. However, subsequent events were to obliterate

¹⁰⁵ Dibba (interview with the author, 21 June 1993) for example, stressed that registration problems were prevalent in the border towns.

¹⁰⁶ *The Gambia Weekly*, 1 May 1992, p 3. Although PDOIS was referring to the 1992 elections Sam Sarr (interview with the author, 16 July 1993) suggested the same applied to previous elections, the point being that, without access to information and given the undue emphasis on personalities in Gambian elections, the "true will of the people" was bound to be "distorted." It is worth noting that some of the more youthful PDOIS supporters (interviews with the author, 1993-4) were rather less concerned with these distinctions and far more inclined to condemn elections as a "sham."

¹⁰⁷ Money, it is said, was handed out to compound heads who would then deliver the votes of others in their compound. One NCP candidate, defeated much later in the 1992 elections, insisted that PPP representatives had been distributing as much as D5000 to selected locals in his constituency (interview with the author, 4 November 1993) but other local sources suggested D100 was closer to the going rate.

¹⁰⁸ This gave the NCP half the seats in the NBD. The following month, however, the delayed election in Jokadu was held and won by the PPP. This gave the ruling party four of the seven NBD seats and twenty-eight seats overall.

¹⁰⁹ Noted by Arnold Hughes, in *West Africa*, 18 April 1977, p 743. The election results demonstrated the NCP's limited appeal among Mandinkas elsewhere. It was perhaps unsurprising, then, that Jawara saw little reason to diverge from the path he had been following prior to the formation of the NCP. Taking the 1977 cabinet, for example, although Hughes (*ibid.*, p 745), noted that the appointment of four Mandinka ministers (including Lamin M'Boge at Finance) was "meant to reassure those Mandinka who felt that the government was slipping out of their hands," Jawara also appointed three Fulas, two Wolofs, one Jola and a Serahuli.

these achievements. Within a matter of weeks a by-election in Banjul Central (necessitated by the death of the UP candidate) produced a PPP win and the following year the UP MP for Banjul Central defected to the PPP.¹¹⁰ By 1978, then, Jawara's efforts to build a genuinely national party had borne fruit; of the six seats which might be classed as urban (three in Banjul, two in Serekunda, and Bakau) the PPP had four and the NCP two.

After 1977, support for the NCP declined. Some of the party's supporters, having genuinely believed in the likelihood of an opposition victory, were disillusioned by the results. For some, political expediency dictated a return to the PPP fold and mass defections were subsequently reported in a number of constituencies, not least in the NCP-held seats of Illiassa (Baddibu district) and Serekunda West.¹¹¹ Some higher-ranking party members also chose to desert the NCP. In 1977 for example, FM Krubally resigned his post on the Executive Committee accusing Dibba of "dictatorship, favouritism and absolute maladministration."¹¹² The subsequent loss of Lamin Juwara proved even more damaging to the NCP. His depiction of the Executive Committee (of which he was a former member) as "a Mandinka affair" dominated by people "from Baddibu, hand-picked by the leader"¹¹³ echoed Jawara's earlier statements and further undermined all subsequent efforts to present a national image.

Although Dibba claimed indifference to this gradual shifting of grassroots political support it became clear he was losing political momentum. Regaining it, moreover, was unlikely to be easy. Compared to the financial and manpower resources backing the PPP "machine," Dibba's personal efforts - made prior to the 1982 elections - to extend and consolidate his party's organisational apparatus appeared painfully inadequate.

The shift in grassroots political support after 1977 is key to explaining the NCP's poor showing in the 1982 elections. The aftermath of the 1981 coup attempt - though stressed by Dibba as the primary reason for his party's defeat - merely compounded pre-existing problems. Having made the point, however, it was certainly true that the events of 1981 did the NCP few favours.

The widely-held belief that NCP supporters had played some role in the coup attempt was encouraged by Jawara. On a number of tours - both after the coup and during the run-up to the elections - he stressed that the party's supporters had played a "great role" in events and recalled that Kukoi Sanyang, the coup leader, had contested the 1977 elections on an NCP ticket.¹¹⁴ His intention was to discredit the NCP as well as to boost support for the PPP. On a tour of the North Bank for example, Jawara equated a vote for the PPP with the "condemnation of criminality and

¹¹⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 7 September 1978, p 1.

¹¹¹ See the 1977/78 issues of *The Gambia News Bulletin*. Defections were also announced in Kombo North where the NCP had done well in the 1977 elections.

¹¹² *The Gambia Onward*, 17 June 1977, p 3.

¹¹³ *West Africa*, 3 November 1980, p 2171.

¹¹⁴ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 16 April 1982, p 2.

terrorism."¹¹⁵ These efforts, combined with the apparent political inexpediency of attachment to a party associated with an unpopular coup attempt, resulted in further defections from the NCP. The political fallout from the coup attempt also hampered the NCP's electoral campaign. Perennial manpower shortfalls were compounded in 1981/82 with the imprisonment of substantial numbers of NCP officials and supporters.¹¹⁶ Dibba himself and two other NCP candidates remained in detention, charged with treason, until after the elections.

Nevertheless it is important not to exaggerate the impact of the coup attempt upon the performance of the NCP. The party was free to nominate candidates (it managed nineteen) and Dibba contested the presidency,¹¹⁷ albeit from a prison cell. Jawara made no attempt to manipulate the State of Emergency or the Senegalese presence for his own ends. At the first NCP election rally, for example, *The Nation* reported the "surprising" absence of police or soldiers.¹¹⁸

Although the NCP provided its strongest challenge in the Western half of the country (and backed UP candidates in the three Banjul constituencies),¹¹⁹ the PPP did not escape unchallenged elsewhere. Thirteen Independent candidates - standing throughout the country, though predominating in the URD¹²⁰ - ensured that only three PPP candidates were returned unopposed. The Independents closely resembled those of 1972; twelve of the thirteen were members of the PPP. Having failed to win the party nomination, they hoped to capitalise upon innumerable local issues, personality conflicts and popular resentment over the poor constituency performance of incumbent MPs, to gain election. By far the most visible of the Independents was Bubacarr Baldeh,¹²¹ former Secretary-General of the PPP's youth wing. Popular in his own constituency (Basse) and well-known throughout the URD, Baldeh was regarded as a unifying force for the Independent "movement." Rendering assistance to rebels in other constituencies, he assumed an informal leadership position (absent in 1972) which - if sufficient of his colleagues were elected - posed a substantial threat to the PPP regime.

The ruling party's response was reminiscent of 1972.¹²² All the advantages accruing to the

¹¹⁵ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 19 April 1982, p 1. Jawara also resurrected earlier tactics, arguing that a vote against the NCP would be a vote against tribalism See for example *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 3 May 1982, p 1.

¹¹⁶ Over eight-hundred, according to Dibba. *West Africa*, 16 September 1985, p 1940.

¹¹⁷ From 1982 the President was directly elected in a separate ballot.

¹¹⁸ *The Nation*, 10 April 1982, p 5.

¹¹⁹ By 1982 the UP existed in name only.

¹²⁰ For a list of all the candidates see *The Gambia Onward*, 16 April 1982.

¹²¹ Further information on Bubacarr Baldeh can be found in *The Voice of The People*, p 143.

¹²² One apparent departure concerned the pre-election attention focused on women which may have been linked to an attempt to secure the majority female vote. Initiatives included the creation of a National Women's Council and Women's Bureau (designed to advise government on all matters - education, training, economic status, legal rights etc. - pertaining to women) in 1980. There is little doubt that the PPP regarded the female vote as important; many party members believed that women formed a majority of those choosing to exercise their vote (even though very few actually stood for Parliament) and outlined various theories - related to what they perceived to be the "nature" of women - as to why they frequently opted for the PPP. The Vice-President, Saihou Sabally, (interview with the author, 4 October 1993) described the female vote as "critical" and

PPP - its access to patronage, Jawara's popularity,¹²³ the support of traditional leaders and village heads etc. - were fully exploited to combat the Independent threat. The rebels were expelled from the party - and assurances given that they would not be accepted back¹²⁴ - in order to drive home the point that a vote for an Independent was a vote against the PPP. At one rally Jawara even went so far as to argue that Independents were "other forms of Kukoi" (the leader of the 1981 coup attempt) since nobody could ascertain their political beliefs.¹²⁵

On polling day¹²⁶ Independents gained nearly 16% of the total vote, and five candidates (in Basse, Foni East, Kiang East, Jarra East, Sandu) overcame all obstacles to win their seats. The NCP lost two of its five seats (Dibba's in Central Baddibu and Serekunda West) though it managed to retain three, albeit with reduced majorities. Its showing in primarily non-Mandinka areas - particularly the URD - remained very poor. This left the PPP with almost 62% of the votes, twenty seven seats (including all three in Banjul) and another resounding victory. In the Presidential elections the PPP victory was even more emphatic, with Jawara winning 72.44% of the vote, losing to Dibba in only three constituencies.¹²⁷

Following the elections the PPP resumed business as normal. The five Independents were soon drastically reduced in number with Baldeh losing his seat through absenteeism and two others returning to the PPP.¹²⁸ The NCP meanwhile, without a Parliamentary leader and apparently suffering from a further dwindling of grassroots support,¹²⁹ offered little in the way of a serious challenge.

suggested that women are more steadfast than men - "once they have decided for a party they stick to it." Others argued along the lines that it was in the nature of women to appreciate the PPP's provision of "peace, harmony and tranquillity" (Momodou Gaye, Assistant Secretary at the PPP Bureau, interview with the author, 1 February 1994). Whatever the validity of these views the important point is that the PPP believed it worthwhile to focus an increasing amount of attention on women although this certainly should not hide the fact that they remained a greatly disadvantaged section of the population. For further details of the PPP's efforts on behalf of women, resource shortages hampering those efforts as well as the obstacles facing women (in terms of education, training, economic opportunity etc.) useful sources include *Profile of the National Women's Council and Bureau*, n.d., Africa Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS); *Focus on Gambian Women*, 1986, (Banjul, The Women's Bureau); *Report on the Activities of The Women's Bureau During the Period September 1985 to December 1986*, 1987, ACDHRS; *Indicators on Gambian Women, Population and Housing Census*, Vol 5, 1983 (Central Statistics Department, Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development, June 1990).

¹²³ Given the fact that the President was now subject to a direct election Jawara was constrained from arguing that his own position was dependent upon the electorate voting for PPP candidates. Nevertheless (and in spite of a brief period of hospitalisation following a helicopter crash) Jawara's personal intervention proved crucial in many of the shakier constituencies.

¹²⁴ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 16 April 1982, p 1 and 5 May 1982, p 1.

¹²⁵ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 21 April 1982, p 2.

¹²⁶ Results from *The Gambia Onward*, 11 May 1982, p 2.

¹²⁷ The 10% disparity between the parliamentary and presidential results was attributable to Jawara's personal popularity. Many voters who cast their vote against the PPP candidate still regarded Jawara as the best man for President.

¹²⁸ The PPP regained Basse (Baldeh's seat) in the December by-election. Of the three remaining Independents, one joined the GPP (in 1986) and the two others the NCP.

¹²⁹ Mass defections took place in Illiassa, Lower Baddibu and elsewhere. See *West Africa*, 28 May 1984, p 1104 and *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 23 May 1984, p 1.

1985-1992.

In 1986 two new political parties were formed. Of the two, The People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS) founded by Halifa Sallah and Sam Sarr, gave the PPP least cause for concern. A radical socialist party, PDOIS failed to win a seat in either of the subsequent elections. This lack of electoral success was attributable, in part, to the party's reluctance to popularise its political ideals - its verbose and often complex message¹³⁰ appealing only to a very narrow strata of the Gambian electorate. Ever confident in the efficacy of political education as a long-term route to political power, PDOIS self-consciously refused to compromise its principles in order to win seats in the short-term.¹³¹ As a result it failed to offer people what they wanted or expected from a political representative. Even assuming the party had not been plagued by financial difficulties - which limited its activities in the rural areas - it is unlikely that its impact would have been significantly greater.

Jawara - aware of PDOIS's limited appeal - paid it little attention.¹³² He was far more concerned with combating the comparatively greater threat posed by the second new political party of 1986, the Gambia People's Party (GPP). The GPP followed closely in the footsteps of its predecessors. A splinter party, it was based upon personal resentment and frustrated expectations rather than any significant ideological differences. Its leader, Assan Musa Camara, had lost his Vice-Presidential post following the 1982 elections. According to Camara,¹³³ rumours of his personal ambition had been gaining ground since early 1981. Allegations that he was grooming a number of young men to stand as Independents in the forthcoming elections were apparently substantiated when Bubacarr Baldeh¹³⁴ and others chose to stand. Although Camara denied that he assisted the Independents - and it is certainly true that he took no immediate advantage of the situation by resigning from the party - Jawara subsequently dropped him from both the cabinet and, soon after, from the Central Committee. In February 1986 Camara - having failed to be rehabilitated - resigned from the party.

Resigning alongside him was Lamin Saho, MP for Banjul Central and former Attorney General and Minister of Justice. Camara and Saho were, from the start, strange bedfellows. In 1982 both regarded themselves as best-suited to the post of Vice-President and their personal relationship

¹³⁰ To give some indication, PDOIS's 1992 election manifesto was one-hundred and nine pages long (compared to the NCP's two). The party's aims - which included combating "the present fatalism in the world" and convincing "the peoples of all countries ... that each people can build a self-reliant economy" held little appeal for the average Gambian voter. *Election Manifesto by the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Organisation for independence and Socialism*, 31st January 1992.

¹³¹ Indeed, in one interview (with the author, 16 July 1993) Sam Sarr suggested the party's first priority was "to expose problems in the system ... and emphasise issues not personalities" rather than win seats.

¹³² Other than to argue that, as "communists," PDOIS would prevent people from pursuing their religious beliefs.

¹³³ Interview with the author, 24 August 1993.

¹³⁴ Camara had, for many years, "adopted" Baldeh and provided him with an education, and was widely regarded as his political mentor.

was believed to have suffered accordingly. Nevertheless, their mutual disappointment¹³⁵ and subsequent exile from the cabinet provided sufficient common ground for them to join forces - albeit temporarily - in 1986. The final member of the founding trio was Howsoon Semega-Janneh. His political career, too, had come to a sudden halt in the early 1980's. Dropped from the post of Minister of Information and Tourism in late 1981 he had subsequently failed to be reselected for the 1982 elections.

From its inception the GPP singularly failed to deliver any new prescriptions for The Gambia's economic or political development.¹³⁶ From an electoral perspective however (and given the fact that elections were not generally fought on policy) this was not necessarily a major disadvantage. The threat posed by the GPP centred instead upon the likelihood of its winning ethnic and regionally-based support.

Camara, a Fula, concentrated most of his efforts upon the URD from where he hailed. Reputedly very popular among the predominantly Fula and Serahuli inhabitants of his own constituency (Kantora) the PPP feared that Camara's influence might spread throughout the region. The GPP was the first party to directly challenge PPP support among the numerically smaller ethnic groups. It provided a "test" of Jawara's record in the fair distribution of rewards. If his record was deemed inadequate - and if Camara succeeded in fusing ethnic dissatisfaction with existing constituency-level dissatisfaction - the likelihood of the GPP winning at least some seats appeared high.

During the period between the announcement of the party and the 1987 elections, however, the GPP suffered a number of setbacks which served to blight its electoral prospects. Lamin Saho's inclusion in the party was Camara's first mistake. Already unpopular for his role as Attorney-General in the aftermath of the abortive coup,¹³⁷ in September 1986 Saho became a positive liability following his arrest in London on a theft charge. Typically, Jawara did not hesitate to publicise Saho's misdeeds; whether or not Camara was correct in his belief that it was Jawara who directly leaked the news¹³⁸ the President was certainly not reluctant to refer to it on numerous occasions. Several months later Saho reapplied for membership of the PPP.¹³⁹

The second scandal to hit the GPP in almost as many weeks concerned allegations - made by Jawara himself - that the new party had "sold" The Gambia to a Nigerian for the sum of D3m.

¹³⁵ Saho had been offered local government, a post he publicly and belligerently refused.

¹³⁶ Like the NCP, Camara focused primarily upon government corruption and mismanagement though he was constrained to confine his criticisms to the post-1982 period. GPP policy "innovations" extended no further than a vague emphasis upon "mass participation" and a promise to limit the presidency to two terms.

¹³⁷ A point noted in *West Africa*, 24 February 1986, p 436.

¹³⁸ Interview with Camara in *West Africa*, 13 October 1986, p 2156.

¹³⁹ Camara (interview with the author, 24 August 1993) claimed that the departure of Saho and other "key figures" (see below) had demoralised the party to such an extent that the effects were still being felt during the 1992 elections.

This episode is covered in further detail in Chapter four. Suffice it here to say that, without producing a shred of documentary evidence to substantiate the claims, Jawara managed to place a large dent in the credibility of his new opponents. At numerous rallies he condemned the GPP as opportunistic, unpatriotic and selfish. Suntu-Fatty - who had joined Camara the previous month - was persuaded to stand up at a rally in Kafuta and "confirm" that he had been a signatory to the "Lagos deal."¹⁴⁰

The GPP also suffered from organisational problems. Camara, recognising the limits imposed by both time and resource shortages, had hoped to superimpose his party upon pre-existing patterns of support. He hoped to benefit from the local support conferred upon PPP dissenters. One of the successful 1982 Independents, Henry Jammeh, did join the new party. Bubacarr Baldeh however, still aspiring to the PPP nomination, was persuaded to declare for the ruling party. Though no longer in Parliament, Baldeh's popularity in the URD was nevertheless widely acknowledged and his neutralisation proved a serious blow to the GPP.¹⁴¹

In the period between the formation of the GPP and the 1987 elections, the PPP made every effort to secure its position in the country. Particular emphasis was placed upon the reactivation of links with the rural areas and to this end Jawara and his ministers undertook numerous provincial tours. Increased producer prices for groundnuts and other crops were announced¹⁴² and special attention devoted to the people of the URD in an attempt to reassure them that the PPP, not the GPP, provided their best chance of protection. As Wiseman¹⁴³ notes, up-river constituencies received a "generous" share of government development funding and, for the first time, the party held its congress up-river, in Basse.

The PPP also focused particular attention upon Camara's Kantora constituency. Jawara appreciated the fact that if defeat could be inflicted upon the GPP leader the morale of the whole party would, in subsequent years, suffer accordingly. The PPP's organisational apparatus in Kantora - having fallen into a state of disrepair due to the party's hitherto solid support and Camara's unopposed return in 1982 - was strengthened. The candidate sponsored by the PPP in Kantora was also carefully chosen. Not only did he have impeccable family connections, he was also a Serahuli.¹⁴⁴ The latter fact was extremely important since Camara needed the support of both Fulas and Serahulis to retain his seat. In the event Camara and his thirty-three fellow candidates mustered

¹⁴⁰ *West Africa*, 20 October 1986, p 2237.

¹⁴¹ In 1992 Baldeh finally received the PPP nomination in Jimara which he won with a large majority. His decision not to join the GPP, combined with the departure of Saho and Suntu-Fatty left the GPP (like the NCP) with a lack of identifiable leaders.

¹⁴² This was a tactic used in previous elections though it was particularly marked in 1987 following the implementation of the ERP.

¹⁴³ John A Wiseman, "The Gambian Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of 1987," *Electoral Studies*, Vol 6, No 3, 1987, p 287.

¹⁴⁴ *West Africa*, 19 January 1987, p 110.

16% of the vote but failed to win a single seat.

The NCP - having sponsored candidates for all thirty-six seats - won five with 27% of the vote. Although the NCP managed, for the first time, to win a seat in Banjul (South) even that was due more to the actions of the ruling party - in particular the decision to implement the Economic Recovery Programme - rather than any significant innovation on the part of the opposition. Overall, it was clear that the NCP had singularly to extend its popular appeal. Apart from Banjul South, the seats won included two in the North Bank Division (NBD), Bakau and Serekunda West. Dibba failed to regain his seat in Central Baddibu. PDOIS, meanwhile, sponsored five candidates and with 1% of the vote, won none. With the exception of Halifa Sallah in Serekunda East all lost their deposits. This left the PPP with 56% of the vote and thirty-one seats. Similarly in the Presidential elections Jawara gained 59% of the vote compared to Dibba's 28% and Camara's 13%. PDOIS did not select a Presidential candidate.

The results of the 1987 elections demonstrated that, if the opposition was to have any hope of defeating the PPP regime, it was imperative that the various parties - particularly the NCP and GPP - should pool their resources; in six of the constituencies won by the PPP the combined opposition vote exceeded that of the ruling party.¹⁴⁵ Fortunately for the PPP, however, and despite the fact that both Dibba and Camara professed to desire a united front, there was little love lost between the two leaders. Dibba regarded his party as *the* opposition and clearly regarded the GPP as encroaching upon the NCP's domain.¹⁴⁶ In the years following the 1987 elections opposition unity remained a distant goal; in fact, further fragmentation occurred.

In September 1991 the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was launched. Although its leader - a political novice, Dr Lamin Bojang - had never been a member of the NCP, the PDP was in every other sense a splinter party. The prime mover, Solo Dabo, had been expelled from the NCP in July 1991 for "anti-party activities." Dabo had joined the NCP in 1977 and was reported to have been a major financial contributor.¹⁴⁷ The origins of the Dabo/Dibba split remain obscure. According to the former it was caused by a dispute over party funds; Dibba claimed that Dabo had been working to undermine the NCP for some time. Whatever the case, Dabo left and the new party was formed.

The PDP posed little threat to the PPP's electoral dominance. It lacked both a well-defined political programme¹⁴⁸ and experienced or "visible" political leaders. Although some former NCP

¹⁴⁵ Wiseman, *op. cit.*, p 288.

¹⁴⁶ Although not stated publicly, numerous local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94) intimated that Dibba would only contemplate working with members of the opposition if their parties were formally dissolved.

¹⁴⁷ The extent of these contributions was however, unclear. Dibba denied Dabo's claims that he had contributed millions of dalasis. In addition Lamin Bojang (interview with the author, 21 November 1993) complained that Dabo was not as well off as he originally believed.

¹⁴⁸ Bojang claimed that his party would promote agricultural development, reduce unemployment and eradicate corruption, although he appeared to have no clear idea as to how these goals were to be achieved. Interview with the author, 21 November 1993.

members - including Jabel Sallah the NCP MP for Banjul South - did join Bojang, since the NCP itself lacked strong political leaders it was unlikely that the PDP would prove radically different in this respect.

The new party may not have challenged the position of the PPP but it did threaten to split the opposition vote even further. Dibba's long-standing refusal to co-operate with Camara was later, unsurprisingly, extended to the PDP. Although the GPP and PDP demonstrated some ability to co-operate prior to the 1992 elections¹⁴⁹ they did not form an electoral coalition. And finally PDOIS - although not wholly adverse to the principle of opposition unity - refused to join with other parties simply to unseat the government.¹⁵⁰

Inevitably then, a substantial number of candidates contested the elections. The PPP's thirty-six candidates were variously challenged by the NCP, with thirty-four candidates; the GPP with seventeen; the PDP with nineteen; PDOIS with fourteen; and eleven Independents.¹⁵¹ The PPP electoral machine, facing a more substantial (albeit divided) opposition challenge than ever before, rolled into action once more. All the tactics and strategies which had produced earlier election victories were put to the test for the final time (prior to the 1994 coup) and passed with flying colours. Although the PPP lost ten seats - more than in previous elections - the nature of opposition gains deserve closer examination. The NCP, without significantly widening its appeal,¹⁵² won six seats as opposed to five in 1987. For the first time the GPP won two seats. However, all three "extra" seats resulted directly from the opposition's willingness to accept as candidates known PPP supporters. Momodou Saidywan (NCP), Mbemba Tamedou (GPP) and Babung Phatty (GPP) had all applied for the PPP nomination. Following the elections they all reapplied to the PPP. One of the two victorious Independents did likewise. Although the PDP failed to win a seat it did enable the PPP to slip in on a minority vote in Wuli West. In two additional constituencies the combined opposition vote exceeded that of the winning PPP candidate. Significantly, however, even with these seats the opposition would have been far from gaining a Parliamentary majority. And finally,

¹⁴⁹ Both parties participated in a petition designed to persuade Jawara of the need for an Independent Electoral Commission. (*Petition to the President of The Republic of The Gambia submitted jointly by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Gambia People's Party (GPP) in connection with the 1992 Presidential and Parliamentary elections*). It is worth noting that the petition (which had complained about unfair access to the national radio, government vehicles and petrol depots as well as the support given to PPP candidates by Divisional Commissioners, District Chiefs and village heads) did result in increased access to the radio and extensive coverage of opposition activities in the government paper, *The Gambia Weekly*. Nevertheless complaints on these grounds were still voiced following the elections.

¹⁵⁰ Although the boundaries between opposition parties were firmly drawn, those between the opposition and the PPP remained fragile. In 1990, for example, talks were held between Jawara and Dibba on the prospect of some sort of alliance between the two parties. Informed local sources (interviews with the author, 1993-94) suggest that Dibba's intention was to strengthen his claim to the Presidency should Jawara step down but in the event the talks came to nothing with Jawara refusing to contemplate a coalition and Dibba reluctant to disband his party.

¹⁵¹ *West Africa*, 27 April 1992-3 May 1992, p 710.

¹⁵² For a table of the results for each constituency see *The Gambia Weekly*, 1 May 1992.

in the Presidential elections, Jawara once more demonstrated his enduring popularity winning in all except three constituencies.¹⁵³

Electoral Functions in The Gambia.

Analysing the relationship between Gambian elections and regime legitimacy is at once both simple and complex. The complexities arise on inquiring whether competitive elections were a cause or effect of legitimacy. In other words, did multi-party elections serve to *create* legitimacy or were they a function of Jawara's recognition that - for reasons unrelated to elections - his regime was blessed with sufficient legitimacy and popular support to win?

Certainly the PPP's ability to win elections was based upon a number of factors unrelated to the legitimating-mechanism of elections themselves. Thus, it would be odd to argue that the PPP won elections as a result of the legitimating effects of holding elections! At the same time, however, consistently (and comfortably) winning elections undoubtedly strengthened Jawara's commitment to holding them - a commitment which, in turn, proved, instrumental in consolidating regime legitimacy. Election victories and electoral functions were, in this sense, mutually reinforcing.

The legitimising benefits¹⁵⁴ of Gambian elections stemmed from a number of factors, not least their rarity value. Over the years - as more and more African states opted for a single-party system - Gambians were encouraged to take pride in their country's odd man-out status and, by association, in their government which had stood against the continental tide of events.¹⁵⁵ Talking to Gambians one is particularly struck by their appreciation of the over-riding importance of President Jawara's *personal* commitment to multi-partyism. In fact, Jawara appears to have purposefully cultivated such awareness in order to strengthen his personal political position. On a number of occasions - following the 1981 coup attempt for example - he made it clear that his attachment to democracy was not replicated throughout the party. As he put it: "In the aftermath of this threat to our internal security some have asked whether it would not be appropriate at this time to consolidate both the power of the state and the power of the executive. Let me state categorically and unequivocally that the system of democracy that has always existed will prevail."¹⁵⁶

Although no mean achievement Jawara recognised that simply retaining what was, after all, an externally imposed system of government was not enough. To capitalise upon his willingness

¹⁵³ Dibba won in Bakau, Central Baddibu (where he also regained his parliamentary seat) and Lower Baddibu.

¹⁵⁴ The following discussion focuses upon legitimacy in the domestic sphere. For further details of how elections boosted the PPP regime's legitimacy internationally see Chapter four.

¹⁵⁵ In the early 1990's The Gambia was, of course, joined by many other African states. Though to some extent this development vindicated the PPP's attachment to multi-partyism (and Jawara lost no time in pointing this out) at the same time it undermined the system's rarity value.

¹⁵⁶ *Presidential Address Delivered by His Excellency Sir Dawda Jawara President of the Republic of The Gambia at the State Opening of Parliament on Friday 14th August, 1981*, Sessional Paper No 1 of 1981 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1981).

(and ability) to maintain a competitive system Jawara was compelled to ensure that its value was fully appreciated. Although explicitly favourable comparisons with single-party states were muted (at least until the early 1990's)¹⁵⁷ the multi-party system was presented as the best and fairest method of decision-making¹⁵⁸ and, perhaps more importantly, it was repeatedly linked to a range of universally valued ends. At a 1977 rally in Wuli, for example, Jawara turned down one individual's request for a single-party system, arguing that the current system had engendered "peace and stability" in The Gambia.¹⁵⁹ Such claims - alongside others which linked multi-partyism to national unity and economic development - were repeated on numerous occasions throughout the period of PPP rule.

Over the years these efforts were more than repaid. A few dissenting voices aside (see below), most Gambians viewed multi-partyism favourably and appreciated the efforts of those responsible (especially Jawara) for its preservation. This popular support was reflected in the overwhelmingly positive attitude of the opposition parties towards the existing system. In an interview with Sheriff Dibba¹⁶⁰ for example, he stressed the importance of re-establishing his party's democratic credentials following its alleged involvement in the abortive 1981 coup. Dibba knew that support for a "non-democratic" party would not be forthcoming. Even the 1994 coup leaders were quick to promise (if not to deliver) democracy.¹⁶¹

A second aspect of the relationship between elections and regime legitimacy concerned popular participation. The available evidence suggests that Gambians were not only keen to participate in elections¹⁶² but regarded the casting of their vote as a significant event. The importance popularly attributed to elections reflected the seriousness with which the PPP approached elections, particularly when faced with a credible opposition threat. The time and money invested in elections bestowed them with importance in the popular mind. In turn, the elections' end product - the PPP regime - was accorded greater legitimacy.

Linked to this, Gambians appear to have felt some obligation to accept election results even

¹⁵⁷ Until the early 1990's Jawara had to take care not to alienate other African states - most of which had single-party systems. Later he could afford to be more explicit and on several occasions, both at home and abroad, he criticised single-party rule arguing that it had done little to promote political stability or economic development.

¹⁵⁸ Although the PPP never spared any effort to win elections, the loss of a few seats often proved a positive advantage in that it strengthened claims that the system was fair.

¹⁵⁹ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 15 March 1977, p 1.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with the author, 21 June 1993.

¹⁶¹ That they did so indicated that popular support for multi-partyism had not diminished by the time of the take-over. Conversations and interviews held with numerous Gambians in 1993-4 suggested the same. Nevertheless it was perhaps inevitable that, over a period of thirty years, the multi-party system would increasingly be taken for granted. Electoral turnout statistics - though subject to various possible interpretations (see below) - seemed to indicate some element of complacency. From a high of 83% in 1977, turnout decreased to 58% in 1982 and 56% ten years later.

¹⁶² Although participation (defined as casting a vote) did decrease over the years, for many Gambians this appeared to indicate satisfaction rather than alienation. Some obvious exceptions to this are noted below.

when they did not accord with their personal preference. This sense of obligation extended not only to the regime but also to its policies. Although policy issues were not a primary determinant of voter choice, Jawara was able to claim a mandate for unpopular policies or, in some cases, retrospective justification for actions already undertaken. The clearest example of the latter occurred in 1982 when he argued that "a resounding victory at the forthcoming general elections will be an indication that the people have chosen to endorse the realities of the Senegambian Confederation."¹⁶³ Similarly, the 1987 elections helped to legitimise the economic austerity measures begun in 1985.

Having made the general point however, it must be stressed that the legitimating benefits of participation are confined to those who take part in elections. Those who, for whatever reason, refuse to exercise their vote may well feel less obligation to accept the result. Thus, in a survey undertaken in Serekunda in April 1981 John Wiseman found that 45% of Jola respondents had no voting record and interprets this fact as indicative of the "partial alienation" of the Jola which he links with their "higher than average ... participation and support for the attempted coup."¹⁶⁴ The question is, can Jola abstentions be regarded not only as an *expression* but as a *cause* of this apparent alienation? On a fundamental level their resentment stemmed from status considerations (in employment terms, for example) which appears to have persuaded some of the futility of political participation. In turn, however, it is certainly conceivable that by waiving the right to participate their estrangement from the existing political order deepened. They had no stake in the system and no reason to accept the leaders it produced.

A similar point may be made in relation to some of the younger people¹⁶⁵ living in Banjul and the surrounding areas who readily participated in the coup attempt. Thus, in the same survey, Wiseman notes that 84% of those in the youngest age-range (23-35) supported neither the PPP nor the NCP.¹⁶⁶ Although the existing, constitutionalist, political parties had been able to contain these youthful elements for some years, by the late 1970's they began to look beyond the confines of the PPP and NCP prompted both by the insufficiently radical stance of these parties¹⁶⁷ as well as their own failure to make progress within their ranks. It will be recalled, for example, that Kukoi Samba Sanyang (leader of the 1981 coup attempt) contested the 1977 elections as the NCP candidate for Foni East. The leader of the NLP, Secka, was also convicted for involvement in the abortive coup.

As Sanyang and Secka demonstrated, electoral participation (particularly if it failed to

¹⁶³ *West Africa*, 5 April 1982, p 957.

¹⁶⁴ John A Wiseman, "The Social and Economic Bases of Party Political Support in Serekunda, The Gambia," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol 23, 1985, p 12.

¹⁶⁵ The challenge Gambian youth posed to the survival of the PPP regime is discussed in detail in Chapter one.

¹⁶⁶ *Op. cit.*, p 17.

¹⁶⁷ As discussed in Chapter one, new parties - notably the GSRP and MOJA - were formed. It is important to point out that it was not Jawara's decision to ban the GSRP which prompted the abortive coup. The leaders (and supporters) of this party were never committed to playing by Jawara's political rules; this was not a case of constitutionalist politicians being forced underground and resorting to extra-legal means of securing power.

produce the desired results) was no *guarantee* that either the political system or the regime it produced would be regarded as legitimate. These dissatisfied individuals, in combination with certain segments of the population who, for whatever reason, felt excluded from the prevailing political set-up, very nearly succeeded in destroying the PPP regime.

On the other hand popular support for the coup was limited precisely because elections were due.¹⁶⁸ Given a choice between the right to *choose* their future leaders and having Sanyang foisted upon them, most opted for the former.

Jawara fully appreciated the importance of electoral choice. While not sparing any effort to inflict defeat upon his opponents, Jawara worked to maintain a controlled environment within which they could continue to function.¹⁶⁹ This applied not only to general elections - as witnessed by the absence of intimidation, violence, arbitrary arrests, etc.¹⁷⁰ - but also to the contest for President. At the PPP's fourth national congress, for example, Jawara vetoed proposals which would have made it more difficult for presidential candidates to stand. The proposals had recommended a quadrupling of the nomination fee and an increase in the number of people required to nominate a candidate from one-hundred to six-hundred.¹⁷¹

Providing a choice of leaders (if not of policy) was important for two reasons. The first overlapped with the benefits of participation (noted above) and was encapsulated by Jawara in the following words: "it is extremely important for the people to be able to choose whom they wish to represent them in Parliament ... you must make the people feel they have a stake and a say in their own affairs."¹⁷² The second, related, reason centred upon the benefits of giving people a legitimate means of expressing their grievances. That grievances existed was indisputable; in every election the PPP was opposed by approximately a third of the electorate, sometimes more. Dissatisfaction expressed as a vote, however, was preferable to other more destructive, possibly violent, forms of protest. Giving people a choice enabled the PPP to channel, and to some extent control, popular frustrations.

Elections in The Gambia also played an important role in the perpetuation of patron-client

¹⁶⁸ For the same reason, Sheriff Dikka had refused to lend the rebels respectability by offering his support. Although it was unclear how long Dikka's belief in an eventual NCP electoral victory would hold out (especially given his party's marked lack of progress), his optimism did not appear to be flagging even towards the end of PPP rule. At the very least he was willing to wait until Jawara chose to step down, an event he believed would cause the PPP's "disintegration" and his own ascent to the presidency (interview with the author, 21 June 1993).

¹⁶⁹ The tactics used by the PPP to win elections - notably the exploitation of its position as the ruling party - provided the element of control.

¹⁷⁰ Given the advantages of providing voters with a choice it was important to the PPP that unopposed candidates were kept to a minimum. Although the opposition could not be forced to nominate candidates they were more clearly more likely to do so in a non-intimidatory environment. At the same time much depended upon the comparative "health" of the opposition. For example, in 1972 seven constituencies were uncontested whereas in 1977 none were.

¹⁷¹ *West Africa*, 9 March 1987, p 487.

¹⁷² *West Africa*, 23 March 1987, p 548.

relations. As noted in the previous section, most voters regarded elections as a means of accessing the patron-client network. Candidates - judged primarily upon their ability to bring resources (in the form of local amenities) to the constituency¹⁷³ - ignored this at their peril. In contrast to many single-party systems the electorate was possessed of a genuine resource - the vote - and were willing to use it to punish those who performed below expectation. Four of the five PPP MPs who lost out to Independents in the 1982 elections, for example, were judged to have neglected their constituents.¹⁷⁴ In the 1992 elections the PPP candidates for Tumana and Jokadu - long regarded as safe seats - were defeated for similar reasons. The examples of Tumana and Jokadu, though only two among many, are particularly instructive, clearly demonstrating the importance attached to an MPs constituency "service." Thus, not only did the PPP suffer defeat in 1992 but, in spite of an intensive campaign, it lost again in the following year's by-elections.

In Jokadu¹⁷⁵ the 1992 elections were won by Momodou Manneh. Having applied - and been rejected - for PPP sponsorship Manneh had chosen to stand as an Independent against the official PPP candidate Amadou Lowe. Elected with a majority of 1294 his victory was short-lived; an election petition (which charged that presidential tokens had been found in Manneh's ballot boxes) was upheld and fresh elections ordered. In the event, however, the PPP's vigorous campaign - involving several ministers as well as the Vice-President - was to no avail and in 1993 Manneh again defeated Lowe, with a slightly reduced majority of 1071. Manneh's win was attributable to his past performance as a constituency MP. He had won Jokadu for the PPP in 1977¹⁷⁶ and, from 1981-85 had been Minister of Economic Planning and Industrial Development, at which point he fell out of favour.¹⁷⁷ During his time in government he had been credited with initiating numerous projects in his constituency (including the construction of roads, wells and stores) as well as assisting many in the search for employment. These facts loomed largest in the mind of many voters.¹⁷⁸

Tumana's constituents voted on a similar basis. The PPP candidate MC Cham - although he

¹⁷³ Candidates were also judged on other bases (family connections, ethnic identity, personality etc.) and yet the ability to bring resources to a constituency often formed the primary determinant of voter choice.

¹⁷⁴ *West Africa*, 17 May 1982, p 1305.

¹⁷⁵ Details of the two Jokadu contests were obtained from *The Point*, 7 June 1993, p 1 and 6 September 1993, p 4.

¹⁷⁶ According to local sources most Jokadu constituents wanted the incumbent, AM Drammeh, rather than Manneh as their candidate in 1977. After Drammeh had been persuaded to step down, however, Manneh was elected for a probationary period; in subsequent years he worked hard to "earn" re-election in 1982.

¹⁷⁷ Although Manneh remained popular among his constituents he was regarded by Jawara as a political liability and was sacked in January 1985. Various accusations were levelled against Manneh. Particularly serious were the NCP allegations that he had been responsible for the intimidation of opposition supporters in Illiassa and Lower Baddibu. Jawara's subsequent decision to send a high-ranking delegation to the area to apologise for Manneh's behaviour suggested there was much truth in the allegations. Manneh was not reelected in 1987.

¹⁷⁸ The onus was on Lowe to convince voters that he would be more effective than his predecessor, Doudou Jome. According to journalists who covered the election (interviews with the author, 1993-4) voters appreciated that, as an Independent MP, Manneh would probably be less effective than he had been as a minister and yet his record still counted for more than Lowe's promises.

had been Tumana's representative for thirty years (both as a UP and a PPP MP) - was regarded as having outlived his usefulness. On polling day in 1992 voters expressed their belief that, in recent years, he had not done enough to earn their vote. Cham lost to Mbemba Tamedou (GPP)¹⁷⁹ by 2179 votes to 2829. In the subsequent by-elections¹⁸⁰ voter preference was even more emphatically expressed when a huge (91%) turnout gave Cham 2707 votes to Tamedou's 4519.

The elections in Tumana demonstrated how political incumbents - if they wished to be re-elected - were compelled to respond to their constituents' needs; elections helped to keep the clientelist system responsive. At the same time, candidates could not ignore the political "centre." Without the support of leading politicians - and ultimately Jawara¹⁸¹ - political aspirants could not hope to gain the party nomination. The PPP nomination, though it did not guarantee electoral success, was in most constituencies an important first step towards the coveted position of MP. During the election contest itself central intervention - a presidential visit, for example - often proved crucial to the outcome. The importance of the political "centre" thus served to consolidate Jawara's position at the apex of the clientelist structure.

To sum up, all candidates - to be sure of re-election - were compelled to court both the central and local political levels; they served as a link between the two. Problems arose, however, when central and local priorities clashed. Thus, although Jawara's "ideal" MP combined two qualities - local popularity¹⁸² and political reliability¹⁸³ - if the need to prioritise arose reliability usually came first. On a scale of political reliability incumbent MPs were often judged favourably if only because their challengers were an unknown quantity.¹⁸⁴ Added to this, Jawara was forced to take into account the potential risk involved in dropping a sitting member. Political loyalty was, for many politicians, dependent upon reward. If reward (defined as renomination and all that that implied) was not forthcoming MPs could and would explore new ways of entering Parliament.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ Tamedou had unsuccessfully applied for the PPP nomination in 1982, 1987 and 1992. In 1982 he had contested the elections as an Independent and subsequently for the GPP.

¹⁸⁰ Tamedou had lost his seat following an election petition which claimed that he had failed to meet the six-month residential requirement. The by-elections were covered in *The Point*, 14 June 1993, p 2, *The Gambia Weekly*, 4 June 1993, p 1 and *The Gambia News and Report*, June 1993, p 7.

¹⁸¹ The Selection Committee comprised about 40 individuals including certain influential MPs, some members of the Central Committee and constituency delegates. Nevertheless, candidates would not be selected against Jawara's wishes.

¹⁸² Popularity confined to a single constituency rather than extending over a wider area was preferable. Thus, Jawara wished to avoid MPs establishing a substantial and independent power base from which they might be tempted to challenge his position.

¹⁸³ Reliability was generally defined as loyalty, though it could include other qualities. Manneh for example had become a political liability through his over-zealousness (see above).

¹⁸⁴ The tendency to retain incumbents - even those who had lost the respect of their constituents - was also indicative of the ruling party's deterioration at the local level. As early as 1972 the PPP's inability to "renew" itself was demonstrated by the support received by the predominantly youthful Independent candidates.

¹⁸⁵ Howsoon Semega-Janneh, for example, who lost the nomination in 1982 went on to help form the GPP. It should be pointed out, however, that many others remained loyal in the hope of being rewarded at a subsequent election.

Although Jawara was not averse to rebellion on a small scale (see below) he was certainly keen to retain a political grip over the majority. Thus, in 1972 all except three incumbents were renominated;¹⁸⁶ in 1977 there were no exceptions.¹⁸⁷ In 1982 the need for a hike in legitimacy following the abortive coup caused four candidates to be dropped¹⁸⁸ but in 1987 and 1992 almost all were, once again, incumbents.¹⁸⁹

When sitting members failed to meet expectations at the local level - and complaints of unpopular candidates being "imposed" from above were often heard - there were two possible outcomes. Most frequently voters responded to PPP electoral tactics (outlined in the previous section) and accepted the candidate, albeit with reservations. In 1987, for example, Seni Singhateh (Wuli East), Doudou N'Gum (Lower Niumi) and LF Sonko (Upper Niumi) had all become unpopular at the local level and yet all were given another chance by their constituents. In 1992, Omar Sey (Basse) was similarly re-elected. Alternatively - as in Tumana in 1992 for example - voters would oust the sitting MP.

Significantly, the latter scenario rarely indicated a net loss of political control for Jawara. Many of the victors - whether they were Independents or members of an opposition party - subsequently applied for PPP membership. After the rule changes, implemented prior to the 1982 elections, Independent MPs were forced to resign their seats and reapply for PPP sponsorship in subsequent by-elections. Some were successful, others were not. Following the 1982 elections, for example, Saihou Barrow the successful Independent candidate in Jarra East resigned. In the by-elections which followed he was nominated by the PPP and regained his seat.¹⁹⁰ The successful Independent for Kiang East, Kebba Fadera, was less fortunate. Having resigned his seat he was refused the PPP nomination.¹⁹¹ Similarly after the 1992 elections five of the non-PPP successful candidates - Momodou Saidywan (NCP); Babung Phatty (GPP); Lamin Waa Juwara (Independent); Mbemba Tamedou (GPP); Momodou Manneh (Independent) - all applied for membership of the PPP.¹⁹² Saidywan - after a failed attempt in September 1992 - was finally accepted the following year. The others were turned down (Phatty and Tamedou twice). The two Independents were turned down on the basis that if they wished to rejoin they would have to resign their seats. Jawara said that although the same rules did not apply to the GPP candidates party "principles" dictated that

¹⁸⁶ Moreover, two of the three were Sheriff Sisay and Yusupha Samba who "were being punished for their separatist excursion" in the PPA. *West Africa*, 14 April 1972, p 453.

¹⁸⁷ There were seven new candidates but these were either standing in newly created constituencies or replacing those who had defected or resigned. *West Africa*, 4 April 1977, p 649.

¹⁸⁸ These were joined by four others who resigned giving a total of eight new candidates. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 24 March 1982, No 34, p 1.

¹⁸⁹ In 1987, for example, only Dr Manneh was dropped.

¹⁹⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 25 February 1983, p 1.

¹⁹¹ In the subsequent by-election Fadera chose not to re-contest his seat as an Independent and the PPP won against another Independent Wally SB Sanneh. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 22 June 1983, p 2.

¹⁹² Tamedou and Manneh had reapplied after their by-election wins.

they should do the same.¹⁹³

In fact neither rules nor principles formed the basis upon which decisions about PPP applicants were made. By refusing applicants Jawara was sending a clear message to future rebels that membership would not be automatic - that gaining support at the local level was not *sufficient* to win a place in the PPP.¹⁹⁴ He needed to retain the party nomination as a source of patronage and hence control. At the same time, those who were accepted had every reason to be grateful to Jawara. They also provided a relatively risk-free method of introducing new faces into the ranks of the ruling party.

A second reason for refusing applicants stemmed from Jawara's desire to keep the opposition functioning. While it was important to co-opt key opposition members, with a consistently healthy parliamentary majority there was no reason to accept every rebellious MP. Indeed, it was to the PPP's advantage to avoid completely obliterating the opposition. The advantage lay in the final - diversionary - function which may be attributed to Gambian elections. That elections served to divert attention from the national level - from economic problems for example - was a reflection of the bases upon which they were fought. As noted in the previous section local issues, local connections and local personalities tended to predominate. The emergence of these factors was, however, dependent upon the existence of some opposition. And of course when faced with a threat the PPP was forced to campaign, conduct tours, hold rallies etc. - an obvious example being the period following the launching of the GPP - all of which frequently proved highly diverting to its intended audience.

Elections in Sierra Leone.

Until 1978 a multi-party system operated in Sierra Leone. Following Siaka Stevens' accession, however, the system bore little resemblance to that in The Gambia. For reasons discussed below, the APC regime operated under far fewer self-imposed constraints than its counterpart in The Gambia; violence and intimidation were two electoral tactics used by the former but not the latter.

Is it possible, then, to posit a meaningful relationship between election victory and APC survival? Certainly one might expect the relationship to be less critical than in The Gambia and yet,

¹⁹³ In fact there appears to have been some confusion as to what constituted a rule and what a principle. When Saiduwan was admitted into the PPP, the party chairman admitted the rules had been bent and yet a short time later Jawara argued that the resignation rule applied only to Independents.

¹⁹⁴ At the same time Jawara was sending a message to the electorate about the implications of their choices. Although he argued that he was refusing the applications on the basis that an acceptance would be unpopular at the grassroots (*The Point*, 6 December 1993, p 1) this was not true of all the constituencies. In Tumana constituents reportedly put Tamedou under a great deal of pressure to reapply to the PPP. According to one report (*The Point*, 1 November 1993, p 13) his supporters were apparently being refused the use of the Coos milling machine and were finding it difficult to gain access to the village well which was situated in the PPP chairman's compound.

as noted in the first section of this chapter, victory is by no means guaranteed simply because a regime is willing to distort the electoral process.¹⁹⁵ Generally speaking, the APC's electoral position actually appeared rather *less* secure than the PPP's - indeed, the decision to utilise extra-legal electoral tactics may have reflected the fact that election victory was not regarded as a foregone conclusion.¹⁹⁶

Before examining elections under the APC regime in detail, it is necessary to deviate slightly and take a brief look at the pre-1968 electoral history of Sierra Leone. There are several reasons for doing so. For one thing it is important to "set the scene" for later elections, to understand the opportunities and constraints facing the APC regime both in its efforts to win elections and to use them as a survival resource. Linked to this it should be noted that the APC's approach to elections (particularly the critical 1968-69 by-elections) was based on a shrewd appreciation of SLPP strengths. Although these have been discussed at length by other scholars - and there is little point replicating their efforts here - a brief outline of SLPP strengths (which, while diminished by the loss of power, did not disappear overnight) is integral to an understanding of the APC's subsequent efforts to win elections as well as the nature of those efforts. For similar reasons it is important to undertake a brief examination of why the SLPP lost (and the APC won) the 1967 general election.

Before independence the SLPP's predominant position stemmed from two factors. The least important for the purposes of this discussion derived from the Colony-Protectorate divide. In short, as long as the divide remained politically salient the SLPP - in its role as the sole champion of protectorate interests - was through sheer force of numbers virtually guaranteed a politically predominant position. Nevertheless, and in spite of the SLPP's attempts to keep the 'threat' of Creole supremacy alive, by independence it had ceased to be politically relevant.

The second factor - of more enduring significance - concerned the SLPP's close relationship with Sierra Leone's traditional authorities. The SLPP leadership - itself highly elitist - benefited greatly from the traditional authorities' extensive influence over their subjects' political choices. The intimate relationship between Sierra Leone's modern and traditional elites originated in kinship ties¹⁹⁷ as well as Milton Margai's "personal preference for working through the traditional institutions."¹⁹⁸ It was reinforced and sustained through patron-client ties. Chiefs would deliver electoral support in return for assistance during times of, frequently intense, chiefdom political

¹⁹⁵ See, for example, the 1967 elections below.

¹⁹⁶ Of course it could be argued that had the APC truly regarded elections as posing a threat to survival, a one-party state would have been established much earlier. However certain factors (discussed below) precluded this as an option much before 1978.

¹⁹⁷ A review of the importance of kinship ties between traditional rulers and SLPP leaders/parliamentary candidates can be found in Martin Kilson, *Political Change in a West African State: A Study of the Modernization Process in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 1966), pp 102-3, 113.

¹⁹⁸ Cartwright, *op. cit.*, p 88.

competition (see below) and the freedom "to pursue material benefits."¹⁹⁹

Unfortunately for the SLPP the very strengths of the party were at the same time its weaknesses; it was these weaknesses - in conjunction with a number of unforced blunders on the part of Albert Margai - which accounted for the 1967 election results.

A fundamental problem for the SLPP was the almost total absence of party organisation.²⁰⁰ The reliance on traditional authorities combined with the 'instant' appeal (as far as the vast majority of the population was concerned) of a party championing Protectorate interests had rendered a strong party, and the cultivation of party loyalties, surplus to requirements. However, as the salience of the Colony-Protectorate division subsided the SLPP - lacking a mass base - became vulnerable to opposition attempts to cultivate support along lines which divided, rather than unified, the mass of the population. The APC (established in 1960) proved particularly adept at the politicisation of divisions, both nationally and locally.

At the national level regional and ethnic divisions were a particularly important pillar of APC support. As the 1967 election results clearly showed, the APC predominated in the (mainly Temne) North of the country and the SLPP in the (mainly Mende) South.²⁰¹ Under Milton Margai - despite the fact that Mendes were predominant at every level of the SLPP²⁰² - the mutually reinforcing factors of regional and ethnic identity had not proved politically decisive. Milton Margai's skill in allaying Temne fears - by means of a reasonably equitable distribution of jobs and resources - was, however, not replicated by Sir Albert. His failure to appease non-Southerners (already concerned that one Southerner, Albert, had replaced another, Milton) and moves designed to strengthen the position of Mendes in the government and civil service provoked consternation among Temnes.²⁰³ Already aware of the relative deprivation of their region, they perceived that the situation was hardly likely to improve with the loss of representatives willing to press for extra resources at the centre.

The APC - popularly identified as a vehicle for Northern advancement - benefited from the

¹⁹⁹ For further details see Roger Tangri, "Central-Local Politics in Contemporary Sierra Leone," *African Affairs*, Vol 77, 1978, pp 167-68.

²⁰⁰ See *West Africa*, 18 June 1960, p 688.

²⁰¹ Although the following concentrates primarily upon divisions within the Protectorate - that is, the mass of the population - it should be noted that colony-based Creole support for the APC was also extremely important (see the 1967 election results below). According to Gershon Collier - Sierra Leone's Chief Justice in 1967 - Creole disaffection with the SLPP stemmed from Albert Margai's policies (in particular his attempt to establish a one-party state) and leadership style. Margai's reluctance to co-opt Creoles to senior governmental positions was particularly galling. See Gershon Collier, *Sierra Leone: Experiment in Democracy in an African Nation* (New York, New York University Press, 1970), pp 62-63.

²⁰² See Martin Kilson, "Sierra Leone," in James S Coleman and Carl G Rosberg (eds.), *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (London, University of California Press, 1970), p 101.

²⁰³ Although Margai did make some attempt to appease northerners, it was rather half-hearted and far from sufficient to disguise the general trend. For a detailed account of ministerial appointments under Albert Margai see Victor E King, "The Search for Political Stability in Sierra Leone 1960-1972" (PhD dissertation, Manchester University, 1975), pp 139-41.

prevailing state of affairs. Although there is little evidence to suggest that the (mainly Northern/Temne) founding members of the APC originally intended to form an ethno-regional party,²⁰⁴ divisions along these lines nevertheless provided an extremely important basis of recruitment and support.

