

**THE INFLUENCE OF RESEARCH ON STATE BUILDING  
POLICY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SECURITY  
SECTOR REFORM:**

**THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE**

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## Abstract

Over the last few decades, international organisations and bilateral donors have progressively promoted externally-led state building and Security Sector Reform (SSR) as two of the principal policy approaches to enhance state legitimacy and promote stability and security in countries emerging from conflicts. At the same time, the state building and SSR research agendas have grown exponentially and the quest for evidence-based policies has increasingly become an important aspect for international and British decision-makers working in fragile, conflict-affected countries. Nonetheless, the use and uptake of state building and SSR-oriented research findings by those involved in policy-making has remained a largely under-studied field of research, and enquiry into the research-policy nexus has rarely approached the issues of state building and SSR.

This PhD research seeks to compensate for this gap in the literature by investigating the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with SSR policies, programmes and activities implemented by the United Kingdom (UK) in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The thesis uses concepts and notions from the literature on the policy process and research utilisation to explore the ways in which research has influenced UK-led SSR policy. It analyses the evolution of the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on SSR in Sierra Leone, and argues that two main variables – an increased stability in the country and a progressive evolution of SSR in policy and research – contributed to the expansion of the policy network over time and to a better use of research by street-level bureaucrats on the ground. The thesis tests the applicability of the literature on the research-policy nexus to the challenge of state building and SSR in conflict-affected environments, deriving from the Sierra Leone case study a series of recommendations to improve the use of research by international organisations and bilateral donors working in fragile states.

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## Author's Declaration

This PhD thesis is one of the outputs of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)/Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Research Project: 'The Influence of DFID-Sponsored State Building-Oriented Research on British Policy in Fragile, Post-Conflict Environments' (Grant Reference: RES-167-25-0596). This three-year project has been carried out at the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit of the University of York by a team composed of three researchers. Professor Sultan Barakat was the Principal Investigator of the project, Dr. Thomas Waldman was the lead researcher, and I participated in the project as ESRC/DFID-funded PhD student, dividing my time between the work for the project and my personal PhD thesis.

The work in this thesis is my own and has not been submitted for examination at this or any other institution for another award. Some of the materials presented in this thesis have been used in the project outputs. In particular, some of the materials of the thesis have been published in two main publications of the project: the article, Varisco, A. E. (2014). The Influence of Research and Local Knowledge on British-led Security Sector Reform Policy in Sierra Leone. *Conflict, Security & Development* 14(1): 89-123, and the book, Waldman, T., Barakat, S. and Varisco, A., *Understanding Influence: The Use of Statebuilding Research in British Policy*, which will be published by Ashgate in September 2014. They have also been used as part of other outputs of the project, such as the project concept paper, Barakat, S., Waldman, T. and Varisco, A. (2011a). *The Influence of DFID-Sponsored State Building-Oriented Research on British Policy in Fragile, Post-Conflict Environments – Project Concept Paper*; the project progress paper, Barakat, S., Waldman, T. and Varisco, A. (2011b). *The Influence of DFID-Sponsored State Building-Oriented Research on British Policy in Fragile, Post-Conflict Environments – Project Progress Paper*; and the draft of the report, Barakat, S., Waldman, T. and Varisco, A. (2014), *Understanding Influence: Summary Report for DFID*.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Empirical context and argument

Over of the last 15 years, scholars and donors working on Security Sector Reform (SSR) have extensively analysed the policy interventions designed and implemented by the United Kingdom (UK) during and after the Sierra Leone civil conflict (Albrecht, 2009, 2010; Albrecht & Jackson, 2009; Albrecht & Malan, 2006; Baker, 2006; Ball, 1998; Denney, 2011; Department for International Development (DFID), 1998, 2000a; Ebo, 2006; Ero, 2000; Fitz-Gerald, 2004; Gbla, 2007; Horn, Olonisakin & Peake, 2006; Jackson & Albrecht, 2010, 2011; Kondeh, 2008a; Malan et al., 2003; Short, 1999). British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone consisted of a series of programmes, projects, and activities that started in the late 1990s and targeted the police, military, justice, intelligence, and governance structures of the country. These externally-led initiatives represented for the British government the first attempt to reform and overhaul the entire security architecture of a conflict-affected state. The novelty of this type of intervention, as well as the achievements of the country in the field of security over the course of the last two decades, demonstrated the importance of the Sierra Leone case study in the whole body of SSR literature. As a result, British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone is still studied and referred by scholars and practitioners working on SSR.

Most of the narratives of the Sierra Leone case study have described and analysed the policies implemented in the West African state (Albrecht, 2010; Albrecht & Jackson, 2009; Albrecht & Malan, 2006; Denney, 2011; Gbla, 2007; Horn, Olonisakin & Peake, 2006; Jackson & Albrecht, 2010, 2011; Kondeh, 2008a; Malan et al., 2003), focusing on the lessons learned from the SSR intervention (Ebo, 2006; Ero, 2000; Fitz-Gerald, 2004) and providing possible recommendations for future British and international SSR engagements in other fragile, conflict-affected environments (Albrecht, 2009; Ball, 1998; DFID, 1998, 2000a; Short, 1999). Only a few studies have actually described the policy process that brought British policy-makers in London and street-level bureaucrats in the country<sup>1</sup> to take and implement such allegedly successful

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<sup>1</sup> The thesis uses the term ‘policy-makers’ to refer to those people responsible for or involved in formulating SSR policies, mostly based in London headquarters. It uses the term ‘street-level bureaucrats’ (Part 1.4 of the thesis defines the term according to Lipsky’s definition) to generally refer to those people

policy decisions (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009; Horn, Olonisakin & Peake, 2006; Jackson & Albrecht, 2010, 2011). Furthermore, no previous study has tried to investigate whether and how research played a role in designing and shaping these policies. Nonetheless, the international SSR policy and research agenda has grown exponentially over the last decade (Ball & Hendrickson, 2006; Bryden & Keane, 2010; DFID, 2002a, 2002b; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), 2005, 2007a; Sugden, 2006), and the quest for evidence-based policy has increasingly become an important aspect for British and international decision-makers working in fragile, conflict-affected countries (DFID, 2004, 2008, 2009a, p. 1, 2010a). An analysis of the role played by research in the design and implementation of British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone would therefore shed light on the dynamics characterising the policy process in such contexts, potentially improving the uptake and utilisation of research in current and future SSR interventions worldwide.

This PhD seeks to understand the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The thesis explores the problems, the dynamics, and the narratives of research utilisation characterising the Sierra Leone case study, investigating the ways in which research and researchers have interacted with the SSR policy process in the country and, by extension, with British policies in the West African state. This PhD thesis thus represents an empirically-driven study on the role and utilisation of research in a specific, internationally-led policy such as SSR and in a dynamic and insecure context such as conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Through an extensive analysis of the use of research and knowledge in this particular and allegedly successful case study, the thesis aims to better understand the complexities of the SSR policy process in fragile, conflict-affected environments, deriving from the Sierra Leone example useful recommendations on how to improve the utilisation of research into policy.

With that goal at its centre, this PhD addresses this main question:

To what extent has research influenced and interacted with British governmental SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone?

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(advisers, programme managers, implementers, officers) tasked with implementing Her Majesty's Government (HMG) SSR policy and managing SSR assistance programmes on the ground, specifying their exact roles when possible.

To assist with answering this question, a series of inter-connected sub-questions are also addressed throughout the text:<sup>2</sup>

1. How has the network of researchers and policy actors working on SSR in conflict-affected Sierra Leone evolved during the conflict and post-conflict years?
2. What were the main contextual factors and exigencies that hindered or promoted the uptake of research into British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone?
3. What is the applicability of the literature on the research-policy nexus to the fast-paced, cross-governmental, institution-oriented, and internationalised challenge of state building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected environments?
4. What measures could favour and increase the influence of research upon state building and SSR policies in fragile, conflict-affected environments?

In line with the ESRC's definition, this PhD thesis defines research as "any form of disciplined inquiry that aims to contribute to a body of knowledge or theory" (ESRC, 2005, p. 7). Research involves gathering and analysing information in a structured, methodical, and scientific way, and can be divided in at least two categories that are relevant to this study. Academic research is more likely to involve a broader (often comparative) focus, to be deeper in nature, and to have a strong empirical basis as a result. Because academic studies take longer to conduct, this kind of research tends not to be commissioned as much by donors working on SSR who require quick solutions to the challenges they face. Policy-driven research, on the other hand, is often commissioned by donors in response to a particular problem they want to address (quite urgently) and is hence more likely to be narrowly focused (on a specific country or theme), shorter-term in nature, and therefore have a weaker empirical basis.

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<sup>2</sup> Some of these questions are similar to those of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)/DFID Research Project: 'The Influence of DFID-Sponsored State Building-Oriented Research on British Policy in Fragile, Post-Conflict Environments' (Grant Reference: RES-167-25-0596), to which this PhD is linked. For more information on the differences between this PhD and its overarching project, please see the Appendix.

Knowledge simply refers to what people know, or what is already known about a particular subject. The thesis adopts a wide definition of research, encompassing different studies and research outputs, from academic books to analyses and evaluations. It looks at the influence of different types of research on the decisions of policy-makers working in the headquarters of UK governmental departments and on the activities of street-level bureaucrats implementing policy-decisions in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. It examines the extent to which British street-level bureaucrats sought to harness relevant 'local' knowledge of the context in which they were working or to draw upon research produced by outside experts to assist them in implementing the UK's SSR programme.

The thesis accepts the Oxford Dictionary's definition of influence as "the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something" (Stevenson, 2010).<sup>3</sup> In line with the literature on research utilisation (Hanney et al., 2003; Weiss, 1979), this study recognises that research can influence and interact with the policy process in different ways. Research can have a direct, straightforward, instrumental impact on policy-making and implementation, or it can have a more articulated interaction with policy, influencing the activities, choices, and thoughts of policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats in an indirect and conceptual fashion (Coleman, 1991; Garret & Islam, 1998; Mulgan, 2005; Neilson, 2001; Nutley, Davies & Walter, 2002). The thesis therefore understands 'influence' as a dynamic and multifaceted process through which the concepts, notions, and ideas that emerge from research directly or indirectly shape and model the activities, thoughts, choices, strategies, and policy approaches of policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats. Research utilisation in policy can thus follow knowledge-driven, problem-solving, interactive, political, tactical, and enlightenment models, and research can be seen as part of the intellectual enterprise of a society eventually interacting with policy and with the larger fashion of social thought (Weiss, 1979).

The principal argument of the thesis is that research has increasingly influenced and interacted with policy decisions and activities of British SSR personnel working in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. In particular, two main variables contributed to this incremental interaction and influence of research. These two variables are an increasing

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<sup>3</sup> A sub-definition of influence also defines the terms as "the power to shape policy or ensure favourable treatment from someone, especially through status, contacts, or wealth" (Stevenson, 2010).

stability of the country context of Sierra Leone, and the progressive evolution of SSR as HMG policy and a related research agenda.

With reference to the stability of the country context, the first UK SSR activities in Sierra Leone started in a period of open conflict and represented a series of so-called ‘fire-fighting’ solutions aimed at re-establishing and bolstering the security apparatus of the state in an emergency situation. Early British-led security assistance activities in Sierra Leone started in the late 1990s in the middle of a civil war and evolved over the years in a more integrated set of reforms that continued until the current peaceful period. The end of the conflict in 2002 and an increased security on the ground assured researchers and street-level bureaucrats more access and capacity to gather information from the different provinces of the war-torn country. Similarly, this progressive stability gave British street-level bureaucrats more time to reflect on their policies and to read and analyse various studies and reports conducted in the country. As a result, the urgent and compelling policy and programme decisions taken in a dynamic situation of open conflict were progressively replaced by more articulated and structured policies during the post-conflict years. These policies were increasingly shaped and modelled by ad hoc, policy-driven research, studies, and surveys of international and local researchers working on the ground, as the improved security in the country allowed a more systematic gathering of information.

At the same time, the SSR policy agenda developed in the late 1990s in the UK and was increasingly adopted at an international level by the donors member of the OECD DAC and by other multilateral organisations such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) (Albrecht, Stepputat & Andersen, 2010; Ball, 2010; Ball & Hendrickson, 2006; DFID, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2002b; DFID, Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) & Ministry of Defence (MOD), 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Ebo & Powell, 2010; OECD DAC, 2004, 2005, 2007a; Short, 1998, 1999; UN, 2008; United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United States Department of Defense (USDOD) & United States Department of State (USDOS), 2009). As part of this evolution, Sierra Leone constituted the first engagement with SSR for the British government, an important learning experience for several UK departments as well as a test of their increasingly joined-up activities. Indeed, the first British-led security assistance activities in Sierra Leone started well before the launching of the first SSR policy statement by DFID Secretary of State Clare Short in March 1999

(Short, 1999). These narrowly oriented, ‘fire-fighting’ activities cannot be considered ‘SSR’, since they were not always in line with the holistic, integrated, governance-oriented principles of SSR. DFID thus developed and launched the SSR policy agenda because the first solutions in Sierra Leone were not working, and the Department believed that HMG required a longer-term, more integrated approach to reforming the security sector. DFID itself believed that it had a role to play in this process, but required a policy framework to enable this, hence the development of the SSR policy agenda.

Thus, the British SSR policy agenda was launched in March 1999 and evolved progressively in the successive years. Lessons emerging from Sierra Leone and from other HMG engagements in countries such as Ethiopia, Uganda, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka informed this growing agenda and contributed to the refinement of the early SSR concept at headquarters level and HMG programmes and policy approaches on the ground. Research constituted an integral part of this evolution and since the launch of the SSR policy agenda DFID funded several security-related studies (Ball, 1998; Ball & Holmes, 2002; Ball et al., 2007; Hutchful, 2009; Nathan, 2007), as well as research centres such as the Conflict Security & Development Group (CSDG) at King’s College, London and the Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GFN-SSR) to inform the emerging SSR policy agenda. The progressive evolution of SSR as British and international policy and a related research agenda thus was a second main factor that contributed to an increased use of research by British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. Lessons emerging from other conflict-affected countries progressively informed SSR policy at HMG level, and shaped street-level bureaucrats’ activities on the ground. Furthermore, the increased reflection on SSR-related issues and availability of research on security and governance-related issues constituted an important repository of knowledge for SSR street-level bureaucrats working in Sierra Leone.

The improved stability in the country, as well as the progressive evolution of SSR as HMG policy and a related research agenda thus represent the two main variables impacting on the utilisation of research in British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Positive changes in these two variables resulted in an increased influence and interaction between research and policy at headquarters level and in an improved use of research in SSR programmes and activities on the ground. As a consequence, the British-led SSR policy process in Sierra Leone evolved from a first period of ‘fire-



fighting’ solutions to the more stable post-conflict decade. Policy-makers in London, street-level bureaucrats implementing SSR policy on the ground, and researchers informing HMG policy at headquarters and country level established over the years a growing and consolidated network stretching from the UK to Sierra Leone. The improved stability in the country and the progressive evolution of the SSR policy and research agenda contributed to the expansion of this policy network and to the increase of the number of policy and research actors participating in British-led SSR programmes and activities both in the UK and on the ground.

The network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers involved in British-led SSR in Sierra Leone evolved over the years, shaped and modelled by the two main variables that influenced the use of research in SSR policy in the country. These variables can be thus considered as the main external (the stability and security of the country) and internal (the evolution of the SSR policy and research agenda) factors that determined the shape and extension of the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on SSR in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Developments outside and within the research-policy network thus interacted with one another, eventually contributing to a more structured and articulated network of policy and research actors, and, by extension, to an increased use, influence, and interaction of research with British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone.

The utilisation of research in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone also improved over the years, shaped by external contexts dynamics and by a progressive evolution of SSR as international and British policy and a related research agenda. During the first period of open conflict, British street-level bureaucrats in the country were compelled to take urgent and delicate policy decisions. The instability of the environment, together with the novelty of the SSR concept in British and international policy and in the related research agenda, severely limited the influence of research on these early decisions. Widespread insecurity in some provinces, lack of available materials, and HMG organisational structures shaped the British-led SSR policy process in the country, limiting the number of policy and research actors and the use of research on the ground. As a consequence, research played a marginal yet important role in the first ‘fire-fighting’ solutions of British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. It directly influenced some of the early policy decisions and the little information gathered from

the field constituted an invaluable source of knowledge for British street-level bureaucrats implementing security reforms in the country.

Conversely, the post-conflict years were characterised by incremental stability, an increased availability of research, and a more structured and institutionalised policy process. They also saw an increase in the mechanisms at HMG level to use research in SSR policy at headquarters and country level. These different factors contributed to a better interaction between research and policy, eventually leading to an improved utilisation of research in SSR decisions and programme implementation in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on British-led SSR grew and was further consolidated in the post-conflict years. Lessons from other HMG engagements progressively shaped British governmental policy at headquarters level. Likewise, the improved security in the provinces allowed more information to be gathered and increased the street-level bureaucrats' contextual knowledge of the country. As a result, SSR programmes in post-conflict Sierra Leone could benefit from a vast array of reflections on SSR, as well as from an improved research capacity of international and local researchers working on the ground. The network of policy and research actors and the SSR policy process in Sierra Leone therefore evolved over the years. Likewise, the role, influence, and utilisation of research in British-led SSR became more important the further the country moved away from the conflict period.

In spite of the great strides made in research utilisation in SSR policy and the expansion of the network of state building and SSR researchers at the international level, a significant gap remains in the literature on the research-policy nexus. The following sections of this chapter introduce this gap, as well as the context, the theoretical approach, and the structure of the thesis. Part 1.2 analyses how over the last two decades the quest for evidence-based approaches to policy has become an increasingly relevant requirement for British and international donors and decision-makers working in the field of post-war reconstruction and development. Nonetheless, and despite a burgeoning production of research on state building and SSR, only a few studies have thus far investigated the use and uptake of these research findings by policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats on the ground. Part 1.3 sets the scene of the whole thesis by providing an historical account of the civil conflict in Sierra Leone and of the different British-led SSR policies implemented in the country. Part 1.4 focuses on

the theoretical approach used by the study to bring order and explore the main empirical question of the PhD. Finally, Part 1.5 presents the structure of the entire PhD and of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

## **1.2 The gap: the quest for evidence-based policy<sup>4</sup>**

This PhD, its principal question, and related sub-questions identify and seek to compensate for a gap in the literature on research utilisation and post-conflict recovery, vis-à-vis an increasing contemporary emphasis and attention of bilateral and international donors on the promotion of more evidence-grounded policies. In recent years, state building has risen to the forefront of donors' post-war reconstruction and development policy agenda (DFID, 2009b, 2010b; OECD, 2008, 2010; OECD DAC, 2007b, 2008, 2011; Whaites, 2008). State building can include a range of different policy interventions designed to enhance state legitimacy through increased capability, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of citizens. Among these interventions is SSR, which has become one of donors' principal policy prescriptions to promote stability and security by rebuilding or reforming the security institutions of countries emerging from conflict. Indeed, the SSR policy agenda has expanded progressively over the last decade (OECD DAC, 2004, 2005, 2007a; UN, 2008; USAID, USDOD & USDOS, 2009), and the UK has become one of the major players promoting and implementing this growing agenda at bilateral and multilateral levels (DFID, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2002b; DFID, FCO & MOD, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Short, 1998, 1999).

Over the last two decades, externally-led state building and SSR have thus emerged on the international agenda as two principal policies of intervention in fragile, post-conflict environments. State building, at least in its post-Cold War manifestation, has become a relatively new and burgeoning field, regularly challenging policy-makers with new and multifaceted problems. This rapid emergence of state building in the international policy agenda has "confronted policy-makers with novel problems" (Barakat, Waldman & Varisco, 2011a, p. 2) for which there were few ready answers, leading to "a situation in which practice often ran ahead of knowledge and evidence" (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 3). Similarly, SSR practices require an array of different and timely activities. Whilst the intent of these SSR efforts is political, their

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<sup>4</sup> Part of the analysis in this section has been used in Barakat, Waldman & Varisco (2011a).

nature is usually technical, operational, and targeted at military, police, justice, and intelligence actors, or relevant groups in the civilian policy sectors. Because of their nature and urgency, “there is seemingly little or no room for research to influence the implementation of these activities” (Varisco, 2014, p. 90). Rushing to tackle the several problems emerging in the aftermath of a war, policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats working on state building and SSR have often resorted to “atavistic, haphazard, fragmented, and short term responses” (Ghani & Lockart, 2008, p. 5) that sometimes exacerbated the collection of problems they were trying to fix.

At the same time, research has sometimes struggled to keep up with this burgeoning policy agenda and provide state builders with solutions as new issues arose (Collier, 2006). However, the body of research on state building and on its “armed wing” (Jackson, 2010) SSR has grown significantly since the end of the Cold War, with an increasing volume of research on the topic (Collier, 2009, p. 3). Over the last decade, scholars and researchers have produced an increasing number of academic studies and research on post-conflict state building and SSR (Call & Wyeth, 2008; Chanaa, 2002; Chandler, 2010; Chesterman, 2004; Cooper & Pugh, 2002; Egnell & Haldén, 2009; Fukuyama, 2004; Jackson, 2011; McCartney, Fischer & Wils, 2004; Paris & Sisk, 2009; Sedra, 2010; Wulf, 2004). Furthermore, they “now have a larger pool of country case studies from which to extrapolate more reliable findings” (Barakat, Waldman & Varisco, 2011a, p. 2), evidence, and lessons learned.

Yet this increased number of lessons has “not necessarily resolved the apparent disconnect between research and policy” (Barakat, Waldman & Varisco, 2011a, p. 2). If it is true that “the inadequacy of postwar interventions does not necessarily result from a lack of expertise” (Jennings, 2003, p. 5), it seems nonetheless that academic studies on the topic have not yet sufficiently filled the alleged gap and disconnect between researchers and practitioners (Egnell & Haldén, 2010; Englebert & Tull, 2008, p. 109). The use and uptake of state building and SSR-oriented research findings by policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats working in conflict-affected countries has remained indeed a largely under-studied field of research. Enquiry into the research-policy nexus has rarely approached the issue of state building and SSR in the aftermath of the ‘new wars’ (Kaldor, 1999) that erupted since the end of the Cold War, rather it has thus far focused primarily upon either commercial or scientific questions. Furthermore, when this enquiry approached the field of international development, its focus has seldom

revolved around state building or post-recovery issues, instead investigating scientifically-oriented issues such as natural resource management, health, and agronomy (Behrman, 2007; Buenavista, 2003; Buxton & Hanney, 1996; Court, Hovland & Young, 2005; Gilson & McIntyre, 2008; Hennink & Stephenson, 2005).

Thus, the literature on research utilisation has rarely explored the problems associated with the use of research in post-conflict state building and SSR. As a result, if, on the one hand, the number of academic studies, country case analyses, lessons learned, and recommendations for policy-makers working on state building and SSR has flourished in recent years, on the other hand, the scholarship investigating the interactions between policy and research in state building and SSR has remained nonetheless limited (Ball & Hendrickson, 2006; Barakat, Waldman & Varisco, 2011a; CSDG, 2008; Sugden, 2006).

The limited number of analyses and studies on research use in state building and SSR therefore constitutes a notable gap in the literature on post-war recovery and research utilisation. This gap has several consequences for international policy-makers and practitioners working on the ground. The apparent disarticulation between research and policy has often led to situations in which state builders repeatedly make the same mistakes and follow misguided short-term approaches (Barakat, 2010, p. 249) or blueprint model interventions in different contexts, difficulty learning from previous post-conflict engagements. This represents a major challenge for international donors and British departments working in the field of post-war reconstruction and development.

In Britain, DFID has been the leading department within the UK government to increasingly promote evidence-based policy for development since its establishment as a separate ministry in 1997. From a practical point of view, this has been manifested in: explicit commitments to research in policy documents (DFID, 2001, p. 30, 2004, 2007, 2009c, p. 1, 2010a; Surr et al., 2002); the adoption of comprehensive research strategies (DFID, 2008); improved funding for research (DFID, 2008, p. 6; National Audit Office (NAO), 2011, p. 56); the creation of several and new funding mechanisms such as the Research Programme Consortia (DFID, 2009a; Hovland et al., 2008); and the progressive evaluation of the impact of DFID-funded research (DFID, 2013). An analysis of the DFID WPs shows, for example, an increasing commitment of the ministry toward research and evidence, up to the 2009 promise of £1 billion investment

in development research over 5 years (Burnell, 1998, p. 794; DFID, 1997, 2000c, 2006a, 2009d, p. 128). At the same time, DFID's *Research Strategy 2008-13* (2008) underlines the Department's seriousness about supporting relevant and usable research, and "commits DFID to developing innovative means of measuring the impact of research" (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 47).

The bulk of DFID's research has "traditionally focused on scientific and technical fields of enquiry, with subjects in social science, governance and politics only seriously gaining attention from the late 1990s" (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 50). Similarly, DFID understanding of the impact and uptake of research on policy and practice remained confined to particular domains. Despite the Department's high interest on the topic,<sup>5</sup> DFID-commissioned studies have only examined so far the impact and 'return' of research in fields such as health,<sup>6</sup> water sanitation,<sup>7</sup> sustainable agriculture,<sup>8</sup> natural resources,<sup>9</sup> education, and economics, without focusing to date on impact in relation to state building or SSR in fragile, conflict-affected environments. Nevertheless, as state building and SSR have recently become two of the main approaches of DFID and other international development actors, the Department has progressively augmented its investment in research into such issues over the last decade. For example, in 2006-07 DFID spent over £10 million on social and political research (DFID, 2007), and in 2014-15 the Department's Research and Evidence Division (RED) has pledged to spend just under 10% of its budget on governance, conflict and social development research, for a projected amount of approximately £29 million (NAO, 2011, p. 57).

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<sup>5</sup> See for example the websites of the following projects from the website *Research for Development* (R4D) of DFID: [Learning Lessons on Research Uptake and Use: A Review of DFID's Research Communication Programmes](#); [Communicating Research for Utilisation: Scoping Study](#); [Improving the Impact of Development Research through Better Communication and Uptake](#).

<sup>6</sup> See for example the websites of the following projects from DFID R4D: [Future Health Systems: Making Health Systems Work for the Poor RPC](#); [Consortium for Research on Equitable Health Systems: Research and Capacity Building in Reproductive and Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries](#).

<sup>7</sup> See for example the websites of the following projects from DFID R4D: [European Water Initiative Coordination of Member State Research Programmes in Water Science and Technology for the Developing World](#); [Institutionalised Scaling-up and Uptake Promotion of Outputs from Soil and Water Management Research in East and Central Africa](#).

<sup>8</sup> See for example the websites of the following projects: [IFPRI/SPIA: Impact of Agricultural Research on Poverty Reduction: An Integrated Economic and Social Analysis – Phase 2: The Research Into Use Programme](#); [Bridging Knowledge Gaps Between Soils Research and Dissemination in Ghana](#).

<sup>9</sup> See for example the websites of the following projects from DFID R4D: [Policies Processes and Institutions in NRM – Lessons from NRSP Research](#); [Developing a Framework to Assess the Poverty Impact of NR Research](#); [Guidelines for an Assessment Method for the Optimum Uptake of Research](#).

Over the years, DFID has funded several studies and research in the field of state building and SSR (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009; Ball, 1998; Ball & Holmes, 2002; Ball et al., 2007; CSDG, 2008; Fritz & Rocha Menocal, 2007; Hendrickson, 1999; Hutchful, 2009; Nathan, 2007).<sup>10</sup> In particular, DFID's funding for state building-oriented research has been focused on four main large research programmes,<sup>11</sup> which together have received around £22 million over ten years. According to DFID's 2011 *Governance Portfolio Review*, between 2004 and 2009 the same programmes of research have generated some 130 peer-reviewed journal articles, 19 books or edited volumes, and 138 book chapters (DFID, 2011a, p. 12). DFID thus "spends millions every year funding research on state building-oriented topics and yet, to date, no study into the research-policy nexus has addressed this topic" (Barakat, Waldman & Varisco, 2011a, p. 6). Alongside the Department's burgeoning agenda, British and international state building and SSR-oriented research has grown exponentially over the last decades. In the field of SSR, international organisations such as the OECD, donor governments, academic institutions such as Birmingham University or the CSDG at King's College London, research institutes and think tanks like the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Clingendael, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Saferworld, are working and conducting research on SSR.

Today, several books, studies, and reports describe the different and multifaceted challenges faced by international organisations and bilateral donors working on state building and reforming security institutions in countries emerging from conflict. Academic studies on state building and SSR topics flourish, and quantitative and statistically-based analyses, case studies, lessons learned, and policy recommendations now enrich this burgeoning literature. Nonetheless, the literature on state building and SSR has rarely analysed the different dynamics and key factors which underpin the relationship between such research and policy. Many scholars and practitioners raised the problem. Likewise, governments need to know whether their investments in research are providing them with solid evidence that could support

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<sup>10</sup> Most of DFID-sponsored, state building-oriented research has been carried out by large Research Programme Consortia such as the Centre for the Future State at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex; the Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability also at IDS; the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) at the University of Oxford; the Crisis States Research Centre at the London School of Economic and Political Science (LSE), and the recently funded Justice and Security Research Programme also at LSE.

<sup>11</sup> These are the Centre for the Future State and the Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability; CRISE; and the Crisis States Research Centre.

difficult policy decisions with systematic analysis and information. Furthermore, research funders such as the ESRC and DFID are under increasing pressure to demonstrate the 'value for money' arising from their expenditure in research. The literature on research utilisation has so far investigated several policy areas such as health, agriculture, or development. As state building and SSR have become increasingly important for post-war recovery and development, the same careful analysis of the problems entailed in using research in fragile, conflict-affected environments is required.

This PhD seeks to compensate for this gap in the literature. Focusing on the particular case study of Sierra Leone, it investigates the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British policies to reform the security sector of that conflict-affected country. The choice to focus on SSR derives from an academic as well as a personal and professional interest. As stated earlier, in the last few decades SSR has become one of the main policies promoted in the framework of British approach to state building in conflict-affected countries. From an academic point of view, this emergence of SSR in the post-war recovery agenda has spurred the publication of numerous studies and a growing body of literature on the topic at British and international levels. Analysing how this burgeoning research influenced and interacted with UK-led SSR post-war recovery practices could therefore have important implications on British policies in fragile, conflict-affected environments, as it could derive useful lessons to improve the current uptake of research into externally-led state building and SSR policy. Likewise, from a personal and professional point of view, I decided to focus on SSR because my academic and professional background on security and disarmament studies enabled me to better evaluate such policies, compared to other state building activities promoted and implemented by the UK in fragile, conflict-affected countries.

The choice of Sierra Leone as a case study came almost as a natural consequence of the decision to focus on SSR. Although the UK undertook extensive efforts to reform the security sectors of other post-conflict countries, Sierra Leone constituted the first engagement with SSR for the British government. At the time of the first UK reforms in the country, no other international donor had tried to reform the security structures of a country emerging from war. British-led SSR in Sierra Leone thus represented the first attempt to reform and overhaul the entire security architecture of a conflict-affected country. It encompassed a wide range of programmes, projects,



and activities ultimately targeting the police, military, justice, intelligence, and governance structures of the West African state. As already underlined, the particularly unstable situation in which these reforms started and the achievements of the country in the field of security brought donors and researchers to analyse extensively the Sierra Leone case study, to derive from it important lessons learned and future best practices, and to refer to British-led SSR in Sierra Leone as one of the most important examples of externally-led SSR. For this reason, some scholars have viewed British-led SSR in Sierra Leone as a notable case of success among the numerous, internationally-driven, SSR interventions in conflict-affected countries (Malan, 2003).

Yet, at the time of the first British reforms in the country in the late 1990s, the outcome and direction of British efforts were still unclear for the different governmental departments, policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working in the UK and on the ground. Thus, as British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone and policy-makers in London were learning how to make SSR by doing it, research was, at the same time, struggling to keep the pace with practice, responding and interacting with policy needs as they arose. The choice of Sierra Leone as a case study for this PhD thesis was therefore dictated by the need to understand the extent to which research and knowledge influenced and interacted with this early and alleged case of success. By focusing on a case study which is still studied and referred to by scholars and practitioners in the field, the thesis sheds light on the role research and knowledge can play in SSR policies designed and implemented in hectic and rapidly-evolving conflict-affected environments.

The next part of this introduction sets the scene for the whole thesis. It provides an historical account of the civil conflict in Sierra Leone and briefly introduces the different policies and activities promoted by UK in the West African country.

### **1.3 Setting the scene: the Sierra Leone Civil War and British-led SSR policy**

#### *1.3.1 The seeds of the conflict*

The war in Sierra Leone was a brutal civil conflict which lasted 11 years from 1991 to 2002. The war ravaged a country with a population of roughly 5 million people, claiming the lives of approximately 50,000 people, maiming and injuring thousands others, and creating 500,000 refugees and over two million internally displaced persons (Solomon & Ginifer, 2008, p. 5). Most of the literature on the Sierra Leone conflict

agrees in identifying key causes of the 1991-2002 Civil War, including: political injustice, mismanagement of resources, economic corruption, social exclusion, over-centralisation of state powers and resources, wide-spread poverty, and mass illiteracy (Adebajo, 2002, pp. 79-109; Alie, 2000, pp. 34-35; Chege, 2002; Hanlon, 2005; Keen, 2003; Peters, 2004; Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), 2004; Waldman, 2005; Zack-Williams, 1999). Some of the seeds of these causes can be traced back to the historical period in which the state was formed and to its colonial years, when the Freetown peninsula (the Colony) and the territory outside the coastal Colony (the Protectorate) developed separately and unequally over the whole nineteenth century (Kurz, 2010; TRC, 2004).

However, the majority of the political, social, and economic problems that eventually led to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attack on the 23 March 1991 were increasingly exacerbated after the country gained independence in 1961, particularly during Siaka Stevens' rule. At the political level, Siaka Stevens ruled through cronyism and patronage since his election in 1967, when he assumed presidential power and subsequently undermined his political opposition by making his All People's Congress (APC) the only legal political party in the country. With increasing polarisation, over-centralisation, and division between the capital and the provinces, local governance was progressively neglected, and chieftains replicated the power and patronage practices of the APC at the local level. As Sierra Leone is home of a multi-ethnic society composed by several different ethnic groups,<sup>12</sup> Siaka Stevens reinforced the progressive polarisation along ethnic lines that had been initiated in the early post-colonial years, with the APC following the practice that its predecessor, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), had adopted: appointing people from their respective ethnic groups in the Army, the judiciary, and the public sector. Whilst ethnicity and ethnic factionalism did not play a significant and decisive role in causing and fuelling the war (Conibere et al., 2004 cited in Bellows & Miguel, 2009, p. 1146; Glennerster, Miguel & Rothenberg, 2012), the intense rivalry between the Mende and Temne for political power had "serious implications for national unity and cohesion" (Alie, 2000, p. 26).

On an economic level, Stevens relied on informal networks based on clientelism and patronage to control the state and its resources, a *de facto* shadow state (Reno, 1995,

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<sup>12</sup> The main ethnic cleavages are the historical dichotomy between Creoles in Freetown and natives in the country, and the division between groups such as the Mende in the South-East and the Temne and Limba in the North. The support to the main political parties is polarised along these lines, with the SLPP receiving more votes in the South and the East and the APC being predominant in the North and Western areas.

1998, 2000), which allowed him to draw authority from his ability “to control markets and their material rewards” (Reno, 1995, p. 3) and enabled him to exert “government control over import/export licenses and over the allocation of foreign exchange to favour his own clients” (Keen, 2003, p. 75). On a social level, the practices of bad governance, corruption, and favouritism were in stark contrast with a reality of poverty for the majority of the population, accompanied by a progressive decline of education and health services. In particular, a large cohort of disgruntled radical students and a mass of ‘lumpen’, illiterate, unemployed, and marginalised youths (Abdullah, 1998; Abdullah & Muana, 1998; Kandeh, 1999, pp. 356-362; Keen, 2003, pp. 77-80; Rashid, 2004), were increasingly denied opportunities to improve their social status. Finally, on a military level, Siaka Stevens’ mistrust of the Army – the military had already toppled him with a coup in 1967 – induced him to maintain it purposely weak, relegating it to a mainly ceremonial role. He created and relied instead on the Internal Security Unit (lately renamed Special Security Division (SSD)),<sup>13</sup> a well-trained and armed paramilitary force which essentially acted as his private security force used to intimidate political opponents and suppress demonstrations against the government.

Major-General Joseph Momoh succeeded to Siaka Stevens in 1985, inheriting a country on the brink of collapse, characterised by inflation and devaluation out of control, a 10 per cent fall of revenue collections in 10 years (Keen, 2005, p. 27), an increasing inequality between a few privileged people and the majority of the population, widespread unemployment, corruption, and worsening services, education, and health. During the same time period, a former corporal of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) named Foday Sankoh met with the leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Charles Taylor, during some military and ideological training in Benghazi, Libya (TRC, 2004, p. 97). Taylor understood the importance of sustaining the RUF advance in south-eastern Sierra Leone, as it would have provided access to the diamantiferous areas of the country and could, in this way, finance his own movement in Liberia. On 23 March 1991, the RUF entered into Sierra Leone from Liberia, attacking the border town village of Bomaru, in Kailahun District and opening a second flank at the Mano River Bridge, in Pujehun District (TRC, 2004). In its Manifesto *Footpaths to Democracy* (RUF, 1995), the Movement denounced the misuse of natural

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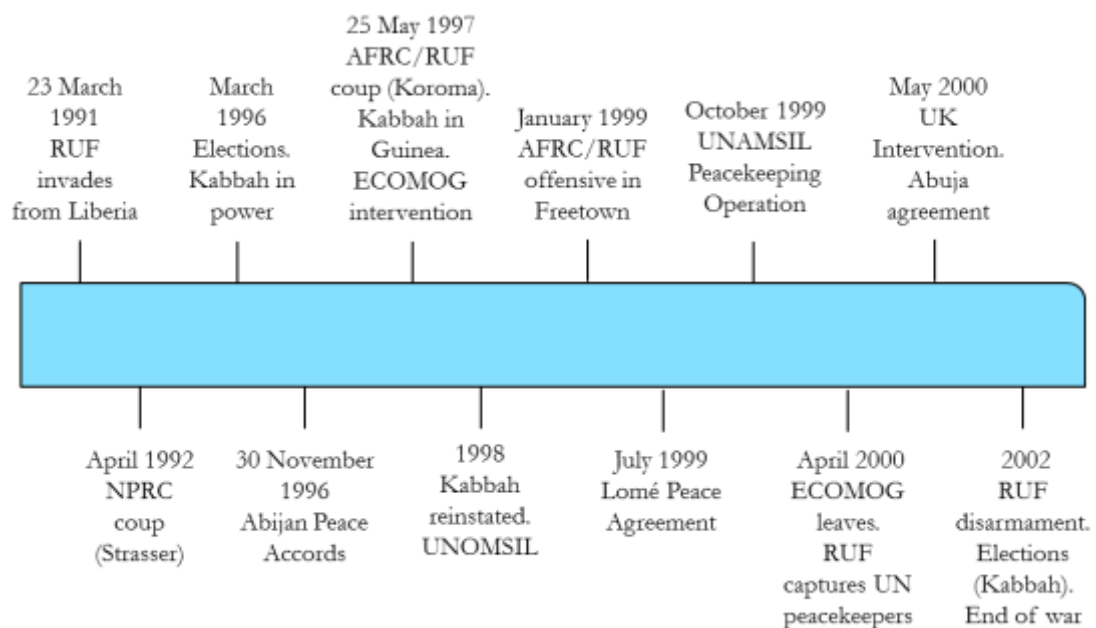
<sup>13</sup> Given the acronym of the Unit (ISU), and its propensity to use its weapons, the Unit was nicknamed in popular parlance “I shoot you”. When the name of the Unit changed in SSD, the new acronym was dubbed as “Siaka Stevens’ Dogs”.

resources by “crooked politicians and military adventurers” and pointed its finger at a “decadent, backward and oppressive regime” that moved the country toward a “pattern of exploitation, degradation and denial” after “years of autocratic rule and militarism”. Asking at the same time “freedom, justice and equal opportunity for all”, the RUF clearly identified the main grievances of the Sierra Leonean society. Its real willingness to fight for these ideals was subsequently tested by 11 years of civil war.

### 1.3.2 The Civil War (1991-2002)

As shown in Figure 1, the conflict in Sierra Leone was a long civil war between the rebels of the RUF and government forces. However, several different actors also participated in the war, and the lines and roles of the different fighting forces blurred throughout the 11 years of conflict. Military coups, alliances between some factions of the Army and the rebels, the support of civil armed forces to the government, as well as the direct involvement of regional and international actors contributed to enrich the narrative and the complex chronology of the Civil War.

**Figure 1** Chronology of the Sierra Leone Civil War (1991-2002)



At the moment of their first attack in 1991, the rebels of the RUF were supported by Liberian and Burkinabe fighters from the NPFL. Sub-regional dynamics – and particularly the war in neighbouring Liberia – sustained the first offensives of the RUF

in the country (Sawyer, 2004). In this early phase of the conflict, the rebels carried out targeted attacks to conscript young people, sometimes receiving support from the population. More often, the RUF exerted violence against senior members of the villages, and its Liberian and Burkinabe factions were frequently involved in disruptive lootings. On the government side, the soldiers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF) proved unable to effectively respond to the 'target' warfare tactics used by the RUF and were always at risk of ambushes organised by the rebels. Being afraid of confronting the RUF openly, or simply not finding the rebels in the midst of the jungle, they sometimes arbitrarily accused civilians of collaboration with the rebels, widening the gap between them and the local population.

The terrible condition and limited capacity of the SLA was the result of years of mismanagement by the APC regime and of Siaka Stevens' choice to rely on the paramilitary SSD force rather than on the RSLMF. According to the TRC, at the moment of the attack in 1991:

“The Army didn't have moveable vehicles, communication facilities were non existent, and most of the soldiers were not combat ready. They had not attended refresher courses or gone to the practice range for years. The senior officers had indulged in the good life and were therefore unwilling to go to the warfront. The Army was simply a mess” (TRC, 2004, p. 145).

Being, in the words of one of its generals, “caught with our pants down” (Keen, 2005, p. 83), the Army was quickly expanded to 7,000. However, this expansion was poorly funded and Sierra Leonean soldiers were also reinforced by the Liberian militia group United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy and by the help of Guinean and Nigerian Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops that were in those days fighting against Taylor in Liberia.

Facing several difficulties on the battlefield and lacking a sufficient political support from Freetown, a group of junior officers of the SLA led by Captain Valentine Strasser organised a successful military coup against Momoh's government. From April 1992, the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) was in power in the country. The NPRC denounced the previous APC corruption, and declared a commitment to “end the war, revamp the economy, and restore a multi-party democracy” (Abdullah &

Muana, 1998, p. 181). In reality, it suspended the constitution, executed some political detainees, and soon returned to the old practices of corruption that had characterised the APC regime. Early negotiations with the RUF rapidly failed, and the NPRC “maintained Momoh’s policy of rapidly expanding the Army” (Keen, 2005, p. 97) to 13-14,000 soldiers by mid-1992. Recruited after minimal vetting procedures, these new soldiers were usually badly trained for a period of approximately three weeks in Freetown then quickly sent to resources-rich areas to counter the rebels.

Following some losses in 1993, the RUF changed its tactics and opted for a more elusive guerrilla warfare, establishing small bases in the jungle for its fighters and conducting ambushes and ‘hit and run’ attacks on near-by villages to ensure its survival. On the other side, government soldiers’ wages continued to decrease, and soldiers grew resentful towards the NPRC leadership. It is in this period that some groups of undisciplined soldiers started acting as ‘sobels’ – soldiers by day and rebels by night – looting and carrying out attacks on civilians, arming the rebels and collaborating with them to avoid direct confrontations in order to prolong the war and its related opportunities for enrichment (Abraham, 2004; Keen, 2003, 2005; Richards P., 1996; TRC, 2004). Illegal diamond smuggling also contributed to prolong the war, as the control of the diamantiferous areas of the country allowed the RUF to support and finance their struggle and to sell diamonds in exchange of weapons (Cater C., 2003, p. 38-39; Keen, 2003, 2005; Pugh, Cooper & Goodhand, 2004, pp. 91-141; Smillie, Gberie & Hazleton, 2000; UN, 2000; USAID Office of Transition Initiatives, 2001).

