

# Soldiers of Fortune:

A qualitative study into the effects of military provider, Private Military  
Companies on the domestic sovereignty of fragile African nations

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## **Declaration**

This thesis has been submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree 'Bachelor of Advanced Studies (Politics and International Relations) (Honours)'. This work is substantially my own, and where any part of this work is not my own, it has been indicated by acknowledging the source of that part or those parts of the work.

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## **Abstract**

The global security environment is rapidly changing and dynamic, presenting an interesting challenge to nation states. This has created an industry for private security in which lower capacity states can increase their force, skills, and expertise on the combat front to effectively defeat an enemy. However, this industry presents a new challenge to the sovereignty of nations as it takes the military, which was previously a state-controlled institution and has opened it up to private influence. This thesis looks to explore whether Private Military Companies that provide direct military combat have a measurable negative impact upon the domestic sovereignty of an already fragile African state. To do this, the thesis first defines domestic sovereignty and the measurable aspects that will be analysed in each of the three case studies. These measurable aspects will be elite fragmentation, the ability to generate revenue from state assets, and territorial control. The three case studies analysed are Sierra Leone, Angola, and Nigeria. The thesis finds that when a nation hires with higher levels of elite fragmentation hires a Private Military Company then measurable negative effects on the nation's ability to practice domestic sovereignty will occur. Further, the thesis discovers that when a nation with lower levels of elite fragmentation hires a Private Military Company there will be a neutral effect on the nation's ability to practice domestic sovereignty.

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# Abbreviations

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<b>PMC</b>	Private Military Company
<b>MSSD</b>	Most Similar Systems Design
<b>SI</b>	Sandline International
<b>RUF</b>	Revolutionary United Front
<b>EO</b>	Executive Outcomes
<b>AFRC</b>	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
<b>ECOMOG</b>	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
<b>RSMLF</b>	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces
<b>MPLA</b>	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
<b>UNITA</b>	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
<b>FAA</b>	Forças Armadas de Angola
<b>FNLA</b>	Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
<b>STTEP</b>	Specialised Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection
<b>MJTF</b>	Multi-National Joint Task Force

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*'Who will take responsibility for any violations of international humanitarian law and of human rights that [military companies] commit ... What will be the human rights consequences of entrusting internal order and control over the exercise of civil rights in a country to an international private security firm?' (Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights 1996)*

Private Military Companies (PMCs) are international businesses that provide military support, intelligence, operations, training, and equipment to supplement the military campaigns and conflict of another group. These highly trained companies became more well-known following the periods of decolonisation in Africa where patron support was withdrawn leading to violent conflicts over power and control. Political parties, unable to fight their opposition began hiring PMCs which were designed to increase the strength and knowledge of their own armies, whilst also supporting soldiers in direct conflict. Since these occurrences, PMCs have played a larger role in conflicts, specifically during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars where they were hired as supplementary forces by powerful nation states. PMCs have developed from mercenaries who are classified as illegal under international law. They are illegitimate, unorganised, operate unregulated in foreign countries and are primarily motivated by financial gain (Percy 2007). However, PMCs are categorically different in that they are organised, legitimate companies that operate legally and regulated to an extent (Singer 2010, pp. 45-47). Since the end of the cold war and the ensuing struggle for power among many African countries, there has been a lot more research conducted into the origins, uses and consequences of Private Military Companies utilising specific real-world examples.

The rise of the PMC as a non-state actor is particularly interesting due to the way in which they are incorporated into government institutions traditionally reserved for state actors. They have prompted attention from academics to analyse their usage and more pertinently, their effect on the state. PMCs are one of the few non-state actors that can legitimately engage in violent state military operations. The state's ability to maintain the monopoly on the use of legitimate force is highly engrained in modern society and thus this change could have far-reaching consequences for established institutions and states. The effects that PMCs can have on sovereignty aren't widely researched, but there are a few academics who specialise within the area, often divided as to whether they are a negative or positive addition to a state's security agenda.

The current literature available discusses PMCs as a whole, failing to distinguish the difference between the categories of services that they provide. This thesis will distinguish between case studies based on the services that the PMCs provided to states, specifically, services involving combat, training, and equipment. Further, current literature looks to how PMCs affect sovereignty but do so addressing it as a whole concept. This thesis will focus specifically on domestic sovereignty to understand the way in which a PMC can affect this. Thus, this thesis looks to fill a gap in the research of military provider PMCs and whether they influence the domestic sovereignty of African states.

This thesis will look to examine the use of these Private Military Companies within similar Sub-Saharan African states to assess their effect on a state's domestic sovereignty. To successfully highlight this potential effect, an analysis into Sub-Saharan Africa presents interesting case studies to account for the impact of PMCs due to the governance and corruption issues already rampant in many of these states. The countries that will be analysed are Sierra Leone, Angola, and Nigeria.

What can be understood from the three case studies is that the pre-existing levels of elite fragmentation influence the impact that a PMC can have on domestic sovereignty. If a state with high levels of elite fragmentation hires a PMC, this can determine how the PMC is used and thus, results in a net negative impact on the ability for a state to practice domestic sovereignty. However, if the state has lower levels of elite fragmentation, the impact that a PMC has on domestic sovereignty is neutral. To explain how this theory was reached, the thesis will first review relevant literature to set the scene for the research. The second section will then outline the research methodology and the theory that will be tested in the case analysis. The thesis will then analyse three case studies to determine the impact of PMCs on their domestic sovereignty. Finally, the conclusion will look to the key findings of the research and future policy implications.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Understanding Private Military Companies**

It is common in current discourse to find a range of varying definitions about what a PMC is comprised of. Notably, Singer provides the most comprehensive definition of a PMC. Singer's definition is one that is commonly used among other academics. He argues that PMCs are, 'private business entities that deliver to consumers a wide spectrum of military and security services, once generally assumed to be exclusively inside the public context' (Singer, 2010, pp. 9). PMCs are used for a variety of reasons, with Singer's framework providing a key basis for how their operations have been divided. Singer uses the 'tip of the spear' framework to distinguish the types of PMCs by how close they are to military combat (Singer 2010). Singer separates PMCs into Military Provider Firms, Military Consultant Firms and Military Support Firms (Singer 2010). Military Provider Firms are those that provide combat services for the clients and engage on the battlefield such as Sandline International and Executive Outcomes. Military Consultant Firms are those that provide consulting and training services, engaging directly with militaries and private armies, such as Dyncorp and WatchGuard International. Military Support Firms are those that provide functions including nonlethal aid and assistance such as Brown and Root and SAIC (Singer 2010). These definitions allow for a more comprehensive characterisation of PMCs and for more rigorous analysis due to the ability to categorise their impact on states; however, companies can transcend these boundaries leading to confusion about where they stand. This thesis will use a slightly modified version of these categories in order to discuss the impact of those PMCs that provide military combat services, with Singer arguing that this classification of PMCs allows researchers to explore a variation in firms organisation, their operations and their impact (Singer 2010, pp.91). When referring to

Military Provider Firms, the thesis will reference those PMCs that provide services closer to the 'tip of the spear', including combat, training, and weaponry. This is because PMCs that provide these services integrate themselves into the militaries of nations, engaging directly with the soldiers and thus having more of an influence on their operations.

The rise of military companies labelled as PMCs began because of shrinking national armies globally due to the end of the de-colonisation period in the 60's where the economic strain they placed on the governments was large. This period of rapid unemployment of skilled soldiers, combined with increasing security issues is what many key academics argue is the rise of Private Military Companies (Manoilo and Zaytsev, 2020, pp. 50). The PMC as an entity stems from mercenary groups dating back to what Singer argues as the beginning of war itself (Singer 2010, pp.26). These soldiers and commanders, coming from some of the elite forces in the world, were hired by the first official PMCs to provide primarily consultancy services to leaders globally.

The vast push for the privatisation of industries has occurred globally with governments looking to outsource the operations of some of their key institutions. An increasingly unstable political environment in Africa has created a thriving opportunity for the Private Military industry (Boyce 2013, pp.50). The way in which PMCs interact within a modern society has been labelled by Newell and Sheehy as highly associated with the economic, social and political aspects of a nation-state (Newell & Sheehy 2006, pp.72). These academics suggest that larger, institutionally, and economically stronger states look to incorporate PMCs into their core defence strategy. Singer highlights that these stronger nations look to hire PMCs to supplement areas in which they may not have as much expertise, to ensure the strength of their military (Singer 2010, pp.94). This is in comparison to those smaller and weaker states that contract PMCs to provide direct combat assistance as well as military training to increase the capacity of their soldiers and

to fill a security gap (Newell & Sheehy 2006, pp.72). Singer discusses this concept through highlighting that countries with low military capability will employ military provider PMCs when faced with an, 'immediate, high threat situation' (Singer 2010, pp.93). The economic capacities of these two categories of countries fundamentally influences how, what and where they are used. As PMCs have little international regulation to police their operations and services they provide, there are large grey areas as to what acts are illegal in warfare (Newell & Sheehy 2006, pp.81). This grey area has allowed for stronger states to exploit these actions as there is a lack of accountability when looking at government contractors.

### **Sovereignty and Private Military Companies**

Recent research has been undertaken to account for the rise of PMCs, their regulations and specific case study analysis. Due to this research, the issues of state sovereignty and a PMC's increasing influence within the politics of countries they work in have become topics of interest. Conventional sovereignty has four key aspects including international legal sovereignty, domestic sovereignty, Westphalian sovereignty and interdependence sovereignty (Krasner 2004). These notions of sovereignty are argued by Krasner to be mutually supportive and aim to ensure that the state has the fundamental right to non-interference by other nations. Domestic sovereignty is defined by Krasner as, 'the formal organisation of political authority within the state and the ability of public authorities to exercise effective control within the borders of their own polity' (Krasner 1999). Krasner looks to explore that despite some weak states having international sovereignty, the break-down of domestic sovereignty can undermine this.

There are a few academics that look to the relationship between PMCs and state sovereignty. Leander is a particular proponent of the idea that PMCs are a threat to the notion of state authority. Leander suggests that private companies are interested in maximising their power and monetary benefits through shaping how weak states analyse and understand security issues (Leander, 2005, pp.804). The strong sentiment against the effectiveness of PMCs is that their strategic self-positioning as security market leaders allows them to create illegitimate security concerns to ensure the viability of their contracts (Leander, 2005b, pp.614). Therefore, the state has a private entity determining security solutions that may not be in the best interests of the public good (Leander, 2005b, pp,614; Singer, 2001, pp.216; Small, 2006, pp.14). Another argument widely discussed on the effects of PMCs is the ability for weakly governed states to be trapped by agenda seeking private corporations. These arguments are further developed by Singer who outlines that dependency upon a private corporation leaves a state vulnerable to market fluctuations, resulting in potential risks to the independence of a state (Singer, 2001, pp.205).

### *Domestic Sovereignty*

Most PMC literature addresses sovereignty as a whole, failing to identify the specific effects on domestic sovereignty, thus revealing a gap. This thesis argues that domestic sovereignty can be characterised through three indicators. These three aspects are elite fragmentation, the ability for a nation state to control and generate revenue from state assets, and territorial control.

Elite fragmentation can be characterised by political and military groups vying for political power and access to natural resources. Elite cohesion leads to political stability which is defined as one of the key aspects of domestic sovereignty (Brown 1993, pp.111). Political stability is

widely used as a measure of sovereignty, and this is directly impacted upon by the fragmentation of elite political groups. The World Governance Indicators look to the political stability of nations as a factor in determining their levels of governance and sovereignty (Kaufmann et al. 2011). The effects of elite fragmentation have been studied, particularly in Africa with academics such as Branch and Cheeseman analysing the effects of elite fragmentation on political conflict and state failure in Kenya (Branch & Cheeseman 2008). Brown's work on elite cohesion supports the idea that in some countries, elite fragmentation affects political stability and thus aspects of domestic sovereignty (Brown 1993). Elite fragmentation within African politics is of great importance when analysing sovereignty due to the history of decolonisation and conflict for political control.

The ability to generate revenue and retain control over state resources is of great importance when the state is heavily reliant on the profits to fund their budget. The right for a state to have complete sovereignty over their natural resources is one that is enshrined in international law, specifically the General Assembly Resolution 1803 (XVII) of 14 December 1962 (UHCHR 1962). Thus, the lack of governmental control over these state assets directly impacts on sovereignty when considered by international law. Lockhart's work analyses strategies for enhancing core governance and sovereignty, highlighting that one of the core functions of the state is to generate revenue and thus if they are unable to do this, their control over state institutions diminishes (Lockhart 2018, pp.91). The ability to generate revenue and maintain control over these state assets is thus greatly important to the domestic sovereignty of a nation state.