The second set of divisions at the national level - which in practice were closely linked to the regional divisions outlined above - were based on class. In the North²⁰⁵ popular discontent with some aspects of chiefly behaviour - dramatically illustrated by the riots of 1955-56²⁰⁶ - provided an important source of popular support. Although, as various observers have noted, the APC's emphasis on class divisions became increasingly muted (and to some extent overtaken by regional divisions) as the 1960's wore on, they nevertheless contributed substantially to the APC's ability to resist SLPP harassment and thus played at least an indirect role in the 1967 election victory.

The SLPP - given its dependence upon the chiefly structure for local electoral support - was powerless to counter the APC's politicisation of class divisions. Chiefly abuses (extortion for example) could not easily be curbed as the reciprocal relationship between chiefs and party would thereby have suffered irreparable damage. Nevertheless two counter-tactics were open to the SLPP leadership. First, rather than removing the source of popular concern, chiefs could be used to curb its focus - the APC - at the local level. Albert Margai used this tactic to some effect (see below), although its long-term utility was questionable. Coercion tended to alienate a chief's subjects - often causing them to identify more strongly with the APC rather than the SLPP - thus compounding the problem outlined above. Alternatively the SLPP could try to by-pass the traditional authorities and establish direct links with the populace through a strengthened party organisation. However, Albert Margai's attempt to strengthen his party met with resistance at both central and local levels and was ultimately abandoned.²⁰⁷

Reinforcing the APC's promise to curb chiefly abuses was its avowed intention - emphasised during the early years of the party - to implement radical change elsewhere. The APC leadership, consisting mainly of comparatively low-status, youthful individuals,²⁰⁸ both reflected

²⁰⁴ The People's National Party (PNP), the predecessor of the APC, had, as King (*ibid.*, p 84) points out, been intended as a "liberal, anti-chief, Protectorate-oriented grouping - one that would encompass all the regional and tribal areas within the Protectorate." However when Albert Margai (one of the founder members of the PNP) returned to the SLPP, taking most of the dissident Southerners with him, it was left to a mainly Northern group to form the APC.

²⁰⁵ For an explanation of why popular discontent in the North was expressed much more clearly than in the South see footnote 59 in the Introduction.

²⁰⁶ Summarised in Kilson, *op. cit.*, 1970, p 91.

²⁰⁷ None of the various groups - in particular the chiefs - upon which the SLPP was built discerned any personal advantage (and perhaps a positive disadvantage) in a stronger party, and consequently resisted all attempts to establish one. Margai also faced resistance from within the party - from MPs, who had won their positions without assistance from the party, and (according to Cartwright, *op. cit.*, p 189) from "many of the 'old guard' supporters of Sir Milton who had not forgiven him for breaking away to form the PNP."

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 131-32.

and strengthened the party's chosen image. Urban youths in particular were attracted by the APC's radical stance, manifested in promises to nationalise foreign firms, reduce unemployment, redistribute wealth and protect the common man.

Local level divisions also provided an extremely important source of electoral support for both parties. As noted above the SLPP possessed only the flimsiest of party organisations. Consequently it relied heavily on the ability of local candidates to mobilise their own support base. In turn locally influential candidates often relied upon the resources generated by local divisions, in particular those between rival chiefly families. Voters frequently voted for the candidate aligned with the chiefdom faction that they themselves supported.²⁰⁹

In theory then winning national elections was, for the SLPP, a function of identifying the strongest local factions. At least in the South, however, this process was not strictly necessary. "Opposition" to the SLPP was provided not by the APC - which (unsurprisingly) found it difficult to find well connected local candidates to stand on the APC ticket - but by Independents.²¹⁰ Under Milton Margai Independents were not regarded as a challenge to the party; by refusing to become embroiled in chiefdom conflicts Margai was able to simply co-opt (through the lure of material benefit) victorious Independents after the election. Following the accession of Albert Margai however this arrangement broke down; in fact his interference in local disputes and direct sponsorship of candidates at the local level cost him the 1967 election.²¹¹

The APC's ascendancy in Northern Sierra Leone can also be partially explained with reference to local factors. In the North, in contrast to the South, the APC was able to nominate candidates of some local standing and capitalise on local disputes. As noted above, the vast majority of Northern paramount chiefs were aligned with the SLPP; rival factions in turn tended to coalesce around the APC in the hope of receiving central support should the party be elected. The strength of rival factions - which stemmed largely from the chiefs' growing unpopularity - was accordingly translated into support for APC candidates.

That APC support was most effectively explained by a combination of local and national factors is a point persuasively argued by Cartwright.²¹² While there is little point replicating his

²⁰⁹ For a comprehensive account of local level divisions and their influence upon voting behaviour see Walter Barrows, *Grassroots Politics in an African State: Integration and Development in Sierra Leone* (New York and London, Holmes and Meier, 1976). Although rivalry over the chieftaincy formed one of the most important bases for local divisions, it was not the only one (see Barrows pp 202 onwards).

²¹⁰ Barrows (*op. cit.*, p 203) notes that in Kenema, in the 1962 and 1967 elections, "only minor candidates - almost all of them strangers from the Northern Province - ran under the APC banner."

²¹¹ Margai's interference in Nongowa chiefdom affairs - where two independents, KI Kai-Samba (Kenema Central) and JB Francis (Kenema Town) were returned - is described in Barrows, *op. cit.*, pp 183-94. The critical role of successful independents in the outcome of the 1967 election stemmed from the closeness of the overall result (see below) with Margai needing them to declare for the SLPP if he was to gain re-election. However, his interference had provoked so much hostility that four of the successful independents (including Kai-Samba and Francis) refused their support and the APC was subsequently invited to form a government.

²¹² See John Cartwright, "Party Competition in a Developing Nation: The Basis of Support for an Opposition in

arguments here one further point - concerning the relative strength of the APC party organisation - is worthy of note. Although harassment at the local level (see below) precluded the establishment of a mass party the APC nevertheless constructed a comparatively centralised organisation, enabling it to exert a greater degree of control over the selection of candidates. As Clapham has noted this enabled the party "to appeal to the electorate on grounds independent of the personality and connections of its individual candidates."²¹³

The APC's appeal was not confined to the fundamental divisions outlined above. As Prime Minister, Albert Margai made a number of disastrous - and unforced - blunders, thus damaging his position and (almost by default) strengthening that of the APC. As Siaka Stevens²¹⁴ put it, "So unpopular had the SLPP and its leader become that, barring coercion, intimidation and fraudulent practises by them and their supporters, the APC could almost certainly have won an election hands down without even going to the trouble of issuing a manifesto and canvassing the electorate, even if for no other reason than that we were the only alternative to the party they so wanted to be rid of."

Margai's abortive attempt to introduce first a one-party state and later a republic,²¹⁵ combined with allegations of elite corruption (from which Albert himself was not excluded) were seized upon by the opposition.²¹⁶ The APC - having played a significant part in publicising Margai's failings through its paper *We Yone* - promised to end corruption and (after some initial hesitation) defend political competition.

That the APC was able to capitalise on SLPP blunders was partly attributable to Albert Margai's reluctance to annihilate the opposition.²¹⁷ This reluctance, combined with sheer ineptitude, also helps explain the APC victory in March 1967.

There is no shortage of evidence to suggest that - particularly in the North - Margai attempted to manipulate the election results.²¹⁸ Chiefs were directed to disallow APC meetings

Sierra Leone," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol 10, No 1, March 1972, pp 71-90. Although the survey sample Cartwright used was far too small to reach any firm conclusions (a point conceded by the author himself), his main arguments - confirmed by the observations of several other scholars - remain very persuasive.

²¹³ Christopher Clapham, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: An Essay in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), p 93. For further information on the APC party organisation see King, *op. cit.*, pp 106-11.

²¹⁴ Siaka Stevens, *What Life Has Taught Me: The Autobiography of His Excellency Dr Siaka Stevens, President of Sierra Leone* (London, Kensal Press, 1984), p 242.

²¹⁵ Both were received unfavourably in the country at large as well as within the SLPP. The moves were widely interpreted as an attempt by Margai to strengthen his personal position.

²¹⁶ For details of these and other policy failures see Humphrey J Fisher, "Elections and Coups in Sierra Leone, 1967," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 7, No 4, 1969, pp 614-21. Fisher's contention that "real" issues had a significant impact upon the election results is confirmed by King who - to give just one example - explains the APC's one victory in the Southern Province (Moyamba West) in terms of dissatisfaction over policy. See King, *op. cit.*, p 190.

²¹⁷ An explanation of Margai's reluctance can be found in Cartwright, *op. cit.*, 1972, p 85.

²¹⁸ For a summary of the evidence presented at the Dove-Edwin Commission of Inquiry (instituted by the military government to investigate the 1967 elections) see *West Africa*, 1 July 1967, p 870; 22 July 1967, p 966 and 12 August 1967, p 1062. Interpreting this evidence, the commission concluded that "the whole of the

within their chiefdoms,²¹⁹ election deposits were raised by Le300 in an attempt to dissuade APC candidates from contesting and SLPP men were appointed Chief Electoral Commissioner and Acting Chief Justice.²²⁰

However, these measures proved insufficient to produce an election victory. In particular Margai's dependence on the chiefs was ill-judged. In the North some chiefs "looked the other way" when APC meetings were being held;²²¹ even where the chiefs felt they had little choice but to toe the party-line the APC was able to campaign on a face-to-face basis. Margai appears to have underestimated the organisational strength of the opposition. This strength enabled the APC both to overcome obstacles in the nomination process²²² and to thwart at least some of the more flagrant malpractice.²²³

The results of the election reflected the APC's strength in the North and Western Area (a result of Creole and immigrant Temne support) as well as its weakness in the South.²²⁴ For the SLPP the results reflected exactly the reverse; it won only one of the nineteen and none of the eleven contested seats in the North and Western Area respectively. In the South it won eighteen of the twenty-five seats with the remainder (apart from the single APC victory) captured by Independents. The final totals were APC thirty-two, SLPP twenty-eight and Independents six.

The APC's return to power in 1968 necessitated a transformation of electoral tactics and strategy. Prompting this transformation was the simple fact that sectional appeals could not be relied upon to *guarantee* election victory. A strategy designed to cultivate Northern support, for example, was not adequate (in numerical terms) to ensure an electorally predominant position. The APC needed to make some inroads into SLPP strongholds - specifically the South - in order to buttress its position. Appeals on the basis of class were also (further) de-emphasised after 1968, though for somewhat different reasons. The need to work with, rather than against, traditional authority - not least in their role as administrators - combined with a marked lack of enthusiasm for ideological politics²²⁵ or the promised redistribution of wealth proscribed the cultivation of class-based support.

The first elections under APC rule were the 1968-69 by-elections, held predominantly in

government's arrangements for the elections were rigged and corrupt."

²¹⁹ They were empowered to do so under the Public Order Act of 1965-66.

²²⁰ Joe AD Alie, *A New History of Sierra Leone* (London, Macmillan, 1990), p 232.

²²¹ Fred M Hayward and Ahmed R Dumbuya, "Changing Electoral Patterns in Sierra Leone: The 1982 Single-Party Elections," *African Studies Review*, Vol 28, 1985, p 64.

²²² According to Cartwright (*op. cit.*, 1970, p 245) one candidate "was rejected for leaving off the "e" in the name of the "Bonthe South" constituency; two others for signing the nomination papers with their middle names when these were not in the register; while yet another for not including his middle name, which was in the register." In response the APC "sent a number of lawyers to the various district headquarters on nomination day, and assembled large and menacing crowds outside the headquarters."

²²³ See *West Africa*, 29 April 1967, p 559.

²²⁴ According to Cartwright (*op. cit.*, 1970, p 249) the APC captured only 16% of all votes in the South; even these had been cast mainly by Northern immigrants. The party won just one seat in the South.

²²⁵ Stevens' pragmatic approach to political survival precluded any well-defined ideological stance.

opposition strongholds in the South and East. Stevens' enthusiasm for these elections was well-placed. Not only did they give him an opportunity to break the backbone of the SLPP²²⁶ but the geographical concentration of the contests simplified efforts to capitalise on this opportunity, enabling Stevens to fight on one front (in the South) rather than two (the South *and* North). Thus, in the long term Stevens would have to find a way of retaining his Northern base while, at the same time, cultivating new support in the South. One method of achieving the latter would be to distribute resources on an equitable basis, thus reassuring Mendes that their interests would be catered for by the new regime. Simultaneously, however, if Northern groups perceived they were not receiving special treatment from "their" regime it was possible that another party, presenting itself as the new champion of Northern or Temne interests, would emerge to challenge the APC on its home ground. Stevens - aware of these potential conflicts of interest - realised that early by-elections in the South and East gave him a chance to extend his support base without extraneous interference from the North.

Holding the elections early also enabled the APC to capitalise on the prevailing disorganisation in the SLPP camp. SLPP leadership divisions, initially over the question of Albert Margai's future role²²⁷ and subsequently between MS Mustapha (National Chairman) and Salia Jusu-Sheriff (parliamentary leader), had substantially weakened the party but there was no saying when these problems might be resolved.²²⁸

Of course, seizing the opportunity to hold by-elections was one thing, winning them quite another. The APC's popular appeal (as well as its organisational apparatus) was confined to the North. Any successful penetration of the South would necessarily depend upon the APC's access to governmental resources.

Copying the SLPP's earlier tactics in the North the APC turned to the traditional authorities. Many chiefs had, following the return to civilian rule, switched allegiance to the APC. This was unsurprising - as the party in power the APC was in a position to dispense patronage and, during the by-elections, most chiefs behaved accordingly.²²⁹ The recalcitrant were placed under enormous pressure, including the threat of deposition, to conform. While this strategy was hardly foolproof - as the SLPP had discovered in the North pro-government chiefs may, if the ruling party is

²²⁶ A total of twenty-five out of thirty-two SLPP MPs lost their seats as a result of election petitions.

²²⁷ The faction pressing for his removal finally won the day and Albert Margai returned to political exile in England. *West Africa*, 28 September 1968, p 1150.

²²⁸ In the event leadership problems continued to plague the SLPP for many years; Mustapha's continued refusal to accept the young Jusu-Sheriff as leader undermined party unity and morale. As one SLPP conference resolution observed in 1973, the rivalry between the two men shook the party "to its very foundation." *West Africa*, 5 March 1973, p 323.

²²⁹ The material rewards of chieftaincy - including extractions from chieftdom subjects, "unauthorised advances," the distribution of contracts in return for a commission - have been discussed at length by Roger Tangri, "Paramount Chiefs and Central Governments in Sierra Leone," *African Studies*, Vol 39, February 1980, pp 191-94. According to Reno, (*op. cit.*, p 144) chiefs also received subsidised rice from the government which they could either sell or smuggle across the border, either way accruing a substantial profit.

unpopular, simply alienate their people²³⁰ - it did provide the APC with greater influence and acceptability in areas it had hitherto struggled to find a foothold. Moreover, in those instances where the chieftdom ruling family remained aligned to the SLPP, the APC - by aligning with rival factions - was able to capitalise on local disputes.²³¹ This was in contrast to previous elections when the party had struggled to find suitable individuals to stand on the APC ticket. Local men, who would previously have stood as Independents, were now willing to use their influence and resources on behalf of the ruling party.²³² Local realignments helped to obscure the North-South/Mende-Temne dichotomy which had hitherto precluded the extension of APC support.

Patronage resources were greatly reinforced by the APC's newly-discovered access to the state's coercive machinery. During the by-elections the widespread defection of chiefs resulted in new expressions of support. Deprived of their organisational base many SLPP adherents resorted to violence. The Poro, a traditional secret society, was used as an intimidatory device throughout the South - appearances of the feared Poro "devil" inflamed political passions and resulted in widespread violence against Temnes²³³ aimed at preventing their appearance at the polls. Predictably, however, the APC met force with greater force. SLPP violence was in that sense counter-productive, enabling the APC to utilise the coercive apparatus in order to guarantee victory at the polls.²³⁴ The first step was to declare a state of emergency (the first of many) in November. This enabled the APC to selectively postpone elections in the ten constituencies of Bo and Kenema where further "preparations" were deemed necessary.²³⁵

An important aspect of these preparations commenced almost immediately. Thus, from

²³⁰ During the by-elections a number of clashes between SLPP supporters and chiefs were reported. See King, *op. cit.*, p 215.

²³¹ Equally, where ruling families were aligned with the APC local oppositions identified with the SLPP, enabling the party to retain some support at the local level.

²³² In Kenema, for example, three of the five APC candidates were Mendes who had contested the 1967 elections as Independents. According to Barrows (*op. cit.*, p 203) all three were "closely affiliated with the 'out' ruling families in their constituencies." The hope was that electoral support for the APC would be reciprocated at the chieftaincy-level.

²³³ Although the Poro is not an exclusively Mende society, the Temne and Mende societies do not have reciprocal membership. For further details on the use of the Poro see Walter Barrows, "Local-Level Politics in Sierra Leone: Alliances in Kenema District" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1971), p 337. Also see *West Africa*, 29 March 1969, p 367 and 5 April 1969, p 394 for coverage of an election petition trial (Bonthe North) during which evidence on the use of Poro emerged.

²³⁴ The APC's enthusiasm for intimidatory and even violent tactics reflected the critical nature of the by-elections. As noted above the by-elections represented a chance for the APC to break the SLPP. At the same time, however - and given the closeness of the 1967 results - they represented a chance for the SLPP to re-establish itself and perhaps even regain a majority. By resorting to intimidation the APC was able to eradicate the risk-factor.

²³⁵ Following two postponements the state of emergency was eventually revoked on February 26th and the elections held in March 1969. *West Africa*, 5 October 1968, p 1182 and 8 March 1969, p 282. As Clapham notes, the elections were postponed only in those constituencies where the regime felt least confident of victory. In Kono "where electoral violence was much greater but worked to the APC's advantage" the elections were held according to schedule. Christopher Clapham, "Civilian Rule and the New Republic," *The World Today*, No 28, 1972, p 85.

November 21 approximately three hundred SLPP members (including Jusu-Sheriff) and chieftom officials were arrested and charged with a range of offences from theft to riotous assembly. Although most were released from January onwards, the SLPP's electoral campaign was greatly inhibited by the detention of its key members.²³⁶ Meanwhile, the APC could operate without restraint. The utility of mass detentions did not stop there. As Barrows observes, they "demonstrated the power of the Government, drawing vacillating elements to the APC side."²³⁷ The implicit threat of further arrests persuaded chiefs in particular that they would be well-advised to abandon the SLPP.

And finally, on election day, the APC encouraged intimidatory tactics - designed to prevent SLPP supporters casting their vote - on the part of the police, army and party activists ("thugs" to the opposition). The disenfranchised SLPP supporters were replaced by truckloads of APC supporters, imported to inflate the party's final tally. The final result gave the APC five of the ten contested seats, the remainder being retained by the SLPP.²³⁸

The 1968-69 by-elections showed that, as the ruling party, the APC was able to win seats in a region hitherto closed to it. Added to this - and perhaps less predictably - they brought home the fact the SLPP was still a force to be reckoned with. Despite the loss of power, the taint of corruption (a result of the military commissions of inquiry) and chronic leadership divisions, the party not only survived but remained a threat to the consolidation of APC power. This fact was not lost on Stevens who, in subsequent years, continued to exploit every opportunity to undermine the opposition. For individual SLPP MPs just holding on to their own seats became fraught with difficulty. Even assuming they were fortunate enough to be spared the short-term hurdle of an election petition, general elections were unavoidable in the long term - a distinctly unattractive prospect given the APC's tactics and superior strength as displayed in 1968-69. These facts, combined with an almost continuous state of emergency which not only hampered campaigning but facilitated the detention of opposition members, rendered SLPP MPs extremely vulnerable to the lure of the APC. Siaka Stevens proved more than willing to accommodate defectors; in 1973, for example, he welcomed Francis Minah, an SLPP MP, and AB Jah, a former deputy Minister in the Margai government into the cabinet.²³⁹

²³⁶ The detention of SLPP-leaning chieftom officials also stripped the party of its local support base. In Dama (Kenema) for example the detention of the Paramount Chief resulted in his temporary replacement by the APC candidate. According to Barrows, *op. cit.*, 1971, p 342, the acting chief was reported to have fined known supporters of the SLPP.

²³⁷ Barrows, *op. cit.*, 1976, p 130.

²³⁸ Together with the November 1968 contests (all of which had been won by the APC) this gave the APC forty-four of the sixty-six directly elected seats. The SLPP had twelve and Independents six. For details of the elections results see *West Africa*, 2 November 1968, p 1299; 16 November 1968, p 1359; 23 November 1968, p 1397; 22 March 1969, p 340.

²³⁹ *West Africa*, 12 March 1973, p 354. Many other prominent SLPP stalwarts were "neutralised" by the offer of parastatal directorships, ambassadorships etc.

The SLPP was further enfeebled by its inadequate (though in the circumstances understandable) response to the Republican issue. As noted above, the APC in opposition had made a great deal of fuss and won a lot of support during Albert Margai's attempts to transform Sierra Leone into a Republic. An adverse response on the part of the SLPP in 1971, however, would have laid the party open to charges of hypocrisy. Unable to oppose the principle of a Republic the SLPP failed to capitalise on widespread reservations concerning the government's actions. Vague complaints about the APC's "undemocratic behaviour" and a boycott of parliament did little to boost the party's credibility.²⁴⁰

The introduction of a Republic did not go wholly unchallenged however. In 1970, fears that Stevens was intent on strengthening his personal political position (see below) coalesced with simmering resentments over resource distribution to produce a new political party. The latter reflected Stevens' ongoing attempts to incorporate an increasingly diverse number of elements within the APC's organisational structure.²⁴¹ This process, begun in the 1960's with the attachment of the Creole community, continued during the late 1960's as the party extended its support base to the South. Spreading the party net had obvious advantages. At the same time however it necessarily meant that limited resources (particularly jobs) had to be spread more thinly between competing groups and many of the APC's original supporters began to feel that the government was letting them down.

This mixture of fear and resentment was compounded by individual grievances. In June 1970 Ibrahim Taqi (a Temne) was dropped from his post as Minister of Information. Soon after his brother - Hamid Taqi - joined a number of young politicians to form the National Democratic Party (NDP). The new party - in spite of vociferous (if somewhat contradictory) criticism of Stevens' alleged communist links as well as his over-reliance on the Creoles - failed to make much headway. In September 1970 however things took a rather more serious turn with the resignation of two cabinet ministers, Dr Mohammed Forna (Finance Minister) and Mohamed Bash-Taqi (Development Minister and brother of Ibrahim and Hamid), Together with Dr John Karefa-Smart - a former SLPP minister and latterly a member of the APC - Ibrahim Taqi and the members of the NDP, the two ministers formed, on September 20, the United Democratic Party (UDP).²⁴²

There was little doubt that personal grievances played some part in the formation of the UDP. Ibrahim Taqi had been dropped from the cabinet, Karefa-Smart (the party leader) had reportedly been frustrated in his hopes of being appointed governor-general while Forna felt snubbed by his non-appointment as Acting Prime Minister during Stevens' recent absence in

²⁴⁰ See *West Africa*, 30 April 1971, p 490 and 25 June 1971, p 733.

²⁴¹ A point stressed by Christopher Clapham, *op. cit.*, p 87.

²⁴² *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 444-5.

Lusaka.²⁴³ Nevertheless the new party could not be dismissed as the brainchild of an isolated few. The electoral implications of the UDP were potentially very serious. First there was its probable support in the North, from where Karefa-Smart, Forna and the Taqi's all hailed. While there is little doubt that the party would have experienced problems extending its sphere of influence beyond the North, the prospect of incursions in a traditionally APC stronghold could not be taken lightly. Despite some gains in the South the APC still relied heavily on Northern support and if, as seemed likely, the UDP could win some seats in the North at the same time as the SLPP continued to win some seats in the South, Stevens' electoral grip would have been seriously undermined. Indeed it was not inconceivable (particularly given the original composition of the NDP which included some Mendes) that the UDP and SLPP might form sort of electoral compact to oust the APC.²⁴⁴

That the UDP might benefit from local disputes in the same way as the APC - while in opposition - had done, also gave Stevens cause for concern. Indeed, Barrows²⁴⁵ interprets Stevens response to the UDP (see below) as "a reasoned effort to forestall a reverse snowball effect, in which initial minor dealignments if they are successful may provide incentives for local factions throughout the alliance network to raise their demands, with threats to defect if they go unmet." The UDP's attempt to capitalise on the impending introduction of a Republic was also worrying. Forna's allegation that Stevens was "hell-bent" on forcing through an executive presidency²⁴⁶ both coincided with and reinforced pre-existing popular concerns on that score. The emphasis placed on this issue was not simply tactical however; the founders of the UDP fully appreciated that the most likely outcome of a Republic would be the consolidation of Stevens' personal position vis-à-vis his ministers.

Stevens' response to the UDP was typically thorough. On 14 September he declared a state of emergency. This was followed, on 8 October, by the banning of the UDP; the arrest of its leaders (Karefa-Smart, Forna and Bash-Taqi included) as well as many supporters; a clamp-down on the press and the despatch of army and police units to deal with outbreaks of violence in the North.²⁴⁷ Subsequent events²⁴⁸ merely confirmed the UDP's demise. Although most of the detainees were

²⁴³ Individual grievances overlapped with, and were reinforced by, an emergent party cleavage on generational lines. Those who had been with the APC since its formation resented the younger, more recent arrivals including Forna and Ibrahim Taqi. The latter, prior to being dropped, had been the youngest member of the cabinet. *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 444.

²⁴⁴ This interpretation was strengthened by subsequent events. Thus, in the 1973 elections some former UDP members (following the banning of their organisation) did decide to stand for the SLPP. Meanwhile the UDP in exile declared its intention to co-operate with the SLPP.

²⁴⁵ Barrows, *op. cit.*, 1976, pp 224-25.

²⁴⁶ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 445.

²⁴⁷ That Stevens was willing to abandon his usual legalistic approach and implement emergency measures, despite the fact that the state of emergency was not ratified until 19 October, gives some indication of his perception of the UDP threat. Stevens' urgency was prompted by the possibility of UDP-military links, discussed in Chapter two, rather than the longer-term electoral threat.

²⁴⁸ Details from *West Africa*, 9 April 1971, p 386; 26 August 1974, p 1057; 25 November 1974, p 1443; 28 July 1975, p 878 and 12 August 1975, p 1005.

released early in 1971 any further political activity was circumscribed by the fact that their party remained banned together with the threat of rearrest. This latter factor was decisive in Karefa-Smart's decision to leave for London on March 24, the day after an abortive coup. The fate of Forna and Ibrahim Taqi was quite different. Having remained in detention much longer than their colleagues they were finally released only to be rearrested (and ultimately executed) for their alleged role in a bomb attack against the Prime Minister, CA Kamara Taylor, in August 1974.

Following the eradication of the UDP Stevens moved to shore up his now weakened coalition. He continued to distribute positions among Southerners while simultaneously trying to appease Northerners. The confirmation of Sir Banja Tejan-Sie, a Northerner, as substantive governor-general²⁴⁹ and the appointment of SI Koroma (at that time still popularly believed to be a Temne) to the premiership, as well as the release of most northern detainees (noted above) were actions designed to remove some of the tensions which had prompted the formation of the UDP.

In turn this left Stevens free to deal with the one remaining electoral threat - the SLPP. As noted above, Stevens had been working to undermine the SLPP since 1968. The positive results of his efforts (by 1973 APC MPs outnumbered their opposition counterparts by six to one)²⁵⁰ plus the realisation that any hasty moves towards single-partyism might be counter-productive combined to produce a tolerance of the SLPP not extended towards the UDP. Simultaneously, however, there were well-defined limits to this tolerance - limits which reflected Stevens' realistic assessment of his party's strength vis-à-vis the opposition. For the SLPP had, for the most part, managed to retain its integrity and viability in the role of opposition. Some reasons for the SLPP's staying power - its continued ability to attract local level support in the South, for example - have already been noted. The fact that the SLPP had once formed a government (and experienced at first hand the benefits of so doing) together with the fact that an opposition party had previously managed to win an election in Sierra Leone may also have helped fortify the SLPP against APC blandishments.

Stevens did not repeat his predecessor's mistake of underestimating the opposition. His comparatively thorough approach to both the 1972 by-elections and the 1973 general elections presented a stark contrast to the rather half-hearted attempts of Albert Margai in 1967.

The 1972 by-elections²⁵¹ - of which there were twelve in all - were, to all intents and purposes, decided during the nomination process for the first three contests (including one for the chieftaincy) in Kailahun, Eastern province. APC tactics were two-fold. First, given the fact that the SLPP was traditionally very strong in Kailahun, every effort was made to ensure that APC

²⁴⁹ Noted in *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 443.

²⁵⁰ *West Africa*, 22 September 1972, p 1247.

²⁵¹ Events prompting the by-elections varied from constituency to constituency. Interestingly, two of them were in the former constituencies of Mohamed Forna and Ibrahim Taqi whose seats had been declared vacant following their non-attendance in Parliament. Attending would, of course, have been less than straightforward given that both were in detention at the time.

candidates would not actually have to face the polls. By staggering the elections the APC was able to concentrate its resources on one contest at a time²⁵² and the SLPP, cowed by a range of APC tactics (most visibly the importation of party "thugs") was rendered powerless to nominate its candidates.²⁵³ The opposition was further debilitated by the imprisonment of its leaders for the duration of the by-elections. Following the death of an APC supporter in Kailahun East constituency - reportedly killed by an SLPP Land Rover - ten opposition leaders (including Salia Jusu-Sheriff and MS Mustapha) were detained and charged with murder. That the Kailahun incident served merely as a pretext for the temporary removal of the SLPP leaders was apparently confirmed when the case was subsequently dropped.²⁵⁴ By that time the APC tactics had had the desired effect - the SLPP had discontinued their efforts to nominate candidates and the APC won all the by-elections unopposed.²⁵⁵

The 1973 general elections followed a similar pattern. On nomination day (April 24) the SLPP - despite its intention to contest all eighty-five seats²⁵⁶ - failed to nominate candidates in all but a couple of dozen constituencies. A massive resurgence of violence combined with a whole array of obstacles on nomination day (including the rearrest of key SLPP players) accounted for this poor showing. APC supporters - reportedly "wearing their election uniform of red vests and armed with rifles and sub-machine guns"²⁵⁷ - converged on nomination centres to prevent their opponents entering. Where SLPP members managed to gain access to the nomination process their candidature was frequently disallowed on any one of a number of grounds. As one commentator observed, the difficulties of unravelling "rapidly changing electoral regulations" meant many candidates "arrived either too late for nominations to be filed, or had not collected the right amount of money for the deposit, or the right number of signatures."²⁵⁸ Admitting the impossibility of an election victory and fearing further violence the SLPP subsequently withdrew all their candidates.²⁵⁹

In both 1972 and 1973, then, the APC succeeded in winning the elections at their most easily controlled point - the nomination process. This success, compared to Albert Margai's

²⁵² A point noted in *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1972-1973, B 726.

²⁵³ *West Africa*, 15 September 1972, p 1211.

²⁵⁴ On the Kailahun incident see *West Africa*, 22 September 1972, pp 1247, 1270. At the end of 1972 murder charges against Jusu-Sheriff, Mustapha and Kande Bureh (the others having been released two months previously) were withdrawn and replaced by charges of conspiracy to murder. The following year all three were cleared, the prosecution having failed to pursue the case.

²⁵⁵ *West Africa*, 22 September 1972, p 1247.

²⁵⁶ Increased from sixty-six. Twelve of the new seats were in the North, two in the South and five in the East. *West Africa*, 26 December 1970-1 January 1971, p 1519.

²⁵⁷ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1973-1974, B 765.

²⁵⁸ 'Frank Ly', "The Paradox of Economic Decline and Political Stability," *Monthly Review*, Vol 32, No 2, 1980, p 22. The necessary preparations were further complicated by Stevens' decision to announce the dissolution of Parliament on the eve of the Easter vacation, a point noted in *West Africa*, 14 May 1973, p 623.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.* On election day, May 11, only five constituencies voted. All five contests were between APC candidates and "Independents" (APC members who had failed to gain the party nomination), one of whom won. Twelve Paramount Chiefs were also elected unopposed. For further details see *West Africa*, 21 May 1973, p 681.

similarly directed attempts in 1967, was attributable to the APC's comparatively efficient approach. While not all intimidatory practices emanated directly from the centre, many did. SI Koroma was reputed to have played a particularly important role - both in 1973 and 1977 (see below) - in devising and executing APC electoral strategies.²⁶⁰

The central role of violence and intimidation resulted in a "simplification" of the electoral process. The fact that most Sierra Leoneans were denied the opportunity to vote consigned communal identities, clientelist links and national issues, if not to oblivion then to a clearly secondary status. Who was elected depended primarily on the decisions of the APC Central Committee.

The APC's reliance on intimidation, while not without costs (see below), was a sensible policy. Quite simply, the APC was not blessed with any particularly reliable electoral props. By the time of the elections it was unlikely that "popular preference," for example, would have resulted in any overwhelming victory for the APC; the introduction of a Republic and other aspects of government policy had done much to undermine the APC's standing. Resources at the local level were also unreliable. Thus the very nature of local disputes, involving shifting bases of support for both the government and the opposition, had enabled the SLPP to retain some support at the grassroots. And finally the APC regime would have been ill-advised to rely upon either ethnic identity²⁶¹ or an increasingly weak and insubstantial party organisation to guarantee election victory.²⁶² The use of intimidation, on the other hand, both devalued the importance of these factors and at the same time more or less guaranteed election victory.

The general elections of May 1977²⁶³ witnessed the partial revival of some of these factors. Significantly, this was due not to any change of heart on the part of the APC but to the SLPP's new-found resilience. This time around the SLPP²⁶⁴ was much better prepared for the APC's expected onslaught and despite a resurgence - some would say intensification - of violence and intimidation²⁶⁵ the party succeeded in nominating forty-one candidates, fifteen of whom were ultimately victorious.

²⁶⁰ *West Africa*, 5 August 1974, p 951.

²⁶¹ In a free and fair election it is reasonable to assume that the Mende South would still have voted overwhelmingly for the SLPP. The ethno-regional bases of party support had been obscured but not obliterated and continued to provide a backdrop to the electoral process. Prior to withdrawing, for example, the SLPP's successfully nominated candidates were all set to stand in Southern constituencies.

²⁶² Responsibility for the implementation of APC electoral strategies was assumed not by the party organisation but by a number of powerful figures within the APC hierarchy. With Stevens' tacit approval they and their supporters "helped" APC candidates in a range of ways. In 1973, for example, the convergence of APC supporters on nomination centres - noted above - was the most important form of assistance.

²⁶³ Coverage of the elections can be found in *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1977-1978, B 778 and *West Africa*, 2 May 1977, pp 847, 882 and 9 May 1977, p 925.

²⁶⁴ The SLPP contested the elections in alliance with the Democratic National Party led by George Cox and thirty-six independents. In the event the NDP polled only 0.07% of the vote while the Independents secured 8.01%. Neither won any seats. *West Africa*, 23 May 1977, p 1017.

²⁶⁵ Not all the violence was APC-inspired. On Nomination day (15 April) for example, nine people - all supporters of the ruling party - were reported dead.

One new element in the 1977 elections element was the use of the Internal Security Unit, ostensibly to ensure a free and fair election but in reality to bolster the activities of APC party thugs. This aside, however, APC tactics varied little from the 1973 precedent. A state of emergency was declared, elections were selectively postponed and SLPP stalwarts and supporters were arrested *en masse* and charged with a variety of offences.²⁶⁶ The level of intimidation was such that most observers expressed surprise that the SLPP managed to do as well as it did.

The reasons for the SLPP's success operated on two levels. Following their obliteration in 1973 many SLPP members were, as noted above, under no illusions as to the extent of APC violence and intimidation which could be expected. As a result they were much better prepared, both psychologically and practically, to tackle it. Their success in limiting APC violence in at least some areas enabled other factors to come to the fore. The importance of ethno-regional imperatives, for example, was clearly illustrated by the pattern of nominations and results. Whereas in the North twenty-nine of the thirty-two seats were unopposed, of the twenty-one Southern seats the SLPP forced contests in nine, and managed to win five.²⁶⁷ In the East the SLPP won nine of the twenty available seats, having managed to contest them all. The final results then, saw the APC claiming 70 seats and the SLPP 15.²⁶⁸

Intimidation was the key to the APC's electoral success. Without it the SLPP - which clearly commanded substantial support in Sierra Leone - could have posed a very real challenge. The residual strength of the opposition, not to mention the impending loss of a number of seats through election petitions,²⁶⁹ appears to have convinced Stevens that the time was ripe to introduce a one-party constitution.

The move to a single-party state formed an integral part of Stevens' overall survival strategy and there is evidence to suggest that he had intended the change for many years. The elections influenced the timing of the change rather than the change itself. In the final analysis Stevens' survival strategy was designed to bypass rather than rely on popular preferences and competitive elections (however distorted) not only formed an inappropriate structural component of this strategy

²⁶⁶ According to Amnesty International (*West Africa*, 31 October 1977, p 228) at least one hundred and fifty eight members of the party were detained. Prior to nomination day the arrests were aimed at dissuading potential SLPP candidates from going ahead with their candidacy. After April 15 the arrests were (often successfully) directed towards persuading those who had been nominated to withdraw. In some cases more extreme tactics were used. In Moyamba West 1, for example, Mr Christopher Coker was allegedly kidnapped and forced to withdraw his nomination.

²⁶⁷ The eight elections in Bo (an SLPP stronghold) were repeatedly postponed. A familiar pattern of arrests and violence (apparently involving the ISU) ensued and on 6 October all the APC candidates were returned unopposed. *West Africa*, 30 May 1977, p 1069 and 10 October 1977, p 2103.

²⁶⁸ *West Africa*, 23 May, 1977, p 1017. The number of seats won by the SLPP did not reflect its popular support in the country at large. Whereas the APC polled 61.93% of the vote the SLPP gained just under half at 29.99%.

²⁶⁹ Sixty-nine election petitions were lodged - sixty of them against APC candidates. Judgement had already been delivered against the first Vice-President, and similar judgements against others seemed inevitable.

but had constituted a continuing threat to the consolidation of power.²⁷⁰

Of course the introduction of a single party state was not without immediate risks, amply demonstrated by Albert Margai some years earlier. Nevertheless Stevens made every effort to ensure they were minimised. His gradual approach - designed to confirm the oft-repeated claim that a single-party state would only come about through evolution and to acclimatise people to the idea of a new type of political system²⁷¹ - was crucial. Of even greater importance was the emasculation of those sections of civil society who had protested with the loudest voices in Albert Margai's day. The opposition too, was subdued. Years of continuing harassment combined with a further drop in the number of SLPP parliamentary representatives following the 1977 elections had weakened SLPP morale.²⁷² When Parliament voted to adopt the one-party constitution only three SLPP MPs voted against the bill and six - no doubt with one eye on their future career - abstained.²⁷³

Facing little overt opposition Stevens nevertheless made every effort to legitimise the changeover to a single party. Investing the single-party state with a constitutional basis enabled Stevens to avoid charges of flagrant illegality both at home and abroad. The entrenched clauses of the former constitution which could only be changed if passed by two successive parliaments, with a general election in between, provided the major obstacle between Stevens and his goal. A solution was discovered in a 1971 constitutional amendment which provided for the introduction of an entirely new constitution subject to a referendum.²⁷⁴

A referendum was duly held in June 1978. The results - which overwhelmingly endorsed the new constitution - were hardly surprising. Having come this far Stevens certainly had no intention of falling at the last hurdle. The point of the referendum was not to ascertain the popular will but to provide a legal base for, and popular endorsement of, the one-party state. A huge turnout (which in some areas actually exceeded the number of registered voters)²⁷⁵ and an overwhelming

²⁷⁰ It goes without saying that Stevens presented a rather different picture of his motives to the Sierra Leonean public. He argued that Sierra Leone was too tribally divided, too small and too poor for multi-partyism. Single-party rule, he said, would promote economic development and reduce violence. See, for example, his annual address in *West Africa*, 26 June 1978, p 1255.

²⁷¹ As early as 1968 Stevens, on the subject of single-partyism, argued that "it may come, but we won't force it." (*West Africa*, 14 December 1968, p 1463.) During subsequent years he continued to toy with the idea of a single-party, never letting it drop entirely from the arena of public debate.

²⁷² The number of SLPP MP's had been reduced from fifteen to eleven. One of these - Tejan Sankoh - had defected to the APC and the other three detained immediately after the 1977 elections. Their seats were subsequently declared vacant for non-attendance in Parliament. *West Africa*, 2 January 1978, p 39 and 9 January 1978, p 79. SLPP morale was further undermined by the Speaker's decision (apparently taken under pressure from Stevens) to refuse the SLPP the title of Official Opposition. A few months later seating arrangements in the House were changed when APC MPs dispersed throughout the chamber rather than sitting on one side. *West Africa*, 11 July 1977, p 1448 and 5 December 1977, p 2483.

²⁷³ *West Africa*, 5 June 1978, p 1062.

²⁷⁴ See *West Africa*, 15 May 1978, p 916.

²⁷⁵ In the Southern Province, for example, 508,522 people voted but only 484,795 were registered. *West Africa*, 26 June 1978, p 1225.

"yes" vote²⁷⁶ - were held up by Stevens as evidence of the popularity and legitimacy of the new system.

Electoral Functions in Sierra Leone.

In pre-1978 Sierra Leone elections were regarded primarily as obstacles to be overcome. Winning elections was given clear priority over the possibility of using them as a political resource. The need to prioritise at all stemmed from the conflict between the two facets of the relationship between elections and regime survival. Thus, as noted in a previous section, the functions of elections are partly dependent upon their fairness or, in other words, upon the willingness of a regime - in presiding over a "straight fight"- to gamble with its own survival. Whereas in The Gambia this willingness existed - thus neutralising any potential conflict - in Sierra Leone it did not. The comparative insecurity of the APC had resulted in a belief that holding free and fair elections might be fatal to the continued survival of the regime.

Given the pattern of violence and intimidation which characterised the electoral process, why bother to hold elections at all? If winning was so important why not simply declare a one-party state? Part of the answer could be found in the seemingly indefatigable popular attachment to the electoral process. In short, this attachment - which, as Hayward and Kandeh have stressed, stemmed from the country's long history of political participation²⁷⁷ - rendered the staging of elections a lesser risk than any hasty declaration of a single-party state.

Although the popular preference for elections acted primarily as a constraint - in that it compelled the staging of nominally competitive elections - Stevens was shrewd enough to recognise its secondary potential as a political resource. The range of intimidatory tactics winning entailed may have undermined the potential benefits of elections but did not obliterate them altogether. For one thing Stevens understood that the meaning popularly attributed to elections invested them with great diversionary potential. This potential, though realised during both general elections, was illustrated with particular clarity in 1977. In short, Stevens' decision to hold elections in 1977 - a year early - represented a successful attempt to exploit the widespread enthusiasm for elections for his own ends.

Early in 1977 a student demonstration at Fourah Bay College had resulted in a violent counter-demonstration organised by APC militants which, in turn, sparked off violence and demonstrations in the capital and the country at large.²⁷⁸ Responding to events, Fourah Bay students released a statement outlining a number of demands including elections within nine months.

²⁷⁶ 152,454 people were reported to have voted in favour and 63,132 against. According to the Electoral Commission not a single "no" vote was cast in the North. *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1978-1979, B 773.

²⁷⁷ *Op. cit.*, p 28. Hayward and Kandeh's thesis was subsequently validated by the popular agitation for a return to multi-partyism during the terminal period of Momoh's rule. See below for further details.

²⁷⁸ See the February issues of *West Africa* and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1977-1978, B 778.

Stevens' acquiescence was typically astute. Holding elections provided not only a way of temporarily pacifying the students - they were informed that it would be unconstitutional to act upon their other demands without an election - but also of restoring order in the country at large. Mounting tension was defused and diverted into electoral channels. Popular attention was focused upon individuals, in particular upon who would be elected to represent them and whether it would be someone able to materially benefit their constituency. Individual critics concentrated on getting themselves elected.

The process of getting elected (in both 1973 and 1977) diverted attention from national issues and government failings. Opposition hopefuls concentrated their efforts on gaining access to the nomination process and, where successful, upon the manipulation of local-level concerns. APC aspirants, meanwhile, focused upon both the political centre and the periphery. Their main hope of election depended upon the granting of the party nomination and, as such, it was of vital importance to obtain the approval of the APC Central Committee. Inevitably, critics were silenced.

Political aspirants also focused on the local level. In SLPP strongholds, for example, there was plenty to be done. For a start there was the job of "dissuading" opposition candidates from running; where such efforts failed - as in some constituencies in 1977 - intimidatory tactics were focused upon persuading nominees to withdraw and/or preventing their supporters from casting a vote. Although some of the violence occurred spontaneously, in many constituencies candidates played an important organisational role. For their part, unopposed candidates (in both the North and South) often rendered assistance to their colleagues elsewhere.

The large numbers of unopposed candidates in both 1973 and 1977, though integral to APC strategy, invites some comment on whether the functions of elections went beyond mere diversion. One would expect, for example, the prevalence of unopposed candidates to have undermined the possibility of elections being used to reinvigorate patron-client relations; where candidates were unopposed the electorate had no vote to "sell."

In practice Stevens had some success in mitigating the unfavourable impact of unopposed candidates. Appreciating that, for most people, the significance of elections lay in their impact upon resource distribution at the constituency level he encouraged MPs to "serve" their people.²⁷⁹ A failure to do so might result in the candidate being refused the party nomination in a subsequent election. It is important not to exaggerate this point. Certainly many candidates were imposed upon a reluctant public, and yet Stevens could - and on occasion did - use elections as a means of removing those who had proved a liability at the local level.²⁸⁰ In 1973, for example, one cabinet

²⁷⁹ Following the 1973 elections, for example, Stevens advised MPs to return to their constituencies, study their constituents needs and inform the government. A failure to do so, he warned, might result in ejection from the party. *West Africa*, 28 May 1973, p 717.

²⁸⁰ For this reason candidates did not altogether neglect their local base. For example they continued to manipulate chieftaincy affairs in order to maintain local support, despite the fact that such support was not

minister and six MPs failed to be renominated by the APC.²⁸¹ Linked to this, Stevens could use his control over the selection process to strengthen his personal political position. Loyal incumbents were given an easy ride whereas the critical or troublesome were excluded and new faces brought in.²⁸²

A final area of investigation concerns the possible legitimating function of these elections. Clearly Stevens' overriding concern with winning, and the unprecedented level of violence and intimidation that entailed, necessarily involved some reduction in legitimacy.²⁸³ An upsurge in popular cynicism and distrust was inevitable. This aside, however, Hayward and Kandeh²⁸⁴ have suggested that elections in the 1970's were important in creating "a sense of legitimacy." They argue that for candidates and their supporters both the time and money, "and in some cases the willingness to risk life, health, reputation, and safety," served to legitimise their participation in the electoral process. Although they do not take the argument further it is certainly conceivable that this generalised sense of legitimacy worked to the advantage of the APC. At the very least it is probable that those politically ambitious individuals who had been drawn into the political process - and who perceived their participation as legitimate - would be more likely than the permanently excluded to accept the regime which such a process produced.

This conclusion may - albeit tentatively - be extended to the voting public at large. Certainly in those areas where violence and intimidation were less prevalent elections may have conferred some sense of obligation to accept the victorious regime. Hayward and Kandeh go much further in arguing that even in those areas where voters were the victims of intimidation and violence elections may yet have generated a sense of legitimacy. Individual voters, they suggest, powerless to confront the violence, resorted to rationalising their participation in the system as a whole. While this "sense of legitimacy" cannot be equated with regime legitimacy, an acquiescent general public was nevertheless instrumental in the maintenance of power.

By 1978 the changeover to a single-party system was complete. Stevens, safe in the knowledge that his party could not lose, was eager to benefit from the staging of elections and in 1982 they were duly held. The functions of the 1982 elections were shaped by the rules under which they were held. A new feature of the electoral process was the introduction of primary elections. In brief, those candidates wishing to contest the general elections had first to present themselves for

strictly necessary to ensure election victory.

²⁸¹ *West Africa*, 7 May 1973, p 614.

²⁸² Bringing in new faces enabled Stevens to allay criticisms of the generally poor quality of MPs. According to *West Africa* (19 May 1986, p 1033) in 1977 SI Koroma was despatched to London, Washington and Bonn to recruit Sierra Leonean intellectuals living abroad.

²⁸³ The government's reputation abroad also suffered although it is important to point out that Stevens' willingness to retain a multi-party system - in contrast to the majority of his African counterparts - did help to legitimise his rule.

²⁸⁴ *Op. cit.*, p 38.

selection by an electoral college, or Constituency Executive.²⁸⁵ The three selected - assuming they cleared the penultimate hurdle of approval by the APC Central Committee²⁸⁶ - could then go on to contest the elections.

Before examining the implications of this model, it is important to make a note of events preceding the election with particular reference to the diversionary function of elections. The diversionary function of elections, despite playing an important role in regime survival, is ordinarily of rather fleeting value. In the 1980's, however, Stevens - in response to the relentless economic decline - adopted a number of tactics which enabled him to sustain interest in the electoral process over an unusually long period. The aim was to divert popular attention, including that of aspiring politicians, away from depressing everyday realities and towards the relative excitement of elections.²⁸⁷

In 1980, long before elections were actually held - even before any decision on the type of electoral system had been taken - Stevens began to deliberate upon the prospect of elections. Hints that elections would be "competitive" aroused widespread interest and, from March 1981 - when the registration of voters (which many interpreted as a sign of imminent elections) began²⁸⁸ - the belief that elections would be "soon" took hold. Needless to say Stevens seized every opportunity to encourage this belief.²⁸⁹ In April 1981 he said the country should "gear itself for a general election," in June he opined that the country was "now prepared" to hold a general election and by October he was promising elections before the end of the year. At this stage Stevens - perhaps sensing election fatigue - gave the campaign an added fillip by announcing his (as it was later revealed, insincere) wish to retire after the elections.²⁹⁰ This announcement not only invested the whole process with greater meaning in the eyes of the general public but spurred on those prospective candidates who hoped for a place in a post-Stevens government. Stevens then resurrected his earlier strategy. Thus in November the prospective election date was the "end of January" and in March, April. The response to these tactics was immense. In many places, a whole year before elections took place, candidates were named and campaigning began.²⁹¹ Interest was maintained right up to May when the elections were finally held.

²⁸⁵ For details of the composition of the Constituency Executives see *West Africa*, 9 November 1981, pp 2637-38.

²⁸⁶ For details of the composition of the forty-nine-member Central Committee - which included the President as well as some cabinet members and the more influential MPs - see *West Africa*, 9 November 1981, pp 2636-37.

²⁸⁷ That elections served as a diversion from national issues was a function of the determinants of voter choice - campaigns were not issue led.

²⁸⁸ *West Africa*, 23 March 1981, p 660.

²⁸⁹ Details taken from *West Africa*, 13 April 1981, p 796; 22 June 1981, p 1397; 12 October 1981, p 2382; 2 November 1981, p 2574 and 1 March 1982, p 621.

²⁹⁰ *West Africa*, 2 November 1981, p 2574.

²⁹¹ According to *West Africa* (11 May 1981, p 1063) in one constituency alone as many as thirty individuals had, by May 1981, announced their intention to contest the elections.

Stevens' success in exciting widespread interest in the elections conceivably had some impact upon the type of electoral system he eventually settled on. Having unleashed his people's political energies Stevens was compelled to find a safe outlet for them. The system he chose - with provisions for both local input into the choice of candidate at the primaries and multiple candidates at the elections proper - had the potential to do just that. The *raison d'être* of the primary elections was to produce three candidates to stand for election. These candidates - by eliminating the hitherto prominent feature of unopposed candidates - were to provide the voters with a choice. Participation, choice and representation formed the key features of a process aimed at the legitimisation of the APC regime.²⁹²

Although the theory appeared sound, in practice the new system was to encounter various problems.²⁹³ While in many constituencies the primaries passed off successfully, in others there were grave problems. Some candidates - responding to the obvious attraction of being the party's sole candidate - went to great lengths to ensure that they were returned unopposed. Violence, intended to "dissuade" candidates from contesting, emerged in some areas (Pujehun West and Freetown Central I, for example) while in others a wide range of irregularities were reported.²⁹⁴ In Port Loko district for example it was alleged that the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, AB Kamara effectively excluded his opponents by terminating the nomination process a day early. In their place two Kamara supporters were nominated, their subsequent withdrawal ensuring the unopposed return of the Attorney-General.²⁹⁵ In one constituency it was charged that the incumbent had packed the constituency executive with his supporters,²⁹⁶ in others bribes were said to have

²⁹² It goes without saying that notions of participation and choice are used in a relative sense. Thus, although the elections were intended to promote greater "competition" than had been the case in the 1970's the confines of the single-party state - and in particular the Central Committee's power of veto over candidates - ensured the maintenance of party control.

²⁹³ It is important to assess the source of these problems. Most observers have stressed that, although in some instances Stevens intervened to limit competition, generally speaking the problems were a function of the candidates' choice of strategies. Thus, while Stevens was working to promote competition, some candidates - in order to ensure their safe return - were working to thwart it. To substantiate this point observers (see for example Fred M Hayward and Ahmed Dumbuya, "Changing Electoral Patterns in Sierra Leone: The 1982 Single-Party Elections," *African Studies Review*, Vol 28, 1985, p 69) indicate the response to Stevens' announcement that civil servants would be allowed to contest the 1982 election; fearing for their own positions some party members succeeded in changing the rules to exclude a substantial proportion of civil servants unless they agreed to resign three months prior to their candidacy being announced. In retrospect, however, it appears incorrect to suggest that Stevens and his party were in conflict - that their perception of the elections was radically different. Just a few years hence Momoh was to illustrate that the cycle of violence and intimidation could - if the political will existed - be reversed. Stevens was willing to overlook - and even on occasion assist - attempts to limit competition in order to strengthen his personal political position at the top of the patron-client network (see below).

²⁹⁴ See *West Africa*, 26 April 1982, p 1115.