With the RUF advancing in the south-east, the rebels attacking villages in ‘hit and run’ raids, and the NPRC government being unable to control large sections of its Army, civilians started looking to core groups of traditional hunters for their own protection. These local militias, or Civil Defence Forces (CDF), were scattered across the country and had different names according to their region of origin. The most famous and effective among them were the Kamajors, a group of Mende traditional hunters based in the south and led by Commander Sam Hinga Norman. The Kamajors intervention had indeed a decisive impact on the war, as they had a better knowledge of the fighting terrain and enjoyed the support of the local population. The NPRC government also called the South African private security company Executive Outcomes, an army of mercenaries that arrived in the country in May 1995 to fight

alongside the Kamajors. The advancing RUF was thus defeated firstly outside the capital Freetown, then in the diamantiferous areas surrounding the city of Kono.

1996 was a year of hope in Sierra Leone. Following an internal military coup, Brigadier Julis Bio replaced Strasser as NPRC leader in January. Under increasing pressure from the international community, the country held a democratic presidential election on the 17 March, which saw the victory of the SLPP party led by Ahmad Tejan Kabbah (Bellows & Miguel, 2009, p. 1146). Shortly after the election, a peace process was promoted which led to the signature of the Abidjan Peace Agreement by Kabbah and Sankoh on the 30 November 1996 (Anon., 1996). Among its different provisions, the Agreement ensured amnesty to the RUF combatants, called for a National Commission on Human Rights and for the beginning of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process, gave a political status to the RUF, and required Executive Outcomes to leave the country and to be replaced by a Neutral Monitoring Group.

The Abidjan Peace Agreement lasted only few months. The planned downsizing of the Army, together with the increasing importance of the Kamajors element within the RSLMF, were two main underlying causes of the military coup carried out by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) on the 25 May 1997. The AFRC were a group of disgruntled soldiers led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma. They were joined by the rebel forces of the RUF, bringing the rebel/soldiers collaboration to Freetown. With President Kabbah exiled to Conakry in Guinea, a group of Nigerian and Guinean ECOMOG troops flew to the country during a night operation to try to re-establish control.

After months of failed negotiations between the AFRC/RUF junta and ECOWAS, as well as a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) embargo on the country, ECOMOG regained the control of Freetown in February 1998. As a result of the fighting, which also involved the Kamajor militias and the private military company Sandline, the majority of the AFRC/RUF junta escaped from Freetown to the north of the country and Kabbah was reinstated in power in March. Outside the capital, the security situation remained extremely unstable, with the AFRC/RUF killing and maiming civilians and looting the villages of the provinces. With the ECOMOG troops trying to secure the internal provinces of the country, Foday Sankoh was put on trial and the UN approved the deployment of the United Nations Observer Mission in

Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), a group of 70 military observers to oversee the DDR process agreed at Abidjan.

The apparent safety of the capital and the majority of the 1998 peace efforts were nonetheless thwarted on 6 January 1999 when the AFRC/RUF troops re-entered in Freetown. The attack of the capital in 1999 was probably the bloodiest and most brutal page of the Sierra Leone civil conflict. *Operation No Living Thing* – the name given to the attack by the AFRC and RUF rebels – brought massive destruction to the capital, with major loss of life, executions, rapes, and mutilation of civilians. RSLMF, ECOMOG, and CDF troops hardly defended the capital, losing both their morale and their credibility in the eyes of the population. Civilians and the whole international community turned toward Kabbah to open a dialogue with the rebels. The President realised the necessity of a political settlement with the RUF, and peace negotiations were held in the Togolese capital Lomé.

On the 7 July 1999, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the RUF signed the Lomé Peace Agreement (Anon., 1999). Seen by some scholars as an external imposition (Francis, 2000; Kargbo, 2000, p. 48; Williams, 2001, pp. 147-148), the Agreement provided a framework upon which the future peace of the country could be built. It declared a cessation of hostilities, granting Sankoh and the RUF soldiers “absolute and free pardon” (Anon., 1999) and transforming the rebel group into a political party. The Agreement gave a freed Foday Sankoh the Chairmanship of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development; it called for the replacement of ECOMOG with the new United Nations peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), revived the DDR process and the restructuring of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces, and proposed the establishment of a TRC to investigate human rights violations committed during the war.

The implementation of the Peace Agreement proceeded in the following months. The Sierra Leone Parliament enacted the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act”. Furthermore, UNSC Resolution 1270 authorised the deployment of a peacekeeping force of up to 6,000 troops in Sierra Leone (Malan, Rakate & McIntyre, 2002; Olonisakin, 2008). An increment in the UNAMSIL contingent to 11,000 troops and the complete withdrawal of ECOMOG forces in May 2000 ensured the complete passage of peacekeeping responsibilities to the UN forces. In spite of this progress, some destabilising factors such as “the continuing, destabilising influence of Liberia;



obstructionism by the RUF leadership; the exclusion of the AFRC/SLA from the agreement; the weakness of international support for DDR; and the weak international peacekeeping effort” (Keen, 2005, p. 253) remained and undermined the complete implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

These underlying weaknesses emerged at the beginning of May 2000, when the RUF took more than 550 UN peacekeepers hostage and started moving toward Freetown. A ‘Peace Task Force’ with elements of the Army, the SSD and the West Side Boys – a splinter armed group which operated in the outskirts of Freetown (Utas & Jörgel, 2008) – was formed to defend the city from the RUF advance. The Task Force joined the Kamajors and the UNAMSIL troops to oppose the advancement of approximately 1,000 RUF rebels to the capital. British forces were also sent to Sierra Leone to conduct a rescue operation, *Operation Palliser*, to evacuate British citizens in the country. Led by General David Richards, the British troops joined the anti-rebels side, fighting against the RUF and training some SLA troops. Their intervention, together with the successful UNAMSIL-led *Operation Khukri* in the south-east of the country, boosted the morale of the international troops and resulted decisive for the final defeat of the RUF.

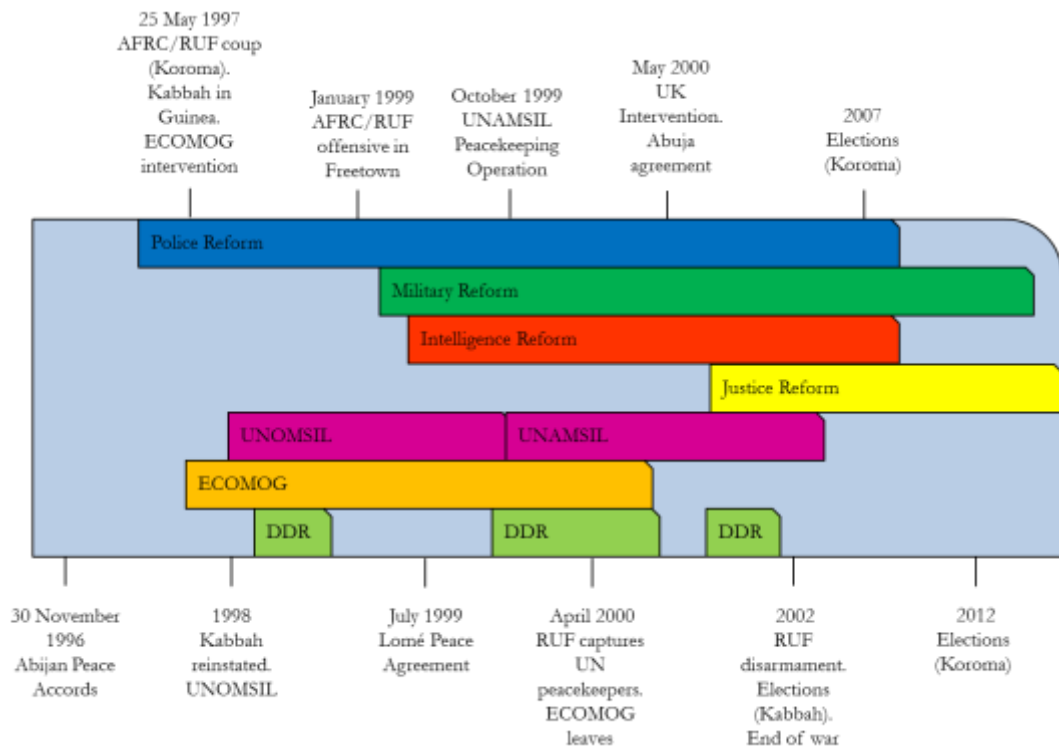
Surrounded by a growing and more organised international force and further defeated by Guinean troops in the north of the country, the RUF was near to its final decline. Sankoh was arrested and the leadership of the movement was assumed by the Commander General Issa Sesay. Meanwhile, the UN hostages were released. On 10 November 2000, the government and the RUF signed the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement (Anon., 2000), which reaffirmed their firm commitment to implement the precedent Lomé Peace Agreement. Further talks were held in the same city in May 2001. These ‘Abuja II’ negotiations reinvigorated the DDR process and ensured the government control in most of the country, in view of a new presidential election. President Kabbah lifted the state of emergency in Spring 2002, *de facto* ending the Civil War. The election was held in May 2002 under the supervision of approximately 17,500 UNAMSIL troops, the largest UN peacekeeping operation in West Africa. Kabbah and the SLPP won the election. With the disarmament of more than 72,000 ex-combatants, and the death of Foday Sankoh in 2003, the country could finally enter into the post-war recovery phase. Nonetheless, the final burden of the civil conflict was extremely heavy, with a tragic legacy of approximately 50,000 deaths, several thousand injured and

mained people, over two million displaced, and widespread human rights abuses perpetrated by rebel and governmental forces (Human Rights Watch, 1999; Leboeuf, 2008).

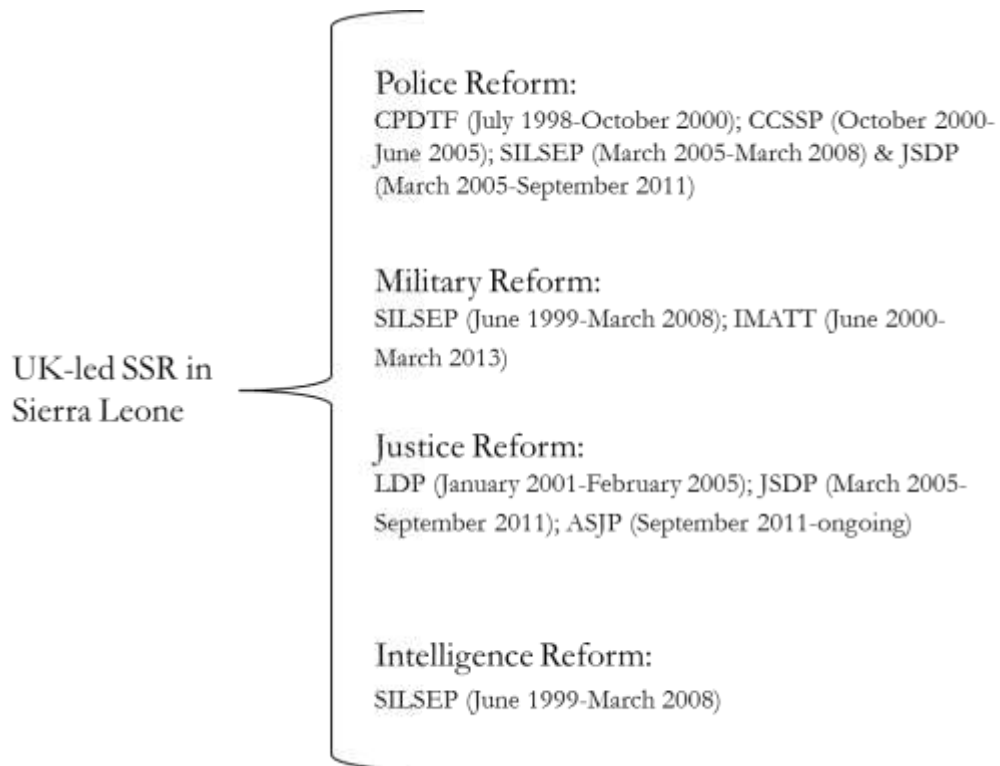
### 1.3.3 British-led SSR activities in Sierra Leone

British-led programmes and activities to reform the security sector of Sierra Leone started well before the UK military intervention in the country in May 2000. As shown by Figures 2 and 3 and further analysed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis, British-led SSR policies in Sierra Leone began in 1996 after an initial request of President Kabbah for a total reform of the police. These reforms evolved over time – some of them continuing to date – and were bolstered by the UK military intervention in May 2000, ultimately encompassing a wide range of programmes, projects, and activities targeting the police, military, justice, intelligence, and governance structures of the state. Furthermore, they developed in conjunction with other activities promoted by the international community, such as the DDR programme or the UN peacekeeping presence in the country (Malan et al., 2003).

**Figure 2** Chronology of SSR and international activities in Sierra Leone



**Figure 3** British-led SSR programmes in Sierra Leone



The first security reforms began during the conflict years, and constituted a series of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to re-establish and bolster the security apparatus of the state. Activities in this phase involved two successive programmes to reform the police: the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force (CPDTF), from 1998 to 2000 – a retired British police officer, Keith Biddle, was also appointed as Sierra Leone Inspector-General of Police (IGP) from 1999 to 2003 – and the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP), from 2000 to 2005. Other SSR programmes during this period include: a programme to reform and restructure the security, intelligence, and military apparatus of the country, the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme (SILSEP), from 1999 to 2008; the presence of an International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT), from 2000 to 2013, to support the planning and restructuring of the Armed Forces and the MOD; and a Law Development Programme (LDP), from 2001 to 2005, which addressed the most urgent problems in the justice sector. These programmes were developed in conjunction with other activities promoted by the international community, such as the DDR programme or the UNAMSIL peacekeeping operation.

With the end of the civil conflict and increased stability on the ground, the Sierra Leonean institutions progressively took ownership of the country's security elements, and some of the early UK-led SSR programmes closed or were restructured. The LPD and the CCSSP were replaced by the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP), a programme that ran from 2005 to 2011 and targeted broader elements of the justice sector previously neglected such as prisons, probation, legal reform, legal advice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), and non-state and traditional justice (Howlett-Bolton, 2008). The police element of SSR was split, with JSDP overseeing broader justice aspects of police reform, and SILSEP absorbing the security aspects of police such as the paramilitary Operational Support Division (OSD). SILSEP, JSDP, and IMATT remained for a number of years as the main UK-sponsored programmes targeting SSR in Sierra Leone. The first of these programmes ended in 2008. JSDP ended in 2011 and was replaced by the four-year Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP), a new programme focusing on improving local ownership of the security and justice reform process and strengthening security and justice provision at community level. IMATT was progressively downsized and eventually ended its mission in March 2013. It was replaced by the International Security Advisory Team (ISAT), a multilateral advisory team with a broader remit across the whole security sector and a growing role within the sub-region. Today, ISAT continues to advise and support the Sierra Leone Armed Forces, providing at the same time advice and support to other elements of the security sector such as the police force, the Office of National Security (ONS), the National Fire Force, the Prisons Department, the Immigration Office, and the Joint Maritime Committee, as well as working alongside DFID and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on operations dedicated to the justice sector.

#### **1.4 Theoretical approach**

Part 1.1 of this chapter has presented the empirical context and the main question and sub-questions underpinning this PhD thesis, specifying that the principal aim of this study is to examine the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British governmental SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. In practical terms, this implies a thorough analysis of the role played (or not played) by research and local knowledge in designing, shaping, modelling, and implementing the numerous British-

led SSR policy decisions, programmes, and activities introduced in Part 1.3.3 of this chapter. This PhD study thus examines the different dynamics, narratives, and patterns of research utilisation in policy, as well as the numerous events, situations, and interactions that modelled the policy process and the decisions taken by British street-level bureaucrats on the ground. However, a careful understanding of the main question and sub-questions of the thesis necessitates, first and foremost, a solid theoretical approach upon which building the empirical analysis of this research. This theoretical approach not only brings order to the thesis as a whole, but also connects this PhD research to more general theories of the policy process and research utilisation into policy, increasing the value of the single case study for the whole literature on the research-policy nexus.

In order to examine the influence and role of research in British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone, this thesis uses, analyses, and re-elaborates theoretical frameworks, concepts, notions, and understandings pertaining to the academic literature on the policy process and research utilisation into policy. Most of the early depictions of the policy process portrayed a linear, highly rational model divided into several sequential stages (Dorey, 2005; Easton, 1965). According to this model, policy decisions are taken following a series of stages. After an initial identification of the problem, policy-makers set the policy agenda, consider the possible alternatives, select the best options in the policy formulation phase, and implement and evaluate the policies adopted.

Over the years, the majority of the literature has heavily modified this early linear conception and scholars have provided different descriptions and understandings of the policy process. Scholars criticised the linear model and argued instead that the policy process is far from being rational and exhaustive, but it is better “typified more by muddling through and incrementalism: small steps taken from a small number of alternatives involving few radical changes” (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 13). The aim of the process is to find consensus, rather than achieve an optimal possible solution: policy-makers thus consider in depth only those policy options that are deemed possible or acceptable. As a consequence, scholars have developed alternative understandings of the policy process that focus on the various influences shaping policy-makers’ decisions. Such more articulated models are usually “centred around the inclusion and exclusion of certain views in the policy process, as well as the domination

of certain alternative approaches” (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 13). They look and analyse the role of networks, narratives, and policy/epistemic communities in the policy process (Sutton, 1999).

This thesis explores the extent to which external actors such as researchers and academics, as well as their research and knowledge outputs, have influenced and interacted with the formulation of SSR policy by British decision-makers at headquarters level and with its implementation by street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. The theoretical approach of this PhD thesis looks at the alternative conceptualisations of the policy process to understand the way groups of actors external to the policy process can shape policy through their studies, narrative, and discourses. In this regard, the policy network approach contends that “different types of relationships between group representatives, bureaucrats, politicians, and other participants in decision-making account for the various ways in which political systems process policy” (John, 1998, p 78). Policy networks are sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and external actors which contribute to policy-making and implementation. The different types of relationships and interactions between governmental and external actors create a policy network; this policy network eventually assumes a major role in shaping the policy process and the decisions taken by policy-makers. Researchers constitute one of these external actors that are able to influence the policy process, an epistemic community of “professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area” (Haas, 1992, p. 3). In conditions of uncertainty, transnational epistemic communities can “influence policymakers through communicative action” (Adler & Haas, 1992, p. 389), and help them “formulate policies” (Hass, 1992, p. 15).

The literature on policy networks, with its understanding of the policy process as an outcome of negotiating interests and relationships between governmental and external groups and actors, has been then used as the principal theoretical model to understand and explain the policy process in the context of this PhD thesis. Researchers are one of the multiple, frequently competing, and intertwined sets of actors eventually impacting on the policy process. Likewise, research has been understood as one of the many variables that can influence policy decisions. However, research has rarely a direct uptake into policy and the literature on research utilisation has explored, analysed, and

theoretically explained the different dynamic modes in which research influences and interacts with the policy process. Scholars working on research utilisation have studied the ways in which policy-makers account for knowledge and research when designing their policy decisions (Hanney et al., 2003; Janowitz, 1972; Lord Rothschild, 1971; Weiss, 1979), as well as the different factors influencing the use and uptake of research into policy (Majone, 1989; Mulgan, 2005; Porter & Prysor-Jones, 1997; Stone, 2002). Furthermore, they developed conceptual frameworks and models (Hanney et al., 2003; Court & Young, 2004) explaining and illustrating how research dynamically interplays with the policy-making process and with the activities of street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980, 1997; Sutton, 1999, pp. 22-23) working on the ground.

Street-level bureaucrats have been defined by Lipsky as “public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their job, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work” (1980, p. 3). Normally charged with implementing policy on the ground, these individuals often maintain a high degree of autonomy and agency from their organisational authority, at the point to be considered by Lipsky as proper policy-makers (1980, pp. 13-25). This vision is in line with an understanding of the policy process in which state power is progressively decentred and dispersed. Street-level bureaucrats are “not merely cogs in an automatic transfer of policy-making to outcome in practice” (Sutton, 1999, p. 22). They maintain autonomy and discretion, they can exercise considerable flexibility in implementing instructions, and they can make and remake policy “with respect to significant aspects of their interactions with citizens” (Lipsky, 1980, p. 13) according to the different circumstances on the ground. As a result, Lipsky argues that “the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively *become* the public policies they carry out” (1997, p. 389, emphasis in original). In the context of this thesis, street-level bureaucrats are those British advisers, programme managers, and officers who were tasked with implementing and managing HMG SSR policy and assistance programmes in Sierra Leone. As it will be shown in Chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis, these individuals maintained a high degree of autonomy and agency from their respective headquarters, in line with Lipsky’s definition of the term.

This PhD starts from the theoretical literature on policy networks and the different frameworks and models of research utilisation to elaborate a sketch of the

policy network of researchers, policy-makers, and street-level bureaucrats who worked on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone, following its evolution over time. By visually illustrating the expansion of this policy network from the conflict to the post-conflict years, the analysis shows how, in line with the main argument of the thesis, changes in two main variables – namely an increasing stability of the country context and a progressive evolution of SSR as a policy and research agenda – contributed to an incremental rise in the use of research by street-level bureaucrats on the ground. These two variables will be considered as the two main external and internal factors that modelled the policy network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers over the years. Developments outside (a shift in context from a period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to the post-conflict years) and inside (a progressive evolution of SSR policy and research) the policy network thus contributed to its expansion and consolidation. As already mentioned in Part 1.1, an incremental stability gave street-level bureaucrats more time to reflect on their policy decisions and more security to access the different provinces of the country. Similarly, a progressive evolution of the SSR policy and research agenda ensured not only a major availability of research, but also a better exchange between street-level bureaucrats and researchers on the ground. Fostered by these internal and external developments, the interaction between policy and research increased throughout the years. As it will be visually demonstrated by the thesis, the policy network of SSR researchers, policy-makers, and street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone expanded and consolidated consequently. It progressively grew as the role, use, influence, and uptake of research in British-led SSR policy in the country improved over the years.

### **1.5 The structure of the thesis**

This thesis is structured in three main parts and composed of eight chapters, including this introduction.

The first part of the thesis is comprised of three chapters and presents the main theoretical concepts and ideas underpinning the investigation of the principal question and sub-questions of this study. The main question of this PhD research positions this thesis at the intersection of two different theoretical disciplines: (i) the literature on the policy-making process and research utilisation into policy and (ii) the literature on state building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected environments. Stemming from an



empirical research question and the analysis of a particular case study, the thesis investigates the interconnections and exchanges between these two different fields of research, exploring the relationships and the possible synergies between the study of public policy and the post-war reconstruction and development discipline.

Chapter 2 explores how policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers exist in policy networks that define and characterise the policy-making process. The chapter briefly introduces the literature on policy networks to show how, over the last few decades, the theoretical inquiry on policy-making has progressively considered the importance of informal links between governmental and other actors in the policy process. In seeing researchers as one of these competing actors, the chapter particularly examines the theoretical concept of epistemic communities – peculiar groups of professionals who base their influence on policy upon their recognised knowledge and expertise. It then introduces the literature on research utilisation to further comprehend the narratives and dynamics characterising the use of research in policy.

Chapter 3 analyses how HMG policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and SSR researchers exist in a state building policy network which stretches from donor countries such as the UK to conflict-affected states like Sierra Leone. The chapter first canvasses the evolution of the literature and policy in post-war recovery to see how the practice of (re)building states in the aftermath of a conflict waxed and waned over the years to become today the main international policy of intervention in fragile, conflict-affected environments. It examines how the state building academic literature and the international and British policy agendas proceeded at the same pace and how the network of state builders and researchers working in donor and fragile states has expanded exponentially over the last two decades. Likewise, the chapter illustrates how SSR has recently become the main internationally-led policy prescription to reform the security architectures of countries emerging from conflict. It shows how the network of SSR policy and research actors developed, expanded, and consolidated. The chapter further conceptualises the theoretical ideas presented in Chapter 2 within the context of this thesis, and presents a visual representation of a hypothetical policy network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers, an ideal model that will be indirectly compared to the policy network of policy actors and researchers working on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone over the years.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology of the PhD, a mainly qualitative study that starts from the activities and the interviews with British street-level bureaucrats who worked in the country to evaluate the influence of research on such policies. In presenting the methodology of the thesis, the chapter also underlines its limits and ethical considerations.

The second part of the thesis is divided into two chapters and moves the discussion from theory to practice, presenting the main findings of the data collected by the study. The chapters analyse in depth the role played by research in the British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone. They explore and describe the narratives and interactions between policy and research and the evolution of the policy network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on rebuilding and reforming the security institutions of conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The second part of the thesis visually shows how this network and the role of researchers within it evolved over the years, developing and growing from the first phase of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to the second, post-conflict phase. The chapters examine how the two main variables, namely the increasing stability of the Sierra Leone context and the progressive evolution of SSR as policy at HMG and international levels and a related research agenda, contributed to the evolution of the policy network, and, by extension, to an increased influence of research in British-led SSR policy in the country.

In this way, Chapters 5 and 6 provide an account of the role played by research in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone, as well as a visual understanding of the evolution of the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and research actors working on such policies over the years. Focusing respectively on the war and on the post-war periods, the two chapters have a parallel structure that analyses the historical context, the evolution of SSR policy and research, and the role of research in the SSR policy process. This parallel structure facilitates the comparison between the two historical periods and shows how a more stable country context and a progressive evolution of SSR policy and research at British and international level contributed to an incremental rise in the use of research by street-level bureaucrats working on the ground.

The third part of the thesis is divided in two chapters that analyse, assess, and synthesise the main findings of the thesis and link them to the theory introduced in the first part of the study. Chapter 7 derives from the data presented in Chapters 5 and 6

some indications about when, why, and how different types of research have different kinds of policy impacts – or not. The chapter builds a typology of types of research and types of impact to explain the different policy influence of various kinds of research during the conflict and post-conflict years. It looks at the reasons why research has or does not have high influence on policy, presenting the main ingredients and indicators of high impact research. It then explores the various direct and indirect ways in which research has been used by HMG policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats working on SSR programmes and activities in Sierra Leone.

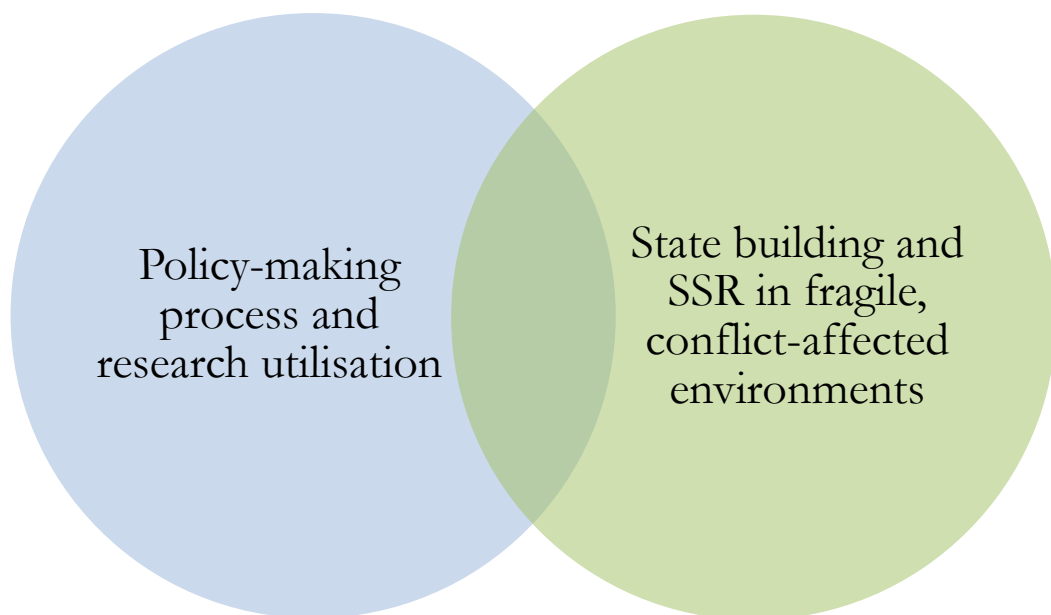
Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by presenting the main findings of the research, providing some practical recommendations to increase the influence of research on SSR policy, and setting the thesis within the current and future literature on research utilisation and post-war recovery. The recommendations section of the chapter abandons the descriptive, explanatory approach of the thesis for a more normative and prescriptive tone, suggesting some practical measures to promote and improve the use of research in internationally-led SSR policy. These recommendations reinforce the methodological, theoretical, and empirical contribution of the study to the literature and discipline. They are aimed to impact the theoretical research-policy debate and help researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers maximise the influence of research on policy. While these recommendations mainly target HMG departments, such as DFID or the Stabilisation Unit (SU), similar organisations such as bilateral aid-financing agencies like USAID and the Canadian International Development Agency, governments or intergovernmental bodies like the UN or the European Commission (EC), international financial institutions such as the World Bank, non-governmental or philanthropic entities such as Oxfam or the Gates Foundation, research sponsors like the ESRC or the Leverhulme Trust, and the private sector could equally benefit from some of the findings of this PhD to improve the commissioning, management, dissemination, and utilisation of research in their programmes and policy. Finally, the final section of the thesis focuses on the importance of this PhD research vis-à-vis the general literature on research utilisation and post-war recovery and points to future research directions that could stem from this study.

## PART I –THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The main question of the thesis addresses the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. An empirical enquiry lies at the foundation of this research. Nonetheless, the introduction (specifically Part 1.4) emphasised how a careful examination of this subject also requires a solid theoretical approach upon which to build the empirical analysis of the thesis. Such a theoretical approach would structure the thesis by grounding the main empirical enquiry of the research in both the theoretical literature on the policy process and research utilisation in policy. Situating the empirical question of this PhD research within such a theoretical framework would emphasise the value of the Sierra Leone case study for the literature on the research-policy nexus, eventually deriving from the thesis important theoretical insights on the use of research in externally-led SSR policy in fragile, conflict-affected countries.

Figure 4 shows how this multidisciplinary, empirical PhD study lies at the intersection of two different theoretical disciplines: (i) the literature on the policy-making process and research utilisation in policy and (ii) the literature on state building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected contexts.

**Figure 4** Visual map of the theoretical foundations of the thesis



Through the analysis of the ways in which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone, this PhD thesis looks at the intersections between the policy analysis and the state building/SSR disciplines. It investigates the interconnections between the literatures on the policy-making process and on post-war reconstruction and development, exploring the relationships and the possible synergies between these two different fields of research. These multidisciplinary theoretical foundations are in line with sub-question 3 of the thesis. As this sub-question aims to understand the applicability of the literature on the research-policy nexus to the fast-paced, cross-governmental, institution-oriented, and internationalised challenge of state building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected environments, the introduction of such a multidisciplinary approach would not only set the theoretical background of the study, but it would also facilitate a better investigation of such sub-question.

The first part of the thesis explores the theoretical literature on the policy-making process, as well as post-conflict state building and SSR, in order to identify concepts and ideas that shed light on the empirical question and sub-questions of the research. It also shows how the network of policy and research actors working on externally-led state building and SSR engagements in fragile and conflict-affected contexts has exponentially grown over the last two decades. In the case of Sierra Leone, this policy network increased in extension and reach, finally stretching from the UK to the West African country, comprising British decision-makers and street-level bureaucrats, as well as international and local state building and SSR researchers. This first, theoretical part of the thesis introduces concepts and frameworks that will be used to analyse the extent to which research influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. It is divided in three different chapters, which present key concepts from the literature on the policy process and research utilisation, analyse the evolution of the state building and SSR policy and research agenda, and illustrate the methodology used in this PhD study, respectively.

Chapter 2 explains how policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers exist within policy networks – sets of formal and informal interactions between governmental and external actors that eventually shape the policy process. In order to reach this aim, the chapter introduces and analyses notions, understandings, and theoretical frameworks pertaining to the academic literature on the policy-making

process and research utilisation in policy. It firstly looks at the evolution of policy network analysis to explain how researchers can be considered one of the numerous external groups informally and formally interacting with governmental actors throughout the policy-making process. In particular, the chapter underlines how researchers can contribute to policy-making and implementation as part of transnational epistemic communities of professionals with expertise, competence, authoritative claim, and policy relevant knowledge in a determined area. Furthermore, the chapter canvasses the literature on research utilisation to understand the different ways in which policy-makers account for research in the policy-making process. It presents the work of different authors who investigated the complex and dynamic interaction between policy and research, analysing the principal factors that hinder or facilitate the uptake of research in policy.

Chapter 3 shows how policy-makers at headquarters level, street-level bureaucrats on the ground, as well as state building and SSR international and local researchers can be considered part of a growing network that stretches from donors to fragile countries – in this instance, from the UK to Sierra Leone. The chapter analyses the recent expansion of these state building and SSR networks, devoting particular attention to the British case and to the evolution of SSR in policy and research. The analysis firstly shows how the practice of (re)building states in the aftermath of a war has become, in recent years, the principal policy of intervention in countries emerging from conflict. Subsequently, the chapter focuses on SSR – the “armed wing” of liberal state building (Jackson, 2010) – to show how this policy practice and related research agenda emerged in the late 1990s and developed over the last decade as one of the major policy prescriptions to rebuild and reform the security architecture of states emerging from war. The chapter thus interprets and re-elaborates the ideas and concepts from the literature on research utilisation introduced in Chapter 2 in light of the particular policy process and policy network that characterise state building and SSR in fragile countries. It introduces some studies that analysed the specific factors impacting on the use of research in development policy and concludes by presenting an outline of an ideal typical policy network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on post-conflict state building and SSR. This framework will be used as a model for the empirical part of the thesis, as it will be indirectly compared to

the growing policy network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone over the years.

Finally, Chapter 4 constitutes a methodological chapter that presents the methods employed by the research to investigate the use and influence of research on British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone and highlights the challenges and limitations of this PhD research. Chapter 4 concludes the theoretical part of the thesis. It explains how the concepts and ideas introduced in Chapters 2 and 3 have been operationalised in the research. It then moves the discussion from theory to practice, transitioning to the empirical portion of the dissertation which analyses in depth the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone.

## 2. Policy networks and research utilisation into policy

### 2.1 Introduction

The central question of this research aims to understand the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The thesis therefore represents an empirical exploration on the use of research in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone, providing an analysis of the role played by research in the design and implementation of a series of internationally-led programmes, projects, and activities in a fragile, conflict-affected country. Through careful analysis of the utilisation of research in British SSR policy in Sierra Leone, this PhD thesis aims to understand the extent to which research and researchers can influence policy. It also explores new measures that could favour and improve the influence of research upon state building and SSR policy decisions and programmes.

The first step in the exploration of the empirical question of the thesis is interrogating the academic literature on the policy process to understand whether research and researchers could have the capacity and the ability to interact with the activities of the decision-makers who design and implement policies and to examine the different ways in which research could potentially be utilised as part of the policy process. Chapter 2 addresses this first conundrum by investigating the role that research and researchers can play in policy. It introduces notions, understandings, and theoretical frameworks pertaining to the academic literature on the policy-making process to explain how policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers interact with each other as part of policy networks. It further analyses the literature on research utilisation to understand the different ways and processes through which research can be incorporated into policy by decision-makers and street-level bureaucrats on the ground.

Figure 4 illustrated how, from a theoretical point of view, this PhD research is positioned at the intersection of two main fields of enquiry: the literature on the policy-making process and research utilisation into policy, as well as the literature on state building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected environments. This chapter explores the first of these two fields of research to find in the policy process and research utilisation literatures the main tools, ideas, and concepts that will help unravel the use of research in Sierra Leone and the role researchers played in the British-led SSR policy process in the country.



The chapter is composed of three different parts and is structured as follows.

Part 2.2 explores the policy network literature to explain how researchers are one of several external groups that can interact with governmental actors in the policy-making process. The analysis shows how policy networks are defined as sets of formal and informal interactions between government and groups, which eventually shape the policy process. Policy networks can differ for different dimensions such as their number of participants, the type of interest, their frequency of interaction with governmental actors, their resources and power (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992, p. 251). These dimensions eventually determine the tightness of a network, and its role and importance in the policy-making process. Part 2.2.1 thus introduces the dialectic approach to policy networks, a particular view of policy networks that considers the variability within and across networks.

Part 2.3 starts from the previous discussion on policy networks to focus on particular approaches that stress the cognitive dimension of policy networks and the role of knowledge and expertise in policy-making. In particular, the analysis shows how the role of research and researchers in policy could be explained by the notion of epistemic communities. Epistemic communities are networks of “professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area” (Haas, 1992, p. 3). Researchers thus form a transnational epistemic community that can be consulted by policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats as part of the policy process.

The next section, Part 2.4, looks at theories and paradigms of research utilisation to explore in depth the research-policy nexus and the ways in which research influences and interacts with the policy-making process. The analysis firstly introduces the different models of research utilisation to examine the ways in which policy-makers account for research in their policy decisions. It then investigates some main factors and barriers that can hinder the uptake of research into policy and limit the extent, frequency, and quality of the interactions between policy and research actors within policy networks. Finally, it presents a readapted version of the payback model, a conceptual framework of research utilisation into policy that explores the different ways in which research interplays with policy as part of the policy-making process.

## 2.2 Policy network analysis

As the introduction of the chapter underlined, the first step to understand whether research and researchers can be accounted as part of the factors and actors influencing and interacting with policy is to interrogate the literature on the policy process to look for models, notions, and theories that emphasise the role of external actors in policy. In this regard, the study of public policy and the research on “how the machinery of the state and political actors interacts to produce public actions” (John, 1998, p. 1) evolved throughout the years as the role, responsibilities, and policy domains of the state expanded. The extensive literature investigating the policy process followed this expansion of the state, bridging and incorporating new approaches to explain the increasing “variety and complexity of the decision-making process” (John, 1998, p. 1) vis-à-vis the expansion of the state and its policy domains. Traditional ‘stagist’ models of the policy process (Easton, 1965) which assume “a clear sequence of stages through which public policies proceed” (Dorey, 2005, p. 4) have been discarded and replaced by different approaches that provide a more realistic explanatory account of the increasing complexity of the process. More articulated models of the policy process have thus been developed in the last 50 years. Some of these models focus on the role of the institutions in shaping policy decisions and outcomes or on the importance of groups and networks in the policy process. Others emphasise the influence of socio-economic factors on policy outcomes, as well as rational choice, institutional and socio-economic constraints to policy-making. Still more highlight the role of ideas in the agenda setting, giving rise to different policy-making models such as the rational, the incrementalist, or the ‘garbage-can’ model, to mention few (Hanney et al., 2003; John, 1998; Sabatier, 1999).

Among these different models, the policy network approach<sup>14</sup> contends that “different types of relationships between group representatives, bureaucrats, politicians, and other participants in decision-making account for the various ways in which political systems process policy” (John, 1998, p. 78). According to this view of the policy-making process, policy decisions thus emerge from the interdependence and links between a government and other state and societal actors – the policy networks. Policy networks were defined by Rhodes (2006, p. 426) as “sets of formal institutional

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<sup>14</sup> This PhD uses the term policy network approach and policy network analysis interchangeably.

and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around a shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policy making and implementation”.<sup>15</sup> In the context of this thesis, researchers and their research can be considered part of these external actors that potentially influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The policy network approach, with its emphasis on the relationship between government and other external societal actors, thus emerges as the most pertinent way of understanding and explaining the policy process in the context of this research. Consequently, this chapter begins with a short presentation of the literature on policy networks, as introducing this literature would help understand the role that external groups – and researchers among them – can have in the policy-making process

The idea that a government has to consider the interests of different groups in its policy-making process is not new and some authors have traced it back to Greek philosophy (Jung, 2010, p. 351; Kimber & Richardson, 1974, p. 4; Parry, 1969). One of the first modern reference to the influence of groups on government can be found in the work of Charles Alexis de Tocqueville in the early nineteenth century, when he describes how a tariff question generated association and lobbying activities at the national level (Tocqueville, 2003, pp. 222-224). However, it is only at the beginning of the twentieth century – particularly with the end of World War II – that the activities of groups started to be considered as an integral part of the policy-making process.

The analysis of government/group relations developed and expanded in the twentieth century in the United States (US) literature and is embedded in the pluralist tradition (John, 1998, pp. 67-68; Richards D. & Smith M. J., 2002; Smith M. J., 1993, pp. 15-28). For pluralists, “power is dispersed throughout society rather than concentrated within the state” (Smith M. J., 1993, p. 3), and different groups reflecting the various, competing and sometimes divergent interests of the society are formed to put pressure on government. Groups are therefore central to the political process and neither the state nor single groups have the ability to control the policy process. The role of the state is therefore to reflect the public desires and adjudicate between the competing

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<sup>15</sup> *Policy network* is a generic term used to identify these actors. The literature on policy networks also identifies similar general concepts such as pressure or identity groups. Beside these general terms, more specific notions such as policy communities, issue networks, iron triangles, sub-governments, or sub-systems have developed through the years to better identify, describe, and understand the linkages between a government and other groups. These notions will be considered as varieties and more specific subsets of the general notion of policy networks and will be explored in the course of the chapter.

interests of the society. In line with this pluralist view, the pioneering work of Arthur F. Bentley in 1908 describes for the first time government as the “process of the adjustment of a set of interest groups” (p. 260) and as a “network of activity” (p. 261). Bentley concludes that “all phenomena of government are phenomena of groups pressing one another, forming one another and pushing out new groups and representatives (the organs or agencies of governments) to mediate the adjustments” (p. 269).

In the following years, other scholars and political scientists began to give particular attention to the role of groups in the policy process. For example, Griffith argues in 1939 (p. 182):

“One cannot live in Washington for long without being conscious that it has whirlpools or centers of activity focusing on particular problems. ...It is my opinion that ordinarily the relationship among these men – legislators, administrators, lobbyists, scholars – who are interested in a common problem is a much more real relationship than the relationship between congressmen generally or between administrators generally. In other words, he who would understand the prevailing pattern of our present governmental behavior, instead of studying the formal institutions or even generalizations of organs, important though all these things are, may possibly obtain a better picture of the way things really happen if he would study these “whirlpools” of special social interests and problems”.

Following World War II, an “increasing complexity in the organisation of government and the government of society” (Jung, 2010, p. 351) moves scholars and political scientists toward a more attentive study of government/group relations. In 1951, Truman states that “the behaviours that constitute the process of government cannot be understood apart from the groups, especially the organized and potential interest groups, which are operative at any point in time” (p. 502). Likewise, in 1952 Latham recognised the importance of groups in the political process in his book *The Group Basis of Politics*.

The idea of policy networks developed from these early studies and replaced the group perspective. Different from the pluralist tradition, the policy network approach

sees the state as having its own interests, goals and resources that it seeks to manage through networks. The concept of policy networks is therefore used to explain the relationships between government and groups. These relationships can be different, informal, and vary by policy sector. The relationships between group representatives and decision-makers matter and influence the policy process, rather than the mere presence of a group.

The term '*policy network*' appears for the first time after World War II in the US literature. Starting from the 1950s, the scholarship investigating the policy process became increasingly aware of the role of groups, networks, associations, and informal relationships both inside and outside political institutions in shaping the policy process. As part of this increasing consideration of the role of networks in policy-making, political science scholars began to concentrate their attention on a "few privileged groups with close relations with governments" (Rhodes, 2006, p. 427) and on "the links between actors involved in both policy formulation and implementation" (Jung, 2010, p. 351). This focus entailed a distinction between outsiders and insiders (Dorey, 2005, pp. 125-132; Grant, 1978, 1995), with the latter defined as legitimate groups "acceptable to government, responsible in their expectations, and willing to work with and through government" (Rhodes, 2006, p. 427).

