



## Diamonds and Dependency: A Case study of Blood Diamond

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### ABSTRACT

*This study focuses on elements of dependency in the movie "Blood Diamond with the lens of Raul Prebisch's dependency theory in the movie "Blood Diamond". The study implements qualitative data analysis, guided by the principles of dependency theory. The data for research is collected in the form of dialogues from the movie "Blood Diamond" and the dialogues are discussed in detail with contextual analysis to uncover the elements of dependency. The findings reveal that the film serves as a tool to understand the cycles of exploitation of resources-rich countries by wealthier nations which causes dependency of resource-rich countries on foreign countries. This research is limited to some dialogues related to dependency leaving the room for future researchers for further researches.*



## Introduction

This paper provides the theoretical shades of dependency in the Blood Diamond, a movie released in 2006. It is an Oscar-nominated Hollywood blockbuster movie. Which is directed by Edward Zwick. The movie focuses on the exploitation of natural resources especially Diamonds, of Sierra Leone, by wealthier nations, reflecting key principles of the dependency theory. This theory is the idea that resources move from a poor to wealthier, underdeveloped to developed, periphery to core

countries (Ahiakpor, 1985) same as shown in the movie Blood Diamond. The elements such as transnationalism and others are discussed in previous research papers of Blood Diamond movie.

### **The Dependency and Blood Diamond**

Blood Diamond represents the uncompromising barbarity of Sierra Leone civil war using painful imagery which invites the viewers to empathize with the locals of Sierra Leone while at the same time drawing them into passive watching without concern. This filmic depiction of violence treats the Sierra Leone Civil War apparently while rooting the colonial violence that forms the spine of the film and of Sierra Leone's history. The aestheticization of violence hinders the viewers from seeing the deep genetic strands of the film narrative and its colonial references. This desensitizes them to the compounded trauma that deals with depiction of violence embedded in style. It agrees with the critical school that sees the violence in the film in a stylish way. This makes people less sensitive that could make them more likely to act aggressively. (Bruder, 1998)

### **Colonialism in Africa**

Blood Diamond is another movie that set up in deepest and darkest Africa. It concerns about human rights. Several scholars and politicians states that the dependency has been removed with decrease in colonialism (Glennie, 2012). While, other scholars oppose this perspective, and states that various countries are dependent on developed countries such as United States and other European Countries to finance their economy and military. Furthermore, by the title above, this object will discuss in the movie "Blood Diamond" that the country that is depicted as being densely dependent on resources, particularly diamonds, is Sierra Leone. The film focal points how the illegal diamond trade fuels conflict and misdeed in the country, well-known to a cycle of violence and poverty. Sierra Leone's economy has been typically fixed by the demand for diamonds from other countries, which generally leads to the backing of armed groups and civil war. (Achmad 2022).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Dependency theory starts from two papers that were released in 1949. Among these, one paper was by Hans Singer while the other one was by Raul Prebisch. Among these papers the writers concluded that all of the rules and conditions of the trade sector for poor countries collapse over time with relative to the developed countries. The poor nations were capable to pay for only fewer manufactured items from the wealthier nations even after giving them a amount of the natural resources retracted from their lands. This notion is recognized as the 'Prebisch-Singer thesis'.

As Achmad says Dependency can be interpreted as a description of the economic development of a state in terms and conditions of foreign factors such as economic, political, and cultural on the development policies. Countries that have fewer resources but are dependent on their nations just because they make their economies strong. When interacting with fellow human beings, whatever it is, person to person, person to organization, organization to organization, consistently hued by two things: calm and collaboration, as shown in the movie "Blood Diamond." (Achmad, 2022). During the 1650s to 1900s, European countries, to the same degree, Britain and France took control or colonized other countries. At the time, America, Africa, and Asia exported their natural resources from their lands to Europe, and to do this they had operated with their advanced defense systems and superior sea-based powers (Dependency Theory, 2020). Multiple countries have been impacted by the good and bad results of this theory. While the concept of the dependency of one country or nation on another one is not a new notion, but dependency theory on its own is a fresh notion (Crossman, 2020).