²⁹⁵ According to Hayward and Dumbuya, (*op. cit.*, p 73) other candidates - including Dr. IM Fofana (Tonkolili West), Dr. AF Joe-Jackson (Bo Town I), Dalton Shears (York Rural), Harry T Williams (Moyamba West II), and Alex Koroma (Moyamba West I) - adopted the same tactic

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 69.

changed hands.²⁹⁷

The support of the party leadership proved crucial in some cases. For the reasons outlined above it would have been disadvantageous to allow large numbers of unopposed candidates and yet some favoured individuals (usually ministers)²⁹⁸ undoubtedly received assistance. As Hayward and Dumbuya observed, many candidates attempted to negotiate the withdrawal of their opposition.²⁹⁹ Presidential intervention in such negotiations virtually guaranteed success (in the form of an unopposed candidacy) in this endeavour.³⁰⁰

Having outlined some of the problems it should be stressed that in the majority of constituencies more than one candidate successfully navigated the primaries. In only nineteen of the eighty-five constituencies were candidates returned unopposed.³⁰¹ Of the remaining sixty-six, forty returned three candidates and twenty-six, two.³⁰² The final obstacle prior to the elections - nomination day - passed off smoothly. Stevens' decision that the formal nomination process for all constituencies should take place in Freetown ensured that aside from a few minor incidents, peace reigned.³⁰³

However with the return to constituency level for the elections proper, problems re-emerged. Most observers agree that electoral violence in some areas of Sierra Leone reached its zenith in 1982. In some areas - notably Pujehun - the violence was so extreme that its manifestation and implications long outlived the elections themselves.³⁰⁴ In Koinadugu North bitter conflict, which for many resulted in injury or even death, forced people to relocate in an attempt to escape the violence.³⁰⁵ In many areas violence was perpetrated against both candidates (to effect their withdrawal) and voters (to prevent them voting for an opponent). A wide range of "irregularities" also characterised many contests in both the provinces and the capital. In some constituencies candidates and supporters - fearing defeat - forced their way into polling stations and snatched the ballot boxes.³⁰⁶ In others, marbles were "placed illegally in the boxes of a favored candidate."³⁰⁷

²⁹⁷ *West Africa*, 16 May 1983, p 1162.

²⁹⁸ Of nineteen candidates who were returned unopposed, fourteen were ministers.

²⁹⁹ Hayward and Dumbuya, *op. cit.*, p 72. Negotiations involved pay-offs and job promises. The credibility of the latter was dependent upon the prospect of a candidate being appointed a minister. Both incumbents (for example AK Koroma) as well as first-time candidates (for example Abbas Bundu) were able to convince opponents of the likelihood of their being appointed ministers.

³⁰⁰ Hayward and Dumbuya (*ibid.*) note, in this context, the unopposed returns of Abdulai Conteh, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and AB Kamara, the Minister of Trade and Industry.

³⁰¹ *West Africa*, 17 May 1982, p 1298. All twelve chiefs were returned unopposed.

³⁰² Hayward and Dumbuya, *op. cit.*, p 70.

³⁰³ *West Africa*, 26 April 1982, p 1117.

³⁰⁴ See *West Africa*, 30 May 1983, p 1276 for an outline of the causes and course of the violence in Pujehun.

³⁰⁵ Although much of the violence in 1982 was intra-ethnic in nature, in Koinadugu North the problems appear to have been rooted in inter-ethnic hostilities. The two candidates were former Labour Minister, ABM Kamara (the incumbent) and Alpha Barrie. According to *West Africa*, the campaign was fought along ethnic lines, the Yalunkas supporting Kamara and the Fulas, Barrie. The violence was such that both the elections and the by-elections (scheduled for June) had to be cancelled. See *West Africa*, 12 July 1982, p 1810.

³⁰⁶ It was reported, for example, that Jengo Stevens (Siaka Stevens' son) rendered such assistance to his

The negative implications of electoral violence and intimidation mirrored those of earlier elections.³⁰⁸ In those constituencies which suffered the worst excesses - or those in which candidates were returned unopposed - the regime legitimating benefits of participation and choice were severely debased. In others, however, where the level of violence was less extreme, candidates and their supporters proved adept at developing "sophisticated methods and strategies"³⁰⁹ to frustrate or withstand their opponents' tactics. The ensuing equilibrium enabled voters to express their preference on election day.³¹⁰ And of course it should be stressed that the problems of violence and intimidation did not extend to all constituencies. In many the contest was free and fair and voters were able to express their preferences accordingly.

In those constituencies where it was operative, this aspect of preference or choice (operating within the limits laid down by the party) served to strengthen the position of the APC regime. In essence, Stevens' aim was to entrench the upper echelons of the party.³¹¹ To do this he was more than willing to sacrifice those lower-ranking MPs whose popularity had declined, thus strengthening the APC at the local level.³¹² The 1982 elections entrusted the electorate with the task of identifying and punishing those out of favour. As it turned out over half the incumbent MPs and four out of nine ministers were defeated at the polls.³¹³

Linked to this the elections played an important role in the perpetuation of patron-client links.³¹⁴ How effectively a prospective candidate would serve his or her constituency formed the primary basis of voter choice. Those incumbents who had failed to bring resources to their

brother, Alex Stevens, in the Freetown West II constituency. See *West Africa*, 17 May 1982, p 1297.

³⁰⁷ Hayward and Dumbuya, *op. cit.*, p 74. Violence and irregularities caused the cancellation of elections in thirteen constituencies (*West Africa*, 17 May 1982, p 1297). For details of the subsequent by-elections - which saw the return of five more unopposed candidates - see *West Africa*, 12 July 1982, p 1810.

³⁰⁸ This applied to the regime's international - as well as its domestic - standing. Stevens' renunciation of multi-partyism had already undermined his standing abroad. The fact that one of his major justifications for introducing a single-party state - a reduction in violence - had proved specious, damaged his position even further. Stevens, in an attempt at damage-limitation, took the relatively unusual step of calling an international press conference to defend the elections. He stressed that voting had taken place in seventy-seven constituencies and concluded that "we have done fairly well in the conduct of the elections bearing in mind the way elections go in other parts of the world." *West Africa*, 17 May 1982, p 1298.

³⁰⁹ Hayward and Kandeh, *op. cit.*, p 52

³¹⁰ Where problems did occur, moreover, the aggrieved were allowed to file election petitions. Many did so - some successfully. MPs who lost their seats included Alhaji Ben Mansaray, Dr Sheka Kanu (Minister of Foreign Affairs), SAT Koroma and Patrick Sovie. Details from *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1985-1986, B 162 and *West Africa*, 22 July 1985, p 1512.

³¹¹ As noted above, the majority of the unopposed candidates were ministers; only nine were forced to actually contest the elections. It is doubtful, to say the least, whether all the unopposed ministers - had they been forced to contest - would have won. Abdulai Conteh (returned unopposed in Kambia West) for example, was reported to have become extremely remote from his constituents. *West Africa*, 12 April 1982, p 996.

³¹² That Stevens recognised the importance of popular representation was confirmed by reports that the Central Committee added the names of some popular individuals to the lists drawn up by the constituency executives.

³¹³ The names of both the winners and losers can be found in *West Africa*, 17 May 1982, p 1297. The appearance of new faces helped to bolster the APC by fostering an impression of renewal and change.

³¹⁴ With the exception of those constituencies in which candidates were returned unopposed.

constituency were often forced to relinquish their seats on election day.³¹⁵ They were replaced by those who appeared both willing and able to serve in the role of patron. Stevens, meanwhile, remained at the apex of the patron-client structure. Political aspirants, denied the opportunity of defection or standing as Independents were, without exception, dependent upon Stevens' approval and in some cases his personal intervention. The system operated to produce a loyal and dependent body of parliamentarians.

The 1982 elections were the last to be held under Stevens prior to his decision to retire from office. His successor, Joseph Momoh, was elected President in October 1985. Unlike previous presidential elections - which Stevens had "won" by virtue of his position as the sole candidate - Momoh, despite the fact he too was unopposed, chose to go through the electoral motions. Commencing in Makeni, Momoh travelled throughout Sierra Leone campaigning for his election.³¹⁶ He went to unprecedented lengths to meet the people - visiting every district and the Western Area in turn - giving notice of his intentions, hearing complaints and appealing for ideas. The presidential campaign was not to ensure victory - that, after all, was a foregone conclusion³¹⁷ - but was nevertheless regarded as crucial.

The primary purpose of the campaign was to exemplify a theme of renewal and change. As the sole recognised party the - by now thoroughly discredited - APC could not be removed and yet, with a change of leader, Sierra Leoneans were encouraged to believe that henceforth things would be different. In short the APC's survival prospects were improved by virtue of Momoh's personal popularity. Public approbation stemmed partly from the simple fact that Momoh was not Siaka Stevens but the presidential campaign - with its emphasis on discipline and a fresh approach - greatly strengthened his position. Many Sierra Leoneans were persuaded of Momoh's genuine concern to improve their lot.

The elections also provided a mechanism or opportunity for the release of popular frustration and tension, built up over many years. The mass rallies, crowds and carnivals which greeted Momoh's campaign were essentially cathartic, providing a means of expressing disapproval

³¹⁵ See David Fashole Luke, "Electoral Politics in Sierra Leone: An Appraisal of the 1982 Elections," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol 23-24, March 1985, p 37 for a detailed account of the case of KC Gbamanja, whose failure to develop his constituency (Kono East) caused his downfall in 1982.

³¹⁶ For details of Momoh's campaign see *West Africa*, 19 August 1985, p 1722; 2 September 1985, p 1835; 9 September 1985, p 1850.

³¹⁷ Although at this early stage Momoh was unquestionably popular the actual election results (even taking into account the efforts to ensure a substantial voter turn-out) were somewhat implausible. In the nine constituencies of Port Loko, for example, not a single dissension was reported. In the Western Area one third of the constituencies voted unanimously for Momoh and in the rest the "no" vote was negligible. Overall there were 2,784,591 valid votes in favour (out of a possible 2,975,065 registered electors) and 4,096 against. The impact of these apparent irregularities was, however, minimal. No-one doubted that the result would be in Momoh's favour - the value of the election (for both the populace and hence the APC) lay in the campaign rather than the official results. For further details of the election results see *West Africa*, 7 October 1985, pp 2073-74 and 14 October 1985, p 2142.

of all that had gone before. In some instances this disapproval was explicitly voiced. During a party rally at Freetown City Hall, for example, it was reported that one party stalwart, voicing his hope that Momoh would continue "to walk in the footsteps of his predecessor," was "booed off the rostrum with thundering shouts of 'No, no, no'."³¹⁸

In a general sense, then, the presidential elections functioned to provide Momoh with a level playing field. Relieved (of at least some) of their frustration and optimistic for their future, Sierra Leoneans sat back to watch their President perform. Momoh responded in a number of different ways. Of singular importance however, was his decision to call general elections - a year earlier than necessary - in an attempt to satisfy some of the expectations his election had fostered.

On a fundamental level people's expectations centred upon a desire for economic improvement. Quite clearly elections could not, by themselves, halt the economic deterioration but Momoh's insistence that the two were linked was important in checking people's growing impatience until after the elections were completed. He argued that elections were necessary to produce a new body of parliamentarians from which he could choose a cabinet ready and able to assist him in the task of development.³¹⁹

Momoh's assessment was not simply an exercise in diversionary politics however. As Hayward and Kandeh³²⁰ note, Momoh recognised the need to bring some of his own supporters into the cabinet. Certain members of the "old-guard" - those still harbouring presidential ambitions - were believed to be disrupting Momoh's developmental efforts³²¹ and in this context elections were regarded as a means of achieving a degree of independence from Stevens' former cronies. Linked to this it was hoped that elections would give Momoh a fresh mandate, as well as a sufficient reserve of legitimacy, to enable him to survive the implementation of unpopular economic reforms.³²²

As in 1982 the elections were intended to promote the legitimacy (and hence the survival prospects) of the APC regime through processes of participation and choice at the local level. This time around, however, these processes, though still operating within the confines of a single party, proved significantly more meaningful. A number of factors accounted for this difference.

Firstly there were changes to the process of candidate selection for the one hundred and five constituencies.³²³ With the abolition of primary elections in 1985³²⁴ it was decided that the task of

³¹⁸ *West Africa*, 9 August 1985, p 1850.

³¹⁹ *West Africa*, 10 February 1986, p 321. Momoh's apparent impatience with politics in favour of development ran parallel to the popular view. Elections were widely regarded as important but only as a means to an end.

³²⁰ Fred M Hayward and Jimmy D Kandeh, "Perspectives on Twenty-Five Years of Elections in Sierra Leone," in Fred M. Hayward (ed.), *Elections in Independent Africa* (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1987), p 35.

³²¹ Momoh's problems with the "old-guard" are discussed in Chapter one.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ The number of constituencies had been increased from eighty-five. As in 1982 the twelve Paramount Chiefs were returned unopposed.

³²⁴ The bill abolishing primaries was passed in November 1985, although the decision to do so had actually been taken the previous year. *West Africa*, 11 November 1985, p 2394.

selecting candidates would henceforth lie with the APC Central Committee - assigned the responsibility of short-listing applications - and the Governing Council which would determine the final list of candidates.³²⁵ Although by themselves these changes did not guarantee the elimination of problems associated with the 1982 primaries, the efforts of Momoh and others ensured the system ran reasonably smoothly. The decision to increase the number of candidates in each constituency to five,³²⁶ combined with a determination to minimise the number of unopposed candidates, facilitated both choice and participation. Thus the nomination committee of the governing council - chaired by Siaka Stevens - returned single candidates in only five constituencies;³²⁷ all the rest had at least two and many others the full complement of five.

The second original feature of the 1986 elections (as compared to 1982) was the marked absence of violence and intimidation. Every effort was made to ensure that the elections were as free and fair, and as peaceful, as possible. A code of conduct was established binding candidates to uphold the "dignity and reputation" of the party by confining themselves to peaceful methods of campaigning.³²⁸ Those deemed to have contravened it,³²⁹ including Sahr E Gbomor (Minister of State, Finance), Abdul Karim (former secretary to the President), Ibrahim Sorie (Minister of State) and Sani Sesay (Minister of Mines and Labour) were disqualified.³³⁰ Further efforts to ensure electoral integrity³³¹ included a last minute checking of the entire voters' list following reports of tampering, measures to prevent the abuse of the marble system of voting and the effective countrywide deployment of police and army personnel. These measures had the desired effect in the vast majority of constituencies. Certainly the elections were not entirely without problems - in some constituencies the authorities were forced to suspend contests and reschedule them for the following week³³² - and yet the contrast with previous elections was unmistakable.

This break with the past enhanced the legitimacy of the APC regime in two ways; directly, by facilitating participation and indirectly, by enhancing the stature of President Momoh. The new state of affairs was, quite rightly, widely attributed to the personal efforts of the President to oversee

³²⁵ See *ibid.*, for further details.

³²⁶ *West Africa*, 7 April 1986, p 748.

³²⁷ The favoured few included Joe Amara Bangali, Minister of Finance, Development and Economic Planning and the First and Second Vice-Presidents, Francis Minah and AB Kamara (*West Africa*, 12 May 1986, p 981). Subsequently four further candidates were returned unopposed and yet as Hayward and Kandeh (*op. cit.*, p 36) note, the total number of uncontested seats still formed only 9% of the total as compared to 28% in 1982.

³²⁸ See *West Africa*, 5 May 1986, p 967.

³²⁹ According to *West Africa*, 16 June 1986, p 1249, evidence of candidates' transgressions was caught on film. A team of men were reportedly sent, by helicopter, to film events in those areas which had suffered the worst violence in 1982.

³³⁰ See *West Africa*, 12 May 1986, p 1025; 26 May 1986, p 1133, and 2 June 1986, p 1149.

³³¹ Details from *West Africa*, 2 June 1986, pp 1149, 1151.

³³² Approximately one quarter of all the contested seats had to be rescheduled. Though incidents of violence and other irregularities prompted the suspensions in a minority of constituencies it was the electoral commission's ineptitude which caused most problems. The non-arrival of ballot boxes and marbles, for example, was a not uncommon occurrence. *West Africa*, 9 June 1986, p 1232.

a free and fair election. Many believed that Momoh's success in this field might overlap into other spheres, particularly the economic. He appeared to have proved the doubters wrong. And finally, of course, the elections enabled the APC to rid itself of those who had become political liabilities.³³³ Sierra Leoneans, making their choices on much the same basis as 1982, voted to replace a majority of incumbent MPs.³³⁴ Moreover, and reflecting Momoh's refusal to intervene on behalf of individuals, a large number of ministers lost their seats.³³⁵

In the short-term then Momoh's first experience with elections was overwhelmingly positive. In the medium and longer term, however, the omens were less positive. For one thing the elections - predicated on the need for change - had served to enhance expectations. Momoh's failure to fulfil these expectations was to prove extremely damaging in subsequent months and years. And secondly, Momoh's refusal to intervene on behalf of particular candidates (even those with whom he already had close links) had an obvious downside. Unlike Stevens, Momoh did not use elections as a means of establishing his position at the top of a clientelist network. Newly-elected MPs were under no personal debt of obligation to a President who had refused to assist them.³³⁶

Although the 1986 general elections were the last to be held under the auspices of the APC, Sierra Leone's pre-coup electoral history was far from complete. In 1990, preparations for the impending single-party elections (due in 1991) stalled as a result of growing pressure for electoral reform. Beginning in April with the distribution of leaflets and petitions by the students of Makeni Teachers College,³³⁷ increasingly strident demands for a return to multi-partyism were voiced by a number of groups within Sierra Leone.³³⁸ The independent press were particularly quick to take up the multi-party cause. Articles attributing the country's economic and political failings to the single-party system appeared on a frequent basis. According to *West Africa*, Freetown's *New Shaft* even produced a form "asking all those interested in multipartyism to fill it in and sent it back to the

³³³ These were replaced by new faces which gave Momoh the opportunity to carry out his much-promised ministerial changes. In the event however he failed to take full advantage of the situation - approximately two-thirds of the new cabinet was composed of old hands. (*West Africa*, 16 June 1986, p 1249.) This failure was an early warning of the difficulties Momoh would experience in meeting popular expectations of progress and change.

³³⁴ Forty-nine (of a total of one hundred and five) MPs had served in the previous parliament. For further details of the results see *West Africa*, 9 June 1986, p 1197 and 16 June 1986, p 1292.

³³⁵ Those who lost included SB Kawusu-Konteh (the Minister in charge of the elections), Sembu Forna (Minister of Information Broadcasting and Tourism) Tom Smith (Minister of Social Welfare and Rural Development) and Dr Aloysious Joe Jackson (Minister of Education). *West Africa*, 9 June 1986, p 1197. One-third of competing ministers lost their seats as opposed to approximately one-sixth in 1982.

³³⁶ The implications of Momoh's distinctive approach are examined in Chapter one.

³³⁷ *West Africa*, 23-29 April 1990, p 663 and 4-10 June 1990, p 934.

³³⁸ Calls for an end to the single-party system were undoubtedly influenced by events in Africa, Eastern Europe and elsewhere, the repercussions of which have been fully documented in John A Wiseman, *The New Struggle for Democracy in Africa* (Aldershot, Avebury, 1996). However it would be wrong to exaggerate the impact of external events. Despite the unhappy electoral experiences of previous decades (1986 excepting) popular adherence to the idea of competitive elections had remained very much alive.

paper for forwarding to State House."³³⁹

The APC's response to the multi-party debate held clear implications for the survival of the regime. Two options - neither of them particularly attractive - were open to the party. It could attempt to ignore or suppress popular demands and continue with the single-party elections in the (extremely unlikely) hope that the widespread desire for greater participation would thereby be assuaged.³⁴⁰ Alternatively it could accede to competitive elections and accept the prospect of defeat at the polls.

In the event the APC attempted a number of variations on both themes. Momoh's earliest response was conciliatory. In an interview in February 1990 he stated that "if it should come to the point that the people ... want a multi-system, then people like myself have an open mind on the issue. It is left for the people to decide."³⁴¹ However, as soon as "the people" showed any sign of having decided, vacillation set in. Momoh wavered between stressing his own belief in democracy combined with appeals for patience, and a defence of single-party rule.³⁴²

By July, however, Momoh had come down strongly on the side of a single party. In an address to Parliament he argued that a return to multi party rule would "spell doom for us and take us right back to those old dangerous days of divisiveness, conflict, victimisation and vindictiveness."³⁴³ If Momoh had hoped that would be the end of the matter he couldn't have been more wrong. Subsequent protests and articles, not to mention the impact of the Bar Association's resolutions on the subject,³⁴⁴ prompted another change of tack.

In September the President announced a series of wide-ranging reforms aimed at liberalising the electoral process under the aegis of a single-party state. The scrapping of electoral restrictions - notably that limiting the number of candidates in each constituency to five³⁴⁵ - was intended to seize the initiative from the multi-party lobby. Other reforms were targeted at particular groups in an attempt to cultivate support for the one-party idea. The legislation requiring civil servants and teachers to resign a year prior to elections was changed³⁴⁶ alongside promises of greater judicial autonomy.³⁴⁷

³³⁹ The paper claimed to have received approximately 25,000 responses. *West Africa*, 4-10 June 1990, p 663.

³⁴⁰ Another problem associated with single-partyism was the increasingly adverse reaction of donors. See Chapter four for further comment.

³⁴¹ *West Africa*, 5-11 February 1990, p 164.

³⁴² See *West Africa*, 4-10 June 1990, p 935.

³⁴³ *West Africa*, 9-15 July 1990, p 2078.

³⁴⁴ See *West Africa*, 13-19 August 1990, p 2278.

³⁴⁵ Details of the reforms are to be found in *West Africa*, 10-16 September 1990, p 2437. It was later announced that the number of candidates per constituency would be increased to twenty. *West Africa*, 28 January-3 February 1991, p 97.

³⁴⁶ The legislation - an extremely sore point among civil servants - had come into force in August 1989. Following Momoh's announcement the period was reduced to six months.

³⁴⁷ Specifically, Momoh promised to examine those statutes which covered presidential powers over the appointment and removal of judges, objections to which had been recently voiced by the Bar Association. See *West Africa*, 19 August 1990, p 2278.

And finally, Momoh promised to set up a National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC). The NCRC - inaugurated in November - was composed of thirty-five citizens (including "die-hard APC stalwarts," lawyers, paramount chiefs, one student and two representatives of the Bar Association)³⁴⁸ and headed by Dr Peter Louis Tucker.³⁴⁹ Its brief was to review the 1978 constitution "with a view to broadening the existing political process, by enhancing and accommodating a wider and fairer participation of the citizens, and guaranteeing their fundamental human rights and the rule of law."³⁵⁰

Although Momoh's reforms were widely welcomed he was still a long way from resolving the multi-party issue. His intention in setting up the NCRC appears, at this stage, to have been to deflect and diffuse demands for multi-partyism. Although the NCRC was composed of a reasonable cross-section of society, Tucker's links with the party leadership rendered an unfavourable conclusion unlikely. For many Sierra Leoneans, however, the NCRC was a means to a very specific end - multi-partyism. The commission's deliberately vague brief had ensured that popular aspirations to radical change were not completely crushed.

Things came to a head in March/April 1991 when it was announced that the May elections would be held under the existing one-party constitution. The intention was to capitalise on the existing state of uncertainty - prior to the production of the NCRC report - by holding elections and renewing the APC mandate for another five years, thus placing the multi-party debate in abeyance. Never much more than an exercise in wishful thinking, the inadequacy of these plans soon became painfully apparent. The popular outcry made it clear that single-party elections would do little or nothing to legitimise an extension of APC rule. Academics, lawyers, trade unions and the press joined in denouncing the prospect of single-party elections - students abandoned their classes and threatened to call a boycott.³⁵¹

Momoh's response was not long in coming. In April he wholeheartedly endorsed the NCRC's recommendation (hastily submitted on March 28) for the establishment of a multi-party system.³⁵² Indeed, in a rather transparent attempt to capitalise on the turn of events, he argued that even as early as 1985 it had been his intention to introduce democracy into Sierra Leone.³⁵³ The announcement of a return to multi-partyism was extremely important to the APC's survival in the short term. It boosted the regime's international reputation and resulted in an immediate relaxation

³⁴⁸ Details from *Africa Confidential*, 25 October 1991, p 7.

³⁴⁹ For a profile of Dr Tucker see *West Africa*, 15-21 April 1991, p 555.

³⁵⁰ *West Africa*, 5-11 November 1990, p 2785.

³⁵¹ For two articles covering the adverse reaction to the prospect of single-party elections see *West Africa*, 1-7 April 1991, p 482 and 15-21 April 1991, p 553.

³⁵² The main recommendations of the Tucker Report can be found in *West Africa*, 10-16 June 1991, pp 940-41. The government accepted that there should be no restrictions on the number of political parties providing they were not ethnically, regionally or religiously exclusive.

³⁵³ *West Africa*, 8-14 April 1991, p 532.

of mounting domestic pressure. Popular attention was focused on the diverting prospect of a referendum,³⁵⁴ new parties and competitive elections.

In the longer term, of course, the APC was faced with the prospect of actually having to win the elections. While not strictly relevant to regime survival it is nevertheless interesting to note that - had the military intervention not put a stop to events - the APC may well have emerged victorious. This was in spite of the inevitable fall-out - in the form of resignations, suspensions, accusations and counter-accusations³⁵⁵ - which followed the NCRC's multi-party recommendation. Apart from the obvious advantages of incumbency, the weakness of the opposition endowed the APC with a realistic chance of electoral success.³⁵⁶ With the exception of the National Democratic Party (formed by academics, teachers and lawyers), all the opposition parties were tainted as a result of their leaders' high-level involvement with the APC. The resurrected SLPP, for example was headed by Salia-Jusu-Sheriff (Momoh's former Vice-President) and the Democratic Peoples Party by Hassan Gbassay Kanu, the former Minister of Finance. The National Unity Movement, the National Action Party, and the Peoples Democratic Party were all headed by individuals who had held important positions within the APC hierarchy. Even assuming these parties could have overcome their credibility problem it seemed inevitable that the opposition vote would be split. By March 1992 seven political parties (including the APC) had been registered.

Less clear was whether the APC intended to resort to foul-play to ensure victory. The possibility was undeniably there - the state of emergency for instance, though declared primarily as a security measure was (as previous elections had shown) open to abuse. Widespread suspicions also focused on the possibility that the APC leadership might try to delay the elections,³⁵⁷ due in October. Certainly the overriding impression one receives was that the regime was keeping its options open. In one interview³⁵⁸ for example, the first Vice-President Abdulai Conteh argued that "the election timetable is fixed by law" but at the same time maintained that "when the country is at peace, then, and only then, can you ask people to take part in an electoral process."

Comparative Overview.

Comparing the electoral survival of the PPP and (pre-1978) APC regimes several questions

³⁵⁴ The referendum was held at the end of August. Almost 1.5m of the 2.5m eligible voters turned out to vote for a multi-party system. *West Africa*, 13-19 January 1992, p 66

³⁵⁵ The problems experienced by the APC during this period are summarised in *West Africa*, 4-10 November 1991, p 1850.

³⁵⁶ Details on the new opposition parties can be found in *Africa Confidential*, 25 October 1991, p 7 and *West Africa*, 13-19 January 1992, p 80; 6-12 January 1992, p 40; 10-16 February 1992, p 241.

³⁵⁷ These suspicions grew following the publication of an article in the *New Breed* newspaper suggesting that the APC was planning to prolong the war in order to delay the general elections. To support these allegations the paper published what were claimed to be the minutes of a meeting between APC leaders and the inspector general of police. *West Africa*, 20-26 January 1992, p 120.

³⁵⁸ *West Africa*, 23-29 March 1992, p 497.

need to be addressed. Did elections pose a genuine threat to political survival? If so, what was the nature and extent of that threat? What resources were available to both the opposition and to the two regimes? Were there changes over time?

At first glance the quite different approaches of the two regimes - in particular the APC's reliance on coercion to secure electoral victory and the subsequent introduction of a single-party state - suggest a higher order threat in Sierra Leone, and to a certain extent the evidence bears this out. Nevertheless it is important to place this observation in a broader context. Hence, the APC's approach to elections was, in part, a response to perceptions of regime vulnerability in the sphere of civil-military relations, perceptions seemingly absent in The Gambia. That Stevens regarded his hold on power as extremely uncertain moved him to make doubly sure of his position during election time, hence the deployment of force even during the early by-elections. On the other hand, it is important not to overstate the impact of perceptions of vulnerability. Indeed, and somewhat paradoxically, by deploying the armed forces domestically to ensure electoral victory, Stevens ran an enhanced risk of military intervention.³⁵⁹ His willingness to take this risk reflected a genuine anxiety about the APC's electoral prospects (as opposed to a more generalised anxiety about the regime's overall survival prospects) which persisted even after the strengthening of civilian control.

In The Gambia, by way of contrast, regime anxiety - both generalised and electorally specific - appeared far less prevalent. The PPP certainly made significant efforts to win elections, efforts which proved crucial to the party's repeated victories, although a desire to win the vast majority of seats (supporting claims to wide-ranging support as the party of national unity) rather than fear of losing altogether, often appeared to account for these. This point should not be overstated - some elections posed a more "real" threat than others - but from a comparative perspective remains valid.

Accounting for this difference it is important to go beyond those resources (notably the ability to distribute patronage) which *both* regimes enjoyed, to examine the divergent resources available to the opposition in each state.

On taking power, each regime needed to both maintain and extend their support base in order to win elections. Just as sectional appeals to the North could not be relied upon to *guarantee* election victory for the APC, the PPP could ill afford to rely on those predominantly Mandinka areas where it was clearly strongest. The PPP may have made more substantial pre-independence progress in gaining the votes of non-Mandinkas than the APC in winning support beyond the North and Western Area, but there was still a clear need to go further.

That incursions into opposition strongholds appeared a brighter prospect in The Gambia than in Sierra Leone reflected the enhanced viability of the SLPP compared to the UP. It is worth

³⁵⁹ See Chapter two.

reiterating the limits to the threat posed by both parties - limits resulting from both ruling party advantages and (though admittedly often related to these advantages) the internal weaknesses and divisions of the opposition - and yet within these constraints it was Stevens who faced the more credible and resilient opposition.

Three factors helped to explain this difference. First, the SLPP's Sierra Leonean Protectorate, as opposed to the UP's Gambian Colony, origins; given that electoral defeat had compelled both parties to rely upon their "core" support, the PPP benefited from the fact that the UP's urban support was numerically much less significant than the SLPP's rural Mende base. Second, the far greater importance of local level resources in Sierra Leone with the SLPP continuing to access chieftdom conflicts, whether on the side of the ruling family or rival factions, to cultivate support, and in some areas resorting to using the Poro as an intimidatory device. In retrospect the former resource was far more important (it was always unlikely that SLPP-inspired intimidation could match that of the ruling party) and yet the important point is that neither resource was available, to any significant degree, to the UP. And finally, it is important to highlight the comparatively greater salience of ethnicity in Sierra Leone (a reflection, in part, of the PPP and APC's divergent routes to office³⁶⁰) which the SLPP could exploit in return for Mende support. It is important not to overstate this point. Over time, local realignments and power sharing at the centre helped to obscure the North-South/Mende-Temne dichotomy, and yet it remains the case that ethnic divisions continued to provide a rather clearer backdrop to the electoral process than in The Gambia.

The divergent strengths of the SLPP and UP were central factors in the two regimes' quite different approach to elections. In particular, Stevens' decision to employ large-scale violence and intimidation - designed to undermine and devalue the SLPP's residual strengths, apparent even as late as 1977 - lay in stark contrast to Jawara's peaceful approach.

At the same time, however, there were some clear parallels in the tactics employed by the two leaders (albeit with different emphases according to the different resources at their disposal³⁶¹). In particular, both made extensive and effective use of patronage distribution and co-optation³⁶² as a means of undermining the opposition and expanding their support base. For both, however, these processes held potentially adverse implications for the retention of their core support. By accommodating an increasingly diverse number of elements within the government and party, both leaders ran the risk of alienating their original supporters. These individuals, who had often suffered personal setbacks (usually the loss of position), feared the dilution of their group-based influence

³⁶⁰ Whereas the APC had made a conscious attempt to cultivate support along lines of ethnic identity, the PPP had emphasised a message of national unity after 1962.

³⁶¹ For example, the two regimes divergent reliance on chiefly support, noted above.

³⁶² Though in Sierra Leone this, too, was often reinforced with intimidation and harassment. Thus, for some SLPP MPs the choice was between defection or arrest.

within existing power structures.

Although the processes facilitating the emergence of disaffected factions, and subsequently opposition splinter parties, bore some similarities, the two regimes' response was again quite different. As previously, this reflected the divergent strengths and resources of the new parties compared to those of the PPP and APC. Thus, Stevens' prompt obliteration of the UDP reflected both electoral factors - the party's probable support in the North, the likelihood that it might benefit from local disputes in the same way as the opposition APC had done, the possibility of it forming an alliance with the SLPP - and fears of UDP-military links.

Jawara's quite different response to a similar type of threat - a combination of local and elite level dissatisfaction - reflected a range of factors. Before examining these it is important to stress that unlike in Sierra Leone, where the obliteration of the UDP and the subsequent imposition of a single-party state precluded the formation of dissident splinter parties, in The Gambia they continued to emerge throughout the period of PPP rule (hence the PPA, the 1972 Independents and the NCP).

Although it is worth reiterating that these challenges were of varying potency (for example the youthful, inexperienced and fragmented Independent grouping which emerged in 1972 posed a lesser threat than the NCP³⁶³), from a comparative perspective the overall threat posed by splinter formations in The Gambia can be adjudged less serious than that posed in Sierra Leone. As before, this reflected the divergent resources available to the opposition in the two states. The differential access to local chieftaincy conflicts, noted above, was of central importance. Linked to this, although there undoubtedly existed constituency level dissatisfaction in The Gambia, benefiting from this as an opposition party often proved problematic. The question most ordinary voters asked themselves was whether an opposition MP would prove more effective than the PPP incumbent in the role of patron; the answer, unsurprisingly, was frequently in the negative. And finally, two further features of the Sierra Leonean set-up - the possibility of a UDP-SLPP alliance and the fear of UDP-military links - were absent in The Gambia. By the time of the NCP's emergence, the UP's residual popular support was minimal. Likewise, the Field Force posed no obvious threat.

Although the opposition in both states were hampered by further, *common*, problems (of finance, organisation etc) it was the *differences* between the two states which convinced Jawara, in contrast to Stevens, that he could secure electoral victory without utilising coercion. Jawara's tactics varied according to the nature and gravity of each challenge although certain features constantly recurred. These included the exploitation of incumbency (including access to patronage, to electoral

³⁶³ The course of events in The Gambia compared favourably with that in Sierra Leone. Whereas in The Gambia opposition challenges, from the PPA to the NCP, grew progressively more significant - giving the PPP time to learn valuable lessons, to establish its electoral "machine" and to benefit from the inertia vote - in Sierra Leone the APC was compelled to meet the SLPP challenge from day one.

finance, to the means of communication and the support of traditional leaders) and Jawara's personal popularity. Crucially, these resources not only maintained their potency over time³⁶⁴ but were progressively reinforced by the benefits of regime longevity and the forces of inertia.

Moving on from the electoral threat in each state, it is important to briefly discuss the comparative importance of elections as a survival resource. Thus far it has been argued that each leader's electoral approach reflected their perceptions of regime security, both in general and specific (regime versus opposition) terms. A second influence on their approach, however, centred upon a belief in the utility of elections. That this second influence was capable of over-riding the first was clearly illustrated in The Gambia when, in 1981, Jawara opted to retain a multi-party state despite the unprecedented anxiety and insecurity induced by the coup attempt of that year. The considerable effort Jawara expended in maintaining a system which, alongside his counterparts elsewhere, he might easily have abandoned, suggests that multi-party elections played at least some role in his overall survival strategy. The most important aspect of this role centred upon regime legitimation, a reflection of Jawara's readiness to ensure relatively free and fair contests, the rarity value of multi-party elections, and their perceived link with a range of political goods including stability and national unity. Providing a choice of leaders ensured people felt they had a "voice" - and an obligation to accept the result of their collective choice - and facilitated the peaceful expression of popular grievances.

Although it is important not to undervalue the importance of these factors, equally one must take care not to overstate the value of elections. Two factors suggest the advisability of striking a note of caution.

First, the fact that the PPP enjoyed comparatively greater legitimacy than the APC should not be uncritically, automatically linked to the holding of free and fair multi-party elections. Although the evidence presented above suggests a link did exist, it is important to place elections - which, after all, were held only once every five years - in context. Thus, Jawara's *ongoing* ability to provide the political goods (political stability, national unity etc) outlined in Chapter one was, in retrospect, perhaps more important to his political position than multi-party elections *per se*. And although Jawara attempted (no doubt with some success) to clarify the link between these goods and multi-partyism it is unlikely this was fully appreciated by all concerned. At least some Gambians believed that Jawara's willingness to pursue a route of political accommodation or impose restraints on corruption was a function of his personality, not a reflection of his need to win elections. And given that Jawara was not *compelled* to retain a multi-party system this was not an unreasonable view.

³⁶⁴ Re-emerging, for example, in response to the GPP.

Secondly, elections appear to have been rendered a decreasingly important legitimating mechanism over time. For one thing, the rarity value of multi-party elections became increasingly devalued, partly as a result of their regularity within The Gambia and partly due to the return to democracy in other African states.³⁶⁵ People became accustomed to, and perhaps somewhat complacent about, the opportunity to cast a vote (hence the declining turnout). Linked to this, even where the connection between "political goods" and the retention of multi-partyism was consciously made, the progressive popular tendency to take the provision of these goods for granted devalued the importance of elections as one of the supposed factors in producing them. It is not suggested that Gambians desired a different system (a fact recognised by the 1994 coup leaders who were quick to promise a speedy return to democracy) but simply that popular appreciation became increasingly blunted by time.

If elections held greater importance in the earlier part of PPP rule, from a comparative perspective they were nevertheless more, and more consistently significant as a legitimating mechanism than those in Sierra Leone where widespread electoral violence necessarily entailed a degree of popular pessimism and disquiet. As noted above, in those areas where violence and intimidation were less prevalent elections may have conferred some sense of obligation to accept the victorious regime, but the suggestion that individual voters, unable to confront the violence, resorted to rationalising their participation in the system as a whole - hence creating a "sense of legitimacy" - if accepted at all, cannot be equated with the *regime* legitimating function of Gambian elections.

A clear and important exception to this overarching contrast occurred in 1986 when Momoh's determination to facilitate peaceful participation represented a genuine break with the past, serving to enhance the legitimacy of the APC regime, distance Momoh from his predecessor and inspire hope in the future. Overall, however, Sierra Leonean elections were far more important as a diversionary than a legitimating mechanism. This difference reflected the two regimes overall approach and divergent survival requirements (see Chapter one). Whereas Jawara needed popular support and regarded the multi-party electoral process as one means to this end, Stevens required only popular acquiescence. If, in circumstances of precipitate economic decline, elections could not reverse declining legitimacy levels, their "meaning" (in the popular mind) implied a substantial diversionary potential. As noted above, Stevens used elections to divert the attention of both the politically ambitious and the voting public at large. Momoh's subsequent agreement to resurrect the multi-party system likewise played an important diversionary role.

As with the legitimating role of Gambian elections it is important not to overstate the diversionary function of elections in Sierra Leone. Thus, they were only one part, and at least in the

³⁶⁵ Although, of course, the latter factor only exerted an impact upon the 1992 elections.

case of some elections a relatively fleeting one, of a whole range of diversionary tactics employed by Stevens. On the other hand, and unlike the legitimising function of Gambian elections, the diversionary role of Sierra Leonean elections did not apparently lessen over time. The introduction of a single party system did not blunt the diversionary utility of elections in 1982, mainly due to Stevens' considerable efforts to ensure they did not. Likewise the progressive economic decline rendered it more, not less, imperative that political aspirants obtain a nomination and ordinary Sierra Leoneans a representative willing and able to act as patron.

This brings us, finally, to the clientelist role of elections, of central importance in both The Gambia and Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone the clientelist function of elections appears to have been enhanced with the introduction of a single-party state. Thus, in 1973 and 1977 the imperative need to win elections and the concomitant prevalence of unopposed candidates undermined the possibility of elections being used to reinvigorate patron-client relations in many constituencies. It is important not to overstate this point. As noted above, Stevens was able to use his control over the selection process both to eliminate potential rivals and those who had proved a liability at the local level thus strengthening his personal political position and that of the party. Nevertheless, Stevens' decision to assume responsibility for judging the local acceptability of candidates was hardly foolproof; a far more reliable mechanism was to let the people themselves decide.

The 1982 elections gave people this opportunity, albeit within the constraints of a single-party system. No longer concerned about the prospect of losing elections, Stevens allowed more than one candidate to successfully navigate the primaries in a majority of constituencies. To secure his position, and those of his trusted colleagues, Stevens was willing to surrender unpopular MPs to the grievances of the electorate, thus strengthening the APC at the local level. At the same time, and as in previous elections, Stevens utilised his control over the selection process and the distribution of electoral assistance to clarify his subordinates' dependence at the centre. Momoh's failure to replicate this process - given his enhanced concern to use elections to enhance the party's position at the local level - was discussed above.

How then did this situation compare with that in The Gambia? Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the clearest parallels emerge when comparing The Gambia with Sierra Leone's single-party rather than multi-party years. The similarities centred upon the two regimes' willingness to allow multiple candidacies, thus enabling the electorate to punish ineffective patrons and reinvigorating clientelist relationships.

Clearly it would be unwise to overstate this parallel. Thus, although in each case the regimes' willingness to allow multiple candidacies was a function of confidence, the sources of this confidence (PPP strengths versus Sierra Leone's single-party state) diverged, as did the implications of this difference. Whereas in The Gambia the electorate was (at least in theory) given a "real" choice between government and opposition, the Sierra Leonean electorate was given only a choice

of APC candidates. Nevertheless in practice, two additional factors - the unfavourable resource-related implications of casting an anti-PPP vote and the fact that successful opposition candidates would frequently apply for PPP membership - rendered the PPP's political grip just as strong and all embracing as that of the APC.

Likewise, Jawara's ability to manipulate elections to strengthen his position at the political centre was just as apparent as in Sierra Leone. The PPP nomination and Jawara's personal endorsement during elections were just as highly sought after in a multi-party context as the APC nomination and presidential assistance, whether in the form of patronage or coercion, in Sierra Leone. PPP candidates were certainly compelled to court the local level and reactivate clientelist links to win elections, but to become a candidate in the first place implied the approval of the political centre.

To conclude this chapter, a few words on party system type. Both the multi-party system in The Gambia and the single-party system in Sierra Leone types formed an integral part of the overall survival strategy pursued in each state - strategies which (in terms of years) had not dissimilar results. Given this, it would be problematic to contend that either system was "better" at promoting regime survival although it is possible to make some observations of a general nature.

One of the dangers of introducing a single-party system was summed up by the Sierra Leonean Vice-President in 1978³⁶⁶ when he warned fellow party members that under a multi-party system it is easy "to identify the enemy" but with a single party it is difficult to "flush him out." To some extent this observation was borne out by events in The Gambia and Sierra Leone. Multi-partyism in both states allowed intra-party divisions (once they had become sufficiently serious) to metamorphose into splinter parties *viz.*, the NCP in The Gambia and the UDP in Sierra Leone. Although these two parties were dealt with in very different ways the important point to note is that the system facilitated their identification.

On the other hand, the APC regime survived for another fourteen years following the establishment of a single-party state. Some of the ways in which Stevens and Momoh dealt with intra-APC factions have been discussed in Chapter one. For now it is sufficient to point out that even Momoh - who was much less skilful than his predecessor in this area - fell not to an elite-inspired conspiracy but to a military coup.

It is equally important to stress that, although a multi-party system may provide an outlet for political ambitions, if the ambitious do not succeed they may turn to more extreme methods of winning political power. Take, for example, the GSRP in The Gambia. Although one might argue that the decision to ban the party simply succeeded in driving it underground, even had it continued to operate legally it seems likely that electoral failure would - at some point - have prompted action

³⁶⁶ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1978-1979, B 773.

similar to that taken in 1981. Immunity from plots is not guaranteed by the maintenance of a multi-party system; it can only be achieved if everyone agrees to abide by constitutional norms. Although most political parties (responding to both popular opinion as well as the opportunity of legally acquiring power) agreed to play by the rules, in 1981 a minority of dissenters very nearly succeeded in destroying the system.

For obvious reasons, definitive conclusions on the relationship between party system type and mass stability cannot be drawn from a study of just two states. Nevertheless, evidence from The Gambia and Sierra Leone appears to validate the conclusions (outlined on p 242 above) of scholars such as Hayward who suggest that party system type has a minimal impact upon stability/instability at the mass level, at least in relation to popular expectations. Certainly The Gambia did not conform to Huntington's belief that political competition would raise expectations hence promoting instability. Nor, for the most part, did it result in the overt politicisation of ethnic cleavages - as a means of cultivating support - although this "lesson" would not necessarily be transferable to states with a different ethnic make-up or less conciliatory leader.

Although it is impossible to say what impact the introduction of a single-party state might have had in The Gambia, Sierra Leone under Stevens had experience of both types of system. The establishment of single-party state in Sierra Leone clearly failed to reduce the instability associated with elections, although after 1978 intra-ethnic rather than inter-ethnic violence prevailed. Again, Huntington's argument concerning the negative impact of participation is unconfirmed, the changeover to a single-party state in 1978 appearing to have no significant impact upon expectations. Nevertheless the difficulty of drawing meaningful conclusions regarding the impact of party system type from the Sierra Leonean experience - where multi-partyism under Stevens was less than genuine - is apparent.

CHAPTER FOUR: MANIPULATION OF INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES.

This chapter examines the manipulation of international linkages undertaken by Jawara, Stevens and Momoh with a view to enhancing their survival prospects. The international system is considered primarily as a survival resource - as a means by which a skilful leader might further his domestic political ends.

As in domestic politics, a leader attempting to manipulate international linkages is compelled to work within certain constraints. The scope of these does, however, vary from state to state. Thus, if African states in general have operated on the margins of international relations the constraints imposed by local "givens" in The Gambia and Sierra Leone (particularly in comparison to somewhere like Nigeria) are especially significant. The most illuminating of these givens (and one which incorporates, and is a partial cause of, some of the others (for example relative strategic unimportance and relative poverty) is the factor of small state size.¹ That small state regimes are compelled to interact with their larger and more powerful counterparts holds important implications for the conduct of international relations. Nevertheless, rarely is small state international behaviour simply reactive or solely determined by external pressures. Small size might render the manipulation of international linkages more problematic (or indeed affect the form it takes) but does not negate its importance altogether.

A second preliminary point concerns the fact that foreign policy behaviour is usually the product of a complex set of concerns of which regime survival is but one. Much depends upon the leader² making the decisions, how skilful he is at identifying those issues important to survival or how much psychological gratification he receives from acting on the world stage on "non-important" (non-survival related) issues. The limits to a leader's time and energy implies that the more effort devoted to "non-important" issues the less will remain for "important" (external *and* domestic) ones.

With these two points in mind the following sections examine the main areas in which a leader might manipulate international linkages in order to strengthen his domestic political position.

¹ Nevertheless, small state size may fail to illuminate all aspects of a regime's international behaviour. Location, for example, may be of equal or even greater importance in particular cases. Useful studies on the implications of small state size for international behaviour include Elmer Plischke, *Microstates in World Affairs: Policy Problems and Options* (Washington, DC, American Enterprise Institute for Public Research, 1977); George L Reid, *The Impact of Very Small Size on the International Behaviour of Microstates* (Beverly Hills, Calif., Sage Professional Papers, International Studies Series, 1974); Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* (London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985).

² Although there is little detailed research on how African states make foreign policy decisions, there exists a widespread consensus that the Head of State has a major impact upon the decision making process. This is particularly the case in small states where a small foreign affairs establishment is the norm. For further discussion see Reid, *op. cit.*, pp 16-23.

Economic Imperatives.

The relationship between small state size, international economic imperatives and regime survival centres upon (most) small states' perennial lack of resources. Many survival strategies require extensive resources and, in the face of a domestic shortfall, a leader may turn to external sources as a useful supplement (if not the major source).

The ways in which assistance is utilised depend, in part, upon the survival strategies pursued. To the extent that economic development is perceived as a route to political consolidation, aid will be used in a way that is compatible with donor intentions. Given the ambiguous nature of the relationship between development and survival³ however, it may be used for quite different ends. For example, aid may provide the resources to sustain a regime's urban bias, to maintain the support of a specific regional or ethnic group or to fuel the illicit accumulation of wealth. On an individual level, external assistance may provide the resources for corrupt diversion. With these considerations in mind decision makers may court aid from those states without a reputation for strict monitoring of aid allocations. Alternatively, aid might be requested for a "respectable" project (for which a regime would have had to find funds) and the surplus internal resources "shunted" elsewhere.

A second aspect of the relationship between external assistance and survival is less straightforward. On the one hand a regime might perceive that maximum political dividends will be obtained to the extent that it can establish (in the mind of aid recipients) its primary role in the search for aid. If so, a regime will attempt to portray itself as unusually successful in this role in order to persuade recipients to continue to support the status quo. On the other hand it is conceivable that an opposition party could capitalise on any anomaly between extensive assistance and meagre development efforts, thereby gaining the support of those excluded from the benefits of aid. Added to this if - for whatever reason - aid levels decrease, a regime which has emphasised its dominant role in the search for aid will receive the blame. Alternatively, then, a regime might choose to concentrate on emphasising measures to decrease aid-dependence. Small state inhabitants - often unusually sensitive to threats to state sovereignty or independence - may be particularly appreciative of such efforts (see below). Nevertheless in most cases and, somewhat paradoxically, particularly in resource-poor small states the utility of such a strategy may be of questionable value. In the absence of a genuine reduction in dependence - which for obvious reasons is extremely

³ Although it is difficult to separate a discussion of economic development and international relations, particularly in small states where the debilitating implications of size (including such factors as small domestic markets hindering industrialisation, dependence on foreign trade, narrow concentration of export products) suggest an almost inextricable link between the two, such a separation is attempted here. Whereas Chapter one examines the relationship between economic development and regime survival this chapter concentrates upon the economic aspects of a state's dealings with the outside world which possess a less straightforward relationship to economic development (but perhaps at the same time a more straightforward relationship to regime survival) and focuses upon the search for aid and other forms of economic assistance.

difficult to achieve - political rhetoric alone is likely to be of limited use.

The strategy adopted depends partly upon a regime's perception of the popular view of external aid, whether it is seen as crucial to economic development or whether concerns over "exploitative" donors prevail. However, the public perception of aid may itself be subject to manipulation. Thus, a regime which dwells upon the evils of international capitalism or which criticises donors for their lack of understanding or inadequate aid allocations may succeed in inculcating an anti-donor mentality among its people. In turn, and as noted by Wriggins, this identification of "scapegoats" may be used by a regime to shift the blame for a poor economic performance and attract "free-floating hostility" which might otherwise be directed against the leadership.⁴

Once again however, the benefits of this approach must be weighed against the need for aid. Care must be taken to avoid antagonising donors to the extent that they contemplate reducing or even discontinuing assistance. Popular support for an apparent increase in independence is likely to evaporate if suffering is caused by an actual cessation in aid flows. In fact, "scapegoating" is often used to greatest effect if aid flows have already been reduced by existing survival strategies. To give an obvious example if the International Monetary Fund (IMF) demands the removal of subsidies on essential commodities prior to the allocation of aid a regime may be able to rally support in the face of "external interference" in internal affairs. More problematic is the maintenance of support in the likely event of continued economic decline.

Small states face a number of obstacles in the path of acquiring sufficient amounts of aid, particularly sufficient amounts on favourable terms, from larger powers. It is often the case (though location is also vitally important) that small states lack strategic importance and consequently have little to offer in return for assistance. Promises of alignment, for example, are of marginal importance to larger international powers. Regional powers may be more desirous of small state support on particular issues but will usually be less important sources of aid. A second aspect of the unequal power relationship concerns the issue of tied aid. The greater the dependence on aid the more likely it is that small states will be forced to come to terms with aid conditionalities - even where these conflict with the survival imperative. IMF assistance is an obvious example and yet other donors too, particularly in recent years, have required domestic political modifications prior to the receipt of aid. This has been most clearly illustrated by assistance from the West, particularly the USA, where democracy, human rights and "good governance" have been increasingly explicitly linked to aid disbursements. A final debilitating implication of small size concerns the likelihood that a regime will be compelled to limit both the range and extent of its international behaviour. A paucity of resources precludes the maintenance of extensive representation abroad through which to

⁴ W Howard Wriggins, *The Ruler's Imperative: Strategies for Political Survival in Asia and Africa* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1969), p 235.

cultivate support.

In spite of these obstacles observers have noted that, as a group, small states receive an above average level of aid per capita.⁵ Although reasons are rarely advanced to explain this phenomenon it may be at least partly a result of the lower absolute amounts involved. Clearly then small states do have at least one inherent advantage in the search for aid. Nevertheless other, more contingent, factors are also important. As Dommen and Hein⁶ point out, their data clearly indicates the positive correlation between political dependency and amounts of aid received. Even regarding independent states, however, smallness alone cannot explain variations in aid allocations, in particular the variations *between* small states.

One factor which is linked to the receipt of substantial amounts of (at least Western) external assistance concerns a state's reputation. If small states cannot give potential donors economic or strategic reasons to assist, they may rely on "political" reasons. A good international reputation - in terms of sound economic management, an absence of corruption, political tolerance or the observance of Human Rights - will encourage donor support. Even with the recent introduction of political and economic conditionalities some states clearly have a more genuine claim to aid on these bases. In the past those states (i.e. the vast majority) which failed to fulfil Western political and economic expectations attempted to maximise aid by giving their foreign policies a decidedly pro-Western flavour - in spite of the fact that most remained officially non-aligned.