The ability for a government to maintain territorial control over the land within their borders is one of the traditional measures for sovereignty and one that is discussed in sovereignty literature

(Krasner 1999, Philpott 1995). Territorial control is very much an issue of domestic sovereignty as the loss of territory to an insurgency or political group can lead to a reduction in both domestic control and domestic authority. Rotberg's study into the causes and indicators of weak, failed, and collapsed states identifies that the amount of land controlled by the government can indicate the extent of the state's failure (Rotberg 2003, pp.6). Rotberg's research further examines the lowered rates of loyalty in areas of which territorial control is lost due to disenfranchised citizens (Rotberg 2003, pp.9). These findings suggest that in the case of lost territorial control, both domestic authority and domestic control are reduced.

The following section will look to the research methodology employed in the thesis to properly set out the way in which the argument will be made. The section will further include the theory surrounding how a PMC impacts on a state's domestic sovereignty.

## **CHAPTER 3: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Theory**

This thesis will look to analyse the impact of PMCs on the domestic sovereignty of a state. The distinction that Singer makes between military companies is important to categorise the effect of PMCs. When a PMC is referred to throughout the thesis, it will focus on those PMCs closer to combat, providing direct combat support, training, and weapons supply.

The thesis theorises that the levels of elite fragmentation within a state influences the effect that a PMC will have on the nation's domestic sovereignty. If the level of fragmentation among elites is higher prior to hiring a PMC, this affects the way in which a PMC is used to perform their duties, thus impacting negatively on domestic sovereignty. However, if a PMC is hired by a state with lower levels of elite fragmentation, the way in which the PMC is used will be primarily for the hired purpose, thus having a neutral impact on the nation's ability to practice domestic sovereignty. The differing levels of elite fragmentation cause governments to hire a PMC for different reasons. The alternate hypothesis is that PMCs have no impact and are unrelated to domestic sovereignty.

PMCs are having a measurable impact upon the ability of weak African states to effectively practice domestic sovereignty within their territorial borders as they enable a shift in the distribution of elite political power. If a PMC directly engages in combat missions, they can create a large shift in the distribution of power due to their direct military impact. Those firms that don't provide direct military combat may have less of an impact on the domestic sovereignty of states as their operations are not necessarily as extreme.

The impact that PMCs have upon a nation state is highlighted through the three factors that are analysed within this thesis. These are elite fragmentation, the ability to generate revenue from state assets and territorial control. Not only do these three factors allow for an analysis into the impact of PMCs upon a nation state, but they are interconnected in terms of how they impact the state. Elite fragmentation is inherent within the politics of weak states as each political group vies for greater power. The ability for a nation to control its revenue generating assets is of vital importance to its ability to maintain good governance as this revenue allows the governments provision of essential services such as that of the military. The nation state, unable to provide reasonable remuneration for its military, or effective social services creates grievances and greed amongst their population. The promise of increased remuneration and status within rebellions or militias can see the efficacy of the national military decrease as corruption becomes inherent. This lack of generating revenue from state assets can then be seen as a cause of the loss of territory and control due to weaker military capacity. These three factors are interconnected and thus must be studied together to understand the full impact of a PMC on domestic sovereignty.

## **Methodology**

This thesis will utilise an observational design method, specifically, a comparative case study using the Small N approach. This will be achieved through demonstrating a causal link between the introduction of the PMC and changes in the defined variables of sovereignty.

### Most Similar Systems Design

Within the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), I will utilise P.W. Singer's classification for PMCs as the framework to assist in this case study selection. Singer uses the 'tip of the spear' framework to distinguish the types of PMCs by how close they are to military combat (Singer 2010). This categorisation will ensure that not every PMC is generalised to influence state sovereignty, only those at the tip of the spear that provide services closer to combat.

One of the main criticisms for using a Most Similar Systems Design in a Small N comparative case study is that utilising a unit of analysis such as a country inhibits the researcher from ensuring that every control variable is controlled (Esser & Vliegenthart 2017, Anckar 2008, Meckstroth 1975). In order to counter this and increase the strength of the thesis, the inclusion of Process Tracing is argued by Esser and Vliegenthart to allow, 'soft control' of the variables in a way that increases the validity of the argument (Esser & Vliegenthart 2017, pp.7).

### *Case Justification*

This study focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa, looking at the use of PMCs in Sierra Leone, Angola, and Nigeria. This thesis will focus on this region for two main reasons. The first reason is that the African region attracts the most number of PMCs than anywhere else in the world. Secondly, the region has undergone large amounts of decolonisation in its recent history resulting in many conflicts and power battles among political parties. This race for control and power has led to the prolific use of PMCs (Manoilo & Zaytsev 2020).

These specific case studies have been chosen as the independent variables are similar in terms of the background of their country, their geographic location, and the recency of their use. In Sierra Leone, PMCs were contracted by the government to assist in the civil war and were paid in part through mining concessions, giving them the ability to gain more control (Selber & Jobarteh 2002, pp.91). In Angola, PMCs were contracted to assist in helping the government maintain authority after election results were contested (Selber & Jobarteh 2002, pp.91). In the instance of Nigeria, PMCs were contracted by the government to assist in quelling the terrorist forces of Boko Haram (Nabiebu & Alobu 2019, pp.65). Each case study has a period of unrest in which the PMCs were brought in to assist and hence the timeline will follow the beginning of the conflict to when PMCs were withdrawn. For Sierra Leone, the timeline will occur from the beginning of civil unrest in 1991, to when Sandline International (SI) left the country in 1998. In Angola, the timeline will be from 1991 until 2002. In Nigeria, the timeline will focus on 2014 to 2016.

*Table 1. Most Similar Systems Design Explanation*

Case Study	Domestic Sovereignty			Why was the PMC hired?	Geographic Location	Government hired a PMC?	Time Period
	Elite Fragmentation	Control of State Assets	Territorial Control				
Sierra Leone	VERY HIGH	LOW	LOW	To Retake Oil Plant	Sub-Saharan Africa	YES	Past 30 years
Angola	HIGH	LOW	LOW	Civil War	Sub-Saharan Africa	YES	Past 30 years
Nigeria	LOW	HIGH	HIGH	Terrorism	Sub-Saharan Africa	YES	Past 30 years

The variable that constitutes an MSSD in this thesis is elite fragmentation. All three case studies are nations with lower state capacity and thus it is expected that they all have lower domestic sovereignty. However, when looking to the three measures of domestic sovereignty above, there are varying levels of sovereignty within these lower capacity states. In saying this, despite the three cases being similar, they differ in the prior levels of elite fragmentation. This elite fragmentation affects the way in which the PMC is used and the services they provide. Thus, whilst the variables and outcomes are similar, the causal pathway is different.

### Process Tracing

This thesis will look to theory testing in order to explain the causal link between ‘tip of the spear’ PMCs and the domestic sovereignty of weak states (Beach & Pedersen 2019, pp.3). This thesis looks to provide evidence for the hypothesis that the varying levels of elite fragmentation in a nation prior to hiring a PMC influences the way in which a PMC is used and thus, a PMC will have varying impacts on the domestic sovereignty of a state. The alternative hypothesis to this is that PMC and a change in domestic sovereignty is unrelated.

### **Research Design**

The causal mechanisms will form a structure that will include five questions to build a case for how PMCs may be influential in ability of a state to practice domestic sovereignty. The following questions will be asked of each of the three case studies:

*What is the state of sovereignty in the country before the introduction of PMCs?*

This will provide a base level where the analysis can begin. By looking at the state of sovereignty prior to the PMC, this will allow the thesis to analyse whether a defined change has occurred. The most important factor in this thesis is the before and after of PMC intervention within the state and thus within each of these sectors, an analysis of the following three factors will take place.

### *Elite Fragmentation*

Regime survival and greed for money often causes a split in political ideals and thus the split between elite groups. This competing set of ideals, driven by greed and power sees each party take measures which may compromise their ability to govern effectively. The state of elite fragmentation within a nation prior to the introduction of PMCs, as stated before, is a factor in influencing the impact that a PMC can have on domestic sovereignty. If a PMC is introduced as a supplementary force to heighten the government's power over other elite political groups, this can lead to a shift in decision making that can change the trajectory of the war.

### *Control of State Assets*

Prior to the introduction of PMCs, the control that a state has over their revenue generating assets is essential to understand the reasoning behind why a PMC was introduced. If a state does not have control over these assets, this directly impacts upon their ability to fund essential services such as that of military and social services. For the three case studies, natural resources are a fundamental aspect to the economy and thus governmental control over these assets is vital

to ensure their military and political power. The loss of this control may signify elite fragmentation and loss of territory, both of which are essential to maintaining domestic sovereignty.

### *Territorial Control*

The measure of territory for a government is a good indicator of their ability to practice domestic sovereignty within a nation. If prior to the introduction of a PMC, the nation state is ceding territory to their political or military rival, this signifies a loss in control and sovereignty. If an external force claims the territory of a state in such a way that inhibits the state from accessing key military bases, financial assets, or weaponry barracks then this can have a major impact upon the sovereignty of the state. This is due to the nations' inability to mobilise their resources or control significant revenue generating assets. This lack of access creates either a weaker and more unstable military or government, both of which can impact upon the sovereignty of a nation state.

*Why were PMCs hired? What were the PMC's actually used for?*

The initial intention for hiring PMCs is the first step in analysing the impact that a PMC can have. The many reasons for hiring a PMC, whilst all different can have varying impacts upon the sovereignty of a state and thus must be analysed. If direct military combat is the main agenda of PMCs, this allows them to manipulate conflicts to suit the requirements and intentions of the business. Further, using PMCs as a force multiplier can leave the national military in a weaker position once the contract is terminated, as the previously strong force that ended conflict is now weakened, allowing for rebel forces to again flourish.

The actual actions undertaken by the PMC is the next logical step in analysing the impact as it is important to identify whether the PMC looked to manipulate the contract through performing tasks outside of their initial responsibilities. This mechanism will look to establish whether the PMC's actions extended beyond those of their contract. If actions were undertaken outside of the contracted obligations, this can increase the impact that PMCs can have as a clear shift in thinking has occurred on the government's behalf.

*How did the government fund the use of PMCs?*

The next step in the process is to identify how the government funded the use of PMCs due to the inherent financial impact that they present. If a state is unable to gather the necessary funds to pay for a PMC's services, this may force a state to provide mining concessions or other forms of payment. This can lead to valuable state income being redirected to ensure contractual obligations are followed, potentially disadvantaging other aspects of a government's agenda (Leander 2005, pp.614). Furthermore, a government can choose to fund the PMC through an external company or actor in which the PMCs services are of a mutual interest. Whilst this enables the government to carry out the military agenda, it also opens the government up to exploitation and manipulation of the funding company due to the significant debt burden placed upon them.

*What is the state of sovereignty following the use of PMCs?*

Finally, it is important to measure the impact of PMCs following their departure to identify if they influenced the ability for the government to practice domestic sovereignty. This section will

look at the mechanisms above and will compare the outcomes to the state of sovereignty prior to the introduction of PMCs. This comparison is essential to establish whether the mechanisms have a causal link to the degradation of state sovereignty.

### *Elite Fragmentation*

The influence and force multiplier effect of PMCs can have consequences for elite groups as they may cause a shift in the distribution of power between elite political groups. This shift in the distribution of power can both permanently and temporarily increase the ability for one group to take control and power of the state. Along with this shift in power, a PMC may be the catalyst for a lengthened civil war as this shift in power provided to states may change their risk tolerance. Elite fragmentation is only one aspect of the larger domestic sovereignty picture as one political group may have more power than the other; however, if they don't have control over their state assets or territory, this shift in power may be short-lived and untenable.

### *Control of State Assets*

When a PMC is given assets as a substitute for payment of government contracts as the state does not have the funds, this can begin to impinge on the domestic sovereignty of a nation (Howe 1998, pp.319). More specifically, this impacts upon the ability of a nation to exercise influence and security over territory based on the location and use of the asset. Whilst the provisioning of mining concessions may not have a significant impact upon the ability of states to generate long term revenue, it may affect the governments influence of these assets. Often these mining companies are involved with the PMC, offering to pay for part, or all of the PMC's services on behalf of the government. This can in some instances see the state in debt to the

mining company who can then influence more favourable concessions. Thus, both influence and revenue generated must be analysed following the use of a PMC.