## **Research Question**

What are principles of dependency in Blood Diamond?

What are the elements of dependency in the movie "Blood Diamond"?

## **Research Objective**

To study the principles of dependency theory in the Blood Diamond's Diamond trade.

To examine the elements of dependency in the movie " Blood Diamond".

## **Limitations**

The study focuses on the dependency in the dialogues of the certain people in certain situations. It may not cover all dialogues and situations related to dependency. It may not completely represent economic and social structure that dependency theory seeks to explain. It only focuses on some aspects of dependency in the movie 'Blood Diamond'. Future researches may focus on other aspects of dependency in 'Blood Diamond'.

## **Literature Review**

### **Dependency as a Political Term**

(Ake, 2000) says that it looks like a minimalist structural form of democracy instead of a comprehensive liberal concept. On the contrary, Sierra Leone is possible to be viewed like developing its own form of 'local democracy'. This democracy is not influenced by the elements like class or societal wealth. Democracy is a notion with various definitions, historical contexts and a present day realities. (Karlstorm, 1996) says that the democratic project is truly universal and ongoing. The West is only able to declare a historical dominance rather than a hegemony on its current or future forms and definitions. Robinson says that the centralization of power in the executive if it is contrasted to the councils and the poorly funded and relatively inactive Parliament. It will remain noticeable. In (2008), disorder and violence sometimes released together. It poses a threat to the state-related stability. Like the PMDC decreased towards the foundation. Also, the state-related system reversed in its larger scope is likely dual-party structure.

(Le Billon, 2009) states that diamonds remained the primary source of income for Sierra Leone. They make 60 to 80 percent from export market before the deadline of 2000s (based upon the prices). It is many times argued that managing diamonds should be easier in Sierra Leone as compared to Botswana. Because the recent government put efforts to move from small-scale to large-scale industrial mining. However, the shift to industrial mining could also lead to security issues. It will cause for the further loss of jobs, especially for younger miners who rely on small-scale mining for surviving in life. (Little, 2010) states that the benefits to Sierra Leone will largely depend on how the new revenues are managed at national level. Development of country, political favors and all personal finances all are competing for attention. (Richmond, 2008) says that it has been blamed for treating Africa as a land without its own politics and has been described as an illusion because the issues with progressive conflict resolution are not limited to Africa. That is why its outcomes often being 'poverty with rights'.

When looking at those who are working in lower government positions and the general population. And then considering the ideas of mutual benefits and obligation. The workforce in deeply

involved in 'patron-clientelism'. Their main loyalty is to their village, secret society, family, and relatives in contrary to the state (Two Publics).

The nation additionally has for itself Attitudinal and Behavioral Change Secretariat. Both currently and earlier. Whether its defense, state, society have issues. In dealing with these issues, it is similar in approach to the efforts of other African countries (Kahler, 2007).

The Liberal policies just help to speed up things and Sierra Leone is changing quickly. The nation still holds on to ideas from the colonial era about how societies evolve and develop in many ways, as well as the theories from the Cold War about modernization. (See again Bayart, 'Africa in the World').

### **Concept of Dependency in Different Movies**

Johansen, (2018) argues that the global system is designed in a way which always benefits the Core countries and create imbalance between Global North and South. Even from globalization, only rich countries get more benefits, also by expenses of the poor ones that already disadvantage the dis-empower regions and communities.

Molony, (2007) aligns with dependency theory and emphasize that global economic system sustains inequalities. The fishing industry demonstrate that how resources in the Global South (Tanzania) are put to use for interest of Global North. This terribly creates a cycle of dependency and underdevelopment among the local population.

Lucien, (2012) approach can reflect dependency theory by critiquing how narratives of guilt and reconciliation may serve external audiences or systems potentially reinforcing cultural or ideological dominance from "core" societies over "peripheral" ones.