In this way, the process of policy formation and implementation began to be understood through the analysis of sub-governmental levels and by the linkages within a policy sector between public and private organisations, government, and external groups. These sub-government levels constitute "clusters of individuals that effectively make most of the routine decisions in a given substantive area and policy" (Ripley & Franklin, 1981, pp. 8-9). Scholars described their understanding of the government/group relations by developing new metaphors such as 'sub-systems' (Freeman, 1965; Freeman & Stevens, 1987), 'subgovernments' (Cater D., 1964), 'sloppy large hexagons' (Jones C. O., 1979), and 'iron triangles' (Ethridge & Handelman, 2010; Ripley & Franklin, 1981). These new concepts represent the first attempts to better understand the evolution of policy-making in the US and to further investigate aspects of the government/group relationship rarely addressed by the precedent literature.

Originating from these studies, the work of Heclo and Wildavsky (1974) and, particularly, Heclo (1978), further refined the analysis of government/group relations within the policy process. Heclo argued that for many policy initiatives "is all but

impossible to identify clearly who the dominant actors are” (Heclo, 1978, p. 102) or who is controlling these actions. By looking as a consequence at the wider “open networks of people that increasingly impinge upon government” (Heclo, 1978, p. 88) and at the webs of influence that provoke and guide the exercise of power, the author introduces the concept of issue networks. Issue networks are defined as webs of influence that “comprise a large number of participants with quite variable degrees of mutual commitment or of dependence on others” (Heclo, 1978, p. 102). In an issue network, no one is “in control of the policies and issues” (Heclo, 1978, p. 102), as “participants move in and out of the networks constantly” (Heclo, 1978, p. 102). Within an issue network, intellectual and emotional commitment are more important than direct material interest: individuals with “a reputation for being knowledgeable” (Heclo, 1978, p. 103), issue-skilled people, “policy activists who know each other through the issues” (Heclo, 1978, p. 103), and “people with recognised reputations in particular areas of public policy” (Heclo, 1978, p. 107) can all be part of an issue network. The introduction of the concept of issue networks was an important step forward in the literature about government/group relations. It underlines for the first time the dynamic nature of the interaction between government and external groups. Furthermore, it does not confine the nature of the relationship between government and groups to material interests only.

The early US studies on policy networks were rapidly broadened and expanded by British, Western European, and Canadian scholars and political scientists (Berger, 1981; Pross, 1986; Richardson, 1982). In particular, the literature on policy networks flourished in Britain, where groups acquired increasing importance in the domestic policy-making to become over the decades “a central aspect of the British political process” (Kimber & Richardson, 1974, p. iii). Over the years, British scholars devoted increasing attention to the importance and influence of policy networks in the domestic policy process: if in 1958 Finer underlined the existence of “faceless, voiceless, and unidentifiable; in brief, anonymous” (p. 145) groups, Alderman argued in 1984 that “the influence of pressure groups is to be found at all levels in the organs and decision-making machinery of British government. This is inevitable” (p. 126). Likewise, a survey of more than 250 groups in 1986 found that “almost 75 per cent – maintained ‘regular or frequent’ contact with one or more MPs” (Rush, 1990, pp. 280-296 cited in Norton, 1995, p. 94) and Kavanagh affirmed in 1996 that “the role of pressure groups and the development of the ‘group politics’ style of decision-making are crucial to an

understanding of the development of British politics” (p. 202). Government/group relationships therefore increased their importance in British policy-making through this period to become “part of the democratic process” (Alderman, 1984, p. 132), with the British literature drawing from the post-World War II American insights to develop its own independent perspectives over the years.

Richardson and Jordan were among the first scholars to study the role of pressure groups in the British policy-making process. The two authors consider groups as “essential to the process of government” (John, 1998, p. 71) and they argued that “policy-making is characterised as a process by which an equilibrium is reached between the competing groups in society” (Richardson & Jordan, 1979, pp. 3-4). They thus introduced for the first time the concept of policy communities, groups “distinguished by commonality of interests” (Dowding, 1995, p. 138) and by a “common culture and understandings about the nature of the problems and decision-making processes within a given policy domain” (Dowding, 1995, p. 138). Policy communities are therefore “a special type of *stable* network” (Jordan, 1990, p. 327, emphasis in original) with shared views on a problem. The two authors focused their attention on the role of policy communities on the British policy-making process. By seeing the policy process as based on co-operation and consensus, they asserted that “co-ordination takes place at a number of levels within the relevant policy community until a common policy emerges” (Jordan & Richardson, 1982, p. 83). In their analysis of the British policy process, they stated that “the incorporation of some types of groups into the process by which policies are formulated and implemented has become routinized in a complex web of informal and formal arrangements” (Jordan & Richardson, 1987, p. 277) and considered the influence of groups in the political system as “both inevitable and generally positive” (Jordan & Richardson, 1987, p. 290).

Working in the same decades of Richardson and Jordan, Rhodes developed new models and understandings of the policy networks. In particular, Rhodes’ numerous analyses of the policy networks (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992; Rhodes, 1981, 1986, 1997) became influential and predominant in the literature because the author aligned policy networks along a continuum according to their diverse degrees of integration, stability, and exclusiveness, thus differentiating for the first time policy networks according to their characteristics. The Marsh and Rhodes’ model is presented in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5** The characteristics of the policy networks

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Policy community</b>	<b>Issue network</b>
<i>Membership</i> Number of participants	Very limited, some conscious exclusion	Large
Type of interest	Economic/professional	Wide range of groups
<i>Integration</i> Frequency of interaction	Frequent, high quality	Contacts fluctuate
Continuity	Membership values, outcomes persistent	Fluctuating access
Consensus	All participants share basic values	A degree of agreement but conflict present
<i>Resources</i> Distribution of resources within network	All participants have resources. Relationship is one of exchange	Some participants have resources, but limited
Distribution of resources within participating organisations	Hierarchical leaders can deliver members	Varied and variable distribution and capacity to regulate members
<i>Power</i>	There is a balance among members. One group may be dominant but power is a positive-sum	Unequal power. Power zero-sum

Source: Marsh & Rhodes (1992), p. 251

In Marsh and Rhodes' model, policy networks differ from their levels of membership, integration, resources, and power. Furthermore, "the character of the network explains policy outcomes and policy change" (John, 1998, p. 84). In other words, the different characteristics of a policy network determine its position along a hypothetical continuum, as well as its influence on policy, power, and access to policy-makers. Located at the two ends of the continuum, policy communities and issue networks are two ideal types with different and antithetic characteristics. Any other network "can be located at some point along it" (Rhodes, 1997, p. 45), as "no policy area will conform exactly to either list of characteristics" (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992, p. 250).

The levels of membership, integration, resources, and power are thus important to locate a policy network along Marsh and Rhodes' continuum and understand a network's influence on policy. Policy communities are tight and stable networks



characterised by a limited number of participants and “frequent and high quality interaction between all members of the community on all matters related to the policy issues” (Rhodes, 1997, p. 43). On the other hand, issue networks are unstable and loose networks, characterised by a large number of participants and fluctuating interaction and access for the various members (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992, p. 14; Rhodes, 1997, p. 45). The stability and balance of a policy community allow frequent and continuous interactions with policy-makers and the construction of a reciprocal relationship which could eventually influence the policy process. Conversely, the large, loose, and fluctuating nature of an issue network hinders its regular access to policy-makers, resulting in a less powerful government/group relationship and a limited influence on policy.

During the same period, Wilks and Wright developed a new typology to study the different policy actors within the industrial policy sector (Wilks & Wright, 1987; Wright, 1988). They also assigned policy actors to differently aggregated sub-systems of policy universes, policy communities, and policy networks. However, Wilks and Wright’s re-utilisation and re-definition of terms that already had an accepted currency in the policy networks literature – such as policy communities and policy networks – undermined the success of this new typology (Jordan, 1990, p. 335).

The policy network continuum, with its division between policy communities and issue networks and the different dimensions of the Marsh and Rhodes typology, influenced the successive literature on policy networks to become in the course of the decades “the most widely referenced schema” (Skogstad, 2005, p. 4). Most of the scholars who studied the policy networks in the last two decades start their analysis from the Marsh and Rhodes typology, aligning policy networks along a policy community-issue network continuum according to their different characteristics. Some authors, such as Van Waarden (1992), tried to develop new classificatory schemas to catalogue policy networks; others, like Dorey (2005, pp. 124-161), readapted Marsh and Rhodes’ model to specify the different characteristics and dimensions of policy networks and their role in the policy process. The result of this second group of classifications is thus not dissimilar to the Marsh and Rhodes’ model, with policy communities intended as close and organised networks with significant impact and influence on public policy, and issue networks understood as loose and wide networks

which “usually enjoy only limited or sporadic consultation with policy makers” (Dorey, 2005, p. 156) and have a minimal role in the implementation of public policies.

### *2.2.1 The dialectic approach to policy networks*

The characteristics and nature of policy networks have been identified as important factors explaining the influence of a network on policy and, in the case of this thesis, the differential impact and uptake of research. For instance, Evans M. and Davies (1999) introduced the notion of policy transfer network, “ad hoc phenomenon set up with the specific intention of engineering policy change” (Evans M. & Barakat, 2012, p. 545) and characterised by defined levels of membership, integration, resources, and power. The dialectical approach to policy networks originated from the precedent literature on policy networks and was introduced in 2000 by Marsh and Smith. This new approach attempted to “provide an explanation of policy continuity and change within policy networks” (Evans M., 2001, p. 543) and examine policy networks effects on policy outcomes.

The starting point of Marsh and Smith’s reflection is “the claim that policy networks cannot be distinguished from the actors who are participating in them” (Evans M., 2001, p. 543). As a consequence, the two authors produced a multi-level, interactive theory of policy networks that integrates micro-anthropological levels of analysis with macro-level of analysis and looks at the ways in which both micro-level and macro-level factors shape and affect policy. According to Marsh and Smith, “there are three interactive or dialectical relationships involved between: the structure of the network and the agents operating within them; the network and the context within which it operates; and the network and the policy outcome” (Marsh & Smith, 2000, p. 20). Policy outcomes are defined, shaped, interpreted, and reinterpreted by the interactive relationship between networks and actors. Likewise, “the network is interpreted, reinterpreted, and constrained by its participating actors” (Evans M., 2001, p. 543), in a complex interaction between structure – the network – and agency – its participating actors. According to Marsh and Smith, a dialectic, interactive, and more complex relationship exists between actors and networks. Macro-level variables are part of this relationship, as they are interpreted by both actors and network relationships and, consequently, “should not be seen as distinct from networks” (Evans M., 2001, p. 543).

The dialectic approach to policy networks advocated an alternative pathway within policy network analysis. It tried to surpass precedent accounts and approaches to the study of policy network and integrate them into a coherent analytical whole. It underlined the limits of the explanatory claims of meso-level approaches and argued that these can be enriched and integrated with macro and micro level perspectives. It enriched the debates on policy networks, engaging and focusing on the interactive relationship between structure and agency. Lastly, the dialectic approach assumed a conceptual, environmental, contextual, political, ideological, institutional, cultural, and ethical variability within, and across, networks, an important aspect of policy networks which will explain the differential influence and uptake of research in British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

This brief account of the literature on the policy process presented the modern evolution of the concept of policy network, and its particular uptake and re-definition in the British literature. Not only did British scholars further explore the concept of policy networks aligning them in a continuum according to their degrees of integration, but they also investigated their different characteristics and the implications on policy influence, power, and access to policy-makers. This evolution of the British literature proceeded together with a change in the British policy process, “a shift from government by a unitary state to governance by and through networks” (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003, p. 6), an increasing hollowing out of the state (Dorey, 2005; Rhodes, 1997, 2007; Richards D. & Smith M. J., 2002), and a progressive loss of control of the British core executive over the policy-making arena (Dunleavy & Rhodes, 1990; Kavanagh et al., 2006, pp. 42-63; Rhodes & Dunleavy, 1995, pp. 1-60; Smith M. J., 1999).

The current policy-making process in Britain is therefore shaped by “a whole range of pressures” (Richards D. & Smith M. J., 2002, p. 3). The role of interest groups and policy networks has become crucial in contemporary discussions of governance. Considering the influence of external groups on policy-makers has assumed paramount importance in the understanding of the modern British policy process. Researchers can be considered as one of these many competing groups – a particular external group of actors that derives its authority from knowledge and expertise in a determined field with the potential of interacting with and exerting influence on the activities of decision-makers and on the policy-making process. Nevertheless, the literature on policy

networks presented in this subsection has adopted a descriptive and principally rational approach to outline a decision-making process mainly based on power relations. The next section of this chapter looks at the work of those scholars who explored the cognitive dimension of policy networks and the role of knowledge and expertise in policy-making. Among the different and alternative approaches to the study of the policy process presented in Part 2.3 of the chapter, the analysis particularly focuses on the theoretical concept that better understands and explains the role of researchers in influencing the policy-making process: the notion of epistemic communities.

### **2.3 The role of epistemic communities in the policy process**

The bulk of the literature on policy networks employs a descriptive approach to policy networks and sees the policy process as “a bargaining game between different types of actors” (Dowding, 1995, p. 147) with loose or tight interactions between themselves. It mainly focuses on “normative questions around policy formation” (Dowding, 1995, p. 147), principally rational decision-making, power structures, and technical issues over policy formulation and implementation. It rarely devotes a similar level of attention to the processes through which interests are generated. Starting from the 1990s, this rational, power-dependent approach and the possibility of rational policy-formation have been questioned by studies investigating the generation of interests and “the socially constructed nature of knowledge” (Dowding, 1995, p. 147). This shift of attention compelled international policy and decision-makers to face and consider an ever-widening range of issues of “increasingly complex and technical nature” (Haas, 1992, p. 12). The descriptive literature on policy networks was therefore no longer seen as a sufficient tool to encapsulate and explain the role of groups in the policy process. Some scholars developed new and alternative approaches that looked at the role of beliefs, meanings, and traditions in policy-making; others started to investigate “the generation of policy ideas from technical experts and professionals” (Dowding, 1995, p. 147).

Starting from the early 1990s, scholars and political scientists studying the policy process moved away from the rational and power-dependent models that had characterised the literature up to that point, instead exploring the role of beliefs in the policy-making process and developing alternative approaches to the study of policy networks. These new approaches enriched the policy network literature and have been

conceptualised by some scholars as specific types of policy network analysis (Rhodes, 2006). For example, the pioneering work of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith introduced the advocacy coalition framework, a new view of the policy process that conceptualised public policies “in the same manner as belief systems, that is, as sets of value priorities and casual assumptions about how to realise them” (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 16). According to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith’ view of the policy process, advocacy coalitions “seek to translate their beliefs into public policies or programs” (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, p. 28). Belief systems therefore “determine the *direction* in which an advocacy coalition [...] will seek to move governmental programs” (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, p. 29, emphasis in original). Stable advocacy coalitions have a consensus upon a set of core, shared beliefs that is resistant to change. They also have some secondary beliefs that can change over time and bring a “re-evaluation of the belief system about public policy” (Dowding, 1995, p.147) and a reformulation of the interests of a coalition over a policy solution. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith’ advocacy coalition framework surpassed the understanding of public policy as a mere battle between groups, reintroducing “the concept of ideas and their origins in the study of policy change” (Dowding, 1995, p. 150), and considering knowledge as a source of power. However, in arguing that knowledge is used in open rationale debate, the authors did not aim to demonstrate that “public policy is a result of open rational debate, and would not want to try” (Dowding, 1995, p. 150).

Following the work of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, more recent scholars such as Rhodes (2007) and Bevir and Richards D. (2009a; 2009b) promote a new and decentred approach to policy networks that “highlights the importance of beliefs, meanings, traditions and discourses” (Bevir & Richards D., 2009a, p. 7) in the policy process. This decentred approach argues that beliefs and actions, “informed by traditions and expressed in stories” (Rhodes, 2007, p. 1259), can influence the everyday practices of policy-makers. Government advisers therefore “define and redefine problems in new ways by telling policy-makers distinctive stories about their world and how it is governed” (Bevir & Richards D., 2009a, p. 13) This approach thus calls for a richer understanding of networks which involves “methodologies, such as textual analysis and ethnography, as a way of recovering meanings embedded in traditions” (Bevir & Richards D., 2009a, p. 13) and attention to the way other people construct the world. It moves away from earlier rational, power-dependent approaches to the study of policy

networks to adopt a more nuanced and articulated view of policy networks and the policy-making process.

A second group of scholars investigated the cognitive dimension of policy networks and the role of knowledge and research in the policy-making process. The early literature on policy networks had already identified researchers and experts as two of the groups of actors potentially interacting with the policy process. For example, Laffin (1986) saw the “possession of expert knowledge; occupancy of a senior position in a relevant organisation” (p. 7) as two qualities to be part of a policy community. Similarly, Creighton Campbell et al. (1989) considered “‘experts’, inside government, in universities or other institutions, who research and think about policy” (p. 86) among the main possible members of a policy community. However, it is only with the introduction of the concept of epistemic communities in the early 1990s that a new approach to account for the role of knowledge and information into policy is developed.

The literature on epistemic communities focused its attention on “the various ways in which new ideas and information are diffused and taken into account by decision makers” (Haas, 1992, p. 4). As already stated in the introduction of the chapter, epistemic communities are defined as networks of “professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area” (Haas, 1992, p. 3). These networks, usually transnational in their nature, “can consist of social scientists or individuals from any discipline or profession who have a sufficiently strong claim to a body of knowledge that is valued by society” (Haas, 1992, p. 16). They share knowledge, beliefs, values, professional judgement, skills, methods, and techniques, and “can influence state interests either by directly identifying them for decision makers or by illuminating the salient dimensions of an issue from which the decision makers may then deduce their interests” (Haas, 1992, p. 4). Decision-makers can consult epistemic communities under conditions of uncertainty. Furthermore, epistemic communities can also influence the international debate and contribute to the creation of institutions that guide international behaviour, increasing “the likelihood of convergent state behavior and international policy coordination” (Haas, 1992, p. 4).

The notion of epistemic community is the closest to the idea of research influencing policy, as researchers could be seen as an epistemic community with

expertise, competence, authoritative claim, and policy relevant knowledge in a particular subject. Policy-makers tend to rely on the expertise and knowledge of epistemic communities to justify a particular policy pursued by a state and legitimate “the power that the state exercises in moving toward that policy” (Adler & Haas, 1992, p. 389). As underlined by Haas, epistemic communities can influence the decisions of policy-makers in different ways: they can “provide advice about the likely results of various courses of action” (Haas, 1992, p. 15); they can “help decision makers gain a sense of who the winners and losers would be as the result of a particular action or event” (Haas, 1992, p. 15); they can also “shed light on the nature of the complex interlinkages between issues and on the chain of events that might proceed either from failure to take action or from instituting a particular policy” (Haas, 1992, p. 15). Additionally, epistemic communities can influence and “help formulate policies” (Haas, 1992, p. 15), providing, for example, information about a proposed policy and its alternatives, selecting an appropriate policy and working out its details, anticipating possible conflicts of interest, or building national and international coalitions supporting it. Lastly, epistemic communities “influence policymakers through communicative action” (Adler & Haas, 1992, p. 389) and can exert influence on policy innovation by “framing the range of political controversy surrounding an issue, defining state interests, and setting standards” (Adler & Haas, 1992, p. 375).

The concept of epistemic communities is thus the best way to understand the policy process and the influence of knowledge and research on policy in the framework of this thesis. In particular, the fact that epistemic communities can influence international debates accrues the value of this concept for this PhD research. In line with the notion of epistemic communities, state building and SSR researchers were consulted by international and national policy-makers, eventually shaping bilateral SSR policies and contributing to the convergence of SSR policy at international level. In this way, epistemic communities of researchers can influence and interact with the SSR policy process. Yet, the influence, use, and uptake of ideas and research in policy are rarely a straightforward, immediate, linear process, but are instead impeded, hindered, inhibited, mediated, or postponed by several theoretical and practical problems. In order to address these problems, the next part of this chapter moves away from the policy network literature to present the principal theoretical models that explore the research-policy nexus and the utilisation of research into policy. It introduces the

literature on research utilisation and underlines some of the main practical aspects that characterise and sometimes hinder the utilisation of research in policy.

#### **2.4 Theories and paradigms of research utilisation<sup>16</sup>**

The principal research question of this thesis aims to understand the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The chapter so far has deepened the analysis of this question by showing how researchers can be seen as one of the many groups that are able to interact with the policy process and to influence the activities of international and national policy-makers. In particular, the notion of epistemic communities – groups of professionals with competence, expertise, and policy-relevant knowledge in a determined area – has been introduced as the best way to understand the role and influence researchers might exert on policy. The chapter has also illustrated how the loose or tight nature of the network of policy-makers and different groups eventually determine the extent, frequency, and quality of interactions between governmental actors and external groups. With reference to the main question of this thesis, the extent to which research influences and interacts with policy is thus linked to the nature and extension of the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on state building and SSR. Yet, the extent, quality, and frequency of interactions between researchers and policy actors within a policy network are dependent on several circumstances and the use of research in policy might be hindered or postponed by numerous barriers. These factors and barriers that ultimately facilitate or oppose the use of research in policy have been extensively examined by the literature on research utilisation. The following part of this chapter provides a review of this literature, as most of these general factors and barriers presented also characterise the research-policy nexus in the case of British-led SSR in Sierra Leone.

Some of the analyses that explored the role of research (and researchers) into policy-making assume, as a general belief, a cultural divide and lack of dialogue between researchers and policy-makers, who seem to live in parallel universes and belong to two distinct communities with different values, language, time-frames, interests, reward systems, and professional affiliations (Buse, Mays & Walt, 2005, p. 163; Caplan, 1979; Green A. & Bennett, 2007, p. 26). Researchers cannot understand why there is

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<sup>16</sup> Part of the analysis in this section has been used in Waldman, Barakat, and Varisco (2014).



resistance to policy change despite clear scientific evidence; conversely policy-makers bemoan the inability of researchers to produce accessible and digestible findings. On the other hand, the presumption that social science ought to be useful in the formulation of policies has been accepted by policy-makers over the years, as the UK government's commitment toward "better use of evidence and research in policy making" (Cabinet Office, 1999, p. 16) and the increasing amount of money allocated by DFID to research demonstrate.

The relationship between researchers and policy-makers therefore appears founded upon a difficult dilemma: on one hand decision-makers accept the importance of research into policy-making – at least for a mere 'value for money' approach that can justify the high amount of governmental investments on research – while on the other hand the differences in agendas and *forma mentis* between researchers and decision-makers seem hardly reconcilable. Facing this dilemma, also known as the 'two-communities' theory (Caplan, 1979), several authors tried to explain the difficult relationship between research and policy and the way research can feed into policy. Different models of research utilisation, theoretical paradigms, and understandings of the research-policy nexus have been developed over the years, with some scholars deriving from practical case studies some lessons for a better uptake of research into policy. Likewise, some authors took into account all the factors and issues facilitating or inhibiting the research-policy nexus to create conceptual frameworks that explain the interplay between research and policy in the policy-making process.

The diffuse and contingent nature of policy-making and the exercise of power in policy network analysis portray a fragmented and densely populated policy terrain, where policy-makers take their decisions amidst a variety of different, divergent, and sometimes competing interests. Researchers can be considered as one of these competing groups and actors which can influence the policy-making process, and research is only one of the many variables and factors that can influence policy-making. However, "the model of policy-making as a rational process that gather evidence and provides guidance for appropriate actions is highly questionable" (Clarke & Ramalingam, 2008, p. 32) and multiple, frequently competing and intertwined sets of influences and factors also concur to the policy process (Jones N. & Walsh, 2008, p. 2). Furthermore, the availability of quality research products does not necessarily imply their uptake into policy, as decision-makers can always decide whether to use evidence

in their work or not and how such evidence should be incorporated. Thus, the interaction between research and policy in the policy-making process can be hardly encapsulated by linear or top-down explanations of the research-policy nexus. Over the decades, new and more articulated paradigms have developed alongside the traditional linear approach to explain the role, influence, and uptake of research into policy.

The literature on the policy networks shows how the policy-making process is often characterised by a series of various dynamic interactions between governmental and external actors. Likewise, the use and uptake of research into policy is rarely a linear and straightforward process, as decision-makers can become acquainted with research in a variety of ways. Over the last three decades, several scholars have investigated and theoretically explained the diverse, dynamic modes in which research influences and interacts with the policy process. As a consequence, the literature on research utilisation has grown widely to encompass numerous models, paradigms, and theories on the research-policy nexus. First presented by Weiss in 1979, these models of research utilisation constitute general understandings of the ways in which research is used and taken into account by decision-makers as part of the policy process. The models capture common approaches of policy-makers to research. These models also characterise the use of SSR and state building-oriented research by British policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats working on SSR in Sierra Leone, which is the focus of this thesis. Described in detail by Waldman, Barakat, and Varisco (2014), the main models of research utilisation into policy are: the classic/purist/knowledge-driven model; the problem-solving/engineering/policy-driven model; the interactive/social interaction model; the political model; the tactical model; the enlightenment/percolation/limestone model; and the intellectual enterprise view of research utilisation.

The knowledge-driven model assumes a linear sequence of stages through which research generates knowledge which presses toward its use in policy (Lord Rothschild, 1971). The problem-solving model also sees research feeding into policy through a linear sequence; however, this process begins with a policy-maker identifying a problem and requesting a researcher to provide the missing knowledge. The interactive model sees the research-policy process as a set of interactions. Policy makers seek information from several competing sources, and social science research is only one of these. The political model occurs when policy-makers use congenial and supportive research findings as “ammunition in an adversarial system of policy making” (Hanney et al.,

2003, p. 8) to support (pre)determined positions over a policy issue. The tactical model argues that policy-makers invoke research “irrespective of its conclusions” (Weiss, 1979, p. 429) for purposes such as gaining time and delaying a decision on a pressing issue. The enlightenment model is a less direct form of research uptake and assumes that the gradual ‘sedimentation’ of insights, theories, concepts and perspectives generated by social science research eventually permeates the policy-making process (Janowitz, 1972). Policy-makers therefore are rarely able to quote specific studies that influenced their decisions, but their policies are shaped anyways by ideas emerged in social research. Finally, another model of research utilisation sees research as one of the many intellectual pursuits of a society, which influences and is influenced by the larger fashion of social thought.

The extensive literature on research utilisation does not only focus on theoretical models of the research-policy nexus, but it also includes several studies which investigated, often through practical case studies, the several factors that can impede, hinder, inhibit, or postpone the uptake of research into policy (Carden, 2004; Coleman, 1991; Davies, Nutley & Smith P. C., 2000; Edwards, 2005; Garret & Islam, 1998; Nutley, Davies & Walter, 2002; Perri 6, 2002; Sen, 2010; Shaxson, 2005; Walt, 1994). These factors also characterise the research-policy nexus in the framework of this thesis and the use of research in British-led SSR in Sierra Leone, as they can be considered as general features, practical problems, and issues limiting the ideal model of a governmental decision-making based on evidence and objective knowledge. They derive from inner characteristics of the research utilisation process, as well as from the nature of both social knowledge and policy. For example, one of the main problems emerging from the research utilisation literature is attribution, understood as the difficulty to identify the extent to which a specific piece of research has influenced a particular policy (Carden, 2004; Sen, 2010). Research indeed can be contributory in nature and built on others’ work; it can be indirect and not targeted to a particular policy, or it can be hard to identify, quantify, and measure its potential impact on policy. Likewise, timeliness and communication are two other and equally fundamental aspects influencing the uptake of research into policy, as decision-makers usually need readily available, clear, and accessible research findings upon which to make immediate policy choices (Walt, 1994). Policy-makers have limited time and they rarely rely only on research when taking their policy-decisions; they often overuse, misuse, or interpret

research partially, and are seldom able to predict their future information, knowledge, and research needs.

Stone (2002) is one of the several scholars who studied the factors in the research supply and demand side, as well as in the contingent political models (or ‘policy currents’), that can influence the use or uptake of evidence by policy-making institutions and other research users. These factors are also likely to characterise dynamics and international policy processes such as externally-led state building and SSR interventions in conflict-affected environments. On the supply-side, an inadequate supply of policy relevant research, lack of access to research for policy-makers, poor policy comprehension of researchers about the policy process, and ineffective communication might limit the number of studies available to policy-makers. Similarly, on the demand side politicians may ignore the existence of policy-relevant research, have a tendency for anti-intellectualism, be incapable of absorbing and using research, or tend to use it in a politicised way. Other factors, such as a societal disconnection of both researchers and decision-makers from each other, broader patterns of socio-political, economic and cultural influence, the contested validity of knowledge, and different epistemological questions about what is knowable and the different ways of knowing further characterise and distinguish Stone’s account of the research-policy nexus.

Mulgan underlined some practical limits inherent to the nature of government and social knowledge that hinder the influence and interaction of research with policy and are present in a high degree in fast-paced policy processes such as SSR in conflict-affected countries. Democracy, ambiguity, and time are the limits deriving from the nature of government. In a democracy, the people and the politicians “have every right to ignore evidence” (Mulgan, 2005, p. 224); ambiguity is essential to hold together a society, as “the assertion of rationality and evidence may have little impact” (Mulgan, 2005, p. 224) when different groups have diametrically opposing views and interests. Additionally, research time is different from high-pressured decision-making time, as politicians and officials do not have time for tests and evaluations, but take quick decisions upon their internalised understanding of how the world works. Similarly, the nature of social knowledge is limited by contingency, reflexivity, and disciplinary organisation. Social knowledge is historically contingent: knowledge bases need to be constantly replenished, research users are normally sceptic about the validity of research evidence, and theories and practices change as people and systems change. Reflexivity

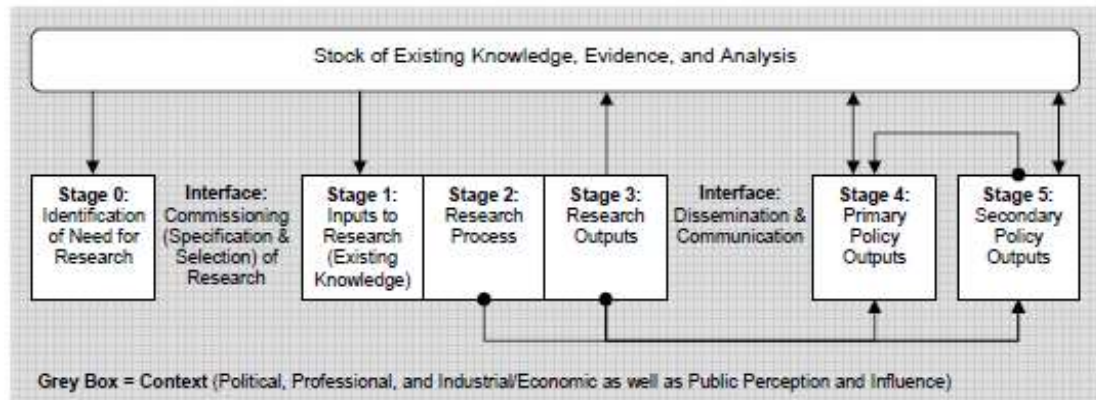
implies that “actors act in the light of available knowledge which transforms the accuracy of the available knowledge” (Mulgan, 2005, p. 225) and has implications for a government’s capacity to influence the behaviours of others. Furthermore, the disciplinary organisation of the social sciences has left major gaps and weaknesses in knowledge and areas that may be of most interest to policy-makers.

Effective and adequate communication of research findings to policy-makers is another fundamental aspect influencing the extent to which research is used in policy. Several scholars focused on the role of communication in the policy process, presenting models and practical suggestions to improve the impact of research into policy. Majone (1989), for example, starts from the assumption that “public policy is made of language” (p. 1) to analyse the role of evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process. He underlines the importance of rhetorical skills for policy scientists and analysts to improve the methods and conditions of public discourse at all levels and stages of policy-making. Likewise, Porter and Prysor-Jones understand the research-policy nexus as a three-pronged “process of communication linking researchers, decision makers, and those most affected by whatever issues are under consideration” (Porter & Prysor-Jones, 1997, p. vii). Starting from this model, they list the four basic stages in the research process (defining the research question; developing the proposal; conducting the study; communicating research results), and present a series of recommendations researchers should follow in each of the four stages to improve the influence and uptake of their work into policy.

The different theoretical paradigms presented, as well as lessons learned from practical studies, demonstrate how the uptake of research into policy is rarely linear and straightforward, but it follows conversely a more articulated process impeded, inhibited, postponed, or facilitated by several converging issues, factors, and external circumstances. Starting from these findings, some authors developed a series of conceptual frameworks that take into account the literature on research utilisation while trying to explain and illustrate the interplay between research and policy in the policy-making process. Among the different conceptual understandings that captured the inter-relations between research and policy, Figure 6 presents a synthesised and

readapted version of the payback model initially developed by the Health Economics Research Group at Brunel University in 2003.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 6** Revised payback model of the research and policy process



Source: *Research Project Proposal* (Anon., 2010), adapted from Hanney et al., 2003 and Hanney, Packwood & Buxton, 2000.

Based upon the various theories of research utilisation, the model consists in a series of stages and interfaces underlining the process through which research is accounted into policy. It incorporates the different interactions of this process with the stock of existing knowledge and with the wider political, professional, industrial/economic, and social environment. The need for research is identified in Stage 0, which occurs before a project or a research is commissioned. Stage 1 encompasses the first inputs to research: “the financial inputs but also the experience of the researchers, the knowledge-base on which they build and the opportunity costs of their involvement” (Hanney, Packwood & Buxton, 2000, p. 144). Inputs from already existing knowledge, evidence, and analysis therefore come also into play at this stage of the model. Research is then conducted in Stage 2 and produces outputs and findings in Stage 3. Such outputs do not only improve the stock of existing knowledge, evidence, and analysis, but they are also disseminated and communicated, eventually reaching the policy arena. Research outputs such as publications and articles produced at Stage 3 can thus influence policy at a rhetoric and conceptual level, or influence policy outcomes at a primary and secondary level. Primary policy outcomes in Stage 4 are formal, governmental policy documents,

<sup>17</sup> This model has been employed as a conceptual framework to support and direct the qualitative elements of this research and its related ESRC-funded project.

white papers, and cross-governmental policies. Secondary policy outcomes in Stage 5 are key research themes or findings in specialised and programme-oriented policy documents, such as DFID country plans or sectoral strategies. Both primary and secondary policy outcomes can thus be influenced by ideas, concepts, and notions elaborated in research and academia.

Despite its linearity, the model leaves room for feedback loops and forward leaps and “recognises that the actual steps involved in utilisation and achieving final outcomes are often multidirectional and convoluted” (Hanney et al., 2003, p. 3). As a consequence, the influence of research on policy-making is best understood as part of a wider analysis of the utilisation of research in the policy process. Research can directly influence policy-makers as part of the linear flow, it can enter the stock of existing knowledge and be grabbed by policy-makers at a different time, or it can be received by other actors such industry, professionals, and the broader public who can, in turn, influence the policy-making process.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The chapter explored the academic literature on the policy process and research utilisation to identify concepts and ideas that shed light on the main research question and related sub-questions of this PhD research. The analysis has shown how researchers, policy-makers, and street-level bureaucrats can be seen as part of a policy network that interacts with and eventually influences policy decisions. In particular, the role of researchers in the policy-making process has been explained with Hass’ notion of epistemic communities. The chapter then canvassed the literature on research utilisation to show how research rarely has a direct uptake on policy, but often interacts with the policy process in a dynamic and sometimes indirect way. By introducing some of the factors that can hinder, inhibit, or conversely facilitate the utilisation of research in policy, the chapter concluded by presenting a readapted version of the payback model developed by the Health Economics Research Group at Brunel University (Hanney et al., 2003), a conceptual framework to understand the interplay between research and policy in the policy-making process.

The theories, analyses, approaches, and frameworks introduced in this chapter have mainly considered the role of research in domestic policy; however, these same frameworks are also applicable to the use and uptake of research in international policy.

They are directly relevant to the main research question and sub-questions posed by this PhD, which aim to understand the applicability of the literature on the research-policy nexus to particular international policy of SSR in conflict-affected countries. In determining the extent to which policy-makers at headquarters level and street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone have used research and knowledge as part of their activities, the thesis therefore also aims to explore the particular challenges, difficulties, and dynamics of research utilisation in foreign policy implemented in fragile, conflict-affected environments. The next chapter re-elaborates the literature presented in this chapter with reference to the context of state building and SSR in post-war societies. In presenting the recent evolution of externally-led state building and SSR in international policy and research, it shows how the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on these topics has grown progressively in recent years, stretching from donor states, such as the UK, to fragile, conflict-affected countries like Sierra Leone.



### 3. State building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected environments

#### 3.1 Introduction

The extensive analysis of the literature on the policy process and research utilisation in Chapter 2 has presented some concepts and ideas that shed light on the principal question and sub-questions of this PhD research. However, most of the concepts and theories on the uptake of research in policy examined in the previous chapter have been so far applied to the analysis of domestic policy processes, rarely addressing the influence of knowledge and research on international processes such as state building and SSR in conflict-affected environments. Chapter 3 problematises and readapts the literature on policy networks and research utilisation within the context of externally-led state building and SSR policies in fragile, conflict-affected countries. It sets the theoretical background for the next empirical part of the thesis, investigating the ways in which the literature on the research-policy nexus can be applied to internationally-led state building and SSR policies.

Chapter 3 thus explores the field of post-war recovery studies to present an account of the literature on state building and SSR, the second main theoretical foundation of the thesis identified in Figure 4. Post-war recovery is a new and multifaceted field of research that has its foundations in recently developed subjects such as peace and conflict studies and development, and overlaps consistently with more traditional disciplines such as political science, international relations, history, economics, anthropology, architecture, sociology, and psychology (Barakat & Zyck, 2009). As a confluence of manifold subjects, post-war recovery studies received inputs and enjoyed a lively debate among scholars from different backgrounds. The multifaceted interventions and practices of post-war recovery – from disarmament to infrastructure rehabilitation, from education to health to mention only few – further widened the number of actors involved in the reconstruction of a society after war, introducing new and disparate disciplines such as medicine, education, or gender studies in the debate. Likewise, the blurred boundaries between relief, recovery, and development in a post-conflict environment entailed a sometimes difficult encounter and interaction between short-term oriented humanitarian relief and longer-term oriented development actors, agencies, and practitioners, *de facto* spurring the debate on

the possible strategies of post-war recovery and long-term development (Bailey S. et al., 2009; Barakat & Zyck, 2009).

Whilst bearing in mind the breadth and the main debates characterising the discipline, Chapter 3 specifically analyses the policy and research evolution of two particular post-war practices, (re)building a fragile, conflict-affected state and reforming its security sector. The chapter sees state building as “the process through which states enhance their ability to function” (Whaites, 2008, p. 4), thus not limiting the practice of state building to fragile and conflict-affected states (Tilly, 1992). However, this chapter, and by extension the whole PhD thesis, mainly focuses on the policies through which international actors aim at (re)building a country in the aftermath of a war, consequently accepting Call & Wyeth’s definition of externally-led state building: “actions undertaken by international or national actors to establish, reform, or strengthen the institutions of the state and their relation to society” (2008, p. 5).

Likewise, the thesis defines SSR<sup>18</sup> as:

“The transformation of the security system – which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions – working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework” (OECD DAC, 2005, p. 20).

This definition includes in the security system core security actors such as armed forces, police, gendarmeries, paramilitary forces, intelligence and security services; security management and oversight bodies such as the Executive, the MOD, internal affairs, foreign affairs, customary and traditional authorities; justice and law enforcement

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<sup>18</sup> In the last decades, different donors, governments, and researchers have used a variety of terms such as ‘Security Sector Reform’, ‘Security System Reform’, and ‘Security System Transformation’ to refer to the policies to reform the security institutions of a country. This thesis refers to these policies as ‘Security Sector Reform’, as this is the main way in which the principal policy papers of the British government refer to these policies. The thesis considers under this term also practices and policies of reform targeting police actors and the civil justice system (which in the UK case fell for many years under the term ‘Safety, Security and Access to Justice’) and reforms to the security apparatus of fragile countries that have been called in different ways by various donors or practitioners. For example, the chapter defines SSR according to the OECD DAC definition of ‘Security System Reform’, as the OECD has supported over the years donor efforts to develop a joint approach to SSR and this definition has been widely accepted by the international community. For a discussion of the different ways to refer to SSR practices and on the evolution and current state of the donor policy debate, see Jackson (2011, p. 1811) and Hendrickson (2009).

institutions such as judiciary, justice ministries, prisons, criminal investigation and prosecution services; and non-statutory security forces such as liberation or guerrilla armies, private body-guard units, or private security companies (OECD DAC, 2005, pp. 20-21).<sup>19</sup> Lastly, this chapter and this PhD thesis use DFID's definition of fragile states: countries "where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor" (2005, p. 7). Since the definition of a state as fragile is a highly politicised issue, donors and scholars have developed and used different definitions of fragility over the years (Country Indicators for Foreign Policy, 2006; OECD, 2008; Stepputat & Engberg-Pedersen, 2008; Stewart & Brown, 2010; USAID, 2005; World Bank, 2005) and there is not a definitive and internationally-agreed list of fragile countries.<sup>20</sup> The reasons for using DFID's definition of fragility in this work are twofold. Firstly, since this PhD is part of an overarching research project funded by DFID and the ESRC, accepting DFID's definition of fragility ensures the consistency of this work with the funders' definition and terminology. Secondly, DFID's definition of fragility underlines how two different and equally important elements concur to the fragility of a state: its ability or capacity to deliver, and its (or at least its rulers') actual willingness to do it. In this regard, fragile states might derive from a lack of capacity, from a lack of willingness to emerge from fragility, or from a combination of these two elements.

In this way, Chapter 3 sheds light on the recent evolution of state building and SSR, understanding and explaining the ways in which concepts and notions associated with fragility, state building, and SSR have modelled the recent policy and research agenda of the post-war recovery discipline. The chapter takes an historical perspective to illustrate how externally-led state building has become the principal international and British policy approach to enhance state legitimacy through increased capabilities, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of citizens – particularly in the wake of 9/11. At the same time, it analyses how the literature on state building has flourished over the last decades and how research has evolved alongside this growing policy agenda. Likewise, the chapter shows how SSR has emerged as one of the major policy

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<sup>19</sup> These SSR actors have been also accepted by DFID (2002b).

<sup>20</sup> In general, most development agencies understand state fragility as the inability to ensure basic security, maintain rule of law and justice, or provide basic services and economic opportunities for the citizens, including in this definition different poor and conflict affected countries. Post-conflict and conflict-affected countries are therefore a particular category of fragile states which are recovering from conflict. A high proportion of post-conflict and conflict-affected countries fall into the definition of fragile states.

prescriptions whereby international actors aim specifically to promote stability and security by rebuilding or reforming the security institutions of fragile and conflict-affected countries. In presenting such evolution, the chapter re-elaborates the literature, concepts, and ideas introduced by the previous Chapter 2 to demonstrate how the network of state building and SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers has grown progressively up to stretch from donor states to conflict-affected countries.