### *Territorial Control*

The control of territory following the introduction of a PMC can highlight the direct effect that a PMC can have on the state. If there is a clear change in the control of territory in favour of the government, this signifies the positive effects of the PMC. However, analysing the time shortly following the PMC departure is also essential to identify whether the government can retain control over the regained territory. This aspect is essential to understand as it can highlight the long-term consequences of utilising a force multiplier to boost the military, without properly training them to fight the war on their own. If a PMC does not have a long-term positive influence on the levels of territorial control, this can see the state revert to higher levels of political elite fragmentation, causing the potential loss of state assets.

*Table 2. Effects of PMCs on Domestic Sovereignty Variables*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Elite Fragmentation (BEFORE)</b>	<b>Elite Fragmentation (AFTER)</b>	<b>Control/Revenue of State Assets (BEFORE)</b>	<b>Control/Revenue of State Assets (AFTER)</b>	<b>Territorial Control (BEFORE)</b>	<b>Territorial Control (AFTER)</b>
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	Very High	Higher	Didn't have complete control	Lower	Low	Greater
<b>Angola</b>	High	Higher	Didn't have complete control	Lower	Low	Greater
<b>Nigeria</b>	Low	Neutral	Had complete control	Had complete control	Low	Greater

The table above identifies the changes in key variables across each case study after the introduction of the PMC. Sierra Leone and Angola are both detrimentally impacted by the PMC when looking at elite fragmentation and the control of state assets due to the nature in which the PMC was brought in to assist in the civil war. Within Nigeria, there was no change when looking at these variables as the PMC was hired to counter a force that didn't threaten the government. This table highlights that differing levels of elite fragmentation prior to hiring the PMC leads to differing effects on domestic sovereignty.

### **Potential Challenges and Contingencies**

The Private Military Industry is secretive when it comes to specific information relating to government contracts and this is one of the concerns when it comes to the data collection phase. As PMCs are a private entity, they legally do not have to publish or present their annual reports, budgets, or other relevant information to the public. In addition, the specifics of government contracts are often kept private as to the security concerns and sensitivity of the information. These two main points form an issue when the data collection phase begins. Whilst the information is not directly relevant to the thesis, as the area of concern focuses more on their impact in the state, this could hinder the depth to which I am able to analyse their relationship to the government for which they are working. I will look to mitigate this through a deep dive into reports and media releases that detail this key information, being careful to ensure that I am still using credible and reliable sources. The next section of the thesis will look to the first case study, Sierra Leone to analyse the impact of a PMC.

## **CHAPTER 4: SIERRA LEONE**

Sierra Leone's civil war from 1991-2001 was primarily a greed driven conflict with the RUF fighting for political control through the exploitation of diamond mines. This conflict arose from a fragmented group of elites that were vying for the political control of Sierra Leone. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was a rebel group that wanted to overthrow the government of Joseph Momoh and establish a multi-party democratic government. The government hired the PMC on multiple different occasions including to bolster their state capacity leading to a shift in the distribution of power among elites and whilst seemingly assisted in the short term, created long-term ramifications as the PMCs failed in the mission to effectively train military institutions.

The RUF took hold of key revenue generating mines to provide an income to fund their rebel forces. The introduction of a PMC saw not only an increasing attempt for power from the Sierra Leone government, but also an attempt for power and influence by Executive Outcomes (EO). The RUF, who maintained control over the diamond mines, rendered the Strasser government unable to fund necessary state functions such as that of the military, as well as contracts from PMCs. This fragmentation forced the government to find alternative ways of payment and opened them to exploitation from the PMC due to their provision of mining concessions, further increasing the influence and payment of the profit driven PMC.

Thus, the case study supports the hypothesis as the introduction of PMCs fuelled the already existing fragmentation of elite groups. Further, this fragmentation and greed for control forced the Strasser government to provision the use of revenue generating assets to fund the PMCs, detrimentally affecting their ability to generate income. These PMCs provided only short-term

benefits to the government that hired them as they failed to properly prepare and train the forces as stipulated in the contract, thus resulting in an overall net negative effect on domestic sovereignty.

### **Sierra Leone Conflict 1991-1999**

The Revolutionary United Front, a rebel group based in Sierra Leone enlisted disillusioned and rebel youths in an attempt to overthrow the dictatorship and implement a multi-party democracy in 1991 (Fuchs 2007, pp.106). Following failed attempts and a change in government, the new President, Captain Valentine Strasser took over power in 1992 and aimed to lead Sierra Leone to democracy (Fuchs 2007, pp.107). The RUF continued to fight and occupy land to the north and east of Sierra Leone with the threat of occupying the capital city leading to the enlistment of a PMC. By 1995, the RUF not only controlled most of south-east Sierra Leone, they also controlled the rutile and bauxite mining centres, some of the largest and most monetarily important in Sierra Leone (Fuchs 2007, Howe 1998, Francis 1999). These key mining areas accounted for 15% of Gross National Product and supplied 57% of the Sierra Leone's official export earnings (Reno 1997). To combat the RUF, Strasser hired Executive Outcomes to assist in regaining power.

However, in 1996, EO assisted Julius Maada Bio in overthrowing Strasser for control of the government after Strasser showed increasing disinterest at democratising. Bio was committed to establishing a democratic government and signed the Abidjan Peace Accord in November 1996 which aimed to make peace with the RUF and end the civil war (Fuchs 2007, pp.110). This peace agreement created an environment for election the same year where Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected.

Following intensifying pressure from international governments and local groups, President Kabbah cancelled EO's contract with the government and ordered them to leave. This was despite EO's warning that Kabbah's government was not strong enough and that it would be overthrown within 100 days. On the 95<sup>th</sup> day, the government was overthrown by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) who had aligned forces with the RUF (Francis 1999, Musah & Fayemi 1999, pp.100). This coup saw the breakdown of the Abidjan Peace Accord (Fuchs 2007, pp.110). Kabbah held power from 1996 until 1997 where the AFRC successfully took control of the government until 1998. Sandline International was hired by the Kabbah government to restore the democratically elected government.

Sandline International, along with the Kamajors and the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) successfully launched an assault on Freetown and re-established the Kabbah Government as the ruling government of Sierra Leone.

*Table 3. Timeline of Events Occurring Throughout Sierra Leone Civil War*

<b>Timeline</b>	
March 1991	The RUF initiated war in Sierra Leone
April 1992	Strasser leads coup to topple Momoh
1992-1995	The RUF is in control of vital diamond mining assets and 6 out of 13 districts
April 1995	Executive Outcomes hired by government
May 1995	EO started training the Sierra Leone Army
December 1995	EO's contract ended, and most soldiers withdraw
January 1996	Strasser ousted by Maada Bio

March 1996	Bio was defeated in election by Kabbah
November 1996	Abidjan Peace Accord signed between the Kabbah government and the RUF
May 1997	Kabbah government is ousted by the AFRC
December 1997	Sandline International is hired by the ousted Kabbah government

## **Analysis**

*What is the state of sovereignty in the country before the introduction of PMCs?*

### *Elite Fragmentation*

Prior to the introduction of PMCs in Sierra Leone, the RUF was gaining support and taking territory from the Sierra Leone government. The two major factions within the conflict continuously fought to gain control and power over the country. The fragmentation of these political elites was a factor in the beginning of the Sierra Leone civil war as they were each competing for different political ideologies. As each group competed for power, they provided incentives and opportunities for individuals to join their side. The incentives provided by the RUF to disillusioned youth and soldiers of the national military included increased remuneration and the satisfaction of overthrowing the, 'corrupt elite' (Fuchs 2007, pp.106, Rashid 2018, pp.192). The political fragmentation of Sierra Leone prior to the introduction of PMCs was high and influenced many aspects of government, providing a good environment for hiring a PMC.

### *Government ability to derive income from state assets*

The government control over mining assets in Sierra Leone has historically been difficult to control due to the level of illegal activity and corruption within the military and political hierarchy (Keen 2005, pp.80, Wilson 2013, pp.1004, Smillie 2000, pp.26). This has been argued to have resulted from Joseph Momoh's strategy to utilise the national military to stop illegal diamond traders, causing many soldiers to rebel and initiate their own illegal trades (Keen 2005, pp. 80, Wilson 2013, pp.1004). Momoh's strategy was labelled the Public Emergency Economic Regulations which looked to ensure sustained control over the Kono diamond fields through harsher regulations on this illicit trade (Wilson 2013, pp.1004).

The Momoh government in 1990 again attempted to stop the illegal trade of diamonds due to the impact that it was having upon the economic conditions of Sierra Leone (Wilson 2013, pp. 1005). This attempt was called Operation Clean Slate in which close to 10,000 diamond miners were expelled from the mines in order to break the circuit of illegal activity (Wilson 2013, pp.1005, Keen 2005, pp.81). Both attempts by the Momoh government failed to create the stability in diamond trading needed to promote economic growth and further created a community of disgruntled miners (Keen 2005, Wilson 2013). These disgruntled miners, having lost their jobs turned to the RUF as employment as this provided a greater source of income. This highlights their lack of loyalty to the national military and identifies greed as a source of rebellion. The increasing control over the diamond sector by the RUF highlighted the government's lack of autonomy over the revenue generating assets. The lack of control over the mines was costing the Strasser government large amounts of valuable funds. These funds prohibited the government from providing the basic remuneration and services that may have prevented the severity of conflict through retaining loyal soldiers.

### *Territorial Control*

Decreasing territorial control forms an important aspect when looking to the domestic sovereignty of a nation state and this is evident from the beginning of the Sierra Leone civil war in 1991 to when Executive Outcomes was introduced in 1995. Prior to Executive Outcomes entering Sierra Leone, the RUF had gained a lot of land from the Sierra Leone government. In 1991, when the RUF entered Sierra Leone from the Liberian border in the east, they took hold of areas within the Kailahun district (Rashid 2018). This then expanded to other attacks along the Sierra Leone-Liberia border eventuating in the control of seven chiefdoms to the east of Sierra Leone (McHugh 2016, Leboeuf 2008).

By 1995, the RUF was in control of vital diamond mining assets in the eastern and southern regions that accounted for a large amount of the governments' revenue. These mining sites included the Sierra Rutile mine in the Bonthe district and the Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Company in the Moyamba district (Rashid 2018, pp.194). During this time, the RUF had trained their soldiers and became highly knowledgeable in the bushy areas of the East and the South, allowing them to set up camp in non-visible areas. This allowed them to gain valuable territory on the arterial routes to Makeni, Bo and Freetown. The lack of territorial control over a large part of south and east Sierra Leone as well as the monetarily important diamond mines impacted the nation due to their lack of financial and military control. The enemy control over these mines further created a stream of revenue to allow the RUF to continue to grow their operations. This allowed them to gain more strength and support to take more territory.

### Why were PMCs hired?

There have been a couple of instances of PMC use in Sierra Leone over the duration of the civil war from 1991-2001. In May 1995, the Sierra Leone government contracted the assistance of Executive Outcomes, one of the largest Private Military Companies of that time (Howe 1998, Singer 2010, Selber & Jobarteh 2002, Leander 2006).

The Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF) were unable to fight the RUF effectively due to their lack of training, discipline and the lack of paid work leading to severe consequences for the nation (Francis 1999, pp.325). There was increasing pressure against Strasser to combat the revolutionary forces that had devastated the nation in a war costing 15,000 lives in three years and 1.5 million of the 4 million population to become refugees (Howe 1998, pp.313). The PMCs were hired for similar reasons including to train the military, act as a force multiplier and provide weaponry and assets.

### *Executive Outcomes 1995-1996*

Executive Outcomes (EO) was contracted by Strasser in late 1995 to provide military training and front-line combat in the fight against the RUF to regain the critical mining sites and to combat the rebel forces (Singer 2010, Kinsey 2006). They were contracted to train the RSLMF and the Civil Defence Forces in techniques that would assist in pushing out the RUF from the capital city, Freetown, and the diamond mines.

### *Sandline International 1997-1998*

Sandline International was introduced in 1997 by external actors including the Kabbah government, the United Kingdom, and mining stakeholders in order to reinstate the democratically elected ousted Kabbah Government (Musah & Fayemi 1999, pp.98) Sandline was brought in to assist in security assessments, threat intelligence and the transportation of weaponry (Francis 1999, pp.328).

#### *What were the PMCs actually used for?*

The use of PMCs in Sierra Leone between 1995 and 1998 assisted in quelling rebel forces and re-establishing democratically elected governments.

EO initially deployed 160 troops in Sierra Leone, growing to 300 at the height of the conflict (Singer 2010, pp.112, Musah & Fayemi 1999, pp.91). They were successful in regaining control over the key mines belonging to the government, as well as re-taking the capital city from the RUF within nine days (Singer 2010, pp.112-113). EO reopened the key routes into Freetown for vital food and fuel transport (Howe 1998, pp.314). They did this by providing combat assistance that trained the national military as well as assisted their campaigns. 30 EO officers trained 150 soldiers within a few weeks with the training of the Kamajors then following (Howe 1998, pp.314).