### **Dependency in Africa**

The movie is meaningful and widely praised. It aims to raise awareness about conflict diamonds. This article states that Blood Diamond weakens its own message by placing whiteness at the heart of humanitarian morality. The story presents the rescue of Africa and its people and diamonds. The audience especially white people, Americans, which depicts the postcolonial black Africa and its people as they are not able of governing themselves effectively.

It was not just corporations that were involved. About 65 percent of the global raw diamonds supply is obtained from just African nations. Many of the countries involving South Africa and Botswana feared that this movie could have a negative impact on their economies. The opposition of South Africa to the references of the movie and they said that the Blood Diamond was formed with the help of the Department of the Trade and Industry South Africa. They denied it and did not take any responsibility of any of this.

No matter if the movie earned a limited recognition and spread but it also gains major amount of both. It still serves as a significant contemporary record of Hollywood liberalism.

It indicates the range to which the anti-capitalism of Hollywood can continue before it provides concession to the responsible consumption. Furthermore, it highlights how anti-black racism going on for monopoly and to shape United States renowned culture. It is now going on so with a fresh stamp of ethical authority.

### **Previous Studies about Blood Diamond**

Different shades of " Blood Diamond " is previously studied by different researchers, Sandika, (2008), writer employed sociological approach in this article and objective of this research is how misery under comfort is shown in Blood Diamond and it is viewed by the sociological perspective. Writer has applied sociological approach to identify the social issues in Blood Diamond and how luxury lifestyle can cause sufferings to people.

Wahyurini, (2010), researcher's psychological approach is applied to struggle of Solomon Vandy for better life, the main purpose of the writer is to analyses the struggles faced by Solomon Vandy in movie "Blood Diamond" to get a better life with his family and for this purpose writer has applied individual psychological approach.

Saputra, (2015), this movie is seen through postcolonial lens by researcher, the motives of the researcher are to elaborate Blood Diamond movie with operation of binary through Postcolonial theory. The themes of postcolonialism, colonialism, exploitation and power dynamics are highlighted by writer in this article using post- colonial theory.

Onuzulike, (2015), The researcher has deeply analyzed the movie in the background of transnationalism. The main aim of this analysis is to identify how Blood Diamond critiques transnational forces such as multinational institutions.

Ridho, (2022), the objective of this article is how do social conflicts affect Sierra Leone society in blood. Diamond movie and how social conflicts are reflected in the movie "Blood Diamond"

Different from these perspectives the study focuses on elements of dependency in movie "Blood Diamond" our area of research is different from previous researches as there is no previous research on applying dependency theory on Blood Diamond.

### **Methodology**

The research implements qualitative data analysis, guided by the principles of dependency theory. The data for research is collected in the form of different dialogues from the movie "Blood Diamond" and the environmental hints and thematic background was also noted. dependency theory is applied as research methodology to identify the elements of dependency in the movie, dependency theory originated from the work of Raul Prebisch. It focuses how dominated countries captured some land and made them dependent, elements like cheap labor, education, economics, politics, natural resources, banking and finance and Media are discussed in the separate parts. The conclusions are made on the basis of the element of dependency seen in the movie. This methodology provides clear framework for applying dependency theory to study of the movie , providing insights into the themes of dependency , exploitation and violence

### **Discussion**

This discussion strongly based on the elements of the dependency by Raul Prebisch that are mentioned in the methodology. This is dialogue based discussion in which specific elements of dependency are discussed by researcher and provides a comprehensive way to examine and understand the principles of dependency.

## **Cheap Labor**

Cheap labor refers to a labor that is employed at very low or no pay, often under poor working conditions. Just as shown in movie "Blood Diamond", Solomon Vandy says:

"My son, they will make him do terrible things. They will take away his hands to mine Diamonds, and then they will take away his soul."

Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone uses children and other people in diamond mines under poor working conditions with no pay. These people are subjected to physical torture, malnutrition and inhuman treatment, they amputate body parts of some of them to induce fear in others. This shows the condition of the labors that are working in the mines that they were forced to do the work in return to keep themselves alive, otherwise they we're beaten dreadfully and killed by the guards that are their incharge.