The chapter is composed of three main parts, aimed to show how the state building and SSR network of researchers and policy practitioners has extensively expanded over the last two decades. Part 3.2 analyses how the practice of (re)building states in the aftermath of a conflict has waxed and waned in recent years to eventually become the main externally-led policy of intervention in countries emerging from war. In particular, the chapter argues that the recent reconsideration of state building in post-war recovery followed a three-phase evolution since the end of the Cold War. It also examines how contemporary historical events fostered and accompanied these progressive developments of state building in the international and British policy and research agenda. Part 3.3 illustrates how, among the different policies designed to buttress the state and enhance stability, security, and development in the wake of a conflict, SSR has emerged as one of the major policy prescriptions to reform the security institutions of conflict-affected states. In presenting the progressive growth of importance of SSR in policy and research, the analysis focuses on the prominent role played by the UK in promoting this expanding agenda. Finally, Part 3.4 reconnects more explicitly Chapter 3 with the theories of the policy process and research utilisation introduced in the previous Chapter 2. It presents the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) framework elaborated by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to examine the particular challenges entailed in using research in international developmental policies. It then draws a sketch of an ideal policy network of state building and SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working in a conflict-affected country. This network is an important tool to understand the evolution of the network of policy and research actors designing and implementing British-led SSR programmes and activities in Sierra Leone, as Chapters 5 and 6 will draw similar sketches of the SSR policy network in the country, indirectly comparing these to this ideal typical model.

### **3.2 (Re)building fragile, conflict-affected states: a three-phase evolution in policy and research**

The network of state building and SSR policy and research actors has grown exponentially over the last two decades, stretching internationally from donor countries like the UK to fragile and conflict-affected states like Sierra Leone. In particular, the evolution of the state building policy network in the post-Cold War years followed three principal phases which eventually resulted in the promotion of externally-led state building as a major policy of intervention in countries emerging from conflict. Likewise, it fostered the production of a burgeoning literature to support this expanding policy agenda. The following sections of the chapter present this post-Cold War evolution of state building in policy and research. The analysis starts from post-World War II approaches to post-conflict recovery to illustrate how the policy network of state builders and related researchers has grown in importance and dimensions over the last two decades and concludes underlining three different main trends that characterised this evolution.

#### *3.2.1 Cold War approaches: from the Marshall Plan to the Washington Consensus*

State-led reconstruction and development efforts are far from being a new policy in the field of post-war recovery. Whilst rebuilding states in post-war contexts has a long history, the international thinking and practices regarding the role of the state in fragile, conflict-affected environments waxed and waned over the last 50 years.

Following the mandates system and the transitional administrations of the League of Nations in the aftermath of World War I (Chesterman, 2004, pp. 11-47), state-led reconstruction and development efforts became the main post-conflict recovery policies promoted in the wake of World War II. Such policies were often supported by funding from the US or the Soviet Union, as the emblematic examples of the reconstruction of war-torn West Germany and Europe through the Marshall Plan (Barakat, 2010; Diefendorf, 1993; Ellwood, 1992) or the post-war recovery of Japan demonstrate. This state-led approach to post-war recovery was in line with a state-led model of development in vogue in the same years. Emerging from the birth of new independent states in Africa and Asia, this model of development was encouraged and supported by the international community through the creation of regional member

states-based organisations such as the UN Economic Commission for Latin America in 1948 and the UN Economic Commission for Africa in 1958.

This state-led approach to post-war recovery and development changed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In light of state capture phenomena, growing debt, macroeconomic instability, and strategic Cold War interests, Western capitalist nations started embracing a set of neo-liberal policies to promote reconstruction and development in the aftermath of a conflict. The premise for this new market-oriented model was the liberal assumption that “the surest foundation of peace [...] is market-democracy, that is, a liberal democratic polity and a market-oriented economy” (Paris, 1997, p. 56). As a consequence, economic liberalisation policies were promoted in the reconstruction, recovery, and development processes of Sudan, Egypt, Mozambique, and several Latin American countries. In this regard, the support from the international community – particularly the Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – to post-conflict and developing countries started being based on aid conditionalities – structural adjustment loans to develop infrastructures and adjust the local economies for export. Economic liberalisation programmes were thus based on the promotion of macroeconomic stability through the control of the inflation, the reduction of fiscal deficit, the liberalisation of trade and capital, and the privatisation and deregulation of the domestic markets (Gore, 2000).

This new neo-liberal approach, also known as Washington Consensus, presupposed structural adjustments designed to reduce the size, reach, and control of the state upon its economy. Deregulation and a minimal role of the government were also envisaged in the 1991 World Bank’s *World Development Report*, a key text affirming that governments need to “let domestic and international competition flourish” (World Bank, 1991, p. 9), doing “less in those areas where markets work, or can be made to work, reasonably well” (World Bank, 1991, p. 9) while at the same time doing “more in those areas where markets alone cannot be relied upon” (World Bank, 1991, p. 9). These structural adjustments, often considered a sign of loyalty to the liberal democratic model, had sometimes detrimental consequences on state capacity, *de facto* heightening the risk of conflict reversion in several countries in Latin America (El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala to mention few of them), and West and North Africa (Sudan and Zambia).

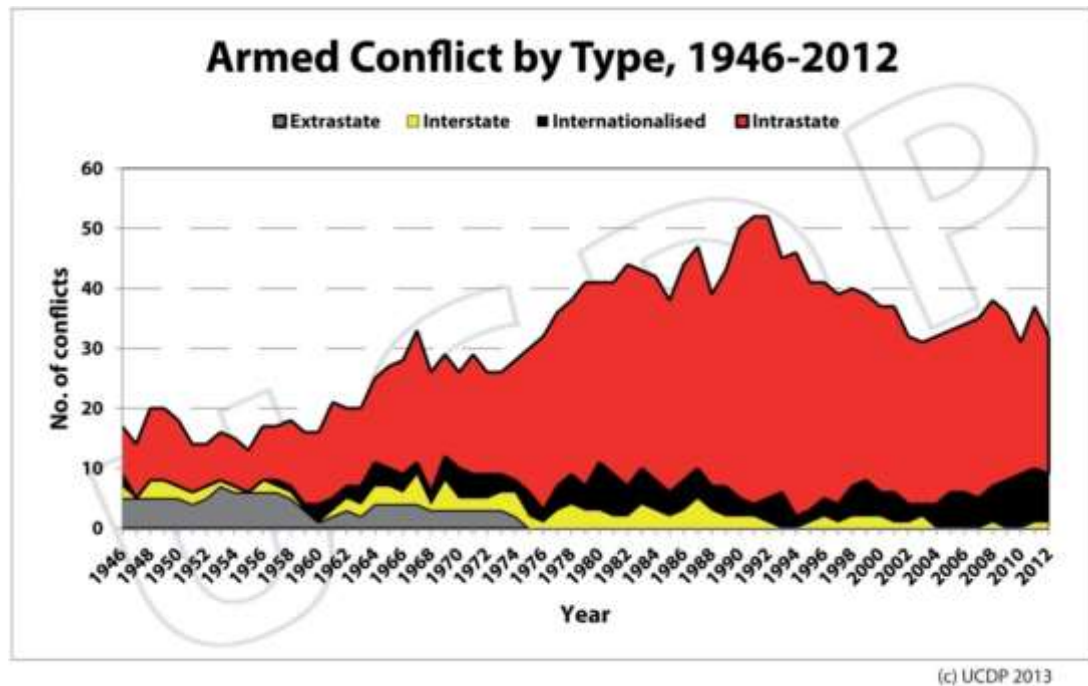
Furthermore, these structural adjustments could not ensure the provision and delivery of basic social services to the most vulnerable. As a consequence, more flexible international non-governmental actors stepped in trying to fill this vacuum and provide previously state-controlled services. A new and more people-centred paradigm emerged in these years and “envisioned a consensual partnership between international organisations, donor agencies, recipient governments and ‘grassroots’ civil society” (ul Haq, 1995 cited in Barakat & Zyck, 2009, p. 1074). As part of this paradigm, new social funds were distributed by quasi-public agencies and involved donor contributions to community groups or NGOs for community-improvement projects. The neo-liberal and the people-centred approach, though apparently complementary, proposed indeed completely different and sometimes incompatible solutions to the development challenges faced by post-conflict environments. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent increment of conflicts in the early 1990s showed the limits of both the private sector and the NGOs paradigms and paved the way for a more unified approach to post-war reconstruction and development.

### *3.2.2 Post-Cold War evolution*

The end of the Cold War resulted in the emergence of at least four different trends: an increase in the number of intrastate conflicts; a shorter length of some of these conflicts; a growth in the number of states; and an increase of international activism in post-war recovery.

The first trend was an increase in the number of intrastate armed conflicts across the globe. As shown by Lotta and Wallensteen (2013) and by the data of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) in Figure 7, this was particularly marked in the first years of the 1990s and spurred by the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, the weakening of state power in several countries, and by increasing calls for autonomy and self-determination. At the same time, Lotta and Wallensteen (2013) and the UCDP data also underline a major second trend in post-Cold War armed conflicts, namely their shorter length. Some of the conflicts erupted at the end of the Cold War lasted indeed for only few years, and, as the number of conflicts peaked in the early 1990s, the 1989-2000 period also witnessed the end of 56 conflicts (Wallensteen & Sollenberg, 2001 cited in Mac Ginty, 2003, p. 602).

Figure 7 Armed conflict by type, 1946-2012



The third trend characterising the early post-Cold War period was a growth in the number of states in the world. Numerous and smaller countries replaced the former Soviet and Yugoslavian blocs, the quest for statehood remained a strong ideal for people in conflict, and the number of states rapidly increased, as evidenced by the access to the UN of 26 new countries in a period of only three years from 1991 to 1994.<sup>21</sup> Fourthly, the early 1990s saw a progressive increase of international activism in post-war recovery. The vanishing of the bipolar order also allowed the dissolution of the mutual vetoes which paralysed the UN during the Cold War. As a result, the UN not only multiplied its Security Council Resolutions,<sup>22</sup> but it also increased exponentially the number of its peacekeeping operations (Gleditsch, 2008, p. 695).

As a consequence of the growing number of intrastate conflicts and an altered international order which ensured more resources and possibilities for peace operations, peacebuilding activities and post-war reconstruction and development interventions

<sup>21</sup> See the webpage, *Growth in United Nations Membership, 1945-present*, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/members/growth.shtml>.

<sup>22</sup> From 1946 to the end of 1989, the UN voted 646 Security Council Resolutions. On 5 March 2014, the UN voted its Security Council Resolution number 2142, therefore approving approximately 1,500 resolutions in less than 25 years, almost two times and a half the number of resolutions approved during its first 43 years of existence. For more information, see the list and text of the *Resolutions adopted by the Security Council since 1946*: <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/index.shtml>.



became more sophisticated and expanded in number and scope. In a short time span of only four years between 1989 and 1993, the UN launched eight different peacebuilding operations in countries emerging from civil conflicts (Namibia, Nicaragua, Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Liberia, and Rwanda). The tasks and responsibilities of these peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions multiplied over the years, and post-conflict efforts became broader and more varied, encompassing new activities such as DDR of ex-combatants. Furthermore, these security-related policies were gradually seen as a part of a more multifaceted approach which also included humanitarian, political, and economic reforms and was eventually aimed to (re)build the structures and capacities of a conflict-affected country. Resettlement of refugees, monitoring and administration of elections, human rights investigations, and economic reforms became part of these new and more comprehensive efforts toward post-war recovery (Bush, 1995, pp. 55-56). While initially maintaining limited mandates and “quick and dirty” approaches (Paris & Sisk, 2007, p. 2), these first post-Cold War interventions have been retrospectively seen “as early statebuilding operations” (Roberts, 2008, p. 537). This specific approach characterised the whole post-Cold War period and started in Namibia in 1989, where the activities of the UN Transition Assistance Group involved police training, disarmament, elections preparation, and constitution assistance tasks. It then evolved in Cambodia, where the UN operation involved polling, disarmament, demobilisation, demining, and limited political trusteeship with suspended sovereignty, and “an early manifestation of contemporary statebuilding became clearer” (Roberts, 2008, p. 539).

Following these trends and this mutated international scenario, the international and British policy agenda and the scholarship in the field started to progressively reconsider the role of the state in post-war recovery and development. While it is debatable and always difficult to draw artificial boundaries to explain a dynamic, on-going evolution shaped by events and the interactions between policy and research, nevertheless three main phases characterised the process of reconsideration of the role of the state during the post-Cold War years:

- A first phase of early reflection, from the early 1990s to 2001;
- A second phase of post-shock recovery, from 2001 to approximately 2004;
- A third phase of proactive engagement with fragility and internationally-led state building, from approximately the end of 2004 to the current time.

The following parts of the chapter discuss the ways in which contemporary historical events, changes in the academic discourse, and policy developments at international and British level contributed to this three-phase evolution. They also explore how the network of policy actors and researchers working on post-conflict state building has developed and grown over the three phases.

### 3.2.2.1 Phase 1: early reflection (1990s-2001)

The tensions between a market-oriented approach to post-conflict and a more people-centred paradigm persisted in the early 1990s. If on the one hand the “end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992) seemed to indicate to the world that market economy, liberalisation, privatisation, and democracy were the best developmental models to follow, on the other the NGOs maintained the control of several of the new post-conflict activities, multiplying their number and tasks. Nevertheless, an increasing debate on the role of the state in post-war recovery and development started emerging in the early 1990s among practitioners in academia and policy-makers at international level. Early in 1992, the UN Secretary General Report *An Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali, 1992) analysed the wide array of activities entailed in a post-conflict peacebuilding intervention. These ranged from disarmament to the repatriation of refugees, from the support and training of security personnel to the monitoring of elections, from the protection of human rights to the reform and strengthening of governmental institutions and the promotion of formal and informal processes of political participation. Without directly identifying these activities with the practices of (re)building a state, the report called nonetheless for comprehensive efforts to “identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

At the same time, successful state-led development experiences of the four East ‘Asian Tigers’ and the increasing economic growth of the Indian subcontinent, China and Vietnam moved to a re-evaluation of the role of the state in supporting rapid economic growth and radical socioeconomic transformation. By the end of the 1990s, the neo-liberal model and the informal activities of the NGOs were no longer seen as sufficient approaches for the recovery and development of post-war societies, and scholars and practitioners started questioning the political, economic, and developmental orthodoxy of that time. At the academic level, the ‘good governance’ agenda with its emphasis on transparency, accountability, and the need to control the

state rose in prominence and overlapped to some degree with the ‘developmental state’ agenda and its focus on the effectiveness of the state (Fritz & Rocha Menocal, 2006). Likewise, the presumed link between democracy and economic growth was challenged. Leftwich (1993) argued that “non-consensual and non-democratic measures may often be essential in the early stages of developmental sequences” (p. 616), whereas Brohman (1995), Green R. and Ahmed (1999) promoted traditional models of development and rehabilitation over imported Western blueprints.

Ideas developed in academia progressively permeated the policy discourse: by the end of the 1990s, the international policy agenda changed its approach to development and started reconsidering the role of the state. The 1997 World Bank’s *World Development Report* is an emblematic publication testifying to this change. In evaluating the role and effectiveness of the state in development, the Report affirmed that “state-dominated development has failed. But so has stateless development” (World Bank, 1997, p. iii). Furthermore, the Report envisaged a rethinking of the state, recognising its centrality “to economic and social development” (World Bank, 1997, p. 1). Likewise, other international organisations such as the IMF played an important role in the promotion and imposition of the good governance agenda. In 1996 for example, the Interim Committee of the IMF stressed the particular importance of “promoting good governance in all its aspects, including by ensuring the rule of law, improving the efficiency and accountability of the public sector, and tackling corruption” (IMF, 1996). One year after, the IMF’s Executive Board adopted the *Good Governance – The IMF’s Role* guidance note to foster good governance, public sector transparency and accountability (IMF, 1997).

From the late 1990s, the international community started reconsidering the role of the state and the importance of governance, state capacity, and institutional quality for effective post-war recovery and development. The conventional wisdom of the end of the century re-evaluated the significance of the state for development, and expressions like ‘institutions matter’ or ‘getting to Denmark’ – a model of a developed country with functioning public sector and state institutions – became common recommendations in the development world. The research and policy world moved alongside this policy evolution: as the academic literature emphasising the importance of institutions and good governance flourished (Grindle, 1997, 2000; Klitgaard, 1995;

Tendler, 1997), donors and international organisations began to reconsider the role of the state in post-war recovery and development (World Bank, 1997, 2000).

The mixed results of the international efforts in the early 1990s, with relative successful missions such as El Salvador accompanied by failures such as Rwanda, imposed an additional reflection about the complexity of post-conflict transitions. In particular, the international community started “bringing the state back” (Evans P. B., Rueshemeyer & Skocpol, 1985) into the post-war recovery agenda. The trend toward intensified efforts in post-war recovery and development continued at the international level in the following years, as more expensive mandates for UN operations and the introduction in 1999 of the country-focused IMF/World Bank *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (PRSP) demonstrate. A new wave of international interventions in Burundi, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, East Timor, and Sierra Leone adopted a new and longer-term approach to post-war recovery, aimed to (re)build effective formal institutions and performing states. These efforts to promote state effectiveness were also echoed within the humanitarian world, as the international community claimed in the wake of Kosovo its right of military intervention in a sovereign state whenever a state does not fulfil its ‘responsibility to protect’ its own citizens from serious harm (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001).

This first phase of evolution in the academic and policy discourse was also reflected in British policy agenda. Whilst UK’s role in assistance can be dated at least to the first activities of the Ministry of Overseas Development in the 1960s (Barder, 2007), the Labour Government’s establishment of DFID as a separate ministry in 1997 marked the recent engagement of Britain with state building interventions in fragile, post-conflict environments. Since then, DFID has led British efforts in the field of post-war recovery and development. Its activities and programmes have been increasingly developed in collaboration with other British ministries and with international donors, in line with a ‘whole of government’ (OECD DAC, 2006a; Patrick & Brown, 2007, pp. 9-30) and multilateral approach which characterised the UK post-war recovery efforts in the new century.

The first activities of DFID saw a convergence between the Department’s and the international policy agenda of other donors and international institutions. DFID promoted themes, concepts, and principles in line with the research agenda and the general donors’ approach to post-war recovery and development of that time. For

example, DFID WPs in 1997 and 2000 denoted an initial and growing commitment of the Department toward states weakness and ineffectiveness. DFID underlined the problems linked to state weakness and corruption and increasingly recognised the importance of good governance, political stability, and accountability in development (DFID, 1997). The WPs explore the linkages between conflict and poverty, considering “weak and ineffective states” (DFID, 2000c, p. 23) as a barrier to globalisation, and focusing on the need to promote effective governments, efficient markets, and inclusive political institutions. Likewise, the words of then DFID Secretary of State Clare Short re-echoed previous World Bank reports in acknowledging the failure of “the old models – both statism and laissez faire” (Short, 1998). Short stressed the importance of the state and its institutions for security and committed the Department to “provide more support to countries coming out of conflict to rebuild and move forward” (Short, 2000). Researchers were part of the early DFID’s policy agenda: for example, the Department started sponsoring in 2001 the Governance Resource Centre in Birmingham to support evidence-based policy and practice in international development.

Alongside DFID, other British governmental departments and agencies devoted increasing attention to weak states and progressively became integral part of the growing network of policy actors working on state building. The MOD *Strategic Defence Review* considered “the break-up of states” (1998, p. 14) as a security problem and identified “the failure of state structures” (MOD, 1998, p. 95) as one of the new challenges for Britain outside Europe. Furthermore, British ‘whole of government’ approach to post-war recovery was reinforced by the creation of the conflict prevention pools – joint funding mechanisms managed by DFID, FCO, and MOD and used to reduce conflict and promote joint analysis, long-term strategies, and an improved coordination with international partners. An Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) and a Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) became operational in 2001.

British policy network of actors, HMG departments, and agencies working on state building and fragility emerged, developed, and started consolidating across government in the late 1990s. In particular, some key components of this network, such as the emergence of DFID and its agenda, the increasing cross-governmental relationship between DFID, FCO, and MOD, or a progressive policy attention toward research emerged in this first phase of evolution to be further consolidated over the

successive years. This early British approach to post-war recovery and development moved alongside the international policy agenda and contained most of the concepts and principles appearing in the subsequent academic literature on state building. However, these early policy papers did not articulate yet a clear policy response to weak states, and DFID assistance seemed to be designed to strengthen already functioning states rather than to build them from failure or fragility.

#### 3.2.2.2 Phase 2: post-shock recovery (2001-2004)

This early evolution of thinking ushered in a second, post-shock recovery phase, a direct consequence of some contemporary events such as the terrorist attacks in the US in September 2001 and the problematic process of post-conflict reconstruction in war-torn Afghanistan. In particular, the 9/11 attacks served as a catalyst for a thorough academic and policy investigation on the role of the state in security and development. In the wake of 9/11, the international community started seeing unstable and non-performing countries (addressed over the years as ‘weak’, ‘rogue’, ‘failed’, or ‘fragile’ states) as a potential threat to global security (Barakat, 2009, pp. 107-108; Fukuyama, 2004). Scholars and practitioners (re)considered the impact of state fragility on security and stability; at the same time, addressing state fragility became one of the top priorities of the international community to promote development and prevent conflict, terrorism, human and drug trafficking, and organised violence both at domestic and international level.

From a scholarly point of view, the literature on state reconstruction started flourishing in the first few years of the new century, as academics further investigated the role of the state in post-war reconstruction and development. The ‘good enough governance’ agenda (Grindle, 2004) reformulated the concept of good governance to focus on those areas that matter the most for a state’s development process. Scholarship in the field of post-war recovery started an attentive reflection on how to effectively and comprehensively address state fragility, and the academic literature saw the burgeoning outgrowth of studies and books on post-conflict state building, particularly in 2004 (Chesterman, 2004; Chesterman, Ignatieff & Thakur, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2004; Fukuyama, 2004; Krasner, 2004; Paris, 2004).

As scholars reflected on the role of the state in security and development, so the policy agenda at the international level evolved to reconsider and incorporate states

in their post-war reconstruction and development practices and strategies. Western donors stressed the importance of legitimate states and effective institutions in fragile, conflict-affected environments, considering states as “the front-line responders to today’s threats” (UN, 2004, p. 18). Also, from a development perspective, the fragility of a country started to be seen as the major barrier to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, with one third of the people living in extreme poverty found in fragile and failing states (DFID, 2005).

This increasing reflection and reconsideration of the role of the state elicited the first policy answers to state fragility and state weakness found its way in the international policy agenda. In 2002, the World Bank set up a Task Force to address the special needs of Low-Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS), a particular group of countries with unstable government and institutions and weak economic structures (World Bank, 2002). State weakness became thus prominent in the international policy agenda and started to be considered part – when not the actual cause – of several security and development problems. At the same time, donors promoted programmes and studies to improve their understanding of state weakness, analysing the ways in which international and external actors can prevent or redress conflict by tackling state problems effectively. The state thus (re)gained an important role into the policy discourse, and comprehending state instability and engaging with it became the main international policy answer to the challenges of post-war reconstruction and development.

In Britain, the policy discourse was characterised by a progressive convergence with the international policy agenda and an increasing reflection on the role of the state. DFID reinforced its engagement with post-war recovery: it launched the *Drivers of Change* approach (DFID, 2003) and published the first evaluation of the conflict prevention pools mechanism (Austin et al., 2004). At the same time, then DFID Secretary of State Hilary Benn incorporated the terminology on state building and state fragility into some of his official speeches. He asserted that weak, failing, broken-down, collapsed, or crisis states represented a challenge for development and security (Benn, 2004a, 2004b) and reiterated the need to prevent state crisis and “do something to promote more effective states” (Benn, 2004a, 2004b). Benn described these weak states as “unable or unwilling to carry out their basic functions” (Benn, 2004b), *de facto* anticipating of one year DFID’s official definition of fragile states. DFID’s rhetorical

and policy commitments were matched by increasing efforts at HMG level. In 2004, the government set up the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU, renamed in 2007 SU), a joint DFID-FCO-MOD unit to provide through a civil-military partnership targeted assistance in countries emerging from violent conflict.

Researchers were integral part of these increased commitments toward state weakness. DFID published in September 2002 the Surr Report (Surr et al., 2002), a policy paper that constituted an important step in enhancing DFID's approach to research and led to the establishment of the Central Research Department. Building on the findings of Surr, DFID published in May 2004 the *Research Funding Framework 2005-07* (DFID, 2004), a publication outlining the long-term use of DFID funds for research to "contribute to a global pool of new knowledge and technologies for development, improving access of users in developing countries to this global pool, and raising the impact of DFID-funded research" (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 46). The network of state building researchers therefore grew and expanded alongside the evolution of the policy agenda, supporting these early HMG commitments toward state weakness.

### 3.2.2.3 Phase 3: proactive engagement (2005-today)

The third and current phase represents the natural evolution of the precedent increasing reflection on the role of the state in post-conflict recovery and sees the concepts of state building and fragility permeating the contemporary literature and policy agenda. This growing engagement with state building and state fragility was actually fostered by recent historical events: the complexity of the current post-war reconstruction process in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, forced scholars and policy-makers to further study, evaluate, and understand the most effective ways to engage with fragile, conflict-affected countries. The network of research and policy actors working on state building has thus consolidated and reached international dimensions during this third phase. At the same time, the academic reflection on state building and fragility has become more nuanced and articulated. Likewise, international organisations and bilateral donors have progressively refined their policy responses to post-conflict state fragility.

From a scholarly point of view, the academic literature broadened its reflection on the role of the state in post-war recovery. Scholars underlined the relevance of institutions for economic growth (Fritz & Rocha Menocal, 2006), while the reflection



on good governance was enriched by the more inclusive approach of ‘collaborative governance’ (Evans M., 2010). Some authors stressed the need for inclusive, “internally-led and externally-supported” (Interpeace, 2010, p. 6) state building processes. Others analysed the different forms of legitimacy characterising fragile states (Bellina et al., 2009; Clements, 2008). They focused on the different ways through which a state can improve its legitimacy, arguing that political commitment, a state’s control over a territory, and its capacity to deliver policies need to be matched by an institutional, long-term perspective (Ghani, Lockhart & Carnahan, 2005). Likewise, academics looked at the work of Cliffe, Guggenheim, and Kostner (2003) to emphasise the importance of locally-owned, community-driven models of recovery and development, and warned against the risk of exporting and imposing external frameworks of governance on other countries (Chandler, 2010; Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008).

As researchers reflected on the different roles and functions of a state (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008, pp. 124-166; Ghani, Lockhart & Carnahan, 2005), they published new and more articulated studies on the practices and dilemmas of post-war state building that analysed the complexities, difficulties, problems, and theoretical and practical consequences entailed in (re)building a fragile, conflict-affected country (Barbara, 2008; Paris & Sisk, 2007, 2009). For example, scholars studied the different aims and priorities of state building, peacebuilding, nation building, and institution building (Belloni, 2007; Call & Cousens, 2008; Call & Wyeth, 2008; Lun, 2009; Paris & Sisk, 2007, 2009; Rocha Menocal, 2010). Noting how post-conflict state building has become crucial in the promotion of sustainable peace and long-term development, they investigated the implications of the progressive merging of the peacebuilding and the state building agendas (Call & Wyeth, 2008; Rocha Menocal, 2010). They underlined how the priorities of the two agendas, while overlapping and somehow complementary, also pursue different goals: if the aim of state building is to create legitimate and effective states, the main goal of peacebuilding is a self-sustaining peace (Call & Wyeth, 2008). At the same time, they contended that (re)building states in the aftermath of conflict entails a difficult mediation between the immediate and short-term objectives of peacebuilding and the longer-term goals of state building (Call & Cousens, 2008). This apparently minimal difference could actually result in tensions when post-war programmes are designed around the different goals and time frames of the two agendas, as donors might tend to bypass state institutions or appease some leaders in

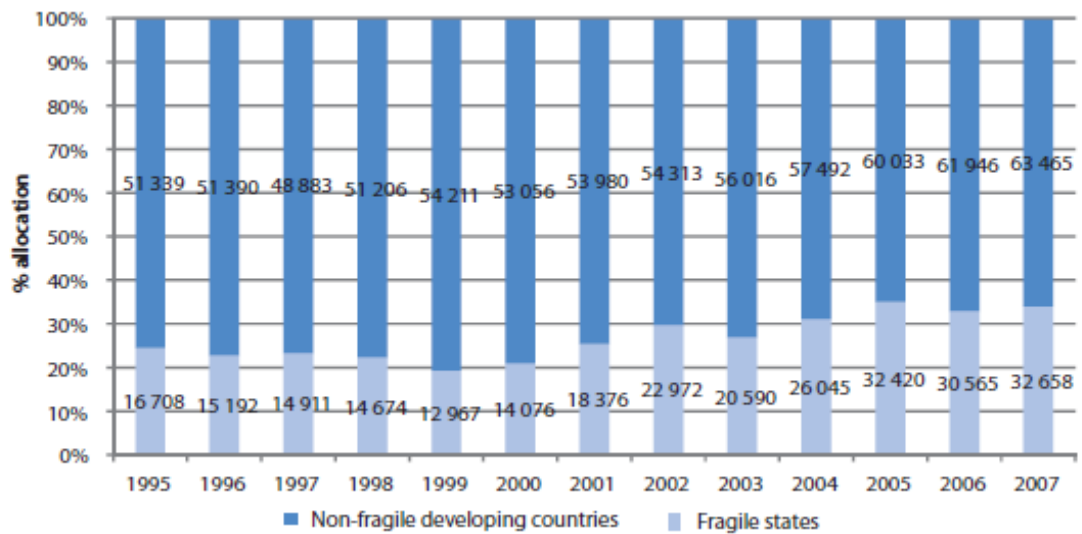
the interest of peace, undermining in this way long-term state building efforts (Brynen, 2008; Call & Wyeth, 2008; Rocha Menocal, 2010).

Likewise, some academics pointed out how early recovery and post-war reconstruction policies consist most of the time of different, overlapping approaches and activities promoted by numerous international, governmental, and non-governmental actors in a conflict-affected environment (Bailey S. et al., 2009). State building priorities and policies thus interact with other humanitarian, stabilisation, counterinsurgency, early recovery, peacebuilding, and development policies, at times competing and clashing with the agendas of the different actors on the ground. Others scholars reflected on contemporary state building and post-war recovery practices and derived recommendations for policy practitioners working in fragile states (Barakat, 2010; Call & Wyeth, 2008; Rocha Menocal, 2010).

On the policy side, international organisations and donors closely followed – and sometimes anticipated – this academic evolution, progressively polishing their policy answers to state weakness. Multilateral organisations and bilateral donors embraced the notion of state fragility, and started to consider fragile states as a threat to security and an obstacle to development. At the same time, the international community began to promote externally-led state building as the main policy answer to post-conflict fragility, recognising that establishing a minimally functioning state is “essential to undertake political and economic reforms and maintain the peace, especially in the long term” (Rocha Menocal, 2010, p. 3; Call & Cousens, 2008; Paris & Sisk, 2009). The notions of state fragility and post-conflict state building have thus become prominent in the international policy agenda (OECD DAC, 2007b, 2011; World Bank, 2011, pp. 97-117). For example, the OECD DAC published its *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States & Situations* (2007b), as well as several studies and practical policy guidance on how to (re)build fragile and conflict-affected countries (OECD, 2008, 2010; OECD DAC, 2008, 2011). Similarly, the World Bank reinforced its work in fragile states (Zoellick, 2008) and stressed in its 2011 *World Development Report* the importance of transforming institutions to deliver security, justice, and jobs. In this way, the concept of state building has become “more and more accepted within the international community” (Brahimi, 2007, p. 5) as a main policy of external interventions in post-conflict countries.

This progressive engagement with state fragility not only resulted in the increase in the number of studies and policy papers on fragility, but also entailed a substantial growth in the amount of aid spent in fragile states by post-war reconstruction and development donors, as demonstrated in the following figure published by the OECD DAC:

**Figure 8** Official Development Assistance (ODA) to fragile and non-fragile states, 1995-2007



Source: OECD DAC, 2010a, p. 36.

The figure is particularly significant because it shows how from 2001 – the starting date of the second phase of post-war recovery evolution – the yearly amount of ODA to fragile states has always been higher than in the precedent years. This escalation continued progressively in the most recent years. Starting in 2004 – the end date of the second phase of evolution and the starting date of the third phase – the amount of ODA channelled to fragile states has regularly surpassed the 30% of the total ODA expenditure.

Increasing engagement with post-conflict fragility is not the only policy trend characterising the third phase of evolution of the role of the state in post-war reconstruction and development. As international donors have proactively promoted externally-led policies to create effective states and institutions, as well as ensure peace, recovery, and development in the aftermath of a war, they also fine-tuned their approaches toward state fragility, incorporating in some of their policy papers reflections, concepts, and debates that emerged in the academic literature over the years.

Exchanges and interconnections between policy and research actors therefore characterised this third phase of evolution and constituted an integral part of the growing network of practitioners and academics working on state building and post-conflict fragility.

For example, the OECD (2010, pp. 53-57) integrated in its recommendations for donors working on fragile states some of the notions and suggestions stressed by the literature on the subject (Rocha Menocal, 2010). Furthermore, international actors became more cautious in imposing external and radical modernisation agendas and emphasised the importance of non-state actors and bottom-up approaches for building sustainable peace and legitimacy (OECD, 2010). In line with academic studies on the importance of national ownership for successful recovery and long-term development, international and bilateral donors have devoted increasing attention to the leadership and ownership of national governments over the post-war reconstruction and development processes. The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* emphasised the importance for partner countries to “exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies and co-ordinate development actions” (Anon., 2005). Similarly, the launching in 2008 of the *Accra Agenda for Action* (Anon., 2008), the recent establishment of the g7+, a group of self-defined fragile states which tries to influence the burgeoning international agenda on fragility, and the signature by more than 40 countries and organisations of the 2011 *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States* (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 2011), are examples of the increasing international efforts toward more articulated and refined models of post-war recovery and development.

The UK was integral part of this growing state building network, as the HMG policy evolution has proceeded together with, and sometimes anticipated, the general policy trend in post-war recovery at international level. Early signs of a more proactive engagement toward fragility could be already found in late 2004, when the British government established the Poverty Reduction in Difficult Environments (PRDE) team, then renamed fragile states team. In particular, the PRDE published seven Working Papers between 2004 and 2005 which introduced for the first time the concept of fragility in the British policy discourse (Anderson et al., 2005; Leader & Colenso, 2005; Moreno-Torres & Anderson, 2004; Vallings & Moreno-Torres, 2005), paving the way to a new phase of proactive engagement toward fragility and post-conflict state

building. The following year, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit produced a *Background Paper on Countries at Risk of Instability* (Yiu & Mabey, 2005), while DFID expressed its proactive engagement with fragility in its Policy Paper *Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States* (DFID, 2005). This paper represented a change of policy for the UK, as DFID made for the first time explicit its policy commitment toward fragile states by defining them "one of the biggest challenges for the UK and for the international community" (DFID, 2005, p. 3). The document set out DFID objectives and commitments about its work in fragile environments and provided a first proxy list of fragile states. The Department's response to fragility appeared in line with the growing state building agenda at international level: the Policy Paper promoted multilateral efforts in closely cooperation with the UN, the EU, and the G8 countries. Likewise, DFID identified the World Bank and the OECD DAC as the main partners "to build on the research base for better policy" (DFID, 2005, p. 25).

Policy documents at HMG level (Cabinet Office, 2008; DFID, 2006a, 2006b; FCO, 2006) and the official speeches of the then Secretary of State Hilary Benn (Benn, 2006a, 2006b) supported British commitment to state building and fragility. In particular, DFID 2006 WP suggested for the first time a move toward more explicit state building objectives and programmes (DFID, 2006a, pp. 17-42). This engagement with post-conflict state building was further articulated in DFID's publication *States in Development: Understanding State-building* (Whaites, 2008), a working paper that did not represent UK policy but proved to be extremely influential on DFID policy approach to fragility and post-conflict state building. Whaites elaborated a model of responsive state building that involved three necessary areas of progress: (i) the development of political settlements; (ii) the presence of the three survival or core functions of security, revenue, and law; and (iii) the delivery of expected functions to fulfil public expectations in the field of infrastructure, social provision, policing, and others. This state building model influenced the rhetoric of the then Secretary of State Douglas Alexander (Alexander, 2008, 2009a, 2009b). Furthermore, Whaites' concepts and analysis were incorporated and re-elaborated in successive British policy papers (DFID, 2009b, 2009d; SU, 2008). For example, DFID 2009 WP explicitly recognised the importance of building peaceful states and societies in countries emerging from conflict (DFID, 2009d, pp. 69-89) and used concepts derived from Whaites' state building model such

as inclusive political settlements and core functions of a state to highlight the Department's approach to post-conflict fragility.

The hypothetical point of arrival of HMG's recent reflection on the role of the state in post-war reconstruction and development was the publication in 2010 of DFID's Practice Paper *Building Peaceful States and Societies* (DFID, 2010b). The paper re-elaborated the analysis of Whaites (2008) and of the precedent DFID Policy Paper *Building the State and Securing the Peace* (2009b) and developed a new approach aimed at building peaceful states and societies through the promotion of strong and positive state-society relations. This new approach integrated and combined DFID's understanding of state building and peacebuilding, thus incorporating in a practical policy paper the theoretical convergence of the state building and peacebuilding agenda. In line with the academic literature on the subject, the paper also recognised the possible tensions between the short-term goal of peace and the longer-term state building process (DFID, 2010b, p. 18). Nonetheless, the paper aimed at guiding the work of DFID practitioners by listing some operational implications and practical tools for officers working in fragile or conflict-affected countries, as well as a list of examples on how to apply the integrated approach to different sectors of intervention such as justice, education, job creation, political institutions and processes. *Building Peaceful States and Societies* is therefore the UK's last and most advanced framework for understanding peacebuilding and state building in the context of post-conflict recovery. It represents an attempt to incorporate the developments of research and international policy in fragile, conflict-affected countries into a single policy paper. As an ideal ending point of the current British reflection on conflict and fragility, the paper has informed "analysis, DFID country plans and the development of UK strategies" (DFID 2010b, p. 38), as well as the work of several DFID officers in conflict-affected countries.

Britain's growing policy activities and engagement in post-conflict state building have been progressively supported by a growing network of researchers and HMG-funded studies. In 2005, the Governance Resource Centre was further expanded to become the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC), a centre providing DFID and other international clients such as the EC with applied knowledge services on broader state-building-related issues such as governance, social development, humanitarian response, and conflict. Recently, Coffey International Development and a large group of consultancy partners have started working alongside

the GSDRC to provide expanded and integrated governance, social development, conflict, and humanitarian Professional Evidence and Applied Knowledge Services (PEAKS) for DFID. Likewise, DFID-sponsored research has grown exponentially over the years: in 2006-07, the Department spent over £10 million on social and political research (DFID, 2007), while DFID's 2008 Research Strategy (DFID, 2008) pledged to invest £1 billion in research from 2008 to 2013. This increased funding was overwhelmingly devoted to establish and oversee large Development Research Centres such as the Research Programme Consortia. Typically funded for a period of five years, these Consortia are "centres of specialisation around a particular research and policy theme" (DFID, 2009a, p. 2), led by a UK university or research institute and comprised of a number of Southern research partner institutions such as academic, civil society, and commercial organisations.

HMG's in-house capacity to commission, appraise, and use research has also improved progressively over the years. RED, a division in DFID "specifically tasked to identify and generate evidence, knowledge, technology, and ideas" (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 48) and to convey these with the view to inform and influence policy, programmes, and practice, accounted for 90% of the Department's expenditure in research in 2010-2011 (NAO, 2011, p. 55). Its research budget is expected to increase from £125 million in 2008-09 to £320 million in 2014-15, and just under 10% of this total research expenditure – a projected amount of approximately £29 million for 2014/15 – is spent on governance, conflict, and social development (NAO, 2011, pp. 55-57). Other funds have been made available for ad hoc research on specific issues. DFID Policy Division can now directly commission its own research on pressing issues through the Policy Research Fund; likewise, DFID country teams have funds available to commission their own research, and in 2010-2011 they commissioned research for a total amount of £26 million (NAO, 2011, p. 55).

DFID is also using reference groups and expert panels of leading academics to inform its policy-making process. The Department has also recruited a number of Senior Research Fellows, academics working part-time in DFID and helping draft policy on certain issues. Furthermore, regional resource hubs have been established in a number of locations. For instance, in 2010 RED established the South Asia Research Hub to support the use of evidence by DFID South Asia country programmes; capacity building in the research institutions in the region; and the development of DFID

research programmes that address key regional priorities. Today, RED Evidence into Action Team promotes and supports the use of quality research evidence in decision-making both within DFID and more widely. DFID also requires its staff to set out the rationale for choosing a project and programme in business cases based on evidence of what works and knowledge and experience from fragile states. Finally, intermediary figures such as FCO analysts or DFID's evidence brokers – DFID staff that assist advisers and programme managers by providing evidence products and building internal capacity to search, appraise, and apply evidence in programmes and policy – facilitate the use of research in government departments.

### 3.2.3 Main trends in British state building policy network

The network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working and writing on post-conflict state building and fragility has grown exponentially over the last two decades. In line with the recent expansion of the international policy agenda on post-conflict recovery, Britain's efforts in post-war reconstruction and development followed a three-phase evolution which found its zenith in the current proactive engagement with state building in fragile, conflict-affected countries and in the publication of DFID Practice Paper, *Building Peaceful States and Societies* (DFID, 2010b). Three main and distinct trends have emerged over the past few decades and have characterised the progressive expansion of the British network of policy and research actors working on state building and post-recovery.

The first trend is an expansion and consolidation of this network at the international level, as part of a growing HMG and international policy engagement with fragility and post-conflict state building. State weakness and fragility have received an increasing attention in the wake of 9/11. Particularly after 2004, policy initiatives on fragility and post-conflict state building have flourished among international organisations and bilateral donors, in line with a burgeoning academic literature on the topic. A proactive engagement with internationally-led state building has progressively become the most supported policy answer to conflict and fragility. This engagement has resulted in an intensified rhetoric and proactive attention to fragile states and post-conflict environments (Mitchell, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2011), as well as an increasing allocation of funds to programmes in fragile states. The UK has become a global leader in the field of development (OECD DAC, 2006b, 2010b), and DFID has piloted some



OECD DAC programmes<sup>23</sup> and started to be considered the “key driver of the DAC work on fragile states” (OECD DAC, 2010b, p. 31).

The second trend is a progressive consolidation of this network across HMG. As DFID emerged as a global player in the field of development, its work has been progressively conducted in a framework of cooperation with other ministries and bodies, consolidated, reinvigorated, and supported by whole of government and joint DFID-FCO-MOD policies. Examples of these joined-up approaches were the creation of the SU and of the Conflict Pool mechanism,<sup>24</sup> or the publication of tri-departmental strategies such as the recent *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2011). Indeed, these efforts for a better coordination among departments have become in the last decade a common feature in donors’ response to fragility and conflict (Patrick & Brown, 2007). Like the UK, the US created in 2004 the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilisation, an office responsible for coordinating federal government efforts in countries at risk of or in conflict. This office has been integrated since 2011 with the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilisation Operations. Likewise, Canada created in 2005 the joint Department of Foreign Affairs-International Trade’s Stabilisation and Reconstruction Task Force, while the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Agency for International Development created in 2009 the Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation and Recovery Group. This recent creation and promotion of joint and cross-governmental mechanisms at British and international levels denotes how bilateral donors progressively began to see that the problems associated with conflict necessitated a more comprehensive response. This type of policy response is the increasing promotion of state building in countries emerging from conflict. This new approach would no longer necessitate separate and disjointed efforts in the fields of security, development, foreign policy, or economy, but would progressively require an overarching and cross-government effort, the joined-up work

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<sup>23</sup> DFID for example chaired and co-chaired some of the OECD DAC’s networks and groups, piloted the DAC *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States* in Nepal, Yemen, and Somalia, and published in 2010 the Briefing Paper series *Working Effectively in Conflict-affected and Fragile Situations* (DFID, 2010c), based on the OECD DAC *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*.

<sup>24</sup> The Conflict Pool was created in 2009 as a new DFID-FCO-MOD joint mechanism of funding which merged the funds of the Africa and Global Conflict Prevention Pools with the Stabilisation Aid Fund. This new mechanism is aimed at reducing global and regional conflict, and requires collaboration among DFID, FCO, and MOD to conduct joint analysis, establish shared priorities, and design and implement joint conflict prevention and management programmes on the ground.

of every department to (re)build the structures, the institutions, and the functions of an effective state.