They further provided military assistance in the form of helicopters, freight ships, logistical support and security protection for mines (Fuchs 2007, pp.108, Singer 2010, pp.114). By this point, EO had brought in a further 200 personnel that had been included in a second contract to

further push the RUF out of Sierra Leone territory (Singer 2010, pp.113). EO was successful in achieving what it was hired to do which was training troops and regaining critical territory.

Moreover, Executive Outcomes, as part of their supporting role in the democratisation process assisted in Julius Maada Bio overthrowing Strasser's government.

Following this coup, former President Kabbah hired Sandline International from his exile in Guinea to take over the governing forces and reinstate his power (Fuchs 2007, pp.111). Sandline was hired in collaboration with the then British High Commissioner, Peter Penfold in order bring back the democratically elected government (Fuchs 2007, pp.111, Douglas 1999, pp.179).

Sandline International assisted the countercoup strategy by importing 30 tonnes of illegal weapons worth USD\$10 million into Sierra Leone using a private air force partially owned by the group of mercenary companies (Musah & Fayemi 1999, pp. 99, Fuchs 2007, pp. 111). SI further provided logistical assistance including strategising an assault on Freetown, and subsequently training the Kamajors and ECOMOG troops to carry out this assault (Musah & Fayemi 1999, pp.98). These weapons violated a United Nations arms embargo on the importation of weapons into Sierra Leone, which later caused a scandal with Britain violating the international embargo as SI claims to have had permission from the British Government to import the weaponry from Bulgaria (Singer 2010, pp.115). These weapons were used by SI, the Kamajors and ECOMOG troops to strengthen the force of their offensive and ultimately retake Freetown and reinstate the Kabbah Government. Thus, Sandline International achieved what they were contracted to do which was reinstate the Kabbah government.

*How did the government fund the use of PMCs?*

It has never been made public as to the specific payment methods between Executive Outcomes and the Sierra Leone Government; however, there has been research into the potential transaction. The Sierra Leone government was introduced to Executive Outcomes through Branch Energy's Tony Buckingham (Francis 1999, Singer 2010, Harding 1997). EO provided security for Branch Energy's mines prior to the civil war and were heavily intertwined in operations. The Sierra Leone government at the time of employing EO was suffering from severe revenue loss due to the loss of control over their key mines. The initial figure for the contract for eight months was USD\$13.5mn, slowly increasing to USD\$35mn as the RUF rebels were ruthless (Fuchs 2007, pp.109).

The Strategic Resources Corporation (SRC) was a holding company that owned both EO and Branch Mining, as well as having directors that were closely associated with the British web of companies run by Tony Buckingham (Pech 1999, pp.87-88, Isenberg 1997). This British web of organisations owned multiple companies including Branch Energy, Branch Minerals, Diamond Works and Sandline International (Pech 1999, pp.87-88, Isenberg 1997). Sierra Leone, throughout the course of the war was unable to pay Executive Outcome the agreed upon payment. This was due to the RUF maintaining control over the key state mines that brought in a substantial amount of revenue for the government (Reno 1997, Fuchs 2007) The government is said to have given EO mining concessions as a substitute for the lack of payment (Francis 1999, pp.326, Musah & Fayemi 1999, pp.101). These mining concessions, due to the ownership of both EO and Branch Energy, were given to Branch Energy to add to their corporate expansion (Francis 1999, pp.326).

Following on from Executive Outcomes, Sandline International was brought in by Rakesh Saxena, owner of Jupiter Mining Company who was promised diamond concessions and mining rights by the ousted government if they were successful in reinstating the Kabbah government. Saxena promised the funding of SI's contract to reinstate Kabbah in exchange for increased mining concessions, however he failed to fulfil these obligations (Shaw 2003, Musah & Fayemi 1999). As the payment and future profitability of mining concessions is highly dependent upon a stable mining environment, the attraction for stability in the region is considerable for the hired PMCs.

*What is the state of sovereignty following the use of PMCs?*

#### *Elite Fragmentation*

Following EO's success in quelling the RUF in 1995, a period of relative stability provided opportunity for the government to undertake democratic elections. It is argued by Howe that Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone encouraged a democratisation process (Howe 1998, pp.315). EO had created stability within the country leading to more interest from foreign investment (Reno 1997, pp.229, Howe 1998, pp.315). This is argued to have assisted in lowering foreign debt by 20% in 1995 and 1996 (Howe 1998, pp.315). Further, the newly acquired mining concessions by Branch Energy required the stability of a democratically elected government and sustained foreign investment to ensure the production and sale of their diamonds. In an interview conducted by Singer, Eben Barlow, the founder of Executive Outcomes outlined their push for Sierra Leone to democratise, with the threat of EO to withdraw if Strasser backed out (Singer 2010, pp.314). This highlights the significant weight placed on EO to ensure a stable or 'recognised government' was in power as their payment would be secured. Thus, the influence

that EO had upon political processes within Sierra Leone raises issues as to whether the government was acting independently and in the best interests of the nation.

This influence of EO extended not only to politics, but their training and fragmentation of military forces highlighting how a PMC can exacerbate other areas of elite fragmentation. Executive Outcomes trained only 150 soldiers within the national military before they were stopped due to concerns that the level of training they were being provided was too intense and would result in a highly capable military that could present security threats to the government (Howe 1998, pp.314). This led them to instead train the Kamajors which was a group of militia forces that fought on the side of the Sierra Leone government (Singer 2010, pp.113, Howe 1998, pp.316). EO provided them with intelligence, training and strategic guidance that later had negative ramifications when the highly trained Kamajors created further domestic issues. This thus highlights the potential unintended consequences of a PMC on the domestic governance of a nation through providing military training to a force that is not governed by the government.

This push for democratisation further created interference issues with EO's influence in the government. Executive Outcomes' liaison with the Sierra Leone government was Brigadier Julius Maada Bio who was related to one of EO's business partners. This influence, and success with the RUF heightened his political standing and allowed him to oust Strasser with the assistance of Executive Outcomes (Musah & Fayemi 1999, pp.89). This ability to influence the democratisation process of a nation through assisting a leader in a coup highlights the impact that the PMC can have on elite fragmentation as they shifted the balance of power between the two political groups. EO interfered with Sierra Leone's sovereignty over its political autonomy. This interference can further be seen in Sandline International's tenure after it was hired to restore the democratically elected government into power. SI assisted the Kabbah government

through providing funding, advise, weaponry and training to the Kamajor militia (Singer 2010, pp.115).

*Non-state owners of state assets*

Allowing a multi-national corporation access to partial revenue and control of a state's assets evidently can impact upon the influence that the company has within the nation-state. The Kabbah government contracted Executive Outcomes with the promise of mining concessions to their brother company Branch Energy. Following EO's successful mission to push the RUF out of Freetown and regain diamond territory, Branch Energy secured a 25-year lease for many mines in the Kono diamond fields (Francis 1999, pp.331). Further, in 1998, the Kabbah Government announced a new mining code which stipulated that foreign companies could only apply for a mining license if 25% of the company was owned by a Sierra Leone citizen (Francis 1999, pp.331). This code however, exempted Branch Energy highlighting how these lucrative deals were detrimentally impacting upon the government's ability to generate revenue and healthy competition for the industry.

As the PMC was unable to be paid if the government lacked control over the mining sites, this provided significant incentive for EO to assist the government. Following the departure of EO and SI, many of the mining sites in Sierra Leone relied on Lifeguard Security to protect their interests and government revenue. Lifeguard Security was owned by Executive Outcomes. This ability of EO to significantly influence not only the revenue generating assets of Sierra Leone, but also their ability to provide security for their population placed EO in a highly strategic and influential position upon the government.

The Sierra Leone government, prior to the introduction of PMCs struggled to maintain control over their mining assets which led to damaging impacts upon their economy. This already weak situation of the government's ability to utilise state resources for economic gain presented further issues following the introduction of PMCs. However, in a highly volatile environment like that of the diamond industry in Sierra Leone, providing diamond concessions to legitimate and stable businesses may be beneficial to the government's ability to control the industry. Sierra Leone's ability to pay for the use of the PMCs rested upon the stability of their revenue streams, of which they did not control. Through providing mining concessions as a form of payment to the PMCs, this would have allowed them to regain control of the territory as well as ensure stability. However, their inability to retain control over the mines throughout the civil war, combined with the increasing burden of servicing their debts to the PMCs impacted the country in damaging ways.

This is further evident with Rakesh Saxena who had the majority of shares in Diamond Works, the company that owns Branch Energy (Francis 1999, pp.328). Saxena made an agreement with Kabbah and Sandline to provide the necessary funds for Kabbah to hire Sandline International to reinstate the democratically elected government (Francis 1999, pp.328). However, Saxena failed to pay the full \$10 million (Fuchs 2007, pp.111). Singer identifies that in order to pay SI for their services following the incarceration of Saxena, the government traded \$200 million worth of long-term diamond concessions (Singer 2010, pp.167). This vast difference in the value of services highlights the governments desperate attempts at ensuring regime survival through provisioning the use of mining assets.

Thus, the provisioning of mining concessions as payment for PMCs inhibited the government from regaining control and stability over their revenue generating assets whilst also increasing the influence that the PMCs had over their government.

### *Territorial Control*

There was constant instability with the control of territory throughout the entire civil war from 1991-2002. The RUF would gain control over territory and PMCs would be brought in to successfully regain control. However, this was a circular process that happened twice over the course of the war.

The RUF had control over the key diamond areas from 1994-1996 in which Executive Outcomes pushed them out towards the Liberian Border (Wilson 2013, pp. 1005). Following 1996, EO had assisted in democratic elections which saw President Kabbah come into power. Along with this immediate strategic impact of EO's military ability, the government was able to engage the RUF in negotiations and come to the Abidjan Peace Accord in November of 1996 (Francis 1999, pp.327). However, the main condition of peace was for EO to terminate operations in Sierra Leone. This government military advantage was short-lived with the RUF quickly regaining territory and control over the diamond mines (Wilson 2013, pp.1005). The RUF again held control of the diamond mines from 1997-1999 in which they had assistance from the AFRC (Wilson 2013, pp.1005).

Whilst Executive Outcomes was effective at initially gaining territory and mining areas back from the RUF, this was short-lived as EO's departure again left the government vulnerable to further attacks. It is clear throughout the course of PMC intervention within the civil war that short-term objectives of security and asset control was achieved. This in turn enabled the government to regain their control of the security setting in Sierra Leone. The territorial gain provided by EO was of advantage to the Sierra Leone government at the time as it is argued by some academics to have provided the, 'coercive stability' needed to provide a safe state for

democratic elections to occur (Francis 1999, pp.327). This territory gain can be argued as beneficial to the nation state as it stabilised the region and enabled the government to hold democratic elections in which President Kabbah came to power in 1996. However, it is also important to identify the further loss of territory following EO's departure, which suggests that despite the training provided by EO, the national military was improperly trained to protect and ensure security.

In comparison to a national military where the security of the state is one of the primary goals, a PMC is a private company that will focus purely on profit-driven motives. EO, to ensure the payment for their services, needed to provide a tangible impact in which fulfilled their contractual obligations. The gain in territorial control leading to democratic elections provided this. However, despite the military training provided by EO, upon their departure, the national military was unable to uphold the level and training of security provided by EO. This led to the RUF regaining control over the diamond mines. Thus, in the short term, the use of PMCs enabled the continuance of security and stability through regaining key territory. However, this impact was short-lived due to the inability of the national military to maintain control.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, the PMC, introduced to provide regime stability, compounded the already damaging effects of elite fragmentation within Sierra Leone. The inherently power-driven PMC provided short-term stability and assistance to allow the government to retake mining assets that proved to be mutually beneficial. The inability for the government to pay the PMC led to the provisioning of mining assets which provided negative long-term effects as it decreased the income of the government and increased the influence and power of the external actor. The force multiplier

functions to regain critical territory by the PMC caused negative repercussions once the PMC had left the country due to the lack of support and assistance against the persistent efforts of the RUF. Therefore, the three variables of measurement were negatively impacted by the introduction of a PMC, highlighting the negative effects on the ability of the Sierra Leone government to practice domestic sovereignty. The introduction of a PMC for political stability will be further explored in the next case study analysing the Angolan Civil War.

## CHAPTER 5: ANGOLA

The Angolan Civil war from 1975-2002 can be split into three phases with this thesis looking at the second and third phase from 1991-2002. The war was driven by two groups of elites vying for political power and resource control of Angola which brought with it a civil war that cost the lives of thousands of civilians.