This also highlights that they are dependent on the rulers for their food, lives, and survival. Also, in case if they do mine, as majority do for their survival, their condition become miserable. They are also forced to join their force and alliance for more exploitation. It demonstrates that how they forced the labor to do work for them as the locals are dependent on the rulers. The local works and die, but the profit goes to foreign companies.

This highlights how brutality is exercised to amputee arms or legs of workers who disobeys them, tries to hide a diamond and who tries to run away. They use this physical abuse to get cheap labor from them and to infuse fear in other workers, we can see this physical abuse from the dialogue of Danny Archer when he says: "People back home would not buy a ring if they knew it costs someone their hand."

In another dialogue he further highlights,

"In America, It's bling-bling, but out here it's bling-bang."

Danny Archer emphasize on the contrast between glamorous image of diamonds in America and terrifying image of diamonds in Sierra Leone.

The words 'bling-bling' and 'bling-bang' highlights the imbalance between the situations in America and Africa, the labors are exploited and forced to mine the diamonds. This also highlights that how multinational companies blind the eyes of their customers what is happening behind their product before reaching to the market.

The element of cheap labor in Blood Diamond reflects the principles of dependency theory, which states underdeveloped nations remain dependent on developed countries through exploration through their resources and labor. This shows a clear contrast between periphery and core, exploited and wealthy countries. The Blood Diamond also shows that how cheap labor support the profit, luxury, and lavishness of wealthy nations that exploits their resources and human power.

## **Education**

For any underdeveloped and resource-rich country, education is fundamental for its development because if youth of the country is educated the country will make progress and vice versa, but in exploited counties like Sierra Leone this basic right of education is violated as highlighted,

Dia: "Papa, the teacher said this country was founded as a utopia, do you know what that means?"  
Solomon: "A utopia? She tells you this at school? And tomorrow, what? You want to go back again?"  
Dia: "Yes, Papa. I want to go to school every day now."

Utopia is basically an imagined place in which everything is perfect but Solomon scared after hearing about utopia because of his previous experiences of war and exploitation. Utopia for Solomon seems impossible but his son through education was hopeful for it and shows his desire for going to school but despite of his desire his basic right of education is violated as rebel group (RUF) takes him and force him to become a child soldier.

Danny Archer elaborates,

"Do you know that Solomon thinks his son will be a doctor one day?"

This underscores Solomon's son, Dia's wish to become a doctor. This reveals that exploited nations people are determined to get education for their betterment but they have no access to it because they are controlled by foreign countries. This falls in dependency theory as developed nations make people from exploited nations dependent on them by limiting their access to education. The rulers' interest is just show their dominance in the dominated area, their main focus is to just control them, exploit them, and their resources. They don't want their development such as education and other betterment for them. The rulers don't want anyone to be engineer, doctor or anyone like that, they only want locals to be their forced workers that work in their mines and forces.

### **Politics**

Sierra Leone was politically dependent on foreign countries and multinational companies for its decisions as shown in foreign conference in the movie, Danny Archer points out:

" You think I'm here for the Diamonds? I'm here for the money, Solomon. And you're the key to getting it. The rebels, the government, the Diamond companies... they're all puppets on a string. And I'm pulling the strings."

Here Danny Archer call's "puppets" to both government and rebels who are dependent on him and he was pulling their strings, this clearly reflects rebel's, government, and diamond company's dependency on Danny Archer, which highlights how government of Sierra Leone was dependent on others for their decisions. This shows how resource-rich countries are dependent on foreign countries and multinational companies. They are exploited by both of them. Their own institutions are weak and fragile which make them dependent on foreign countries despite of being resource-rich country.

This shows chain of dependency as Solomon is depending on Danny Archer to find his family and Danny Archer says "I, m here for money, and you are the key to getting it." So, Danny Archer was dependent on Solomon for getting money by getting that big pink Diamond from Solomon.

Danny Archer further asserts:

"Governments only want to stay in power until they have stolen enough to go into exile somewhere else."