The third and final trend characterising the British network of actors working on state building is the increasing role played by researchers as part of this growing network and policy agenda. The amount of HMG funding allocated to in-house and commissioned research has grown exponentially over the last two decades. Furthermore, the different governmental departments, and DFID in particular, have promoted an increased number of new mechanisms, roles, teams, and divisions to facilitate the appraisal and use of research at HMG level. These developments, as well as organisational restructuring, have underpinned an increasing synergy between policy practices and the academic literature and research. As the scholarship on state building, conflict, and fragility has mushroomed over the last decade, British policy documents, practice papers, and strategies on post-war state building and fragility have progressively incorporated the main themes emerging in the academic literature. Several scholarly themes have thus shaped the UK's growing state building policy agenda and have been incorporated into the different WPs and policy papers delineating British policy practices in the field of post-conflict development. The concept of political settlements has found for example its way into several HMG doctrines and policy documents (DFID, 2010b; House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 2011; MOD, 2009; SU, 2008). Likewise, academic studies on the convergence between the peacebuilding and state building agenda have been translated into DFID recent promotion of an integrated approach to state building and peacebuilding.

### **3.3 SSR: the armed wing of state building**

The precedent part of the chapter has analysed the modern evolution of state building as a policy practice and field of research at international and British level, showing how different policy and academic institutions and actors working on state building were part of a network that has grown exponentially over recent years. Externally-led state-building has thus become the principal policy approach to enhance state legitimacy through increased capabilities, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of citizens (DFID, 2009b, 2010b; OECD, 2008, 2010; OECD DAC, 2007b, 2008, 2011; Whaites, 2008). Among the different state building policy activities, SSR has emerged in the last decade as one of the major policy prescriptions whereby international actors aim

specifically to promote stability and security by rebuilding or reforming security institutions of fragile, conflict-affected countries. As a result, SSR has today become the principal policy approach to reform the security apparatus of a state in the aftermath of a war. As part of this evolutionary process, the UK has emerged as one of the main global actors in the field of SSR, pioneering some SSR interventions, and promoting the international policy agenda, as well as a range of academic studies on SSR. The next part of the chapter therefore looks at this evolution of SSR as a concept, policy practice, and field of study.

State building and SSR practices are closely interlinked within the modern liberal policy agenda of post-war recovery promoted by international and western donors working in fragile, conflict-affected environments. According to the OECD DAC *Handbook on Security System Reform*, international countries promoting SSR policies support recipient states in achieving four overarching objectives: establishing effective governance, oversight, and accountability in the security system; improving delivery of security and justice services; developing local partnership and ownership of the reform process; and promoting the sustainability of justice and security service delivery (OECD DAC, 2007a, p. 21). The definition of SSR reported in the introduction of this chapter and these SSR objectives therefore stress how the practices to reform a security sector in a conflict-affected country are underpinned by core values such as democracy, transparency, accountability, and good governance. These values bring the SSR agenda within the framework of internationally-led, liberal state building policies. SSR has been thus considered “the armed wing” (Jackson, 2010) and “an integral element of state building” (Jackson, 2011, p. 1810). Reforms in the field of security have become an essential “part of the international community’s approach to conflict management” (Jackson, 2010, p. 123), a central aspect of international interventions in fragile states to bring peace and security in the aftermath of a war. Over the last two decades, SSR policies and practices have therefore developed alongside the three-phase evolution of the state building policy and research agenda, constituting major policy prescriptions to reform the security institutions of a country emerging from war.

SSR gained prominence in the international policy agenda since the early 1990s and over the successive post-Cold War decades. During the Cold War, the main activities promoted by bilateral and international donors in the field of security were limited to the provision of technical, financial, and material assistance to allied or

friendly countries, with the aim to support Western (or Eastern) foreign and security strategic objectives overseas. Indeed, no attention was given to ensure that donors' security support resulted in the creation of efficient, effective, or democratically accountable security sectors in the country assisted. Similarly, the research community was not interested in investigating the linkages between support in the field of security and the broader development agenda. Few academic studies focused on the military involvement in politics in the 1960s and 1970s and only in the 1980s did researchers start to devote increasing attention to issues such as the military's role in governance in transition countries, the impact of the broader security sector on development, and the prevention of violent inter-group conflict or state violence against populations (Ball & Hendrickson, 2006).

The end of the Cold War resulted in consequent shifts in donors' geopolitical priorities and in a changed political and strategic scenario. Several new approaches to security and development began to emerge in the early 1990s and they eventually shaped the development discourse and constituted the building blocks of the current SSR agenda (Smith C., 2001). In particular, some of the main developments influencing the emergence of SSR were an increasing consideration of the linkages between military expenditure and economic development and growth with a consequent attention from donors on the reduction of military expenditure for development purposes; a necessity to match the growing number of peacekeeping and post-war recovery missions with a better security assistance and conflict prevention; and a progressive emphasis on governance and public sector reform (Brzoska, 2003). These developments interacted with old and new debates and concepts that were shaping the international research and policy agenda, such as the academic enquiry on civil-military relations and the emergence of the concept of human security in the early 1990s (Brzoska, 2003; Law, 2005). At the same time, the emerging SSR agenda received further inputs from some security reforms in Eastern and Central Europe as well as African countries. For example, the transition of Eastern Europe under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the EU sphere of influence required an increased emphasis on democratic civil-military relations and accountable armed forces. Likewise, the advocacy efforts of civil society actors in post-apartheid South Africa influenced the country's reforms of defence, intelligence, and police while research initiatives in the field security

emerged in other African states such as Ghana and Nigeria (Ball, 2010; Ball & Hendrikson, 2006).

It is thus upon these foundations and premises that the SSR agenda emerged in the late 1990s and developed over the successive years. DFID and the British government were the first bilateral actors to champion SSR and HMG engagement with SSR started soon after the 1997 election of the New Labour Government. The early seeds of British interest in SSR can be found in the DFID 1997 WP, when the Department stated its commitment to “help other countries to develop democratically accountable armed forces” (DFID, 1997, pp. 69-70), while at the same time discouraging “excessive military expenditure in developing countries” (DFID, 1997, p. 70). DFID’s reiterated its role in conflict and security in the following years. The Department published some policy papers and statements on the importance of security, justice, and SSR for development (DFID, 1998, 2000b, 2000d) and its 2000 WP reaffirmed its support to “effective security sector reform, to ensure that security sectors are appropriately structured and managed and subject to proper civilian control” (DFID, 2000c, p. 33). During the same period, then Secretary of State Clare Short released a series of influential speeches promoting “the need for a real partnership between the development community and the military” (Short, 1998) and explicitly announced DFID’s emerging SSR policy agenda in March 1999 at King’s College, London (Short, 1999). These early HMG initiatives occurred alongside British security assistance activities in Sierra Leone. British-led security activities in the West African state constituted the first engagement with SSR for the British government, an important step in the evolution of SSR as a concept and related policy at HMG level.

Following these initial engagements of DFID in the late 1990s, SSR developed as an increasingly cross-governmental agenda in the early 2000s. In 2001, HMG launched the conflict prevention pools and created a tri-departmental Defence Advisory Team (DAT) of 10-15 people – later renamed Security Sector DAT (SSDAT) given its main involvement with SSR – to support SSR initiatives and “provide a mobile team of civilian and military advisers to undertake short-term training and advisory work” (DFID, 2002b, p. 11). Efforts toward a more joined-up approach were progressively reinforced: in June 2002, ministers from DFID, FCO, and the MOD approved a tri-departmental SSR strategy (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2003b) and in November 2003 the three departments published an SSR Policy Brief that set out the UK government’s

policy approach to SSR (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2003a). During the same years, DFID produced some guidelines for SSR and police and justice reforms (DFID, 2002a, 2002b), while DFID, FCO, and the MOD published a new SSR Strategy in 2004 and received support from the DAT team to implement it in “over 25 different country programmes” (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2004, p. 6).

As happened in the case of state building, researchers constituted an integral part of the emerging policy agenda and of the related network of SSR academics and policy practitioners. The SSR research thus moved alongside this policy evolution. In 1998, DFID funded through Saferworld a seminar and a pioneer study symbolically entitled *Spreading Good Practices in Security Sector Reform: Policy Options for the British Government* (Ball, 1998). Furthermore, the Department started in 1999 a three-year collaboration with King’s College London (which established the dedicated CSDG unit to support DFID’s work on SSR) to receive “analysis and advice, as well as training and the planning and implementation of programmes in the field” (Short, 1999). At the end of the three years, the contract was passed to Bradford University.

Likewise, in the summer of 2000 a DFID-sponsored three-day symposium tried to maintain the momentum of the emerging policy and research agenda by bringing together and consolidating the emerging network of international and HMG policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats working in post-conflict environments, along with British and international SSR researchers and academics (DFID, 2000a). The network expanded in the following years to reach progressively more practitioners and researchers based in conflict-affected countries. In 2002, DFID set up the GFN-SSR, a hub for SSR resources and practitioners to provide “the intellectual engine to support forward thinking, and networking and capacity building” (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2004, p. 7). The GFN-SSR was based in Cranfield University until 2006, and moved to the University of Birmingham for the following five years, where it also started organise quarterly Security and Justice training courses for HMG and international SSR officers and practitioners. The courses aim to give a practical, case study-orientated introduction to security and justice by mimicking the real-life experience of designing, implementing, and reviewing a security and justice intervention in a developing country. Mechanisms to include local researchers in the process have been also envisaged: for instance, in 2003, through the GFN-SSR, DFID began to sponsor the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), which became a hub for African researchers, policy analysts,

practitioners, and current and former members of the security forces working on SSR. Besides these DFID-funded initiatives and studies, the Defence Academy, Cranfield University, the Central Police Training and Development Authority, and Her Majesty's Ship Dryad played a significant role in capacity building and defence education.

The UK also supported the emerging SSR agenda in international multilateral fora such as the OECD DAC. The work of the OECD DAC on security and development started in 1997 and continued in 2001 (OECD DAC, 1997, 2001). However, it was only in 2004 that the DAC members agreed on a policy statement and a successive paper on SSR and governance that defined SSR, articulated its objectives, and provided some guidelines for implementation (OECD DAC, 2004, 2005). The following years saw a progressive formalisation of thinking and expansion of the SSR policy agenda at the international level. The OECD DAC published in 2007 a *Handbook on SSR* (OECD DAC, 2007a), the main outcome of the Implementation Framework for SSR, a two-year process to gather lessons learned and good practice on SSR. In recent years, many international multilateral and bilateral actors have become more involved in SSR programmes. International organisations such as the EU and the UN, as well as Western donors and governments like the US, the Netherlands, or Canada have undertaken numerous SSR activities. The UN has included SSR mandates in its peace support missions; similarly, numerous bilateral donors have translated the OECD DAC statements and papers in domestic policy papers, doctrines, and approaches (UN, 2008; US Department of the Army, 2009; USAID, USDOD & USDOS, 2009). A number of donors have funded an International Security Sector Advisory Team, located at DCAF, to ensure a standing capacity for operational support to their SSR activities. Some governments such as the Netherlands have secured interdepartmental pooled resources for SSR and created ad hoc teams to work on stabilisation issues. At the same time, SSR programmes have been promoted as an integral part of the international state building efforts in several countries of the world including Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan.

The policy network of multilateral institutions and bilateral governments working on SSR has thus grown exponentially over the last decade. Researchers have been part of this expanding network and the academic work on SSR has supported these international policy developments over the years. However, whilst the literature on some SSR-related issues such as civil-military relations or justice and security has a

long academic tradition, SSR emerged out of the development policy world as a response to urgent problems on the ground and developed primarily as a policy agenda that was very normative in nature and hence, to some extent, lacked a strong theoretical and empirical basis. This was particularly the case when the SSR policy agenda was launched in the late 1990s. SSR originated from policy documents, experiences, and recommendations as a practical policy-oriented agenda, not rooted in any theory, apart from the idea of liberal state building. SSR thus developed as a prescriptive agenda that always suffered a “benign academic neglect” (Peake, Sheye & Hills, 2007 cited in Jackson, 2011, p. 1804). As SSR emerged from the policy world, academic studies on the subject “have been relatively few and have never been fully linked into the broader state building debate or to the dialogue on liberal peace building” (Jackson, 2011, p. 1804). The SSR policy approach, one of the policy interventions promoted in the framework of the liberal state building agenda – and part of the related academic literature – has rarely questioned or challenged “the underlying assumptions of the model” (Jackson, 2011, p. 1812). Instead, it has conversely focused on the technocratic and prescriptive aspects of an SSR intervention.

As a consequence, whilst SSR has been incredibly influential, SSR concepts and programmes have not been adequately grounded in a contextual understanding of the security institutions donors were trying to change. Early SSR research was sometimes not sufficiently micro-level or empirical, but conversely focused excessively on normative frameworks that sometimes proved incapable to capture the complex power relations and the institutional and political dynamics in a country (Ball & Hendrickson, 2006, pp. 24-28).<sup>25</sup> As a result, despite the fact that scholars working on SSR have often been aware of the challenges entailed in transforming the socio-political structures of a conflict-affected country (Ebo, 2007; Egnell & Haldén, 2009), SSR research has frequently been normative, technical, operational, strongly influenced by donors’ policy-related concerns, and targeted to the needs of specific groups such as military, police, justice, or intelligence actors, or relevant groups in the civilian policy sectors.

In spite of these early constraints, the SSR literature has grown, expanded, and diversified over the last two decades (Berdal, 2009; Chanaa, 2002; Cooper & Pugh,

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<sup>25</sup> This was linked to the fact that short, policy-oriented assessments written by international consultants who flew in a country for a few weeks could hardly capture the micro-level security intricacies of power between the different actors on the ground. This point was stressed to me by an experienced SSR researcher in a private conversation.



2002; Hendrikson, 1999; McCartney, Fischer & Wils, 2004; Sedra, 2010; Wulf, 2004). International donors and governments have increasingly relied on the activities of academic and research institutes for guidance and advice on their work. A growing range of international universities, NGOs, and research centres such as the Berghof Conflict Research Center in Berlin, the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), Clingendael in the Netherlands, and DCAF in Switzerland developed alongside British research institutions and today conduct research on SSR and collaborate with international policy actors. This burgeoning international SSR literature was progressively enriched by case studies, recommendations, and lessons learned (Ball & Fayemi, 2004; Bryden & Hänggi, 2004; Bryden & Keane, 2010; Call, 2007; Friesendorf, 2011; Huxley, 2001; Jones S. G. et al., 2005). Likewise, scholars published general reflections on the SSR discipline and policy practices (Hutchful, 2009; Nathan, 2007), as well as analyses on the role and practices to reform specific security bodies such as the police (Bailey D. & Perito, 2010; Hills, 2000a, 2000b, 2009; Neild, 2001), the armed forces (Cawthra & Luckham, 2003), intelligence (Wilson, 2005), justice (Bastick, 2010), or governance institutions (Ball, 2004a; Born, Fluri & Johnsson, 2003; Bryden & Hänggi, 2005). Academic studies on SSR have thus flourished in recent years and the network of SSR researchers and practitioners has today reached international dimensions.

### **3.4 The use of research in state building and SSR: a policy network model**

Parts 3.2 and 3.3 of this chapter have provided an account of the recent evolution of state building and SSR in policy and research. These two sections have underlined how the two practices have become two of the principal policy prescriptions through which international actors and bilateral donors today aim to (re)build post-conflict states and reform the security institutions of countries emerging from war. Likewise, the analysis has shown how the network of researchers, policy institutions, and practitioners working on state building and SSR has grown and expanded exponentially over the last two decades, reaching international dimensions from Western donor countries to conflict-affected, fragile states.

Chapter 2 of the thesis introduced different theories and models that explored the policy process and the utilisation of research in policy. It portrayed a dynamic and complex policy process that is shaped by multiple intertwined and frequently competing

factors in which research rarely interacts and influences in a direct, straightforward way. Most of the theories, concepts, and notions introduced in Chapter 2 have been so far applied to domestic policy processes, seldom examining international foreign policies such as state building and SSR in conflict-affected countries. Investigating the influence of research on an externally-led international policy such as British-led SSR in Sierra Leone adds thus a further geographical dimension to the frameworks and theories of research utilisation introduced in Chapter 2. Internationally-led policies are often planned and envisaged at domestic level in donor countries and implemented by donors' country offices, embassies, personnel, and advisers overseas. These street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980, 1997; Sutton, 1999, pp. 22-23) can re-adapt these policies to the particular needs of a conflict-affected environment, maintaining the long-term footprint emanated by the headquarters, but also changing or delaying its day-to-day operationalisation to respond to more contingent and pressing situations on the ground. Implementing state building or SSR policies in fragile, conflict-affected environments therefore adds a further layer of complexity to the policy process, as policies need to 'travel' internationally from headquarters to conflict-affected states and can be impeded or delayed in these often challenging fragile contexts.

Furthermore, the domestic policy processes and dynamics within fragile, conflict-affected countries can play an additional role in the implementation of externally-led policies. Local governments and institutions could be reluctant to accept and implement policies designed by international actors or bilateral donors which might impinge on their sovereignty and roles. Local policy-makers could find these policies at odds with local culture, social norms, history, or traditions, or perceive them as an external imposition of values and institutions that are not accepted by the local population. In addition, local politicians might have (as most of the world's policy-makers) the political need to conquer and maintain their electorate in order to remain in power. As a consequence of these internal political dynamics, they might thus refuse to accept short-term personal losses, electoral or otherwise, in order to pursue a country's longer-term gains, particularly when, at the moment of their policy decisions, the gains eventually deriving from the implementation of externally-led policies are not certain.

The network of policy actors and the dynamics behind the implementation of internationally-led policies such as SSR in conflict-affected countries are thus wide and varied. This convoluted policy process is further complicated when researchers are

added to this network. As shown in Chapter 2, researchers constitute one of the many groups that might contribute to the policy process. They can exert influence on primary policies at headquarters level, which are then implemented in international conflict-affected environments such as Sierra Leone. Yet secondary British policies in fragile countries can be also designed and planned by British country offices, embassies, and street-level bureaucrats overseas, which can commission their own research before implementing a particular policy at local level. British policy in fragile, conflict-affected environments could therefore be influenced by research conducted at the international, British, or local levels. Moreover, the same research could enter the policy process at the headquarters level or directly at the local level.

Differently from domestic policies, state building and SSR interventions have an international dimension that adds an additional layer to the policy process and to the network of policy and research actors involved in the design and implementation of these policies. Usually envisaged and written at domestic level, British policies are influenced by the international general policy discourse and re-tuned or implemented by street-level bureaucrats in fragile environments. Research can interact with policy at the international, British, and local levels. As policy prescriptions are often in line with the international agenda and move from the UK headquarters towards a conflict-affected state, additional research and specific constraints can influence the policy process, further complicating the process of research uptake into policy. The international dimension of the state building and SSR post-war recovery policies therefore adds an additional layer of complexity to the models and frameworks of research utilisation into policy presented in the precedent chapter of the thesis. As a consequence, the whole architecture of this PhD study – its originality as well as its complexity – arises from the combination of two main aspects: (i) the convoluted interaction between policy and research and (ii) the peculiar international dimension of the state building and SSR policy process in conflict-affected countries.

The general theories and models of the policy process and research utilisation presented in Chapter 2 need therefore to be re-elaborated in light of the peculiar international dimension of developmental policies such as state building and SSR. For example, the interaction between research and policy in fragile states can be hardened by the particular and insecure environment in which street-level bureaucrats operate, as well as by the complex, fast-paced, cross-governmental, institution-oriented, and

internationalised policy process characterising the implementation of externally-led policy decisions in conflict-affected countries.

ODI and other international research centres such as the Canadian International Development Research Centre and the International Centre of Excellence for Conflict and Peace Studies (Church, 2005) have promoted studies, models, and analyses on the impact of research on development policies. For example, ODI investigated six different dimensions of the knowledge-development policy interface, studying how different types of knowledge, political contexts, sectoral dynamics, actors, innovative frameworks, and knowledge translation can have an influence on the use of research in policy (Jones N., Datta & Jones H., 2009). Furthermore, the research institute has developed an analytical and practical framework to describe and examine the interactions between research and policy in development (Court & Young, 2004). This RAPID framework identifies the political context, the quality of a research and how this is communicated, and the links between policy and research as three inter-related factors interacting with external influences and eventually determining the use of evidence in developmental policy.

According to the framework, the highly political, fast-paced, widely insecure context is a first factor influencing the use and collection of research in fragile, conflict-affected environments. The presence of numerous political actors implies a competition for funding and a convergence of different power relationships, institutional pressures, and interests which might eventually limit the uptake of research findings on policy. The urgency of a situation and the shortage of resources allocated to research require the production and availability of quick and sometimes simplified information and data. Likewise, the lack of access to dangerous, conflict-affected, or insecure zones can hinder the work of agencies and the accuracy of the information collected by researchers on the ground.

The quality of research and the way this is communicated is a second main factor influencing the use of evidence into policy. In particular, the RAPID framework underlines how the research sources, the format in which evidence is presented, the clarity of a message and the way this is packaged, conveyed, and communicated to street-level bureaucrats can affect or improve the use of evidence into policy. In this regard, the timeliness and relevance of a research product are fundamental factors determining its uptake into policy. Working in hectic and busy environments,

sometimes for only few months due to the rapid turnover of personnel on the ground, street-level bureaucrats in fragile, conflict-affected countries need timely and targeted evidence to guide their policy; therefore, researchers should be able to provide this clear evidence at short term notice.

The links between researchers and street-level bureaucrats are a third important factor determining the influence and use of evidence in policy in conflict-affected environments. As street-level bureaucrats need to take quick decisions in a rapidly changing context, the legitimacy and the reliability of a researcher or a lobbying group can make a difference in shaping a policy decision. Issues of trust, credibility, and the experience of the messenger could thus play an important role in the uptake of evidence in policy. In particular, networks and relationships assume particular importance in fragile contexts characterised by numerous exchanges, informal linkages, and meetings between different research and policy actors operating on the ground.

Lastly, the RAPID framework emphasises how external influences can also impact upon the use and influence of evidence in policy. International politics and processes, donor policies, and specific research funding instruments and mechanisms can eventually influence the uptake of a study into policy. Likewise, the fact that most research is actually funded by international donors and is rarely undertaken by local consultants or research institutes could undermine the ownership, perception of legitimacy, and the acceptance of a research product in the eyes of a local government and population.

The use of evidence in development, state building, and SSR policy is therefore modelled by numerous factors and hindered by several barriers. Some of these barriers, such as the pressure to see quick results or the existence of several competing processes in the country, are inherent to the nature of the policy and programme implementation process in complex and dynamics conflict-affected environments. Others are more linked to organisational issues of both local government and country offices, such as problems of accessibility and availability of research, lack of institutional memory, resources, funding, and capacity to commission systematic research that is sustainable in the long term.

In the field of SSR, only a few studies have tried so far to narrow the gap between theory and practice (Schnabel & Born, 2011) and to explore the different interactions between research and SSR policy practices (Ball & Hendrickson, 2006;

CSDG, 2008; Sugden, 2006). For example, Ball and Hendrickson (2006) argued that the dominance of donor-driven research priorities, the strong focus on normative frameworks, and the weakness of research capacity in reforming countries are three particular factors that limited the impact of research on SSR policy and practice. Likewise, an HMG-funded study conducted by CSDG at King's College, London, concluded that "various factors make it difficult for SSR policy and programme managers to acquire the political analysis they need" (CSDG, 2008, p. 10). These factors are:

"The long-term nature of academic research; the sensitive nature of security issues, which make research difficult; limited capacity within the advisory cadre to conduct analysis or digest research produced by others; lack of 'local knowledge' about the contexts where HMG is working; and the political imperative to develop programmes before there is adequate understanding of these contexts" (CSDG, 2008, p. 10)

Other scholars such as Sugden (2006) used Haas' (1992) concept of epistemic communities to specifically examine the role played by British epistemic communities in promoting the growing SSR policy agenda in the UK. By noting an increasing engagement and influence of SSR experts in the UK policy circles, the author analysed the contribution as well as the limitation given by experts to the promotion of SSR in UK policy.

The literature on research utilisation has therefore devoted increasing attention to the different dynamics, factors, and barriers impinging on the use of research in policy and on the capacity of epistemic communities to influence decision-makers. At the same time, the network of policy and research actors working on state building and SSR has expanded progressively over the years, to include several institutions and academic and research institutes in donor states and conflict-affected countries. In line with some studies that tried to visualise the interactions of different actors within domestic policy networks (Pross, 1986, pp. 100-101; Richards D. & Smith M. J., 2002, p. 177), this thesis provides in Figure 9 a sketch of an ideal state building and SSR network of researchers, policy-makers, and street-level bureaucrats that stretches internationally from the UK to a conflict-affected country like Sierra Leone.

**Figure 9** State building and SSR policy network

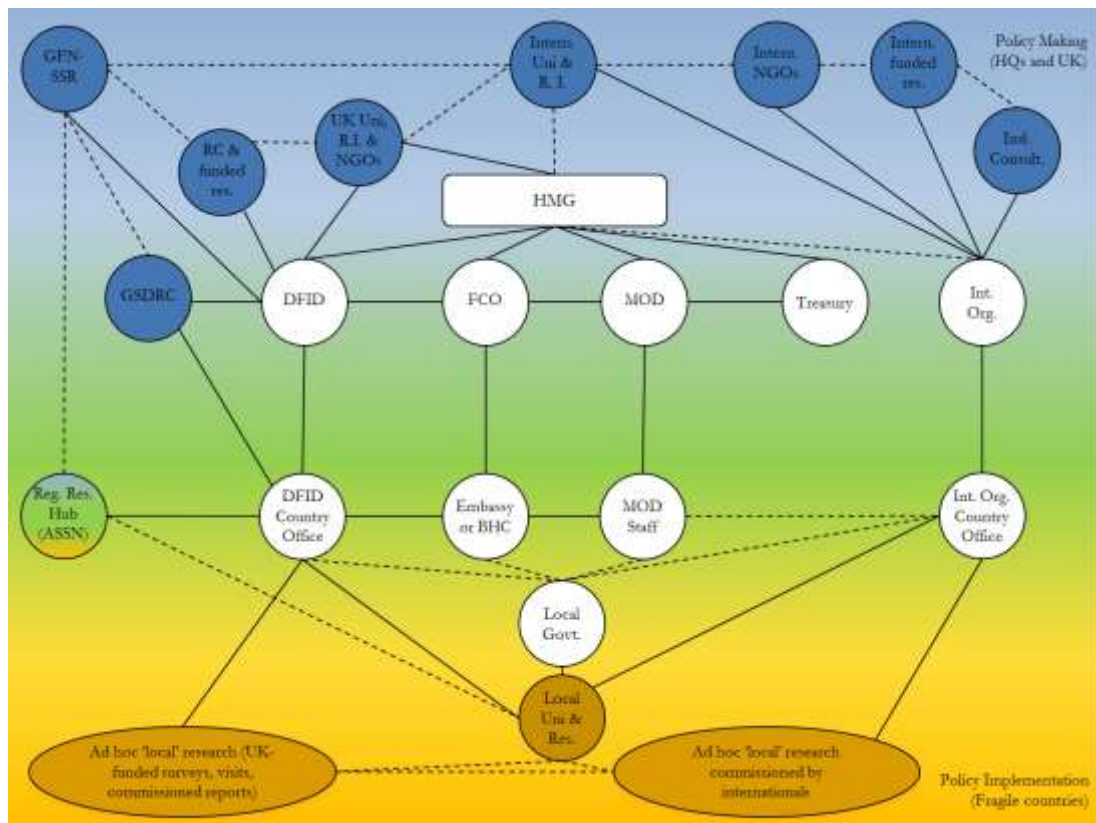


Figure 9 visually reconnects the concepts and notions of policy networks and research utilisation introduced in Chapter 2 with the description of the recent evolution of state building and SSR policy and literature presented in the previous sections of this chapter. It represents an ideal policy network of SSR researchers, policy-makers, and street-level bureaucrats working in a conflict-affected country. The figure encompasses in one single visual model the policy-making process in the UK and the different headquarters of international organisations, as well as the policy-implementation process of HMG and international organisations' street-level bureaucrats working in fragile countries. The white circles at the top of the figure symbolise the main policy actors at headquarters level. In the case of the UK, HMG and main governmental departments such as DFID, FCO, MOD, and the Treasury are all represented in the figure and interconnected among themselves through solid lines symbolising the increased cross-governmental collaboration and joined-up approaches to policy. HMG is also linked through a dotted line to the circle of the international organisations' headquarters. This line symbolises how state building and SSR policy approaches of the UK, other international actors, and bilateral donors interacted with each other and evolved following similar policy

agendas, as exemplified by the convergence between the OECD DAC and UK agenda in the field of SSR.

The white circles representing British and international policy actors are all interconnected with different blue circles through solid lines. These blue circles represent the different research actors working in the UK and in donor countries. In the case of the UK, the circles represent dedicated centres and networks such as the GSDRC and the GFN-SSR; DFID-funded research carried out in research consortia and in other funded research projects; and studies conducted by other British universities, research institutes, and NGOs. As previously mentioned, all these blue research circles are linked through solid lines to HMG and governmental departments. These connections represent the commissioning of some studies by HMG or DFID, and the direct influence of some of these centres, universities, and NGOs on British policy. The circles are also connected among themselves through dotted lines. This symbolises that research themes and studies from different universities and research centres influence and are influenced by the work of other British researchers or by the materials produced by the GSDRC or the GFN-SSR.

Likewise, the white policy circle of the international organisations is directly linked to different blue policy actors, namely international universities and research institutes; international NGOs; internationally-funded research; and independent consultants. The solid connections between these blue circles and the circle of the international organisations symbolise the increasing direct influence exerted by research on international state building and SSR policy. Similar to the UK, the blue circles of international research actors are interconnected by dotted lines, symbolising the progressive convergence of research themes, analyses, and studies by different research actors at international level. The circle of the international universities and research institutes is also connected through a dotted line to British research actors such as the GFN-SSR and UK research institutes and universities, as well as to HMG. These connections with other British research actors symbolise how state building and SSR research produced both at British and international levels has often analysed similar themes and topics; furthermore, different academic studies and researchers have influenced and interacted with each other, and their work has been incorporated in the materials of centres such as the GFN-SSR. The dotted connection between HMG and international universities and research institutes symbolises how some international



studies and researchers have indirectly influenced HMG policy, and how HMG has also commissioned over the years some research to international universities or research institutes.

The white circles in the lower half of the figure symbolise the main policy actors at country level, usually tasked to implement headquarters policy in fragile or conflict-affected environments. The main British policy actors in the figure are DFID country offices, embassies and British High Commissions overseas, and MOD staff. All these UK actors are linked together and to their respective headquarters by solid lines. These connections symbolise how HMG and headquarters decisions are communicated to street-level bureaucrats in country offices, which re-elaborate and implement the main policies through increased joined-up collaboration on the ground. These British policy actors in fragile countries are also linked through a dotted line to a white circle representing the country offices of international organisations. This connection represents how UK programmes and activities in a fragile country develop in line and in collaboration with those of other international actors in the country, which are, in turn, dependent on their respective headquarters and linked to these through a solid line. Furthermore, dotted lines connect the white circles representing British and international country offices to the local government of a fragile country. These dotted connections show how the activities of international and bilateral donors are meant to support and indirectly influence the work of local governments and their ministries through an indirect and bi-directional interaction.

The three gold circles in the figure represent the main research actors working in fragile countries, namely ad hoc local research commissioned by both British and international actors, as well as local universities and researchers. These three circles are linked among themselves through dotted lines that symbolise the interaction between British, international, and local researchers on the ground, with the participation sometimes of local researchers in the work of international and British academics and consultants. The circles of ad hoc British and international research are directly linked with their respective country offices. This symbolises how this type of policy-driven commissioned research is usually extremely influential on the activities of street-level bureaucrats on the ground. Furthermore, the circle of DFID Country Office is also linked to GSDRC through a solid line, as the Department's advisers working in fragile countries have the possibility to directly contact GSDRC helpdesk and use the centre's

research in their policy activities. Likewise, local research institutes and universities are directly linked to the circles representing British, international, and local policy actors. This solid link symbolises how the activities of local researchers, when local research institutes and universities are present, have the potential to strongly impact on the policy decisions of the local government and of international street-level bureaucrats, directly or indirectly influencing the policy process in fragile, conflict-affected countries. A fourth circle of research actors is also present in the figure and represents regional research hubs such as the ASSN. The particular colour of this circle symbolises how these centres rarely carry out operational, policy-driven, ad hoc research commissioned as part of a policy programme. Conversely, some works, studies, and academic outputs of researchers from the ASSN have been included in the databases of research centres such as the GFN-SSR. The blue fading colour of the circle thus symbolises the academic nature of some of the studies produced in these research hubs. The dotted connection of the circle with the GFN-SSR represents how some of the researchers of these centres have had interactions with international and British researchers. Likewise, the dotted link between the circle and local universities represents the local focus of some of the research hubs' studies. The direct link with country offices – in particular DFID – symbolises how the work of such research hubs is meant to facilitate and influence the work of different DFID country offices at regional level.

Finally, the colours in the background of the figure show how research can at times influence the activities of policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats in an indirect way, as underlined in the percolation model of research utilisation presented in Part 2.4 of the thesis. At the top of the figure, the blue colour symbolising this indirect influence of British and international research in policy reaches the white circles of HMG and international actors at headquarters level to progressively fade toward the centre of the figure. Likewise, the yellow colour at the bottom of the figure reaches the circles of the policy actors in fragile countries, showing how themes and studies conducted at local level can indirectly influence the activities of street-level bureaucrats on the ground. Nonetheless, international and local researchers are not completely detached from each other: the green area in the background is created by the intersection of the blue international research and the yellow local research. It borders with both HMG departments in London and country offices in fragile countries, symbolising how concepts, ideas, and notions emerging from research carried out at both international

and local level complete and interact with each other and can potentially and indirectly influence policy decisions at headquarters level, and street-level bureaucrats' activities at country level.

Figure 9 therefore represents a simplified understanding of the policy network of British and international policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working in donor countries and in fragile, conflict-affected states. The figure combines the theoretical concept of the policy network with the international dimension of British SSR policy process, and has been derived from the description of the evolution of the international and British state building and SSR policy and research agendas presented in the course of this chapter. Figure 9 thus visually illustrates the different interactions between policy actors and researchers both in the UK and on the ground, sketching an ideal policy network of research use into policy. Chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis will provide similar figures of the SSR policy network in Sierra Leone, showing how the role of research in British-led SSR in the country evolved over time, and indirectly comparing the different SSR policy networks in Sierra Leone with this ideal typical model.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the recent evolution of the network of policy and research institutions and actors working on internationally-led state building and SSR in conflict-affected environments. The analysis has canvassed history to show how the practice of (re)building states in the aftermath of a conflict has waxed and waned over the years, gaining particular prominence in the wake of 9/11 and contemporary events such as the current military intervention in Afghanistan. The chapter has also underlined how SSR emerged in the last few decades as part of the growing state building policy and research agenda, becoming in the present day the major policy prescription to reform the security institutions of a conflict-affected state and promote long-term security and stability in the aftermath of a war. The analysis has thus problematised the theories, notions, and concepts pertaining to the literature on policy networks and research utilisation introduced in Chapter 2 in light of the state building and SSR policy and research evolution presented in this chapter. It has firstly given an account of some studies that have examined the particular problems, dynamics, and challenges of research utilisation in developmental, state building, and SSR international policies.

Secondly, it has elaborated and visualised a sketch of an ideal policy network of state building and SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working in a conflict-affected country. This network constitutes an important tool to understand the evolution of the SSR policy network in conflict-affected Sierra Leone, as the successive Chapters 5 and 6 will draw similar sketches of the network of SSR policy and research actors working in Sierra Leone, indirectly comparing these to the ideal typical model presented in Figure 9 of this chapter.

Chapters 2 and 3 constituted the theoretical chapters of this PhD thesis. The purposes of these two chapters vis-à-vis the overall argument of the thesis are three. First, the two chapters have introduced theoretical notions and concepts that shed light on the empirical context of the thesis. The chapters re-elaborated the literatures on policy networks and on research utilisation in view of the recent evolution of internationally-led state building and SSR policy practices. The analysis brought together these two fields of study, showing how the thesis lies at the interception between these different theoretical disciplines. Second, the two chapters provided a theoretical framework to interpret, further explore, and better understand the ways in which the influence and interaction of research with British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone changed over time. With its presentation of the literature on the policy process, Chapter 2 has shown how policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers exist in policy networks. By describing the evolution of the British and international policy and research on state building and SSR, Chapter 3 has underlined how SSR decision-makers and researchers are part of an international policy network currently extending from the UK to conflict countries like Sierra Leone. The chapter has further visualised an ideal policy network of SSR researchers, policy-makers at headquarters level, and street-level bureaucrats working in a conflict-affected country to understand the interactions and influences between research and policy in internationally-led SSR policy practices. Chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis will indirectly compare this ideal model to similar policy networks of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers that worked on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone in a first phase of 'fire-fighting' solutions and in a second phase of post-conflict years. The implicit comparison between these figures will convey a visual understanding of the evolution of the SSR policy process in Sierra Leone over the years and the role and influence of research on this process. Third, Chapters 2 and 3 have provided some useful theoretical tools to explore the main

question and some of the sub-questions of the thesis. In particular, the literature on research utilisation with its emphasis on the different factors and barriers that facilitate or hinder the uptake of research into policy constitutes the main theoretical framework which is used to investigate the second sub-question of the thesis and explore the different contextual factors and exigencies that influenced British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Likewise, Chapters 2 and 3 have introduced the theoretical bases to explore the third sub-question of the thesis and understand the applicability of the literature on the research-policy nexus to the international challenge of state building and SSR in conflict-affected countries.

The next chapter presents and discusses the different methods used in the course of this PhD research to investigate and deepen the understanding of the principal question and sub-questions of the thesis. Chapter 4 concludes the theoretical part of the thesis and links it to the successive, analytical part of this PhD work. In explaining and introducing the methods used in the course of the study, the chapter also underlines the main practical challenges and limitations of this research.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

The main aim – and research question – of this PhD thesis is to understand whether and how research has influenced and interacted with British governmental policies to reform the security sector of conflict-affected Sierra Leone. In order to explore this question and its related sub-questions in more depth, Chapters 2 and 3 have introduced concepts and notions pertaining to the literature on policy networks and on research utilisation in policy, and re-adapted them to the fast-paced and internationally-led nature of state building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected countries. In particular, Chapter 3 of the thesis has underlined the problems and challenges of using research in complex state building and SSR policies implemented in third countries, and it has drawn a sketch of an ideal network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers stretching from the UK to conflict-affected countries such as Sierra Leone.

This chapter presents the different methods used to deepen the understanding of the empirical question and sub-questions of the thesis and discusses the challenges and limitations of this PhD research. It sets the scene for the second and more empirical part of the thesis, concluding the theoretical exploration of these first chapters and linking it to the subsequent analytical chapters of this PhD research. It bridges theory with practice and shifts the focus of the thesis from the former to the latter, analysing how the theoretical concepts and notions introduced in Chapters 2 and 3 have been made operational in the course of this PhD research. In explaining and introducing the methods used to investigate the particular empirical context and question of the thesis, the chapter also underlines the main challenges, limitations, and ethical considerations of this study.

Chapter 4 is divided in three main parts. Part 4.1 presents the methodology of the thesis and explains the main methods that have been used to explore the principal question of the research – a qualitative approach tested and triangulated through a quantitative analysis of the qualitative findings. Part 4.2 contextualises the methodology presented in Part 4.1 in the framework of this thesis. It analyses the practical limits and problems of investigating the research-policy nexus in international state building and SSR policies implemented in fragile, conflict-affected environments, underlining the

specific challenges and limitations of this PhD research. Finally, Part 4.3 of the chapter briefly outlines the main ethical considerations which have been taken into account in the course of the study.

## 4.2 Methods<sup>26</sup>

In social science research, a principal and broad division is usually made between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. According to Bryman's definition, "qualitative research usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (2008, p. 697). Examples of this approach to research are semi-structured interviews, ethnography, participant observation, focus groups, and discourse and conversation analysis. Conversely, quantitative research "usually emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman, 2008, p. 697). Examples of this approach are statistical analysis, computer simulations, questionnaires, and surveys. These two approaches are usually associated with different epistemological and ontological perspectives. The inductive approach of qualitative research is typically linked to an epistemological emphasis on interpretivism and the ways people offer casual explanations about the world, in line with an ontological constructivist position that sees social properties as "outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena 'out there' and separate from those involved in its construction" (Bryman, 2008, p. 366). On the other hand, the deductive approach of quantitative research is associated with a positive and natural scientific epistemological approach, deriving from an ontological orientation that views "social reality as an external, objective reality" (Bryman, 2008, p. 22).

This apparently irreconcilable dichotomy between these two archetypal approaches has been indeed blurred over the years, as scholars highlighted the complementarity of the two approaches (Abbot & Guijt, 1997; Chung, 1998; Chung et al., 1997 cited in Maxwell, 1998, p. 1) and argued for mixed methods approaches able to

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<sup>26</sup> This PhD is a distinct and original piece of research linked to the overarching three-year ESRC/DFID-funded Research Project 'The Influence of DFID-Sponsored State Building-Oriented Research on British Policy in Fragile, Post-Conflict Environments'. It differs from the main project in four main aspects, namely: (i) the use of a backward tracking approach which starts from policy-makers to backward track the influence of research on their choices; (ii) a focus on research rather than only on DFID-sponsored research influence on British policy; (iii) a focus on one distinct policy – SSR – rather than on general state building policy; and (iv) a focus on only one country – Sierra Leone – rather than on three case study countries. See the Appendix at the end of the thesis for further information on the four differences between this PhD and the project.

combine qualitative and quantitative data in overall research projects (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006; Poortinga et al., 2004). Mixed method research emerged thus as a term to describe either research that uses a combination of only qualitative or only quantitative research methods, or, more often, research that combines the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Bryman, 2008, p. 695). While still recognising the connection of qualitative and quantitative approaches with distinctive epistemological and ontological assumptions, mixed methods research embraces a more technical point of view in which the two approaches are compatible. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods is thus not only possible, but also desirable, as research results obtained through different approaches mutually reinforce each other assuming in this way a greater validity.

At the same time, the concept of triangulation, namely “the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked” (Bryman, 2008, p. 700), assumed increasingly importance in the literature as a way to improve confidence in research findings. Initially introduced by Campbell and Fiske (1959) as an idea to validate quantitative findings, and subsequently proposed by Webb et al. (1966, p. 3) as an approach where more than one method would have been employed to collect data in social research, the term then became used to refer to an approach that “can operate within and across research strategies” (Bryman, 2008, p. 379) using “multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data and methodologies” (Denzin, 1970, p. 310 cited in Bryman, 2008, p. 379). The importance of triangulating from a variety of methods is well established in the literature (Hanney et al., 2003; Wajcman and Martin, 2002), as triangulation from a number of sources pointing towards a similar finding increases the confidence in that conclusion. In the context of mixed methods research, triangulation “implies that the results of an investigation employing a method associated with one research strategy are cross-checked against the results of using a method associated with the other research strategy” (Bryman, 2008, p. 611).