This case study highlights that the PMC was hired to initially take control of oil fields and following, bolster the government's ability to win against their political opponent. The introduction of PMCs into Angola saw a significant shift in the distribution of power in favour of the government, allowing them to maintain control and influence, as well as international recognition following the departure of the PMC. This redistribution of power allowed one political elite group to have the confidence to continue fighting against their enemy which decreased the willingness of the other side to negotiate a contract. Thus, the opposition wasn't defeated and were unwilling to cooperate, prolonging the war, and continuing to negatively impact Angola's domestic sovereignty. The PMC's help to shift the distribution of power worked too well with one side of the government strengthened too much, leading to a prolonged war and more negative effects.

Like Sierra Leone, Angola faced a high level of elite fragmentation due to the nature of their civil war period. These pre-existing conditions influenced the way in which the PMC was used, and thus led to negative consequences on elite fragmentation and control of state assets. As in Sierra Leone, the territorial control of the government and their influence was increased through the force multiplier effect that the PMC gave to the government. Despite this, the fragmentation between the elite groups was worsened through the PMC's services, enhancing one side's

powers leading to a more deadly and prolonged conflict. The use of a PMC impacted upon the Angolan government's long-term ability to generate revenue from state assets as they provided mining concessions in partial payment for their contract, signally a loss in control and revenue from these assets. Thus, this case study supports the hypothesis that higher levels of elite fragmentation prior to introducing a PMC leads to a net negative effect on the state's ability to practice domestic sovereignty.

### **Civil Conflict 1992-2002**

Prior to the entrance of Executive Outcomes in Angola, the country had faced years of civil war with many different factions fighting for power following de-colonisation from Portugal. The civil conflict is often broken up into three time periods, specifically 1975-1991, 1992-1994, and from 1998-2002.

In 1991, the Bicesse Accords was a ceasefire agreed to by the Russian backed Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and the United States backed União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) in the hopes that Angola could hold multi-party democratic elections. In 1992, the elections took place and José Eduardo dos Santos from the MPLA won with support from the United Nations. The election sparked controversy over the legitimacy of the elections and Jonas Savimbi of UNITA rejected the outcome and broke the ceasefire agreement (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.168, Howe 1998, pp.311).

The second phase of the civil war saw UNITA gain control of close to 80% of Angola, including several key diamond and oil mines, namely the Soyo oil complex (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.168). Executive Outcomes was hired to push UNITA out of the Soyo oil site and reclaim it for the

MLPA and oil companies that were invested into the site. EO was successful in this campaign and was further hired by the MLPA in order to train their armed forces, the Forças Armadas de Angola (FAA) and provide combat support to retake control from UNITA (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.168). Despite this win, UNITA was able to regain control of the Soyo Oil Complex for a second time, shortly after EO had left (Singer 2010, pp.109).

In 1993, EO spent 6 months training the FAA forces and by 1994 had launched a series of attacks on UNITA. EO and the FAA were very successful in regaining lost territory as well as retaking strategic mining areas, forcing Savimbi into signing the Lusaka Protocol in November 1994 (Singer 2010, pp.109, Howe 1998, pp.312). Savimbi’s main condition within the protocol was for the withdrawal of EO from Angola, but the MLPA kept EO’s services until the end of 1995 following international pressure to cancel the contract (Singer 2010, pp.109). The war continued following EO’s departure for many more years; however, the MLPA was able to retain power and influence to prevent UNITA from gaining complete control.

*Table 4. Timeline of Events Occurring Throughout Angolan Civil War*

<b>Timeline</b>	
March-April 1993	EO hired by Heritage Oil and Gas to retake Soyo Oil Complex
September 1993	EO signed first contract with MPLA
September 1993	EO started 6-month training with FAA
February 1994	EO and the FAA re-took strategic diamond fields
August 1994	EO retook Soyo Oil Complex again

September 1994	EO's contract was extended by the MPLA for another year
November 1994	EO recaptured Cacolo
November 1994	UNITA signed the Lusaka Peace Accord
September 1995	EO signed a short third contract with MPLA

## Analysis

What is the state of sovereignty in the country before the introduction of PMCs?

### *Elite Fragmentation*

Following Angola's War of Independence, the Angolan Civil War started in 1975 with three main political groups vying for control over the country and its key revenue generating assets. Angola, being Africa's second largest producer of oil, provided economic gain for any external organisation that could sustain oil fields within the country. These elite groups were the Soviet and Cuban-backed MPLA, the South African backed UNITA and the United States and China-backed Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.167). The FNLA was defeated by the MPLA in 1976 leading to a 15 year conflict between UNITA and the MPLA (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.167). In the lead up to the introduction of PMCs within Angola, the fragmentation of elite groups continued to deepen with the 1992 election. Following the signing of the Lusaka Peace Protocol, UNITA refused to accept the legitimacy of the elections after MPLA's win. Combined with the removal of the Cuban forces who had previously supported the MPLA with troops, and the anger of UNITA, the resulting conflict that arose saw

the political elite groups, UNITA and the MPLA more fragmented than the previous 15 years (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.168).

#### *Ability to generate income from state assets*

Prior to the introduction of EO, UNITA had control of the Soyo Oil Complex. This meant that the Angolan Government did not have access to SONANGAL, the state owned mining company which was the primary revenue stream to finance their war efforts and accounted for 7% of US oil (Adamo 2020, pp.347, Shearer 1998, pp.46). The lack of access to these mines meant that the government was unable to continue funding their war efforts and providing services to their population. Thus, the MPLA needed assistance to regain their revenue generating assets. The Angolan government was struggling as a result of losing this access to revenue suggesting that the state of domestic sovereignty was already weak as the two political parties were essentially competing for financial assistance.

#### *Territorial Control*

Prior to Executive Outcomes being introduced into Angola, UNITA had control over the Soyo Oil Complex with gradually increasing control over the rest of the country. This meant that the state-owned oil company did not have access to their mining facilities SONANGAL, which produced much of the nation's oil. This was a strategic move on behalf of UNITA to cut their counterpart's primary revenue stream which was one aspect of their larger campaign. Along with this strategic chokehold, UNITA continued to make significant gain in territory between 1992-1993. The MPLA had lost control of 70-80% of their territory at the height of UNITA's campaign in 1993 (Adamo 2020, pp.347). Although the MPLA had regained access to the Soyo

Oil Complex, this was short-lived as UNITA quickly retook it following the initial departure of EO. Thus, combined with the increasing strength and control that UNITA had, the Angolan Government was running out of time to regain control of their country as well as their revenue generating assets.

### Why were PMCs hired?

Executive Outcomes was first contracted in Angola in 1993 to retake control of the Soyo Oil Complex (Singer 2010, pp.108). The Soyo Oil Complex was home to Heritage Oil and Gas as well as SONANGAL, the state-owned oil production facility. EO acted on behalf of the Angolan military, funded by Heritage Oil and Gas to recapture the Soyo oil complex due to the strategic importance of the site to the Angolan government (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.168). The Soyo Oil Complex was the largest revenue generating asset for the Angolan government and thus, control over it was of vital importance to sustain government operations (Singer 2010, pp.108).

Following this successful campaign, UNITA still held 70-80% of the country (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.168). As UNITA was able to finance their operations through taking over and running a \$2bn diamond trade, they were powerful within Angola. MLPA's Forças Armadas de Angola (FAA) were untrained and lacked the strength of the former Cuban forces who had recently withdrawn from Angola (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.168). This left them unable to effectively fight against UNITA's strong, soldier heavy military.

Further, the effect that the conflict was having on the citizens of Angola was severe with more Angolans having died between 1992-1994 than in the sixteen years prior to 1991 (Cleary 1999, pp.146). Although this may not have affected the position or fighting decisions made by the MPLA or UNITA, this did create more international attention to the issue. The Angolan

government, in severe need of assistance and having seen the success with EO's Soyo operation, contracted EO in 1993 to support, train, and act as a force multiplier for the FAA in order to regain critical territory taken by UNITA (Shearer 1998, pp.40). The desire for the MPLA to win the civil war due to the weakening state of domestic sovereignty from a loss of territorial control was clear. One of the strategic benefits that EO could provide to the MPLA and the FAA was their insight into UNITA's strategies. Many of the EO soldiers had been recruited from disbanded South African military units including the former 32 Buffalo Battalion which had previously fought alongside UNITA as they were allied with South Africa during the cold-war (Reno 1997, pp.176, Howe 1998, pp.311). Executive Outcomes was hired to train 5,000 troops from the FAA, and 30 pilots in the systems and operations of the weaponry that EO used (Shearer 1998, pp.46). Ultimately, the PMC was hired as elite fragmentation was such that it wasn't winnable by either elite political group, thus creating a need for a force multiplier to gain control and power over Angola, specifically the revenue generating diamond and oil mines.

*What were the PMCs actually used for?*

EO's first contract within Angola was to retake control of the mining assets held by both Heritage Oil and the state-owned SONANGAL. EO supplied 40-50 soldiers to fight alongside two Angolan battalions, against over 2,000 UNITA troops between March and April 1993 (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.168, Isenberg 1997, Shearer 1998, pp.46). Within a few weeks, they successfully retook these sites which held expensive equipment and access to precious resources that generated vital income. This success, however, was short lived as UNITA regained control not long after EO had withdrawn, causing further issues with the MPLA's access to revenue generating assets. EO's focus then shifted to assisting the MPLA in countering UNITA's

influence and control of Angola using combat services, after the MPLA saw their success in retaking the oil site.

EO signed a total of three contracts with the Angolan government (Cleary 1999, pp.164). The first contract was for one year, between 1993-1994. The second contract was for one year, between 1994-1995 and the final contract was for three months, ending in January 1996 (Shearer 1998, pp.46). Within the first contract, signed in September 1993, EO was brought in by the Angolan government to train and provide combat services to the FAA in an attempt to regain control lost to UNITA (O'Brien 1998, pp.86). In September 1993, EO established a six-month intensive training course to re-establish and train FAA's 16 Brigade (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.169, O'Brien 1998, pp.86). EO brought in 500 soldiers to assist in the military campaigns, working alongside the FAA. In February 1994, EO launched a series of overlapping air to ground attacks and heliborne assaults on the rebel guerrillas (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.169). This allowed EO, supported by the FAA to retake the strategic diamond fields of Cafunfo and Saurimo (O'Brien 1998, pp.86). These diamond mines were of great strategic importance to the MPLA as they were helping to fund UNITA's front. Thus, by taking control over these sites, the MPLA was able to stop diamond production and thus revenue.

August 1994 saw EO retake the Soyo Oil complex after it had been taken from them earlier in 1993 (Cleary 1999, pp.161). These campaigns were of great success with EO and the FAA retaking most of the land initially captured by UNITA, including their diamond mines which was a critical asset that provided them with continued funding for their campaigns. This pushed UNITA into the Lusaka Peace Talks in November of 1994 as they were unable to continue to fund their military efforts. (Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.169, O'Brien 1998, pp.86). In total, EO

provided 550 soldiers, training to roughly 4,000-5,000 Angolan soldiers, and fulfilled their contracted obligation to train 30 pilots (Isenberg 1997, Fitzsimmons 2012, pp.169).

*How did the government fund the use of PMCs?*

The initial introduction of EO into Angola was due to UNITA having control over the Soyo oil complex. Both the Angolan government and Heritage Oil and Gas had revenue generating assets within the complex and thus had interests in regaining control over the area. With assistance from Tony Buckingham, a business man linked to both EO and Branch Energy, Heritage Oil and Gas and Executive Outcomes entered into a contract for EO to regain the lost territory on behalf on the Angolan government (O'Brien 1998, pp.86). EO was awarded a \$30 million contract in which it took them a few weeks to regain control of the Soyo Complex (Isenberg 1997).

Following on from this success, Tony Buckingham introduced EO to the Angolan government, using their success from recapturing the state owned oil facilities as proof of their abilities (O'Brien 1998, pp.86).

In total, there were four contracts that EO undertook in Angola. The first one was funded by Heritage Oil and Gas, and the remaining three by the Angolan Government. The initial contract that the Angolan Government signed was worth \$40 million for one year of service (Cleary 1999, pp.158, Shearer 1998, pp.46). Of this, a reported \$20 million went towards military supplies and the other \$20 million went directly to EO (Howe 1998, pp.312). The government extended the contact twice following the initial one, for a period of one a half years. These two contracts totalled \$40 million for EO to continue to protect and train the FAA and the MPLA government (Isenberg 1997). In total, it is estimated that the Angolan government spent \$60mn on three contracts with EO.