An alternative route to maximising aid is diversification, both within and beyond the Western sphere. Diversification also enables a regime to avoid accusations that it is compromising the country's sovereignty through dependence on one or two major donors. As Reid notes, "faced with the impossibility of avoiding dependence, the second best alternative ... is to seek to balance its total dependence among a multiplicity of sources."⁷

In order to tap non-western aid sources a leader may emphasise different facets of the "national character" or aspects of his regime. To do so effectively it helps if the leader himself lacks strong ideological convictions. The danger with such a strategy is that it may, without skilful handling, simply alienate all sides and yet small states are at an advantage since they are not usually of sufficient importance to provoke sanctions from a larger state simply by seeking aid elsewhere.

In order to diversify a regime must maintain the widest possible diplomatic representation, concentrating particularly on those states which produce the highest economic returns. Alternatively, a small state regime may utilise various low cost methods of conducting foreign diplomacy. These include unilateral representation whereby the larger power provides an emissary

⁵ Edward Dommen and Philip Hein, *States, Microstates and Islands* (London, Croom Helm, 1985), pp 143-44.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 145-46.

⁷ Reid, *op. cit.*, p 39.

but this is not reciprocated by the smaller⁸ and common accreditation of diplomats, where "two governments accredit a single envoy to represent them both to a third country."⁹ Personal visits by the Head of State and participation in international organisations (in particular the United Nations which as Linton¹⁰ points out, gives "unrivalled access to the world community and to technical assistance agencies" and functional institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) are also cost-effective.

Security Imperatives.

Security imperatives are essentially two-fold.¹¹ Firstly, a regime must maintain and protect the very existence of the state. Without a state to govern a regime must cease to function. The second imperative is a direct consequence of small state regimes' frequent inability to protect themselves without external assistance. It centres upon the need to cultivate security assistance without placing state sovereignty in doubt.

The relationship between the first imperative and regime survival is straightforward¹² but the second is more complex. On the one hand a regime must accurately assess levels of popular sensitivity over the issue of state sovereignty. At least in the very small states - many of which have had to confront questions of viability - feelings of insecurity and concerns over state sovereignty are likely to be prevalent. From one perspective this may prove advantageous; protecting state sovereignty is one route to popular support.¹³ Nevertheless, problems may arise when the two security imperatives are in conflict. Such a situation (see for example the alliance option below) calls for skilful handling if a regime is to avoid jeopardising its position.

Of course it may never come to this. For one thing if the security threat is a real and imminent one, opposition elements will usually consent to a regime's security arrangements. Moreover, as long as a small state recognises its limitations and avoids deliberately alienating other states the first security imperative will recede. As Diggines notes, "most of them are simply not worth the trouble, cost and international odium that larger neighbours or superpowers would incur by hijacking them."¹⁴ And finally, African states have (with a few obvious exceptions) generally adhered to the principle of non-interference.

Given this, the problem is partly one of perception. If a regime shares widely-held concerns

⁸ Plischke, *op. cit.*, pp 47-50. This is, of course, dependent upon the willingness of the larger power.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 53.

¹⁰ Neville Linton, "A Policy Perspective" in Colin Clarke and Tony Payne (eds.), *Politics, Security and Development in Small States* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1987), p 219.

¹¹ The following definition of security is taken (in a slightly modified form) from Roberto Espindola, "Security Dilemmas" in Clarke and Payne, *op. cit.*, p 64.

¹² Although one should note the fact that external aggression may, at least in the short term, assist regime survival if it results in a renewed sense of loyalty on the part of the populace.

¹³ Recognising this, some regimes have attempted to artificially create security threats.

¹⁴ CE Diggines, "The Problems of Small States," *The Round Table*, Vol 295, 1985, p 193.

about both security imperatives the problem recedes. However, difficulties arise if a regime perceives an external security threat not shared by the populace. A regime then faces three options; the one chosen depends, in part, on whether or not it faces an outspoken opposition willing to highlight a government "sell-out" on the issue of sovereignty. Firstly it may overlook concerns about sovereignty and attempt to boost external security while educating the public about the reality and imminence of the threat. Alternatively, a regime may concentrate on the protection of sovereignty for short term political gains. A third option is to engage in activities (diplomatic contacts and negotiations, for example) designed to promote the first security imperative but which do not threaten sovereignty.

If a regime perceives its continued existence to be in real danger from external attack or subversion it may raise the stakes and seek an alliance with a larger state. Under some circumstances this may be achieved without undermining sovereignty - if for example the state is seeking friendships within the region - but more often the larger state will demand some specific return (be it economic or political) for its investment.¹⁵ The security guarantee may even be what Keohane has labelled an "'Al Capone alliance' in which remaining a faithful ally protects one not against the mythical outside threat but rather against the great-power ally itself."¹⁶ The problem for a regime is to secure an alliance without provoking popular concern and in the process jeopardising its domestic political position.

Political Imperatives.

As noted above, the inhabitants of small states are often unusually sensitive about issues of sovereignty, viability and independence. Accordingly, a regime which succeeds in assuaging these concerns and boosting national self esteem may - in claiming credit for the changes - strengthen its domestic standing.

One method of instilling popular self confidence and esteem involves the implementation of a combination of outward signs that the state has been accepted as an "equal" on the world stage. By joining regional and international organisations a small state can gain recognition and at least formal equality. As Wriggins¹⁷ notes, "at the UN sovereignty and independence are symbolised more clearly than anywhere else. Speeches at the UN and participation in its deliberations ... confirm the reality of independence and the status of equal independent statehood." Similar benefits may be realised from participation in international conferences. Added to this, a leader's *personal* political position will be strengthened to the extent that his international performance is met with

¹⁵ Thus, while a small state may be strategically unimportant on the world stage it may still be important to its larger neighbours.

¹⁶ Robert Keohane, "Lilliputians Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics," *International Organisations*, Vol 23, 1969, p 302.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p 228

approval at home. By demonstrating¹⁸ that he is a constructive and well-respected member of the international community a leader can boost his domestic status and support. International approbation may be symbolised by frequent visits abroad and reciprocal visits by foreign Heads of State, the holding of posts in international or regional organisations or acting as mediator in foreign conflicts.

Nevertheless this strategy is not wholly risk-free. If the level of international activity is perceived as an unnecessary drain on scarce resources, popular resentment may come to outweigh feelings of national gratification. Resentment over domestic problems will also increase should a Head of State seem too preoccupied with jetting round the world ("wasting money") to solve them. Another problem with this strategy is that it will almost certainly be one of diminishing returns as the date of independence (and popular concern over viability) recedes.

Evoking external enemies in order to promote national unity and distract attention from domestic problems provides an alternative method of cultivating support, although the risk of provoking neighbours into retaliatory action cannot be realistically entertained by small states. Another option is to act upon local resentment against foreign residents, resentment which may stem from the belief that foreigners are "stealing" local jobs. Expelling foreign communities may boost a regime's popularity in the short term - not least because it provides a readily acceptable "explanation" for economic problems - but this must be balanced against the potentially damaging effect on the local economy.

The international system may also be used to cultivate the support of specific societal groups. For example, a "conservative" regime might adopt a radical stance on a few, carefully selected, foreign policy issues in order to bolster support among students or youth generally.¹⁹ The international system also affords an opportunity to undermine opposition parties, particularly if they can be portrayed as foreign stooges, prepared to sell their country's independence in the pursuit of power. And finally, international linkages may be used as a source of patronage. Foreign missions provide jobs for potential or actual troublemakers, members of the opposition etc. Once again, however, caution should be exercised. If individuals are appointed on a purely political basis - with no reference to their ability to do the job - the state's international reputation will suffer, thereby damaging aid prospects. Allocating trips abroad - with per diem allowances and opportunities to travel and participate in "world politics" - while useful as a source of reward to loyal supporters may also prove risky if it is popularly believed that scarce resources are being misspent.

¹⁸ A leader must ensure that his activities on the world stage are brought to the attention of the population - not always an easy task in the absence of strong media or popular interest in foreign affairs. Optimum use must be made of the government controlled media and official speeches.

¹⁹ For additional examples see Wriggins, *op. cit.*, pp 248-49.

Economic Imperatives in The Gambia.

This section briefly reviews the sources, and cultivation, of external economic assistance in The Gambia, thereafter focusing upon its contribution to regime survival.

Economic assistance in The Gambia ran, for the most part, at a remarkably high level. Admittedly, not all the aid received was directly attributable to the efforts of the PPP. The factor of small state size - which promoted understanding of The Gambia's economic difficulties and ensured that her total aid requirements were minuscule - played an important role. Nevertheless, even in comparison (on a *per capita* basis) with other small states, The Gambia was notably successful in her quest for aid.

Diversification was an important factor in this success. The cost-effective techniques outlined above - including concurrent accreditation of diplomats, representation by a third power²⁰ and membership of international organisations - were all utilised by the PPP regime. In bilateral relations, particularly when new aid sources were being courted, Jawara's frequent trips abroad also played an important role.

To illustrate the regime's success in diversifying aid sources it is useful to give some indication of The Gambia's near-exclusive reliance at independence, and for much of the first decade, on the former colonial power. British aid was composed of three elements including outright grants towards recurrent expenditure (until mid-1967), substantial technical assistance and support for development expenditure. During the 1967-71 development programme, for example, Britain provided £2.86m towards a total expenditure of £3.3m and a further £2m was allocated towards the £4m 1971-75 programme. From the mid-1970's alternative donors emerged as increasingly important and yet their role was, for the most part, a complementary rather than a replacement, one.²¹ British aid continued to be important; for the first five year plan (1975-1980) for example, Britain committed over £5m (or about 10% of total investment) to various projects including agriculture, telecommunications and river transport. £10m was offered for the succeeding plan. After 1985 British aid was aimed primarily at supporting the Economic Recovery Programme; by 1993 £22.5m had been received in balance of payments support.²²

Britain appeared to feel some residual responsibility towards her scarcely viable colonial "creation" and extended economic assistance beyond the per capita levels found in many

²⁰ Although agreements on shared representation with Senegal were never realised, Britain represented Gambian interests in some Commonwealth countries.

²¹ Aid levels increased accordingly and between 1975 and 1985 Official Development Assistance averaged \$80 per capita, one of the highest levels in Africa. Steven Radelet, "Economic Recovery in The Gambia: The Anatomy of an Economic Reform Programme" (PhD dissertation, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 1990), p 41.

²² Details of British aid after 1975 can be found in *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 13 January 1979, p 2 and *The Gambia Weekly*, 13 August 1993, p 1.

Anglophone states. Building on this advantage the PPP regime deliberately courted British aid. Some foreign policy decisions, including The Gambia's avowed disinclination to quit the Commonwealth over Rhodesia in 1966 or, twenty years later, over the issue of sanctions against South Africa²³ were taken with the aid imperative in mind. Given the often minimal importance of Gambian political support her staunch reaction to the outbreak of the Falklands war in 1982 assumed particular significance; a situation in which the majority hesitated to support Britain lent The Gambia's loyal response a rare visibility and weight.²⁴

In retrospect however, it was The Gambia's domestic rather than foreign policy which, in the long term, guaranteed the flow of British aid. A reputation for sensible economic policies²⁵ combined with a political system which soon assumed a rarity value against a regional backdrop of increasing authoritarianism served to strongly recommend The Gambia for British support. Although Jawara's adherence to a multi-party system was not motivated primarily by aid considerations, his activities in the field of Human Rights (see below) were almost certainly undertaken with a view to increasing external assistance. In the 1990's, as greater competition was introduced by the emerging trend towards democracy in Africa (and elsewhere) Jawara attempted to bolster The Gambia's reputation with the legalisation of MOJA, the amnesty of all apart from Kukoi Sanyang who took part in the abortive coup and the abolition of the death penalty.²⁶

The Gambia's political reputation and generally moderate pro-Western outlook also enabled her to benefit from other European states. Predominant among them was West Germany²⁷ who from the late 1970's challenged Britain's bilateral supremacy as the main provider of grants²⁸ for projects including electricity and rural water supplies, public transport and agriculture. French assistance is also worth noting since it serves to illustrate Jawara's exploitation of all potential sources of aid. In this instance co-operation blossomed after 1981 when increasing French interest in the Gambia - stemming from The Gambia's close association with Senegal - was translated into financial

²³ See *West Africa*, 12 November 1966, p 1038 and 6 October 1986, p 2314.

²⁴ Radelet *op. cit.*, 1990, p 206 notes that The Gambia was one of only three countries to support the British at the outset of the Falklands war in a vote at the UN General Assembly. According to local sources The Gambia subsequently agreed to serve as a refuelling base for RAF flights to and from the Falkland Islands.

²⁵ In the early 1980's this reputation suffered a series of setbacks but was subsequently restored (as was donor support) with the implementation of the Economic Recovery Programme. See Chapter one for further details.

²⁶ Since reintroduced, in 1995, by the military regime.

²⁷ Though also including Dutch technical assistance and aid for the improvement of Yundum Airport and assistance from Denmark and Norway in fisheries development. Assistance in various guises was also received over the years from Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Italy. Contact with these countries was maintained through presidential visits and concurrent accreditation. The Gambian representative in London was accredited to Australia, Federal Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and France and that in Belgium to the Netherlands and Luxembourg, as well as the EEC.

²⁸ Although between 1964 and 1979 Germany had provided about D34.5m in technical assistance, direct financial aid had been limited to D10m. However in 1980 a further D10m was granted, followed in 1983 by a grant of D14m for both financial and technical assistance. Between 1974 and 1984 German financial and technical assistance reached about 14m DM. Statistics from *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 26 July 1980, p 1 and 25 July 1984, p 2.

assistance. A visit by Jawara in 1983 resulted in French development loans for telecommunications in Banjul (later extended to the rural areas) as well as assistance for the cotton industry.

Yet more important than Western European bilateral assistance was that received from the EEC. The emergence of the EEC as a major donor originated in The Gambia's decision, taken in the early 1970's, to opt for associate status²⁹ together with her later classification by the EEC as a "Least Developed Country."³⁰ The former gave The Gambia automatic access to the European Development Fund whereas the latter enabled her to benefit from additional aid, soft loans and non-repayable balance of payments support under STABEX. The EEC was The Gambia's largest multilateral donor in the period 1976-1986;³¹ projects included agricultural credit, fisheries, road construction and health, to name but a few.

A final major attempt at diversification in the Western world was directed, again successfully, towards the United States. Until the late 1970's and the establishment of a USAID office in Banjul, bilateral aid was limited to food aid³² and small amounts of technical assistance. During the early 1980's, however, USAID agreed to assist various projects (mainly in agriculture) with an annual budget of approximately \$4m. American assistance subsequently expanded to include support for The Gambia's economic reform programme and aid more than doubled to approximately \$10m annually.

This support was bestowed upon The Gambia on much the same basis as aid from other Western sources. As the USAID representative put it, "our total aid programme is at such a high level in relation to the small population in The Gambia largely because of the Government's unswerving commitment to economic policy reform and human rights."³³ Moreover, and despite the inescapable fact of The Gambia's marginal strategic or political importance to the USA, Jawara was fully alive to the potential benefits to be gained by putting his country at the service of the larger powers. Just as he agreed to Britain's request for The Gambia to be used as a stop-over point for flights to the Falkland Islands, Jawara acquiesced in the USA's choice of The Gambia as an emergency landing site for NASA's space shuttle.

²⁹ The decision was made for trade as well as aid reasons; as the Finance Minister explained, without associate status The Gambia's groundnut oil would, given Britain's intention to join the EEC (thus abolishing the Commonwealth preference which had enabled The Gambia to sell oil tariff free in the UK) have been at a disadvantage with her competitors some of whom were already associates and thus able to sell oil duty free in the UK. *Budget Speech by the Honourable SM Dibba, Minister of Finance and Trade on Friday, 23 June, 1972 in the House of Representatives*, Sessional Paper No 5 of 1972 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1972).

³⁰ *Budget Speech by the Honourable IM Garba-Jahumpa, JP, Minister of Finance and Trade, in Parliament on Thursday 27th June, 1975*, Sessional Paper No 8 of 1975 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1975).

³¹ Aid increased from \$0.5m in 1976 to \$13.7m by 1981. Between 1987-1990 assistance totalled approximately \$30m, much of it in balance of payments support, and in 1992 the EEC once again became The Gambia's major donor with \$19m or 20% of total assistance received. *West Africa*, 9-15 January 1995, p 11.

³² From 1962 to 1975 assistance through food aid totalled \$5.3m. After 1975 food aid continued to arrive; in addition to shipments of PL480 food aid in response to periodic drought conditions, by 1980 the US food aid programme was running at approximately \$755,000 a year. *The Gambia Onward*, 3 September 1980, p 2.

³³ *The Point*, 17 January 1994, p 1.

Another important source of aid was that received from the Arab world, in particular the conservative Arab states. Serious attempts to court assistance from this quarter did not gain momentum until the mid-1970's - indeed, any such attempt to do so was largely precluded on the basis of The Gambia's friendly relations with Israel.³⁴ The government's reluctance to adopt a definitive stance in the Arab-Israeli dispute (until forced to do so by the outbreak of conflict in 1973) was based upon a recognition of the benefits to be gained by remaining officially non-aligned. Not only did Israel provide useful technical assistance but some, albeit limited, Arab aid was also received.

Having made the decision to break with Israel - a decision influenced as much by the need to remain "in-step" with other African states as the perception of future economic benefits - a concerted attempt to benefit from the new stance was launched. Efforts in this direction were assisted by the Islamic affiliation of most Gambians. In order to realise the maximum benefits from this "natural" advantage, a number of symbolic gestures were made to emphasise The Gambia's Islamic credentials and character. These included the appointment of AB N'Jie, a Muslim, to replace the then Christian Minister of External Affairs, Andrew Camara and the decision, taken in the mid-1970's, to introduce Islamic studies to the school curriculum.

Foreign policy pronouncements were also modified, some in a predictable manner - the position on Israel, for example, which moved closer to that of the Arab states with every succeeding statement - some less so. The Gambian response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 provides an example of the latter. Whereas at home the invasion was condemned on the basis of the threat posed to international peace and security as well as the principle of territorial integrity, at the Organisation of Islamic Conference in 1981 Jawara adopted a more partisan approach, stating "Let the Soviet Union know ... that by committing aggression against Afghanistan it has launched an attack on Islam and that it is doomed to failure like those, in history, who have tried to stifle the dynamic and progressive influence of Islam."³⁵ These efforts were reinforced by a number of presidential tours beginning in 1974³⁶ and the establishment of an embassy in Riyadh (assigned to several Gulf states).

By 1978 the Gambia was receiving 32% of her total development aid from the Arab states.³⁷ Immediately responsive had been Libya, with promises of grants for a number of projects. A

³⁴ In April 1967 a friendship treaty had been signed by both countries.

³⁵ Statement to the Third Summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, 25th-28th January 1981, contained in *Foreign Policy Guidelines: Selected Speeches by His Excellency Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, President of the Republic of The Gambia and the Honourable Minister of External Affairs, Alhaji Lamin Kiti Jabang, MP* (Ministry of External Affairs, Banjul, Government Printer, 1982), p 38. By condemning the Soviet Union, The Gambia was able to demonstrate both her pro-Arab and pro-West leanings.

³⁶ The 1974 tour covered Saudi, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Lebanon. In March and December 1976 Jawara visited Libya, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

³⁷ Mohammed-Bassiru Sillah, "Saudi Arabian economic aid to West Africa: A case study of The Gambia and Sierra Leone" (PhD dissertation, Howard University, 1988), p 265.

number of these promises, including Libyan participation in the establishment of the public transport corporation and the building of government offices, were partially fulfilled. Nevertheless by 1980 (when diplomatic relations were severed) many projects had failed to get underway and others were faltering.³⁸ In the longer term, then, it was some of the other Arab states which proved a more important source of funds. Of particular importance were both Saudi Arabia - with substantial concessional loans for the road network and the improvement of Yundum Airport plus assistance in support of the ERP - and Kuwait who, by 1990, had lent The Gambia approximately D217m for roads and a River Wharves Project.³⁹ Access to Islamic financial institutions resulted in a further diversification of aid sources. Of particular importance was the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which The Gambia joined in 1979. By 1993 the IDB had made available two loans, eight technical assistance and seven foreign trade financing operations for The Gambia at a total cost of just under \$26m.⁴⁰

Reflecting The Gambia's non-aligned status, a further source of aid was the communist world. The PRC was by far the predominant source and fully justified the decision, taken in December 1974, to establish relations with that country.⁴¹ The PRC became involved in rice production and numerous other projects (the construction of a sports stadium for example) funded by a soft loan of D28m signed in 1975. Subsequent loans, agreed during presidential visits in 1987 and 1991, were used to finance projects in agriculture, health and construction.

Some modification of The Gambia's foreign policy pronouncements may have encouraged the receipt of aid from the PRC. As one observer⁴² notes, whereas prior to 1974 there were few instances of The Gambia expressing support to 'liberation movements' outside Africa, in 1975 a joint communiqué with Mali - espousing the cause of the people of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Korea in their struggle for national independence and reunification of their countries - was released. Nevertheless the extent to which the PPP modified its language to increase aid from communist states was noticeably limited. This reflected both the greater flow of aid from the West and a certain wariness concerning communist intentions. According to local sources the Soviet Union in

³⁸ Projects which failed to get underway included the construction of the Essau-Kerewan road (subsequently funded by Kuwait) and the central mosque. Many others - including agricultural co-operation, fisheries development, telecommunications assistance and the replacement of ferries - remained in limbo while Libya prevaricated. Even the transport corporation ran into financial difficulties as Libya failed to come through with the requisite funds, prompting the government to nationalise in 1979. Details from *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 27 September 1979, p 1 and 19 July 1979, p 1.

³⁹ *The Gambia Weekly*, 23 March 1990, p 1.

⁴⁰ *The Daily Observer*, 1 November 1993, p 3. In addition the Arab bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) had, by 1980, provided two development loans and two emergency aid loans at a total cost of approximately \$10m. *West Africa*, 10 March 1980, p 449.

⁴¹ This decision precluded the continuation of aid (in the form of rice experts) which The Gambia had been receiving from Nationalist China.

⁴² Wendy C Momen, "The Foreign Policy and Relations of The Gambia" (PhD dissertation, London School of Economics, 1978), p 276.

particular was regarded with circumspection⁴³ and relations with that country were limited.⁴⁴

The Asiatic nations provided the final major source of bilateral assistance. Japanese assistance, for example, included four grant aid projects (worth about D93m) for artisanal fisheries between 1978 and 1993, technical assistance from 1982, food aid from 1980 as well as various projects in food production, energy and infrastructural development.⁴⁵

Of the prominent multilateral donors, the contributions of the EEC and the IDB have already been noted. Other organisations, in particular the UN financial specialised agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the International Development Association,⁴⁶ as well as the non-financial specialised agencies including the Food and Agriculture Organisation⁴⁷ and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) were an important source of assistance, as were the OPEC Fund⁴⁸ and the African Development Bank.⁴⁹

Two final efforts towards diversification are worthy of note. Firstly, The Gambia's enthusiasm for joining regional organisations was based, in part, upon the recognition that she would thereby be eligible for extra assistance. By becoming a member of the Inter-State Committee Against Drought (CILSS) in 1974, for example, The Gambia benefited from Canadian funds through the CILSS Road Rehabilitation Project. Secondly, one should not overlook the contribution of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), particularly during the 1980s. By 1991 the NGO proportion of total development assistance was 7-8% and rising.⁵⁰ Davis has put the number of international NGO's in early 1993 at twenty;⁵¹ assuming particular importance were the various activities of Action Aid, Save the Children, Freedom From Hunger Campaign, Oxfam, and the Catholic Relief Services.

⁴³ Newspapers told a similar story. As one commented, "it has been an open secret that the hoisting of a non-western flag over a building in Banjul would cause some raised eyebrows if not anxiety. Hence the Russians found it not easy to say the least, to find premises to lease as offices." *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 8 November 1975, p 2.

⁴⁴ Co-operation - prior to the suspension of relations in 1980 - was limited to technical assistance for the fishing industry and the provision of scholarships.

⁴⁵ Details from *The Gambia Weekly*, 2 April 1993, p 1. More limited assistance (mainly in the form of technical help) was also received from Korea (both North and South), India and Pakistan.

⁴⁶ The IDA is a soft loan affiliate of the World Bank. It represented The Gambia's first efforts at diversification prior to 1975 and contributed 32% of total development expenditure during the Third Development Programme. It continued to be important, contributing to both development expenditure (in agriculture, education and road maintenance to name a few) and the requirements of the ERP, and in 1986 overtook the EEC as The Gambia's principal multilateral donor.

⁴⁷ From 1969 to 1984, WFP assistance totalled \$29m. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 28 November 1984, p 1.

⁴⁸ By 1985 a total of \$10m had been lent in balance of payments support. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 3 April 1985, p 3. After 1985 the OPEC Fund continued to support the ERP.

⁴⁹ From 1974 to 1993 the ADB financed projects to the tune of over \$184m, including the Banjul-Serekunda Highway, the Port Development Project and the Airport Development Project. *The Daily Observer*, 10 January 1994, p 18.

⁵⁰ Daniel Davis, David Hulme and Philip Woodhouse, "Decentralisation by Default: Local Governance and the View from the Village in The Gambia," *Public Administration and Development*, Vol 14, 1994, p 257.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

On a fundamental level the receipt of external financial assistance enabled The Gambia to remain economically viable. As already noted, the relationship between economic *growth* and regime longevity is by no means straightforward and yet in The Gambia foreign aid was a prerequisite for the country's economic *survival*. This was never more clearly the case than in the period immediately following independence when The Gambia relied upon British support for recurrent expenditure, and yet even after 1967 she continued to rely upon foreign funding for a phenomenal 70-80% of the development budget.⁵² If one adds to this the generous assistance received during periods of severe financial hardship - without which The Gambia would have been hard put to withstand the effects of natural disaster, periodic droughts in particular⁵³ - the importance of external support was unquestionable. Without it, it is difficult to conceive how the PPP would have been able to survive politically at the head of a country whose continued economic existence was itself in doubt. This point is brought home even more clearly when one considers that economic collapse would have provided the Senegalese authorities with an opportunity to forcibly annex her smaller neighbour (a possibility examined in more detail below).

Although The Gambia's dependence on external aid was indubitable, a transformation of the type of dependency fulfilled an important political function. Gambians were concerned about the need to protect their country's independence and sovereignty (see below); both the termination of British budgetary support and the gradual transition from unilateral to multilateral dependency were portrayed by the PPP (and, according to local observers, widely accepted) as indicative of a net gain in independence.

In spite of aspirations to greater independence most Gambians were well aware of the need for development aid. In conversation with the author, numerous individuals expressed genuine appreciation for the government's - and more particularly Jawara's - success in bringing assistance in to the country although reservations about both aid conditionalities and the utilisation of aid undoubtedly existed (see below). Gambians' appreciation was reflected in, and partly shaped by, the press. One local observer noted "the pride with which the national media ... announce the successful negotiation and signing of another 30 million dollar loan. It sounds as if some Minister went into battle, put all of his powers and life at stake and came out of that wicked money jungle of the New York Hilton, war-wounded but alive, with 30 million dollars for his people."⁵⁴ For its part the PPP made every effort to establish in the minds of recipients a link between the regime and the

⁵² It will be recalled from Chapter one that donor support was also crucial to the success of the ERP. As Radelet (*op. cit.*, p 122) notes, between 1985/86 and 1987/88 the IMF, the World Bank, the EEC, UK, ADB, the Netherlands, US, Japan and Saudi Arabia provided approximately SDR75m in balance of payments support.

⁵³ Additional aid was also made available from many sources as a result of the "man-made" disaster of 1981 - the attempted coup. In 1980 and 1981, extra aid donated as a result of drought and the coup, resulted in an annual aid per capita of \$120. *Ibid.*, p 41.

⁵⁴ Nana-Grey Johnson in *The Daily Observer*, 13 July 1993, p 9.

continuation of aid. Jawara himself would often make an appearance to open externally funded projects while representatives of the party - either MPs or rural leaders - were usually responsible for the distribution of free rice or other assistance. Selective distribution of the latter to PPP supporters ensured that public endorsement of the opposition was curtailed and areas in which the opposition enjoyed a significant following or appeared to be gaining ground received particular attention. Following the creation of the GPP, for example, an unusual amount of aid was directed to those up-river constituencies in which the PPP felt its supremacy threatened. Similarly, the retention of support by Dr Lamin Saho in the Central Baddibu constituency (contested by Sheriff Dibba) in 1987 resulted, in part, from the concentration of West German development grants in that area. Saho's announcements of aid were invariably accompanied by calls for people to rally round the PPP and his personal responsibility for achievements in this area heavily stressed. In 1984 for example - on handing over farming implements and medical equipment donated by a private German organisation, Action 99 - Saho emphasised that the assistance was the direct result of a visit to Germany, made on behalf of "his" people.⁵⁵

Political imperatives not only influenced the distribution of assistance within the rural areas, they also affected allocation between the rural and urban areas. Urban dwellers benefited to a much greater extent from development grants than their rural counterparts. Equally significantly, however, externally generated resources facilitated the government's urban-rural balancing act (analysed in detail in Chapter one). The expansion of the public sector, for example, was partly financed by foreign borrowing rather than the alternative - transfers from farmers - thus helping to avoid rural alienation. After 1985 aid flows helped to ease the burden of newly-introduced austerity measures upon the urban areas.

Although the PPP accrued substantial political advantages from its success in generating aid certain drawbacks (albeit comparatively minor ones) could be identified. On occasion the press and the opposition would critically enquire about the utilisation of assistance. In *The Daily Observer*, for example, an editorial noted that despite the "phenomenal" amount of foreign aid, "the poverty levels of Gambians continue to rise at an embarrassingly high level."⁵⁶ Similarly, the NCP's 1992 election manifesto began by noting that, "During the past twenty seven years, The Gambia received a substantial inflow of external assistance to the tune of over \$2 billion and yet ... remains one of the poorest countries in the world."⁵⁷ Criticisms such as these gained wider currency during the late 1980's and early 1990's as evidence of large-scale corruption scandals came to light.

The Gambia's dependence upon aid (and the likelihood that aid levels would decline in the face of blatant and repeated evidence of misappropriation) meant that the PPP regime was obliged

⁵⁵ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 1 August 1984, p 3.

⁵⁶ *The Daily Observer*, 14 July 1993, p 15.

⁵⁷ *Manifesto of the National Convention party (NCP)*, 9 April 1992.

to keep the incidence of corruption below the levels found in some other African states. However, corruption did play an important role in the PPP's survival (see Chapter one) and externally generated funds complemented domestic resources as a source for individual accumulation.

Aside from an occasional report of food aid (intended for free distribution) being sold and a more serious case involving the misappropriation of 18,000 bags of USAID rice in 1990⁵⁸ there occurred a number of well-publicised instances of misappropriation. One of the first concerned the relief assistance received after the 1981 coup attempt. Thus, in 1982 a commission of enquiry was established to investigate the activities of the External Aid Fund and its Commissioner, Ebou Taal. Alleged malpractice (reported in the local press) included the diversion of donated vehicles, unauthorised expenditure of funds on hotel bills, extravagant overtime pay-rates and the sale of commodities intended for free distribution. Additional funds were diverted through the sale of rice and the purchase of vehicles; suspiciously low prices were (officially) quoted for the former and improbably high prices for the latter.⁵⁹

Large-scale corruption in the Gambia Co-operative Union (analysed in detail in Chapter one) was also facilitated by external resources. Early in 1994, for example, an audit revealed various irregularities including shortages in the fixed deposit account of the Jahally-Pacharr agricultural project funded by West Germany and the ADB.⁶⁰ The June 1994 Commission of Inquiry (which reported after the coup d'etat) revealed further, much more serious evidence of corruption. A sum of D38m which had been secured by the GCU from the IMF and World Bank between 1985 and 1993, together with D9m from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the Jahally-Pacharr projects, remained unaccounted for. Twelve employees (both past and present) including the former General Manager, Dibba, were ordered to pay approximately D23m.⁶¹

A final survival strategy - economic scapegoating - was rarely employed by the PPP regime, certainly in comparison to the APC under Stevens. Although blaming the outside world might have diverted attention from the PPP's economic failings and refusing to abide by externally imposed conditions (as a demonstration of independence) might have boosted the regime's popularity⁶² the need for aid remained the paramount consideration. Accordingly, every effort was made to remain on good terms with the country's major donors.

⁵⁸ *The Gambia Weekly*, 23 November 1990, p 1.

⁵⁹ Ebou Taal was jailed following the findings of the commission.

⁶⁰ *New Citizen*, 4 February 1994, p 3.

⁶¹ *Daily Observer*, 28 November 1994, p 1.

⁶² After the coup in particular, local sentiments on this subject were quite forcibly expressed in the press. For example *The Nation*, 27 August 1994, p 2 argued that, "the threat to The Gambia by foreign donor countries if they do not do as they are told, is rather dictatorial to a sovereign state. It is an insult to the dignity of a nation."

Economic Imperatives in Sierra Leone.

On a per capita basis Sierra Leone received rather less foreign assistance than The Gambia. Accounting for this was the conflict between the APC's survival priorities - including massive corruption and an increasingly authoritarian political system - and the expectations of the international community. Compared to The Gambia, Sierra Leone's greater wealth of natural resources meant Stevens was less constrained by external expectations and willing to sacrifice a certain amount of aid in exchange for the freedom to manipulate domestic resources (notably diamonds) to promote his regime's survival.

It would, however, be wrong to suggest that Stevens was unconcerned about courting foreign sources of assistance. This was particularly true during the latter stages of his rule as the diversion of resources took an ever greater toll on domestic revenues, but even prior to then the amounts received were far from negligible and played an important role in Stevens' continued survival.

To some extent Stevens' approach to the cultivation of foreign assistance resembled that of Jawara. Both presidents played a prominent, often opportunistic, role in attempting to maximise aid through diversification which in turn implied reducing their states' dependence upon the former colonial power, Britain. In Sierra Leone this process was begun before 1968 and yet Stevens was to take it much further. Indeed it was important that he do so given the potential for his survival strategies to offend. As he put it, "if A disturbs us we can run to B. If B disturbs us we can run to C..."⁶³

Stevens' enthusiasm for diversification did not rule out the receipt of aid from the former colonial power. Although British aid to Sierra Leone failed to reach Gambian levels, in both states Britain remained the major donor until 1975 (replaced in that year by the EEC). In Sierra Leone both capital aid for development projects⁶⁴ and technical assistance - which by the late 1970's was running at approximately £1m per annum - were provided by Britain.

Despite Sierra Leone's lack of strategic importance and Stevens' often unwelcome domestic political priorities he did utilise his control over foreign policy in an attempt to maximise British aid. During the early years of APC rule foreign policy statements were designed to demonstrate Stevens' moderate, conservative credentials thus neutralising the radical approach he favoured as leader of the opposition.⁶⁵ In later years a predominantly pro-Western stance on issues of international importance helped to ensure the continued flow of assistance. And finally, like Jawara, Stevens seized upon those rare occasions when his country could be of service to the larger powers -

⁶³ Amadu Sesay, "Sierra Leone's Foreign Policy since independence: Part One; The Era of the Margai's, 1961-67," *Africana Research Bulletin*, Vol 9, No 3, 1979, p 30.

⁶⁴ Development aid fluctuated from year to year, but reports in *West Africa* suggest it ran at approximately £2-3m per annum by the early 1980's.

⁶⁵ See for example his cautious policy over Rhodesia, noted on p 368 below.

an obvious example being the provision of port and airport facilities for British ships and aircraft during the Falklands War.⁶⁶

As in The Gambia, Sierra Leone's moderate stance on international issues brought forth assistance not only from Britain but also from other Western European countries. Aid sources included France and Italy but West Germany assumed a particularly important role and towards the end of Stevens' tenure was actually contributing more than Britain. In 1983-84, for example, 13-14% of that year's total development expenditure was offered by West Germany.⁶⁷ Of greater importance than bilateral European contributions were those made by the EEC after 1975. Under the first Lomé Convention (1976-1980) Sierra Leone received food aid and substantial development assistance for various projects in agriculture, road construction, health and education totalling \$21m. Under Lomé II (1980-85) \$35m was received.⁶⁸

Still in the Western sphere, for some years domestic political priorities took precedence over the cultivation of amicable relations with the USA (see below) but by the mid-1970's Stevens' desire to mend political fences and benefit from US assistance emerged as the paramount consideration. In 1976 he travelled to Washington and after meeting with President Ford obtained promises of assistance, notably the reactivation of - mainly agricultural - assistance from USAID (dormant in Sierra Leone since 1968). In 1977 the USA also began to provide substantial amounts of food aid under the Public Law 480 Programme; by 1983 the amount received totalled \$13.6m.⁶⁹

The receipt of American aid stemmed from that power's reassessment of the APC's political orientation. Stevens' self-declared radical socialist credentials, cultivated whilst in opposition, repelled the USA but once their insubstantial nature had been revealed (and Stevens had ceased designating the USA a security threat) the path was clear for Sierra Leone to receive assistance. Attempting to maximise this assistance Stevens aligned with the US on issues of international importance. As he put it, "if a country desires the pre-requisites for development, then it must be prepared to treat with due deference and regard those sources which can afford the necessary economic commodities." Stevens also made every effort to ensure that relations were not needlessly ruptured. Whereas in the early years of APC rule he had been quick to seize upon any sign of American "interference" in internal affairs, once aid had been resumed a much more relaxed posture was adopted. In 1981 for example, rumours that John Kilherfner - an American labour education

⁶⁶ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1981-1982, B 554. Perhaps as a token of gratitude Britain provided a new grant of £3.5m in early 1983.

⁶⁷ F Mohlenberg, "Bilateral Aid under Conditions of Economic Depression - Experiences from Bilateral Cooperation between Sierra Leone and the Federal Republic of Germany," *Sierra Leone Studies at Birmingham* (Birmingham University, 1985), p 143. Projects included road construction; help for the Road Transport Corporation; agriculture; forestry; a waste disposal project in Freetown; community projects and fisheries. See *West Africa*, 25 March 1985, p 591 and 10 December 1979, p 2307.

⁶⁸ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1985-1986, B 170.

⁶⁹ *West Africa*, 23 May 1983, p 1268.

specialist employed by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress - was involved in the strikes of that year were quashed by Stevens who made it clear that his government "felt no ill-will towards the USA in the matter of the recent labour unrest."⁷⁰

Further moves towards diversification included approaches to the communist world, in particular the PRC. Aid expectations - the overriding factor in Stevens' decision to support Peking's admittance to the UN in 1971⁷¹ - were not disappointed. According to one observer, under Stevens "Sierra Leone became one of the higher per capita recipients of Chinese aid in Africa"; by 1991 she ranked, in total commitments, sixteenth among the forty eight African countries assisted by China.⁷² During Stevens' tenure the Chinese established thirteen experimental rice farms (although many subsequently failed due to poor management); the Magbass Sugar Factory, which began production in 1981/82, and a hydroelectric project in Kenema. Particularly during the second half of the 1970's and the early 1980's they were involved in the construction of roads, bridges, a sports stadium and various buildings in Freetown. Even towards the end of Stevens' presidency assistance continued to flow; in 1984 China pledged \$12.6m - the largest single amount since relations were established - to support existing projects.⁷³

Once again, Stevens' willingness to treat China with "deference and due regard" helps to explain the receipt of aid. To boost the lingering effects of his early espousal of socialist ideology Stevens - particularly in the early 1970's - periodically expressed admiration for the Chinese model; in 1973, for example, he could be heard advocating "communal rather than individual efforts in farming."⁷⁴ Ultimately, however, Stevens' disinclination to introduce socialism (and the need to reassure other donors) caused a greater reliance on foreign policy statements to ensure continued Chinese support. During his various trips to China Stevens enunciated a strongly anti-colonial posture, in 1973 observing Sierra Leone's "solemn pledge" to assist in the effort to "forever wipe out colonialism [and] neo-colonialism ... from the continent of Africa."⁷⁵

⁷⁰ *West Africa*, 12 October 1981, p 2423.

⁷¹ For details of the limited aid from Nationalist China see Amadu Sesay, "International Politics in Africa: A Comparative Study of the Foreign Policies of Liberia and Sierra Leone, 1957-1973" (PhD dissertation, University of London, 1978), pp 384-85.

⁷² Deborah A Brautigam, "Foreign Assistance and the Export of Ideas: Chinese Development Aid in The Gambia and Sierra Leone," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol 32, No 3, 1994, pp 332, 345 (footnote 36).

⁷³ Details from *West Africa*, 25 July 1983, pp 1712-13 and *West Africa*, 17 December 1984, p 2605.

⁷⁴ See Brautigam, *op. cit.*, p 332 for further details.

⁷⁵ Amadu Sesay, "Sierra Leone's Foreign Policy Since independence; Part Two: The Military Inter-regnum (1967-1968) and the APC (1968-1981)," *Africana Research Bulletin*, Vol 11, Nos 1-2, 1981, p 31. Aid from other communist sources was cultivated in a similar way. For example in one statement delivered to the North Korean ambassador in Freetown, Stevens offered assurances that under his administration the country had eliminated the "last vestiges of colonialism." Aid from North Korea included the gift of a Civic Centre (*West Africa*, 8 September 1972, p 1202) and participation in the construction of a City Hall (*West Africa* 17 April 1978, p 767.) Aid from other communist sources was rather limited. Apart from providing aid to the fishing industry, the USSR restricted assistance to the medical and sporting fields. Meanwhile Eastern European countries - Hungary and Romania in particular - provided a small amount of technical assistance (see for

Perhaps Stevens' most concerted effort to increase external aid was focused (after the 1973 break with Israel) upon the Arab states. Although Sierra Leone's population was only 40% Muslim (compared to 90% in The Gambia) a combination of support for Arab issues - including calls for Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territories - and intensive diplomacy produced positive results. Not that they were immediately forthcoming; in 1974 for example few benefits ensued from Vice-Presidential visits to Lebanon, Kuwait, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.⁷⁶ However from 1975 to 1980 these efforts were renewed with Stevens himself conducting a series of visits to Libya (prior to the severance of relations in 1980), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar.

Following these visits some assistance was forthcoming but much closer links were forged with the 1982 decision (apparently taken during a further presidential visit to Saudi Arabia that year) to ratify the Charter of the Islamic Conference, thus qualifying Sierra Leone for support from the Islamic Development Bank. Before long the IDB began to render valuable technical assistance and subsequent agreements included the provision of a \$10m loan to finance oil imports from Saudi Arabia and contributions to the funding of the Freetown/Monrovia highway.⁷⁷ Regarding bilateral contributions Saudi Arabia contributed generously to various development programmes - including the construction of hospitals and roads - as well as providing food and medical aid.⁷⁸ Valuable assistance was also provided by Qatar and Kuwait.

The need for economic assistance - particularly the provision of oil on concessionary terms - also prompted Stevens' determined effort to promote relations with Iran. As one observer noted, the "suddenly developing relations" (beginning in 1983 when relations were established at ambassadorial level) with Tehran typified Stevens' attempts to sell "Sierra Leone's political alliance (for what it was worth) in exchange for material gain."⁷⁹ That it was not worth a great deal was demonstrated by the generally disappointing results of Sierra Leone's diplomacy in Iran.⁸⁰ Nevertheless it is worth noting that, depending upon the issue at stake, Stevens' increasingly blatant opportunism (while doing little to promote Sierra Leone's image abroad) did meet with some success. For example, during 1980-1981 relations with Algeria blossomed following Sierra Leone's recognition of the Polisario government in Western Sahara. Following a visit by Stevens in 1980 the

example *West Africa*, 3 December 1973, p 1712 and 17 March 1980, p 505).

⁷⁶ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1972-1973, B 728. During the visit to Lebanon Sierra Leone asked the Lebanese to negotiate on her behalf for the provision of Arab oil at reasonable prices. The request appears to have been presented on a quid pro quo basis, with the Sierra Leonean side assuring Lebanon that the interests of her citizens in Sierra Leone would continue to be protected.

⁷⁷ Details of IDB aid are from various issues of *West Africa*. See in particular 26 March 1984, p 897 and 24 July 1985, p 1263.

⁷⁸ For further details see Sillah, *op. cit.*, pp 363-64.

⁷⁹ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1983-1984, B 578.

⁸⁰ On relations with Iran, see *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1982-1983 - 1985-1986. Although Iranian oil shipments were received only intermittently, supplies were rather more plentiful than during Momoh's rule. Some observers attribute this to Jamil Mohammed's willingness to broker deals with Iran on behalf of the government. See *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1987-1988, B 154.

Algerian government pledged assistance in various sectors and promised to help Sierra Leone secure aid from Islamic financial institutions. Subsequently however Stevens changed his position on Polisario - apparently on the assumption that good relations with Morocco would prove more lucrative. In 1984 he was duly "rewarded" with a \$10m interest free credit from Morocco.⁸¹

Looking beyond bilateral assistance⁸² to multilateral donors, the UN financial specialised agencies including the IMF and IDA⁸³ as well as the non-financial specialised agencies including the FAO (which provided food aid) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) all contributed in various ways. Additional help was received from IFAD,⁸⁴ OPEC (which provided a significant contribution to road maintenance in the early 1980's) and the African Development Fund, involved in education and agriculture. A final effort to maximise the amount of available aid was concentrated upon regional organisations. Membership of the Mano River Union (see below) qualified Sierra Leone for additional funds from the EEC and West Germany.⁸⁵

During Momoh's presidency external aid underwent a dramatic decline. To account for this it is important to briefly reiterate the state of play between the IMF and Sierra Leone (discussed at length in Chapter one). It will be recalled that simply by producing minimal arrears payments and effecting a commitment to reform Stevens was able to maintain negotiations and, with every new IMF agreement, ensure the continued flow of funds from other sources as well as debt-rescheduling from the Paris Club (in 1980 and 1984). By 1985, however, the IMF was no longer willing to accept partial reform as a sign of good faith and relations had reached an impasse. Although Momoh's accession appeared to signal a new phase with the resumption of IMF credits and donor support,⁸⁶ his attempts at reform proved short-lived, the agreement collapsed and in April 1988 Sierra Leone was finally declared ineligible for further borrowing. This situation continued essentially unchanged until Momoh's fall from power in 1992.

Without IMF approval or the ability to service external debts⁸⁷ few donors were willing to

⁸¹ *West Africa*, 5 May 1980, p 811 and 17-23 October 1988, p 1938.

⁸² Since the preceding discussion has not covered every single source of bilateral assistance it is worth noting that one of the keys to Stevens' success was the multiplicity of sources offering aid. These included Japan (who from the late 1970's provided a significant amount of food aid as well as assistance for fisheries and the hosting of the OAU summit), South Korea (in spite of relations with North Korea), Canada and Denmark.

⁸³ The IDA was very active in education and by the end of 1982 had extended approximately \$40m in this sphere (*Africa Contemporary Record*, 1982-1983, B 574). By 1985 the World Bank as a whole had extended a total of over \$120m for projects in agriculture, infrastructure, technical assistance and education. *West Africa*, 8 July 1985, p 1367.

⁸⁴ For a detailed review of IFAD's activities in Sierra Leone see *West Africa*, 19 May 1986, p 1075.

⁸⁵ By 1979 the MRU had been allocated \$6.7m under the section of the Lomé Agreement devoted to regional co-operation (*West Africa*, 1 October 1979, p 1826). West Germany also contributed generously to the construction of the Freetown-Monrovia Highway. *West Africa*, 22 September 1980, p 1869.

⁸⁶ Grants and development receipts increased from Le104.3m in 1985-86 to Le604m the following year. *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1986-1987, B 151.

⁸⁷ By May 1990 Sierra Leone's debts included \$90m to the IMF and \$9.5m to the World Bank. The latter had rescinded its decision to suspend disbursements at the beginning of 1986 (following the payment of a \$1.2m debt) but arrears on loan repayments caused a re-suspension in mid-1987. Similarly the African Development

provide Sierra Leone with new development loans and the public investment budget was rendered almost exclusively reliant on grants (which often fell short of expectations⁸⁸) rather than foreign borrowing. Momoh was left with no option but to maintain friendly relations with as wide a spectrum of states as possible and, to some extent, simply rely upon their goodwill. Some countries proved more benevolent than others. While Britain insisted that any help - other than technical assistance - was dependent upon an agreement with the IMF, West Germany was willing to cancel debts (or convert them in to loans) and extend further assistance, mainly for infrastructural rehabilitation.⁸⁹ France too wrote off debts worth 30m francs in 1987 as well as donating much-needed food and medical aid,⁹⁰ while the USA maintained the PL480 programme. Assistance from the EEC also continued to hold an important place in the overall aid picture. Despite the lack of an IMF agreement Sierra Leone was able to receive help under Lomé III's Indicative Programme; the largest project was the rehabilitation of the telecommunications network (for which the EEC provided ECU7.5m) although assistance was also received in other spheres including agriculture, health and emergency assistance.⁹¹

Of other, non-western, donors China remained one of the most important. While refusing to consider all of Momoh's requests for new projects - the reintroduction of the railway for example - the Chinese proved willing to continue to fund existing projects and in 1990 agreed to a new interest free loan for the construction of various small buildings in the Freetown area.⁹² Meanwhile, efforts to cultivate Arab sources of aid were rather less successful. Although Momoh was as willing to exploit lucrative opportunities as his predecessor - a \$10m "reward" from Kuwait followed the despatch of a Sierra Leonean contingent to the Persian Gulf in 1991⁹³ - such opportunities were few and far between and, overall, Arab aid was limited to modest amounts of assistance intended to keep various projects from collapse.⁹⁴ Beyond development aid a desperate need for oil supplies occupied

Bank ceased disbursements from 1988 until, in 1991, the repayment of \$4.8m in arrears paved the way for an additional \$45.8m for the provision of electricity (*West Africa*, 21-27 January 1991, p 62). These institutions apart, some of the UN specialised agencies - including UNICEF, the FAO and the UN sponsored Labour Intensive Rural Works Programme - continued to give small project grants, thus helping to prevent too precipitous a decline. Just how precipitous the decline might otherwise have been was graphically illustrated in 1988 when the UNDP agreed to provide \$1.6m in emergency aid to ensure safety standards at Lungi airport, under threat of losing its status with the International Civil Aviation Authority. *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1988-1989, B 180.

⁸⁸ According to the 1990 budget only 38% of the previous years estimate was realised. *West Africa*, 12-18 March 1990, p 408.

⁸⁹ See *West Africa*, 18 July 1988, p 1318; 19-25 December 1988, p 2397 and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1988-1989, B 180.

⁹⁰ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1987-1988, B 153.

⁹¹ *West Africa*, 1-7 April 1991, p 485. Nevertheless, EC funding for the Integrated Agricultural Development Projects in the North and North West (which had previously received by far the largest share of development funds) was suspended in 1987. See *West Africa*, 2-8 October 1989, p 1633.

⁹² See *West Africa*, 10 March 1986, p 529 and 19-25 June 1989, p 1022.

⁹³ Noted in William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p 169.

⁹⁴ In 1989, for example, an agreement was signed with the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development for a

much of Momoh's attention and to this end delegations were despatched to Iran, albeit (and taking into account persisting repayment problems as well as Jamil Said Mohammed's departure) with patchy results. Intermittent oil supplies were received from Libya with whom diplomatic relations were renewed in 1988, apparently for that very purpose.⁹⁵

Relations with the Arab states were complicated by the intricacies of domestic politics, notably the struggle for economic influence between the Lebanese and other newly-emerging groups. As noted in Chapter one, Momoh's attempts to break the Lebanese stranglehold had resulted in the brief emergence of LIAT, a company with strong Israeli links. LIAT's emergence and the development of a strong pro-Israeli lobby in Freetown prompted Momoh to consider how Sierra Leone could benefit from closer relations with the Israeli government, which in return was seeking diplomatic recognition. In 1987 the Minister of Finance visited Israel - the first time a delegation had been sent since 1973 - and reportedly returned with promises of assistance in housing and transport.⁹⁶ In response Jamil Said Mohammed arranged a visit⁹⁷ by Yasser Arafat in mid-1986 during which Momoh was offered \$8m to provide the PLO with a training base on Banana Island. Although this offer was turned down, apparently on the advice of LIAT supporters in the cabinet, Momoh's desire to maintain friendly relations with the PLO was expressed in the two sides' joint communiqué which agreed on the need for universal recognition of "the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people."

Momoh, then, appears to have made some attempt to place himself in a favourable bargaining position between the Arabs/Palestinians on one side and the Israelis on the other. Parfitt⁹⁸ for example notes how the government approached both Saudi Arabia and LIAT over the import of tractors in order to get "the best deal." That Momoh's bargaining met with limited results can be partly attributed to the sudden cessation of LIAT's influence in Sierra Leone.⁹⁹

Two further sources of bilateral assistance are worthy of note. Firstly Japan proved to be a

loan to help finance Waterloo-Kent Road Project. *West Africa*, 26 June 1989-2 July 1989, p 1071.

⁹⁵ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1988-1989, B 179. It appears that Momoh's need for assistance compelled him to make peace with Libya, despite the mutual suspicion which had characterised relations since Stevens' failure to attend the (aborted) OAU summit in Tripoli in 1984. According to one report (*West Africa*, 25-31 May 1992, p 880) Gaddafi had called Momoh a "boy scout" on his assumption to the presidency in 1985.

⁹⁶ *West Africa*, 2 March 1987, p 440. LIAT's alleged South African connections also resulted in unconfirmed speculation that Momoh was attempting to capitalise upon an association with the South African government.

⁹⁷ See *West Africa*, 30 June 1986, p 1391 and Trevor W Parfitt, "Sierra Leone: Wide Open to South Africa?," *Review of African Political Economy*, No 38, 1987, pp 88-89.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 89.