The task of conducting research in fragile, conflict-affected environments entails several different problems and challenges that can potentially hinder the entire architecture of a study. As detailed by Barakat et al. (2002, p. 992), the post-war recovery discipline is characterised and distinguished by problems of access, sampling, generalisation and bias, as well as ethical issues. As a consequence, while some similar



problematic conditions can be found in other research contexts, these conditions “are unlikely to occur with the same degree of intensity as in war-affected contexts” (Barakat et al., 2002, p. 992). Indeed, some of the challenges related to research in conflict-affected environments have impacted this PhD study. While Part 4.3 of this chapter addresses specifically the ethical considerations of the study, one of the main problems faced during the course of this research includes the high rates of staff turnover of UK personnel overseas. Additionally, the task of tracking policies developed and implemented over the course of 15 years implied some problems of access and sampling. Access to relevant people was sometimes hindered by the fact that British street-level bureaucrats who had worked in Sierra Leone were at the time of this research employed in field missions in other countries, had moved to different occupations, or were otherwise impossible to reach. Memories of their experiences in Sierra Leone were not always completely accurate and it was sometimes difficult for some of them to recall names of colleagues or exact dates of events happened more than a decade ago.

Keeping in mind these limitations, the sampling strategy firstly through a desk-based review of British-led SSR policies in Sierra Leone identified the names of the most relevant policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats who had worked on those policies. Starting from contacting those people, the sample has been snowballed to include enough street-level bureaucrats to cover the specific time period examined by the study, as well as the different aspects and programmes of British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. A large sample of people covering the whole duration of the UK intervention in the country and the manifold policies falling under the remit of SSR has therefore been approached to minimise and overcome potential problems of access and sampling.

The choice to start from British policies and UK street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone in order to sample the potential participants to this PhD research is a consequence of the methodological decision to adopt a particular and new backward tracking approach to the study. Already theorised in the academic literature in the late 1970s (Elmore, 1979), the backward tracking approach is a new and promising approach used to evaluate the influence of research on policy that has also been recently tested in some other ESRC-funded studies (Clark & Simmonds, 2010; WM Enterprise, 2010). A backward tracking approach tracks the influence of research on policy by

starting from policy-makers and their decisions. Instead of selecting some pieces of research and studying their influence on policy, the backward tracking approach starts conversely from policy-makers and asks them what sources, research, and studies have been influential for taking their policy decisions. In the case of this PhD thesis, adopting a backward tracking approach would firstly result in a selection of British SSR street-level bureaucrats who worked in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The analysis of their answers and narratives would then enable the researcher to understand the role and the influence of research in the Sierra Leone SSR process.

The reasons for using a backward tracking approach in this study are threefold and stem from the specific nature of this PhD research, as well as from operational and practical considerations. With reference to the nature of the research, this approach was identified as the best way to grasp from street-level bureaucrats the different political, environmental, and social constraints that, together with research, influenced SSR policy in post-conflict Sierra Leone. These constraints could be particularly significant in fast-paced and chaotic war-torn environments, thus starting the investigation from British street-level bureaucrats rather than from research would facilitate a better understanding of the policy process in such peculiar situations. Furthermore, in the late 1990s – the time of the first UK-led SSR policy activities in Sierra Leone – “SSR was a relatively new approach for development agencies” (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 8), and “the international community was only beginning to come to terms with what SSR actually entailed” (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 8). SSR-oriented research followed this evolutionary path, and, as SSR became in the 2000s the *‘mot du jour’* among defence, police, intelligence, and judiciary policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, so academic studies and research flourished in the same period. The use of a backward tracking approach is aimed at capturing these research-policy interactions as they were developing and at better understanding the particular character of the research-policy nexus in fragile, conflict-affected environments, underlining the problems and factors limiting or fostering the use of this growing SSR research into policy. With its primary emphasis on the needs and opinions of policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats on the ground, rather than on pieces of research supposedly impacting policy, the backward tracking approach has proven to be the best way to interrogate the role of research in SSR policy and the policy process in the particular context of conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

On an operational level, previous studies pioneering the use of a backward tracking approach have underlined that a sufficient amount of time must pass for the impact of a policy to be felt, “but the time lapse should not be so great that it is difficult or impossible to track down discussion partners that were in positions of some influence at the time and who may no longer be available to expand on that experience” (Clark & Simmonds, 2010, p. 27). As a consequence, these studies suggested the use of a backward tracking approach within a maximum timeframe of 10-15 years from the policies analysed (Clark & Simmonds, 2010, p. 27). The British-led SSR policies and activities in Sierra Leone started in the late 1990s and lasted for several years. This period of time is suitable for utilisation of backward tracking based on the suggested timeframe. Moreover, the initial target of numerous UK street-level bureaucrats helps minimising the impact of particular and potentially problematic peculiarities of this research such as the long-term interventions, and the high rates of staff turnover in UK personnel overseas.

On a practical level, sub-questions 2 and 4 of the thesis respectively investigate the different contextual factors and exigencies that also impacted upon British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone and the measures that could favour or increase the influence of research on policy in fragile, conflict-affected environments. The use of a backward tracking approach allows the researcher to start the enquiry on these sub-questions by directly asking them to street-level bureaucrats who worked on the ground. Findings, answers, and narratives obtained through interviews and conversations with street-level bureaucrats have been thus considered as the most effective starting point to capture the interactions and intricacies of using research on policy. In this way, backward tracking information on the use and influence of research in policy decisions could provide a more precise account of the practical constraints and factors impacting the policy process on the ground. It could also show how these constraints and factors changed and evolved over time. Likewise, as the aim of sub-question 4 is to understand the measures that could favour the influence of research on policy, analysing extensively street-level bureaucrats’ views on the subject ensures a more policy-oriented analysis to such sub-question.

Following the selection of the sample of policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, a ‘composite approach’ utilising and combining different methodological strengths (Barakat et al., 2002) has been then used to plan the methodology of the

study. Such approach, particularly designed to tackle the potential problems deriving from conducting research in post-conflict environments, combines a triangulation of sources and methods to overcome the omissions of a single approach. This triangulation of qualitative and quantitative approaches is therefore in line with the theorisation of mixed methods research, in which the strengths of different methods are combined to improve the validity of the research findings. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has thus been envisaged as the main methodology of this study. These methods have been used in the framework of the backward tracking approach previously discussed. Thus the analysis and assessment of the influence of research on policy started with the British street-level bureaucrats and their policy initiatives. Following a careful consideration and study of British involvement in the SSR process in conflict-affected Sierra Leone, the research looked at the policy decisions in the country to explore the use and influence of research in these policies through two main phases of investigation.

The first, mainly qualitative part of the methodology examined how and to what extent state building-oriented research has contributed to British-led SSR policies in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Particular activities in this phase included a desk-based review to identify major British policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats who were part of the policy network that designed and implemented British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone; an analysis of their main policy decisions; and an assessment of general and DFID-sponsored research on state building and SSR. Starting from an initial list of UK policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, and snowballing from that initial sample, a total of 30 decision-makers have been selected and contacted. The sample size and selection was aimed at covering the whole length and range of activities of the UK SSR intervention in Sierra Leone. The final sample included different British and international actors that played a role in the SSR network and policy process in conflict-affected Sierra Leone: advisers working from the Security & Justice Group of the SU; officers and advisers working at DFID country office and at the British High Commission in Sierra Leone; relevant people and former street-level bureaucrats who worked in British-funded programmes in Sierra Leone such as CPDTF, CCSSP, SILSEP, IMATT, JSDP, ASJP; staff of international organisations currently working in the country; local and international NGO personnel based in Freetown; and Sierra Leone decision-makers working for the Justice Sector Coordination Office (JSCO), and

the ONS. Semi-structured interviews, consultations, and one focus group were conducted with all these actors in the UK, through Skype, and in the course of a two-week research trip to Freetown in June 2012.

The trip to Sierra Leone was an opportunity to meet in-person the actors who were part of the SSR policy network and were working in local institutions, national public agencies, DFID country office, the British High Commission, and other HMG-funded programmes such as IMATT, as well as various representatives of the international community. It allowed qualitative data collection through semi-structured interviews and informal conversations, as well as observational data on the state building process and the current security status of the country. The choice of semi-structured interviews as the main method of research allowed a dynamic interaction with the interviewees (Kvale 1996) which gave the opportunity to explore the topics in more detail, have a broad range of perspectives and points of view, and develop the narratives of research utilisation in policy. Likewise, the literature on research methods considers observation and informal conversations as equally important methods for researchers working in conflict-affected environments (Kawulich, 2005), as only through physical presence in a country it is possible to understand the local situation and the potential challenges to the effective implementation of a policy. Presence on the ground is thus an indispensable part of such a research methodology, as through observation and informal conversations with local people a researcher can have a better picture of a country's reality. This understanding minimised the potential bias of such research, as experiencing life in the country – although for only a limited period and in better living conditions than the locals – entailed a daily interaction with the people, the political environment, the society, the economy and the culture of the place investigated, partially redressing the risk of interpreting the local policy process through an overly 'western' lens.

The research trip was conducted mainly in Freetown for a total length of two weeks. The reason for the focus on the capital city was that the country offices of British institutions working in Sierra Leone (as well as the offices of international organisations, the main NGOs, and the offices of the Sierra Leone government) are based in Freetown. Likewise, the decision to spend only two weeks in the country was a consequence of the fact that most of the British street-level bureaucrats and researchers who had worked on SSR in Sierra Leone had been posted to other countries at the time

of the visit. The presence of British street-level bureaucrats in the country was therefore limited to the number of officers and advisers currently based in HMG offices in Freetown<sup>27</sup> and most of the street-level bureaucrats who had had an important role in the first phases of the Sierra Leone SSR process have been interviewed in London or through Skype.

In the course of the interviews, street-level bureaucrats have been also asked to identify people, researchers and research centres, papers, articles of books which have been influential for their work, in order to have an understanding of the main research actors in the SSR policy network and the ways through which research found its way into the policy process. Starting from the street-level bureaucrats' indications, a second sample of nine key informants, researchers, academics, and evaluators who were part of the network of actors that influenced the British-led SSR process in conflict-affected Sierra Leone has been approached and interviewed. Maintaining the backward tracking approach of the study, only researchers considered extremely influential by the same street-level bureaucrats and policy-makers have been included in this second sample. This could have excluded some pieces of research or authors that are relevant in the literature, but that have had only a limited influence on policy activities on the ground.

The final group of researchers comprised university professors and researchers working for British and international research institutes and academic institutions. The researchers have been interviewed in person in British cities or, in one case, through Skype. This round of interviews was aimed at confirming the preliminary findings of the research, better developing the narratives of research uptake into policy and confronting the decision-makers' views with those of researchers. Furthermore, it allowed a different analysis of the dynamics characterising the research-policy nexus, as well as the gathering of practical recommendations from researchers to improve this inter-relationship.

The first, mainly qualitative part of the study entailed a desk-based review of British policy decisions in Sierra Leone, a research trip to the country to collect qualitative and observational data, interviews with a total number of 39 policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers identified through a backward tracking process, and an analysis of research deemed influential by the same decision-makers. This phase of the study allowed the collection of some preliminary findings upon which to build

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<sup>27</sup> All these Freetown-based street-level bureaucrats have been interviewed in the course of the thesis.

the first narrative to explain the dynamics of interaction and influence of research into policy which characterised the British-led SSR process in Sierra Leone.

Starting from this narrative, the second part of the study tested and triangulated the qualitative findings of the first part through a quantitative analysis aimed at estimating the contribution of research to British policies in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The choice to combine qualitative and quantitative methods did not only derive from the well-established importance of triangulation in the general literature, but it also stemmed from the findings of previous similar studies on research influence into policy. As specified in the ESRC-funded *Pathways to Work* study, “insights gained through qualitative understanding need to be integrated with quantitative analysis” (WM Enterprise, 2010, p. 15). At the same time, despite some positive attempts to quantitatively measure the impact of research (ESRC, 2009), “any attempt to derive a simple quantitative estimate of the impact of social science research on policy outcomes needs to be placed in a much wider context that recognises the complexities involved in the processes through which research influences policy and practice” (WM Enterprise, 2010, p. 15).

Data collected in the second phase of the study thus implemented, completed, and enriched the qualitative analysis carried out in the first part of the study. The main activity to measure research influence at this stage was further bibliometric, documentary, quotation, and content analysis of policy or strategy papers to understand whether and to what extent authors, concepts, and pieces of research identified as influential by policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats interviewed effectively found their way into official UK policy documents. The extent of this analysis was nevertheless limited at confirming or implementing with more data and with the ‘wider context’ (WM Enterprise, 2010, p. 15) the precedent and principal findings of the interviews.

Several different reasons lay behind the choice of not relying heavily on bibliometric, documentary, quotation, and content analysis. The first is that speeches, policy papers, guidelines, and white or strategy papers at governmental level do not always report extensive references or quotations to research. Whilst influential theories or concepts could percolate through the policy papers, the names of authors, articles, and books are not always referred to, and therefore this kind of quantitative analysis can capture the influence of research into policy only to a limited extent.

A second reason is that the particular backward tracking approach of this PhD used the major British policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats who worked on UK-led SSR in Sierra Leone as starting point for the research. While recognising that the policy and strategy papers written at headquarters level could have been extremely influential and relevant in steering the long-term direction of British policy in the country, the study has nonetheless given more attention to those authors, researchers, and studies that had been identified as influential by street-level bureaucrats who worked on the ground and were not necessarily quoted in the strategies and primary documents published at headquarters level. Furthermore, most of these SSR strategy and policy papers appeared only while British street-level bureaucrats were already operating in Freetown. For example, Chapter 5 will show how the first UK SSR street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone did not even have a strategy upon which to rely to implement their policies. In order to analyse the impact of research on these early policies, findings from the interviews have thus been considered more important than bibliometric indicators on policy and strategy papers that sometimes were not existent at the time of the first reforms implemented in the country.

The third and final reason why this research did not rely excessively on quantitative measurements is that the particular country context and characteristics of conflict-affected environments have necessarily influenced the research-policy nexus. As a result, quantitative analysis *per se* would not have been sufficient to explain in depth the different conceptual and indirect forms of interaction and influence characterising the uptake of state building and SSR research into policy in fragile countries. An excessive focus on quantitative, bibliometric, and documentary data would not have captured completely the several factors, particularities, narratives, and dynamics of research utilisation characterising the research-policy interplay in conflict-affected countries. It has therefore been considered that the accounts of the experiences of people working on the ground would have better explained the dynamic interactions between policy and research at local level. Nonetheless, quantitative analysis of the policy papers was extremely important in order to sketch a whole picture of the use of research in policy and describe the influence of research on British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone.

As part of this second, quantitative phase of investigation, a survey involving 40 British policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats working on state building- and SSR-



related issues in headquarters and country offices was also envisaged and launched. The survey would have enabled the collection of longitudinal data through the answers of different decision-makers to the same set of questions. This data would have allowed a comparison between results which would have not only tested the qualitative findings of the first phase of research, but it would have also permitted an analysis of the uptake of research from decision-makers pertaining to different UK departments. As these departments constitute the key actors of the British state building and SSR policy network, such a survey would have investigated the utilisation of research across government and the impact of different forms of research on the work of the diverse institutional policy actors in the network. Furthermore, given the different level of experience and seniority of the policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats targeted, the survey would have also explored whether, how, and why the influence of research on HMG policy had changed and evolved over the years. The low rate of responses to the survey (equal to 10%) did not allow a thorough presentation and comparison of the data. However, the answers provided by some of the survey participants represented an interesting and additional point of view on the use of research in HMG policy. They highlight the different research attributes favouring the utilisation of research by decision-makers', and the diverse measures which could be adopted at HMG level to increase the influence of research on policy.

### **4.3 Practical limitations of the research**

Examining and understanding the ways in which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone requires a careful consideration of the peculiarities, problems, and limits characterising the empirical context of this research. Some of these peculiarities have been already introduced in Part 3.4 of the thesis. As already underlined, the task of evaluating research impact into SSR policy is enriched and further complicated by several different issues deriving from the specific fragile, conflict-affected environments in which street-level bureaucrats and researchers operate, as well as from the particularly technical research topic analysed. Investigating the use and influence of research in internationally-led SSR policies implies taking into account the distinctive features of the SSR policy process in fragile environments. These features characterise this PhD investigation and can be considered as additional challenges toward a deep understanding of the principal question and

related sub-questions of the thesis. The methodology presented in Part 4.2 minimises the impact of these issues on the findings of this PhD research. However, some peculiarities and potential practical problems still remain to characterise, challenge, and to some extent limit the investigation into the empirical question and sub-questions of this PhD.

The unique peculiarities characterising fragile, conflict-affected environments, as well as the specific nature of state building and SSR knowledge thus complicate the uptake of research into policy. Conflict-ridden countries are indeed fluid and unpredictable environments – complex, hostile, and dangerous contexts characterised by violence, insecurity, and extreme living conditions. The potential local partners for international state builders are often in disarray, with governments and institutional structures frequently absent, collapsed, or, at best, under-funded, transitional, disorganised, undefined, contested, unstable, or new. Moreover, multiple actors and spoilers try to implement different and sometimes competing agendas, with private, international, and regional interests occasionally converging with the needs and expectations of the local population. As a consequence, the task of (re)building a state in the aftermath of a war might entail a complete overhaul of the security, economic, social, and judicial architecture of a conflict-affected country, and the implementation of timely and coherent interventions in a dangerous, fragile, and extremely politicised environment.

At the same time, Part 1.2 and Chapter 3 of the thesis have already underlined how state building research is a new, cross-disciplinary, sometimes contradictory form of knowledge providing few solutions, benchmarks, or universal indications of ‘what works’ and is usually dominated by the liberal state building ideology (Duffield, 2001; Jackson, 2010, 2011). Such kind of research is often based on past experience, yet it rarely provides a definition of success or a recipe to be used in every scenario, as past experiences could have succeeded for a series of reasons hardly replicable in other contexts. Moreover, the impact of state building research on policy is hardened by the fact that such research may provide theoretical findings difficult to operationalise by policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, or it might challenge business or development agencies and be in this way not always comfortably accepted.

Likewise, SSR-oriented research is a form of knowledge that is extremely technical, operational, specific, and targeted to well defined groups such as military,

police, justice, and intelligence actors, or relevant groups in the civilian policy sectors. Implementing SSR policies requires a long timeframe and necessitates a gradual change in attitudes and behaviours. Such change usually takes a decade to manifest, and it is therefore extremely difficult – if not impossible – to replicate in a short-term policy the environmental conditions and the factors underpinning that attitudinal change. Moreover, the sensitive nature of SSR might further impinge upon the use of research in policy. The decision to provide – or not provide – SSR assistance to a fragile, conflict-affected country can entail several political and reputational risks for the international actors and donors involved. For example, a lack of accountability in the local security sector might result in violent actions by military or police forces, riots, coups, or disrespect of human rights, with these events heralded globally in the media. This highly sensitive dimension of SSR can thus complicate the use of research in SSR policy in two ways. First, the sensitivity of security issues can make conducting good empirical research more challenging. Second, high reputational risks mean that street-level bureaucrats working on SSR may not be open to research findings for different reasons, political and otherwise. Conservative cultural mind-sets or a resistance to inputs coming from civilians and academics can at times hinder dialogue among the different components of the security sector and between such actors and the research world. Likewise, prescriptions against entrenched institutional mind-sets or previous patterns of operation might not be incorporated into policy. These distinct peculiarities of research add a further layer of complexity to the picture, and when combined with the unique issues, contexts and challenges of a conflict-ridden environment, shape and influence the research-policy nexus.

Section 2.4 has already introduced the numerous factors that can impede, hinder, inhibit, or postpone the uptake of research into policy. The peculiarities of fragile, conflict-affected environments as well as of state building and SSR practices and research presented in the course of this section further impinge upon these factors, creating unique research-policy interplay. This particular interaction needs to be carefully taken into account when investigating the influence of research on state building and SSR post-war recovery policies, as this interaction necessarily shapes the policy process in fragile countries and indirectly limits the extent of the study. Exploring the role of research on British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone thus entails taking into account the particular characteristics of the research-policy nexus in

fragile environments, as the peculiarities of the context may negatively impact the uptake of research into policy. The fast-paced and extremely politicised practices of externally-led state building and SSR entail that research influence, shrunk among several converging interests, actors, and policy agendas and limited by the surrounding environment as well as by its own peculiar nature, could be less direct than in other disciplines and fields. Moreover, practical problems such as the long-term interventions evaluated, the high rates of turnover in UK personnel overseas, their lack of time to approach research when facing several urgent and compelling issues, their organisational culture, bias, and personal relationships with other expatriates and local policy-makers add final and new challenges to research uptake and, consequently, to this PhD.

#### **4.4 Ethical considerations**

The task of researching in fragile, conflict-affected environments entails several unique ethical difficulties which have been extensively addressed by the specific literature on the topic (Barakat & Ellis, 1996; Barakat et al., 2002; Goodhand, 2000; Marriage, 2000; Olujic, 1995). As the main targets of this study are researchers and British policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats in the UK and Sierra Leone, the research does not face most of the ethical issues involved in dealing with traumatised or more vulnerable categories such as children or former combatants. Participants to the study were experienced policy actors or researchers used to deal with press and to talk in public. Nevertheless, ethical concerns, particularly related to access to the interviewees and to the use of the data generated in the interviews, needed to be taken into account in designing and carrying out the study.

All the participants to the study gave their informed consent and were fully informed of the purpose of the research. In order to prevent personal or institutional risks, their names remained anonymous, particularly in case of quotations in the thesis or in related publications. Recordings and transcripts of interviews were anonymised using a coding system and kept secured.

Personal and university reputational risks connected to the trip to Sierra Leone were minimised through the adherence to the FCO security advice and guidelines for the country. While in Sierra Leone, the researcher sought and received security updates from the British High Commission and had access to a security number for

internationals to be called in case of emergencies. During the visit to Freetown, the researcher was covered by the University's travel insurance scheme, a scheme that applies to higher-risk environments such as Sierra Leone and provides evacuation and emergency transportation and medical treatment. Only airlines or other transportation providers approved by the EU were used to travel to the country.

Finally, this PhD research (and its related ESRC/DFID project) was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of York, as of personal communication from 6 June 2012.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This methodological chapter has carefully introduced the methods used in the course of the study to deepen the understanding and explore the principal question and the sub-questions of this PhD research. The analysis has presented the different methodological approaches of the thesis, explaining the reasons behind the choice of particular research methods, and the ways in which qualitative and quantitative data have been combined and triangulated in the course of the study. Such triangulation from a number of different methods and sources is aimed at improving the accuracy of the research findings of the thesis and the confidence in its conclusions. However, the chapter has also presented the particular characteristics of this PhD study, arguing that a careful exploration of the principal question and related sub-questions of the thesis requires a preliminary consideration of the practical and ethical challenges, problems, and intrinsic limitations potentially entailed in this research. Such preliminary analysis and clarification of the problems and potential difficulties of this study was particularly needed given the ground-breaking nature of this thesis, a study combining different disciplines such as research utilisation and SSR in conflict-affected countries. In this regard, the chapter presented and introduced a strong methodology through which the empirical analysis of the study has tried to minimise and mitigate these problems.

Chapter 4 concludes the theoretical part of the thesis. This first part of the study presented the theoretical foundations underpinning the rest of the research. It introduced the main theoretical concepts and notions that will be used in the course of the study to deepen the understanding of the empirical question and sub-questions of the thesis. Moreover, it set the general context of the thesis while specifying the particular limitations and methodology of the work. The second part of the thesis

moves the analysis from a theoretical to a more empirical level. It examines in depth the processes and the ways in which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policies in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Chapters 5 and 6 will thus present and analyse the data collected in the course of the research, showing how the network of policy and research actors working on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone and the consequent use of research in policy increased and evolved over the course of the intervention.

## PART II – LINKING THEORY TO PRACTICE

The first part of the PhD thesis introduced the main theoretical foundations of the research. It explored the literature on policy process and research utilisation to identify concepts and ideas that help examine the principal question and related sub-questions of the thesis. It re-elaborated these concepts in light of the recent evolution of state building and SSR in policy and research, showing the progressive expansion of the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers, while providing in Figure 9 an important tool to understand the evolution of the SSR policy network in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. This second part of the thesis moves the analysis from theory to practice, presenting the main findings of the data collected throughout the course of this study. These data will be used to examine how the network of SSR policy and research actors working on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone evolved from the conflict years to the post-civil war decade. Such analysis investigates the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British governmental SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone, and provides a deep exploration into the principal question and related sub-questions of this PhD.

The second part of the thesis is divided in two main chapters that analyse the role played by research in British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. In particular, Chapter 5 focuses on the ‘fire-fighting’ solutions designed and implemented during the Civil War, while Chapter 6 investigates the ways in which research influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy during the post-conflict years. The division into two periods differs from other accounts of UK SSR activities in the country (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011), which conversely divide British-led policy in three distinct phases. The reason for this choice was to distinguish the narrative of British activities only between a war and a post-war phase, maintaining more cohesion in the analysis and without further dividing it in smaller and more numerous parts. Indeed, most of the features and themes that characterised the use of research in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone evolved over the years without being associated to clear and watershed dates. In this regard, 2005 – the year that represents the beginning of the third phase in Albrecht and Jackson’s book, as well as the year in which DFID opened its country office and some of the first SSR programmes closed

and were replaced by the more comprehensive JSDP – will be still considered an extremely important year in the evolution of British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, the date will not be taken as a starting year of a third phase of analysis, but it will be incorporated into the second phase of the narrative focusing on the use of research since the end of the conflict in 2002.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the evolution of the network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers from the civil war period to the post-conflict years. The two chapters provide sketches of these different policy networks, describing and analysing them in a parallel structure composed of three main parts which respectively examine (i) the historical and security context in the country; (ii) the institutional pathways through which SSR entered into British policy and the related research agenda; and (iii) the role of knowledge in influencing British-led SSR policy in the country. This three-part division would help maintain coherence in the analysis, facilitating comparisons between the themes, barriers, problems, dynamics, and the main features characterising the use of research in the war and the post-conflict UK-led SSR activities in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, the policy network models provide a visual understanding and the basis for comparative analysis of the evolution of the interactions between research and policy during the war and post-conflict periods. The indirect comparison between the two figures and Figure 9 presented in Chapter 3 will show the distinctions and differences between the networks of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working in Sierra Leone and the ideal typical policy network portrayed in the theoretical part of the thesis.



## **5. The influence of research on British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone: first period (1996-2002), ‘fire-fighting’ solutions<sup>28</sup>**

### **5.1 Introduction**

As the main analysis of the Sierra Leone case study, Chapters 5 and 6 examine the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policies promoted in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The data presented in these chapters constitute the principal materials used by this PhD thesis to investigate its main question and inter-connected sub-questions. The two chapters analyse the narratives and dynamics of research utilisation in UK-led SSR policies designed and implemented in Sierra Leone, showing how the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers – and the influence of research on British-led SSR policy – evolved over the years.

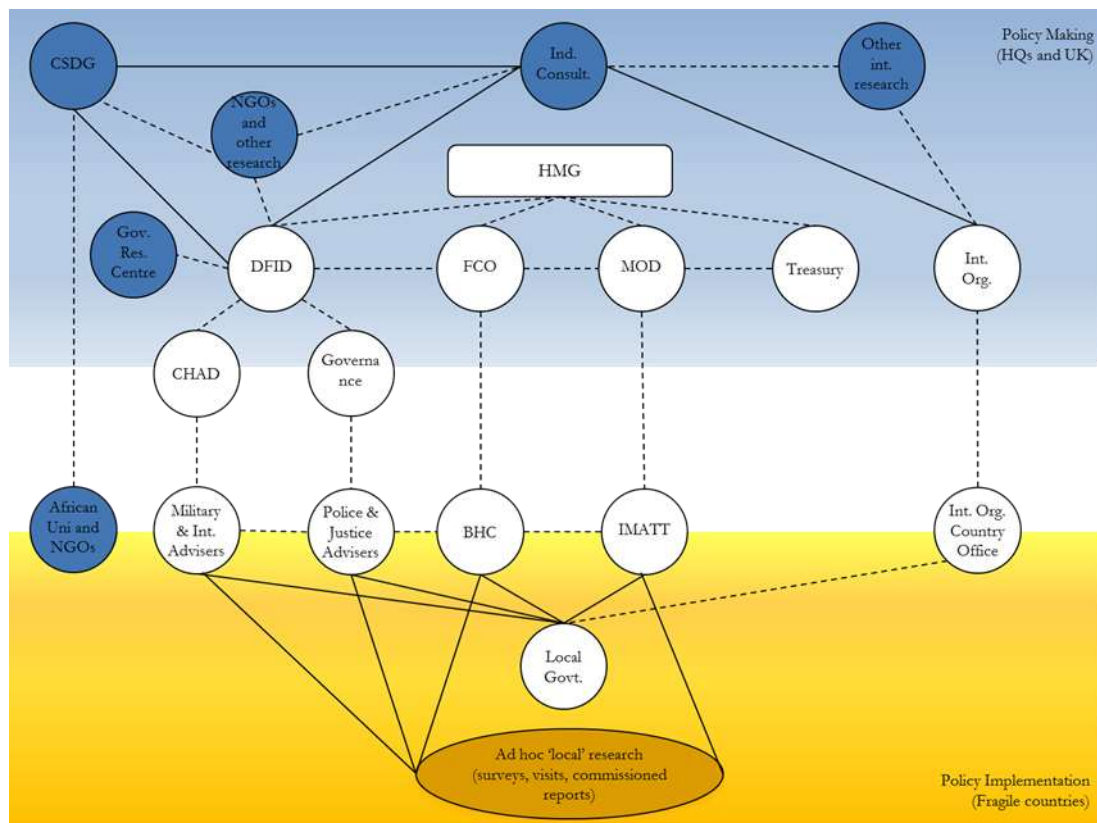
In particular, Chapter 5 examines the conflict period and the influence of research on British-led SSR activities from 1996 to the end of the Civil War in 2002. Likewise, Chapter 6 focuses on the influence of research in SSR policy in the post-conflict years. Together, the chapters show whether and how the use of research has evolved over time by moving away from the conflict toward the increasingly peaceful and stable post-war recovery period. As already underlined, both chapters have a parallel structure which facilitates comparison between the use of research during the conflict and the post-conflict years. The chapters present sketches of the different policy networks characterising the two periods. They build, describe, and analyse these networks through a three-part narrative that examines the Sierra Leone context and stability situation, the evolution of both SSR policy and research in the UK and in Sierra Leone, and the role played by knowledge in shaping the British-led SSR activities in the West African country. The presentation of the policy networks of SSR researchers and practitioners working in Sierra Leone helps to understand and visualise how the role of research in policy evolved and improved over time. Furthermore, the parallel structure of the chapters helps to compare the narratives of research utilisation in policy during the conflict and post-conflict years.

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<sup>28</sup> Some of the materials of this chapter have been used in Varisco (2014).

Figure 10 introduces the network of policy and research actors working on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone during a first period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions from the late 1990s to the end of the civil conflict in 2002. The chapter will explore this policy network in depth, examining the relationships between the different actors in the network, and the ways in which research has influenced and interacted with SSR activities promoted and implemented by British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone during the conflict years.

**Figure 10** First period, ‘fire-fighting’ solutions: the policy network



Chapter 5 is divided in three main parts. Part 5.2 introduces the SSR policies implemented by British street-level bureaucrats and analyses the unstable security situation of Sierra Leone in the late 1990s. It argues that this lack of stability in the country is the first variable (external to the policy network proposed in Figure 10) that inevitably limited and impacted on the policy options and activities of British street-level bureaucrats and, by extension, on their use of research. Part 5.3 examines the pathways through which SSR was institutionalised for the first time into the UK policy agenda at headquarters and country levels and developed as related research agenda. It

also discusses the ways in which this evolution shaped the activities of British street-level bureaucrats working in Sierra Leone. Since the developments of SSR as a policy and research agenda occurred concurrently and alongside the events in Sierra Leone, the analysis argues that this evolution could be considered as a second, internal variable modelling the network of policy and research actors, interacting with both the policy process in Sierra Leone and the use of research in British-led policy decisions in the country. Part 5.4 explores the role played by knowledge and research in influencing the British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone. The analysis shows how the two variables previously introduced in the chapter, namely the stability of the context and the SSR evolution in policy and research, also impacted – and sometimes limited – the influence of research on the policy process in the country. Despite the limited impact of research on policy during this period, the chapter nonetheless provides examples of studies directly feeding into policy and enriches the exploration of the SSR policy network in Sierra Leone by describing the dynamic relationship between policy and research on the ground.

## **5.2 The context and stability situation**

The first UK-led SSR activities in Sierra Leone started in 1996 following a personal request from President Kabbah to DFID to reform the Sierra Leone Police (SLP). Prior to that date, Sierra Leone's former colonial power had already provided a sort of sporadic, ad hoc, short-term training assistance to the SLP. Recent British security efforts in the country therefore developed after the initial request of President Kabbah and by the end of the war in 2002 encompassed reforms in the fields of intelligence, justice, military, governance, and police. The first policies implemented by SILSEP, CPDTF, CCSSP, IMATT, and British street-level bureaucrats in the country constituted the main foundations of Sierra Leone's SSR programme. This set of reforms started in the late 1990s in the middle of the civil conflict and developed alongside other activities promoted by the international community in the country such as the DDR process and the UNAMSIL peacekeeping operation.

Sierra Leone's volatile security and stability situation and the events that occurred in the final conflict years inevitably influenced and impacted on the early activities and choices of British street-level bureaucrats in the country. At the first arrival of British police advisers in Freetown, the SLP was, according to a report of the

former Sierra Leone foreign minister Hastings Banya, “a demoralised force, lacking in basic equipment, logistics, accoutrement and resources, inadequate and often neglected accommodation, and a deplorable working environment” (Horn, Olonisakin & Peake, 2006, p. 111). British project appraisal initiatives, which encompassed the legal sector and civil service reform (Gbla, 2007, pp. 17-19), began in 1997 but were soon disrupted by the AFRC/RUF coup in May. Kabbah’s return to Freetown in 1998 reinvigorated British engagement in the country (Thomson, 2007, pp. 5-8). The CPDTF, a group of seven senior police advisers from the UK, Canada, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe, flew to Freetown in the summer to conduct an initial assessment and begin to work on police reform. The results of this first visit were almost immediate: President Kabbah announced a new Policing Charter in August 1998; furthermore, the Police Mission Statement and the new doctrine of Local Needs Policing were defined in the same months.

Likewise, in October 1998 DFID funded a preliminary diagnostic study of the civil service. Alongside these first UK activities, the international community also increased its involvement in the country. President Kabbah appointed the Nigerian Head of the ECOMOG Task Force as Sierra Leone’s Chief of Defence Staff. His main task was to assist the reorganisation and restructuring of the Armed Forces, as the 1997 coup demonstrated in stark relief the lack of government control over the Army. Furthermore, the first phase of the DDR programme, implemented by the Sierra Leonean National Committee for DDR and supported by international partners such as the UN, the World Food Programme, the World Bank, and the UK (Tesfamichael, Ball & Nenon, 2004, pp. 25-31), began in July 1998 under the control of 70 UNOMSIL military observers.

The security situation in Sierra Leone nonetheless remained fragile and the RUF attack on Freetown in January 1999 halted all reform activities and forced the British street-level bureaucrats in the country to leave. As soon as security was re-established, the UK sent Brigadier David Richards to Freetown. Brigadier Richards, the head of the *Operation Basilica Operational Liaison Team*, assessed the type of assistance the country required and established “relations with key players in the Government of Sierra Leone, including President Kabbah” (Jackson and Albrecht, 2011, p. 64). It was after this visit, and following the decision to abandon the idea of completely disbanding the Army to replace it with an expanded police force, that the UK boosted its support to Sierra

Leone and started to plan its direct involvement in reforming the military apparatus and the defence institutional structures of the country.

The poor condition of the RSLMF was a consequence of several years of mismanagement. During the Siaka Stevens era and before the beginning of the war in 1991, the Army was purposely maintained weak: a ceremonial, conservative, and politicised body with an official force of approximately 3,500 people. With IMF conditionalities preventing Momoh from expanding the Army, at the time of the RUF attack Sierra Leone's Armed Forces were "ill-equipped, badly-led and had no real intelligence capability" (Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, p. 62). Although the NPRC military junta did not improve the status of the military, it did undertake a massive recruiting and training campaign that brought approximately 14,000 armed personnel to fight against the RUF (Keen, 2005, p. 97). Left with no control and discipline, these poorly recruited, badly trained, and inadequately armed soldiers soon became 'sobels', looting and attacking civilians, and coalescing with the RUF in the 1997 military coup. For British street-level bureaucrats and military advisers, the task of reconstructing the MOD and rebuilding the Army while fighting a war required then a complete overhaul of the military *status quo*.

In Spring 1999, a British military training team of six men was deployed to provide some military training to the SLA. The UK also provided weapons, vehicles, and materiel to ECOMOG and the Army, and, in June 1999, deployed the first three SILSEP advisers. SILSEP aimed to reform and restructure the country's security, intelligence, and military apparatus. Two of the three advisers, one military and one civilian, renamed themselves the MOD Advisory Team (MODAT) and worked on designing and implementing a plan to reorganise the Sierra Leone MOD. MODAT's first fact-finding visits underlined the need for a complete review of the roles, functions, and organisation of the Armed Forces. The GoSL gave MODAT the responsibility to conduct a mini-Strategic Defence Review, which was completed by October 1999. Among the different recommendations, the Review proposed the establishment of a British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) to support the planning and restructuring of the Armed Forces and the MOD, fill some staff and command appointments, and implement SILSEP reforms. The recommendations were accepted and the idea of BMATT was enlarged to include other countries – becoming IMATT.

The Commonwealth and Overseas Defence Attachés were briefed on these developments in London in January 2000.

The third SILSEP adviser focused on the reform of the intelligence and security services of the country. At the time of SILSEP's arrival in Freetown, the main counter-terrorism, counter-espionage, and counter-subversion responsibilities were the responsibility of the Special Branch of the SLP, while intelligence was mainly gathered to monitor opposition parties, student organisations, and trade unions. SILSEP's initial activities were aimed at supporting the Sierra Leone National Security Advisor and contributing to the creation of a National Security Council, the outline of a National Security Act, and the draft of a National Security Policy. A first draft of the Sierra Leone National Security Policy Paper was thus initiated and circulated by 2000. The aim of the paper was to consider the key security issues and threats of the country and to provide an overarching basic framework for the main security agencies.

Meanwhile, the CPDTF team returned to Freetown to resume police reform activities. By the end of the year, Keith Biddle, a retired British police officer who was heading the team, was appointed by President Kabbah as Sierra Leone IGP. It was after the CPDTF return in 1999 that the team decided to maintain, rearm, and train the SSD as the country's sole armed police forces. This decision was made given the permanence of unstable security circumstances and the role played by the SSD in defending the capital from the RUF attack in January 1999. Police ranks were reduced and streamlined and training was provided by British personnel in Sierra Leone. Police officers in more senior positions received training at the UK Police Staff College at Bramshill. By the end of 1999, British-funded street-level bureaucrats were thus fully engaged in helping the GoSL rebuild its Army, police, intelligence, and public sector. At the same time, the signature of the Lomé Peace Agreement in Summer 1999 reinvigorated the efforts of the international community. A second DDR phase was implemented from October 1999 to May 2000, and UNAMSIL troops replaced UNOMSIL observers in October 1999.

The hostage crisis in May 2000 and the UK military intervention in the same month bolstered British support to SSR. The UK committed additional funds to re-equip the SLA and deployed an infantry battalion with Short Term Training Team (STTT) functions. IMATT was deployed in June 2000 to support the STTT and fill key and command appointments in the MOD and Armed Forces. It was then further

strengthened following the deterioration of the security situation in early October 2000. Security concerns also suggested a need for an increase in the size of the Army to approximately 15,000 personnel, followed by a proposed reduction to 10,600 by 2005 (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 57; White, 2008). In order to ensure transparency and civilian oversight of the Armed Forces, plans to restructure the Sierra Leone MOD according to the UK MOD structure were considered and implemented. In January 2002, the GoSL inaugurated the new MOD as a 'joint Civilian/Military organisation'. To mark the new beginning, the Armed Forces were officially renamed Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF).

On the police side, in October 2000 the CPDTF was transformed into the CCSSP, a project funded by DFID and by the ACPP which supported the longer-term SLP development (Albrecht, 2010). Police presence outside Freetown was nonetheless very limited, and DFID procured more vehicles and communications equipment to extend the SLP's reach beyond the capital. At the same time, the team established the Family Support Units (FSU) to deal with issues of domestic violence, sexual offences, and crimes against women and children (Fakondo, 2008).

At the end of 2000, there were three official intelligence agencies in the country: the Special Branch of the SLP, the Force and Intelligence Security Unit (FISU), and the Central Intelligence Security Unit (CISU), established in 1997 to provide secret intelligence services. British street-level bureaucrats and national counterparts started considering plans to restructure, integrate, and organise these three agencies. These plans resulted in the creation of the ONS, a new, apolitical government institution with central coordination and open source intelligence gathering functions (Conteh, 2008). At the head of the new-born ONS, the title of National Security Coordinator replaced that of National Security Advisor, marking the departure from a personality-driven relationship with the President to a more professional and institutionalised interaction with a governmental agency (Ashington-Pickett, 2008). Security coordination mechanisms were also decentralised with the progressive creation of the Provincial and District Security Committees (PROSEC and DISEC). Developing the security architecture outside Freetown was extremely important, as this resolved the problem of the lack of early warning mechanisms in the provinces and emphasised the importance of security as a community issue.

The peculiar security situation of the country in the late 1990s urged British street-level bureaucrats to prioritise the police, military, and intelligence reform processes over justice reforms. As a consequence, reforms of the justice sector started only in January 2001, with the launch of the LDP. The LDP was developed in parallel with the CCSSP and the partially UK-funded Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission, a body established by an Act of the Parliament of Sierra Leone in 2000 and supported by HMG until 2007. The first task of the LDP was to address the most urgent problems in the justice sector, such as the reconstruction of infrastructure. The programme refurbished the main Law Courts Building in Freetown and Magistrate's Courts in Bo and Kenema, an activity that had "a major psychological effect" (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 41; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, p. 60) on the population. The second part of the programme was then devoted to rebuild the capacity of the judiciary by training 20 registrars, administrators, under-sheriffs, and bailiffs.

By early 2002, the main programmes and structures to reform the police, military, intelligence, and justice apparatus of the country were in place. Police reform activities were under the CCSSP, with a British officer as IGP of the SLP force. Military reforms of the Sierra Leone MOD and of the Armed Forces were under the responsibility of the military element of SILSEP and IMATT. Intelligence reform was ensured by a SILSEP element, and further reinforced by the presence of intelligence specialists from the UK to support the new-born ONS and CISU (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 73). The LDP was addressing justice issues. Alongside these reforms and programmes, the international community remained committed to ensure and maintain security in the country. Seven British military officers served with the UN Force headquarters in Freetown (Le Grys, 2008, p. 2), while 17,500 UNAMSIL peacekeepers provided space for the UK to reconstruct local security forces and governance structures. The DDR process was restructured as the UK withdrew its support from the programme's Emergency Response Team in 2000, and had its third and final phase from May 2001 to January 2002. As part of the DDR programme, approximately 2,500 ex-combatants entered the Military Reintegration Programme and were absorbed into RSLAF in 2001/2002 (Nelson-Williams, 2008, pp. 7-8).

During the first period of reforms, British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone therefore designed and implemented a series of security programmes and policies targeting the whole security apparatus of the West African country. Nonetheless, the



unstable security situation on the ground severely restricted the possible policy options and activities of British street-level bureaucrats on the ground. HMG street-level bureaucrats not only had to leave Freetown in more than one circumstance, but they were also constrained in their mobility, decisions-making freedom, and policy implementation. For example, establishing a police and intelligence presence in the outskirts of Freetown was almost impossible until late 2000, and the provision of vehicles and communication equipment for the police force was indeed one of the priorities of the early police reform programmes. The instability in the provinces limited British and international presence to the capital city. Security was also lacking in some parts of Freetown, as recalled by one of the first advisers sent to the country in 1999:

“On our arrival we found Freetown in complete disarray and still in a state of virtual war. The functions of state were practically collapsed, with ministries in confusion and officials lacking clear aims and direction. Most businesses and government offices had been looted and vandalized during the January 1999 RUF/AFRC attack and had not been repaired. Much of the city’s infrastructure had been destroyed or badly damaged. We were taken by car to the MOD in Freetown to meet the Deputy Minister of Defence. On the journey from our accommodation we passed through seven checkpoints manned by various groups of armed persons. From their dress it was difficult to ascertain if they were military, civilian or police. The rule of law and order appeared to have broken down completely” (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 45; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, p. 64).