The Angolan Government is said to have used funds generated from another Canadian mining firm called Ranger, which is linked to Buckingham. Subsequently, these funding firms were reportedly given mining concessions as part of this deal (Cleary 1999, pp.163, Singer 2010, pp.109). Angola used little state funds to contract Executive Outcomes to fight UNITA, instead they pulled upon powerful mining companies to fund the PMC with promises of mining and oil concessions as payment for their service. The government attempted to resolve the issues of elite fragmentation through increasing their military power, but in doing so they further fragmented the elites and lost control and revenue of state assets.

*What is the state of sovereignty following the use of PMCs?*

#### *Elite Fragmentation*

Elite fragmentation following the departure of EO remained consistent with that prior to the introduction of the PMC as the warring between elite factions continued until 2002. The Angolan Civil War saw many peace agreements and cease-fires presented by each elite group in an attempt to settle on middle ground. In September 1993, Savimbi declared a unilateral cease-fire (Cleary 1999, pp.146, Kalley et al. 1999, pp.67, Amnesty International 1994). Despite this, the Angolan government was determined to win the war as they had seen the power and force that EO could provide, so much so that they ignored a unilateral cease fire presented by UNITA in order to continue fighting (Cleary 1999, pp.146). This not only shows the extent of the fragmentation, but also the influence associated with a PMC to the extent that one political group was so confident in their abilities that they ignored potential peaceful options that could have saved countless lives and atrocities. This confidence increased the hostilities of UNITA and

removed any further plans to negotiate with the MPLA, causing increased fragmentation and an enemy that refused to be defeated. Had the MPLA not seen or understood the successes of the PMC, this may have changed the course of the civil conflict. This highlights the counter-intuitive nature of PMCs as their success in countering the enemy created a prolongment of the civil conflict, leading to more atrocities.

Whilst this intended peace agreement from UNITA eventually became the Lusaka Protocol, acting upon the negotiation earlier may have put them in a better position to negotiate mutually beneficial terms that could have saved money and lives. This is evident through the MPLA's agreement to participate in peace talks for the few months prior to hiring Executive Outcomes, which suggests that the introduction of a PMC altered the decision making processes of the government (Cleary 1999, pp.163). The influence of PMCs upon elite fragmentation can thus shift the distribution of power in favour of the group hiring the PMC.

Despite further attacks by UNITA until 2002, the MPLA remained the internationally recognised government. The training that EO had provided allowed the government to retain control over Angola for the further 10 years of the conflict. While the MPLA forces were unsuccessful in some circumstances in retaining control, this can be explained as UNITA had access to increased funding and weaponry, therefore increasing their military power in parallel to the MPLA. The PMC, whilst not helping the state of elite political fragmentation within Angola, did assist one of the elite groups in maintaining power. Thus, the level of elite fragmentation was greater following the use of a PMC as whilst they allowed for a distribution of power in favour of the MPLA, this distribution caused one side to gain assurance of their ability to win, thus prolonging the war.

### *Ability to generate income from state assets*

The MPLA was encouraged to find alternative methods of payment for their military endeavours which saw them pull upon the mining companies that had supported their efforts previously. This not only put them into debt, but it also inhibited their ability to draw on the potential future income of state resources as they had given them away as mining concessions. Further, UNITA control over key diamond mines prevented the MPLA government from receiving this monetary benefit and allowed their enemy to finance their military for many years following the Lusaka Peace Protocol.

As UNITA held control over the Soyo Oil fields from late 1993-August 1994, this period saw the MPLA cut off from their main revenue stream and thus their ability to continue to finance key areas of the conflict including the military. At the time, crude oil accounted for over 80% of the Angolan export earnings as well as being the largest contributor for government finances (International Monetary Fund 2000, pp.40). This highlights the strategic disadvantage the MPLA were placed at due to the lack of effectiveness of EO's first assignment to retake the Soyo Oil Complex. This may be an explanation for the mining concessions given to mining companies associated with the PMCs. Branch Energy referred Executive Outcomes to the Angolan government and following this, received favourable mining concessions. Further, the government hired Executive Outcomes on a separate contract to help fight against UNITA which was paid from state funds from mining, resulting in further mining concessions to the funding firms (Singer 2010, pp.109). UNITA remained in control of many provinces and their capitals, accounting for over half of Angola's diamond production (Sherman 2000, pp.704). This lack of control of centralised state resources, whilst not costing the MPLA the civil war, dramatically reduced their ability to generate revenue for necessary state operations.

Thus, the implications of these favourable mining concessions, whilst short-term have a positive impact as it allows for the government to fund the activities of a PMC to regain influence, in the long-term it can impact upon the government's ability to generate revenue. Whilst it is not clear about the terms of these mining concessions, what can be understood is the long-term situation for the ability of the government to alter or raise the price of concessions due to the PMC's greater influence and the need for the government to honour their agreements. This restricts the government from potential future earnings and decreases their sovereign control over the fields.

### *Territorial Control*

Executive Outcomes was initially brought into Angola as UNITA held control over the Soyo Oil fields. The territorial threat that UNITA was posing to the MPLA was growing each day and creating an increasing political threat to the authority of the MPLA government. This threat was weakening the ability of the MPLA to fund their counter insurgency due to the stronghold that it had on key revenue assets.

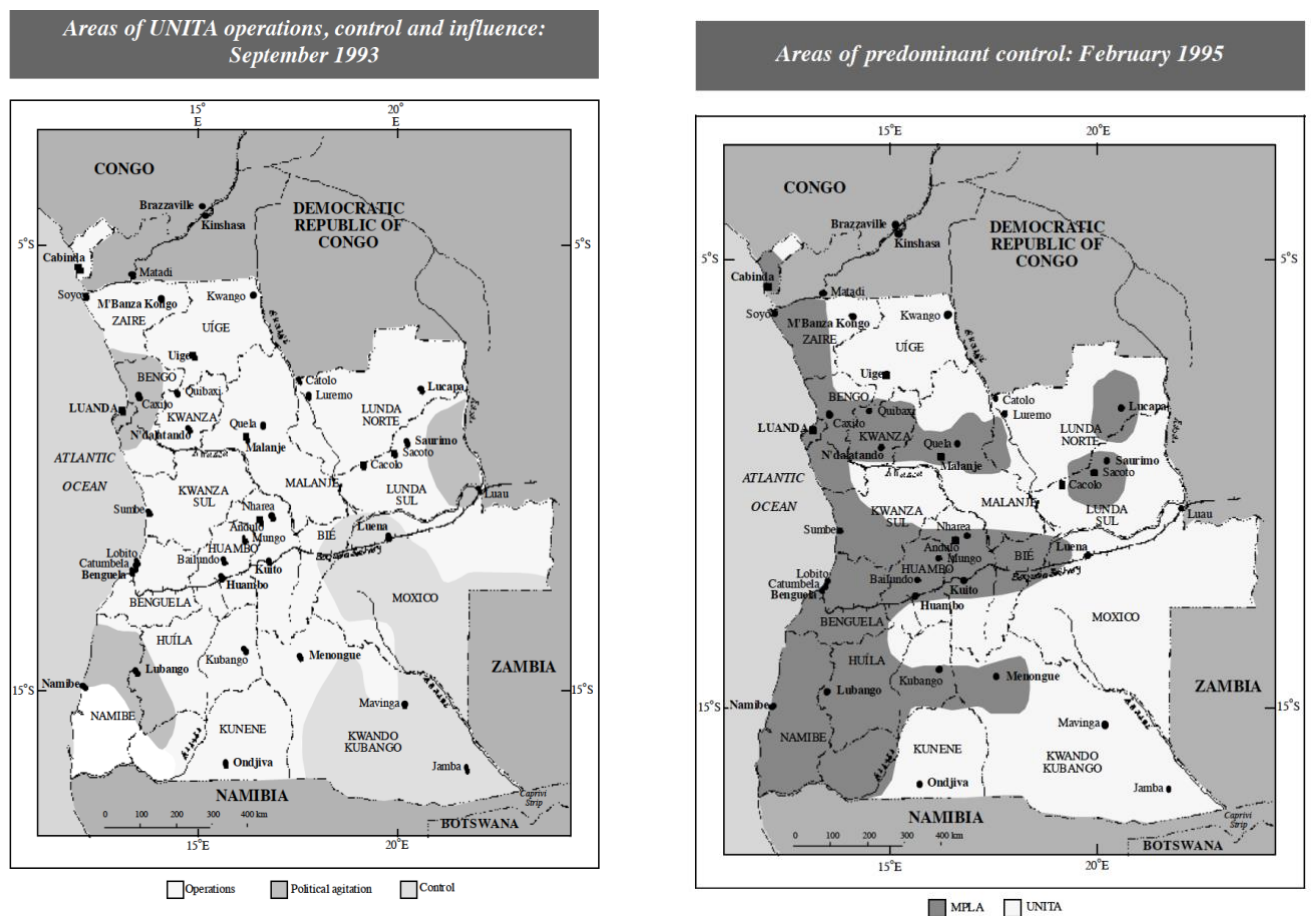
The force multiplier effect that Executive Outcome's provided to the FAA allowed them to successfully retake the mining fields in April-May 1993 (Shearer 1998, pp.46). This however, was short lived as UNITA quickly retook the site following the departure of EO later that year (Shearer 1998, pp.46). The following map highlights UNITA and MPLA control over Angola from September 1993, when EO was hired until February 1995, when EO left.

There were many conflicts and advances that occurred by both UNITA and the MPLA and control over key sites and strategic locations varied constantly following the departure of EO.

The maps highlight that no significant amount of territory was retaken by Executive Outcomes in their campaigns. Whilst large amounts of territory may not have been retaken, key strategic sites important to the economic vitality of the regimes were secured at different points (Singer 2010, pp.109). The EO backed FAA troops were able to regain control over most diamond sites within the country, however UNITA retook these following the departure of EO as they were of great importance to their economic vitality.

The MPLA held international recognition for their legitimacy as the Angolan government, but they struggled to regain complete territorial control over their land. This politically undermines the government as both the soldiers and regions under UNITA control may not be loyal to the MPLA

Figure 1\_ Maps showing territorial control of Angola from before and after PMC intervention ( Source: Cleary, 1999)



## **Conclusion**

It is undoubted that the hired PMC enabled the government to retain control and defeat their political opponent which can be perceived positively; however, this is not without effects on the state of domestic sovereignty. The introduction of a PMC to assist in a volatile political situation inadvertently created a shift in the distribution of power that whilst enabled the government to win the civil conflict, did so at a cost of mining concessions and the disregard for their civilian population through the prolongment of the conflict. Hence, the introduction of PMCs as a response to civil war increased the fragmentation of elite groups as they shifted the distribution of power in favour of one political group, creating an incentive for one party to win. This fragmentation encouraged the MPLA to contract a PMC to regain control and power over Angola resulting in the provisioning of mining concessions to companies that helped fund the PMCs. The short-term fix to the solution could bring negative ramifications for the long-term growth of the nation as the government may be limited in their ability to generate revenue from these sites. Further, whilst the PMC assisted in the short-term territorial gain of the government, they failed to reduce elite fragmentation and created blocks for the long-term revenue, thus reinforcing the proposed hypothesis.

## CHAPTER 6: NIGERIA

Nigeria provides a different insight into the hypothesis being tested when compared to Sierra Leone and Angola as the nature of elite fragmentation within the nation was both lower and different, thus having a net neutral effect on Nigeria's domestic sovereignty. As identified earlier in this thesis, a nation with a stronger military presence may contract a PMC to bolster their core defence strategy rather than as a quick response to an unfolding situation. Historically, the Nigerian military has been one of the larger and more established militaries in Africa; however, a lack of expertise in counter-insurgency strategy and an increasingly corrupt military created an issue when Boko Haram kidnapped 276 Chibok school girls, highlighting an area where new expertise was needed, and thus the hiring of a PMC. To counter this threat, Nigeria built capability through hiring a PMC to assist with their strategy. As the threat wasn't political or born out of a civil conflict, the PMC was used more efficiently as it wasn't a political tool. While the state wasn't coming under the direct threat of being overtaken like those in the previous case studies, the increasing prominence of Boko Haram threatened the authority and domestic sovereignty of Nigeria if left undefeated. Further, the kidnapping of the Chibok school girls created an opportunity for President Jonathan to increase his chances of being re-elected through locating and bringing the girls home. When compared to the former case studies, Nigeria is fundamentally different due to the nature of elite fragmentation within the state, and thus had a measurably different effect.