⁹⁹ Indeed, the circumstances of LIAT's collapse - which followed the arrest of its President (a Russian émigré) in Israel, on charges of spying for the USSR - raises doubts as to how far Sierra Leone's relationship with Israel could have been (or was) improved through association with LIAT. The same was true of the government's association with NR SCIPA (discussed in Chapter one). As one report noted, many Sierra Leoneans regarded "the company's activities as an attempt by the Israelis to cut down the Lebanese role in the economy, their belief being that the Lebanese are using profits from the diamond operations to fund Israel's opponents in the Middle East." However, the release of a statement from Israel warning Momoh that SCIPA was "trying to corner the diamond market" suggested otherwise. See *West Africa*, 14-20 August 1989, p 1327.

reliable source of modest grants for various development projects (particularly rural water development in the North), food aid and debt relief. Secondly there was the - rather less consistent - contribution made by Nigeria. Momoh's approach to Nigeria at the beginning of 1986, his first visit outside of Sierra Leone, signified an attempt to further diversify sources of assistance, (Stevens' efforts in this direction having proved largely unsuccessful). During the visit negotiations were held on a diverse range of subjects (including economic, scientific, and technical co-operation, trade, fishing rights and educational agreements) but the meeting centred upon Momoh's requests for changes in the agreement on crude oil and for a reduction in prices. The following year Nigeria - perhaps influenced by the "close personal relationship" between Presidents Momoh and Babangida (they had both attended the same military college in 1961) - reportedly agreed to start supplying crude oil directly to Sierra Leone, enabling the latter to make substantial foreign exchange savings. Subsequently however Sierra Leone's struggle to meet payments caused frequent interruptions to the supply.¹⁰⁰

Having examined the major sources of aid under Momoh and Stevens it remains only to look at the role external assistance played in the APC's survival. Although, compared to the PPP, external assistance was less crucial to the APC's ability to survive - demonstrated by Momoh's ability to hang on despite a drastic reduction in the amounts available - it did play an important role.

Stevens used externally generated resources to prolong urban quiescence, devoting disproportionate amounts to urban dwellers particularly the residents of Freetown. Loans were used to fund the provision of basic services and major infrastructural developments. Large new projects - presented as evidence of "development" - were aimed at legitimising Stevens' rule. Appearing at the opening ceremonies of new roads or buildings - some of which were named after him (hence the Chinese-built sports stadium became the "Siaka Stevens Stadium") - served to emphasise Stevens' personal responsibility for the projects. Under Momoh, foreign sponsors were far more reluctant to embark on major new developments but on a lesser level his efforts to provide basic services (for example the repayment of arrears to the ADB in order to restore electricity) were concentrated on the capital.

The APC's urban bias did not, however, imply the equal treatment of all urban dwellers. Those capable of exerting most pressure on the regime were inevitably given priority either legitimately - external assistance for the military (see Chapter two) or EEC funds for students¹⁰¹ for

¹⁰⁰ Sierra Leone's relationship with Nigeria is covered in some detail in *West Africa*. See in particular, 24 February 1986, p 433 and 12-18 December 1988, p 2323.

¹⁰¹ According to Parfitt, one EEC project provided improvements to the water and electricity supplies at Njala University College, hostels at four other educational establishments and transport for students. Interestingly, Parfitt also observes the down-side to the aid process, noting that despite the fact that the project proposals were presented in April 1978, the "painfully laborious" appraisal process meant they were not approved until eighteen months later. Long deprived of adequate electricity and water supplies students opted to go on a sit down strike in January 1980. (See Trevor Parfitt, "The First Lomé Convention and its Effects on Sierra Leone"

example - or through the diversion of funds. Regarding the latter it has been suggested that loans intended for economic development were used to finance public sector pay increases (see below).

If the APC was primarily concerned with appeasing urban groups, rural areas did not remain wholly untouched by external resources. Indeed, the APC's lack of enthusiasm for devoting internally generated funds to rural dwellers rendered foreign assistance particularly important. In the ten year period after 1976, for example, it was estimated that foreign investment in agriculture - approximately Le250m - accounted for 90% of the total.¹⁰² The distribution of these funds played a significant role in cultivating the support of key rural clients. Much of the money was devoted to the Integrated Agricultural Development Programmes (IADPs) which provided a convenient means of distributing a range of services within the APC's wider patronage network. The "integrated" nature of the programmes meant they covered access to credit facilities and feeder roads as well as valuable agricultural inputs such as fertilisers and seeds. Distribution was far from equitable with a minority of rich farmers (among whom were the clients of central government officials) benefiting disproportionately.¹⁰³

A second observable aspect of distributive bias was based upon region. Staying with the example of the IADPs (although others could be cited) it is possible to illustrate the role of external assistance in Stevens' attempts to maintain the APC's northern support base. Thus, Trevor Parfitt has provided convincing evidence to show that the two biggest projects under Lomé I, the Koinadugu IADP and the Makeni-Kabala Road - "designed to open up and develop the far north of the country" - were developed by Stevens on the basis of their political patronage rather than developmental value.¹⁰⁴ Parfitt has shown how the "dubious" economic justification for the road, an important component of Stevens' attempts to redistribute resources to the North, led the APC to float the idea of an agricultural project in Kabala, the idea being "to make Kabala in some way significant" thus

(PhD dissertation, Manchester University, 1983), pp 152-53.) Even when aid did arrive there was no guarantee of a grateful reception. In 1984 an EEC gift of non-fat milk caused Fourah Bay College students to boycott meals and lectures alleging that the milk made them ill. *West Africa*, 5 March 1984, p 494.

¹⁰² *West Africa*, 1 December 1986, p 2404. The APC's neglect of agriculture is discussed at length in Chapter one. By 1989, agricultural programmes were almost wholly dependent upon West German, World Bank and EC donor support. *West Africa*, 2-8 October 1989, p 1633.

¹⁰³ See Omotunde EG Johnson, "Development 1: General Studies" in John Levi (ed.), *African Agriculture: Economic Action and Reaction in Sierra Leone* (Slough, Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, 1976), p 321. Needless to say the above noted suspension of IADP funding in 1987 resulted in the contraction of Momoh's patronage resource base.

¹⁰⁴ See Trevor Parfitt, "EEC Aid in Practice: Sierra Leone" in Christopher Stevens (ed.), *EEC and the Third World: A Survey 4, Renegotiating Lomé* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), pp 143-51. Parfitt (p 148) argues that "the absence of any clear and specific criteria for the acceptance of project proposals results in the EDF being presented with the weaker projects which the more rigorous aid agencies would refuse, and which may be proposed on the basis of their prestige or political patronage value as opposed to their congruence with any real developmental need." Stevens' targeting of aid agencies as well as bilateral donors with the least "rigorous" guidelines has been noted by other observers. Luke for example has noted that countries such as Canada or Sweden, "which have a record of insistence on the use of aid for well-defined developmental activities ... were not courted." David Fashole Luke, "Continuity in Sierra Leone: from Stevens to Momoh," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 10, No 1, January 1988, p 72.

justifying the construction of the road. The subsequent haste with which the KIADP was rushed through the appraisal stages, not to mention the fact that the success of the KIADP was dependent upon the (not yet built) road, had - from a developmental perspective - predictably disastrous results.

Parfitt also highlights what appeared to be an attempted misappropriation of EEC funds allocated to the road project. According to his account,¹⁰⁵ a full two years before the road project had been approved Stevens had voiced his preference for the German building firm Allgemeine Bau Union (ABU) - with which he had close links - to undertake the construction of the road. When the nine tenders were considered in 1979 the contract was awarded to ABU, despite a price Le5m more expensive than the cheapest with little to judge between them in terms of quality. Moreover ABU, despite being more firmly established in Sierra Leone than the competition, had quoted, at Le9m, the second most expensive price for "preliminary and general works" (the establishment of a working site). Since the other, less well established firms had quoted prices of between Le2-6m the obvious conclusion, identified by Parfitt, is that "a figure somewhat in excess of Le3m" remained unaccounted for. If the intention was misappropriation the instigators were ultimately thwarted when the EEC threatened to withdraw funding unless the government changed its decision.

Although this apparent instance of attempted misappropriation proved unsuccessful it does serve to suggest that the diversion of external funds occurred under APC rule. Such cases are important given the difficulties involved in uncovering successful instances of corruption, where success is generally defined by continued secrecy. Indeed, as far as external assistance is concerned the need for secrecy is even greater given the likelihood that evidence of corruption will persuade a donor to suspend further disbursements.

Despite the problems associated with identifying specific instances of corruption there is little doubt that the diversion of external funds did occur.¹⁰⁶ It is known, for example, that EEC aid intended to fund the Paramedical school at Bo was diverted to assist in the hosting of the OAU summit in 1980.¹⁰⁷ At the same time Algerian aid worth \$4m, itself intended to assist with OAU costs, was reportedly distributed among a number of ambassadors.¹⁰⁸ PL480 food aid from the USA provided a further resource. In theory this scheme involved the provision of rice on concessional terms, the intention being that proceeds from sales would be channelled to agricultural projects which in turn would generate funds for repayments to the US. In practice, however, it appears that

¹⁰⁵ See Trevor Parfitt, "The Politics of Aid to Sierra Leone: A Case Study of the Makeni-Kabala Road Project and the Koinadugu Integrated Agricultural Development Project," *Sierra Leone Studies at Birmingham* (Birmingham University, 1985), pp 151-53.

¹⁰⁶ Although many of the cases (such as the Vouchergate scandal) outlined in Chapter one almost certainly involved the misappropriation of external assistance, here the focus is upon those instances in which diverted funds were traced directly to the outside world.

¹⁰⁷ Parfitt, *op. cit.*, 1985, p 161.

¹⁰⁸ *West Africa*, 5-11 October 1992, p 1657.

profits were used to finance the construction of roads and bridges and, in some instances, deposited into personal bank accounts.¹⁰⁹ Food aid from other sources was abused in similar ways.¹¹⁰

Under Momoh rumours of corruption were similarly prevalent; in 1989 for example allegations concerning the diversion - by "high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Agriculture" - of Japanese rice-growing equipment in Pujehun gained widespread currency. The same report noted that proceeds from the sale of fertilisers (also donated by the Japanese) "which were meant for the purchase of seedlings and other materials ... have reportedly been squandered" while a similar consignment had disappeared the previous June. Needless to say the Pujehun agricultural projects failed to prosper.¹¹¹ Beyond rumour - however convincing - concrete evidence of corruption after 1985 was provided by the military Commissions of Inquiry. Misappropriation ranged from the petty (one Minister's diversion of five Chinese sewing machines for example)¹¹² to the substantial. Rumours concerning senior officials' misappropriation of USPL480 aid were confirmed and the true extent of the problem revealed. Momoh himself had apparently received a total of Le25.5m under the PL480 rice fund for two virtually non-existent agricultural projects at Binkolo and Newton.¹¹³

Corruption - together with all the other economic and political imperatives deemed unacceptable by the international community - had a predictably adverse effect upon Sierra Leone's relationship with the outside world. Nevertheless the deteriorating state of relations did hold one, albeit short-term, political advantage in that it enabled both Stevens and Momoh to indulge in economic scapegoating. Whereas in The Gambia every effort was made to remain on good terms with donors in Sierra Leone the APC attempted, with some success, to score political points from the worsening relations.

Stevens had engaged in some low-key scapegoating even before the rot of deteriorating relations had fully set in. A favourite target was Britain whose colonial legacy was blamed for many of the country's economic ills and who was charged with not demonstrating enough "compassionate interest" in her former colony. Elaborating on this, Stevens observed that "we did not expect to be pampered, but we did expect that we would get a little advice here and there, a visit from a minister, or something like that ... But we have been disappointed in that respect."¹¹⁴

Stevens appears to have targeted Britain in response to Sierra Leoneans' disappointment at what they regarded as an inadequate level of support. However, if people had some doubts about the

¹⁰⁹ *West Africa*, 17 November 1986, p 2432.

¹¹⁰ For example, it was later discovered that the former foreign minister, AK Koroma, had ordered that the proceeds from Italian food aid, amounting to Le5m, were to be paid into his personal account. *West Africa*, 11 October 1992, p 1657.

¹¹¹ *West Africa*, 18-24 December 1989, p 2126.

¹¹² The Minister was Professor Moses Dumbuya; giving evidence he claimed the machines were a gift. *West Africa*, 27 December 1993-9 January 1994, p 2348.

¹¹³ *West Africa*, 14-20 December 1992, p 2156.

¹¹⁴ See *West Africa*, 5 November 1979, p 2023 and 17 November 1980, p 2306.

relationship with Britain they were doubly sceptical about that with the IMF. This was greatly encouraged by Stevens, particularly from the late 1970's as the economic decline rendered the need for a scapegoat ever more pressing. In 1979 anti-IMF rhetoric both within and outside the country reached new heights; as one report noted "the Foreign Minister seemed determined to use every international platform to offer a critique of the fund."¹¹⁵

While targeting the IMF was useful for providing Sierra Leoneans with an alternative outlet for their economic frustrations, it was not without drawbacks. In particular the very success of the APC's anti-IMF propaganda rendered the successful implementation of IMF-backed economic reform even more difficult than it might otherwise have been. Sierra Leoneans - well-versed on the insensitivity of international financial institutions - became less and less willing to accept their financial prescriptions; many were even persuaded that Sierra Leone would be better off seeking entirely internal solutions to economic problems. Accordingly Momoh's early attempts to seek accommodation with the IMF met with scant approval at home. Having failed to reach an agreement with the IMF, Momoh too ceased blaming internal factors for the economic decline and shifted his focus to the IMF. At home he told students at Njala University College that "the IMF does not seem to be bothered about the socio-political repercussions" (of economic reform)¹¹⁶ while abroad, at the UN General Assembly, he "regretted that the international community had not responded generously to the emergency requirements of many developing nations."¹¹⁷

Given Sierra Leone's deteriorating relationship with the donor community Momoh had comparatively greater leeway than his predecessor to criticise individual countries. Given that aid from many states was not forthcoming, Momoh was free to use much harsher language - language which struck a chord with a large segment of the Sierra Leonean public. In 1988 for example Momoh criticised Britain (who had once again emerged as a target) for turning her back on her former colonies. He stated that, "they should not forget that we know how our diamonds and other natural resources were taken away from us" and claimed that Sierra Leonean resources had been used to develop Britain. He went on to argue that Britain's conditionalities were designed "to make life more difficult for us ... they simply don't want to help us."¹¹⁸

Security Imperatives in The Gambia.

During the years of PPP rule the two security imperatives (discussed above) were both intimately linked and, for much of the time, in direct conflict. The first imperative centred upon the

¹¹⁵ *West Africa*, 24-31 December 1979, p 2376. At the UNCTAD V full session at Manila, for example, Abdulai Conteh (the then foreign minister) gave a speech in which he criticised the IMF for its "seemingly inflexible and unresponsive conditionality demands." *West Africa*, 28 May 1979, pp 918-19.

¹¹⁶ *West Africa*, 23 May 1988, p 941.

¹¹⁷ *West Africa*, 17-23 October 1988, p 1938.

¹¹⁸ *West Africa*, 21 March 1988, p 529.

threat which Senegal (a much larger and almost all-encompassing neighbour) posed to the maintenance of territorial integrity. It concerned the need to avoid the incorporation of The Gambia by Senegal - thus becoming her eighth region - and the dismantling of the PPP regime this would entail. The second imperative concerned the need to minimise any diminution of The Gambia's sovereignty. Before 1965 doubts about The Gambia's ability to survive as an independent state had produced an unusual level of sensitivity over the issue of sovereignty. The PPP could not ignore popular concerns. They stemmed, in part, from Gambians' wish to protect their distinctive way of life and to maintain a separate national identity while living in the shadow of their Francophone neighbour. As Bayo, in a study of grass roots orientations towards "Senegambia" (conducted in 1975-76) observed, "both in terms of Senegalese 'ways of thinking' ... and Senegalese 'ways of behaving' ... most actors ... believed that Gambians and Senegalese are different."¹¹⁹

The conflict between the two security imperatives stemmed from Senegalese interests (discussed below) in The Gambia - interests which were of potentially sufficient importance to persuade the Dakar authorities of the desirability of forcibly incorporating The Gambia. Although the PPP was capable of implementing measures to persuade Senegal her interests were being protected, by appearing to compromise The Gambia's freedom of action the regime faced the likelihood of domestic disapproval. At least during the early years of independence any weakness regarding issues of sovereignty might even have been interpreted as a sign of the PPP's willingness to voluntarily integrate with Senegal. Integration, desired by no-one, was regarded with positive apprehension by politicians and civil servants who, as Proctor¹²⁰ notes, "could not feel very optimistic about their chances of securing senior positions in a central government"; by Gambian chiefs who would have been relegated to the lowly status of their Senegalese counterparts; and by Mandinkas who would have lost their numerically dominant position.¹²¹

Although the two conflicting security imperatives posed problems for the PPP the situation nevertheless held great legitimising potential. To the extent that the regime could demonstrate its ability to resist Senegalese encroachment The Gambia's geographical position was an important political resource. Even during the run up to independence this was a fact clearly not lost on contemporary political elites,¹²² although the events of this period undoubtedly helped shape

¹¹⁹ Bayo identified this "strong sense of national identity" not only in urban locations (as expected) but also in semi-urban and rural areas. See Kalidu M Bayo, "Mass Orientations and Regional Integration: Environmental Variations in Gambian Orientations towards Senegambia" (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, Illinois, 1977).

¹²⁰ JH Proctor, "The Gambia's Relation's with Senegal: The Search for Partnership," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol 5, No 2, 1967, p 147.

¹²¹ In 1973 Mandinkas comprised 42.3% of the population but only 6.4% in Senegal. If union had occurred the total Mandinka population of Senegambia would have been a mere 451,000 of a total population of 4,050,000. Statistics from Bayo, *op. cit.*, p 45.

¹²² In 1961, when PS N'Jie - then Chief Minister - initiated discussions with the Senegalese (for the content and limited outcome of these discussions see Momen, *op. cit.*, pp 137-39) he was strongly criticised by the PPP and yet in 1962, with the change of leadership, came a change of roles. The UP promptly transformed itself into

Jawara's post-1965 approach.

In 1962 Jawara requested a United Nations study on the forms association with Senegal might take. Economic considerations appear to have prompted this, politically risky, initiative.¹²³ If, as appeared to be the case, Jawara believed The Gambia could not maintain economic viability in the absence of an agreement with Senegal (and at this point there were no guarantees of forthcoming aid), the prospects for political survival in the face of economic collapse appeared gloomy. Such long term reasoning was, however, quickly overshadowed by short term survival calculations. Opposition to association with Senegal gained momentum during the period - extending to almost a year - which elapsed between the request for UN assistance and the arrival of the experts. As Momen¹²⁴ notes, during this period the UP was active in the capital, "stirring up anti-Senegal feeling." When they eventually arrived in Bathurst the UN experts were greeted by "several thousand demonstrators ... with banners proclaiming, 'We want a change of status, not a change of masters.'"¹²⁵

Influenced by public opinion, Jawara proceeded cautiously. He rejected the possibility of economic integration and emphasised the need for gradualism towards the creation of a customs union.¹²⁶ He did suggest the creation of a "confederal authority" with responsibility for defence and foreign affairs¹²⁷ - a proposition rejected by the Senegalese - but turned down any closer forms of association. To break the deadlock Senegal eventually proposed an acceptable compromise - two agreements providing for consultation and co-operation on defence and foreign relations. The treaties signed in these two areas did not diminish Gambian sovereignty¹²⁸ and residual concerns over the possibility of The Gambia's foreign policy becoming subservient to Senegal's were allayed by verbal reassurances backed up by concrete expressions of independence. Thus, the decision to support the holding of the OAU conference in Ghana in 1965, the vote against the admission of

defender of the national interest while the PPP sought to negotiate with Senegal.

¹²³ A government statement (reproduced in Fafa Edrissa M'Bai, *A Senegambian Insight* (Surrey, Unwin Brothers, 1992), pp 138-41 explained the decision in terms of both economic factors - in particular the economic difficulties an independent Gambia might expect to face - and the desire to "contribute to the wider cause of African unity." Although the latter may have been a contributory factor - Hughes ("Senegambia Revisited or Changing Perceptions of Integration with Senegal" in RC Bridges (ed.), *Senegambia: Proceedings of a Colloquium at the University of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen, African Studies Group, 1974), p 145) for example has argued that a "belief in the historical necessity of African unity undoubtedly existed" - Jawara's political instincts tended towards pragmatism rather than Pan Africanism.

¹²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p 144.

¹²⁵ Proctor, *op. cit.*, pp 150-51.

¹²⁶ Economic integration would not only have undermined The Gambia's sovereignty but would have engendered economic hardship, notably an increase in the cost of living and the loss of customs duties on imports bound for Senegal and exports of Senegalese grown groundnuts.

¹²⁷ *The Gambia News Bulletin Supplement*, 9 July 1964, p 1.

¹²⁸ Thus, the defence agreement provided for mutual assistance to secure "external security and defence against any form of threat" while that on foreign policy provided for the exchange of resident ministers, the representation of the Gambia by Senegal as directed by the former, and a Joint Committee to meet four times a year to "harmonise the approach of the parties to all matters of importance in the field of foreign affairs."

China to the UN¹²⁹ and the less critical stance towards British policy regarding Rhodesia (see below) were all at variance with the Senegalese position.

Jawara's success in negotiating The Gambia's independence boosted his political support. In the longer term however, the question of whether he had rendered The Gambia vulnerable to Senegalese annexation remained. Security and (to a lesser extent) economic concerns might have prompted an invasion. At the time of independence Senegal feared that The Gambia might become a base for Senegalese dissidents and/or subversive elements from a third state. In later years this fear was compounded, and to some extent overtaken, by an increasing awareness of the obstacle The Gambia posed to communications with (separatist-leaning) Casamance in the South. Economically, integration would have benefited Senegal in a number of ways, not least by putting a stop to smuggling which stemmed from The Gambia's lower import duties and liberal trade policy.¹³⁰

Jawara's success in both avoiding annexation and protecting The Gambia's sovereignty reflected, in part, Senegalese restraint. The Senegalese leader, President Senghor, was a moderate and comparatively restrained individual, unlikely to sanction drastic measures on a whim. The unpredictability of an invasion and the potentially problematic incorporation of The Gambia into an already complex domestic political equation gave him good reason to hesitate.¹³¹ Added to this, it is important to remember that although a large part of The Gambia's external concerns were focused upon Senegal, the opposite was by no means the case. Senegal had concerns and aspirations which went far beyond her tiny neighbour; as Hughes has noted, it may have been "an act of self flattery on the part of Gambians to think that the Senegalese have nothing else to do except plot the incorporation of Gambian territory into their own."¹³²

While acknowledging these factors it would be wrong to argue that Senegal never had any intention of annexing her smaller neighbour. In fact the measures Jawara implemented played an important role in dissuading Senegal from pursuing the obvious solution to the "problem" of The Gambia.

To reiterate, Jawara's position was finely balanced between the need to pre-empt a Senegalese invasion and his wish to use the issue of sovereignty as a political resource.¹³³ His

¹²⁹ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 12 December 1967, p 1. In 1967 the UN General Assembly rejected the admission of the PRC; Senegal voted in favour and The Gambia against. Senegal recognised the PRC in 1971 but The Gambia did not follow suit until late 1974.

¹³⁰ For further details on the causes of smuggling see, Catherine Boone, "Illusion of 'Relative Autonomy': the Frustrated Senegambia Federation Project," Paper presented at the Thirty First Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Chicago, 28-31 October, 1988, pp 3-4. For a more general discussion of the benefits (to be gained by Senegal) of economic integration see Arnold Hughes, "The Collapse of the Senegambian Confederation," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol 30, No 2, 1992, pp 206-7.

¹³¹ For further discussion see R Mortimer, "From Federation to Francophonia: Senghor's African Policy," *African Studies Review*, Vol 15, No 2, 1972, pp 293-94.

¹³² Hughes, *op. cit.*, 1974, p 169.

¹³³ The need for a delicate approach assumed greater importance towards the end of the 1960's. Thus, by signing the defence and foreign policy agreements Jawara had achieved a short breathing space. The defence

approach was flexible and influenced by his perception of the importance of a particular issue to the Dakar authorities as compared to the Gambian population. For example, Jawara's repeated reassurance that subversive activities on Gambian soil would not be tolerated¹³⁴ allayed Senegalese fears without placing Gambian sovereignty in doubt. On the question of access to Casamance, however, Jawara was less propitiatory and - despite Senegalese complaints about the inadequacy of existing arrangements - insisted that The Gambia maintain control over the trans-Gambia ferry. The issue of smuggling also provoked a non-conciliatory response. Not only was smuggling a less internationally acceptable basis for intervention than security,¹³⁵ Jawara also perceived the ambivalence which characterised Dakar's attitude towards smuggling (a predominantly Senegalese activity).¹³⁶ Accordingly, Jawara could afford to be quite vehement in his protection of Gambian sovereignty without incurring too great a risk of retaliation. Periodic Senegalese outbursts on the issue of smuggling (used by the Dakar authorities to divert attention from domestic problems) enabled Jawara to demonstrate his commitment to protecting Gambian interests.

His willingness to do so became increasingly apparent. Thus during the first incident of note in January 1969 Jawara erred on the side of conciliation and caution. Remarks made by the Senegalese Finance Minister (and later endorsed by Senghor) describing smuggling as "an economic aggression" and advocating that it "ought to be resisted as such" received widespread media attention in The Gambia.¹³⁷ Jawara's mild verbal rejoinder and The Gambia's agreement (reached at the February Inter-State Ministerial Committee) to establish a customs union were not appreciated in Bathurst, despite Jawara's insistence that progress towards a customs union would be very gradual.

During the period between 1969 and 1971 annexationist pressures were on the increase in

agreement in particular reassured the Senegalese elite that their security was, for the time being at least, more or less secure. On that basis they were willing to let The Gambia experience independence and simply wait for the day, which many believed was inevitable, when Gambians realised they could not survive alone. By the late 1960's however, it had become clear that The Gambia was not facing imminent collapse.

¹³⁴ This claim was substantiated in 1970 when a group of Guinean exiles, living in The Gambia, were extradited to Guinea on charges of plotting Sekou Touré's downfall. Although in the short term this did little to improve relations with Senegal (since Senegal was not on good terms with Guinea) it did at least indicate that Dakar could expect Senegalese subversives to be treated in a similar manner.

¹³⁵ On the issue of international acceptability it is interesting to note that, where possible, Jawara's foreign policy was particularly vocal on the unacceptability of boundary violation or change. Examples include The Gambia's support for the Nigerian government against the Biafran secessionists and the June 1971 OAU resolution that Israel should return to its pre-1967 boundaries as well as condemnation of the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in 1990.

¹³⁶ Boone, *op. cit.*, p 3, argues that during the 1970's, the Senegal government's ambivalence reflected "both an unwillingness to challenge increasingly autonomous rural authorities [who, she argues, profited from the parallel market] and a recognition that attempts to 'recapture' rural surpluses could backfire, igniting rural discontent." For further details see pp 7-15. The benefits of other aspects of economic co-operation were also ambiguous. See, for example Hughes, *op. cit.*, 1974, p 158 on communications.

¹³⁷ They resulted in hostile demonstrations during Senghor's visit (in February) for the annual Heads of Government meeting. According to reports, stones were thrown at the Senegalese High Commission, youths burnt two Senegalese flags and the windows of the new (Senegalese) BICIS bank were broken. *West Africa*, 15 February 1969, p 195.

Dakar and Gambian sensitivity escalated accordingly,¹³⁸ despite reassuring noises from Senghor. In January 1971 Jawara was given a second chance to prove his worth and boost his survival prospects.¹³⁹ During that month some Senegalese soldiers entered Gambian territory and proceeded to abduct a number of citizens (who subsequently claimed maltreatment) before releasing them a short time later. Despite evidence to suggest that the Senegalese raids were retaliatory¹⁴⁰ the Gambian government's reaction - which included a diplomatic protest, demands for compensation and a request that the individuals involved be "severely punished" - was robust. At the same time, Jawara - mindful of the need to protect territorial integrity - (allegedly) asked Nigeria for military assistance. When none was forthcoming he wrote to the UN Secretary General asking him to inform the Security Council to "prepare world opinion for the acts of aggression that could follow," thus embarrassing Senegal into an amicable solution.¹⁴¹ Senegal's readiness to accept a return to the *status quo* was further influenced by The Gambia's apparent desire to make some headway in relations. While the thorniest problems remained, Senegal was temporarily mollified by Jawara's ability to create an impression of movement and progress. The signing of a myriad of "secondary" level (less contentious) agreements¹⁴² and verbal reassurances (notably Jawara's assertion, at the State Opening of Parliament in 1973, that the Senegambian idea was "an inevitable and necessary development") conveyed the impression that the Senegal-Gambian relationship was constantly evolving.

In July 1974¹⁴³ Senegalese forces again crossed the border and (reportedly using violence) arrested approximately twenty Gambian citizens. Jawara's response - designed for domestic consumption and appreciated accordingly - was unprecedentedly forceful; he condemned the arrests

¹³⁸ Gambian sensitivity was heightened by articles appearing in the Senegalese press. One report (see *West Africa*, 19 April 1969 p 435) noted that an attack by Bara Diouf (Senghor's press secretary) on the Dakar-published *Le Moniteur Africain* - which had argued that it "would be an error to facilitate the disappearance of The Gambia" - was received by Gambians as an indirect admission that facilitating The Gambia's disappearance was indeed the Senegalese government's intention. Momen, *op. cit.*, p 193 has also noted the "Gambian disquiet" which greeted an article in *Jeune Afrique* in September 1970 which concluded that "The Gambia would probably last only as long as Senegal's patience did, a patience which had limits."

¹³⁹ For details of this incident and its immediate aftermath see *West Africa*, 27 February-5 March 1971, p 260 and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1971-1972, B 545-46.

¹⁴⁰ Earlier in January Gambian police had arrested a Senegalese policeman and customs official who, they claimed, had "crossed into Gambian territory in illegal pursuit of an alleged smuggler." Dakar claimed that the officials had been arrested in Senegal.

¹⁴¹ FA Renner, "Ethnic Affinity, Partition and Political Integration in Senegambia" in AI Asiwaju (ed.), *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries* (London, C. Hurst, 1985), p 80.

¹⁴² These covered technical and/or functional co-operation in a range of areas including telecommunications, transport, fisheries and the development of the Gambia River basin and were the least risky course domestically. Thus in the interviews conducted by Bayo, *op. cit.*, although isolationism was selected by a greater percentage of respondents (27.5%) than any other single option (p 161), among the other options economic integration (defined as working with Senegal to improve agriculture, commerce and other areas of mutual economic concern, (p 85)) was the most favoured, with 24.7% support. Until 1981 limited, functional co-operation, dominated the Senegal-Gambian relationship.

¹⁴³ Details from *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1974-1975, B 635.

as "acts of banditry and brutality akin to the strong-arm tactics Hitler used against those who were less strong, or ancient marauding and slave-taking regimes in Africa employed against their neighbours." Senegal eventually apologised and agreed to compensate the individuals involved.

Jawara's distinctly non-conciliatory approach stemmed from his belief in The Gambia's improving security situation. The cultivation of a wide circle of friends within the region and the world beyond (see above), particularly after 1969, imbued Jawara with a new confidence. The likelihood that these friends would condemn any precipitate action on the part of Senegal gave the latter pause for thought. Jawara's ability to project The Gambia as an independent sovereign state capable of fulfilling an active regional role (rather than an historical anomaly) increased the likelihood of friendly support.

Resource shortages compelled Jawara to employ cost effective tactics - including personal diplomacy, concurrent accreditation and support for inter-governmental organisations¹⁴⁴ - and to choose his friends carefully. Assuming that Senegal would be more desirous of avoiding criticism and preserving her reputation in her "home" region than in any other, Jawara's diplomatic endeavours were, by and large, limited to West Africa. Within this, it seemed likely that some West African states would be either more able or more willing than others to exert pressure upon Senegal had her behaviour violated accepted norms. One such state, whose friendship Jawara assiduously sought, was Guinea. Although observers have noted the absence of any apparent historical or political basis for friendship, Jawara's decision to return Guinean political exiles (noted above) was welcomed by Touré and in June 1971 a Guinean ambassador arrived in The Gambia.¹⁴⁵ Guinea's role in The Gambia's security stemmed from the often fraught relations she enjoyed with Senegal;¹⁴⁶ it is more than likely that Touré, given any chance to criticise Senegal, would have seized it with enthusiasm. Senegal on the other hand was equally eager to deny him that opportunity.

Although Senegal enjoyed better relations with her other neighbours - Mali and Mauritania¹⁴⁷ - they too were obvious targets in Jawara's diplomatic offensive. Jawara's state visit to Mali in 1975, reciprocated by Col. Moussa Traoré in 1976, resulted in a decision to establish a Joint

¹⁴⁴ Support for regional and continental organisations (including ECOWAS, the African Groundnut Council and the West African Health Community) not only enabled The Gambia to benefit financially (see above) but also provided an economical method - at conferences, summits, regional headquarters etc. - of making new friends.

¹⁴⁵ Relations continued to be good; Jawara's visit in 1972 (*The Gambia News Bulletin*, 23 January 1973, p 1) was returned by Touré in 1978, following which the two countries concluded a treaty of co-operation and friendship (*The Gambia News Bulletin*, 29 July 1978, p 1 and 3 August 1978, p 2). Guinea's decision to join the OMVG (the organisation responsible for the development of the Gambia river basin), taken in 1979, further strengthened relations and served to obscure the obvious disparities between the two founder members of the organisation - The Gambia and Senegal. On several occasions, Jawara has reiterated the belief that multi-member organisations are more likely to protect the interests of smaller states than those which contain just two members.

¹⁴⁶ See Sheldon Gellar, *Senegal: an African Nation between Islam and the West* (Colorado, Westview Press, 1982), p 72.

¹⁴⁷ These states' fluctuating relationship with Senegal is described in *ibid.*, pp 71-73.

Ministerial Committee to promote co-operation.¹⁴⁸ Amicable relations were also established with Mauritania - culminating in the signing of a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in 1980 following a visit by Lt. Col. Haidalla¹⁴⁹ - and with Guinea Bissau (Senegal's fourth neighbour.)¹⁵⁰

The decision to establish relations with Guinea-Bissau may have been influenced by a belief that, as a small state, she would be sympathetic towards the problems of The Gambia.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless The Gambia also needed the support of larger and more powerful states and moved to cultivate relations with Nigeria.¹⁵² Senegal's wariness of Nigeria (as an influential regional power) was reflected in her guarded response to the growing friendship with The Gambia. Senegal could reasonably expect that any untoward aggression towards her smallest neighbour would be met with Nigerian disapproval.¹⁵³

By the mid to late 1970's, then, the PPP regime had achieved an apparently durable balance between the need to cater to popular concern and the containment of Senegal. Until the events of 1981 there seemed no reason why these arrangements should not have provided a permanent solution to the problem of security. In the event, however, the coup attempt - which prompted Senegalese military intervention to restore Jawara to power - distorted the carefully cultivated equilibrium between the two security imperatives.

Senegal's willingness to restore Jawara originated in the nature of the coup attempt. Radio broadcasts which signalled the plotters intention to install a "Marxist-Leninist People's State" were hardly designed to promote acceptance of the coup, particularly in view of Senegal's concern over the possibility of The Gambia being used as a launching pad for her own leftist subversives. The spectre of an unfriendly third power (particularly Libya) combining with domestic Senegalese dissidents - whether leftists or Islamic fundamentalists - constituted an additional concern. As

¹⁴⁸ Details from *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 17 February 1976, p 1 and 24 February 1976, p 1. In subsequent years delegations - which held talks on a wide variety of subjects including trade, education, tourism, transportation and agriculture - were exchanged. See for example *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 18 March 1977, p 1.

¹⁴⁹ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 30 August 1980, p 1.

¹⁵⁰ Prior to Guinea Bissau's independence, The Gambia had given political - and some material - support to the PAIGC. After 1974 relations were cordial; visits by Jawara in 1975 and Luis Cabral in 1976 resulted in a trade pact and visa abolition agreement, and in 1981 it was decided to establish a Joint Committee. Details from *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 24 July 1975, p 1; 26 February 1976, p 1 and 4 May 1981, p 1.

¹⁵¹ Similar considerations possibly influenced the cultivation of relations with Cape Verde. The first ambassador from Cape Verde was received in December 1977 and subsequent delegation exchanges resulted in the signing of a co-operation agreement in 1978. Details from *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 1 December 1977, p 1 and 7 March 1978, p 4.

¹⁵² Presidential visits from Nigeria were received in 1971 (when a treaty of friendship was signed) and 1978, and in 1975 the Gambian mission in Nigeria was raised to the status of a full High Commission. Details from various issues of *The Gambia News Bulletin*.

¹⁵³ Although constraints of space preclude the possibility of mentioning all The Gambia's friends, disapproval could have been expected from other states. An obvious example was Sierra Leone. Relations were based primarily upon the historical association between the two states and in fact the first mission established by The Gambia in Anglophone Africa was in Freetown. Reciprocal presidential visits strengthened the relationship and in the mid-1970's the Gambian mission was raised to the status of a full High Commission. Details from various issues of *The Gambia News Bulletin*.

Hughes notes, from the late 1970's Libya was considered by Senegal to be the major source of external destabilisation¹⁵⁴ and this, together with allegations of Libyan meddling in The Gambia in 1980¹⁵⁵ (not to mention the belief - which may have been genuinely held during the rather confused events of July - of Libyan involvement in the Gambian insurrection), gave the Senegalese authorities a clear incentive to intervene. A related concern centred on Senegal's need for access to Casamance. Jawara had at least extended this courtesy; it was uncertain whether the new regime would do likewise.

That Jawara benefited from Senegalese assistance - in that his political survival was assured - requires no elaboration. Inevitably however there was a price (in sovereignty terms) to be paid; the price was institutionalised in the form of the Senegambia Confederation. There is no doubt that the PPP benefited from some aspects of the Confederation. Thus the continuing Senegalese contribution to internal security and civilian control of the military (see Chapter two) was matched by her role in safeguarding The Gambia from emerging external security threats - particularly that from Libya. On the other hand Gambian anxieties over Senegal's intentions were newly-roused by the confederal agreement. Particularly worrying was the potential loss of sovereignty which many Gambians perceived as implicit in those sections of the agreement dealing with political association and economic union.¹⁵⁶

That Jawara was fully alive to his people's concerns was demonstrated by his exhaustive attempts to allay them. Throughout this period (and during the numerous public meetings he held around the country) certain key themes were repeatedly stressed. First, particular emphasis was placed upon how the confederal agreement and institutions protected Gambian sovereignty and independence. The Confederal Parliament for example, which consisted of twenty Gambians and

¹⁵⁴ Arnold Hughes, "The Gambia" in Clarke and Payne, *op. cit.*, p 153.

¹⁵⁵ In 1980 The Gambia severed diplomatic relations with Libya. A government statement (reproduced in *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 1 November 1980, p 1) gave details of the recruitment of Gambian citizens for military training by "an agent of the Libyan government, one Sheikh Ahmad Niasse, a Senegalese national ... in preparation for subversive activities in The Gambia and in our sub-region." According to the statement (which cited as evidence the reports of some escaped conscripts) a group of forty Gambians arrived in Tripoli in July 1980 and "at about the same time 200 Gambians were arrested in Sebha and forcibly sent to military camps." Despite a protest note a further group of Gambians arrived in Tripoli in September. The statement further announced "that the Libyan Embassy in Banjul has been collaborating with subversive, clandestine groups in The Gambia whose sole aim is to create confusion and disorder." Although evidence of Libyan interference is far from conclusive the point to stress is that the Gambian and even more so the Senegalese government appeared convinced of its validity. One of the more persuasive pieces of evidence which emerged was the size of the Libyan embassy in Banjul; it is certainly difficult to imagine what official duties necessitated the presence of a staff constituting approximately eighty diplomats.

¹⁵⁶ Opposition to economic union was stronger than ever. Thus, many people perceived that a continuation of the benefits of functional economic co-operation (see above) did not necessarily require economic union. Meanwhile, as Hughes (*op. cit.*, 1992, p 213) has noted, the cessation of the re-export trade would have meant the loss of approximately 25% of total tax revenues. Gambians would also have been forced to cope with an estimated 20% increase in the cost of living. The other areas of the agreement (apart from defence, detailed in Chapter two) - which covered cultural and technical co-operation and foreign policy - were less contentious. Taking the latter, for example, the agreement only stipulated that the two Presidents should "endeavour to adopt a common position." See *West Africa*, 9 August 1982, p 2047 and 23 November 1981, p 2808.

forty Senegalese, was to make decisions on the basis of a 75% majority, thus ensuring that any "decision" (or what was in effect a recommendation to the confederal executive) would have to be supported by at least five Gambians. Moreover The Gambia held four out of nine posts in the Council of Ministers and all decisions had to be ratified by the legislature of each country.¹⁵⁷ The Gambia's ability to insist on these safeguards was a further testimony to Senegal's restraint during this period. There is little doubt that the authorities in Dakar favoured a closer form of association; indeed some of President Diouf's earliest statements included such phrases as "an integrated state" and "a new country called Senegambia."¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, influenced by the fact that (with troops on Gambian soil) Senegalese security was more or less secure and persuaded by The Gambia's avowed intention to work towards an economic union, he proved willing to settle for less. Meanwhile Jawara could emphasise his efforts to protect Gambian independence and sovereignty. Indeed the importance of the Senegalese "threat" was considerably reduced by an astute, albeit implicit, comparison between The Gambia's neighbour and her other "enemies," in particular Libya.¹⁵⁹

The second (related) theme stressed by the PPP concerned the gradual progress it was intended the Confederation should make. The objective was to avoid unnecessary alarm and to present economic union in particular as a (more palatable) future evil rather than an immediate threat. Much was made of the need for expert studies before a final decision and Jawara repeatedly emphasised that union would occur "through a gradual process of harmonisation and integration of common services in certain specific areas."¹⁶⁰ On the more palpable aspects of the Confederation the accent was on both the "progressive" nature of the agreements as a contribution to African unity¹⁶¹ and their "logic" given the geographical, ethnic and political similarities between the two states. The Confederation was further promoted as a natural progression from earlier agreements and membership portrayed as no more alarming than the existing adherence to ECOWAS.

These themes were repeated during the debate on the Confederation in the House of Representatives.¹⁶² The three opposition NCP members did not participate in much of the debate, having staged a walk-out on the basis that they had not been consulted or represented at the PPP's public meetings. Other possible sources of opposition, the press and the urban population for example, apparently mollified by Jawara's efforts at reassurance (and perhaps subdued by the State

¹⁵⁷ Arnold Hughes, "The Senegambia Confederation," *Contemporary Review*, Vol 244, No 1417, 1984, p 86.

¹⁵⁸ *West Africa*, 24 August 1981, p 1912.

¹⁵⁹ In early 1982 Jawara said in a BBC interview (reported in *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 15 January 1982, p 1) that he had proof of Libyan involvement in the coup attempt. Of course the stress on external involvement was also important in that it enabled Jawara to justify the Senegalese intervention under the terms of the 1965 defence agreement.

¹⁶⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 23 December 1981, p 1.

¹⁶¹ To invest this argument with greater credibility Jawara cited relevant congratulatory messages from other African leaders. See for example, *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 17 February 1982, p 1.

¹⁶² Details from, Dixon Colley and SA Bakarr, *Report on what MPs said at the House of Representatives*, Debate of 29 December 1981 (The Gambia National Library).

of Emergency) gave their tacit consent if not outright approval to the new arrangements.

Nevertheless, in future years - as memories of the coup and the Senegalese "rescue" faded - it seemed inevitable that Jawara would have to redouble his efforts to address popular concerns.¹⁶³ At the same time he was concerned to keep Senegalese troops in The Gambia for both external and internal security purposes.

Jawara's approach to allaying widespread concerns was quite simply to ensure that little or no real progress was made on the more "threatening" aspects of the Confederation - economic union in particular. So successful was he that, as the years passed, apathy came to characterise people's response to the Confederation. Critical voices were few and far between: media interest waned; government MP's confined themselves to an occasional request for a further retardation of negotiations; while the opposition, with the exception of PDOIS, neglected the issue of sovereignty within the Confederation as a possible vote winner.¹⁶⁴

This widespread apathy was useful to Jawara in that it gave him a measure of independence in his dealings with Senegal. While any serious threat to The Gambia's sovereignty would not have gone unnoticed¹⁶⁵ other less contentious measures received very little scrutiny. Accordingly Jawara was able to sanction a degree of progress (thereby placating Senegal) without jeopardising his domestic support. Protocols were ratified in a number of areas - transport and telecommunications for example - and the two countries achieved a significant degree of co-operation in foreign policy.¹⁶⁶ The real sticking point remained economic and monetary union, yet even here Jawara kept Senegal's irritation within certain bounds. For example the decision reached in August 1987 to enter

¹⁶³ This point was graphically illustrated by incidents at a football match between Senegal and The Gambia in 1985. Although the events of the match became well known in The Gambia due to the actions of the Senegalese High Commissioner (who had tried to call out troops to control some trouble at the match and was later recalled to Senegal amidst widespread censure) the interesting feature to note here was the alleged anti-Senegalese behaviour of Gambian supporters. According to various reports they had shown signs of animosity to Senegal both before and during the match, typified by (and according to the government owned *Le Soleil*) the shouting down of the Senegalese national anthem. *West Africa*, 1 April 1985, p 608.

¹⁶⁴ PDOIS argued that "What the Senegalese authorities wanted was first to establish a military control of The Gambia by pretending to be its protector. In short, the coup d'etat was its Trojan horse by which it hoped to station troops and security agents permanently in The Gambia, build up the confederal forces to be more prominent than the National armed forces and security forces, put political pressure to win more economic concessions and gradually annex The Gambia to be a province of Senegal." *Foroyaa Supplement*, 30 December 1987, p 22. The NCP and GPP were also quite critical of the Confederation but did not choose to make it an issue in subsequent elections. Assan Camara (of the GPP) probably felt compromised by his position in government at the time the Confederation was signed; then he had argued that "we are not merely fulfilling the obligations entrusted to us by the people whom we represent but even more significantly we are projecting the way forward towards sub-regional co-operation and the cherished goal of African unity." Dixon Colley and SA Bakarr, *Report on what MPs said at the House of Representatives*, Debate of 29 December 1981 (The Gambia National Library).

¹⁶⁵ Thus, Jawara was reluctant to join the franc zone (UMOA) as a part of the Confederation, insisting that when The Gambia did join it would be alone in order preserve her autonomy. He also objected to Senegal's request for joint control of the two major trans-Gambian ferries.

¹⁶⁶ Reviewed in Tale Omole, "Regional Integration or Regional Co-habitation: Senegambia, 1982-1988," *Quarterly Journal of Administration*, Vol 24, Nos 1-2, 1989-90, pp 63-64.

into a free trade zone was hailed by President Diouf as "notable progress" towards a full customs union.¹⁶⁷

The optimism this agreement induced was subsequently tempered by Senegal's increasing realisation of the difficulties of fulfilling her side of the economic bargain, namely compensation for The Gambia's expected loss of import duties. This was one factor in the break-up of the Confederation in 1989. Even prior to this however, and despite Jawara's placatory efforts, it was clear that Senegal's patience had limits. As early as 1985 Diouf was not only urging the need to move faster with negotiations but stressing that technical considerations should not "be taken as a pretext."¹⁶⁸ In the absence of significant concessions (which Jawara could not make for domestic reasons) Senegal could not be relied upon indefinitely to protect The Gambia from external threats. Nor was there any guarantee that Senegal herself would not revert to "enemy" status once she realised her aims were not likely to be achieved peaceably.

In recognition of this Jawara moved to improve relations with those states deemed to constitute a security threat. In 1982, for example, diplomatic relations with Guinea Bissau were restored; The Gambia was, soon after, rewarded with Guinea-Bissau's expulsion of Kukoi Sanyang and subsequently, in 1985, with the arrest (and return) of an individual implicated in the 1981 coup and reportedly engaged in further subversive activities. Arguably less rewarding - given the allegations of backing for a coup plot in 1988¹⁶⁹ - were the efforts to improve relations with Libya, diplomatic ties with whom were restored in December 1984. In addition Jawara continued to cultivate friendly relations with West African states as a counterweight to Senegal. A new departure was the relationship developed with Nigeria;¹⁷⁰ the agreement on economic, scientific and technical co-operation signed in June 1983, several visits by Jawara, the choice of President Buhari as guest head of state at the 20th independence anniversary in 1985 and Nigerian assistance (both in defence and the provision of experts) combined to produce an intimacy not hitherto present in relations between the two states. That Senegal was alive to Nigeria's role as a counterweight was evident

¹⁶⁷ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1987-1988, B 28. Arrangements were still being finalised when the Confederation was dissolved.

¹⁶⁸ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1984-1985, B 450.

¹⁶⁹ The coup attempt is outlined in Chapters one and two. Although one might have expected this reminder of The Gambia's vulnerability to induce Jawara to make greater concessions to Senegal (indeed one rumour, referred to in *The Nation*, 27 February 1988, p 2, argued that the coup scare had been planned by "some highly placed Senegalese pro-Confederationists for the purpose of driving home to President Jawara that his regime is still not quite secure enough to warrant him to drag his feet"), in actual fact he appeared more concerned with playing it down to avoid giving Senegal greater leverage. Clearly Jawara was still very conscious of the dangers of making any significant concessions to Senegal and his faith in his own security arrangements - perhaps boosted by the timely discovery of the plot - remained firm.

¹⁷⁰ Details of The Gambia's relationship with Nigeria can be found in *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 29 June 1983, p 1; *The Nation*, 23 February 1982, p 1 and *The Gambia Weekly*, 28 August 1992, p 2. Nigerian assistance (previously confined mainly to the legal field) was greatly expanded after 1981. As well as judicial officers and military personnel, Nigeria provided medical personnel, an immigration adviser and training for immigration and prison staff. The two states also co-operated in fisheries development and other areas.

from the press reaction. In response¹⁷¹ to Buhari's 1985 visit, for example, one newspaper commented that "Senegal cannot be insensible to this visit when one knows the weight of Nigeria in inter-African relations and above all in English speaking countries"; *Le Politicien* meanwhile accused Jawara of "wanting to disengage himself from the confederal agreement with the encouragement of ... Buhari."

The limits to Senegal's patience together with Jawara's reluctance to make progress on economic union ended, inevitably, in the dissolution of the Confederation. Although Senegal's decision to withdraw her troops placed The Gambia's (and consequently the PPP's) security in doubt for the first time since 1981, Jawara concentrated upon transforming the inevitable into political capital. Indeed, it was he who hastened the Confederation's demise by making several "unreasonable" demands (at least from Senegal's perspective) and portraying them as indicative of his efforts to protect Gambian autonomy. The request for a rotational confederal presidency, for example, was described by Jawara as "more appropriate between independent sovereign states."¹⁷² After the troops had departed, Jawara - for the first time since 1981 - dwelt on the threat posed by Senegal, telling The Gambia News Agency that Senegal saw the Confederation as "only a first step towards a closer integration of the two states, probably leading to a federation and ultimately to a unitary state."¹⁷³ In this way, Jawara attempted to ensure that the Confederation's demise was fully appreciated.

After 1989 the threat of Senegalese intervention was much less pressing than it had been prior to 1981. It seemed extremely unlikely that Senegal, already undergoing various problems with two of her neighbours (Mauritania and Guinea Bissau), would wish to add to her problems by invading The Gambia. Nevertheless it was important that Jawara attempt to restore amicable relations. Thus, soon after the break-up of the Confederation Senegal instituted a number of economic sanctions against The Gambia, including the closure of borders (resulting in a disruption of the re-export trade), an embargo on essential commodities (leading to shortages of cooking gas and acetylene) and a refusal to allow Gambian buses to use Senegalese facilities.¹⁷⁴ Although Gambians' irritation over these measures was focused on Senegal¹⁷⁵ rather than the PPP regime, Jawara was aware this could change if people continued to suffer. He proposed to visit Dakar and

¹⁷¹ Details from *The Nation*, 9 March 1985, p 8 and *West Africa*, 1 April 1985, p 608.

¹⁷² *The Gambia Weekly*, 25 August 1989, p 1.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *The Gambia Weekly*, 1 December 1989, p 3. Although the refusal came from the Senegalese bus company it was widely held that it originated with the Senegalese government. It resulted in a withdrawal of the Gambian bus service to Dakar.

¹⁷⁵ This was encouraged by the regime. For example the Minister of External Affairs held a press conference during which he condemned the "degrading treatment" Gambians had been subjected to at the borders. *The Gambia Weekly*, 17 November 1989, p 1. It is interesting to note that Jawara distanced himself from such comments and confined himself to improving relations.

was welcomed by Senegal's authorities on the basis of their continuing security concerns.¹⁷⁶ A surge in Casamance separatist activity following the break-up of the Confederation rendered The Gambia increasingly important to Senegal's security and Jawara's willingness to assist in arresting and returning escaped subversives was an important factor in the improvement of relations.¹⁷⁷ However, despite the signing of a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in May 1991¹⁷⁸ relations remained fragile. Although the uncertain nature of relations was illustrated most graphically in the economic sphere - in particular by the Senegalese decision to close her borders in 1993¹⁷⁹ - it was in the internal security sphere that, in retrospect, the problems had the most detrimental effect on the survival of the PPP regime. During the 1994 coup attempt Senegal was, understandably, unwilling to intervene on the PPP's behalf.

Security Imperatives in Sierra Leone.

Compared to The Gambia, Sierra Leone under Stevens never appeared in any real danger of annexation by her immediate neighbours, Liberia and Guinea.¹⁸⁰ Reflecting the much smaller disparity in size between Sierra Leone and her neighbours¹⁸¹ (rendering the prospects for a successful take-over rather less promising) and the fact that Sierra Leone's geographical location did not impinge directly upon their interests, the implications of this difference were mixed. On the one hand the comparative unimportance of the first security imperative enhanced Stevens' freedom to protect Sierra Leone's sovereignty (and boost his domestic standing) without risking aggressive retaliation. On the other, whereas Jawara was able to use popular concerns over sovereignty as a political resource, in Sierra Leone such concerns were much less apparent. This reflected both the

¹⁷⁶ Jawara visited Dakar at the end of 1989 with the intention of resolving the crisis. He was, however, careful to point out that by making the trip he was not giving in to Senegalese pressure. *The Gambia Weekly*, 15 December 1989, p 1.

¹⁷⁷ For details of Casamance separatist activity see *West Africa*, 28 January-3 February 1991, pp 100-2 and 10-16 June 1991, p 965. Various arrests were reported in The Gambia. See for example *The Point*, 30 December 1991, p 1 and *West Africa*, 3-9 May 1993, p 744

¹⁷⁸ *The Gambia Weekly*, 31 May 1991, p 1. The new treaty covered co-operation in defence and security, transport and telecommunications, health, trade and commerce, fisheries, agriculture and energy.