British street-level bureaucrats in the country could barely move from their hotels and some governance activities were managed from London, with sporadic visits to Sierra Leone. Freetown was a traumatised city after the 1999 attacks, as recalled by one of the first British advisers sent to the country:

“I suppose over a million and a half people had come out of the country into Freetown. Freetown was just packed for the people, and it was a pretty destroyed city, nothing had been done, nothing had been rebuilt since the 1999, early 1999 attacks on Freetown by the AFRC. So, it was a devastated city, you had people living in the streets, it was

awful: no water, no electricity, very little food, very difficult place to live”.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, the Sierra Leonean institutions that were to be reformed were either destroyed or in complete disarray. The police forces were considered extremely corrupt by the population. They had no uniforms, only a dozen of working vehicles, and, according to one initial report from the CPDTF, the living accommodation of SLP officers was “the worse any member of the CPDTF has seen and all have travelled widely in the developing world” (CPDTF, 1998a). Military advisers found an equally bad situation: the 1997 coup had already demonstrated the unreliability of some factions of the Army. Similarly, still in 1999 the Sierra Leone’s MOD Deputy Minister’s office:

“Was in a two-storey building, had no glass in the windows, there were whole bullet holes in the roof, there were papers in the courtyard outside. We found out later there were three members of staff, four members of staff [...]. And that was it. And the Minister, the Deputy Minister”.<sup>30</sup>

The status of the intelligence institutions was equally poor. CISU had been established in 1997 but, according to a British adviser working on the reform of the security and intelligence apparatus, existed only on paper:

“I walked into an empty building and about three people in there, who hadn’t really an idea of what they were doing. Three or four people. No, actually, let me think [...]. There must be about 5 people in there. Three of those I had to get out, because they were just political placements”.<sup>31</sup>

The task was not easier for the governance advisers, who on their arrival in the country could not find any institutional memory regarding the activities of the government, except for “a box of floppy disks that had been brought away from Freetown during the war”.<sup>32</sup> The situation was similar for those working with the justice system: the first reforms in this sector started only in 2001 and were aimed simply at refurbishing and

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<sup>29</sup> Interview n. 33, London, 20 March 2013.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Interview n. 31, London, 19 November 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Interview n. 1, Birmingham, 10 May 2012.

reconstructing the Law Courts buildings and the basic physical and institutional infrastructures.

Facing numerous security constraints and the extremely decrepit status of the main institutions in the country, British street-level bureaucrats worked to completely overhaul the entire Sierra Leonean security apparatus. They determined what was needed in their specific sectors, worked out what resources were required, designed and drafted project plans, and recruited and trained people accordingly. Most of the times, these reforms proceeded in combination with the refurbishment of the edifices hosting the main institutions or with the ad hoc construction of new buildings. In April 2000 for example, an advance element of the IMATT Support Team was sent to Freetown to arrange for the provision of accommodation and administrative support for the IMATT personnel. They planned to refurbish a dilapidated block of ten flats that had been allocated to the IMATT by the GoSL. They also initiated a new project to build 20 houses on government-owned land, and identified suitable property to rent in the interim period until the new accommodation was ready (Anon. 2002, p. 19). Likewise, MODAT had to restructure the derelict Paramount Hotel before opening the new Sierra Leonean MOD there. Similarly, one of the LDP's main priorities was refurbishing the Law Courts Building in Freetown and magistrates Courts in Bo and Kenema.

These first activities to completely overhaul the Sierra Leone security apparatus were supported by a progressive evolution of SSR policy in the UK and in Sierra Leone. This policy development of SSR progressed alongside increasing attention and evolution of the research on the sector, as DFID and other HMG departments funded research centres and studies aimed to support, back and complement the emerging SSR policy agenda during the same period. The next part of this chapter gives an account of the early policy and research evolution in the UK and in Sierra Leone, which not only shaped the policy process in Sierra Leone, but also influenced the role of knowledge and research in British-led SSR policy in the country.

### **5.3 The policy and research evolution**

Chapter 3 has already described how the SSR policy agenda developed in the late 1990s in the UK and would be increasingly adopted at the international level by the OECD DAC and its donor members. As part of this evolution, Sierra Leone was the first engagement on SSR for the British government, as well as a new and learning

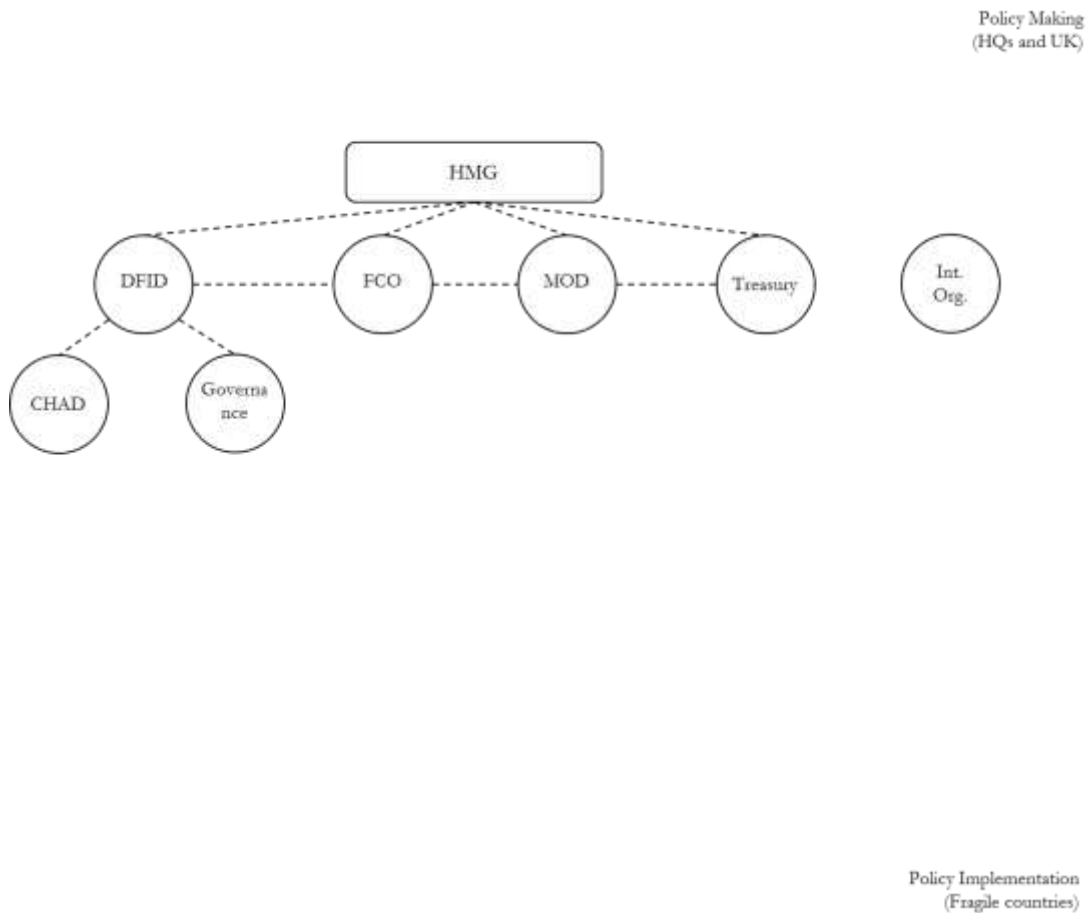
experience for several UK departments and their increasingly joined-up activities. The evolution of SSR policy at HMG level and its related research agenda proceeded concurrently with historical events and policies implemented by British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone, sometimes interacting with these activities, more often remaining disjointed and disarticulated from developments on the ground.

The early evolution of the SSR policy and research agenda happened during the same period in which British SSR street-level bureaucrats were already working in Sierra Leone. As a result, several lessons from Sierra Leone have been translated into British and international policy approaches to SSR. As it has been argued by some scholars, “while SSR came to shape Sierra Leone, the transformation process in Sierra Leone came to shape international approaches to SSR – as a concept, a set of policies and an integrated set of programmatic approaches” (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 8; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, p. 25). UK-led SSR efforts in Sierra Leone were thus referred in several policy papers, speeches, and events (DFID, 1998, 2000a; Short, 1999) or analysed in early research studies and working papers (Ball, 1998; Ero, 2000). Sierra Leone was a real learning experience, as well as a test case study for HMG SSR policy in conflict-affected countries. Lessons from Sierra Leone were feeding into headquarters policy and being extremely influential on the domestic and international policy agenda in London and elsewhere. Equally and conversely, HMG policy was meant to shape the SSR policy developments in the country. The following part of the chapter describes how this early policy and research evolution of SSR shaped the network of actors working in the UK and in conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

### *5.3.1 The policy evolution in the UK*

Figure 11 is adapted from Figure 10 and presents a sketch of the network of policy actors supporting the early evolution of the SSR policy agenda and involved in policy formulation at headquarters level in the UK.

**Figure 11** First period, ‘fire-fighting’ solutions: the policy actors in the UK



As already underlined, the SSR policy agenda developed in the late 1990s in the UK and was further adopted at international level in subsequent years. HMG and British departments and ministries such as DFID, FCO, the MOD, and the Treasury are thus the main policy actors represented in the white circles of the figure. At the same time, international organisations and bilateral donors were increasingly starting their policy reflection on SSR (Ball, 2001, 2002). International organisations thus represent another white circle of policy actors in Figure 11. However, this circle is not directly linked with the UK actors because in the early 2000s the international SSR agenda was only developing, and initiatives aiming to promote SSR at the multilateral level were not yet consolidated.

Dotted lines link the different UK policy actors in the figure. The reason for these dotted lines is that the evolution and institutionalisation of the SSR agenda required some sensitive organisational changes at central government level. In particular, it was sometimes difficult in the late 1990s to overcome deeply entrenched

cultural and institutional differences among and within governmental departments, as well as joining up the diverse approaches of personnel collaborating on the ground. For example, working with other SSR-related actors such as military, intelligence, or security personnel represented a real revolution for DFID. In this regard, SSR activities in Sierra Leone were a watershed operation and only a modification of the 1980 Overseas Development Act allowed DFID to participate to SSR programmes in the country, while setting the limits for the Department's engagement with security-related activities. Working in the UK and Sierra Leone alongside street-level bureaucrats from other security-related departments hence represented "a quite significant shift in the whole ethos" (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 177; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, p. 179) for DFID personnel, a change not devoid of challenges and misunderstandings.

The dotted lines therefore symbolise the difficult process of joining-up institutions with diverse and sometimes antithetic culture such as the different HMG departments. The general perception of this revolutionary change is expressed in the words of a British adviser: "this emphasis on coordination and everything fitting together looks wonderful on paper, but when you are dealing with institutions that they have never even talked to each other, I would react with horror and incredulity".<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, efforts toward a more joined-up approach continued and reinvigorated in early 2000s, with DFID, FCO, and MOD officers and ministries participating to the 2000 SSR Symposium in London, with the development of the SSDAT in 2001, and with the creation in the same year of the tri-departmental ACPP and GCPP. In particular, the ACPP – a joined-up funding mechanism explicitly used for UK policies in conflict-affected sub-Saharan countries – provided the main financial support for British SSR policy in Sierra Leone. In 2002, the ACPP funded British SSR programmes and activities to reintegrate ex-combatants for a total of £28.9 million (Ginifer & Oliver, 2004, p. 11). It also strengthened Whitehall and in country tri-departmental collaboration through "regular formal and informal coordination and information sharing" (Ginifer & Oliver, 2004, p. 2).

Two other white circles are linked to DFID. These represent DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD), and DFID's Governance Department. The reason for these additional circles is that the new and uneasy task of coordinating tri-departmental activities and policies was further complicated by the fact that DFID

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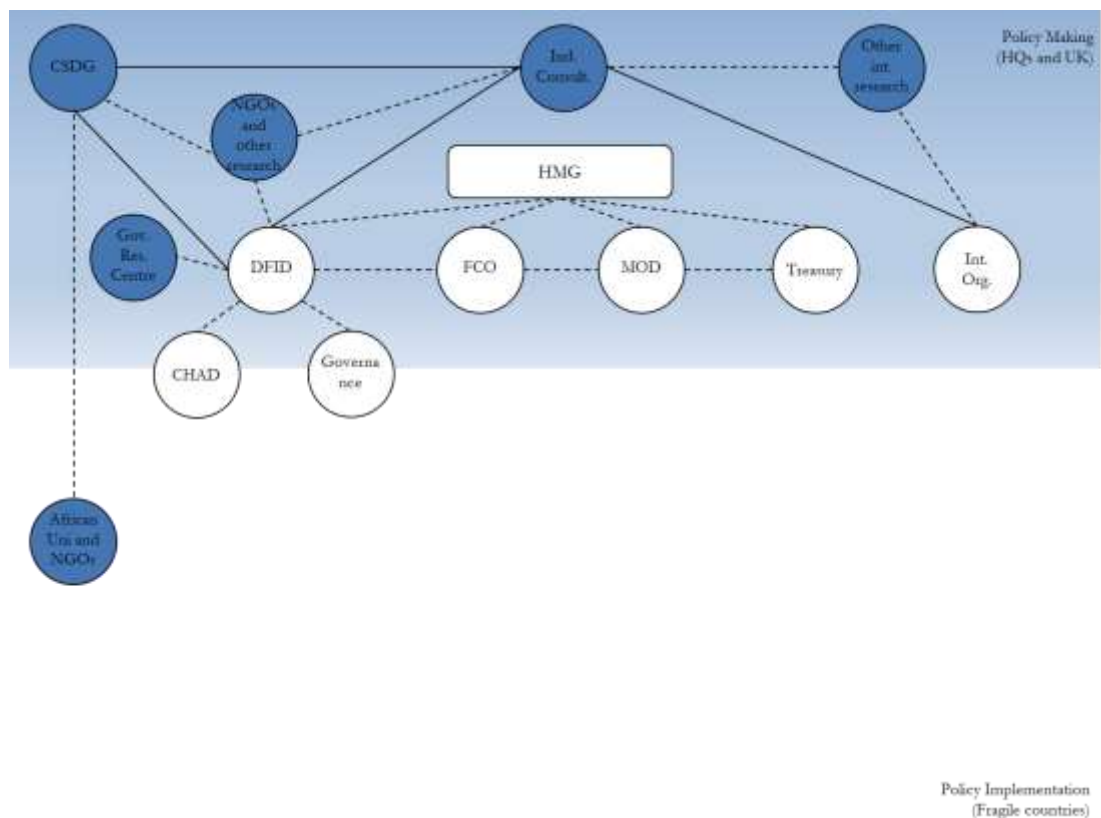
<sup>33</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.

maintained and developed a holistic SSR concept, but divided implementation of its SSR policy administratively into two different departments, with elements relating to “the military, paramilitary, and intelligence services, and the civilian structures responsible for their oversight and control” (DFID, 2002b, p. 7) under CHAD – today called Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE) – and the police and justice elements under its Governance Department. This division of labour resulted in the publication of two different guidelines by the two departments in 2002, which addressed only the specific actors falling under the departments’ respective responsibilities (DFID, 2002a, 2002b). Moreover, the decision to split DFID SSR implementation into two different departments “not only established the basis for a turf war within DFID, but it also delayed meaningful dialogue within the British government [...] on how to address insecurity most effectively through the UK’s foreign, defence and development policies” (Ball, 2010, p. 34). The dotted lines between the two departments and DFID therefore show how DFID divided implementation of its SSR agenda into two internal departments, and how communication between these was limited and often difficult.

### *5.3.2 The research evolution in the UK*

Figure 12 expands upon Figure 11 by depicting the principal research actors that contributed to the development of the early SSR policy agenda in the UK and at the international level.

**Figure 12** First period, ‘fire-fighting’ solutions: the research actors in the UK



As already underlined in Part 3.3, researchers have been considered an integral and important part of the SSR policy evolution at HMG level since the launch of the SSR policy agenda by Clare Short in March 1999. For example, DFID established a three-year collaboration with CSDG at King’s College, London to support the Department’s work on SSR. CSDG thus represents one of the circles in Figure 12, connected to DFID with a solid line to symbolise the direct collaboration between the Department and the research group.

At the same time, DFID began to fund additional research on state building and SSR which indirectly fed into its policy, the work of CSDG, or other international consultants working on SSR. This other research is symbolised in the figure by the two circles named ‘NGOs and other research’ and ‘Governance Resource Centre’. NGOs such as Saferworld were indeed part of this emerging SSR research agenda; likewise, the activities of the Governance Resource Centre were funded by DFID and aimed to support its policy with evidence. However, the dotted lines between these two blue circles and DFID and between the NGO circle and the other research actors symbolise how these studies did not influence directly DFID SSR policy papers, but were



nonetheless part of an emerging discourse on state building and SSR that was progressively shaping the expanding research agenda.

Independent consultants form another blue circle in the policy network linked with a solid line both to DFID and international organisations. The reason for this additional circle is that in the late 1990s, DFID developed regular collaborations with a group of trusted researchers and consultants. Some of them, such as Dylan Hendrickson, Nicole Ball, 'Funmi Olonisakin, Paul Jackson, and Ann Fitz-Gerald started a long-term professional exchange with the Department and other international donors that enabled them to directly influence British SSR policy and participate as consultants, policy advisers, or experts in several SSR-related studies, meetings, and evaluations worldwide (Ball, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2004b, 2005; Ball & Hendrickson, 2002, 2006; Ball & Holmes, 2002; Ball & van de Goor, 2008; Ball, Bouta & van de Goor, 2003; Ball et al., 2007; Bryden, N'Diaye & Olonisakin, 2005; Fitz-Gerald, 2004; Hendrickson, 1999; Horn, Olonisakin & Peake, 2006).

Dylan Hendrickson is one example of these influential researchers who had a direct role in shaping HMG policy. Hired as a Research Fellow for CSDG in King's College, he reviewed in 1999 the thinking, approaches, and dilemmas characterising the emerging SSR agenda (Hendrickson, 1999). One of the first paragraphs of this early Working Paper is emblematically entitled *Linking Research and Policy* and bridging SSR research and policy was a main role for the author in the successive years. He collaborated on the organisation and preparation of the Discussion Papers for the HMG Symposium on SSR in 2000 (DFID, 2000a) and coordinated the production of DFID's guidelines on SSR in 2002 (DFID, 2002b). Starting from these early engagements, he began a prolific collaboration with DFID, HMG, and other international donors. For example, he was involved in the preparation of the tri-departmental SSR Strategy in 2004 (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2004) and today, he still participates as a consultant, policy adviser, and expert on a number of SSR-related activities.

Nicole Ball is another researcher that influenced the SSR policy agenda at HMG and international level. Considered as the 'mother of SSR', she authored in 1998 the first DFID-sponsored report on SSR made by Saferworld (Ball, 1998) which *de facto* constituted one of the first engagements of the Department with SSR. Over the course of the following years, she maintained a strong professional collaboration with Dylan

Hendrickson (Ball & Hendrickson, 2002, 2006) and participated in several studies and initiatives funded by the UK government. For example, she worked on the organisation for the 2000 HMG SSR Symposium, drafting some of the Background Papers (DFID, 2000a). She also led the evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools SSR Strategy in 2004 (Ball, 2004b), and influenced the early approaches to security and defence expenditure of the World Bank and the IMF (Ball, 2001; Ball & Holmes, 2002). Over the years, she became one of the main personalities behind the evolution of the SSR agenda at the international level, collaborating extensively with the OECD, the UN, and the Dutch government, and working as consultant or researcher for international and bilateral donors worldwide (Ball, 2002, 2005; Ball et al., 2007; Ball, Bouta & van de Goor, 2003; Ball & van de Goor, 2008).

The solid lines between independent consultants and the policy circles of DFID and the international organisations symbolise the direct link of these researchers with the institutional actors promoting SSR at policy level. Furthermore, the circle of independent consultants is also linked directly to CSDG. This symbolises how most of the time these influential and independent consultants collaborated with each other in promoting the emerging SSR agenda, as shown in the cases of Dylan Hendrickson and Nicole Ball.

However, it is worth adding two additional comments in relation to these initial collaborations between policy and research. Firstly, some researchers from developing countries such as Rocklyn Williams, Eboe Hutchful, and Kayode Fayemi were also involved in this early evolution of the SSR agenda. This is symbolised in the figure by the blue circle of ‘African universities and NGOs’, linked through dotted lines with the activities of CSDG. The participation of African SSR experts in this process was usually the outcome of institutional relationships between British and Western universities and African non-governmental organisations or academic institutions. As recalled by an early SSR researcher: “we, in many ways, were enabling all these researchers from developing countries to feed into HMG policy”.<sup>34</sup> For example, Rocklyn Williams became part of the SSR process at World Bank level because of his work with Nicole Ball. Professional relationships were thus the main channel through which local researchers could enter the British and international SSR networks. African SSR experts like Kayode Fayemi, Eboe Hutchful, and Rocklyn Williams participated in the 2000

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<sup>34</sup> Interview n. 25, London, 23 October 2012.

HMG SSR Symposium in London. The line between the CSDG circle and the circle of African universities and NGOs is nonetheless dotted because the work of these researchers fed into policy mainly through indirect means such as the collaboration with Western researchers in policy papers delineating the emerging SSR policy agenda. Furthermore, the circle is blue and not linked to policy actors in Sierra Leone, as academic studies conducted by these researchers mainly influenced the development of SSR policy at headquarters level, rather than the activities of SSR street-level bureaucrats in fragile countries such as Sierra Leone.

The second important thing to note about these first SSR research developments is that the majority of the researchers and academics who were involved in the initial phase of the SSR evolution – even those sponsored by DFID – did not see and define their early work as ‘research’. Indeed, DFID had an existing SSR policy agenda, or at least a clear idea of what it wanted to do in the field of SSR in conflict-affected countries like Sierra Leone. As a consequence, researchers during this early stage were not requested to carry out research, but conversely were asked to assist with the further development of HMG’s SSR policy and implement this policy on the ground. People working in the CSDG for example saw themselves as having a hybrid position as DFID policy advisers/staff. They became, in a tangential way, additional members of CHAD, helping British street-level bureaucrats implement the policies on the ground and spending a lot of their time overseas. Their research in the early 2000s consisted of collecting few lessons learned and producing some studies on various approaches to SSR used in different countries. One of the King’s College fellows further clarifies this important point:

“I worked full time effectively for DFID for three years. So, not as an academic, but effectively as a... not a researcher in fact [...]. Basically, they hired us, they had a policy, they had an agenda which talked about Sierra Leone, Uganda and few other countries, but they were not interested in King’s doing research. We did very little research in the first few years which is interesting, what we did was to help them to develop the policy further, to develop a sort of cross governmental working, to help to implement the policy, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Indonesia the countries. So basic we became additional staff members of CHAD as it was called at the time [...]. So, we were under that

contract for four years, and so I was not an academic or a researcher, I was based in King's but effectively what I was... was a policy adviser/staff. So, we both advised and helped to implement the policies, we spent a lot of time overseas, so I think it was a very important point to make first of all in terms of my role and the role of my Unit because all we did was SSR for DFID the first four years".<sup>35</sup>

Figure 12 includes another blue circle of 'other international research' linked with dotted lines to both the research circle of the independent consultants and the policy circle of international organisations. Increasing reflection on security and development, as well as research on themes pertaining to state building and SSR, necessarily shaped the emerging SSR discourse and policy work at the international level. However, the dotted lines symbolise how this research had a cumulative impact on the whole SSR policy and academic discourse, influencing with themes and reflections this emerging agenda, but impacting the work of policy-makers and researchers only indirectly.

Finally, the blue area representing the indirect influence of research and research themes stops at the headquarters policy-making level, without expanding to fragile states. This point will be further investigated throughout the chapter and highlights how the academic research and themes linked to the emerging SSR agenda had a major influence on policy papers, strategies, and documents at the headquarters level. In contrast, academic research shaped to only a limited extent the activities of British street-level bureaucrats in conflict-affected countries like Sierra Leone, who conversely looked for short-term, policy-oriented studies to implement SSR programmes and activities on the ground.

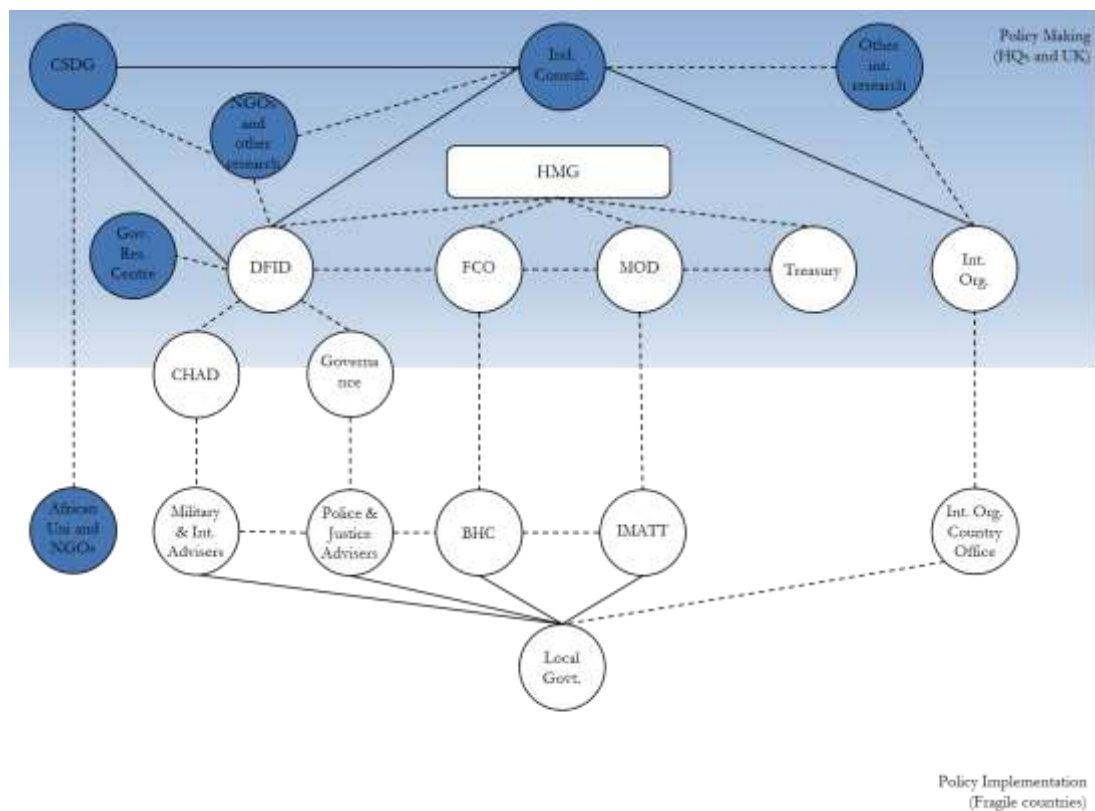
### *5.3.3 The policy evolution in Sierra Leone*

Figure 13 shows the different policy actors who contributed to the implementation of the first, 'fire-fighting' solutions in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The figure derives from the precedent Figure 12 and shows the network of policy actors on the ground, as well as the connections of the different street-level bureaucrats with their respective headquarters.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

**Figure 13** First period, ‘fire-fighting’ solutions: the policy actors in Sierra Leone



The white circles in the figure represent the main policy actors implementing British-led SSR policy on the ground. The circles are linked with different lines, symbolising a variety of reciprocal relationships. The circle of the international organisations country offices symbolises the presence in the country of some international and bilateral actors alongside the British and the Sierra Leonean government. As previously described, international actors such as the UN supported the SSR, DDR, and peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone. They maintained a high amount of freedom from their respective headquarters and are therefore linked to them by a dotted line. The impact of the activities of these international actors on the security situation on the ground was extremely positive and international and bilateral donor countries contributed to promote and maintain peace in the final years of the conflict. However, the lack of connection between these actors and the UK policy players, as well as the dotted line linking these actors to the local government show that these international policy actors were not the main implementers of the SSR policy in the country, as SSR programmes and activities were mainly designed and implemented by the UK.

Indeed, some scholars have pointed out how the driving role of the UK in the early SSR process and British bilateral linkages with the GoSL constituted two factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the first reforms in the West African state (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011). The UK was the principal policy actor implementing the first security activities on the ground. The main British actors and street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone were intelligence, military, police, and justice advisers, the British High Commission, and the presence of the IMATT military contingent to help implement the first military reforms. These actors are all represented in the white circles of the network in Figure 13, and were, in this way, part of the SSR policy process in conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

Two distinct circles symbolise (i) military and intelligence advisers and (ii) police and justice advisers. DFID's decision to divide responsibility of SSR policy implementation between two different departments created a parallel chain of command for street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone, with police and justice advisers reporting to the Governance Department and the activities of the other SSR advisers overseen by CHAD. As recalled by an early SSR researcher, this division had practical consequences for policy design and implementation on the ground:

“The police component was not designed at the same time as the military component and the work on the national security office and things like that, that was all designed somewhere separately and pieced together, so in that sense I don't think it was fully integrated or comprehensive”.<sup>36</sup>

Thus the different SSR elements were not coordinated under a unique command and therefore developed over time as separate entities responding to different departments and desks. Probably the most famous example of this lack of coordination was the December 1999 controversy between the police and the military elements of British street-level bureaucrats in the country over the use of the old Paramount Hotel in Freetown. The derelict building was hosting the police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the SSD and had been at the same time identified by MODAT as a good location for the new Sierra Leone MOD. Eventually, the building was assigned to MODAT and President Kabbah found an alternative accommodation for

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

the CID, while the SSD was placed in temporary barracks outside Freetown (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, pp. 49-50; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, pp. 35-36).

Most of the British street-level bureaucrats working in the country during the period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions therefore agreed that the policy process in Sierra Leone was not necessarily joined-up among the different SSR components. British street-level bureaucrats in Freetown – included the High Commissioner – had regular, weekly formal and informal meetings. They always showed a high degree of professionalism and generally maintained good personal relationships with other practitioners working in the country; nonetheless, the various SSR components often functioned as separate and parallel entities. IMATT, one of the white circles in Figure 13, had a third and different chain of command and reported to UK MOD in London, while the DFID-seconded Civilian Adviser to the Sierra Leone MOD reported to DFID. The various SSR elements thus evolved as separate entities, responding to different departments and desks while lacking an overarching strategic framework. Most of HMG cooperation thus developed directly on the ground, thanks to individuals operating with “the right background, mentality and personality, so a collaborative mind-set”.<sup>37</sup>

Dotted lines link the white circles of the different UK policy actors working in Sierra Leone. The lines symbolise how coordination among the diverse SSR elements on the ground was at times difficult, with different entrenched departmental cultures and several distinct chains of command at times hindering coordination among the various programmes. Moreover, some logistical issues further worked to complicate the pursuit of a holistic SSR approach in the country. Staff continuity was one of the main problems for British street-level bureaucrats working in Freetown. In particular, IMATT personnel had a higher turnover rate than DFID advisers, while their commander usually changed on a yearly basis. This high rotation created obvious problems not only in relation to an internal lack of capacity, continuity, and corporate institutional memory, but also in relation to the work of the other street-level bureaucrats in the country, who always had to build new relationships with incoming IMATT commanders. A DFID adviser working in Sierra Leone during the conflict years for example reminds: “in my period there, three director generals of IMATT

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<sup>37</sup> Interview n. 31, London, 19 November 2012.

changed”.<sup>38</sup> His colleague recalls the difficulties of re-building a professional relationship at every change of personnel: “if you send a new contingent every few months, it becomes a very, a ‘beginning again type’ process”.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, IMATT personnel were located in Leicester Peak, a different location that was relatively isolated from the British High Commission and the other British and Sierra Leonean institutions in Freetown. This small but significant difference in geographic location added to the perception of the separation of IMATT personnel from other British street-level bureaucrats in the country. As a result, IMATT policies appeared to some to be more linked to the priorities of single commanders rather than to an overarching and joined-up strategy in collaboration with other British SSR street-level bureaucrats. An early British adviser in the country recalls: “[IMATT] always changed its personnel. Every commander had his own ideas; they had their own mandate, but every commander had his way to implement it”.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, his colleague comments more explicitly: “there was a lot of concern that basically the IMATT’s operations on an annual basis were very much determined by the interests and the priorities of the commanding at the time rather than each commander delivering against a strategic plan”.<sup>41</sup>

British street-level bureaucrats in the country enjoyed a large amount of freedom and responsibility: their policy was usually reactive and shaped by the needs of the situation on the ground rather than by London headquarters. As remarked by one of the early street-level bureaucrats in the country: “there was in general no involvement from the headquarters, but when policy was done back in London this caused problems because they did not know about the situation on the ground”.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, DFID only opened its country office in 2005. Before that date, it managed some of the programmes from London, occasionally flying out some of its advisers and maintaining only the seconded British advisers and two staff in Freetown (Poate et al., 2008). Figure 13 thus links with dotted lines the British actors in Sierra Leone and their respective headquarters. This symbolises the large amount of freedom of personnel on the ground,

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<sup>38</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

<sup>42</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.



as underlined by the words of a DFID adviser working in Freetown during this early period: “basically, we had more or less a free hand”.<sup>43</sup>

Coordination and cooperation among the various elements of the SSR programme developed directly on the ground, as recalled by one of the early street-level bureaucrats working in Sierra Leone: “we were not coordinated, we did it on the ground”.<sup>44</sup> Interactions among British street-level bureaucrats assumed paramount importance and underpinned the development of the SSR programmes and activities in the country. Top UK advisers worked in close arrangement and used to have regular formal and informal meetings among themselves, with the British High Commissioner in Freetown, and with the President of Sierra Leone to monitor, update, and decide the developments of SSR policy on the ground. In spite of the differences of mandates and roles, the institutional divisions at headquarters level, and the small misunderstandings that can happen when working in a fragile, conflict-affected environment, professionalism, collaboration, and very good relationships underpinned the activities of British street-level bureaucrats. One of them recalls how relationships on the ground were “extremely good. Because there was only a small number of us, because we were in a war situation, we were all professionals, we knew we relied on each other, and absolutely no problem. But of course, with limited resources everybody is grabbing resources!”<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, personal relationships between British street-level bureaucrats and local policy-makers were important, as top UK street-level bureaucrats had regular meetings with the President of Sierra Leone and with the main security actors in the country. In particular, the British High Commissioner, the IGP, and the IMATT Commander had direct access to President Kabbah,<sup>46</sup> as remembered by one of the first IMATT commanders in the country:

“I was also direct Adviser to the President. I was always taken very seriously by the President: together with the Chief of Defence Staff and the IGP we used to meet with the President two or three times per week in informal meetings. No one else, as far as I know, had such a

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<sup>43</sup> Interview n. 22, London, 29 August 2012.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> The IMATT Commander maintained direct access to the President in his role of Military adviser to the GoSL until IMATT was disbanded in 2013.

similar access. There were two reasons for it. First, the President was the Minister of Defence at that time. Actually the Deputy Ministry of Defence then ran the Department, but the President still had the position of Minister of Defence. Now it is no longer the case, as there is a Minister of Defence. Second, the fragility of the situation. Out of the Committee, we could have private discussions, exchange our ideas and discuss them privately, even saying things we could not say at the Committee. The President was immensely receptive. [...] When I left, we reduced the number of informal meetings to two every week”.<sup>47</sup>

President Kabbah was usually extremely receptive and willing to accept and take on board suggestions coming from British street-level bureaucrats, as recalled by two advisers working in the country:

“- *Was he receptive?*

- Oh, yes! Very sensible, he would listen. He would not always do what we wanted him to do.

- No, but he solved few problems.

- And he listened, he thinks about things”.<sup>48</sup>

Other British street-level bureaucrats would regularly meet with the Sierra Leonean President, as well as local ministers and top security officers. SILSEP security and intelligence adviser used to regularly meet the President “in the presence of the head of CISU or the head of the ONS”.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, the British Military Adviser to Sierra Leone MOD used to visit Sierra Leonean ministries and to accompany the Sierra Leonean Chief of Defence Staff in his regular meetings with the country’s President.

IMATT personnel at that time filled key positions in the Sierra Leone MOD and the Armed Forces, as explained by one of the early IMATT commanders in the country:

“The reason for this was that there was a lack of capacity and experience, a lack of capability. The air wing was very tiny, actually they probably had only one M124, and was commanded by the British Air

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<sup>47</sup> Interview n. 18, London, 4 July 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Interview n. 22, London, 29 August 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Interview n. 31, London, 19 November 2012.

Force. The maritime wing was commanded by a UK navy officer, who is the current Defence Attaché in the Sierra Leone High Commission. In the MOD, there were a number of officers running some sections of the MOD. I sat with the Chief of Defence staff, who was from Sierra Leone, and there were lots of Brits in support positions”.<sup>50</sup>

Consequently, personal interactions between British and Sierra Leonean security actors developed and were built on a basis of mutual respect and trust, if not friendship. In the long term, these positive relationships, usually not considered or downplayed in the literature about state building, development, and SSR, “made an immense difference to the work”<sup>51</sup> of British street-level bureaucrats in the country. As explained by one of the first DFID advisers in Sierra Leone:

“Things usually work thanks for personal relationships, and the ability of a person to develop good and strong relationships. It’s only with confidence and patience that then they start collaborating with you, not because they see Britain behind you, but because of you”.<sup>52</sup>

The importance of maintaining good personal relationships with local policy-makers was even higher considering the direct and extremely influential role played by British street-level bureaucrats in guiding and influencing the Sierra Leone SSR policy process. In the first period of UK-led reforms in the country, British street-level bureaucrats were not only mentoring and steering the domestic SSR process, but in some circumstances actively and directly led and participated in the development of the SSR country policy. This strong linkage and direct role played by British street-level bureaucrats in local security reforms is symbolised in Figure 13 by the solid lines connecting the UK actors on the ground to the Sierra Leone government.

Some street-level bureaucrats wrote specific papers, charters, reports, and strategies constituting the early security policy of the GoSL. CPDTF advisers for example had a seminal role in the publication of the Sierra Leone Policing Charter in August 1998 (members of the CPDTF were equally influential in organising and facilitating a seminar where over 70 senior local police officers formulated the Police

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<sup>50</sup> Interview n. 18, London, 4 July 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Interview n. 33, London, 20 March 2013.

<sup>52</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

Mission Statement). They drafted the text of the Charter according to ideas coming from the 1996 Banya Report and from consultations with over 100 people. CPDTF advisers prepared a draft of the Policing Charter, which was then signed by President Kabbah and read in a Presidential public statement on policing. Members of the CPDTF “were delighted that His Excellency used the full text of our draft without any alteration” (CPDTF, 1998b). However, they were equally conscious that “when he signed it, it was exactly what he wanted”,<sup>53</sup> as, in the words of one of the top British police advisers working in Freetown, “President Kabbah would not have signed something because I gave it through”.<sup>54</sup>

Likewise, from 1999 to early 2000, the MODAT team not only developed and proposed the structure of BMATT – then implemented and deployed as IMATT – but it also designed an Order of Battle (ORBAT) for the Armed Forces and drew numerous plans and organisational charts to reform the structure of the Armed Forces and of the Sierra Leone MOD. As explained by a military adviser involved in the process, while bearing in mind the necessity to “put together a structure that was achievable, that looked sensible”,<sup>55</sup> the MODAT team prepared “a paper for restructuring the Armed Forces, reorganisation, and also the formation of a team to implement the restructuring, and that became the IMATT”.<sup>56</sup> The same adviser recalls the process to reform the RSLAF:

“We did our design work, we got a team of single service advisers, so we got somebody from the navy, somebody from the Army, somebody RAF, from the medical services, from the support services to come out to look at our structures. [...] The navy was one gunboat. A hard-sunken shiny gunboat, but, that was it. We put together this team of advisers, but the advisers had – which was the difference to a normal BMATT – we had command appointments, so we were all seconded, I ensured that we were all seconded to the RSLAF, as we called it, and we held ranks, we wore RSLAF badges and rank, and we had command appointments. [...] So, what happened was all the key appointments were Brits. So, the head of navy, the head of RAF, we left Sierra

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<sup>53</sup> Interview n. 22, London, 29 August 2012.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Interview n. 33, London, 20 March 2013.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

Leoneans as a Chief of Defence Staff and the Brigade Commanders, but the Senior Staff Officers were Brits”.<sup>57</sup>

The same adviser also remembers how the MODAT team drafted, discussed, finalised, and presented to President Kabbah the structures for the reformed RSLAF and Sierra Leone MOD: “[My colleague] took on the MOD structure, I took on the Armed Forces structure, Navy, Army and Air Force, then we both looked at each other’s [...], we decided this was a template we could run with, we then talked about to the President”.<sup>58</sup>

British street-level bureaucrats also had a direct role in restructuring the security and intelligence apparatus of Sierra Leone. As recalled by a local ONS officer: “we developed a consistent policy that was DFID led or supported/funded, thanks to DFID and UK taxpayers’ money”.<sup>59</sup> British street-level bureaucrats in Freetown thus facilitated and led the reforms of the country’s security institutions and, in some circumstances, filled key positions and drafted Sierra Leone’s policy papers. The urgency of the situation, the limited capacity in the country, and the need for an external drive to avoid partial and politically biased policies were some of the reasons cited to explain the proactive role played by UK street-level bureaucrats. British help was also requested by Sierra Leonean ministries and institutions, thus local ownership was at times sacrificed for efficiency, effectiveness, and impartiality. One of the first IMATT commanders in the country further explains this point:

“There was a heavy dependence on the UK in terms of driving, foreword, and policy. The legislation per se was there, but in terms of policy, plans, rules and regulations there were no capabilities, and they relied on the UK. Now, if a policy was developed by IMATT, you could ask how it was Sierra Leone owned. In fact this was a challenge, but we did it not because we wanted to divest their responsibilities”.<sup>60</sup>

This active participation of British street-level bureaucrats in the Sierra Leonean policy process was not devoid of difficulties, as UK street-level bureaucrats in Freetown sometimes had to retune the British experience and way of working to the different capacity of the local institutions. For example, British street-level bureaucrats had to

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Interview n. 17, Freetown, 29 June 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Interview n. 18, London, 4 July 2012.

face logistical and organisational problems, as “in a developing country, things move naturally slower, and there are always problems of logistic”.<sup>61</sup> Lack of training was an additional problem, as explained by a military adviser in the country:

“The only way it was going to work was to have British people commanding, to make decisions and mentor the Sierra Leoneans, to take them through it, to show them how it was done, because a lot of these people had no training at all”.<sup>62</sup>

The UK thus developed and provided training programmes for future soldiers and police officers. Additionally, some local military officers participated in training courses in the UK. However, these courses were not always targeted to the Sierra Leonean reality which at times created a disjuncture between the concepts learned in the UK by future officers and the actual possibility of their implementation in Sierra Leone. The problem is recalled in the words of an early military adviser:

“They were sending people again back on courses to UK, and of course the courses they were sending them on were much too high level for these guys. So they were coming back and say: ‘we should not be doing that! In UK, you are doing this one’. And I said: ‘Hang on, you are not in the UK’. ‘Oh, yes, but we got to emulate the UK’. [...] And some of the people got really quite nasty”.<sup>63</sup>

The specific context and stability situation of conflict-affected Sierra Leone, together with the evolution of SSR as policy and as a related research agenda in the UK and in Sierra Leone, thus created a particular policy process for British street-level bureaucrats working in the country. Unique factors, elements, and dynamics shaped and modelled the nexus between SSR research and policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The next part of the chapter explores and describes this nexus, examining the extent to which research and knowledge played a role, influenced, and interacted with early British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

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<sup>61</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Interview n. 33, London, 20 March 2013.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 5.4 The role of knowledge in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone

The previous sections of the chapter have presented the peculiar country context and discussed the main features of the SSR policy process in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Both the stability context and the evolution of SSR in policy and research represented two important variables shaping and limiting the role played by knowledge during the period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions. This section of the chapter analyses the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with SSR programmes and activities implemented by British street-level bureaucrats in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Narratives of research utilisation described in this section of the chapter will help design Figure 14 at the end of the section, a figure building upon Figure 13 that will visually incorporate research and researchers in Sierra Leone to the previous policy network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers in the UK.