This case study highlights the differences between the outcomes of a PMC when they are employed to counter a threat that hasn't resulted from direct elite fragmentation. There are two fundamental differences in Nigeria compared to the previous two case studies, specifically that it didn't help to bolster one political side in a civil war, and the way in which they were paid. In

this case, different to the rest, the PMC did not help the government secure victory over their perceived political opponent, instead they were hired to defeat a terrorist insurgency group. Further, the PMC was not involved in regaining access or control over the states natural resources as Nigeria retained control over them. This signals a higher state capacity compared to the other two, with the ability to pay the PMC in ways other than mining concessions. However, despite these two differences, this case study can be compared to the other two as on a more holistic scale they are comparable, all hiring a PMC due to a lack of military capacity.

Thus, this case study supports the hypothesis in that prior to hiring a PMC, levels of elite fragmentation were lower in Nigeria, thus leading to a net neutral impact on domestic sovereignty.

### **Conflict Overview 2014-2015**

This case study isn't one involving a civil conflict, it instead follows the struggle between a nation to control the Islamic Terrorist organisation Boko Haram from gaining territory and influence. Primarily located in the northern regions of Nigeria, Boko Haram was established as an insurgency group in 2009 and have since caused mayhem across the nation (Nabiebu & Aloba 2019, pp.63). Boko Haram is primarily located in the North as they have a greater proportion of Islamic communities compared to the Christian South. Their control and attacks increased in 2014-2015 where the violence grew the total death count to 15,000 innocent civilians since the beginning of their insurgency (Adamo 2020, pp.343). The terrorism issue within Nigeria was propelled to the international stage when 276 school girls from Chibok, globally known as the 'Chibok girls' were captured by Boko Haram in April 2014 (Adamo 2020,

pp.343). The Nigerian elections were looming, and the President Goodluck Jonathan saw the necessity in hiring a PMC to recapture the girls and subsequently increase his election chances.

The Nigerian National Security Advisor, Sambo Dasuki, in late 2014 contacted Conella Services for private military services (Kinsey & Krieg 2021, pp.139). Conella Services subcontracted Specialised Task, Training, Equipment and Protection (STTEP) in December 2014 to provide the military services. STTEP was established by the founder of Executive Outcomes, Eeben Barlow and thus the company had prior knowledge and expertise in African counter-insurgency warfare (Nabiebu & Aloba 2019, pp.71). STTEP and Conella Services was introduced to train and strengthen the 72<sup>nd</sup> Mobile Strike Force in the Nigerian Military to enable them to regain territory and control over the regions that Boko Haram had taken. STTEP's contract was ended following the May 2015 election in which Muhammadu Buhari won, ushering in a new military strategy (Adamo 2020, pp.346). Since this political change, Boko Haram has been pushed to the border regions to the North leading to more sporadic and targeted attacks when compared to their territory-based agenda before (Brechenmacher 2019, pp.5). More international cooperation and support has allowed Nigeria to retain control over much of the territory, but this hasn't stopped the attacks from happening.

## **Analysis**

### *What is the state of sovereignty in the country before the introduction of PMCs?*

#### *Elite Fragmentation*

Prior to the introduction of a PMC in Nigeria, fragmentation amongst the military was the largest concern. Different to Sierra Leone and Angola, the fragmented elites were not due to a civil war, instead it was the institutions by which make up state power, specifically, the military. Goodluck Jonathan, the Nigerian President was losing popularity as the leader of the country and with upcoming elections, he needed to resecure his position (Nabiebu & Alobu 2019, pp.71).

Jonathan promised to defeat Boko Haram only weeks before the election causing a rush to construct a robust plan (Varin 2018, pp.147). In this way, the political party needed to boost their chances of winning an election, not to militarily defeat the opposing group.

Further, the military in Nigeria was widely known for their lack of cohesiveness and morale due to a lack of funding and training provided by the government (Varin 2018, pp.149). This was not always the case as Nigerian Forces have assisted and provided troops for many African conflicts. Despite this, it is believed that corruption within elite military groups created a funding issue as these leaders would siphon money for their own private gain. On top of this funding issue, the equipment provided by the government was often inadequate and faulty (Varin 2018, pp.149). This fragmentation within the military caused further fragmentation issues within the government as the United Kingdom and United States military support was withdrawn due to these issues with the military. The government, to guarantee their re-election, made promises

that seemed unachievable due to the lack of support from international actors as well as a corrupt military, leading to the hiring of a PMC.

#### *Ability to generate revenue from state assets*

In this case study, there were no state oil or mining sites that were taken by the insurgency group. Further to this, there is little information on the payment made from the government to STTEP and thus it is unsure as to whether the PMC was paid in part with mining concessions. Nigeria is largely dependent on the sale of its natural resources with oil and gas accounting for 10% of gross domestic product and petroleum exports generating 86% of total exports revenue (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries 2021). The oil price plunge of 2014-2016 affected the governments revenue streams and thus their ability to fund public services, exposing their over-dependency on the oil and gas sector. The declining income from the assets directly may have impacted upon government military spending and thus their ability to rely on the national military to provide protection from Boko Haram.

#### *Territorial Control*

Prior to the introduction of STTEP, Boko Haram was making rapid progress with gaining territory in the Northern regions of Nigeria. Boko Haram had taken control of 20 local government regions within the Nigerian state of Borno, estimated to be the land size of Belgium (BBC News 2015b). Borno is a large state located in the north-eastern region of Nigeria, sharing a border with Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Boko Haram's territorial defeats were not just located within Nigeria, but also around the Lake Chad region, extending to the three border countries (Felter 2018). Along with regions located in Borno, Boko Haram also had control in some cities

located in other states including Yobe and Adamawa (Campbell 2014a). Boko Haram's strategic move from random suicide bombings and kidnappings, towards territorial control created many issues for the government including weakened public trust, displaced persons, and mass casualties. These consequences forced the government to act upon the rapidly expanding Boko Haram, and thus the introduction of a PMC.

### Why were PMCs hired?

When compared to the other two cases, Nigeria has a higher level of state capacity due to the size of their economy and the fact that they were not engaged in a civil war. However, despite the previous successes of the Nigerian Military, their increasing corruption and declining funding created capacity and knowledge issues which impacted upon the ability of the government to successfully combat the rising Boko Haram (Kinsey & Krieg 2021, pp.238-239). This, combined with the hesitance of international partners such as the US to provide support due to concerns about the corrupt and controversial Nigerian Military, led to the hiring of a PMC (Kinsey & Krieg 2021, pp.239, Adamo 2020, pp.344).

Initially, STTEP was hired by President Goodluck Jonathan to assist in locating the 276 kidnapped Chibok school girls who were taken by Boko Haram in 2014 (Adamo 2020, pp.345). President Goodluck Jonathan was under pressure to act and counter Boko Haram to protect his chances for re-election later that year. Jonathan looked to the United Kingdom and the United States for military support; however, they were hesitant to assist over fears that supporting a declining military known for its corruption and human rights abuses would be detrimental to their domestic politics (Varin 2018, pp.148). With Nigeria's worsening political situation because of their increasingly corrupt and untrained forces, President Jonathan was forced to find

alternative measures to ensure that his chances at a second term were not defeated. Further to the lack of support from international governments, Nigeria's military were poorly trained in counter-insurgency campaigns which left them vulnerable to the insurgency group, Boko Haram (Adamo 2020, pp.345). With these factors combined, STTEP was hired to find the Chibok girls and return them to safety. Nigeria sought to build capability among their military which led to a more structured and conscious use of the PMC, different to Angola and Sierra Leone in which they were used against a political opponent. This was because they weren't in an immediate threatening situation in which a decision had to be made quickly, while Boko Haram presented a threat, the Nigerian government's position wasn't directly threatened.

*What were the PMCs actually used for?*

The initial phases of STTEP's deployment failed as they were unable to locate the Chibok girls and subsequently, within months, their focus shifted towards an offensive role, fighting to retake the land that Boko Haram had captured (Adamo 2020, pp.345).

As the Nigerian Forces were corrupt and not properly trained, Barlow, the founder of STTEP, was appointed to the role of Major General of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Mobile Strike Force (Kinsey & Krieg 2021, pp.240). The Strike Force was established by the Nigerian government as a specialised counter-insurgency force that was designed to defeat Boko Haram (Adamo 2020, pp.344). STTEP soldiers were incorporated into the Strike Force to assist in training and combat. With the help of STTEP, the Nigerian government were able to secure new equipment including armoured personnel carriers, helicopters and weaponry (Kinsey & Krieg 2021, pp.240). Between December 2014 and March 2015, they fought to take back towns and villages captured by Boko Haram (Adamo 2020, pp.345, Kinsey & Krieg 2021, pp.240). This was achieved through a

‘relentless pursuit’ military strategy (Adamo 2020, pp.345). STTEP provided further services such as air capacity, training for troops, air to ground missions, intelligence gathering and direct combat (Adamo 2020, pp.345).

In March 2015, the strike force was successful in a campaign to attack Boko Haram’s headquarters in Gwoza, which signalled a big win for the Nigerian government. It is believed that the PMCs worked in close cooperation with the Nigerian government so that it looked as if the government hadn’t required the help of PMCs. Allegedly, the PMC would conduct operations at night to leave the villages open for victory the following day, for which the Nigerian government could claim it as their own (Varin 2018, pp.151). This suggests that by introducing PMCs into a nation state, it can have detrimental effects to the perceived ability of a government to govern effectively. The secrecy behind combat support provided to the military threatens the perception of Nigeria as a powerful state in Africa and thus the PMC was introduced in a different way compared to the other case studies. Whilst this seemingly would have no difference on the measures of sovereignty, it is a differing factor when compared to the other two case studies.

#### *How did the government fund the use of PMCs?*

This case study is different from the previous two as there is no information to outline how or how much the PMC was paid for their service. The lack of information and secrecy by the Nigerian government compounds this issue as there are no verifiable sources to suggest how the government funded the use of PMCs. It is unknown how Nigeria paid STTEP for their services, but in an interview conducted by Kinsey and Krieg with an anonymous source close to the STTEP operational team, it is suggested that illicit transfers of cash were used to pay the STTEP

contract (Kinsey & Krieg 2021, pp.242). What can be identified through Barlow is that the Nigerian Government rejected a US\$1.5bn proposal from STTEP initially (Barlow 2018). However, the desperation for political triumph led to Jonathan hiring STTEP as Boko Haram's presence grew more unstable.

The former two case studies show evidence of mining concessions being granted to those mining companies associated with the PMCs due to the inability to pay in full for the PMCs services as a result of reduced revenue from mining assets. There is no proof to show that mining concessions were used by the Nigerian government; however, like Angola and Sierra Leone, Nigeria also suffered from reduced income from these state assets due to the oil crisis of 2014-2016.

The Nigerian economy is heavily reliant on oil export earnings and the period between 2014-2016 saw an economic downfall. 65% of government revenue is generated from the oil and gas sector and combined with the oil price plunge, had large effects on the Nigerian economy (Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative 2021). Further to this decreasing income, President Jonathan requested approval from the National Assembly for a \$1bn loan from the government in November 2014 to combat Boko Haram, shortly before the hiring of STTEP (Campbell 2014b). This loan was important as Jonathan needed approval from the legislature to seek potential creditors for the loan. President Jonathan suggested a government to government arrangement for the loan but failed to specify where this loan would come from (Eboh 2014). This loan may have also supplemented the cost of the PMC as the loan was used to bolster military capacity to defeat Boko Haram. Whilst there is no concrete evidence to confirm how STTEP was paid, there are different economic factors which provide an insight into the government's ability to fund a PMC.

What is the state of sovereignty following the use of PMCs?

*Elite Fragmentation*

The loss of President Jonathan saw a newly elected government come into power bringing a shift in the national security agenda. STTEP's contract was ended under the Buhari government as it was arguably created as a final effort to ensure electoral victory for the former president and thus failed in its task. Despite this, they managed to reclaim a vast amount of territory and overpower Boko Haram which assisted in a more peaceful security environment for the incoming President to inherit. However, despite the PMC assisting in defeating Boko Haram, the inherent corruption and capacity issues within the fragmented military remained prevalent.