This highlights weak as well as corrupt nature of governments in Sierra Leone who are not sincere with their country, they just come in power for corruption and when they get enough money they exile. They are not concern with betterment of the country. They let armed groups to sell diamonds to foreign smugglers who further sell them to foreign Diamond companies, and in exchange of Diamonds armed groups get weapons from foreign countries in this way foreign countries, armed groups and Diamond traders exploit Sierra Leone they are also not sure what they want to do.

Danny Archer: “Sometimes I wonder; will God ever forgive us what we have done to each other? Then I look around and realize, God left this place a long time ago.”

He mentions “what we have done to each other” for the effects of diamond trade which had led to sufferings of millions of humans in Sierra Leone and now their dependency on foreign countries for aid and to solve their problems, Danny's this statement clearly shows the devastating effects of diamond trade on sierra Leone, he was regretting that only for greed of money foreigners like him and rebels have make the country dependent and people to suffer. Despite of being a smuggler Danny has some moral values that's why he was regretting of what they have done to each other.

### **Media**

In conflict areas media was controlled by foreign countries and they cover conflicts in selective way, in Sierra Leone war was not covered by local media and journalists, it was covered by foreign Media as we can see Maddy Bowen a foreign journalist, one of the main characters in the movie who come to Sierra Leone to cover the conflict.

When Solomon says “So when people in your country read it they will come, yes?” than Maddy says that “Probably not.” Solomon shared his experiences with Maddy Bowen, a foreign journalist, about exploitation, war and his sufferings which was the result of diamond trade for her report. He was hopeful that when people in foreign countries read this report they will come for help, this shows that after been broken by foreigners, he was still depending on them for help, he got disappointed by Maddy's answer, this shows limitations of media. Media can cover whole issue but can't solve it.

Last lines of the movie by Ambassador Walker:

“The Third World is not a world apart. The witness you will hear today speaks on its behalf. Let us hear the voice of that world. Let us learn from the voice. Let us ignore it no more. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Solomon Vandy.”

The statement calls for representation of local citizens of Sierra Leone to share their own experiences to solve the issue because without listening to them and relying on selective media coverage exploitation never end and the dependency of conflict areas on foreign countries never. This clearly shows the importance of representing local citizens of Sierra Leone, just like Solomon Vandy explained in the end of movie because they suffered the issues caused by Blood Diamond trade and even Media coverage cannot explain their sufferings better than them.

### **Banking and finance**

Danny Archer: [Shows Maddy a black book] “Names, dates, and numbered accounts. You publish one word of this story before I give them the stone, and I am dead. After I give it to them. I will leave this continent forever.”

The dialogue between the journalist Maddy Bowen and Danny Archer highlights the role of banking and finance. Danny presents a black book containing “names, dates, and numbered accounts”, which refers to those activities that are happened in banking system. The black book symbolizes the record of various stakeholders in Diamond trade. In the movie *Blood diamond*, numbered accounts are used to maintain the records of illegal trade. The role of Maddy in this Dialogue exposing those people, who are facing difficulties through the illegal marketing. Danny’s warning that he will be dead if she publishes any word before he gives them the stone. The dialogue reflects the issues how corruption creates an environment where speaking out can be a life threatening. Furthermore, the dialogues encourage viewers to consider their own complicity in the global injustices. Efforts like the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme 2003, with the United Nation and the diamond business aims to sure that diamonds are conflict free. It reveals the wide consequences of the individuals and institutions in the *Blood Diamond*.

### **Natural resources**

Solomon: "You've taken everything from me. My family, my home... If there was a diamond, it is gone, just like the rest."

Danny Archer: "Liar! I saw you hide it. Do you know what people would give for that stone? You think you can just walk away?"