¹⁷⁹ *Daily Observer*, 27 September 1993, p 1. The borders were closed to vehicles transporting goods to Senegal or third countries amid Senegalese claims that the economy was being seriously undermined by the cross-border trade. As in 1989 the PPP regime's standing did not immediately suffer from the Senegalese action. Most Gambian observers believed that Senegal was making The Gambia a scapegoat for her economic problems and Jawara was commended in the press for his attempts to resolve the deadlock. Nevertheless the re-export trade (with goods destined not only for Senegal but also Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone etc.) was damaged both by the Senegalese action and also, in 1993, by the French Central Bank's decision to discontinue its guarantee to buy back CFA francs from outside the CFA zone. This meant that goods could not be sold to customers who had access mainly to CFA francs (see *The Gambia News and Report*, August 1993, p 18) and one can only speculate as to the effect this may have had in the longer term. As noted in Chapter one, many of Jawara's financial backers were involved in the re-export trade.

¹⁸⁰ Although during Momoh's rule Liberia's Charles Taylor was eventually to pose a rather greater threat to Sierra Leone's territorial integrity than Senegal to The Gambia's.

¹⁸¹ In 1979 Liberia's population was 1.8m, Sierra Leone 3.4m and Guinea 5.3m. Peter Robson, "The Mano River Union," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 20, No 4, 1982, pp 615 and 617.

absence of intimidating neighbours and the fact that independence for Sierra Leone had been a much less questioned - and questionable - undertaking than in The Gambia.

These factors aside Stevens did attempt to use sovereignty issues as a political resource. However, unlike Jawara - who was, for the most part, reacting to a given set of circumstances - Stevens was forced to create threats, or at least respond "creatively" to situations as they occurred. By so doing he hoped to provide a role for the army (see Chapter two), rally support for the APC and distract popular attention from domestic difficulties.

Before 1980 Sierra Leone's relations with Liberia were remarkably cordial. Throughout this period Liberia's interest in Sierra Leone was firmly centred upon the opportunities for economic co-operation, both President Tubman and Tolbert being much too cautious to interfere in any other sphere. Stevens, initially undaunted by this fact, made but one attempt to "use" his neighbour for domestic purposes. In 1971 - during a period when security scares were frequently raised in an attempt to occupy the army and unite the populace in support of the APC - Stevens made an unsubstantiated allegation that mercenaries gathered in the border town of Foyah Kamara were, with Liberian complicity, planning to invade Sierra Leone on behalf of Freetown dissident politicians. Stevens' method of making the allegation - through a press release - suggests it was intended for domestic consumption, not motivated by genuine concern for external security. As Tubman observed, it was "a new form of diplomatic communication where ... the world knows what is intended to be communicated before the government concerned is made aware of it."¹⁸² Viewed in isolation this incident had a minimal effect upon the APC's survival but it did constitute one element in the rather alarming security scenario created by Stevens, the cumulative impact of which *was* significant (see below).

Following this incident issues of security were placed firmly in the background. Stevens calculated that he had more to gain by maintaining friendly relations within the context of the Mano River Union (MRU), established in October 1973. Added to the potential economic benefits of a customs union Stevens believed the MRU would give him greater leverage within ECOWAS,¹⁸³ increase aid receipts through union projects and - with the prospect of Guinean membership - place Sierra Leone's relationship with her second neighbour on a more equal footing (see below). Moreover, Stevens could pursue these objectives without endangering his domestic position. In contrast to The Gambia the prospect of a customs union provoked neither political (sovereignty-related) or economic fears.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² *West Africa*, 23 April 1971, p 459.

¹⁸³ For further discussion of this point see Oga Godwin Ajene, "Leadership Perception of Issues and Foreign Policy Difference: A Study of Foreign Policy Decisions and Orientations in Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1984), pp 284-86.

¹⁸⁴ If anyone, it was the Liberians who perceived themselves as the economic losers. In November 1979 they used the occasion of a football match in Sierra Leone to voice their resentment over increased customs duties and commodity prices resulting from the customs union. See *West Africa*, 10 December 1979, p 2275 and 17

Following the 1980 coup in Liberia - and the assumption of power by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe - relations between the two states cooled. Stevens' reluctance to recognise the new regime reflected his shock over Tolbert's death and perhaps fear that he could be heading for a similar fate. At the same time, however, Stevens did not wish to disrupt the MRU (particularly in view of Guinea's imminent accession) and perceived that any adverse reaction against Doe - a very popular figure in Freetown - would not be well received at home.

Nevertheless in February 1983 an opportunity arose for Stevens to put his instinctive dislike of the new Liberian regime to positive effect. Though the incident was not instigated by Stevens his response was designed to boost his stature as a wise and experienced leader, to illustrate his concern for the protection of Sierra Leone's territorial integrity and to provide a welcome - if relatively brief - diversion from economic hardship.

The incident¹⁸⁵ had its origins in a (wholly spurious) report published in *Progress*, an independent Sierra Leonean newspaper, alleging that Doe had killed his wife after discovering her complicity in a coup plot. Doe responded by recalling his ambassador, severing all transport links and, on February 21, deploying 2,400 troops to several northern border towns. Shortly thereafter a further 1,000 reinforcements were despatched. Stevens, wishing to avoid violent confrontation, proceeded with caution. At a press conference he condemned the paper's allegation - although he stopped short of apologising since the paper was independent - and made it clear he desired the resumption of normal relations. Before long, however, events assumed a rather more serious dimension with Doe reportedly claiming that the parts of Sierra Leone along the Sherbro and Solomon Islands had belonged to Liberia since 1850 and that he "would rather fight to redeem his land and people than kill his wife."

Stevens delayed his response until signs that Doe was willing to accept an amicable solution emerged. These included Liberia's willingness to receive an earlier offer of a Sierra Leone delegation to Monrovia and, on February 24, Doe's reported "serious reaction" to a request from President Touré to hold negotiations in Conakry. Perceiving that a "strong stand" could be safely adopted Stevens refused to negotiate. The offer of the delegation was withdrawn and Touré's mediation efforts ignored. On his return from the non-aligned summit in India which both leaders attended, Stevens informed journalists that despite "desperate efforts by Doe and other third parties" to hold discussions on the border issue he had not responded.

Stevens' handling of this incident received widespread support in Freetown. As one generally critical newspaper, *The Globe*, reflected, "Never before in the history of this nation have the people stood so firmly behind their leader on an international issue involving our sovereignty."

December 1979, p 2352.

¹⁸⁵ Details of the incident and its aftermath are from *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1982-1983, B 575 and *West Africa*, 7 March 1983, p 598, 14 March 1983, pp 699-700 and 28 March 1983, p 812.

Stevens was commended on various levels both for his restraint - "Commander Doe thought that his decision would have prompted our own Commander-in Chief President Stevens to arm his troops and take up position on our own side of the border ... [but] failed to realise that our Head of State has been a Commander-in-Chief for more than a decade, while he has only occupied the position for some three years now" (*The Globe*) - and for his strength. As *The Oracle* (also independent) put it, "If Commander Doe was interpreting old Shaki as a weak President who will shame Sierra Leone by apologising for a blunder he did not commit - bowing down to the threat of force - then he was mistaken." The external threat posed by Doe proved sufficiently serious to rally the population - albeit temporarily - in support of Stevens. Even normally critical groups voiced their support: Fourah Bay students, for example, welcomed Stevens' decision to stay away from Conakry "since the matter had assumed a different dimension that threatened the territorial integrity of the nation."

Following Doe's return from the non-aligned summit he reopened the borders and despatched a goodwill mission to Sierra Leone. Stevens returned the compliment and shortly after scored further political points from the much publicised "peace-making ceremony."¹⁸⁶

Sierra Leone's relationship with Liberia was, in many respects, quite different from that conducted with her second neighbour, Guinea. The differences originated with the Guinean President, Sekou Touré, whose interest in Sierra Leone went beyond economic co-operation to the desire for close political links.¹⁸⁷

In the period following Stevens' accession to the Presidency, Touré's political ambitions received a certain amount of encouragement. Relations between the two states, already close in 1968,¹⁸⁸ were strengthened in 1970 when Stevens assisted Touré in his efforts to check the activities of "mercenaries and subversive agents" allegedly operating within Sierra Leone.¹⁸⁹ These efforts, in conjunction with Touré's undoubted willingness "to fish in the troubled waters of an adjacent state"¹⁹⁰ proved vital to the APC's survival in 1971. The use of Guinean troops for the purpose of ensuring internal security is discussed in detail in Chapter two. Of interest here is an assessment of the effect inviting foreign troops into Sierra Leone had on the domestic position of Stevens and the APC.

Despite official efforts to portray the troops' presence as in the best interests of all Sierra Leoneans - to restore law and order - some in Freetown expressed concern over the future

¹⁸⁶ According to a report in *West Africa* (12 September 1983, p 2097) Stevens and Doe travelled in an open car "to the Yongoro lodge amidst cheers from hundreds of people who had travelled from the surrounding villages of the Port Loko district."

¹⁸⁷ Noted by Sesay, *op. cit.*, 1981, p 9.

¹⁸⁸ In spite of an early hiccup, noted below.

¹⁸⁹ See *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 448. Co-operation with Guinea also served to appease the APC's radical faction.

¹⁹⁰ Christopher Clapham, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: An Essay in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), p 67.

sovereignty and political direction of the nation. Touré's desire for a union between the two states was well known¹⁹¹ and, while few believed he would attempt to impose one by force, there were fears Stevens might find it hard to resist. His public admission that he was unable to control the army without recourse to 'foreigners' seemed to place him in a position of weakness. Compounding this, and although Stevens strongly denied rumours of an imminent union, he did need to stay on Touré's right side and to this end refused to dismiss the possibility of a future 'merger'. In one interview he claimed to be "convinced that in the long run countries as small as Sierra Leone and its neighbours could not live in isolation."¹⁹²

Even if a union was not effected some Sierra Leoneans feared their country's political independence would be compromised by dependence on Guinea. Thus, some attributed Stevens' hasty declaration of a Republic to Guinea's influence and believed a one-party state would shortly follow.¹⁹³ Drawing upon the international arena for inspiration, Stevens attempted to assuage these fears by dwelling, somewhat paradoxically, on issues of national sovereignty. By whipping up fears of external threats, Guinean protection was subtly portrayed as the least unsatisfactory option. For example in one statement Stevens argued that there was "no doubt that ... big power pressures played and continue to play an important part in the recent troubles." In contrast to the threatening and rather mysterious spectre of "big power pressures" the Guineans were at least visible and their influence measurable. Reinforcing this, Stevens portrayed the Guineans as part of the same African "family" as Sierra Leoneans. As he stated in Parliament, "The only way left open to us was to call on friendly neighbouring African territories for help. We did not call in Germans, or Swiss, or Englishmen; we called our own brothers along the boundary."¹⁹⁴ And finally the use and numbers of Guinean troops were kept to a minimum.

These measures were important not for Stevens' short-term survival - which was guaranteed by the Guinean presence - but to avoid his domestic standing suffering irreversible damage. In the event Stevens emerged pretty much unscathed, although certain problems remained. Thus, for some years after 1971 - until the army was judged sufficiently quiescent - Stevens was forced to balance

¹⁹¹ At a meeting of the PDG in June 1970 Touré had appealed for union (*Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 448) and following the sending of Guinean troops Conakry radio could be heard advocating the abolition of the borders (*West Africa*, 7 May 1971, p 522). That most Sierra Leoneans were unenthusiastic about the prospect of union was illustrated by a study conducted by Roberts in the Summer of 1970. According to his results (he interviewed 2,216 people within 13 selected communities) 43% were willing to accept economic federation with adjacent countries (as a means to "enhance or assure a stature of stability and sovereign viability") but only 6% were in favour of political federation. See George O Roberts, "The Role of Foreign Aid in Independent Sierra Leone," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol 5, No 4, 1975, pp 339-73.

¹⁹² *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1971-1972, B 682.

¹⁹³ *West Africa*, 4 June 1971, p 631. In fact it was 'behind the scenes' that Stevens' political independence was most seriously compromised; Reno (*op. cit.*, p 100) notes Stevens' inability to act against the APC's radical wing "without angering his own external patron."

¹⁹⁴ Siaka Stevens, *What Life has Taught Me: The Autobiography of His Excellency Dr. Siaka Stevens President of Sierra Leone* (London, Kensal Press, 1984), p 351.

his continued need for Guinean assistance with the adverse domestic effects it produced. In this respect some similarities can be discerned with the relationship between The Gambia and Senegal after 1981. The main difference lay in the fact that Stevens - unlike Jawara - came down firmly on the side of pursuing a relationship with his neighbour. This was possible given the differing levels of popular concern over issues of sovereignty in the two states (not to mention the APC's lesser need to pursue popular support).

Sesay has described the APC's efforts to maintain friendly relations with Guinea which included the "frequent exchanges" between the APC and PDG and "the numerous trips Stevens and some top APC officials made to Conakry between 1968 and 1973," despite Touré's failure to reciprocate until 1979. An even more revealing indicator of Stevens' priorities occurred in 1974 when, according to Sesay, a delegation of Sierra Leoneans led by the deputy Minister of Health went to Conakry to protest against the alleged killings of some Sierra Leoneans on the Guinean border. Shortly thereafter - in an apparent attempt to mollify the "seriously infuriated Guinea authorities" - the President's office released a statement denying that any Sierra Leoneans had been killed. Interestingly, Stevens used the international arena to appease Guinea, blaming the "false" report on the foreign press "which it claimed, 'overzealously' tried to strain its relations with its Francophone neighbour."¹⁹⁵

Stevens' anxiety to stay on good terms with his external patron also restricted his freedom to exploit popular resentment against the large number of Guineans (mainly Foulahs) resident in Sierra Leone. Allegations of participation in diamond smuggling together with their ascendancy in some areas of the retail trade combined to provoke widespread hostility against Guineans in Freetown and yet it was not until 1982 when Stevens - in serious need of a popularity boost - proved willing to risk Touré's wrath. By then military intervention seemed unlikely and bilateral relations had been placed on a more equal footing with Guinea's accession to the MRU in 1980. The potential benefits of MRU membership (access to a larger market, additional aid etc.) provided Guinea with a vested interest in maintaining cordial relations with Sierra Leone and Stevens took full advantage of this fact. In December 1982 his decision to round up and expel a large group of Guineans was strongly condemned by Touré¹⁹⁶ but did not lead to a break in relations.

For some years after 1985 Momoh did not extend his predecessor's "creative" approach towards Liberia and Guinea, concentrating instead upon reconciliation and the improvement of relations.¹⁹⁷ As already noted, Momoh's primary focus was the search for aid. He had less time for

¹⁹⁵ Sesay, *op. cit.*, 1981, pp 10-11. Stevens' appeasement of Guinea was vital since little practical progress was being made on Touré's desire for closer political and ideological links. In the foreign sphere for example Touré's aversion to West Germany was not replicated by Stevens who had considerations other than security - in this case aid - to take into account.

¹⁹⁶ Touré condemned the expulsion as "totally hostile ... totally discriminating against a particular ethnic group" and in contravention of the spirit of the MRU. *West Africa*, 20 December 1982, p 3259.

¹⁹⁷ These efforts were directed primarily at Liberia since Momoh and President Lansana Conté of Guinea

public relations manoeuvres and, at least during the early stages when he was still popular, less need.

Given that the first security imperative, maintenance of territorial integrity, appeared at the time no more pressing than previously, Momoh's efforts to improve relations were perhaps undertaken with an eye to increasing trade, revitalising the (now seriously ailing) MRU and reducing unsanctioned smuggling. In the event, however, none of these benefits were realised. Alternatively the new departure could have been designed to promote Momoh's domestic stature as a regional peace-keeper and to "make his mark" by distinguishing his foreign policy behaviour from that of his predecessor. If so, Momoh's efforts must again be judged a failure.

To illustrate this point it is useful to recount an incident¹⁹⁸ which occurred towards the end of 1985. In November of that year Doe accused Sierra Leone of complicity (in the form of accommodation and transport) in the Thomas Quiwonkpa attempted coup in Liberia and - in moves reminiscent of 1983 - ordered the borders to be closed, despatched troops and recalled the Liberian ambassador. Unlike Stevens, Momoh appeared genuinely desirous of promoting reconciliation; he promised an investigation into the allegations and some time later visited Conakry in an attempt to involve Guinea in the peace-making process. Reconciliatory talks held in July 1986 resulted in a decision to establish a mechanism for peace, non-aggression, mutual security and co-operation between the three states but Momoh's initiatives seemingly failed to convince Doe of Sierra Leone's non-involvement in the 1985 attempted coup; the charge of complicity was periodically raised and even intensified in succeeding years.

The indifferent outcome of Momoh's attempts at reconciliation combined with a sharp decline in his domestic support produced a significantly less propitiatory response to the next "crisis" in relations. Problems arose in July 1988¹⁹⁹ when Liberia expelled approximately one hundred Sierra Leoneans following an alleged coup attempt. At a subsequent press conference Momoh related their experiences in uncompromising language. He alleged that during their detention in the Executive Mansion cellar ("of all places") they had been "physically assaulted, severely beaten and viciously maltreated" by Liberian soldiers. He further revealed that during "brutal attacks" on Sierra Leoneans in Monrovia a number of women had been beaten and stoned.

This incident served a diversionary function - hundreds reportedly gathered at CID Headquarters in the hope of glimpsing the deportees - and provided an outlet for people's frustration and resentment. At least for a short while, Liberia rather than the APC regime became the "enemy."

enjoyed cordial relations. In subsequent years the good relationship with Guinea paid off when Momoh was casting round for assistance to ward off the RUF.

¹⁹⁸ Details of the incident and subsequent talks are to be found in *West Africa*, 30 June 1986, pp 1354-55; 21 July 1986, p 1542; 15 August 1988, p 1482; 22 September 1986, p 1964 and *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1985-1986, B 166.

¹⁹⁹ Reports covering this period include *West Africa*, 8 August 1988, pp 1435-36; 15 August 1988, p 1482 and 26 September-2 October 1988, p 1815.

The incident also provided Momoh with an opportunity to demonstrate his commitment to his people's welfare by meeting personally with the deportees and adopting a hard-line stance. Liberian denials and claims that the repatriation "was done with the full knowledge, co-operation and collaboration of Sierra Leone embassy officials" were later denounced as a cover-up. At the same time, Momoh kept an eye on the possibility of Liberian retaliation. Delegations were despatched to significant locations in West Africa (including The Gambia, who was that year chairing ECOWAS, Nigeria and Guinea) presumably with the intention of explaining, and cultivating support for the Sierra Leonean point of view. In the event - but only after six Liberian ministers had delivered a "goodwill letter" - Momoh agreed to participate in a reconciliation summit in Togo.

By far the most important aspect of Sierra Leone's relations with Liberia concerns the events of the 1990's. Although it is now widely accepted that the RUF was (and is) a distinct and genuine expression of Sierra Leonean dissidence the role played by other countries, both hostile and friendly, merits consideration.

Even prior to the RUF's formation the APC faced certain challenges stemming from Sierra Leone's proximity to Liberia. The first of these concerned the large number of Liberian refugees - fleeing from the troubles at home - who began to arrive in Sierra Leone in 1990. Their welcome was to prove short-lived. Many Sierra Leoneans regarded the refugees as responsible for an increase in crime and believed that Liberian youth were a bad influence on their Sierra Leonean counterparts.²⁰⁰ Initially such resentment was not unhelpful to the APC. As in 1988 the Liberians provided a focus (other than the regime) for Sierra Leonean bitterness concerning their deteriorating circumstances. Momoh encouraged this, observing that "we are overstressing our resources ... our social amenities are being over-taxed and even our economy has been dislodged."²⁰¹ Before long however some of this hostility was redirected to the APC and there were calls - particularly in the Freetown press - for the flow of refugees to be halted. At first Momoh attempted to shift the blame to international organisations - by claiming they were failing to render adequate assistance²⁰² - but in November he announced that Sierra Leone was unable to accept any more refugees. Perhaps fearing the spread of instability, Momoh was less willing to respond to local demands for a withdrawal from ECOMOG. Even prior to the Liberian incursions into Sierra Leone the press had been urging a withdrawal, arguing that Sierra Leone had "paid more dearly than any of the other four ECOMOG countries for the peace keeping force in Liberia."²⁰³

Although most observers now regard the RUF as an expression of Sierra Leonean dissidence, earlier interpretations - both in and outside the country - placed great emphasis upon the

²⁰⁰ *West Africa*, 26 November-2 December 1990, p 2903.

²⁰¹ *West Africa*, 19-25 November 1990, p 2875.

²⁰² At one stage, the government's estimate of the refugee population exceeded the UNHCR's by 110,000. *West Africa*, 26 November-2 December 1990, p 2902.

²⁰³ *New Citizen*, quoted in *West Africa*, 3-9 December 1990, p 2995.

role played by other countries, notably Liberia.²⁰⁴ The pervasive nature of this interpretation was important to the APC's survival, creating what one observer described as "a tremendous wave of national feeling which ... found expression in support for Momoh himself."²⁰⁵ In the face of an external threat, Sierra Leoneans proved willing to temporarily overlook internal divisions and domestic problems and rally in support of the APC. Mass demonstrations²⁰⁶ condemning the incursions and expressing support for the government were held. Momoh - attempting to capitalise on his new-found popularity - addressed each one separately, liberally dispensing assurances that he had the situation under control.

Although the perception of the incursions as externally inspired was important, subsequent events suggested Sierra Leoneans' major preoccupation was with the threat of violence rather than its source. When Sankoh announced the RUF's existence peoples' response did not change. Sierra Leoneans were afraid of Sankoh and his violent intentions; his statement that "The APC believes in force, and we are going to use the same force against them to get them down ... sparked Liberian-type horror images in people's minds."²⁰⁷ Most Sierra Leoneans, however disaffected with the APC, feared the prospect of violence and believed that Momoh's conversion to multi-partyism rendered peaceful change a possibility.

The widespread perception of the incursions as NPFL-inspired was also important for the receipt of external, particularly regional, assistance. Although help from Guinea could be received under the terms of the 1971 defence pact, other ECOMOG members would have been unwilling to intervene in a purely, or even primarily, internal conflict. Given Nigeria's importance in ECOMOG the APC concentrated its efforts to portray the incursions as externally inspired in that country. The Sierra Leonean High Commissioner in Nigeria released a statement denying Sierra Leonean collaboration with the NPFL and asserting that the NPFL had instigated the border violations to force "Sierra Leone to abandon ... ECOMOG so as to further isolate the Federal Republic of Nigeria."²⁰⁸ Subsequently the then Nigerian Minister of Defence, General Sani Abacha, argued that since the events in Sierra Leone could not be divorced from events in Liberia, and since the mandate of ECOMOG was to restore peace to Liberia and the sub-region, ensuring peace in Sierra Leone was in line with that mandate.²⁰⁹

Other countries, the US and Britain for example, also accepted that Sierra Leone's troubles

²⁰⁴ Although the external impetus was greatly exaggerated during the early stages of the war, most observers nevertheless agree that external forces played an important role. The RUF received assistance from the NPFL (see Chapter two) and a contingent of Burkinabe mercenaries. For further details see Paul Richards, "Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Crisis of Youth?" in Oliver Furley (ed.), *Conflict in Africa* (London, Tauris Academic Studies, 1995), pp 140-41.

²⁰⁵ *West Africa*, 29 April-5 May 1991, p 641.

²⁰⁶ See *West Africa*, 22-28 April 1991, p 591.

²⁰⁷ *West Africa*, 15-21 April 1991, p 552-53.

²⁰⁸ *West Africa*, 29 April-5 May 1991, p 650.

²⁰⁹ *West Africa*, 6-12 May 1991, p 724. For details of assistance received see Chapter two.

were primarily externally inspired²¹⁰ but assistance from these quarters was not very forthcoming and certainly not sufficient to enable Momoh to deal decisively with the rebel threat or to provide extensive humanitarian relief (either of which might have extended his stay in power). The paucity of assistance reflected Sierra Leone's irrelevance to the Western powers. Some observers suggested that Momoh's insistence on conducting the war in secret, resulting in the West's failure to recognise the extent of the crisis, provided a second explanation²¹¹ although subsequent events would appear to disprove this.

Momoh's desire for secrecy reflected his need to reassure Sierra Leoneans in Freetown that he was dealing with the crisis effectively. However, despite the increasingly positive war reports broadcast on the radio, his resurgence in popularity could not be maintained. People's concerns reverted to their economic plight, made all the worse as the effects of the war (reflected in continual fuel and rice price increases) began to take hold.

Political Imperatives in The Gambia.

As already noted, popular concern over the issues of sovereignty and political independence, together with the opportunities such concern provided for the PPP to consolidate its domestic position, were important elements in the survival of the regime. Whereas the previous section discussed this concern in relation to Senegal (one of its sources) the intention here is to concentrate upon some of the alternative means by which the PPP demonstrated The Gambia's viability and independence.

Jawara's early post-independence speeches clearly indicate the importance he attached to relaying and publicising his government's efforts in the international arena. Looking at the subject order of his speeches one is struck by the fact that, for some years after 1965, foreign relations were placed at (or near) the top of the agenda while domestic matters were relegated to second place.²¹² Although this agenda was not an accurate reflection of the PPP's priorities²¹³ it did demonstrate Jawara's awareness of the utility of the external world to act as an antidote to Gambians' concerns. His scope for assuaging these concerns in other spheres (the economic for example) was extremely limited; as Jawara himself emphasised in 1966 it was "in the field of foreign affairs that the impact of independence has been most noticeable."²¹⁴ Announcing the establishment of diplomatic

²¹⁰ This, for example, was the view of the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. See *West Africa*, 15-21 April 1991, p 560.

²¹¹ *West Africa*, 23-29 March 1992, p 494.

²¹² For example during his 1967 New Year message Jawara spoke on the establishment of diplomatic relations; relations with Senegal; aid; international policy; the OAU and Israel. Only then did he move on to the home front. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 5 January 1961, p 1.

²¹³ As noted above, Jawara's enthusiasm for extending the range of foreign relations beyond Senegal did not gain momentum until the 1970's and by that time his periodic communications with the Gambian people were placing much greater emphasis upon the home front, particularly economic development.

²¹⁴ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 19 April 1966, p 1.

relations,²¹⁵ explaining the principles on which foreign policy was to be based or simply joining, and proclaiming support for, regional and international organisations (discussed above) all served to symbolise The Gambia's "equal" status in the international community.

The implementation of a predominantly verbal foreign policy was relatively inexpensive but even so, expenditure was deliberately kept to a minimum. Thus, for many years The Gambia was the only country not to have a permanent mission at the UN,²¹⁶ unnecessary diplomatic representation abroad was eschewed and overseas travel kept within reasonable limits. This frugal approach precluded allegations of wasteful extravagance but did not undermine the government's efforts to symbolise The Gambia's political independence.

Of course these efforts were, to some extent, of finite value. Establishing diplomatic relations or joining organisations are activities (usually) only undertaken once and popular appreciation for the party's efforts inevitably dwindled. Fortunately, however, sovereignty issues constituted a continuing (albeit diminishing) popular concern²¹⁷ and the PPP was able to capitalise on this. Assisted by the size and relative unimportance of The Gambia, Jawara was able to maintain cordial relations with major aid donors while preserving the right to an independent (if infrequently expressed) voice. In 1970, for example, The Gambia played a part in the African Commonwealth Campaign against the British proposal on arms sales to South Africa.²¹⁸ Much later, in 1991, Jawara strongly condemned the USA for her neglect of ECOMOG's efforts in Liberia.²¹⁹ More generally, The Gambia's non-aligned status - which according to Jawara was characterised by the ability to react to issues on the basis of "our own sovereign judgement which cannot be subjectively pre-determined or influenced from outside" - was portrayed as a concrete expression of political independence.²²⁰

²¹⁵ By 1966 Jawara was able to announce that diplomatic relations had been established with nineteen countries; by early 1967 the number had increased to twenty-four. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 19 April 1966, p 1 and 5 January 1967, p 1.

²¹⁶ Instead, *ad hoc* delegations were sent to the General Assembly. In 1978 the government finally budgeted for a mission to New York to be accredited to the UN.

²¹⁷ The persistence of such concerns, even up to the late 1980's, was illustrated by a number of newspaper articles criticising the government for compromising The Gambia's political independence and non-aligned status. For example *The Nation* - citing the agreement giving NASA a mandate to use Yundum airport as an emergency landing site for the US space shuttle - argued that "the country now tends to lean far too much on the US and Western sphere of influence." Substantiating this, the paper pointed out that "whilst The Gambia vehemently condemned the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and voted with the West for their immediate withdrawal, we abstained when the UN met to discuss a subsequent invasion of Grenada by the USA to install a regime sympathetic to the West." *The Nation*, 30 July 1988, p 3.

²¹⁸ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 341. It is interesting to note that Jawara tended to delegate the role of critic to his foreign minister. This was probably linked to his fondness for personal diplomacy in his efforts to retain close (and economically rewarding) ties with Britain.

²¹⁹ He noted "that while peacetime Liberia had enjoyed goodwill from many quarters, when it slipped into anarchy it was abandoned to its fate by most of those who could have helped." *West Africa*, 9-15 September 1991, p 1497.

²²⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 29 May 1979, p 2. Thus, while firmly in the Western camp, The Gambia had by 1975 established relations with a broad range of countries including North Korea, East Germany, Rumania, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Alongside the emphasis on political independence, the PPP attempted to demonstrate the prestige and importance of The Gambia, particularly in regional affairs. It was hoped that a constructive (if necessarily limited) regional role would help legitimise the regime by illustrating how far the country had progressed from the early days of questionable viability. Initially, Jawara appeared to believe that one route to an improved regional status was to exploit The Gambia's geographical position by forming a "bridge" between Anglophone and Francophone West African states.²²¹ Although in retrospect such an aim appears rather over ambitious - particularly in view of persisting problems with Senegal - on a lesser level Jawara did gain credibility (both abroad and subsequently at home) through his mediation efforts. These included his role in reconciling the Heads of State of Guinea, Senegal and Ivory Coast in 1978, his chairmanship of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee dealing with the troubles in Liberia and the part he played (together with Lansana Conté) in the dispute between Senegal and Mauritania in 1989.²²² The Gambia's importance at a regional, and even continental level was further symbolised by the relatively active role she played in various inter-governmental organisations,²²³ a willingness to host the occasional inter-governmental organisation conference²²⁴ plus visits to, and reciprocal visits from, foreign Heads of State.

Jawara's espousal of the cause of human rights (which gained momentum after 1977) also enhanced The Gambia's image abroad. Resource-shortages - which constricted the scope of foreign policy and necessitated a "wait and see" approach to international affairs²²⁵ - did not preclude a focused, single issue, approach. Jawara's decision to espouse human rights was characteristically shrewd. It was a cause which The Gambia, certainly in comparison to many other African states, had a genuine right to endorse. Added to this it had little, or no, potential to offend. Not only did the

²²¹ As he put it, "surrounded as we are by our friendly French speaking neighbour ... we are in a special position in relation to other Commonwealth countries to appreciate the complexities of the relations between English and French speaking countries." *West Africa*, 3 July 1965, p 740.

²²² Details of Jawara's mediation efforts can be found in *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 25 March 1978, p 1 and *The Gambia Weekly*, 3 August 1990, p 1 and 19 January 1990, p 1.

²²³ As Jawara himself stressed, "perhaps the most eloquent testimony of our standing is the number of times we have been elected into high office at important international fora." *Address to the Nation By His Excellency Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara on the Eve of the Silver Jubilee Anniversary of independence, Saturday, 17th February, 1990* (Banjul, Government Printer, 1990), pp 17-18. At various times Jawara served as chairman of the Inter-Governmental Committee of Sahelian States, ECOWAS, the OMVG and the African Groundnut Council.

²²⁴ A typical example was the meeting of the Health Ministers of the West African Health Secretariat in Banjul in 1975. A rather more prestigious event - the ECOWAS Heads of State Conference - was held in The Gambia in 1990. Generally speaking the more prestigious the event the greater the reward in terms of national pride and "excitement." At the same time however there is a risk that the benefits will be outweighed by popular resentment over the cost (see Sierra Leone's hosting of the OAU below). In The Gambia, the gamble - assisted by efforts to publicise the importance of ECOWAS as an organisation - paid off, and the popular/media reaction was generally positive.

²²⁵ Thus, while various African nations withdrew from the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh in response to Britain's stance on the question of economic sanctions against South Africa, The Gambia hesitated (mainly for aid reasons) only finally withdrawing "to avoid the label of 'odd man out' in the West African region." *The Nation*, 26 July 1986, p 1.

West approve The Gambia's stance, but other African states could find little to object to, and much to praise, in her efforts. This perhaps explains why Jawara chose not to emphasise multi-partyism - an issue which (at least for the greater part of his rule) would have placed him in an awkward and isolated position vis-à-vis his African colleagues.²²⁶ Efforts to promote human rights included the prominent role the government played in the adoption of an African Charter on Human and People's Rights (known as the Banjul Charter);²²⁷ the submission of proposals for the establishment of a Commonwealth Human Rights Commission;²²⁸ and, in 1981, the nomination to serve in the Human Rights office of the UN. In later years Banjul was chosen as the home for the OAU Human Rights Commission (inaugurated in 1989) and a non-governmental organisation - the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies - was established. These efforts won accolades from a variety of countries both in Africa and further afield.²²⁹ Talking to Gambians in 1993/94 it was clear that many found a genuine source of satisfaction in the favourable reputation of their country abroad²³⁰ which in turn often translated into appreciation of, and respect for their President whose efforts had brought it about.

Although Jawara's approach to foreign policy played an important role in the PPP's survival,

²²⁶ Although from 1989 events beyond The Gambia were used to legitimise Jawara's domestic choices. For example, in one statement Jawara observed that The Gambia's attachment to democracy had been "amply vindicated by the present turn of events in Eastern Europe and in other parts of the world where one party dictatorships have collapsed" (*The Gambia Weekly*, 19 January 1990, p 1). Again, when The Gambia was chosen to participate in the monitoring of the Namibian elections Jawara interpreted it as "further testimony of the high regard that the international community has for our nation and the strength of its democratic tradition." *Presidential Address Delivered by His Excellency Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara at the State Opening of Parliament on Wednesday, 6th December, 1989*, Sessional Paper No 2 of 1989 (Banjul, Government Printer), p 32.

²²⁷ The original proposals for the charter were tabled by Senegal and co-sponsored by The Gambia at the 1979 Monrovia OAU Summit. Subsequently a draft - prepared in Dakar - was studied at a conference of Attorneys-General and Ministers of Justice convened in Banjul in June 1980 and June 1981. The charter was adopted at the 1981 OAU summit in Freetown. Details from *Proceedings of the 7th meeting in the 1982/83 Legislative Session, Sitting 4 May 1983* (Banjul, Government Printer).

²²⁸ The matter was first raised in 1977 at the Commonwealth Conference in London and later the same year was followed up at a meeting of Law Ministers in Canada. In 1979 the proposals were submitted to the Commonwealth Commission in Lusaka. The outcome - a compromise - saw the establishment of a special Human Rights unit within the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1981. *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 17 September 1977, p 1 and 4 August 1979, p 1.

²²⁹ In 1977 for example, *The Gambia News Bulletin* (15 October 1977, p 1) reported that "The Gambia's stand on Human Rights and the problem of self-determination of nations won the approval of the US and the African group at the 32nd General Assembly of the UN. Addressing delegates at a luncheon President Carter singled out The Gambia for commendation on her stand."

²³⁰ Summing this up in 1990 Jawara observed that, "while the tangible and physical results of our independence may have been modest, our accomplishments in terms of putting The Gambia on the world map have been most impressive ... Over the past twenty-five years we have really found our footing as a nation, and we have established for ourselves an internationally recognised identity." *Address to the Nation By His Excellency Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara on the Eve of the Silver Jubilee Anniversary of independence, Saturday, 17th February, 1990* (Banjul, Government Printer), pp 18-19. Jawara's contribution to this achievement was widely recognised, even by the opposition. In the 1986/87 Legislative Session for example the (opposition) member for Lower Baddibu asserted that it was due to the President that the country had earned a good name. *Proceedings of the 1st meeting in the 1986/87 Legislative Session* (Banjul, Government Printer), p 10.

towards the end of his rule criticisms of the related expense had begun to emerge.²³¹ The cost of sending delegations abroad - one of the most visible aspects of relations with the outside world - was a particular focus for occasional mutterings of discontent. Parliamentary questions on this issue were periodically raised and even Jawara's overseas visits - usually exempt from such criticism - came under scrutiny in 1993/4. The cost of the visits were the subject of press speculation and Sheriff Dibba raised the question of expense in the House of Representatives. In a (largely successful) rejoinder, however, the government issued figures and stressed that Jawara - in using scheduled flights - not only kept costs well below that of chartering or purchasing an aircraft but travelled at "great discomfort to himself to promote the country's interests."²³² A related - and perhaps more important - concern centred upon the amount of time Jawara spent overseas, particularly during his chairmanship of regional organisations.²³³ Though aware of the criticism²³⁴ Jawara made few obvious gestures of appeasement.

Jawara's use of popular concerns over sovereignty was not confined to enhancing the image of the PPP but extended to discrediting the opposition. For example, towards the end of 1986 Jawara - taking advantage of his annual meet the farmers tour - alleged that the recently formed Gambia People's Party had raised a D3m loan from a foreigner (believed to be Chief Nzeribe, a former Nigerian senator and wealthy businessman) to be received in three instalments, the first of which had already been accepted. The conditions of what he called the "sale" were that, in the event of a GPP victory at the next election, "all funds and other moneys coming into The Gambia would be channelled through this foreigner rather than the Central Bank and that all contracts of up to £15m would be handed over to this one man." Whether or not the allegations were true (and the new party failed to produce a categorical denial) Jawara's portrayal of the GPP as willing to "mortgage the independence and the institutions" of The Gambia²³⁵ and his dubbing of the GPP as the "Greedy

²³¹ This was in spite of attempts to keep costs down with, for example, the continued absence of a mission in Addis Ababa due to "financial constraints" (*The Gambia Weekly*, 28 July 1989, p 1). Occasional economy measures (usually at the prompting of the IMF) were also instituted; in 1985, for example the Washington Embassy was combined with the UN mission in New York and personnel numbers in other missions were reduced. *Proceedings of the Fourth meeting in the 1884/85 Legislative session, July 1985 Sitting*, (Banjul, Government Printer), p 27.

²³² *The Gambia Weekly*, 24 December 1993, p 3.

²³³ During the author's stay in The Gambia Jawara was absent for prolonged periods, provoking some adverse comment particularly when he opted to postpone his annual Meet the Farmers tour.

²³⁴ Illustrated, in part, by a change of emphasis in public statements. In 1989 for example Jawara argued that "while the image that The Gambia enjoys in international circles should interest us, the primary concerns of my Government lie in concrete, practical and down-to-earth achievements that will make The Gambia a better place to live in for all of us." *Presidential Address Delivered by His Excellency Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara at the State Opening of Parliament on Wednesday, 6th December, 1989*, Sessional Paper No 2 of 1989 (Banjul, Government Printer, 1989), p 16. That popular concerns were not allayed by such assurances was perhaps reflected in Yahya Jammeh's focus on the issue of trips abroad following the coup. At one press conference, for example, he argued that Jawara "would be paid as though on official trips, just to go and play golf" and stated that "there has never been a President who will leave his country in time of crises just to go and play golf." *Daily Observer*, 27 September 1994, p 10.

²³⁵ *The Voice of the People*, p 148.

People's Party" struck a chord with many Gambians.²³⁶

To complete this discussion it is important to explain Jawara's reluctance to use some of the alternative tactics (discussed above) in order to consolidate his position. First, his distinct lack of enthusiasm for artificially creating enemies, in order to promote national unity and popular support, was attributable to the fact that these functions were fulfilled far more effectively by the position of The Gambia vis-à-vis Senegal. Added to this was The Gambia's need to make friends rather than enemies - a fact which also limited the regime's use of scapegoating (exploiting or creating resentment against economically active, resident, foreigners). Jawara's reluctance to use scapegoating further reflected his unwillingness to disrupt the local economy, although towards the end of PPP rule there emerged signs that this stance was under review. By the 1990's Gambian resentment over the ever-growing influx of foreigners²³⁷ was at an all time high. Thus, despite the expulsion of some six-hundred illegal West African aliens in 1992,²³⁸ articles in the Gambian press²³⁹ continued to give voice to the widely-held belief that foreigners were responsible not only for the upsurge in violent crime but also that they increased unemployment and engaged in "dubious business practices." A further commonly expressed complaint among Gambians was that foreigners found it far easier to acquire scarce land than local people. The government's response - outlined in the National Population Policy - was to promise strict enforcement of the immigration act, the establishment of a border patrol unit and the amendment of national ID card regulations to ensure that applicants proved their citizenship.²⁴⁰ By the time the PPP regime was overthrown however little appreciable change in the numbers or position of aliens could be discerned.

Finally, the use of international linkages to provide patronage was tempered by the aid imperative. While diplomatic postings were usefully employed to reward the faithful or banish the potentially troublesome²⁴¹ the number of political appointees was kept below that found in many African states. Above all the PPP needed experienced people to represent the country abroad in order to maximise aid. The PPP's ability to choose the members of foreign delegations was,

²³⁶ Of course this was a tactic open not only to the PPP but to the opposition as well. However, apart from PDOIS's largely ineffective attempts to portray the PPP as pursuing neo-colonialist policies, it was not one seized upon with any obvious enthusiasm.

²³⁷ In 1998 the Department of Information and Broadcasting published *The Gambia Population Newsletter* which estimated the number of non-nationals in The Gambia at 12% (in Banjul the number was 25%). Moreover whereas the Gambian population was increasing at an approximate annual rate of 3.7% that of non-nationals was increasing at an annual rate of 7.9%. The figures for 1993 (1983) were as follows: Senegal, 79,252 (32,385); Guinea-Bissau, 9,010 (5,626); Guinea-Conakry, 26,204 (12,599); Mauritania, 2,208 (1,828); Mali, 5,807 (4,295). *The Point*, 13 December 1993, p 10.

²³⁸ *West Africa*, 17-23 August 1992, p 1412.

²³⁹ See for example *The Point*, 28 June 1993, p 5 and 30 August 1993, p 12.

²⁴⁰ *Newsmouth*, August 1993, p 5.

²⁴¹ An example of the former being HR Monday Jr., an influential civil servant who was appointed High Commissioner to London in 1987, and examples of the latter including Sheriff Dibba, who became Ambassador in charge of negotiations with the EEC in 1972 (see Chapter three) and Force Commander N'Dow N'Jie, appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France following his resignation from the army.

however, subject to fewer constraints and - particularly in view of the generous per diem allowances - provided a useful source of patronage.

Political Imperatives in Sierra Leone.

When the APC acceded to office Sierra Leone had been independent for a number of years and all the straightforward foreign policy initiatives such as joining the UN - undertaken by the PPP to positive effect - had already been implemented. As a result the APC, if it wished to accrue comparable benefits of increased prestige and legitimacy at home, had no choice but to engage in international diplomacy with a much higher profile.

During the initial years of the regime this was attempted albeit on a decidedly inconsistent, and not particularly successful, basis. The APC's piecemeal approach reflected, in part, Sierra Leone's small size; a shortage of qualified personnel, lack of facilities and limited access to information were all painfully apparent.²⁴² Nevertheless - and given that the PPP, with even less resources, had pursued a reasonably consistent foreign policy - it is important to stress an additional factor, namely the political elite's lack of interest in, or commitment to, the development of foreign policy.

From a survival perspective this lack of commitment had mixed results. On the one hand the APC failed to reap the domestic benefits of a consistent and rational foreign policy designed to raise Sierra Leone's international profile. On the other, the minimal attention devoted to foreign policy enabled Stevens to devote more time to pressing domestic matters.²⁴³ Added to this, the absence of widespread popular concern over foreign policy issues meant that the APC's corresponding lack of concern did not automatically translate into a positive loss of popularity. Plus, the fact that unconcern often resulted in a lack of knowledge about the broad trend of foreign policy meant that an occasional "bold stroke" tended to be judged on its own merits and not on the basis of whether, or how, it contributed to a foreign policy designed to promote the country's image abroad.

During the early years of his rule in particular, Stevens reacted to issues of international or regional importance on a determinedly *ad hoc* basis. Most were largely ignored.²⁴⁴ Others were judged on their potential for producing short term domestic benefits. To give an example, Sierra Leone's policy²⁴⁵ towards the Nigerian civil war showed marked sympathy for the secessionist's

²⁴² See Sesay, *op. cit.*, 1978, pp 177, 197-98 for further details.

²⁴³ Sesay (*ibid.*, pp 181-85) has shown how Stevens, in the first five years of his rule, left all but the most important decisions to the foreign ministry. Added to this, it was not until 1973 that Stevens felt sufficiently secure at home to undertake extensive overseas travel.

²⁴⁴ On Rhodesia for example, Stevens simply said "we are preoccupied with internal affairs and will take our cue from countries more intimately connected with the matter." (*West Africa*, 20 July 1968, p 846.) Again, on the question of Angola, Ajene has shown how Sierra Leone took her cues from the OAU until forced to do otherwise. See Ajene, *op. cit.*, pp 287-93.

²⁴⁵ Details from *West Africa*, 25 January 1969, p 107 and 20 September 1969, p 1130.

cause (though did not include formal recognition of Biafra). While this stance certainly raised Sierra Leone's international profile it won Stevens few legitimacy-boosting accolades abroad. The pro-Biafran stand was widely resented - not least because it did nothing to bring about a resolution of the conflict - and was received with hostility from the Nigerians and their supporters (including the British and the majority of African states which supported the federal government). Given this - presumably anticipated - outcome one must assume that Stevens' approach was at least partly based upon an expectation of popular approval at home. In Freetown there was much sympathy for the Biafran cause.²⁴⁶

A second instance of Stevens' manipulation of foreign policy had a much narrower target group. Thus, his partiality for radical rhetoric, while important for aid purposes, also served to appease the younger, leftist faction in the APC party. Strong anti-colonial statements (though rarely signalling concrete policy departures) were particularly favoured. In May 1970, at the APC's national delegate's conference, for example, Stevens elaborated upon the need for a "cultural revolution" to "remould the pseudo-Western type society that has developed in our midst as a result of years of alien rule."²⁴⁷ The extension of diplomatic relations to communist countries served a similar purpose.²⁴⁸

While pursuing new relationships Stevens was careful to emphasise and maintain his links with the West, partly for aid purposes but also to reassure APC moderates (not to mention the urban populace) of Sierra Leone's non-aligned status.²⁴⁹ In doing so he recognised that opportunities for manipulating the external environment were open not only to him but, albeit to a lesser extent, to the opposition as well. This was brought home in 1970 when Ibrahim Taqi of the NDP argued that Stevens' contacts with Communist countries - illustrated by the attendance of Soviet, Chinese and East German delegates at the APC conference - made "sane people" wonder if the Prime Minister was "going Red."²⁵⁰ Stevens' awareness of the potentially adverse impact of such a charge - both at home and abroad - was illustrated by his subsequent response to a statement by a British Conservative MP, Harold Soref, in the House of Commons suggesting that Sierra Leone and Guinea

²⁴⁶ For details see Sesay, *op. cit.*, 1978, pp 277, 281-82.

²⁴⁷ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 444. It should be noted that the need to placate potentially troublesome groups lessened as Stevens strengthened his hold on power.

²⁴⁸ In general terms the widening and strengthening of diplomatic relations - by 1980 (according to *West Africa*, 23 June 1980, p 1127) Sierra Leone was represented "by a total of eighteen High Commissions and Embassies, a number of consulates" and a permanent mission at the UN - did not serve to strengthen the regime's popular support as it had in The Gambia. As the economy deteriorated the cost of the missions was increasingly a focus for resentment and in 1981 was one of the factors identified by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress as responsible for the economic decline.

²⁴⁹ While Sierra Leoneans' sensitivity over issues of sovereignty and political independence never reached Gambian levels, Stevens would nevertheless have won few friends had he appeared unduly influenced by the communist world. Accordingly, close relations with West Germany balanced out relations with East Germany and the same was true of relations with South and North Korea.

²⁵⁰ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1970-1971, B 444.

would become a future "bridgehead" for communist powers on Africa's West coast. Although the British government could hardly be held responsible Stevens protested and was duly gratified with an apology from the British High Commissioner.²⁵¹

Undoubtedly the most sustained and consistent interest Stevens displayed in foreign affairs occurred during his term as OAU chairman in 1981. The potentially legitimising effects of such a high-profile post were, however, undermined by preceding events, particularly Stevens' controversial decision to hold the OAU Heads of State Conference in Freetown.²⁵² Stevens' decision to give the go-ahead for the conference appeared heavily influenced by the personal prestige and gratification such an event would bring,²⁵³ certainly the exorbitant cost of the whole affair,²⁵⁴ at a time when Sierra Leoneans were suffering food shortages and price increases, suggests that a renewal of popular support was not uppermost in his mind.

The hostility which greeted the news that Sierra Leone was to host the conference²⁵⁵ - encapsulated by the popular slogan "OAU for you, IOU for me" - forced Stevens to implement a damage limitation exercise. His concern was heightened by events in Liberia where the hostility generated by the cost of the OAU conference had played some part in a subsequent military coup. A public relations campaign - portraying all the improvements as necessary anyway or as an important boost to the tourist trade - was launched. Ministers were despatched to reassure those areas (outside the capital and the east part of Freetown) which gained little, that their turn would come. And finally the Broadcasting Service relayed broadcasts urging people to participate in the summit preparations and stressing the honour of playing host. These efforts, combined with a renewed clamp-down on the press and an increased police presence on the streets, ensured that criticism was subdued.

Perhaps, during Stevens tenure as OAU chairman, Sierra Leoneans found some satisfaction in their country's new-found status and their President's prominent role. Sierra Leone played host to seven conferences in the ensuing year and Stevens travelled widely,²⁵⁶ spending much time attempting to help resolve the problems of Western Sahara and Chad. In succeeding years however Stevens' interest in using foreign affairs to cultivate respect abroad and subsequently at home

²⁵¹ *West Africa*, 24 December 1971, p 1527 and 7 January 1972, p 24.

²⁵² Details of the conference are taken from *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1979-1980, B 637; 1980-1981, B 611 and *West Africa*, 6 August 1979, p 1401; 30 June 1980, p 1171 and 11 February 1980, p 281.

²⁵³ Not to mention the sudden expansion of contracts to be distributed.

²⁵⁴ Although the final total was put at Le123.1m (which included the cost of new villas for the Heads of State; extensions to existing hotels and the construction of a new one; improvements to the airport; restoration of the jetty at Government Wharf; improved roads and street lighting etc.) there were many additional hidden costs. For example new ferries from the Japanese were paid for by an additional long-term soft loan and some spending was disguised under ministry budgets. *West Africa*, 6 August 1979, p 1404 and 30 June 1980, p 1170.

²⁵⁵ The Fourah Bay College publication - *Frontline* - noted that "the acquisition of such fantastic loans for an objective which has not got a place even among the least of our priorities was a big shock and utter disappointment." Sections of the press were also critical. *West Africa*, 30 June 1980, p 1171.

²⁵⁶ See *West Africa*, 22 June 1989, p 1397.

subsided once more. His preoccupation with using the international sphere in alternative (often contradictory) ways re-emerged.

One such use, operative during the early years of the regime, was the creation of external threats. Stevens' intention was to create a diversion from domestic problems and to rally popular support. In retrospect he had more success with the first of these aims; the threats created were generally too short-lived (in contrast to the permanent background threat from Senegal in The Gambia) to serve as a basis for long-term unified support.

In the early 1970's Stevens concentrated upon the USA as suitable enemy material. That bilateral relations - influenced by the USA's perception of the APC as a radical socialist party - were already poor (bilateral aid was suspended in 1968) influenced his choice. One interesting incident occurred in late 1970 when, in a blaze of publicity, the government accused the American State Department of ordering £50,000 worth of rice on behalf of the UDP leader, the objective being to "make the commodity available on the market at a price well below that offered by the Rice Corporation" thus undermining confidence in the government and boosting support for the UDP.²⁵⁷ The ensuing demonstrations (organised by the APC Youth League) during which American imperialism was condemned and the US flag burned fulfilled a useful diversionary function.

Stevens attempted to extend the shelf-life of the American threat with accusations of complicity in the attempted coups of 1970 and 1971 (see Chapter two). These allegations played a significant role in legitimising Stevens' decision to declare a State of Emergency and ban the UDP. On October 1970 for example Stevens stated that "It has become abundantly clear ... that the troublemakers amongst us are being supported with money provided by outsiders whose sole aim is to make our country a puppet and a satellite. We must thank God that we discovered this conspiracy in time, that we have succeeded in breaking and exposing it, and that our country has been saved from the hands of her enemies."²⁵⁸ Subsequently however, the need for US aid was judged more pressing than the need for an external enemy and Stevens moved to improve relations.

An alternative method of cultivating popular support centred upon the manipulation of resentment against economically active foreigners resident in Sierra Leone. Based as it was upon pre-existing popular concerns this technique had the potential to be a rather more productive survival resource. The regime's targets included foreigners active in the retail trade (mainly Lebanese and Indian) and West African petty traders, fishermen etc. Among the early scapegoats

²⁵⁷ The details of this incident are described in Sesay, *op. cit.*, 1981, p 38. Sesay's interpretation of the incident as a genuine attempt to overthrow the APC regime is, at the very least, open to question. Not only is it doubtful that the US would have gone to such lengths to interfere in a state as essentially "unimportant" as Sierra Leone, it should be remembered that it was the government who conducted the investigations and made the subsequent allegations (at a time when other dubious security allegations were being made). Moreover, and as Sesay himself notes, the accusations were "convenient" in that they made it simpler for the government to ban the UDP.