Following the departure of STTEP in 2015, the election saw President Buhari take office, a man that was publicly against the use of PMCs and a proponent for multi-national collaboration, an action previously avoided by the isolationist former President Jonathan (Reid 2015). Despite the political loss of the initial government, the new regime brought a more transnational approach to defeating Boko Haram. This provided longer term success in ensuring that no territorial control was ceded. It is difficult to see whether fragmentation within elite political groups improved or not, however the more collective approach to military efforts and new-found funding for the military provides an example as to the improved fragmentation amongst the military on a local and international level. The fragmentation within the military improved following the training provided by STTEP as well as the guidance of President Buhari, a former Major General (Varin 2018, pp.152). Buhari looked to extend and modernise the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) that had been operating since 1994 (International Crisis Group 2020). Buhari enhanced the multi-force group including both public and private local, national, and international security

forces. (Kinsey & Krieg 2021, pp.243). These forces saw Benin, Cameroon, Niger, Chad, and the Nigerian Military forces commit 10,000 soldiers to patrolling and defeating Boko Haram in the regions surrounding and including the Lake Chad Basin (African Union 2021). As part of this agreement, Buhari enlisted the services of the United Kingdom Military to train Nigerian forces in Counter-Insurgency tactics (Department for International Development 2016). This shift towards multi-lateral cooperation, with the support of both the US and the UK as well as the MNJTF, enabled Buhari to reduce military fragmentation through enhancing funding and support for the previously under-funded Nigerian military. The use of a PMC to create a more stable environment enabled President Buhari to implement the security measures necessary to work on defeating Boko Haram. This is the extent to which STTEP assisted in reducing military fragmentation as the introduction of international funding from the US, the UK, and surrounding African countries was a larger factor in enhancing the capacity of the military.

The period following the departure of STTEP saw a more holistic approach to regional security with the former Major General and now President employing a range of security measures to work towards a better security environment for Nigeria's interests and civilians.

#### *Ability to generate revenue from state assets*

As already established earlier in the case study, Boko Haram had no control over revenue generating state assets, nor is there evidence that Nigeria used mining concessions as part payment for their services and thus there was a neutral effect on this aspect of sovereignty. However, their continued presence within Nigeria could potentially affect this aspect of sovereignty if left uncontrolled.

Despite the little initial involvement, Boko Haram in later years has affected the potential future earnings of the Nigerian Government. As the oil mines are primarily located in the South Niger Delta region, Boko Haram has had little involvement in attacks. However, as oil exports make up 70% of government income, the government has looked to the Northern regions for oil exploration. Boko Haram's presence remains in the North of Nigeria and thus has seen an increase in attacks and blockages due to exploration efforts (Campbell 2017). The discovery of oil in the Lake Chad Area was announced by the head of the Nigerian Petroleum Corporation on November 8<sup>th</sup> 2015, following the departure of STTEP (Matfess 2015). In 2017, Boko Haram were responsible for the attack of a convoy of armed oil workers and the subsequent kidnapping of four of these oil workers (Campbell 2017). As a result, the Minister for State Petroleum Resources announced a halt of all oil exploration works in the Lake Chad region until the security situation could be brought under control (Campbell 2017). The continued operations of Boko Haram in this region present a dynamic threat to the Nigerian government and prevents them from capitalising on the oil basin within their state.

These attacks are not a direct result of Private Military Companies as they occurred two years following the PMC intervention; however, the PMCs were hired to counter the forces of Boko Haram which were effective in the short-term. This lack of defeat speaks to the continued weakness of Nigeria as Boko Haram's primary presence remains in the North-Eastern regions of Nigeria, specifically the Lake Chad Basin, where oil exploration is occurring. With reported discontent from communities in the area due to a lack of government assistance, this oil exploration could be a pathway for Boko Haram to gain further support and funding, thus presenting an even larger threat to the Nigerian government (Matfess 2015). The long-term inability for the government to maintain control over these areas has led to the potential for a

reduced income. Had the PMC achieved the desired results of combatting Boko Haram in 2015, then this would likely not have been as big an issue.

### *Territorial Control*

STTEP was effective in regaining most of the territory that was lost to Boko Haram in 2015, pushing the insurgency group to the border regions of Nigeria. The Nigerian government claimed that 10 of 14 local governments had been recaptured by the Nigerian forces (Adamo 2020, pp.346). On the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (BBC News 2015a). As the United States at this time were fighting the Islamic State, which posed a threat to the stability of their oil exports from Nigeria, they committed 300 soldiers to the ongoing conflict to help in their military efforts (Council on Foreign Relations 2021). This support enabled the Nigerian military to avoid further territorial gain by Boko Haram. Further, due to the nature of the political environment in which STTEP was hired, the government was able to retain territorial control as they weren't fighting a continuous direct and imminent threat to their position of power. Whilst Boko Haram's military tactics reverted to suicide bombings and fear mongering, the lack of military presence in many rural communities in Nigeria has created further room for Boko Haram to establish their presence and dominance (Felbab-Brown 2018).

Further, the current location of Boko Haram remains in the North-Eastern region, specifically the Lake Chad Basin. This area is of strategic importance to the Nigerian Government as it is located on the border of three other countries, as well as being an untapped oil basin, capable of producing 2.32 billion barrels of oil, as well as natural gas and natural gas liquids (United States Geological Survey 2010). The Lake Chad Basin covers four countries, as does Boko Haram's

presence. Whilst Boko Haram maintains little territorial control compared to their 2014-2015 campaign, the territory that they do hold is strategically important to the Nigerian Government.

Thus, whilst STTEP successfully assisted the Nigerian Government in reclaiming territory lost to Boko Haram, they did not effectively defeat the insurgency group. This has allowed for Boko Haram activities to continue to develop in strength, creating a threat that could see more territory lost to the group if they manage to secure a source of funding, such as oil.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, the introduction of a PMC in a more stable environment with lower levels of elite fragmentation led to an overall neutral impact on Nigeria's domestic sovereignty. This is in comparison to Sierra Leone and Angola in which a PMC was hired to counter a political threat to the sovereignty of the nation. When compared to Sierra Leone and Angola, Nigeria's state of elite fragmentation was both lower, and fundamentally different. Whilst Sierra Leone and Angola were battling political threats resulting from a civil war, Nigeria's core military institutions were fragmented. Nigeria didn't face the state capacity issues of severe political elite fragmentation or threats to their state assets like those of the former case studies, but the case study does provide valuable insights into the way in which a PMC can be used to achieve a goal efficiently and effectively.

This fundamental difference is the causal factor in determining the effect that a PMC will have on domestic sovereignty as it influences the services that the PMC provides. This is evidenced as the PMC had no effect on Nigeria's state of elite fragmentation; however, it further fragmented elite political groups in Sierra Leone and Angola. Further, Nigeria's state assets were not

controlled or threatened by the threat that led to the hiring of the PMC, and thus the PMC did not provide these services as they did in the other case studies. However, like Sierra Leone and Angola, Nigeria also went through a period of reduced revenue due to an oil crisis and political issues causing similar military funding concerns. Like that of Angola, the inability of the PMC to fully defeat the opposition further created long-term issues as their continued presence created long-term revenue generating concerns. Finally, as with the previous two studies, the PMC operations in Nigeria were successful in regaining the territory lost by the government signalling that PMCs are highly effective at regaining lost territory due to the force multiplier effect. STTEP's success in this area was long-term as Nigeria has retained control over many of the areas previously taken. However, STTEP's failure to completely defeat Boko Haram has created long-term issues over territorial control within a region of new-found strategic importance due to the discovery of oil.

Thus, the lower levels of elite fragmentation as seen in Nigeria created an environment in which the PMC was used differently, thus leading to a net neutral effect on domestic sovereignty.

## CHAPTER 7: KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

### Key Findings

Table 5. Overview of PMC Effects on Measures of Domestic Sovereignty

<b>Case Study</b>	<b>Elite Fragmentation (AFTER)</b>	<b>Revenue from State Assets (AFTER)</b>	<b>Territorial Control (AFTER)</b>	<b>Domestic Sovereignty</b>
Sierra Leone	Higher	Lower	Greater	Negative
Angola	Higher	Lower	Greater	Negative
Nigeria	Neutral	Neutral	Greater	Neutral

For the hypothesis to be supported, the thesis had to show that differing levels of elite fragmentation affects the way in which PMCs impact the domestic sovereignty of a nation state. The findings from the case studies highlight that the background state of elite fragmentation affects the reason as to why the PMC is hired and is the causal link in PMCs impacting domestic sovereignty. If PMCs are used to bolster the power of an elite political group due to underlying issues with elite fragmentation and the military, they will have a net negative impact on the domestic sovereignty of a state. However, if PMCs are hired by a government with lower levels of elite fragmentation, they will have a neutral effect on the domestic sovereignty of the state. The case studies, whilst having similar levels of domestic sovereignty prior to hiring a PMC, hired a PMC for different reasons resulting in varying changes to domestic sovereignty, highlighting that even in similar low state capacity countries, there will be varying results. These case studies followed different pathways from the hiring of a PMC, what they were used for, and their outcomes. This highlights the effect that elite fragmentation has upon the reasoning behind

hiring a PMC, their implementation, and their effect and thus the impact on domestic sovereignty.

The three case studies were chosen as they each hired a PMC for different reasons. Angola and Sierra Leone hired the PMCs to counter the forces of the opposite political group which highlights their need to bolster their political position due to decreasing political influence. This resulted in higher levels of elite fragmentation as the use of a PMC amplified the effects of the warring groups. This is in comparison to Nigeria where the PMC was hired as a force multiplier to counter the insurgency group that was threatening the security of the North-Eastern parts of the country. As the PMC was not brought in to heighten a political groups influence, the effect on the elite fragmentation within Nigeria was negligible. From analysing the cases it becomes evident that the underlying state of political elite fragmentation is the causal factor in a PMC affecting the ability of a legitimate nation to practice domestic sovereignty.

In Sierra Leone and Angola, the PMC was hired in part as the state was unable to maintain control of their revenue generating natural resources. This highlights the fragility of their state capacity prior to the introduction of a PMC. Along with the inability to maintain control over these assets, these case studies also highlight the use of mining concessions as a form of payment for the PMC's services. This necessity to hire a PMC led to the nation giving favourable concessions to energy and mining companies associated with the hired PMC. This directly impacts the state in the long-term as their overall revenue is limited due to the favourable conditions previously given. This is in comparison to Nigeria where there was no issue over lost control of state assets as the government retained control over them. Further, whilst there is no proof over how the PMC was paid, there has been no mention of mining concessions in the evidence and thus the PMC had no effect on the state ability to generate revenue. It cannot be

said that access to mining resources is a reason behind a PMC accepting a government contract as the provisioning of mining concessions was not evident across all three case studies.

However, each PMC that was analysed in this thesis had close relationships or were linked with large natural resource companies operating within Africa.

From the results, it is clear that PMCs are effective at regaining the lost territory of states and shifting the distribution of power in favour of the government. In all three cases, the PMC was successful in helping the government regain lost territory. The force multiplier effect and the training and knowledge provided to the national military enabled effective combat missions that regained territory. Despite this success, it came at a cost, with two of the three case studies sacrificing other aspects of their domestic sovereignty for the control of the land. In Nigeria, the military forces were able to retain control of the lost land following the departure of the PMC which highlights the positive impact that the training and knowledge provided by the PMC had. In Sierra Leone and Angola, the land was retaken shortly after being recovered by the PMC suggesting that the insurgency group was more powerful, and the involvement of the PMC provided little long-term benefit.

The power politics evident in these case studies inhibited the PMC from performing and fulfilling their contract which caused long-term ramifications. Further, the secrecy behind all three contracts suggests that politics is behind the PMC use as the government does not want the public to see the weak and fragile nature of the military as this instability can create public discontent in the government, therefore decreasing the power of their government.

In Sierra Leone and Angola, the PMCs were hired for a different reason on the surface but ultimately, they were hired due to high levels of elite fragmentation where one political group

needed to secure their influence and power against the other. This created issues where the PMC was brought in as a form of desperation and thus, they were used more recklessly. This is in comparison to Nigeria where the level of elite fragmentation was lower with the PMC introduced to counter a terrorist insurgency group. In turn, the PMC had a more neutral effect on the ability of Nigeria to practice domestic sovereignty.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, domestic sovereignty is hard to measure, and PMCs can have differing effects. The positive effects are more evident in Nigeria, whereby there was no threat to the government in power, suggesting that hiring a PMC where the state of elite fragmentation is worse will have a negative impact upon the domestic sovereignty of a state when analysing domestic sovereignty under the three measurables. To prove whether hiring a PMC in an environment of lower elite fragmentation results in a neutral or positive impact to domestic sovereignty, more case studies will need to be analysed as this hypothesis can only be shown in one of the three case studies in this thesis. One of the main issues in researching this thesis was the secrecy behind the government contracts with each PMC, as well as the lack of governmental reporting as to the actions of PMCs within the government. To improve transparency and research results, PMC contracts must be made available to the public, not only for academics to research their nature, but also to increase transparency for the citizens of these nations. This thesis thus suggests that elite fragmentation is new factor in which academics should be aware of in future instances of PMC usage as it can determine their impact prior to their intervention; however, more research needs to be undertaken in the realm of PMC interventions and domestic sovereignty to solidify this hypothesis.

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