This introduces Solomon a fisherman, separate from his family and forced into labor. Solomon talking about his family, home everything and of course he wants his family back. But for the family, he has to find the diamond first and then gave it to the Danny Archer, he has no other chance to find her family back. Danny Archer, a smuggler a kind of greedy for the diamonds and take help of Solomon because he only knows about the diamond he hides. As we know that Danny is a white and does not know anything about Sierra Leone, his main concern is just diamond, White’s eye is just on their natural resources. “Do you know what people would give for that stone? “Danny indirectly focusing on the sacrifices, how you people can forget, you don’t know what you people pay for that stone. He is talking about their family, homes even thousands of people gave their lives because of this conflict. If we see this on the way of dependency, we are not wrong. Solomon and Danny both are dependent on each other. A “give and take” phrase perfectly suit on their characters, Danny and Solomon deals with each other; you help me to find out the Diamond and I will help you to find your family. Not only Solomon and Danny ,the movie *Blood Diamond* fully dependent on the “Blood” and “Diamonds” of Sierra Leone.

### **Economy**

Archer: “After I smuggle the stones across border, local buyers get them to a middleman in Monrovia. He pays off customs and then certifies that the diamonds were mined in Liberia. That way, they can be legally exported. Once they have reached buyers in Antwerp, diamonds are brought to the sorting tables – no more questions are asked. By the time they get to India, the dirty stones are mixed with clean ones and become like any other diamonds.”

The concept of economy in the movie, focusing on the diamond industry. The conversation exposes the diamond market in which supply chains are deliberately manipulated. The process of illegal certification confess that conflict diamonds entered into the markets and are sold to finance in war zone.

The film highlights the suffering of Sierra Leone’s forced to mine diamonds under brutal conditions. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which is at Sierra Leone enslaved civilians to

mined diamonds and purchase weapons using to the profits. Forced labor in diamond mining and the use of child soldiers represents the darkest side of economic exploitation. These conflicts are the actual cause of millions of deaths and displacements. Archer explains how companies take advantage of legal flaws and how diamonds are mixed, he also notes that to maintain high prices how diamond companies manipulate artificially. When the clean and dirty diamonds are mixed it is difficult for the consumer to choose the real one.

“Supply and demand. You control the supply, and you keep the demand high. There is an underground vault where they stockpile diamonds to keep prices up. If rebels flood the market, companies can’t let that happen, especially when telling people to spend three months’ salary on an engagement ring.”

means that the diamonds they are stored underground, they used the stock diamonds to keep prices high, when the lack of diamonds in the market. He refers to the cultural norms of spending “three months’ salary on an engagement ring” a concept popularized by De Beers’ advertising campaign. The demand for diamonds is sustained by this manipulation of consumer behavior. African nations rich in natural resources, continue to suffer due to the ongoing exploitation.

## **Conclusion**

The study focuses on the dependency in the Blood Diamond movie. The exploitation of natural resources of Sierra Leone, reflecting key aspects of dependency theory. Sierra Leone faces violence, focus on the surface and embedded in style. This movie sets in darkest Africa. Hundreds of other countries are dependent military and economic aid. Sierra Leone is dependent on resources and how they misdeed in the country. The idea of Raul Prebisch is that the terms for trade in return for a very fewer quantity of their exports. Many countries like America, Africa, Asia are dependent on each other, use their technology for the trade of natural resources. This study covers those dialogues and situation which is related to the dependency theory. It has been criticized for poverty with rights and depend on the new revenue at state level. In a political term, dependency in Africa, the shades of Blood Diamond, Sierra Leone is rapidly changing. Their children and diamonds become the rightful property of the white people. Suffering behind the luxury, struggle for a better life, through post-colonial lens and the portraits of social conflicts reflected in the Blood Diamond Movie. How luxury lifestyle can cause suffering to the people, researcher do deeply analyses by sociology perspective. The people of Sierra Leone gave their lives for diamonds, enslaved children face violence for the natural resources.

To conclude the study cheap labor (4.1), education (4.2), politics (4.3), media (4.4), banking and finance (4.5), natural resources (4.6), and economy (4.7). These elements are discussed in conflict diamonds. All these elements show dependency, how nations depend on other's resources, take advantage to the resourceful countries through their relationships with each other (4). The world's 65 percent of diamonds comes from Africa. While Africans can be seen struggling for the good life even having much resources than the other nations. Despite all this, their children were killed and their houses were taken away from them. The reason for all this is their resources, especially Diamonds (4.6).

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