²⁵⁸ Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp 335-36.

were Ghanaian fishermen; their large-scale expulsion in 1968 followed local demonstrations objecting to Ghanaian competition.²⁵⁹ In 1969 the APC widened its net and reintroduced the Non-Citizens (Trade and Business) Act (first passed by Albert Margai and revoked by the NRC) which restricted foreigners from various areas of the retail trade.²⁶⁰ Given the foreign domination of this sector and the hostility it provoked²⁶¹ this was a clear attempt by the APC to reassure citizens of its efforts on their behalf.

However, by the end of Stevens' rule foreigners still dominated all aspects of trade. Accounting for this, it is possible that Stevens was influenced by the warnings, sounded from various quarters, about the problems an attempt at mass indigenisation might face.²⁶² The desirability of amicable relations with foreign governments may also have been a factor, notably in the case of resident Guineans (given Guinea's importance to the survival of the APC regime in the early 1970's).²⁶³ Most importantly, however, Stevens recognised that by maintaining the status quo he could avoid the creation of a potentially powerful body of indigenous traders; foreigners' non-citizen status and consequent insecurity was far preferable.

Since the first few years of Momoh's presidency were dominated by economic imperatives, the manipulation of international linkages - for reasons other than the alleviation of economic problems - took a back-seat. Particularly during the earliest phase of his rule (when relations with donors remained intact) the need to remain on friendly terms with potential aid sources precluded the pursuance of contradictory imperatives - an obvious example being the creation of external enemies. Indeed, even when Momoh was presented with an apparently genuine instance of external interference - the Silver Sea Affair²⁶⁴ - he made no attempt to use it for either diversionary or national unity-inducing purposes. This episode involved the activities of thirteen British mercenaries (captured in France on February 24 1986) who, it was alleged, were *en route* to Sierra Leone to oust Momoh, perhaps on behalf of an external opposition group, the SLDP. Momoh's response was conciliatory - he accepted that the British government had had no hand in the

²⁵⁹ *West Africa*, 9 November 1968, p 1331 and 14 February 1968, p 1490. A Government statement argued that Sierra Leoneans were being excluded from fishing. Later, in an apparent attempt to maximise local resentment (and thus the political capital to be accrued) the Government argued that the fishermen had posed a threat to security. For the same reason the Government had been busy maximising resentment against Ghana for her non-co-operation over the extradition of Major Jumu (see Chapter two).

²⁶⁰ See *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1969-1970, B 600 for further details.

²⁶¹ The hostility ranged from reports of physical assaults on foreign traders (*West Africa*, 15 November 1969, p 1387) to a demand from the Sierra Leone Petty Traders Association that all Nigerian, Ghanaian, Gambian and other African traders should be asked to leave (noted in Clapham, *op. cit.*, 1976, p 108).

²⁶² These included a report commissioned by the Central Bank (details of which are to be found in *West Africa*, 2 June 1972, p 707) which noted the lack of local entrepreneurial skills and capital and the comments of the President of the Chamber of Commerce, HEB John, who argued that measures such as the closure of expatriate businesses might actually increase unemployment.

²⁶³ Clapham (*op. cit.*, p 108) has noted the significant increase in the number of Guinean traders "in the five years after 1969."

²⁶⁴ Details are taken from *West Africa*, 3 March 1986, p 501 and 24 March 1986, p 648.

operation - and concentrated upon downplaying the entire incident. According to *West Africa* he said "the affair was not too serious an issue to worry about" and "implored all concerned to forget about the issue, concentrate on nation building and ponder on the numerous economic problems facing the country."

A second constraint stemming from Momoh's preoccupation with the economy was the limited amount of available time to devote to other aspects of foreign relations. Time constraints precluded the pursuance of an active foreign policy designed to boost Momoh's domestic standing;²⁶⁵ at both major summit meetings in 1987 (ECOWAS at Abuja in early July and OAU in Addis Ababa later the same month) he was represented by his second Vice President.²⁶⁶ Linked to this there was little or no attempt to design a rational foreign policy to rescue Sierra Leone's tarnished international image. As one observer noted, "foreign affairs were a mixture of events and policies guided less by a predetermined policy than by autonomous events."²⁶⁷

Momoh's failure to improve his country's reputation was also the result of clashing political imperatives. In spite of the damage wrought upon Sierra Leone's standing, Momoh continued to use top diplomatic appointments and other postings abroad as a source of patronage. Early in 1987 - despite an assertion that "our foreign representation should not be based on ethnicity, political patronage, friendship, reward for personal favours or ... 'jobs for the boys'"²⁶⁸ - Momoh announced a major diplomatic reshuffle²⁶⁹ as part of an attempt to assert his authority and control over the distribution of foreign jobs.²⁷⁰ Overseas travel also continued to play an important role within the wider patronage network. As one report noted, the continued economic deterioration (not to mention IMF disapproval) failed to deter "one delegation after another from roaming around the world."²⁷¹

²⁶⁵ The only exceptions were Momoh's visits to Nigeria and the US (see above). While these visits were primarily economically motivated they were deemed by international observers to be a diplomatic success and - especially given President Babangida's subsequent visit which was reported to have aroused a high level of local interest - were well received at home.

²⁶⁶ *West Africa*, 17 August 1987, p 1566.

²⁶⁷ *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1988-1989, B 178.

²⁶⁸ *West Africa*, 15 January 1988, p 261.

²⁶⁹ See *West Africa*, 5 January 1987, p 39 for further details.

²⁷⁰ Nevertheless, as conditions deteriorated foreign posts presumably became rather less sought after. In 1989 most High Commissioners and Ambassadors travelled to Freetown to protest at the government's failure to provide sufficient foreign exchange to pay salaries or even bills. Six ambassadors reportedly complained that they had not received their salaries for eight months. *West Africa*, 13-19 March 1989, pp 418-19.

²⁷¹ *West Africa*, 20-26 March 1989, p 436. Excessive travel came under government scrutiny in 1989 (see for example *West Africa*, 27 March-2 April 1989, p 499 and 12-18 June 1989, p 958), apparently in response to both IMF and domestic disapproval. In March, Momoh declared himself disturbed by the frequency of trips abroad when "we should be putting in the utmost of our services to this nation" and warned cabinet ministers and other government officials that in future they would have to submit "comprehensive reports" concerning their participation in overseas conferences to the cabinet. In June of the same year Momoh informed Parliament that "all overseas travels would be approved purely on the basis of their profitability to the state." In practice however, overseas travel was not dramatically reduced and government officials continued to benefit from the per diem allowance.

Comparative Overview.

This chapter has examined the three featured leaders' efforts to mobilise externally-generated resources (economic, military and political) as a means of furthering their domestic political ends.

Implicit in the discussion on material resources were two assumptions: first, the recognition that although each state can and should be categorised as "dependent," this did not obviate the importance of each leaders' drive to maximise the generation of resources and second, that there existed a difference in the degree and implications of aid-dependency in each state.

Taking the latter assumption it was seen that the contrasting worth, and nature of, domestic resources in Sierra Leone and The Gambia exerted at least some impact upon each state's relations with the outside world and, linked to this, each leader's domestic priorities. Jawara, operating with a minimal, mono-crop domestic resource base was compelled to seek external financial assistance to ensure economic viability. Throughout PPP rule aid was a pre-requisite for The Gambia's very economic survival; the multi-lateralisation of dependency (from a near-exclusive reliance on the former colonial power) may have been portrayed and interpreted as a net gain in independence but did not signal any real change in The Gambia's *overall* reliance on external resources. In Sierra Leone, by way of contrast, the possession of a more extensive domestic resource base, notably diamonds, lessened (though certainly did not negate) the importance of international aid, simultaneously providing the APC with a wider range of manipulable external linkages and hence greater opportunities to maximise resources.²⁷²

If Jawara was under greater pressure to comply with international expectations than his Sierra Leonean counterparts it is important to stress that this characteristic did not achieve prominence as a survival issue until the mid-1980s. Prior to then, Jawara's success in courting assistance was no doubt primarily attributable to his domestic approach²⁷³ and yet it is important to reiterate that, to a large extent, external aid was an important by-product of (rather than the driving force behind) this approach. Jawara's efforts to retain a multi-party system, sustain ethnic harmony or impose restraints on corruption primarily reflected a combination of personal integrity and domestic survival imperatives, not external dictates. Other choices - the adoption of a generally moderate pro-Western outlook, Jawara's endeavours in the field of human rights, and the manipulation of different facets of the national "character" - were more explicitly intended for international consumption but, crucially, did not conflict with the domestic survival imperative. Taken as a whole, domestic policy (including the ways in which assistance was utilised²⁷⁴) was not

²⁷² See Chapter one for a discussion of how, under Stevens, these links were mediated through the resident Lebanese and Afro-Lebanese community and subsequently, under Momoh, through alternative foreign investors.

²⁷³ Although other factors - notably small state size - were also important

²⁷⁴ Outlined above.

subservient to the need for aid.

The coincidence between domestic strategy and international expectations was not replicated in Sierra Leone. Nevertheless - and despite the fact that massive corruption and an increasingly authoritarian political system were two factors explaining Stevens' lesser success, in *per capita* terms, in attracting aid - it would be inaccurate to suggest that he was unconcerned about courting foreign sources of assistance or that he enjoyed minimal success. Like Jawara, Stevens played a prominent, often opportunistic role in attempting to maximise aid through diversification, particularly through the modification of foreign policy announcements. As in The Gambia such a tactic proved relatively innocuous at home, failing to interfere or conflict with the survival imperative. Likewise, Stevens' efforts to court aid from those states without a reputation for strict monitoring of aid allocations endowed him with substantial freedom of action to use assistance to strengthen his domestic position.

If the implications of the two states' differential degree of dependence remained obscured over many years, they emerged with full force in the mid-1980s alongside the hardening of the IMF's stance and the international insistence on adherence to a range of conditionalities. Half-hearted and partial attempts at economic reform, hitherto pursued by both states, were no longer sufficient to guarantee a continued inward flow of resources. Each state, however, responded quite differently to a similar situation.

The Gambia's reliance on externally-generated resources gave Jawara little option but to implement structural adjustment. The only apparent alternative was a withdrawal of foreign aid and probable economic collapse. Implementing structural adjustment was certainly a gamble - entailing some loss of control over the distribution of resources and the risk of an urban backlash - but in the final analysis Jawara did not enjoy the luxury of choice.

In Sierra Leone, Momoh's quite different response was attributable to two factors. First, although he no doubt desired IMF credits (and conceded some reforms to that end) Sierra Leone's comparatively lesser dependence on externally generated resources bought the APC both some time and a certain leeway. This safety net, largely absent in The Gambia, could not endure indefinitely - sooner or later Momoh would probably have been compelled to accede to IMF conditionalities - but in the short to medium term undermined his political will to pursue economic reform.

Second, and linked to this, was Momoh's comparatively greater dependence on the control of domestic resource allocation to ensure his continued survival. Unlike Jawara, Momoh could not contemplate the political consequences of full adherence to an IMF-inspired reform programme. Thus, although the external world may have possessed greater leverage over The Gambia, in one sense externally generated aid conditionalities were less burdensome in that state than in Sierra

Leone. The PPP's ability to survive meaningful structural adjustment reflected a range of factors,²⁷⁵ not least the fact that Jawara was less dependent on those aspects of the system that the IMF was intent on "correcting." In Sierra Leone, Momoh had to forego external assistance because he could not countenance the consistent implementation of IMF conditionalities; any such attempt would pose a far greater threat to his survival than to Jawara's. This was particularly the case at the elite level where any externally imposed restrictions on Momoh's ability to distribute resources and facilitate accumulation spelled disaster.

In one sense Sierra Leone's refusal to abide by international conditions, and subsequent ostracism, enhanced rather than reduced her dependency. Whereas Jawara's gamble with structural adjustment more than paid off in terms of the generation of resources - resources which, despite restrictions, could then be used to reinforce the PPP's position - Momoh was compelled to enter into unsatisfactory agreements with less than ideal partners (NR SCIPA for example) and to rely on goodwill grants from bilateral donors. That these grants sometimes appeared to be the sole buffer between Sierra Leone and complete economic collapse (UNDP emergency aid to ensure airport safety standards provides a good example) demonstrated Momoh's desperate need for additional resources and the likelihood that he would have to come to terms with the IMF.

For both regimes, the external environment constituted not only a source of financial, but also military, assistance. Outside military assistance constituted an important aspect of the two regimes' survival, albeit more so in the case of the PPP. The Senegalese elite's willingness to assist in 1981 - a reflection of their fear that Sanyang would prove a rather less accommodating leader than Jawara - was central in the defeat of the coup attempt. Thereafter, until 1989, the Senegalese presence was crucial in protecting The Gambia's internal and external security, and ensuring continued military subordination to civilian rule.

In Sierra Leone external military assistance played a much less thoroughgoing role in the APC's survival but was important in 1971 when Guinean assistance facilitated the defeat of the coup attempt and, until March 1973, helped to safeguard the APC's internal security. The only other instance of military assistance - provided by Nigeria and Guinea in response to the RUF - proved important in slowing down the rebel advance but in the longer term failed to compensate for Momoh's shortcomings in the economic sphere (including his inability to come to terms with IMF conditions).

Beyond economic and military assistance, the utility of the external world extended to providing a range of resources which served to strengthen each regimes' political position, to boost their domestic acceptability. Having said that, the extraction of political resources was far more apparent in The Gambia, a difference attributable to two main factors. First was Jawara's

²⁷⁵ Analysed in Chapter one.

comparatively greater preoccupation with consolidating popular support (accounted for in Chapter one). Second, was his comparative advantage in the form of popular concerns about The Gambia's viability as an independent state. Appreciating the utility of the external environment as a means of alleviating these concerns Jawara devoted more time than either Stevens or Momoh to pursuing a foreign policy designed to enhance The Gambia's regional and international image, and to her emphasise her viability and independence. Particularly productive were those efforts (for example Jawara's espousal of the cause of human rights) which enhanced both aid receipts and domestic political capital.

Although Gambian disquiet over issues of state viability receded over time (in part due to Jawara's efforts), at least during the early years of PPP rule it provided the regime with an important political resource largely absent in Sierra Leone. Thus, although Stevens did make occasional use of the external environment to court specific groups, even such limited efforts - and it is important not to exaggerate either their occurrence or the political capital accrued - were rarely attempted after the first few years. No doubt Stevens, and later Momoh, could have done more but their lesser need for popular support helped determine their approach. Alternative domestic imperatives - the distribution of diplomatic postings as patronage, for example - were comparatively more important than image-making overseas. Rarely did these two imperatives overlap; the hosting of the OAU conference, for instance, which had the potential to enhance Sierra Leone's profile, speedily descended into an unedifying competition for contracts and political favours, failing to boost the APC's reputation either at home or abroad.

Even more than Stevens, Momoh devoted minimal attention to the external sphere as anything other than a source of material resources and, later, regional military assistance. This need for assistance clearly militated against the creation of external enemies as a route to domestic support; the primary emphasis was on making friends not enemies, as indeed it was in The Gambia. Nevertheless both Momoh and his predecessor did opt to make accrue maximum political capital from deteriorating relations with the "villainous" IMF, successfully (if temporarily) diverting attention from the APC's own failings. In contrast, Jawara's success in coming to terms with IMF conditionalities reduced both the need for, and the wisdom of pursuing, a similar course.

Instead Jawara focused upon the provision of a second political good, the protection of sovereignty. Although linked to the questions of viability noted above, location *vis-à-vis* Senegal provided Jawara with a second important resource. Before 1981, Jawara's ability to protect Gambian interests - preventing any real diminution of The Gambia's sovereignty - played an important role in legitimising PPP rule. Jawara's success in courting external financial assistance enhanced his efforts in this direction, disproving the widespread pre-independence belief that economic federation with Senegal constituted The Gambia's only hope of economic viability.

After 1981 The Gambia's location was rendered a decreasingly important legitimisation

resource, a function of Jawara's undisputed ability to protect domestic interests and the concomitant dissipation of local fears. Nevertheless, Jawara's continued inability to make any real concessions to Senegal - a reflection of his reluctance to resurrect potentially damaging domestic anxieties - resulted, inevitably, in the dissolution of the Confederation. The dissolution not only failed to strengthen the regime - sovereignty fears did not re-emerge given the by now extremely remote likelihood that Senegal would opt for forcible intervention - but, more crucially, removed the PPP's security guarantee.

If The Gambia's location was rendered a decreasingly important legitimisation resource, its significance in comparison to that of Sierra Leone is nevertheless worth stressing. The lesser importance of sovereignty fears in that state were accounted for above, and although Stevens made some attempts to create threats, or at least respond "creatively" to situations as they occurred, these efforts (notably the conduct of relations with Liberia in 1971 and 1983) were not consistently sustained and in retrospect provided little more than a brief diversion. Neither Liberia nor Guinea (even following the 1971 intervention) cast a shadow comparable to that of Senegal over her diminutive neighbour.

A partial exception to this occurred with the 1991 rebel uprising, supported by the NPFL, and with this in mind it is appropriate to close this chapter with some thoughts on the external world not as a resource, but as a threat. As already noted, stringent economic conditionalities from the mid-1980s threatened the survival of both featured regimes, although more so the APC. The tables were partly turned in terms of security given the Senegalese threat to the maintenance of Gambian territorial integrity. Nevertheless it is important not to overstate this; in retrospect Senegal posed less of a challenge to the PPP than did international economic conditionalities to both regimes. Thus, Jawara's adaptive and perceptive approach, Senegal's restraint and wider external concerns, and African states' general adherence to the principle of non-interference all served to lessen the threat.

From a comparative perspective two further factors suggest the importance of not overstating the threat from, or constraints imposed by, Senegal. First was Jawara's observable freedom of action in balancing the interests of his neighbour with those of his people, a function (in part) of Senegal's interests in The Gambia. As long as Jawara did not overtly undermine these interests, particularly in the sphere of security, the Senegalese elite were quite willing to tolerate (even assist) him. Senegal desired a moderate, trustworthy Gambian President almost as much as Jawara desired an external patron. In Sierra Leone, by way of contrast, Guinea's interest in Sierra Leone was far more nebulous; to retain the Guinean presence after 1971 Stevens was compelled to make much greater efforts to maintain friendly relations, even to the extent of tolerating the APC's radical wing.

Second, the threat posed by Senegal receded over time, reflecting The Gambia's success in

proving her viability. In Sierra Leone, by way of contrast, the gravest threat occurred towards the end, rather than the beginning, of APC rule. The RUF, assisted by Charles Taylor's NPFL, played a key role in the APC's downfall.

In closing this chapter it is important to assess the impact of widespread moves towards democratisation ("encouraged" by international conditionalities) on the African continent. In The Gambia it was rather ironic that a coup occurred just at the time when Jawara's adherence to multi-partyism was in the process of being vindicated by the return to democracy in other African states. In retrospect however the PPP's survival prospects appeared little affected, one way or the other, by political changes elsewhere. Jammeh may have promised to introduce a "genuine" democratic system but this was clearly designed to maximise support - or at least minimise overt hostility - from both Gambians and the international community; more than anything it reflected the hitherto domestic and international acceptability of Jawara's adherence to multi-partyism. Intra-military factors rather than the broader (international or regional) political context were key to explaining the PPP's downfall.²⁷⁶ These factors were of such importance that they over-rode one possible constraint - probable international opprobrium - on military intervention.

In Sierra Leone Momoh's decision to resurrect the multi-party system was taken in response to internal rather than external demands. Given that aid disbursements had already ceased, the international community possessed minimal leverage over the APC; although it is certainly possible that Momoh hoped to benefit financially from acceding to popular demands it was domestic political, rather than external financial, considerations which shaped his approach. In any case the 1992 coup d'etat was the result of intra-military grievances and not high-minded military suspicions that Momoh was intending to manipulate, or even postpone, the elections.

²⁷⁶ Although the possibility of coup contagion (with Jammeh and his cohorts influenced, in particular, by the Strasser coup in Sierra Leone) was discussed in Chapter two.

CONCLUSION.

Adopting a broad conceptual framework - incorporating the threats or obstacles to survival, the resources available to counter those threats and the strategies designed to promote regime longevity - the intention of this study has been to explain and compare the prolonged political survival of the PPP and APC regimes.

The framework was devised in the context of an extensive theoretical literature, discussed at some length in the Introduction. Particular attention was focused upon those theories which, though flawed, have retained some explanatory power - dependency theory for example - and changing analyses of the post-colonial state. The importance of this process was attributable to the absence of any straightforward, immediately apparent solutions to the problem of explaining political survival. Taken alone, fixed variables such as the possession of an extensive domestic resource-base, state size or social composition clearly failed to account for one regime's survival or another's collapse, suggesting the importance of pursuing an alternative approach.

In this context the theoretical literature proved a useful, if limited, tool. Limited because no existing theory was able to definitively explain political survival. Useful because it helped to provide a broad picture of the changing conditions under which African political leaders have operated. These "conditions" encompassed both the constraints and threats leaders have been compelled to face as well as the opportunities and resources at their disposal. Regarding the former, for example, existing theories which highlighted, and helped to account for, prominent features of African political life including intense power struggles in the elite sphere, the difficulties of nurturing widespread legitimacy or the growing strength of civil society, provided an initial insight into why, for many leaders, political survival has remained an elusive goal.

If the theoretical literature provided a "point of entry" into the analysis of regime survival and assisted in the design of a conceptual framework, its utility did not extend much further. Accounting for this was the above-noted inability of existing analyses to explain political longevity. Acknowledging African nations' dependent status or depicting states as "soft" manifestly fails to reveal the factors explaining widely divergent political experiences. In retrospect, then, the primacy of unique local circumstances combined with independent variables (notably leadership skill) is clear. Thus, while it is certainly possible to identify some similarities in the challenges faced by African regimes the gravity of these challenges in particular states diverge, as do the efficacy (or not) of leadership responses. Likewise, different leaders not only possess different sets of resources but exploit what they have to greater or lesser effect. The conceptual framework was designed to accommodate, indeed highlight, these differences while remaining sensitive to the possibility of emergent similarities between just two states, The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

The following sections briefly reiterate the specific challenges to political survival in The Gambia and Sierra Leone, indicating those points at which one threat served to exacerbate another, and ranking them in order of importance. This process is then repeated for resources, with the final section providing a comparative overview of leadership strategies and their role in political survival.

Threats.

The Armed Forces.

Examining post-independent African states, the military clearly emerges as posing the most significant and consistent threat to political survival, and it is against this background one must seek to draw conclusions concerning the course of events (and non-events) in The Gambia and Sierra Leone. Specifically, it is important to identify whether the two regimes' prolonged success in avoiding military overthrow reflected the impact of their civilian control strategies, or whether their armed forces were somehow intrinsically less threatening than those elsewhere on the continent. In other words, did the circumstances prompting military intervention elsewhere mirror the reality on the ground in The Gambia and Sierra Leone?

Since both regimes eventually succumbed to military intervention the simple answer is yes, yet at the same time one must take account of changes over time. In each state the armed forces posed a differing level (and to some extent a different type) of threat at different historical junctures.

At the outset of APC and PPP rule, the two regimes faced a very different set of circumstances. For the APC the military threat was far more acute than for the PPP, a situation graphically illustrated by the fact that Stevens faced an initial coup attempt after just three years, in contrast to Jawara who remained unchallenged until 1981. Each regime's quite different inheritance played an important role in producing this disparity. The army Stevens inherited - politicised, divided, and with prior experience of successful intervention - bore little resemblance to the comparatively inexperienced and neutral Gambian Field Force bequeathed by the colonial power.

If each regime initially (and inescapably) inherited a more or less favourable set of circumstances, from that point on leadership strategies were central to explaining the course of civil-military relations. The situation in which each regime was placed had an important impact upon the nature of those strategies but certainly did not determine either them, or the subsequent level of military threat.

Thus, in 1968 Stevens faced a problematic situation which to some extent shaped his response. In order to have a realistic chance of survival he could not, to take the most obvious

example, have simply ignored the demands of those soldiers who had returned him to power. Nevertheless, he was far from a prisoner of circumstance. Stevens' approach was innovative and forward-looking; clever strategizing - notably the introduction of the Guinean factor, the creation of the ISU and the co-optation of the army Force Commander - helped to ensure the APC's survival but did not constitute an historically inevitable course.

Comparing this situation with that in The Gambia, four points are worth emphasising. Firstly, although Stevens was not a prisoner of circumstance Jawara certainly enjoyed a much greater freedom of action. His more favourable legacy, noted above, accounted for this. Secondly, this comparatively favourable legacy enabled Jawara to take a significantly less pro-active approach to maintaining Field Force subordination, and still survive. Third, this approach was no more historically inevitable than the course pursued by Stevens. As argued in Chapter two, Jawara's inheritance bore a strong resemblance to that of Albert Margai in Sierra Leone and yet, just as Margai's approach served to produce a politicised and divided army, a different response from Jawara could easily have altered the whole course of civil-military relations. And finally, a point I return to below, Jawara's passive approach (in terms of accommodating senior officers, for example) was just as significant to the maintenance of civilian control as was Stevens' more "hands-on" approach in Sierra Leone.

If proactive leadership strategies were crucial to establishing civilian control in Sierra Leone, more so than in The Gambia, how important were they to its maintenance over time? In particular, did the absence of attempted coups after 1974 (and before Momoh assumed office) indicate that the military threat receded with the passing of the years? Part of the evidence points to an affirmative response. Thus, it was during the early years of Stevens' rule that he opted to implement various measures of control - establishing the ISU or manipulating the ethnic composition of the officer corps for example - and there is no doubt that the APC regime was at its most vulnerable during this implementation stage and decreasingly so thereafter. Added to this, Stevens' progressively stronger position within the civilian sphere, not to mention his very longevity in office, further decreased the likelihood of military intervention. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that military subordination was - and remained throughout the period of APC rule - purely conditional. Conditional, that is, upon the APC's willingness and ability to pursue civilian control strategies, most notably the allocation of material reward. From this perspective, the military threat (almost imperceptibly) increased alongside the declining availability of resources. Stevens' ability to sustain the flow of resources was crucial to his survival. His successor - though initially blessed with a very strong basis of support among "his" men - failed to sustain the flow of resources and paid the price in 1992.

How then did this situation compare with that in The Gambia? Prior to 1981, Jawara made no attempt to implement any major, innovative, control strategies and to that extent the PPP

escaped the phases of vulnerability witnessed during the strategy implementation stage in Sierra Leone. Nevertheless it is possible to argue that, pre-1981, the Field Force was, albeit gradually and for the most part imperceptibly, increasingly inclined to protest, a reflection of the regime's inadequate strategizing and a misplaced confidence in the likelihood of continued civilian control. These features sat in stark contrast to the anxiety and resultant innovation witnessed in Sierra Leone. After 1981, The Gambia had an army for the first time and yet the military threat virtually disappeared - intervention was extremely unlikely in the face of opposition from the much larger, better equipped, Senegalese army. Nevertheless, following Senegal's departure in 1989 the threat gradually reasserted itself. Factors of enduring importance throughout APC rule - in particular the question of military satisfaction - now came to the fore in The Gambia.

If it is possible to identify important dissimilarities between the *level* of threat posed by the Gambian and Sierra Leonean armed forces over time, parallels can nevertheless be drawn concerning the specific *source* of the threat. In particular, the rank-and-file and junior officers posed a greater actual (as opposed to potential) threat than the senior ranks in both states. This was particularly true of The Gambia where no outward signs of significant, senior level dissatisfaction ever emerged. In Sierra Leone there were more evident changes over time. Nevertheless, although Force Commander Brigadier Bangura was implicated in the 1971 coup attempt, after that year (reflecting Stevens' efforts to block dissidents' access to the officer corps) coup plots and attempts, including that of 1992, were all planned and/or engineered by those lower down the military hierarchy. These observations should not be regarded as evidence of the impossibility of a senior-led challenge (certainly the three leaders would have been foolhardy to make any such assumption), but they do suggest that, in the context of the strategies pursued, the lower ranks were a more likely source of opposition.¹

Whether the source of the threat had any (and if so how much) impact upon its intensity is an interesting question. Certainly the threat from junior officers was far from negligible and yet it is likely that restive senior officers would have posed a much greater threat given their comparatively brighter prospects of garnering widespread military support than a relative unknown, as well as the greater likelihood of links with dissidents in the civilian elite sphere. Unfortunately it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from The Gambia and Sierra Leone. Certainly the only coup attempt which involved both senior officers and apparent links with civilians (the 1971 coup attempt in Sierra Leone) posed a potentially significant threat and yet its failure was due in part to Bangura's inability to win sufficient intra-army support. Equally, the 1992 and 1994 successful coups in each state suggest the inadvisability of placing too much emphasis on the source of the threat as a factor in its intensity.

¹ Although the factors producing this similarity (in terms of the strategies pursued and the difficulties faced) were rather different in each state, a point I return to below.

Factional conflict.

Following closely on the heels of the military, the second most important challenge faced by the three rulers centred upon the central mechanism of civilian political competition, factional conflict. As with the military threat, leadership survival did not reflect an unusually felicitous set of circumstances (although some factors no doubt militated in the three leaders' favour) but rather a shrewd and successful approach.

How, then, did the form, nature and intensity of factional conflict and elite-led challenge compare in the two states? The first point to note is that in The Gambia factional conflict within the PPP was comparatively less intense than the same phenomenon in Sierra Leone, a characteristic attributable to the multi-party system which gave disgruntled factions the opportunity to form political parties (the PPA, NCP and GPP were all splinter parties). In Sierra Leone the pre-1978 multi-party system ostensibly conferred the same opportunities, yet the fate of the UDP (a splinter of the APC) revealed that what Stevens gave with one hand he was likely to take away with the other.² To some extent the Gambian multi-party system provided an outlet - for the expression of unmet expectations, mounting frustrations and personal grievances³ - not present in Sierra Leone.

Nevertheless, it is important not to overstate this contrast. Intra-PPP conflict did exist and stemmed in part from the party's overwhelming electoral dominance. Throughout the period of PPP rule the party showed few signs of electoral weakness and was as least as secure, albeit for different reasons, as the APC pre-1978. This fact was not lost on aggrieved PPP members, some of whom chose not to enter the political wilderness but, like their APC counterparts, to engage in factional manoeuvres *within* the party.

What, then were the bases of factional cohesion and authority? Potentially significant factors included ethnic or other ties, access to independent financial resources and coercive capabilities (notably, ties to the military).

Regarding the last of these, during the early years of APC rule factional conflict can again be adjudged more threatening than the same phenomenon in The Gambia. Accounting for this was the legacy of a politicised and divided army. Thus, although civilian elites in both The Gambia and Sierra Leone had reason to feel aggrieved (particularly over issues of resource distribution) it was only in Sierra Leone that these grievances mirrored those of some sections of the military elite. For example, the Temne belief that they were being overlooked in favour of Creoles and to a lesser extent other Northern minority groups found an equivalence in Force Commander Bangura's

² Splinter parties later re-emerged with the reintroduction of multi-partyism but the regime failed to survive long enough to judge the implications of these developments or to compare them with the course of events in The Gambia.

³ Although for some - including the leader of the 1981 coup attempt - the system failed to offer satisfaction, a point I return to below.

resentment of Stevens' tendency to by-pass him in favour of his immediate subordinates (from the same minority groups). By way of contrast, in The Gambia it appeared unlikely that disaffected Mandinkas would find support from within an accommodated, primarily urban Wolof/Aku, Field Force officer corps.

Nevertheless, over time, the situation in the two states converged. In Sierra Leone, strategies designed to secure the loyalty of senior army officers, while not serving to de-politicise the military, did lessen the likelihood that disaffected civilians would be able to access the officer corps.

This remained the case when Momoh took office and was crucial to his survival in the immediate term.⁴ As a successor President, Momoh was compelled to face a situation of perhaps greater difficulty than either Stevens or Jawara. Desperately needing to stamp his mark of authority on existing factional networks (of which he inevitably had a much less intimate knowledge than his predecessor) Momoh faced an unenviable task. Officer loyalty greatly improved his survival chances but did not guarantee them. To survive in the long-term Momoh would have to establish control over the distribution of resources.

For all three leaders, controlling resources was imperative to prevent ambitious factions consolidating an independent resource-base. In this context, Jawara once again faced a rather simpler task than Stevens and Momoh, both of whom struggled to assert control over the distribution of formal and informal diamond-related opportunities. I return to this point, and the implications of the two states' divergent resource base, below.

If access to the military and material resources were two of the most significant indicators of factional strength, other variables - notably internal cohesion, frequently based on ethnic ties - also held potential importance. In both The Gambia and Sierra Leone some attempts to exploit ethnic identity (for example Dibba prior to his departure from the PPP and some of the UDP members prior to leaving the APC) were made, and yet two sets of factors militated against both their success and, in time, the perceived utility of ethnic ties. First there were those more or less fixed factors which militated against the productive use of ethnicity. These varied in the two states but common to both was small state size and hence a relatively small elite which facilitated (though did not guarantee) communication and conciliation, and helped prevent the crystallisation of ethnic identity as the primary organising principle of political relations. Second, leadership strategies - and particularly efforts in the direction of power sharing and accommodation - progressively discouraged the conduct of political relations on purely ethnic lines.⁵

Leadership strategies - whether concerned with civil-military relations, access to resources or ethnicity - designed to keep factional politics within relatively peaceful bounds are analysed

⁴ For example, military complicity in the planned 1987 coup was limited to low ranking NCO's and privates.

⁵ Although under Momoh there was a partial reverse in this trend, a point I return to below.

below. Important to note here, however, was the continuing importance of these strategies in safeguarding regime survival. Thus, while political longevity certainly played an increasingly important role in discouraging overt challenge, it was ultimately only one factor among several. Political longevity was, after all, a function of skilful leadership and the shrewd manipulation of resources; had the quality of leadership declined it would not have been *sufficient* to protect the two regimes.

Civil Society.

Perhaps the least of the three leaders' concerns were rooted in the possibility of popular challenge, although it is important not to exaggerate this point or to dismiss the threat posed by civil society. Certainly rural people, who constituted the majority in each state, were organised in neither and to that extent failed to pose an immediate threat. Nevertheless, in The Gambia they posed a greater challenge for two reasons: the retention of a relatively free and fair electoral system and The Gambia's comparatively greater reliance on agricultural returns (hence the need to prevent smuggling or a resort to subsistence) as a source of resources.

Nevertheless, three additional considerations suggest the importance of not overstating the significance of these factors. First, the PPP did not rely solely upon agricultural extraction but also had access to a, crucially important, external resource base. Second, it would be wrong to exaggerate the threat elections posed. Although Gambian elections undoubtedly posed a higher order challenge than in Sierra Leone (where Stevens' willingness to use coercive tactics severely hampered opposition efforts) the PPP nevertheless enjoyed an overwhelming electoral predominance. This reflected a range of factors (outlined in Chapter three) but perhaps most important was the party's access to state resources. The ability to construct patron-client networks as a route to popular support endowed the PPP with a huge - perhaps even irreversible - advantage vis-à-vis the opposition. Moreover, an increasing scarcity of resources during the late 1970s and early 1980s did not translate into a loss of electoral dominance. Accounting for this were non-economic considerations (Jawara's enduring popularity in particular) and a popular, no doubt justifiable, belief that access to residual resources would be best assured by a PPP representative.

A third point also suggests the importance of not simply assuming that the electoral/popular challenge was significantly greater in The Gambia. Thus, in Sierra Leone the establishment of a single-party state failed to kill off popular attachment to the multi-party idea. Indeed, had Momoh not succumbed to a military coup the staging of multi-party elections seemed unavoidable in the context of progressively vocal demands from some sections of civil society. Of course it was entirely possible that the APC's control over material resources and the coercive apparatus, (combined with an opposition lacking either credibility or cohesion) would have produced victory. Nevertheless, spending money on elections - whether directly, to construct a

support base or indirectly, to retain the adherence of an army whose loyalty would almost certainly be strained by additional domestic responsibilities⁶ - implied a decrease in available resources to distribute to members of the civilian elite. We cannot know the eventual outcome; the point to stress is that, at the very least, Momoh faced challenging times ahead whereas his Gambian counterpart looked comparatively secure. Jawara's maintenance of a multi-party system rendered him little affected by the moves towards democracy elsewhere. Jammeh's 1994 promise to introduce a "genuine" democratic system was little more than a publicity stunt designed to maximise support - or at least minimise overt hostility - from both Gambians and the international community; more than anything it reflected the hitherto domestic and international acceptability of Jawara's adherence to multi-partyism.

Previous chapters further identified the non-electoral challenge posed by identifiable groups within civil society. In both states it was found that urban dwellers - generally better educated, organised and more politically aware - posed at least a greater potential threat than their rural counterparts. For all three leaders it was important that legitimacy-deflating urban protest, which could only serve to encourage military and civilian conspiracies, be avoided.

Two comparative points concerning the nature and gravity of the urban threat are worth stressing. First, Sierra Leonean urban dwellers posed a potentially greater threat than their counterparts in The Gambia, a reflection of the enhanced potency of organised groups. For example, whereas the labour movement in The Gambia was small, fragmented, frequently disorganised and hampered by the failings of the labour leadership, Sierra Leonean trade unions were less fragmented, rather larger and hence more powerful. Likewise, whereas Sierra Leone possessed an established university, The Gambia did not.

Second, and militating in the opposite direction, was the fact that the PPP, on its assumption to office, was not the "natural" party of urbanites whereas the APC initially possessed a much stronger urban support base. Nevertheless in later years this situation underwent a partial reverse as the PPP gained the trust and support of *many* urbanites - though some, perhaps inevitably, felt excluded⁷ - whereas the APC's support base suffered a persistent decline.

In Sierra Leone resource-distribution was key to explaining the changing nature of - and the limits to - the urban threat. On the one hand the continuous diversion of resources to elites and attempts to meet IMF conditionalities caused progressive suffering and disaffection among ordinary urban dwellers. On the other, most remained focused upon accessing residual state resources rather than overthrowing the system perpetuating inequality. That the survival strategies of most urban dwellers did not centre upon forcibly toppling the APC provided Stevens and Momoh with some leeway, although declining resources certainly hampered their freedom to

⁶ That is, in addition to prosecuting the rebel war.

⁷ A point I return to below.

juggle group interests, necessitating an increased reliance on coercion.

In The Gambia a somewhat different set of circumstances prevailed. Resource distribution was certainly important in enhancing the PPP's medium-term acceptability in the urban areas and yet both the lesser potency of group-based challenges and Jawara's continued efforts to consolidate regime legitimacy eased the pressure on scarce resources. Urban attitudes were not primarily a function of resource distribution.

The External Environment.

Although the external environment constituted a crucial survival resource (see below) it also imposed certain constraints. Two points are worth reiterating. First, although both states should be characterised as "dependent", in terms of aid-dependence Sierra Leone - with access to a far more substantial domestic resource-base than The Gambia - was less so. The implications of this difference emerged with particular clarity around the mid-1980s with the hardening of the IMF's stance and the international insistence on adherence to a range of conditionalities. The Gambia's reliance on externally-generated resources gave the PPP little option but to implement structural adjustment. In contrast the APC - though certainly desirous of external assistance and ready to make some concessions to this end - possessed greater leeway. Although in the longer-term the survival imperative may have compelled Momoh to accede to IMF conditionalities, domestic resources served to buy the APC time.

Second, although the external world possessed greater leverage over The Gambia, in one sense externally generated constraints were less onerous than in Sierra Leone. The PPP's ability to survive meaningful structural adjustment reflected a range of factors, not least the fact that Jawara was less dependent on those aspects of the system that the IMF set out to "correct." In Sierra Leone, by way of contrast, Momoh had to forego external assistance because he could not countenance the consistent implementation of IMF conditionalities. Any such attempts posed a far greater threat to his survival than to Jawara's.

Moving from international to regional constraints or threats, at least on the face of it The Gambia's location (combined with small state size and viability problems) rendered her far more vulnerable than Sierra Leone. The threat Senegal posed to the maintenance of territorial integrity was a function of her security and economic interests in The Gambia although, as Chapter four argued, this should not be exaggerated. Jawara's actions, Senegal's restraint and wider external concerns, and African states' general adherence to the principle of non-interference all served to lessen the threat. Moreover the threat receded over time, a reflection of The Gambia's ability to prove her viability and, after 1981, the changing nature of the relationship in the context of the Senegambian confederation. After 1989 and the break-up of the Confederation the likelihood of forcible intervention appeared very remote.

If it is important not to overstate the threat emanating from The Gambia's neighbour, from a comparative perspective it was nevertheless of a much higher order than in Sierra Leone where relations with Liberia and Guinea remained on a far more equal footing. It was rather ironic, then, that during the early 1990s Liberia was eventually to prove a much greater threat to the APC's survival than Senegal to the PPP's, with Sankoh receiving assistance (including arms) from Charles Taylor's NPFL. Momoh's inability to prosecute the war effectively, or to protect the interests of those soldiers attempting to halt the rebel advance, would ultimately prove fatal.

Resources.

Having identified and assessed the changing threats facing the APC and PPP regimes it is important to repeat this process with regard to resources. Resources shaped rather than determined survival strategies; crucially, each leader understood the nature of the resources at their (and others) disposal.

Material Resources and External Linkages.

The contrasting worth, and nature of, domestic resources provided a clear point of difference between the two states with The Gambia's reliance on groundnut production standing in marked contrast to Sierra Leone's wealth of mineral resources, most importantly (from a survival perspective) diamonds.⁸ The ramifications of this difference were two-fold. First, it exerted an impact upon each state's relations with the outside world and, linked to this, each leader's domestic priorities. As noted above, Jawara - dependent upon external aid for his continued survival - was under far greater pressure to bend to international constraints than his Sierra Leonean counterparts. Second, although Sierra Leone was blessed with a much greater wealth of natural resources, diamonds in particular constituted a double-edged sword. Thus, in The Gambia, control over groundnut receipts (and external aid) was far easier to achieve than control over diamond wealth in Sierra Leone. Groundnuts may have been subject to the depredations of some sections of civil society (via smuggling to Senegal) but this hardly compared to the ease with which diamonds could be smuggled or, crucially, the wealth they conferred upon the smugglers. Groundnut smuggling was a means by which farmers could achieve an often marginal increase in income; diamond smuggling constituted a route via which elites could accumulate massive wealth, wealth which might be used to oppose the APC.

Let us take each of these points in turn. Regarding the two states' differential dependence

⁸ As detailed in Chapter one, the proceeds of other mineral deposits - which required a large capital investment and involved a relatively complex extraction process - necessarily remained within the formal economy (though were often diverted thereafter) and consequently held different resource implications.

levels it is important to reiterate that this characteristic did not achieve prominence as a survival issue until the mid-1980s. Prior to then both Jawara and Stevens were successful in gaining aid, primarily through diversification, although Jawara more so in *per capita* terms. Given that each state lacked strategic importance, Jawara's relative success was primarily attributable to his domestic approach.⁹ However it is important to stress that to a great extent Jawara's domestic priorities were not constrained by, but coincided with, international expectations. Jawara's decision to retain a multi-party system was not dictated by the need for Western aid (although this was undoubtedly an important by-product) but rather was a personal / domestic-political choice. Other choices - for example the adoption of a generally moderate pro-Western outlook or symbolic gestures intended to emphasise The Gambia's Islamic credentials and character - were more closely geared to maximising aid but did not conflict with the domestic survival imperative.

In Sierra Leone the conflict between survival priorities - including massive corruption and an increasingly authoritarian political system - and the expectations of the international community, rendered the prospects for receiving comparatively substantial amounts of aid less promising. At the same time, however, Sierra Leone's greater wealth of natural resources rendered Stevens less constrained by external expectations and willing to sacrifice at least some aid in exchange for the freedom to manipulate domestic resources, notably diamonds, to promote his regime's survival. Nevertheless it would be wrong to suggest that Stevens was unconcerned about courting foreign sources of assistance (particularly during the latter stages of his rule as the diversion of resources took an ever greater toll on domestic revenues) or that he enjoyed minimal success. Like Jawara, Stevens played a prominent, often opportunistic role in attempting to maximise aid through diversification. The modification of foreign policy announcements - which, as in The Gambia, did not interfere with the survival imperative - constituted a useful tool.

Sierra Leone's diamond wealth not only rendered Stevens more willing than Jawara to sacrifice at least some aid, but also provided him with a wider range of manipulable external linkages - mediated through the resident Lebanese and Afro-Lebanese community - and hence greater opportunities to both control and maximise his resource-base. The role of the Lebanese - of central importance to Stevens' survival - was essentially three-fold. First, they helped Stevens assert control over the distribution of "informal market" diamond-related opportunities. As described in Chapter one, Stevens' moves to rupture the mutually beneficial relationship between pro-SLPP Kono chiefs and diamond dealers - most clearly manifested in the 1968 decision to remove the authority to issue diamond licenses from the chiefs and invest it in the Ministry of Mines - were designed to create a direct link between Freetown and the diamond dealers. That most new licenses were issued to "politically safe" Lebanese or Afro-Lebanese dealers - dependent

⁹ Although other factors - including the static resource of small size which ensured that The Gambia's total aid requirements were minuscule - were also important.

on Stevens for protection against legal sanctions, local harassment and ultimately deportation - served to strengthen this link.

Second, the utility of the Lebanese presence expanded further from 1974 with the announcement of the CCMS, designed to expand the resources at Stevens' disposal. Mining plots - previously controlled by the NDMC - provided Stevens' allies with direct access to legal private diamond mining and illicit diamond wealth. Dealers' licenses constituted a further source of reward. The Lebanese partnered these beneficiaries, organising mining operations, providing finance (through long standing connections in Lebanon and elsewhere) and marketing diamonds, both legal and illicit, overseas. And finally, Lebanese services (notably provided by Jamil and Yazbeck) also extended to arranging loans to assist Stevens' efforts to continue financing a large budget deficit from the mid to the late 1970s. These loans were guaranteed by illicit diamond exports and were usually free of conditions.

If Stevens possessed a more lucrative range of external linkages than Jawara, his retirement in 1985 also meant that, unlike both Jawara and Momoh, he largely escaped the implications of the hardening of the IMF's stance. Towards the end of the 1970s a fall-off in private loans (reflecting declining prospects for repayment) had prompted Stevens to look to the IMF as a source of resources. Given that any wholesale implementation of IMF conditionalities would hit urban dwellers and undermine Stevens' ability to distribute extra-budgetary largesse, official position, and informal market opportunities, he simulated a commitment to reform. Though partial, Stevens' efforts (and the IMF's willingness to accept them as a sign of good faith) alongside small arrears payments enabled him to continue to generate external resources. Not only that, Stevens was also able to manipulate IMF conditionalities - notably privatisation, whereby numerous public enterprises ended up in the hands of Lebanese businessmen and their political allies - to extend his domestic resource-base.

If Stevens' ability to access international resources and manipulate IMF conditionalities reflected the consummate skill which he brought to the problem of political survival there is little doubt that, towards the end of his rule, his room for manoeuvre progressively narrowed. Coping with the consequences of the IMF's changing stance, Stevens left to Momoh. In The Gambia, Jawara opted to remain in power despite the fact that he too faced a situation where half-hearted attempts at economic reform no longer appeared sufficient to persuade donors to continue providing financial assistance.

Momoh and Jawara's quite different response to a similar situation can be partly attributed to the two states differential degree of dependence which emerged for the first time as a key (rather than contextual¹⁰) survival issue. In The Gambia, Jawara simply did not have sufficient

¹⁰ Contextual in the sense that each regime had had little choice but to cope with the manifestations of dependence, including the impact of fluctuating import and export prices.

domestic resources to contemplate a withdrawal of foreign aid. Should the international community carry out its threat to withhold assistance, economic collapse loomed. The adverse implications of "going it alone" were such that Jawara was compelled to gamble with structural adjustment despite the fact that it entailed some loss of control over the distribution of resources and carried the risk of popular protest. The gamble paid off handsomely in terms of the generation of resources; how Jawara coped with the negative implications of structural adjustment is analysed in detail below.

Sierra Leone provides two clear points of contrast. First, although Momoh desperately needed IMF credits - and was willing to make limited attempts to reform on that basis - in the final analysis Sierra Leone's comparatively lesser dependence on externally generated resources reduced his political will to make the reforms stick. Further undermining his political will was Momoh's comparatively greater dependence on the control of domestic resource allocation to ensure his continued survival. Unlike Jawara, Momoh could not contemplate the political consequences of full adherence to an IMF-inspired reform programme. Accordingly, in April 1988, Sierra Leone was declared ineligible for further support. Without IMF approval or the ability to service external debts few donors were willing to provide Sierra Leone with new development loans; resources to create and sustain the new President's political network were necessarily found elsewhere.

The process of creating a network - which involved establishing control over the distribution of resources - compelled Momoh to confront the Lebanese. Lebanese economic power, crucial to the APC's survival under Stevens, now posed a threat with existing Lebanese-politician partnerships owing no debt of loyalty to the new President. The possibility existed that former presidential hopefuls and other aspiring politicians - possessing a source of wealth independent of the new leader - would attempt to fulfil their ambitions at Momoh's expense. Since Momoh was reluctant to tackle members of the old order head on he was left with little choice but to remove their access to resources (via the Lebanese) as a means of establishing his authority. Once this had been achieved, resources could be redistributed according to presidential favour.

Clearly this was a risky strategy. Even if the Lebanese chose not to defend their interests with force, removing them would simultaneously remove the major source of APC patronage resources leaving Momoh with little to redistribute. The need to generate fresh resources under his personal control caused Momoh to turn, once again, to the external world. Chapter one reviewed Momoh's short-lived but profitable alliance with LIAT - designed to increase formal diamond exports at the expense of informal market operators and provide a source of imported rice for distribution to allies - and, following that company's abrupt departure, with NR SCIPA.

The point to emphasise is Momoh's limited freedom of action. Certainly he could look to the external world as both a source of resources and a means of tackling his rivals, but foreign

investors willing to take their chances in Sierra Leone were few and far between. Certainly SCIPA - which under-performed on the formal market and demonstrated a tendency to select Momoh's rivals as allies - was a far from ideal partner, and yet Momoh's need to construct an independent power base, however tenuous, was such that he had little choice but to accept what was on offer. Unfortunately, what was on offer was not enough. Momoh desperately needed further resources to continue to meet basic survival imperatives but found it increasingly difficult to unlock them. The 1991 rebel invasion greatly compounded but did not initiate these problems.

Military Assistance and External Linkages.

The utility of the external environment was not confined to the generation of material resources. For both regimes external military assistance proved important to their survival, albeit far more so in The Gambia. The provision of Senegalese military assistance in 1981 - reflecting Jawara's moderate approach, his earlier willingness to go some way to protecting Senegalese interests (with the prospect of further concessions in the future) and Senegal's security-inspired distrust of Sanyang - was analysed in detail in Chapter two. Suffice it here to note that Senegalese assistance was a crucial factor in the defeat of the coup, thereafter continuing to make a major contribution to internal security and civilian control of the military, as well as safeguarding The Gambia from emerging external security threats.

In Sierra Leone external military assistance played a less comprehensive and consistent role in the survival of the APC regime, but was nevertheless important in 1971. Assistance from Guinea in that year - a function of Sekou Touré's desire for closer political links - facilitated the defeat of the 1971 coup attempt and, until their departure in March 1973, constituted an effective deterrent to further coups as well as facilitating the implementation of alternative control techniques, particularly the establishment of the ISU.

The only other instance of military assistance in Sierra Leone was provided in response to the rebel uprising. The widespread perception of the incursions as NPFL-inspired proved important for the receipt of external, particularly regional, assistance given that ECOMOG members (notably Nigeria) would have been unwilling to intervene in a purely, or even primarily, internal conflict. Nigeria and Guinea both sent troops to be deployed alongside the Sierra Leonean military; they proved vital in halting the rapid progress of the rebels across Sierra Leone but in the longer term Momoh's failure to make progress on the economic front, and his resulting inability to feed the soldiers or pay their wages, was to prove decisive.

Personal Resources.

Implicit in the discussion thus far was the importance of personal resources, particularly leadership skill, in producing regime longevity. Whether maintaining civilian control, asserting control over resource-distribution, cultivating affective ties or engaging in many of the wide range of survival strategies (see below) leadership skill was a central variable.

A different type of personal resource were the personal attributes or qualities of each leader. Without reiterating these in full, Jawara possessed extensive rural links and the benefit of a university education (crucial factors in his early acceptability among the political elite) whereas Stevens and Momoh both possessed mixed ethnic backgrounds. Stevens had long-term political experience prior to his assumption of office and Momoh, too, had gained insight from his years as a Minister of State. This list might be extended but suffice it here to note that the three leaders needed to understand the nature of their own strengths in order to exploit them to maximum advantage. This returns us to the importance of leadership skill; Stevens' and Momoh's long-term exposure to the political scene would, for example, have held little value had they failed to learn from their experience and act accordingly.

Leadership skill was not only important in facilitating the exploitation of personal resources but also a range of additional resources. To briefly reiterate, access to the coercive apparatus and control over the distribution of state resources were valuable weapons but had to be used skilfully if the three leaders were to reap maximum survival-inducing benefits. The same was true of both elections (whether designed to create legitimacy or serve as a clientelist mechanism) and ethnicity which, though not a prime explanatory variable in either state, did retain a degree of political utility; to exploit this without undermining efforts to depoliticise ethnic identity required political skill.

Strategies.

Civil-Military Relations.

Having outlined the changing level and nature of the military threat, the following analyses each regime's approach to this threat with reference to the resources at their disposal. One way to access the discussion is to provide a brief indication of how each leader's approach to civilian control was influenced by his overall approach to regime survival and *vice-versa*. This can be achieved with reference to two opposing survival strategies: the use of coercion and the cultivation of legitimacy.

Regarding the former, although neither regime relied solely on coercion, the APC did opt to use a greater degree of force against domestic opponents than the PPP. This choice impacted on civilian control strategies in two important ways. First, where the army was used to suppress

opposition - a risky course - Stevens and Momoh were compelled to pay more attention to compensating control strategies (notably increasing resource allocations). Second, Stevens' desire for a coercive instrument and recognition of the dangers of using the army internally, was one factor in his decision to establish a para-military force which in turn served as a counterweight to the army. Both these measures may have enhanced the medium-term security of the APC regime but neither came cheap. In the long-term, the diversion of resources to unproductive institutions could only mean a reduction in the amounts available to allocate elsewhere.

In The Gambia, where Jawara placed more faith in legitimacy cultivation than coercion to protect his regime against *civilian* conspirators, overall survival imperatives exerted a quite different impact on the choice of civilian control mechanisms. In purely political terms¹¹ Jawara could not reconcile the diversion of comparatively substantial resources to the armed forces with the retention of popular support. In turn, this reinforced his pre-1981 and post-1989 reliance on regime legitimacy as a buffer against not only civilian but also military intervention. That this route to civilian control ultimately proved inadequate inevitably leads one to question Jawara's wisdom in "letting" the Senegalese depart, and yet it is important to recall his imperative need to maintain the PPP's acceptability - a pre-requisite of which was the protection of sovereignty and a go-slow approach to closer relations with Senegal.

That maintaining civilian control was not a task which could be approached in isolation undoubtedly posed long-term (albeit qualitatively different) problems for the two regimes. Nevertheless, it remains the case that the three leaders enjoyed prolonged success in maintaining civilian control. The following examines this success with reference to the resources - including material resources, ethnicity, external assistance and location¹² - at their disposal.

Comparing the leaders' strategies, a preliminary point to note is that Stevens devoted more time, energy and creativity to preventing military intervention than did Jawara. There were cogent reasons for this, most notably the differing levels of threat during the early years of APC and PPP rule. Stevens was compelled to respond to an adverse legacy, the two subsequent coup attempts serving as a reminder of APC vulnerability and prompting new innovations.

In The Gambia, pre-1981, Jawara did not apparently fear Field Force intervention and failed to replicate the innovative measures undertaken in Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, two caveats (particularly relevant to the senior ranks of the two states' armed forces) to this general comparative conclusion are worthy of note. First, it is important not to overstate the contrast

¹¹ Resource shortages were also important, but in purely economic terms more could have been done to enhance military satisfaction.

¹² It is also worth reiterating the importance of another variable - luck. Thus, it is important not to 'over-explain' the absence of successful military intervention; both regimes were, at different times, presented with extremely ill-planned and incompetently executed coups d'etat. Equally it is possible to discern an element of bad luck in the PPP's eventual downfall (see below).

between the two states; Jawara did take some measures - ensuring senior officers enjoyed a relatively privileged position, for example - to safeguard his position. Second, what Jawara did *not* do, notably his decision not to replace urban Wolof/Aku officers with Mandinkas, probably exerted an almost equal influence on the maintenance of civilian control as Stevens' more hands on approach.

Unlike the early Sierra Leonean coup attempts, the 1981 coup attempt in The Gambia did not prompt innovative solutions, the Senegalese presence obviating the need for new methods of civilian control. After 1989, with the Senegalese departure, Jawara faced his biggest challenge - in the sense of searching for innovative solutions - to date. This provided a clear contrast with Sierra Leone where the APC faced such a challenge at the beginning of its rule (the challenge thereafter lying in the *maintenance* of strategies). Unfortunately, Jawara failed to meet the challenge, opting to continue to place his faith in an external protector, Nigeria.

If Stevens can be judged to have "done more" to establish civilian control than Jawara, what can one conclude about the choice, and efficacy, of his strategies and his successor's efforts to maintain them, in comparison with the course of events in The Gambia?

Of all the strategies pursued by Stevens and his successor maximising military satisfaction was the most important. Ensuring the rank-and-file enjoyed prompt payment and subsidised rice (both meaningful privileges in the context of what was, increasingly, a survival economy), and key senior personnel had access to state resources, whether legitimately via loans or through corrupt diversion, was central to the APC's survival.

In The Gambia military satisfaction was far less central. Although senior ranks did not lack certain privileges these were hardly comparable to those enjoyed by their Sierra Leonean counterparts. Lower down, the rank-and-file received little attention. Even after 1981 - a year when the dangers of Field Force demoralisation had become apparent - the Senegalese presence obviated the need to significantly increase the allocation of resources. Following the Senegalese departure Jawara did opt to pay more attention to the question of military satisfaction, but the new departures were perceived by soldiers as too little too late.

The two regimes' differential dependence on material satisfaction stemmed from a number of factors: differing perceptions of the military threat, the PPP's greater reliance on alternative strategies (legitimacy cultivation and outside military assistance) and, crucially, the different resource-base of the two regimes. Thus, the proceeds of legal and illicit diamond wealth enabled Stevens and Momoh to divert far more substantial resources than could Jawara. Added to this, the nature of The Gambia's resource base - Jawara's reliance on external aid and subsequent need to adhere to IMF conditionalities - rendered it unlikely that he would have been able to get away with devoting comparatively large amounts to an unproductive institution.

If the question of military satisfaction was never seriously tackled in The Gambia it was

never fully resolved in Sierra Leone. Thus, at the end of their rule the experience of the two regimes converged and both fell to military coups motivated largely by military dissatisfaction. In The Gambia grievances were not solely material (Jammeh's perceived insult at Yundum Airport on the day prior to the coup and the wider insult of the Nigerian presence were both important) but late payments and poor living conditions were nevertheless central.

Whereas the Gambian coup reflected Jawara's *misplaced* (from a survival perspective) priorities, the Sierra Leonean coup stemmed from Momoh's inability to *maintain* his priorities. Momoh understood the need to maintain military satisfaction more clearly than his Gambian counterpart and yet failed to do so - at least at the lower levels - given the squeeze on resources. Diverting resources in the context of a declining economy (declining, at least in part, as a result of the diversion of resources to unproductive institutions) was rendered increasingly problematic. That soldiers were compelled to fight a war under less than ideal circumstances no doubt hastened the end of the regime, but had these events failed to occur Momoh's continued survival in the context of waning resources was hardly guaranteed. The 1992 coup confirmed both the vitally important place held by military satisfaction in the APC's strategy of civilian control as well as the difficulties of maintaining it indefinitely.

The differing availability of resources in the two states had a further impact upon each regime's approach to civilian control. Compared to Jawara, Stevens' access to resources - and greater freedom to manipulate them as he so desired - enabled him to establish and maintain an effective and loyal counterweight to the military, the ISU (later re-named the SSD). The ISU's loyalty was guaranteed, in part, by the generous distribution of largesse. Stevens' enthusiasm for the force reflected his fears of military intervention and desire for a coercive instrument but, crucially, his ability to maintain it was a function of his continued access to resources. Momoh - though no doubt less enthusiastic about a one-time rival force - was progressively hampered by resource-constraints and almost certainly cut allocations to the SSD. Hence, the force chose to remain neutral in 1992.

In The Gambia, a paucity of domestic resources caused Jawara to turn to the outside world as a counterweight to the military. Prior to 1989 the counterweight role of the gendarmerie paled into insignificance against the Senegalese presence. Indeed, whereas domestic resources constituted Stevens' most potent weapon, externally generated resources in the form of Senegalese military assistance was Jawara's. Thus, although external assistance played some role in the APC's survival (the Guinean presence from 1971 to 1973 acting as a deterrent to intervention and facilitating the safe establishment of the ISU), just as the diversion of resources to the senior ranks of the army played some role in the PPP's survival, the fundamental strategy of each regime was quite different. Both, however, were ultimately flawed.

Just as the APC's reliance on domestic resources eventually hit problems, so the PPP's

reliance on externally generated resources encountered difficulties. Given a Senegalese safety net, Jawara singularly failed to learn any "lessons" of civilian control. He was not forced, as was Stevens, to experiment with the whole range of control techniques. Admittedly, as Stevens himself had demonstrated, experimentation is risky and yet it was only through a process of trial and error he made headway. Moreover, in The Gambia the risks of experimentation and implementation would have been considerably reduced, if not completely negated, by the fact of the Senegalese presence. When the Senegalese departed the PPP regime was rendered extremely vulnerable. Jawara (opting to effectively downgrade the gendarmerie by merging it with the TSG) turned once again to external assistance, but this time with disastrous results.

Jawara's request for Nigerian assistance stemmed from his perceived need to boost civilian control and his faith in the tried and trusted technique of an external security guarantee. In retrospect however, the request proved a serious miscalculation. Chapter two outlined the contours of this miscalculation: the undermining of soldiers' professional integrity, the perceived lack of trust and the blow to middle-rank promotion prospects. Jawara was neither sufficiently sensitive to how the Nigerian presence would be received nor sufficiently thorough to render the reception irrelevant. The Nigerian contingent was neither large enough to deter a coup nor committed to upholding PPP rule. Jawara - having enjoyed the benefits of Senegal's much greater deterrent potential - ultimately placed too much faith in external assistance as a means to civilian control.

A final resource utilised by both regimes, albeit in different ways, was ethnicity. For both, ascriptive manipulation was most effectively employed at the senior levels with Jawara opting to accommodate the existing set-up (an extension of his strategy in the civilian sphere) and Stevens opting to purge perceived sources of opposition, both Mende and Temne, within the senior and middle-level ranks.

These tactics were most effective in producing a loyal corps of senior officers, vital in the prevention of an elite-led convergence of civil and military disaffection. Nevertheless, it remains questionable what, if any, positive impact these efforts would have had in the absence of continuing material satisfaction. This point also applies lower down the military hierarchy, where problems remained: in Sierra Leone there remained at least *some* junior Mende or Temne officers and members of the rank-and-file whose loyalty had not been assured; in The Gambia there were some, albeit inconclusive, signs of Mandinka disaffection among the rank-and-file. The point to stress, however, is that even in the absence of such loopholes, ascriptive manipulation was no guarantee of survival. Evidence from both states - not least the two successful coups of 1992 and 1994 - demonstrated that individuals of different ethnic backgrounds could join together as a means of redressing resource-related grievances. Once again, this points to the overriding importance of the above-mentioned key strategies - the manipulation of domestic and externally generated resources in Sierra Leone and The Gambia respectively.

Civilian Elites.

The relative importance of material satisfaction in prolonging civilian control in the two states was replicated in the non-military sphere. In Sierra Leone the distribution of resources and resource-related opportunities played a central role in the APC's prolonged survival. That is not to deny that Stevens and Momoh implemented a range of additional tactics some of which - as in the military sphere - were very important, but simply to assert the primacy of resource (particularly diamond) distribution in the APC's survival. In The Gambia resource distribution was also, but not equally, important. As in the military sphere, Jawara relied more heavily on a range of additional strategies, not least the cultivation of affective ties and popular support. I return to the comparative importance of resource distribution in each state below. First it is important to provide a comparative analysis of three key questions relating to the *nature* of rewards, *to whom* were they distributed and *how* were they distributed.

The Nature of Rewards.

Broadly speaking, each of the three leaders under consideration possessed three inter-linked types of reward to bestow upon political aspirants. First, each had the power to influence an individual's political progress through the provision of electoral assistance and the distribution of ministerial posts. Second, and linked to the first, were the material benefits (both legitimate and illegitimate) which accompanied these positions. And finally, the three leaders could offer protection, either in the form of prolonged tenure or protection against prosecution on corruption charges. Let us take each of these in turn.

Electoral assistance, an important form of patronage, bore both similarities and differences in the two states. In The Gambia electoral assistance might come in the form of a party nomination, a pre-requisite of which was Jawara's approval, and a subsequent personal endorsement from the President during the election campaign. The PPP nomination, though it did not guarantee electoral success, was an important first step towards the coveted position of PPP MP and Jawara's control over their distribution served to consolidate his position at the apex of the clientelist structure.

Although it is possible that, by introducing a single-party state - thereby closing off alternative routes into Parliament and enhancing the importance of the party nomination - Jawara's position would have been strengthened even further, in practice this was unnecessary. For those fortunate enough to win, either as Independents or members of an opposition party, re-applying for PPP membership was often a paramount consideration. In 1982 rule changes laid down that candidates should resign their seats and apply for PPP sponsorship in the subsequent by-election. Some applicants were successful, others were not. By refusing applicants Jawara sent a clear message about where real power lay, retaining the party nomination as a source of patronage and

hence control.

To some extent, the situation in The Gambia resembled that of pre-1978 Sierra Leone where the party nomination (dependent upon Stevens' approval) was a crucial element in attaining political office. However there were also dissimilarities with victory as an APC candidate in many cases easier to attain than victory as a PPP candidate given the large numbers of unopposed candidacies. This lack of opposition did not reflect overwhelming support for the APC or Stevens, but rather a second type of electoral assistance. Whereas Jawara might offer his personal endorsement to candidates, Stevens would be more likely to provide coercive assistance (organised by key elite individuals and provided by APC supporters) on nomination day. Hence the large numbers of unopposed candidacies.

After 1978 political aspirants - denied the opportunity of defection¹³ - were ever more reliant on the party nomination. Unopposed candidacies were rarer, but still highly sought after and still dependent upon Stevens' approval. Candidates' attempts to negotiate the withdrawal of their opposition (through pay-offs and job promises) were virtually guaranteed success should the President opt to intervene on their behalf.

In retrospect it was only Momoh - wishing to use the 1986 election to meet alternative survival imperatives, in particular the cultivation of legitimacy - who failed to use elections to establish his position at the top of a clientelist network. Momoh's refusal to intervene on behalf of particular candidates (even those with whom he already had close links) meant newly-elected MPs were under no personal debt of obligation to their President.

Once elections had been held, the three leaders had the power to distribute ministerial positions. Material rewards were a function of position; ministerial positions conferred greater benefits than a seat in Parliament, whereas some ministerial positions were more lucrative than others. The nature of the rewards in each state were both similar and different. Similar in that in each state ministerial positions conferred a salary, a range of sought-after perks (loans, allowance, opportunities to travel etc) and for some, access to illicit wealth. Different largely in the scale and nature of illicit returns. Thus, although corruption was a significant phenomenon in both states - as a means of securing political loyalty - it was comparatively more important and prevalent in Sierra Leone.

Chapter one outlined the key arenas of Gambian corruption - the GCDB, which distributed politically motivated low-interest loans, selectively recovered, and the GCU - and the range of corrupt practices in other parastatals and government departments. In Sierra Leone, illicit rewards (albeit accumulated on a more blatant scale) resembled those in The Gambia with the crucial addition of access to diamond wealth. Fortunes were made on the back of a mining plot, and

¹³ Though of course this hardly constituted an attractive option before 1978.

perhaps a dealers licence, allocated by Stevens (see above). Others, often working in concert with civil servants, with influence over the allocation of goods - import licenses, contracts, foreign exchange etc - could distribute them, usually to foreign businessmen, in return for bribes. Even rice, the staple food, was transformed into a valuable political commodity particularly following the "privatisation" of the rice trade in the 1980s.

Over the years some changes in the nature and scale of rewards occurred although it is important not to overstate this point. In The Gambia elites continued to benefit - from customs fraud and the inflation of foreign travel expenses for example - even after the implementation of the ERP. Opportunities for diversion certainly lessened but for those in the right place (with, of course, Jawara's approval) loopholes could always be found. In Sierra Leone, Momoh's reluctance to implement IMF reforms meant that opportunities for the elite-level diversion of domestic resources were largely maintained,¹⁴ although the international community's subsequent decision to halt the release of aid did remove an important source of resources.

The final reward which each of three leaders had at their disposal was protection, either in the form of prolonged tenure or protection against prosecution on corruption charges. The former I examine below. The latter was used by all three leaders, punctuated by the occasional isolation and subsequent exposure of a guilty individual. The threat of disclosure undoubtedly enhanced clients' loyalty towards their patron.

The Beneficiaries.

All three leaders wished to benefit the loyal, the potentially troublesome and those who might serve to strengthen their personal position. All three viewed political accommodation as one basis for the allocation of rewards which might meet these ends.¹⁵

Jawara favoured accommodating a range of groups within the political sphere to strengthen his initially quite weak position within the party, a corollary of which was reducing his dependence on the party's founding members. Those who were co-opted came from all ethnic groups in the former colony and protectorate. Jawara's enthusiasm for co-optation also reduced the likelihood of a coup d'etat inspired by disaffected urban politicians and served to undermine the opposition.

In Sierra Leone power was also shared, albeit less comprehensively, to secure a broader

¹⁴ This comparative reluctance stemmed from the two regimes' differential reliance on resource-distribution to elites and their different relationship with civil society. I return to both points below.

¹⁵ The two regimes' accommodationist stance extended beyond the political sphere into other arenas, notably the public service. Chapter one discussed the reasons for this, and outlined the expansion of the public sector - to facilitate co-optation - in each state. It also examined the adverse implications of the ERP for those employed in the Gambian public sector, and the downturn in living standards for public employees in Sierra Leone, and reached a number of conclusions as to how each regime proved able to survive these developments.

support base within the elite sphere. Mendes were co-opted (though still outnumbered) for this reason and also to undermine the opposition.¹⁶ Given Stevens' efforts to neutralise the Mende threat within the armed forces, the risks of pursuing this route were substantially lessened. Creoles, already among the regime's supporters, also benefited from APC rule and were heavily over-represented in the cabinet. Creole support facilitated various regime-strengthening measures and, in combination with other Northern minority groups, served as a counterweight to Stevens' less than reliable Temne subordinates.

In both states accommodation failed to receive a universal welcome and splinter parties (namely the UDP in Sierra Leone and the PPA and later the NCP in The Gambia) emerged to threaten the regimes' core support. In both states the splits reflected the culmination of ethnic and personal grievances but, crucially, in neither did the beneficiaries substantially change.¹⁷ The reasons for this were inter-linked and centred upon the weakness of the opposition and the strength of the regimes. Potential defectors - divided among themselves¹⁸ and reluctant to forego patronage opportunities - were often unwilling to leave the government. In Sierra Leone Stevens' willingness to use coercion against the UDP - a reflection of his perception of the possibility of UDP-military links and the UDP's greater electoral potential in comparison to the Gambian opposition¹⁹ - was also important in both obliterating the UDP and sending a clear warning to other prospective intra-party rebels. Nevertheless it is important not to overstate this point of difference. Within the party Stevens did not rely on coercion but rather on a subtle and skilful distribution of resources to maintain control. He understood the disadvantages of coercion. Jawara, equally skilful, understood the advantages of a peaceful approach, notably in terms of maintaining external aid and domestic legitimacy.

Prior to examining Stevens' and Jawara's approach in more detail it is important to note the declining emphasis upon political accommodation under Momoh. Thus, although Momoh continued to accommodate representatives of all ethno-regional groups in the cabinet, his greater difficulties in securing control over the distribution of resources (noted above) caused him to place greater reliance on a powerful, inner core of Limba supporters. Membership of this group was highly lucrative and yet the fact that most politicians appeared to be excluded on the basis of ethnic identity ultimately rendered Momoh more vulnerable to a concerted political challenge.

¹⁶ Although former SLPP members continued to be co-opted after the establishment of a single-party state.

¹⁷ Not, that is, until Momoh's accession to office in Sierra Leone. As detailed in Chapter one, his insecurity facilitated the emergence of an ethnically exclusive, and extremely powerful, coterie of Limba kinsmen. Nevertheless, the cabinet as a whole did continue to represent all ethno-regional groups.

¹⁸ Along generational, personal and other lines.

¹⁹ See Chapter three for a discussion of this point.

The Distribution of Rewards.

In both states the distribution of rewards was designed to clarify and underline subordinates' dependence upon presidential favour. Frequent cabinet reshuffles, demotion, even exclusion from the ruling group were used by Stevens and Jawara to promote feelings of insecurity among ministers, to drive home the fact that personal loyalty was the only route to political advancement) and to prevent individuals amassing a fixed pool of indebted clients attached to a particular ministry.

Of course the danger with this strategy lay in the possibility that the demoted, excluded and insecure might coalesce in an effective, unified attempt to defeat the regime. Three further tactics utilised by the leaders reduced the likelihood of this occurring. First, each promoted division between prominent supporters (viz., Dibba and Sisay in The Gambia, Koroma and Kamara-Taylor in Sierra Leone) using the rotation of senior posts to this end. Second, each leader made productive use of the tactic of rehabilitation, giving the demoted or excluded a reason to believe they might once again enjoy the benefits of presidential approval. If and when this occurred, the beneficiaries - fearing a second descent into the political wilderness - tended to demonstrate considerable loyalty. In the same vein Stevens, though less so Jawara, operated to nurture his lieutenants' ambitions. By frequently expressing a wish to retire, though refusing to name a successor, Stevens kept both the succession issue and his subordinates' aspirations alive. Raising the hopes of various individuals - usually by appointing them to serve in an acting Vice-Presidential capacity - often convinced them of the wisdom of remaining loyal. That it promoted conflict among his subordinates (vying for the position of successor) further enhanced Stevens' security.

The third major tactic was to maintain a *balance* between different factions (ethnic, generational etc). To some extent these factions were created and maintained by the machinations of Stevens and Jawara. As individuals, co-optees often demonstrated a greater degree of personal loyalty to their patron. As a (loose) group they balanced the authority of older members and *vice-versa*.

These measures, though central to the survival of the APC and PPP regimes were never likely to facilitate a smooth succession. The two leaders' very success in balancing the various factions within the party rendered it unlikely that any one individual possessed sufficient support to ensure a peaceful transition. In 1991 Jawara very publicly failed to depart from the political scene while in 1985 Stevens opted to select not one of the main contenders but an outsider.²⁰

As a successor President, Momoh faced a different and more difficult task than either

²⁰ This delicate process was examined at length in Chapter one.

Stevens or Jawara. As noted above, he needed to assert personal authority over pre-existing, entrenched factional networks of which he inevitably had a less intimate knowledge than his predecessor. Elites were understandably hesitant to transfer political allegiance to the new president in a situation of uncertainty as to where real power lay. Specifically, they needed answers to a series of related questions. Would Momoh succeed in asserting personal control over the distribution of resources? Would Stevens remain the real power behind the throne? Would a successful coup (possibly perpetrated by former presidential hopefuls) occur?

To benefit from the range of distribution mechanisms (demotion, exclusion, rehabilitation etc) so successfully exploited by Stevens and Jawara, Momoh desperately needed to convince his subordinates of two things: that his prospects for remaining at the apex of the political system were good and that he had the power to distribute or withhold rewards. The first imperative was in part a function of time. Momoh's very survival and demonstrable ability to emerge intact, even stronger, from crisis situations (notably the 1987 coup attempt) progressively served to persuade elites that he was indeed there to stay.

In contrast the second imperative, which required Momoh to assert personal control over the distribution of resources, constituted an ongoing struggle. It was undoubtedly imperative that Momoh engage in this struggle; a failure to do so would deny him the means of political control either through reward or supervising access to resources which might prove dangerous in the wrong hands. Nevertheless the new president's task was far from straightforward.

Accessing and controlling resources required Momoh to tackle powerful Lebanese-politician partnerships owing no debt of loyalty to the new President. His realistic appreciation of the dangers of confronting old order politicians caused Momoh to focus on the Lebanese as a means of removing his rivals' independent access to resources. His aim was to introduce new foreign investors to exploit Sierra Leone's diamond wealth, hence undermining Lebanese economic power and ensuring presidential access to resources.

As already noted, Momoh's efforts to control Sierra Leone's economic resources - undermined by LIAT's departure and SCIPA's disturbing tendency to seek independent partnerships with powerful politicians - constituted an ongoing, unresolved, task. It is perhaps unsurprising then, that throughout his term of office Momoh consistently appeared rather more vulnerable than both Stevens and Jawara. His eight year survival reflected partial successes in distributing resources and maintaining the opportunities for corrupt accumulation, but the fluctuating availability of resources - and Momoh's failure to satisfactorily resolve this problem - was reflected in continued rumours and reports of elite-level disloyalty.

The Comparative Importance of Material Resources.

Within the elite sphere, the control and distribution of economic resources was absolutely

central to the APC's prolonged survival. In The Gambia resource distribution was also important to PPP longevity although, in comparative terms, less so. That Jawara could not afford to rely upon elite-level accumulation as heavily as Stevens or Momoh was partly attributable to his smaller domestic resource base and the international constraints placed upon the mode of resource distribution from the mid-1980s.²¹ Nevertheless, even prior to the international insistence on economic adjustment the two states' differential reliance on resource distribution was clearly marked. The reason for this centred upon the different *choices* made by the two leaders - their understanding of the ways in which resource distribution might impact upon other aspects of political survival - and thus cannot be explained with sole reference to the two regimes' differential access to material resources.

To explain this point further it is possible to identify the political implications of what may loosely be termed the moral choices of each leader. In particular one can identify Jawara's personal disinclination to utilise force in the pursuit of political survival. This choice, and the decision to retain multi-partyism, required Jawara to maintain his regime's acceptability which in turn ruled out any large-scale, blatant diversion of resources to elites. In contrast Stevens and Momoh were willing to use force and required only popular acquiescence. As the following section concludes, for the most part acquiescence could be achieved in the context of extensive elite accumulation.

Whether or not one regards Jawara's disinclination to engage in massive corruption - and to expect a similar degree of restraint on the part of his colleagues - as a moral choice, or a political response to the need for public acceptability, military subordination²² and international assistance, it remains the case that he was compelled to find additional non resource-related ways of cultivating support among the elite. In this context affective ties came to assume central importance. An able, determined and strong leader, Jawara's ability to unify the party and his popularity in the wider society (to which many a political aspirant owed their electoral success) were crucial factors in his hold over the political elite.

Stevens, too, successfully promoted an image of a strong and decisive leader, disproving those who doubted his abilities. Nevertheless in contrast to The Gambia where affective ties came to assume enhanced importance with the implementation of the ERP, Stevens' subsequent willingness to facilitate and tolerate massive elite accumulation progressively undermined their importance. Having raised elites' material expectations, his political strength was valued as a

²¹ Once more, it is important not to overstate this comparison. As Chapter one noted, elites did continue to enjoy illicit material rewards even after the implementation of the ERP. Indeed, the increased importance of position in accessing these rewards rendered loyalty to Jawara an ever more pressing imperative.

²² Simmering military resentment might have easily boiled over had soldiers been forced to confront the reality of large-scale civilian corruption. In one sense this danger was actually realised in 1994 although as noted in Chapter one it remains unproven whether it was the actual incidence of corruption, or merely popular awareness of the problem (over which Jawara had little control), which had grown.

means of ensuring continued access to resources but would have probably failed to compensate for any downturn. To some extent these changing attitudes benefited Momoh; a comparatively weak, vacillating leader, his political survival nevertheless remained viable alongside the continued distribution of resources.

Civil Society.

All three leaders enjoyed a period of entrance legitimacy when they acceded to office: Jawara benefited from the legitimacy attached to his role as the first post-colonial leader, Stevens as the wronged victor of the 1967 elections and Momoh as the personification of post-Stevens renewal and change.

Of the three leaders, Momoh was the most constrained in his subsequent approach to civil society. Certainly Stevens' diversion of resources to elites - which Momoh could not realistically hope to safely reverse - had a negative impact upon the new President's ability to meet popular expectations. Both Stevens and Jawara enjoyed a far greater freedom of action and yet opted to pursue quite different routes. Jawara was not compelled to maintain a democracy any more than Stevens was predestined to reduce the scope of popular participation and eventually establish a single-party state.

Governing each leader's choice was an acute understanding of the nature and potential of the resources at their disposal. In essence each chose the course best suited to the prevailing local circumstances. In The Gambia, Jawara's personal preference for retaining a multi-party system was reinforced by political calculations. He knew that a paucity of domestic resources would restrict the cultivation of elite-level loyalty solely through the distribution of resources. Cultivating affective ties formed part of Jawara's solution. Consolidating popular support - to serve as a restraint on elite aspirations - formed a second part. The situation in Sierra Leone was rather different, a greater wealth of natural resources rendering the prospects for successfully cultivating and maintaining elite subordination largely (though, as stressed above, not solely) on the distribution of material resources, more promising. Stevens, and later Momoh, desired popular acquiescence - both to reassure elites and foreign investors of their continued security and to avoid excessive and visible legitimacy deflation which might encourage military intervention - but were willing to forego mass support.

Two additional factors also played a role in the different choices made by the two leaders. The first, again linked to resources, concerned the fact that Jawara needed to minimise groundnut smuggling over porous borders into Senegal (militating against neglect of the rural areas) whereas in Sierra Leone the agricultural sector constituted a far less important source of resources. Second, it is possible that Jawara realised his prospects for sustaining popular support was better than that of Stevens. It is important not to overstate this point. Given the logic of his route to political

survival, Jawara needed popular support and was therefore prepared to make greater efforts to sustain it than his Sierra Leone counterparts. Nevertheless, it remains the case that certain factors encouraged Jawara to believe in the viability of his chosen route.²³ The following section examines this point further and analyses the PPP and APC's respective success in cultivating support and acquiescence.

Support and acquiescence.

Material Resources

Jawara's success in retaining a high level of support in the rural areas - evidenced not least by repeated election victories - reflected a number of factors, but material resources played an important role. Although rural people were hardly top of Jawara's list when it came to allocating resources - indeed rural people were taxed, through export duties and the GPMB's monopoly on the groundnut trade, to fund the urban bias - externally-generated resources enabled Jawara to maintain an element of balance between the rural and urban areas, not only easing what would otherwise have been a much greater burden on farmers but also providing them with some modest improvements (in terms of infrastructure and inputs).

Although these improvements fell short of rural expectations, their distribution and role in sustaining the patron-client network were critical to the PPP's survival. Linking the PPP to the rural areas were a number of key rural leaders: chiefs, village heads, local co-operative chairmen, "rich" farmers etc. In return for preferential access to state resources, these individuals operated to secure the support of those lower down the patron-client chain (through the selective provision of co-operative loans, food aid, agricultural inputs or infrastructural developments). The gains accruing to ordinary people were not great and were subject to fluctuations but, for most, continued support for the PPP - in the hope of gaining access to residual resources - was the rational choice.

Against this background, the ERP did not have a major impact upon the PPP's rural support base. During the first two years of the ERP higher groundnut producer prices did lead to a welcome increase in rural incomes but, as these could not be selectively distributed to individuals, they did not operate to reinforce patron-client networks. Moreover, the gradual return to low prices and poor rainfall levels saw rural incomes decline and the PPP relying anew upon the

²³ The focus in this concluding chapter is very much upon *general* factors, but it is worth reiterating that Jawara's willingness and ability to incorporate popular support as a central variable in his continued survival also reflected specifically electoral factors (covered at length in Chapter three). Comparing the two states, the differential importance of resources generated by local level divisions (which endowed the Sierra Leonean opposition with an enhanced potential viability) provides perhaps the clearest point of contrast.

operation of patron-client networks. Although ERP dictates saw some resources (fertilisers and other agricultural inputs, for example) removed from government control, co-operatives continued to provide credit and, more coercively, to collect debts. The selective provision of services - albeit in the context of declining expenditure - also continued.

Comparing The Gambia's experience with that of Sierra Leone it is possible to isolate some key differences. First, although patronage (usually derived from external resources, given the APC's lack of enthusiasm for devoting internally generated funds to rural areas) was distributed to some key rural leaders, notably chiefs and some rich farmers, the clientelist "chain" increasingly, and certainly more so than in The Gambia, tended to stop there. The inequitable distribution of resources - involving the progressive and massive diversion of funds, on a far greater scale than that witnessed in The Gambia, to satisfy elites - progressively constituted a major stumbling block to the maintenance of extensive clientelist networks.

Added to this, elections prior to 1978 featured large numbers of unopposed candidates which undermined the possibility of elections being used to reinvigorate patron-client relations; where candidates were unopposed the electorate had no vote to "sell." After 1978 unopposed candidacies were less prevalent and clientelist considerations re-emerged as an important factor; how effectively a prospective candidate would serve his or her constituency formed the primary basis of voter choice. Nevertheless, within the context of the APC's reluctance to expend resources in the rural areas, this choice often held a minimal value for individual voters.

Despite the disappointments (comparatively greater in Sierra Leone than in The Gambia, given the impact of each state's differential resource-base upon popular expectations) the key point to note is that for the most part rural people continued to acquiesce in APC rule. As in The Gambia, this partly reflected the desire of individuals not to preclude the possibility of accessing state resources (however minor) but perhaps more important was rural dwellers' lack of political organisation. In contrast to The Gambia, any groups with the potential to represent rural interests, such as co-operatives or farmers' associations, were deliberately undermined. Rural people as a whole lacked a voice with the progressive narrowing of legitimate popular participation.

A final point of contrast centred upon Stevens' reluctance to fully implement structural adjustment which meant that rural people did not gain - even temporarily - as they had in The Gambia. Under Momoh export crops did attract significantly increased producer prices (at the IMF's behest) for a time and yet spiralling inflation minimised the impact of increases - when they reached farmers at all - as did an extreme shortage of agricultural inputs.

Personal Resources and Political Goods.

Although there existed a real difference in the nature of resource distribution in Sierra Leone and The Gambia, it is important to recognise that it was largely a difference of degree; rural

people failed to reap substantial benefits in either state. Given this, it is necessary to reiterate the importance of alternative routes to support in The Gambia. Certainly patron-client networks were central and yet other factors also exerted an impact, helping to ease the pressure on scarce resources. In Sierra Leone rural dwellers' above-mentioned lack of a "voice" was crucial in producing acquiescence but additional factors (though often primarily geared to the urban areas) had at least a supplementary role to play.

First were the personal resources of each leader. Jawara's personal popularity, ability to inspire trust, sensitivity to his peoples' concerns, accessibility, peaceable nature and "clean" reputation were all immensely valuable PPP assets. Many Gambians simply could not imagine life without him; few, particularly in the rural areas, appeared to make any direct connection between Jawara and their resource-related grievances. Stevens, too, possessed important qualities - notably his age (a source of respect), familiarity, as a long-time actor on the political scene, and ability to communicate with ordinary people of all backgrounds. Although, with the passing of the years and in the context of widespread hardship, these qualities no doubt greatly diminished in importance they did help to prolong the APC's acceptability. Momoh was perhaps the least well-endowed with personal qualities although his clean reputation and, more importantly, the simple fact that he was not Stevens, did serve to temporarily boost the APC's popularity in 1985-86.

Second, was the provision of political goods. In The Gambia, the two most important political goods provided by the PPP regime were political stability and the protection of sovereignty. Political stability was, in part, a function of Jawara's overall de-politicisation of ethnic divisions. His willingness to share power at the elite level boosted the PPP's claim to legitimacy on the basis that it was representative of all Gambians, helped to ensure all groups felt "included" in the existing political set-up and undermined ethnicity as the primary means of accessing state resources. His efforts in this direction were greatly assisted by Gambians' high degree of inter-ethnic tolerance, in part a function of small state size.

Sierra Leone, likewise a small state, also escaped ethnically-inspired instability. That major ethnic unrest was avoided reflected Stevens' skilful manipulation of his own multi-ethnic background - which helped prevent the crystallisation of ethnic identity as a basis for mass disaffection - and his willingness to share the rewards of office. Perhaps ethnicity remained somewhat more important than in The Gambia - prior to 1978, for example, ethno-regional bases of party support continued to provide a backdrop to the electoral process and there is some evidence to suggest that the North benefited more than other regions from APC rule - and yet it was by no means a prime explanatory variable.

Although Sierra Leone escaped ethnic conflict, the benefits thereby accruing to the APC regime were not of the same order as those in The Gambia. Particular ethnic groups may not have suffered substantially more than others and yet all groups undoubtedly suffered. The

overwhelming predominance of elite interests caused individuals to focus their discontent upon elite-mass distributional issues and the political good of ethnic peace inevitably lost much of its value in the context of widespread hardship. This state of affairs remained static under Momoh, although it is possible that his increasing tendency to rely on Limbas in the elite sphere would ultimately have had negative repercussions in the wider society. The political good of ethnic peace was certainly tarnished by the APC's overall survival dynamic, but existing grievances expressed in ethnic terms may well have proved more potent and potentially harmful to the regime had Momoh survived.

The external world also played some role in each regime's efforts to boost their domestic acceptability, though far more so in The Gambia. This contrast can again be attributed to Jawara's much greater preoccupation with consolidating popular support, although in this instance he also possessed a more potent resource in the form of widespread anxieties over The Gambia's viability. Acknowledging the utility of the external world as a route to allaying these concerns - in the process accruing substantial political capital - Jawara devoted a comparatively greater amount of time (though minimal resources) to pursuing a foreign policy designed to emphasise state viability and enhance The Gambia's regional and international image.

Concerns over viability naturally faded with time but, at least during the early years, provided the PPP regime with an important resource not available in Sierra Leone. Nevertheless Stevens, though far less interested in consolidating undifferentiated popular support, did make sporadic use of the external environment to cultivate the approval of specific groups (early radical rhetoric, for example, was designed to appease the APC's younger left-leaning faction). However, even such limited efforts - and it is important not to exaggerate either their prevalence or the benefits accrued - were rarely attempted after the first few years. Certainly Momoh devoted minimal attention to the external sphere as anything other than a source of material resources and, later, regional military assistance.

Momoh's desperate need for material assistance also militated against the creation of external enemies as a route to domestic support; the emphasis was on making friends rather than enemies as indeed it was in The Gambia. Only Stevens felt rather less constrained and - mainly during the comparatively vulnerable early years of his rule - conjured up a variety of enemies, most notably the USA, to consolidate his domestic position. This was not solely a question of rallying support but also concerned the justification of various regime-strengthening measures - notably the banning of the UDP and the introduction of Guinean troops - undertaken at this time. In later years Stevens' (and of course his people's) preoccupations were increasingly focused upon the economy, and the "unsympathetic" IMF was successfully targeted as a means of diverting attention from the APC's own failings. Having failed to strike a deal with the IMF Momoh replicated his predecessor's efforts, again scoring political points. In contrast, Jawara's success in

coming to terms with IMF conditionalities - and The Gambia's reputation as a model reformer - reduced both the need for, and the wisdom of pursuing, a similar course.

In The Gambia a third political good and route to popular acceptance centred upon the protection of sovereignty. Although linked to the questions of viability noted above, Chapter four emphasised the importance of a further resource, namely location *vis-à-vis* Senegal. Jawara's ability to protect Gambian interests - preventing any real diminution of The Gambia's sovereignty - played an important role in legitimising PPP rule prior to 1981. After 1981 The Gambia's location became a less important legitimisation resource (although of course it remained crucial in terms of security). Following a brief resurgence of sovereignty fears - once the intention to join with Senegal in forming the Senegambian Confederation was made public - the predominant Gambian response was one of apathy. Thus, Jawara's very success in protecting Gambian interests caused Gambian fears to recede. Nevertheless, had Jawara showed any signs of weakening, particularly on the issue of economic union, opposition to which was stronger than ever, his position would certainly have been undermined. It was this inability to make real concessions which resulted, inevitably, in the dissolution of the Confederation. The dissolution not only failed to strengthen the regime - sovereignty fears did not re-emerge given the extreme unlikelihood that Senegal, already undergoing various problems with two of her neighbours and having removed her troops from The Gambia, would opt to invade - but, more crucially, removed the PPP's security safety net.

If The Gambia's location was rendered a decreasingly important legitimisation resource, its importance in comparison to Sierra Leone is nevertheless worth stressing. Sierra Leone under Stevens never appeared in any real danger of annexation by her immediate neighbours, Liberia and Guinea. Reflecting the much smaller disparity in size between Sierra Leone and her neighbours (rendering the prospects for a successful take-over rather less promising) and the fact that Sierra Leone's geographical location did not impinge directly upon their interests, the implications of this difference were mixed. On the one hand it enhanced Stevens' freedom to protect Sierra Leone's sovereignty (and boost his domestic standing) without risking aggressive retaliation. On the other, whereas Jawara was able to use popular concerns over sovereignty as a political resource, in Sierra Leone such concerns were much less apparent.

These factors aside Stevens did attempt to use sovereignty issues as a political resource. Nevertheless, unlike Jawara - who was, for the most part, reacting to a given set of circumstances - Stevens was forced to create threats, or at least respond 'creatively' to situations as they occurred. By so doing he hoped to provide a role for the army, rally support for the APC and distract popular attention from domestic difficulties. Nevertheless these efforts, notably the conduct of relations with Liberia in 1971 and 1983, were not consistently sustained, and in retrospect provided little more than fleeting diversion.

Relations with Guinea provide a closer comparison with the Gambia-Senegal relationship. Guinea's intervention in 1971 reflected Sekou Touré's desire for close economic and political links (resembling Senegal's incentive in 1981) and Stevens' ability to maintain cordial relations up to that point (both he and Jawara had responded sensitively to their neighbours' security concerns). Following the intervention, some Sierra Leoneans expressed concern over the future sovereignty and political direction of the nation; Stevens' attempts to assuage these fears - which included whipping up fears of "big power pressures" and portraying the Guineans as part of the same African family - resembled those of Jawara immediately after Senegal's intervention. In the longer term however it is important to stress that, unlike Jawara's post-1981 preoccupation with allaying domestic concerns, Stevens came down firmly on the side of pursuing a relationship with his neighbour. This was possible given the differing levels of popular concern over issues of sovereignty in the two states not to mention the APC's lesser need to pursue popular support.

Like Stevens, Momoh made no sustained effort to use the international arena as a source of domestic support. The groundswell of popular support which followed the rebel incursions - though certainly helpful to the APC's short-term survival - came about more by accident than design. Even then, the APC's resurgence in popularity did not last long; people's concerns soon reverted to their economic plight, made all the worse as the effects of the war (reflected in continual fuel and rice price increases) began to take hold.

The fourth and final political good worthy of mention centred upon the role of elections. From the discussion in Chapter three, several comparative points emerge. First was the superior legitimating benefits of Gambian elections, a function of the PPP's willingness to preside over a straight fight, the rarity value of multi-party elections and their link, in the popular mind, with stability and national unity. Elections, and the opportunity to cast a vote, were regarded as significant events by many Gambians, enhancing the legitimacy of - and people's obligation to accept - their end product, the PPP regime. Providing a choice of leaders not only ensured people felt they had a real say but gave them a legitimate means of expressing their grievances. Dissatisfaction expressed as a vote was preferable to other more destructive, possibly violent, forms of protest.

Nevertheless, elections were arguably rendered a decreasingly important legitimating mechanism over time. People became used to - and perhaps somewhat complacent about - their opportunity to cast a vote, and events elsewhere in Africa progressively undermined the system's rarity value. Equally, the popular tendency to take the provision of political goods such as stability increasingly for granted devalued the importance of elections as one of the supposed factors in producing these goods.

Nevertheless it remains the case that Gambian elections were a far more important legitimating mechanism than those in Sierra Leone where levels of electoral violence necessarily

entailed an upsurge in popular cynicism and distrust. In those areas where violence and intimidation were less prevalent elections may have conferred some sense of obligation to accept the victorious regime but the suggestion that individual voters, powerless to confront the violence, resorted to rationalising their participation in the system as a whole - hence creating a "sense of legitimacy" - if accepted at all, cannot be equated with the regime legitimacy created by elections in The Gambia. An important exception occurred during the 1986 elections alongside Momoh's determination to minimise the number of unopposed candidates and put a halt to electoral violence and intimidation. This break with the past enhanced the legitimacy of the APC regime in two ways, facilitating participation and inducing new hope for the future.

Overall, however, Sierra Leonean elections proved far more important as a diversionary than a legitimating mechanism. Once again, this difference reflected the two regimes overall approach. Whereas Jawara needed popular support, and regarded relatively free and fair elections as one way to produce this outcome, Stevens required only popular acquiescence. Understanding that the meaning popularly attributed to elections invested them with great diversionary potential, Stevens used elections to divert the attention of the mass (preoccupied with who would be elected or selected to represent them) and political aspirants.²⁴ Indeed, Stevens was a master of diversionary tactics. Not only elections but also foreign policy were skilfully exploited to divert attention from Sierra Leone's economic and political decline and the continuous circulation of rumours - whether they concerned the likelihood of constitutional change or simply an imminent cabinet reshuffle - fulfilled a similar function. Stevens exploited the widespread desire for change, nurturing people's hopes for a better future with frequent indications of a wish to retire and reports of impending economic salvation. These efforts were particularly important in prolonging the acquiescence of urban groups.

Urban Groups.

As a general rule, better educated and more politically aware urban dwellers pose a higher-level threat than their rural counterparts. Whereas rural protest tends to comprise individual acts of dissent, in the towns disaffection is more likely to be collectively expressed whether through spontaneous, unorganised protest or through organised channels.

Further unpacking this observation with regard to Sierra Leone and The Gambia it was found that organised groups in the former state were greater in number and strength than in the latter. Accordingly, in Sierra Leone urban disaffection was more likely to be channelled through organised groups.²⁵ On the one hand this appeared to render the urban threat of a higher order than

²⁴ Momoh's subsequent announcement of a return to multi-partyism had a similar effect.

²⁵ Although there certainly existed the danger - periodically realised - that unorganised groups would latch onto and exacerbate organised protest.

that facing the PPP. On the other - and given that most protests were designed to gain access to state resources, not overthrow the system - groups were rather easier to identify, reach and accommodate than the unorganised.

While accommodation appeared to constitute a viable route to political security it is important to reiterate that neither Stevens nor Jawara approached the urban challenge in isolation. Several additional factors influenced their response.

First, the nature of the urban threat in each state differed in terms of what disaffection might imply for the two regimes. Certainly all three leaders needed urban *acquiescence* to demonstrate their firm grip on power, restrain conspirators and reassure elites that their interests and future security were protected. In addition, however, the logic of Jawara's route to political survival implied the need to cultivate urban *support*, hence retaining the PPP's claim to legitimacy as the representative and voice of *all* Gambians.

Second, the different survival-related needs of each regime had implications for the distribution of resources. Sustaining an urban bias and protecting urban living standards was one way of meeting basic survival imperatives, a way pursued by both regimes for some years. However, as resources declined so the strategy of the PPP and APC diverged.

In both states the urban bias became increasingly difficult to sustain, albeit for different reasons. In Sierra Leone the massive diversion of resources to elites greatly compounded the inadequate economic policies plaguing both states. Both states were also affected by externally imposed constraints albeit in different ways. In The Gambia the introduction of structural adjustment (which raised prices for goods and services and cut the size of the public sector) caused suffering among urban dwellers. In Sierra Leone both Momoh's attempts to convince the IMF of his serious economic intent, and his failure to do so, had an even more serious impact upon the urban areas. Thus, although urban living standards were compromised in both states, the continued receipt of external assistance meant they remained higher for longer in The Gambia.

The two regimes' different approach was attributable to their overall survival requirements. In The Gambia Jawara had little choice but to implement structural adjustment but this route was rendered less risky than in Sierra Leone. The factors already noted - notably the continued provision of political goods, the legitimising effect of elections and the lesser vigour of organised opposition groups - accounted for this. In Sierra Leone the APC - far more dependent upon the distribution of resources to restrain elites - could not afford to adhere to IMF conditionalities. This reluctance had a severe impact upon the urban areas but, crucially, the APC needed only acquiescence to survive. One way of ensuring continued acquiescence was to employ coercion.²⁶

²⁶ In The Gambia, Jawara understood that a resort to coercion would undermine the PPP's claim to legitimacy and popular support; hence his tactics were designed to preclude the necessity of employing it. The success

It should be stressed that coercion proved a useful tool prior to Momoh's presidency. That the decline in urban living standards had begun prior to the cessation of aid partly accounted for this and yet Stevens' comparative insecurity, particularly in the military sphere, also inclined him to limit the autonomy of relatively easily suppressed groups.

Certainly it is important not to exaggerate this point. In comparison with many African states the APC regime was relatively tolerant; indeed, an important factor in the APC's survival was its ability to limit coercion with the nature and gravity of the threat posed (and changes over time) for the most part determining the utilisation of force. Both Stevens and Momoh feared a descent into the "force-contempt-more force" spiral and the expense and risks involved in using the security forces in a domestic capacity. Nevertheless the APC approach stood in stark contrast to the PPP, a contrast which became more pronounced over time as the APC struggled to find resources to divert beyond the elite sphere and the above-mentioned tactics (notably political diversion) increasingly failed to compensate for this failure.

The use of physical force to restrict the autonomy of particular groups (the labour movement, students and the press were all examined at length in Chapter one), often in conjunction with additional tactics, notably co-optation, was largely effective in producing urban acquiescence. However, the long-term position of the APC was hardly guaranteed. Two points are worth reiterating. First, the regime's increasing reliance on coercion was not only risky in itself but constituted a sign of the growing strength of civil society, a strength manifested in the convergence of groups to demand a return to multi-partyism. Even had the APC succeeded in winning those elections the more intractable problem of the rebel war remained. If Richards²⁷ is correct to suggest that the rebels included those students who suffered at APC hands in 1977 the long-term flaws in the APC's approach become apparent.

There were flaws, too, in Jawara's approach. Specifically, his drive to accommodate urban dwellers failed (perhaps inevitably) to incorporate all sections of the populace equally. Urban youth in particular had progressively suffered both political and economic alienation during the 1970s; in concert with Sanyang, who had also failed to access the system, and others, particularly the Jola, who had failed to gain satisfaction from the existing set-up, they very nearly succeeded in toppling the PPP in 1981.

After 1981 Senegal's military presence rendered it extremely unlikely that the fledgling army would attempt to intervene militarily either on its own behalf or as part of a radical, civilian-inspired, rebellion. Nevertheless, following Senegal's departure the disaffection of some urban elements re-emerged as an important issue. Jawara may have made some attempts to incorporate youth in political terms, but economic issues continued to form a central preoccupation. The PPP's

of these tactics was reflected in the absence of overt protest on the introduction of the ERP.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, p 141.

tolerance of corruption heightened youthful alienation and increasing levels of unemployment posed a continuing threat to regime survival. Jawara was aware of this problem but in the context of limited resources possessed few options.

The second flaw in Jawara's approach centred upon his willingness to allow organised groups, in particular the press, a large degree of autonomy. Certainly this willingness constituted an important aspect of his overall approach to political survival and yet towards the end of PPP rule an apparent increase in corruption was seized upon and publicised by a substantially enlarged and evermore vocal press. The spate of legitimacy-deflating articles provided Jammeh with both the motivation and justification to attempt a coup, and helped keep domestic resistance to the intervention to a minimum.

The Problems of Explaining Political Survival.

The intention of this study has been to account for the prolonged survival of the APC and PPP regimes. It has attempted to evaluate and compare the survival strategies of the three leaders, paying particular attention to how these strategies made optimum use of available resources, in response to specific threats. In closing, however, it is worth highlighting some of the problems of definitively explaining political survival.

One problem concerns the relative importance of a leader's tactical choices. Clearly not all the three leaders' tactics exerted an equal impact upon their survival prospects and yet quantifying the significance of each is no easy task. The inter-related and reinforcing nature of many of the strategies pursued certainly provides an important clue to the leaders' prolonged survival and yet it remains the case that some were more important than others. In this chapter an attempt to rank the importance of particular strategies has been made, and yet in the final analysis all conclusions are heavily dependent upon the observer's perception.

Linked to this - and in some ways even more problematic - are the difficulties inherent in attempting to identify the survival-related consequences of a leader's tactical choices. Even leaving aside the range of survival-inducing factors unrelated to a leader's choices, such as simple good fortune, the observer cannot state, with any degree of certainty, how different choices might have affected a regime's survival prospects. Lacking exact scientific controls the observer does not have the option of "removing" choices or circumstances and comparing the outcome with the actual course of events. Again, individual perception of what "might have happened", albeit based upon a thorough knowledge of the states concerned, is the most that is possible.

Although reaching definitive conclusions about why some regimes overcome all the odds to survive and producing an overarching theory of regime survival may prove impossible, further progress towards this end is nevertheless possible. Additional case-studies of prolonged survival, in laying the basis for a wider comparison of instances of both survival and non-survival and

helping to identify the relative importance of specific survival strategies, constitutes an obvious route forward.

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[This is a list of those individuals interviewed in an official capacity although it should be acknowledged that many others offered both assistance and enlightenment.]

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Mariam Ashcroft: Manager, Gambian Women's Finance Association, 26 February 1994.

Bubacarr Baldeh: Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture (former Secretary-General of the PPP's Youth Wing; successful Independent candidate for Basse in the 1982 elections), 9 January 1994.

Jatteh Baldeh (and co.): Members of PDOIS.

AA Barry: Editor, *Daily Observer*, 8 August 1993.

Dr Lamin Bojang: Leader of the PDP, 21 November 1993.

Eddie Bright: Senior civil servant, 26 November 1993.

Nana Busia: African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, 12 February 1994.

Assan Musa Camara: Leader of the GPP (former occupant of a number of ministerial posts and the Vice-Presidency), 24 August 1993, 5 November 1993, 2 February 1994.

Dr Ceesay: Head of Planning, Ministry of Education, 5 November 1993.

Dixon Colley: editor of *The Nation*, 15 October 1993, 6 July 1993, 12 January 1994.

Musa Dabo: NCP activist, 5 January 1994.

David Davis: Senior Archivist, 1 July 1993.

Sheriff Dibba: Leader of the NCP (founding member of the PPP, occupant of a number of ministerial posts and a former Vice-President), 21 June 1993, 5 September 1993.

Baboucar Gaye: Editor, *Newsmonth*, 12 December 1993.

Momodou Gaye: Assistant Secretary at the PPP's Banjul headquarters, 1 February 1994.

Nana Grey-Johnson: Freelance journalist, 19 September 1993.

Deyda Hydara: Editor, *The Point*, 12 August 1993.

M Saho: Member of the NCP, 1 March 1994.

Sulayman A Jack: Permanent Secretary, Defence, 6 January 1994.

IBM Kelepha Samba: National President of the PPP (formerly Minister of Works and Mayor of Banjul), 13 July 1993.

Lamin Bora M'Boge: Founding member of the PPP and occupant of several ministerial posts (Economic Planning and Industrial Development; Finance and Trade; Works and Communications), 19 October 1993.

Doudou S N'Jie: Clerk of the House of Representatives, 29 January 1994.

M N'Jie: Economist, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1 December 1993.

PS N'Jie: Former leader of the UP and Chief Minister, 12 August 1993.

Saihou Sabally: Vice-President, 4 October 1993.

Halifa Sallah: Co-leader of PDOIS and co-editor of *Foroyaa*, 16 July 1993; 20 December 1993.

Sam Sarr: Co-leader of PDOIS and co-editor of *Foroyaa*, 16 July 1993; 20 February 1994.

AB Sheriff: Journalist, *Daily Observer*, 9 September 1993.

Ebrima Sillah: Journalist, *The Point*, 11 December 1993.

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