The UK military intervention in May 2000 stabilised the Kabbah regime and transformed the first, primarily DFID-led, ‘fire-fighting’ solutions into a longer-term commitment to help rebuild the Army and reform the whole security sector apparatus of the West African state. The British intervention was prompted by a mixture of political demands, calculations, and personal commitments. Some of the main motivations identified by different scholars are: the long-term ties between the two countries and an historical sense of responsibility for the former colony, the presence of a relatively large Sierra Leonean diaspora community in the UK, the allegations about British involvement in the ‘arms to Africa’ affair<sup>64</sup> while the UK government was promoting an ‘ethical foreign policy’, the legacy of the Rwandan genocide, the possible criticisms about the different engagement of the UK in the Balkans and in Sierra Leone, and the opportunity to assert the UK’s position in global power politics (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009; Jackson & Albrecht 2011; Schümer, 2008, pp. 26-53).

Personal resoluteness was also important in shaping early policy decisions on the ground. A few extremely influential British policy-makers played a very important role in the decision to maintain British support to the Kabbah government. For example, then Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose father had been a school teacher in Sierra Leone, had a special interest in the country’s fate. Similarly, then Secretary of

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<sup>64</sup> The ‘arms to Africa’ affair consisted of the sale of logistical support, including rifles, made by the UK-based mercenary and logistic company Sandline International to President Kabbah’s allies, in breach of the UN embargo on Sierra Leone and with the alleged knowledge of the British FCO and High Commissioner.

State Clare Short played a seminal role in both DFID's early engagements with SSR and in the decision to intervene in Sierra Leone. She believed that the UK, as the former colonial power of a country that was experiencing years of civil war, could not let the newly democratic elected government of Kabbah collapse and the situation in Sierra Leone deteriorate. Her personal commitment to the country was seen almost as "an elemental force" (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 170; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, p. 173) behind British intervention in Sierra Leone. As recalled by one of the first British street-level bureaucrats in the country: "most of the things started from a personal commitment, mainly of Clare Short [...] She said that we could not let down the newly elected government of Kabbah, and from there everything started".<sup>65</sup> This personal commitment and belief of the then DFID Secretary of State thus drove and supported the early British engagement in Sierra Leone. Garth Glentworth, one of the first DFID advisers sent to Sierra Leone, clarified and made explicit this point in more than one circumstance: "Ms Short said: 'We could not – we, being the British – could not let this fragile, but democratically-elected government collapse'. Now, I don't think there was much theory behind that" (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 174).

Likewise, then Brigadier Sir David Richards, the leader of *Operation Basilica* and commander of *Operation Palliser*, had a seminal role in the planning of SILSEP and in transforming an initial evacuation operation of British citizens into a small- to medium-scale war-fighting operation against the rebels, from which UK longer-term SSR assistance originated.

Up-to-date research on the situation in Sierra Leone did not play a big role in shaping the direction of policy in the first phase of British engagement. UK-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone started during the course of the conflict and was mainly conditioned by events and exigencies in the country. British street-level bureaucrats were mainly reacting to the situation on the ground and trying to avoid making mistakes, rather than following a pre-planned strategy based on previous research or assessments. The limited influence of research on these early activities could be well understood by the body language and by some of the answers of the most experienced interviewees, who did not hesitate to smirk or smile when I introduced the topic of this PhD research, or candidly pointed out: "I will try not to be too cynical; I would turn the

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<sup>65</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.



thing in the other way: the influence of events on research”.<sup>66</sup> This perception was also made explicit by the words of one of the first British SSR advisers who flew to the country:

“The fact is that Sierra Leone was a big learning experience, where we probably made also some mistakes. The thing was to getting the people there, and these were not necessarily the right ones. Research did not play a big role at that time, and never played a big part in my job, or at least in what I was doing”.<sup>67</sup>

Re-establishing security and stability in the country was thus the most pressing issue for British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. Given the urgency of the situation, the first advisers sent to the country had enormous responsibilities, and basically a free hand to implement the policies they considered important for improving stability on the ground. As recalled by one of them:

“I would argue that most of this was just a reaction to circumstances and I don’t apologise for that and I don’t think that it was misplaced. It was so overwhelmingly urgent to try and get things back to work out there. That was the first intention. [...] the overwhelming pressure was to try and to strengthen the government sufficient that it could take over when the RUF was finally defeated as it was declared in 2002. And trying to re-establishing government control in the whole country. That was the other intention”.<sup>68</sup>

The UK lacked a pre-planned strategy to guide its first security policies in the country. Robert Ashington-Pickett, one of the first British Intelligence and Security Advisers to the ONS and CISU, remembers: “when I went to Sierra Leone at the end of 2000, what I was presented with was not a strategy, it was a vision. And, basically, I was told: ‘make it up when you get out there’. When I asked about a blueprint for SSR, I was told: ‘Well, you are going to write it’. Effectively, we did” (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 174; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, p. 176-177). One of his colleagues adds: “in Sierra Leone, we made up everything. Things have been created as we went along. In the Terms of

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.

Reference there was no sequencing, we created things and everyone involved there had the same problem”.<sup>69</sup> These words are echoed by those of another colleague: “we just made it up as we have gone along, and I have to say, we did”.<sup>70</sup>

Likewise, another interviewee highlights the fact that the UK military intervention in Sierra Leone started initially as an evacuation operation to admit that “in the first phase there was no entry, nor an exit strategy”.<sup>71</sup> He then recollects the story of a colleague sent from London to Freetown with a list of priorities who, at his arrival in the country, called London to change these according to the situation on the ground, with the headquarters agreeing with his new set of priorities. Another adviser recalls the lack of a strategy in the first phase of intervention in the country:

“Essentially we had to develop it, make it up, develop it as we went along. Again, we were not working within some strategic framework of what SSR was, what it was there to achieve, what the traps, pitfalls were. We did not have really any of that. We hadn’t. We worked within the sort of DFID developing log frame”.<sup>72</sup>

The instability of the context and the consequent need to re-establish security were thus important factors shaping the initial SSR policy process in Sierra Leone. More than research, the volatile events on the ground influenced initial SSR policy in Sierra Leone, as policy decisions were often shaped by necessity or practical constraints and planned in ad hoc documents urgently written by British street-level bureaucrats. For example, the difficult decision to maintain, rearm, and train the paramilitary SSD police force was taken only after the return of the CPDTF team in Freetown in the spring of 1999, and was based on the positive role played by the SSD forces in defending the city from the January attack of the RUF. As recalled by two CPDTF advisers, at their first arrival in Freetown in July 1998, all politicians including the President wanted to disband the SSD “because they consider them to be the relic of the APC regime”.<sup>73</sup> Back in London in winter, the CPDTF leader:

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<sup>69</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

<sup>70</sup> Interview n. 33, London, 20 March 2013.

<sup>71</sup> Interview n. 1, Birmingham, 10 May 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Interview n. 31, London, 19 November 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Interview n. 22, London, 29 August 2012.

“Briefed England [Ray England, responsible for the SSD] just before new year, in late December 1998, in Victoria Street. And Ray England was briefed that ‘you have to come in, and find a way to dismantle them, and replace them with something more community police friendly’. And that was his initial brief”.<sup>74</sup>

However, the dynamics changed during the RUF’s brutal attack on Freetown in January 1999: “the SSD with limited weaponry held them in two places, they stopped the RUF getting into Freetown, they held them”,<sup>75</sup> and played a major role in the defence of the city. When the heads of the CPDTF team returned to the capital in March-April 1999, “the dynamic had changed, and they have changed in this way that Kabbah, the vice-president, all the politicians and ministers, people in the street who were saying: ‘get rid of the Siaka Stevens’ dogs’ before Christmas, were saying: ‘these men saved this country’”.<sup>76</sup> The forces of the paramilitary police were “not the sharpest, best educated people. But as for what they did they were very well disciplined, very loyal, they could be relied upon”.<sup>77</sup> As a result, the CPDTF team seconded the GoSL decision to turn the SSD “into a proper operational support group”.<sup>78</sup> At the arrival of Ray England in Freetown in Summer 1999, “his Terms of References and briefing were changed in ‘train and bring this Unit into becoming an operational support arm to the rest of the police’”,<sup>79</sup> and British police advisers thus maintained, armed, and trained the SSD in defensive policing, non-lethal tactics and public border control.

Likewise, the unstable and volatile context of the country was one of the main factors influencing military advisers’ decisions on the size of Sierra Leone’s Armed Forces. On their first arrival in Sierra Leone, British advisers realised that the size of the Armed Forces – allegedly composed by more than 14,000 soldiers – was too big for an actual population of a country of less than 5 million people (to put this size in perspective, Ghana for example has “an armed force of 5,000” (White, 2008, p. 4), for a population more than four times bigger than the one of Sierra Leone). This size was even more threatening considering the unreliability of the Armed Forces, which had already staged several coups in the course of the civil conflict. Nevertheless, the first

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

British military advisers and their successive colleagues did not downsize the Armed Forces in a radical, draconian way, but decided to maintain the large number of troops initially and downsize progressively.

Practical security reasons lay behind this choice: facing an unstable situation, with several armed groups potentially deleterious for the security of the country, British military advisers preferred to contain and integrate the different groups within the institutionalised Armed Forces, rather than exclude them from the system and keep them fragmented and isolated. As a consequence, such a large number of soldiers did allow the numerous and potentially dangerous splinter armed groups that otherwise would have remained unchecked across the war-ravaged country to be integrated into the official forces. One of the early military advisers recalls: “we had to bring these three groups [the AFRC, the RUF, and the CDF] together somehow”,<sup>80</sup> because “the collective view at the time was that it would be better to integrate all the different factions under one banner and contain the problem than to isolate various group at the outset and risk the development of fragmented militia forces” (White, 2008, p. 4). Maintaining such an excessive size was of course against every consideration about the long-term sustainability of the Army. However, practical security constraints and contingent necessity influenced this initial policy decision, and the reduction of the number of soldiers was postponed and implemented only in successive years.

Given the insecure context and the lack of a strategic direction from London, most of the early successes of British-led SSR policies in Sierra Leone thus lay in the presence and activities of the first street-level bureaucrats on the ground. Many scholars agree that these were ‘the right people in the right place at the right time’. As the situation in the country “just really got to the state where the right person made the right decision”,<sup>81</sup> the importance of having the right people and personalities on the ground in charge of these decisions was paramount. Most of the advisers sent to Sierra Leone in the first phase of British engagement were admittedly people with many years of combined professional experience in both their respective fields and developing countries. Their extensive expertise proved fundamental in addressing the most pressing problems the country was facing and in steering and guiding the SSR policy process in the right direction.

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<sup>80</sup> Interview n. 33, London, 20 March 2013.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

Furthermore, some street-level bureaucrats combined their experience with an academic background or with the participation in previous research, reports, and evaluations of SSR programmes and activities. As a result, street-level bureaucrats working in Sierra Leone were, in part, informed by research and knowledge gained in other contexts. They were therefore directly or indirectly aware of research themes, problems, and discussions that were emerging in the SSR policy agenda at the time. Facing an urgent situation on the ground characterised by the lack of security and time to sit down, read, and reflect before implementing policies, the different street-level bureaucrats' experiences, academic studies, and backgrounds were extremely important in setting the priorities for British involvement in the country. As underlined by an SSR researcher: "the people there were experienced people with background, experience, and professional development. They learnt from other experiences, and their background and studies had a role in taking the right decisions".<sup>82</sup> A quick glance at the biographies of some of the first British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone can explain how the majority of these constituted a group of experienced practitioners with practical and theoretical knowledge in their field of intervention.

For example, Garth Glentworth was DFID's Senior Governance Adviser at the beginning of the British engagement in Sierra Leone. At the time of British military intervention in the country, he was already a well-experienced adviser. He joined DFID in the late 1970s, and worked for the Department for 27 years. Before coming to DFID, he was lecturer with the Development Administration Group of the then Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham. He worked at the Makerere University in Uganda, and at the University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. He combined this vast academic and theoretical knowledge with a professional background in governance and civil service reform. In this way, he was engaged with the research debates in academia, as well as the practical difficulties and issues entailed in working in fragile, conflict-affected environments. He eventually retired in 2005 after 27 years of work with DFID and he still collaborates occasionally as part-time adviser for the Department.

Similarly, two well-experienced advisers led the police reform activities in the country. Keith Biddle was a retired UK police officer who was chosen by President Kabbah as Sierra Leone IGP because he was not politically linked to any of the

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<sup>82</sup> Interview n. 1, Birmingham, 10 May 2012.

country's parties or ethnic groups and was, for this reason, considered impartial. Before working in Sierra Leone, he gained extensive experience in the UK and had worked on police reform in South Africa. In 1998, he was contracted by DFID along with two academics at the University of Wales to conduct a synthesis study on the police programmes supported by the Department in several developing countries (Biddle, Clegg & Whetton, 1999). From the findings of that study, DFID derived in 2000 its *Policy Guidance on Support to Policing in Developing Countries* (Clegg, Hunt & Whetton, 2000). Biddle was not among the authors of the *Policy Guidance*, as at that time he was already acting as IGP in Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, the other two authors of the 1999 synthesis study wrote the *Policy Guidance* and it is plausible that Keith Biddle was well aware of the literature on policing in developing countries that was published in late 1990s/early 2000s. After Sierra Leone, Keith Biddle worked on policing issues in DRC and in other developing countries. Today, he still works occasionally as police adviser for DFID.

Biddle's colleague Adrian Horn, one of the initial members of the CPDTF team and the manager of CSSP from 1999 to 2003, had a similar professional path. Before working in Sierra Leone, he had precedent experiences in Uganda and Ethiopia. After Sierra Leone, he worked with Keith Biddle in DRC and he now works occasionally as police adviser for DFID, with recent work experiences in South Sudan. Other British street-level bureaucrats working in Sierra Leone in the period of 'fire-fighting' solutions were equally experienced in their respective fields. At the time of his deployment to Sierra Leone, Colonel Mike Dent, the military adviser to the Sierra Leone MOD, had just returned from his role of Military Assistant to the Force Commander of the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, established on the wake of the First Gulf War. More importantly, he already knew his MODAT colleague Robert Foot, the civil adviser to the Sierra Leone MOD, as they both had been members of the Permanent Joint Headquarter Implementation Team in 1995-1996. This prior experience and working relationship was extremely important, since the two advisers had to work in concert on a daily basis in Sierra Leone, collaborating closely on the plans for the reform of the Sierra Leone MOD and the RSLAF.

Nonetheless, the first urgent policy and programme decisions taken by British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone were based on limited empirical analysis of the nature of the issues facing the local security sector, as British advisers urgently sent to Freetown had limited local contextual knowledge of the situation on the ground. Two

principal factors explain the limited empirical knowledge of the context in which HMG was operating, including the various security agencies and governance structures in Sierra Leone. The first is the urgency and instability of the situation, as British street-level bureaucrats had to react to circumstances on the ground by taking compelling decisions often based upon necessity and practical considerations rather than on detailed research. A second and equally important factor was the novelty of the SSR concept. One of the first British street-level bureaucrats in the country reflects upon this point:

“I guess that the reasons why [research did not have a prominent role] are manifold. SSR was a relative new area: for example, the things we always write about, the idea of developing the link between development and security, was at the time a new one; there was not much research at that time, as it was mainly written later; there was some consultancy work, but not what I see as academic research”.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, as recalled by one of the first IMATT commanders in the country, the research capacity on the ground “was limited, in terms of people and technology”.<sup>84</sup> As a consequence, in the late 1990s, empirical research on relevant contextual issues that would affect the SSR programme in Sierra Leone was either limited, non-existent (because of the novelty of the SSR concept and the unstable security conditions limiting research on the ground), or of restricted availability due to technological deficiencies (limited office equipment, computers, or internet access) in the country.

The instability of the context, the particular policy process in the country, and the limited availability of research therefore impacted on the use of research and knowledge by British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. In spite of these limitations, research did however play a role in shaping some of the first UK-led SSR activities in Sierra Leone. As previously underlined, most of the British street-level bureaucrats had experiences from other conflict-affected or developing countries, and some of them had an academic background and a good understanding of the main debates shaping the SSR research agenda at the time of their presence in Sierra Leone. As a result, British advisers sent to Freetown on short notice were not necessarily

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<sup>83</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

<sup>84</sup> Interview n. 18, London, 4 July 2012.

looking for general academic SSR research coming from Western universities or research institutes, but they were hungry for knowledge to improve their understanding of the culture and history of the country.

Anthropologic and historical books and reports written by the few people who had the opportunity to spend time in war-affected Sierra Leone assumed paramount importance for British street-level bureaucrats, who often conducted their personal reading and research independently. The knowledge and expertise of those who studied and understood the local history and culture became an invaluable source of information for British advisers who were sent to the country on short notice and needed to understand as much as possible about their new context. The bibliography of recommended readings included in an unpublished Background Brief prepared by a British adviser is elucidatory in this sense (Anon., 2002). The adviser lists 46 different recommended books and reports which have been influential for him to better understand the history and culture of Sierra Leone. Among these texts, most are historical studies focusing on the pre-colonial and colonial years, on the wider West Africa region, or on the military history of the country, others such as Paul Richards' *Fighting for the Rain Forest* (1996) are anthropological books explaining the causes and dynamics of the war.

At the same time, pressing security needs determined street-level bureaucrats' urgency to act quickly to restore peace, security, and a minimum degree of rule of law in the country. British street-level bureaucrats therefore looked for specific, ad hoc, targeted, operational pieces of research and studies that could provide them with rough data and information. Locally produced reports such as the Banya report, surveys, and pieces of research commissioned by the same street-level bureaucrats and focusing, for example, on formal and informal systems of justice in the communities or on the state of the police, as well as personal visits on the ground, were of extreme importance for the early SSR activities. Rough data collected in the country were extremely valuable sources of knowledge for British street-level bureaucrats and were therefore highly influential.

Contextual information gathered through such types of ad hoc, 'on the ground' activities was critical for establishing some of the UK-led SSR programmes and for steering the implementation of some policies. Examples of uptake into policy of these types of studies are numerous. For instance, CPDTF and SILSEP were activated



following project appraisal initiatives and previous visits of British advisers to the country. Likewise, in late 1999 the MODAT team of SILSEP conducted a mini-Strategic Defence Review of the national security and national defence requirements of the country. The review listed the roles and responsibilities of the Armed Forces and constituted the starting point for the reform of the RSLAF and the Sierra Leone MOD. Following the review, the MODAT team designed a new ORBAT and determined “what the role of the maritime wing was, what the role of the air wing was, what the role of the land forces with the Army”<sup>85</sup> in the reformed RSLAF.

Another problem for British street-level bureaucrats working on the reform of the Army was establishing the exact number of soldiers in the SLA. This was important because the soldiers were not only paid, but they also received bags of rice, and the GoSL was paying salaries and distributing rice to an alleged number of approximately 14,500 soldiers. In Autumn and Winter 2000, an IMATT-led Personnel Verification Team of four people visited all the SLA locations countrywide to effectively check the exact number of soldiers against existing documentation, create a computer database in the newly established Armed Forces Personnel Centre, and issue new temporary ID cards to all the individuals. According to an unpublished Background Brief of a military adviser, the research led by the Verification Team:

“Highlighted a large number of inconsistencies in unit nominal rolls and identified several hundred impostors, civilians drawing military salaries, many previously discharged service personnel and ‘ghost’ soldiers. All these were discharged and several individuals involved in frauds were handed over to the police. By the end of the process the strength and payroll of the SLA had been reduced by over 2000 [...] and the strength of the SLA was confirmed to be under 12,000” (Anon., 2002, p. 22).

Likewise, when police advisers arrived in the country, the only available information on the status of the SLP they had was the Banya report, a government report produced in 1996 and commissioned by President Kabbah that “looked at policing and the future policing in Sierra Leone”<sup>86</sup> and had “already identified all the issues and problems that

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<sup>85</sup> Interview n. 33, London, 20 March 2013.

<sup>86</sup> Interview n. 22, London, 29 August 2012.

needed to be addressed”.<sup>87</sup> CPDTF personnel therefore carried out additional research and commissioned some ad hoc studies and surveys that could provide them with a clear picture of the status of the police. For example, in February 1998, a team led by Christopher John carried out a review of the policing in Freetown and undertook some surveys on public perception of the SLP. The results of these surveys were emblematic for the CPDTF team: 100% of the interviewees considered the SLP corrupt, arguing that police officers “ask for money in police stations” and “should be more polite to civilians” (CPDTF, 1998c, p. 3). Similarly, 100% of police officers stated that there were “no possible channels to forward new ideas for improvement of the police” (CPDTF, 1998c, p. 3), 97.4% bemoaned “a great fall in discipline” (CPDTF, 1998c, p. 3), 95.7% agreed that police stations or formations were “not functioning as they should be” (CPDTF, 1998c, p. 3), and 87% of the personnel had “never seen the Police Force Standing Order” (CPDTF, 1998c, p. 3).

As part of these surveys, CPDTF personnel (who could barely leave their hotel because of security constraints) sent several A4 white sheets to the different police officers in the country. On these sheets, signed on one side by the then Sierra Leone IGP, police personnel could write their thoughts and views on the police situation and problems. The returned papers, sent in majority by junior SLP officers, proved extremely useful not only in understanding the main problems faced by police officers in Sierra Leone, but they also made British police advisers aware of the presence of a vibrant critical mass of officers at junior levels that they could rely on for the implementation of delicate reforms. The survey was thus extremely important in supporting early police reforms in the country. In the words of a CPDTF member: “basically, it gave us confidence that there was a critical mass [...], and I think that sustained some pretty difficult times, because the senior officers at that stage were very very difficult to change with people where the change would mean they had less resources”.<sup>88</sup>

Similarly, in 2001 CCSSP members wanted to understand the effects of their reforms on the local community. They thus commissioned Richard Fanthorpe, a British anthropologist who was in the country at that time, to investigate the factors potentially affecting the interface between formal and informal systems of justice, and the contrasts

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

in policing and systems of justice between urban and rural areas, as well as between secure and recently secured areas. Fanthorpe's report constituted:

“A preliminary analysis of the social, political and cultural environment in which Local Needs Policing must operate in Sierra Leone. It assesses the present operational effectiveness and deployment of the SLP and chiefdom police, the working relationship between the SLP and the chiefdom police and chiefdom courts, the interface between informal and formal systems of justice, and the expectations and attitudes of different stakeholders towards the SLP and chiefdom police”  
(Fanthorpe, 2001, p. 2)

The findings of the report were given serious consideration by British street-level bureaucrats working on police and justice reforms at a community level, and represented the initial HMG and DFID effort toward improved engagement with local and informal police and justice actors.

Finally, the extensive experience of the British advisers deployed in Sierra Leone allowed them to look at examples, ideas, models, experiences, lessons learned, and best practice from other countries and, where possible, re-apply or model these to the local context.<sup>89</sup> For instance, the CPDTF team could rely on the expertise of people who had worked extensively on police-related issues in numerous developing countries such as Bangladesh, Uganda, and Haiti. These different experiences constituted a valuable asset for the early police reforms in Sierra Leone, as remembered by the head of the team Keith Biddle:

“In Sierra Leone we were lucky. I'd done a project, Adrian [Horn] had done a project. The training adviser was David [Tingle], who is now Sudan I think. David had done training projects in Bangladesh and in Uganda. So we had people with some Africa experience who had an

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<sup>89</sup> Policy transfer has been defined as “the process by which actors borrow policies developed in one setting to develop programmes and policies within another” (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 357). Policy transfer is thus “a generic concept that refers to a process in which knowledge about institutions, policies or delivery systems at one sector or level of governance is used in the development of institutions, policies or delivery systems at another sector or level of governance” (Evans M., 2006, p. 1). For a reflection on policy transfer and lesson-drawing, see Evans M. (2006); for an analysis of policy transfer in global perspective, see Evans M. (2004); for a study on the role of the World Bank as an agent of international policy transfer in post-war reconstruction and development, see Evans M. and Barakat (2012).

appreciation. The rest of them came from Commonwealth countries. The girl from Zimbabwe I had worked with in South Africa, so she was good. The Canadian had been in Haiti and had been up in the Arctic working on community policing with the Inuit. It was a fantastic story. The Sri Lankan had been involved in police reform outside of Sri Lanka. So we were lucky that we had a fairly good mix and a good team to start with” (Innovation for Successful Societies Oral History Program, 2007, p. 23).

Advice and models coming from other states were useful sources of knowledge and were often used as templates to reform the local security apparatus. For example, a local ONS officer remembers:

“We needed a country specific scenario, not based only on the UK. We looked at South Africa, Ghana, UK and US to have comparative analysis. From the UK, we took the idea of the assessment team, this Whitehall approach not based on presidency. We stole the idea from it, and the fact the there was no presidential role. From Ghana, we got the idea of decentralised security architecture. From South Africa, the defence; from Uganda, the police. From Canada, and also from the US, we took the National Security Strategy policy and strategy”.<sup>90</sup>

Models and best practices coming from other African states were easier to replicate in a country emerging from years of conflict like Sierra Leone. These models were followed and readapted in some of the local SSR policies, as recalled by an ONS officer: “in 2002 there was a need for a review of the Security Sector since the past. We reviewed the entire security architecture, comparing with South Africa and Uganda”.<sup>91</sup> Likewise, the Joint Intelligence Committee was established following a UK model: “we have the FISU for the military, the CISU for the ONS, and the Special Branch of the Police: together they constitute the Joint Intelligence Committee, a model imported from the UK”.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Interview n. 17, Freetown, 29 June 2012.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

Models, ideas, and examples from the UK also influenced the early SSR reforms. For example, the new motto of the SLP, ‘A force for good’, was taken from the slogan of the British police in Kent, where Keith Biddle had previously worked. Similarly, the concept of community policing was distilled from different community policing experiences to its lowest common denominator in order to simplify it. The reason behind it was to have a useful, simple, and definite concept of community policing to be agreed, understood, and used in a country where people “have had no police force for the last ten years” (Innovation for Successful Societies Oral History Program, 2007, p. 35). Adrian Horn prepared a short paper of one, one and a half page, on community policing and modern policing since the establishment of the Metropolitan Police Service in the UK in 1829. He presented the note to Keith Biddle, who approved the paper and started implementing for the first time the concept of community policing in Waterloo, a small village outside Freetown.

Nonetheless, not all the models and examples coming from other countries were transferrable to the Sierra Leone context. The Sierra Leone MOD and Armed Forces, for example, were initially restructured following the British blueprint. One of the military advisers who drew the initial reform plan highlighted how, in order to have a structure that “was transparent, particularly to the civil population”,<sup>93</sup> the MODAT “followed a very outlined template of the British system, cutting out areas that we did not need, focusing on areas where we needed more civilians so we had civilian oversight, and that was the big driver”.<sup>94</sup> The MODAT team decided to maintain a major distinction between the organisational structure of the RSLAF and the UK model. At commander level, they created a twin structure composed by the Joint Force Command and the Joint Support Command, both of which were subordinated to the Sierra Leone MOD and initially under the IMATT command. The reason behind the establishment of a twin structure was the prevention of possible military coups, because with only “one head, you could have another coup”,<sup>95</sup> whereas “by splitting the Armed Forces in two there had to be collusion to have a coup”.<sup>96</sup>

However, applying the UK model to conflict-ridden Sierra Leone proved too complicated and unsustainable in the long term. Furthermore, the sudden death of one

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<sup>93</sup> Interview n. 33, London, 20 March 2013.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

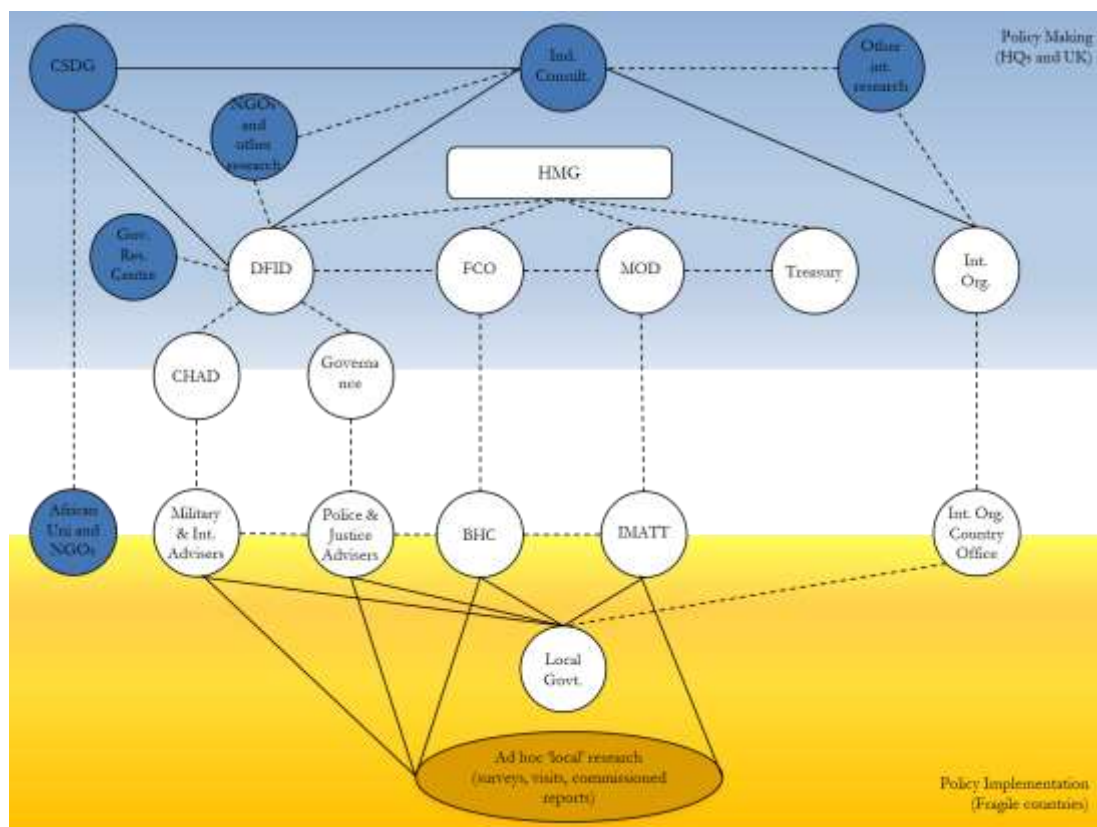
<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

of the British advisers tasked with reforming the Sierra Leone MOD and RSLAF structures created some continuity gaps. Following the publication of the Defence White Paper in 2003, a Sierra Leone-led Command Structure Review Committee began to review the initial structures of the Sierra Leone MOD and RSLAF according to the needs and requirements of the country.

Following the description in this section of the chapter, Figure 14 adds local research and researchers to the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and international researchers presented in the previous sections of the chapter and in Figure 13. Figure 14 provides a visual account of the influence of research on policy decisions implemented by British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone, illustrating the network and interconnections between the different policy and research actors that worked on UK-led SSR in Sierra Leone during the conflict years.

**Figure 14** First period, ‘fire-fighting’ solutions: the research actors in Sierra Leone



The figure indicates how ad hoc ‘local’ research (comprised of surveys, visits in the country, and commissioned reports) was the main form of research that shaped the activities of street-level bureaucrats in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The importance of

this form of knowledge is underscored by the direct lines connecting local research with the circles of the main British policy actors in the country. As extensively shown in the analysis of the chapter, contextual information gathered through such types of ad hoc research was directly up-taken in policy, and was critical for establishing, designing, and implementing some of the early UK-led SSR programmes. The figure also has a yellow area which extends to the circles of British policy actors in Sierra Leone. This symbolises how other forms of 'local' research and knowledge, such as anthropologic studies on the culture of the country, or similar models and experiences from other developing countries, also contributed to the knowledge base of British street-level bureaucrats on the ground. The extent of this area indicates that this form of knowledge also interacted with the activities of SSR street-level bureaucrats. Nonetheless, its influence was less direct than that of ad hoc, policy-driven research. For example, models coming from different developing countries needed to be readapted to the Sierra Leone reality. For this reason, the figure does not include a direct link between this more general form of research and the circles of British policy actors on the ground. The lack of overlap between the blue and yellow areas of international and local research visually shows how concepts emerging from research at British and international level were barely utilised by policy actors in Sierra Leone. Similarly, local and action-oriented research used by street-level bureaucrats on the ground rarely fed into policy at headquarters level or more general SSR studies produced in the UK or in other Western countries.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The chapter has used the theoretical model of the policy network to explore the extent to which research and researchers have influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone during the first phase of UK reforms in the country. The different figures have progressively built a network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers that stretched from the UK to Sierra Leone. The analysis has shown how several research centres and studies from independent consultants supported the emerging SSR policy agenda at HMG and international level. At the same time, HMG created different institutional structures to promote the SSR agenda in fragile, conflict-affected countries. Nonetheless, the lack of a clear strategy and direction from headquarters and the particular division of roles and responsibilities between

different departments resulted in a high degree of freedom from street-level bureaucrats working in Sierra Leone.

British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone thus started collaborating directly on the ground, and looked for ad hoc studies and reports to gather contextual information to guide and steer their early policy decisions. These operational pieces of research were extremely important for understanding the context of the country and for implementing some of the first ‘fire-fighting’ solutions. Furthermore, experienced British advisers based in Freetown relied on lessons learned from previous deployments, implementing and readapting – not always successfully – to the Sierra Leonean reality policy models, ideas, and blueprints from other countries. They consulted historical and anthropological studies on Sierra Leone and maintained up-to-date knowledge base of the academic debates surrounding their respective fields. Previous personal studies and professional activities thus influenced directly or indirectly the early policy decisions of British street-level bureaucrats on the ground.

Two main factors account for the limited extent to which research influenced and interacted with SSR policy decisions in the country. These two factors are the high level of insecurity in the country and the novelty of the SSR concept in the policy and research agenda. The urgency and instability of the situation required immediate reactions from British street-level bureaucrats on the ground, who lacked the necessary time and security to carry out detailed studies or research before taking compelling decisions. Most of the time, necessity, urgency, and political acumen shaped SSR policy-decisions more than research. Rapid and effective policy implementation was ensured by the direct role of British street-level bureaucrats in local policy-making. Furthermore, the relative novelty of the SSR concept in the late 1990s implied that British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone could rely on a limited number of available studies and research. The SSR policy and research agenda developed incrementally since British intervention in Sierra Leone: in the period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions, most of the current SSR-oriented research was thus non-existent or of restricted availability.

Knowledge and research therefore did not play a prominent role in the early policy decisions of British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. Research influence on policy was limited by the country’s instability and by the evolution of SSR in policy and research, the main variables restricting the role played by knowledge and research in early British-led SSR programmes in the West African state. These two variables also



represent the two principal external and internal factors that impacted upon the network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working in the country. These external and internal factors interacted with one another, eventually influencing and limiting the role played by research in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone and creating the particular policy network presented in Figure 10.

Chapter 5 provided a narrative of the early British-led SSR policy activities in conflict-affected Sierra Leone and the role played by research in shaping these policies. It presented a dynamic interaction between policy and research, an interaction rich of anecdotes and particulars, but eventually limited by the peculiar, unstable, and insecure context of the country and by the evolution of the SSR policy and research agendas in the UK and in Sierra Leone. These two variables influenced the first policy decisions of British street-level bureaucrats working in Sierra Leone during the conflict period and the particular policy network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on SSR in the country. Chapter 6 examines whether and how the role of research into British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone changed and evolved since the end of the civil war in 2002. It examines how changes in the two previous variables, resulting in an increased stability and security in the country and in a progressive evolution of SSR policy and research, impacted on the use and influence of research on British-led SSR programmes and activities implemented in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Furthermore, it analyses how changes in the two previous variables shaped and modelled the network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working in the country in the post-conflict years.

## 6. The influence of research on British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone: post-war period (2002-2013)<sup>97</sup>

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 provided an account of the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy implemented in Sierra Leone during the period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions. The analysis has shown how two main variables, namely the context and stability situation, and the early SSR evolution in policy and research, contributed to create a particular policy process for British street-level bureaucrats who were working in the country. These two variables have been considered external (the country context) and internal (the policy and research evolution) factors that modelled the policy network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers. Severely limited by these two variables, research and knowledge interacted dynamically with this policy process, influencing some of the early policy decisions taken by British street-level bureaucrats in the country.

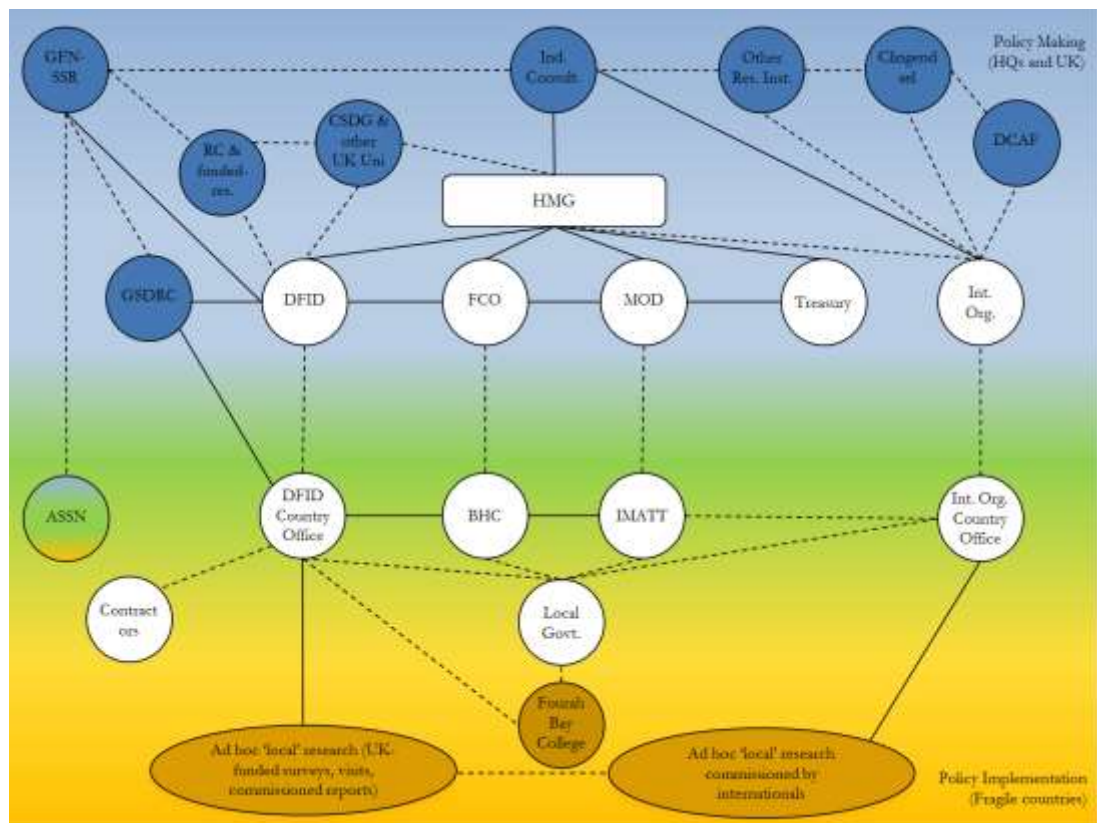
Building upon that analysis, Chapter 6 examines how research has influenced and interacted with British policy to reform the security sector in post-conflict Sierra Leone. It focuses on the role played by knowledge in British-led SSR activities implemented in the country since 2002, the final year of the Sierra Leonean civil conflict. The chapter explores the ways in which the influence of research on policy evolved over time, and the dynamics between policy and research transformed and developed over the post-war recovery period. It analyses whether and how the role of knowledge in policy changed following similar shifts in the stability context of the country and in the evolution of the SSR policy and research agendas, indirectly comparing the narratives of the conflict period described in Chapter 5 with those of the post-war recovery years. As some of the findings are derived from interviews with British street-level bureaucrats currently working in Sierra Leone, the chapter also gives an account of the distinctive features which mark the contemporary interaction between research and policy in the country and, more generally, the utilisation of research in fragile, conflict-affected environments.

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<sup>97</sup> Some of the materials of this chapter have been used in Varisco (2014).

Similarly, Chapter 6 provides a visual representation of the network of policy actors and researchers working on SSR in Sierra Leone during the post-conflict years. This network is presented in Figure 15, and will be explored and described in the different sections of the chapter. Narratives of research utilisation and the analysis of the dynamic interactions between policy and research will contribute to unravel this policy network and to better examine the extent to which research influenced and interacted with British-led policy activities and programmes in the post-conflict years.

**Figure 15** Second period, post-conflict years: the policy network



In order to facilitate comparisons between the period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions and the post-conflict years, the structure of Chapter 6 mirrors Chapter 5 and is organised into three main parts. Part 6.2 analyses the Sierra Leone context, describing how security in the country progressively improved to allow better reach of SSR programmes to the different provinces. Part 6.3 focuses on the evolution of SSR in policy and research and on the ways in which both SSR policy and research have been progressively institutionalised in the HMG domestic policy agenda and in the work of British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. This part of the chapter does not only show how SSR

has incrementally become part of the British and international state building policy agenda, but it also underlines how the role of research in the policy-making process at the headquarters level has evolved over the last decade in line with a ‘quiet revolution’ which brought research to the forefront of DFID’s and HMG’s current policy practices. Part 6.4 investigates the extent to which knowledge and research shaped and influenced UK-led SSR activities and programmes in Sierra Leone in the post-conflict years. The analysis provides some examples of research directly feeding into policy and explores the dynamic ways through which research is accounted into policy by street-level bureaucrats on the ground, indirectly describing the different narratives that qualify the research-policy interaction in conflict-affected environments in contemporary days

## **6.2 The context and stability situation**

President Kabbah’s lift of the state of emergency in the spring of 2002 brought peace to Sierra Leone after 11 years of civil conflict. In spite of the war’s end and increased stability in the country, the security situation on the ground remained fragile during the initial post-conflict period. The third and most effective phase of the DDR process ended in January 2002, bringing the total number of disarmed ex-combatants to more than 72,000. Peaceful Presidential elections were held in May 2002, thanks to the presence of 17,500 UNAMSIL troops, at that time “the largest and most expensive UN peacekeeping operation ever” (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 139).

The end of the war and the new Presidential elections marked the beginning of a period of institutionalisation and consolidation of the security reforms started in the period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions. The early UK-led SSR policies were thus reinvigorated and consolidated in the new-born Sierra Leonean security institutions: the UK and the GoSL signed in November 2002 a Memorandum of Understanding that committed the UK to offer support to the West African country for ten years. At the same time, the capacity of the local security institutions improved. In 2002, the GoSL produced the National Security and Central Intelligence Act (GoSL, 2002), a policy document resulting from a process of almost two years of consultations and reviews between Sierra Leone’s institutions and security actors, with inputs and support from international advisers. The Act delineated the relationship, role, and responsibilities of ONS and CISU, and fully established the National Security Council, PROSECs, and

DISECs, institutionalising in this way the main security and intelligence architecture of the country.

The RSLAF re-equipment programme ended, and in 2003 the GoSL published a Defence White Paper that specified the roles of the RSLAF, MOD, and Joint Force Command (Kondeh, 2008b). A Command Structure Review Committee was also established to revise the MOD structure, as the British template was found to be unsuitable for Sierra Leone's institutions. In the same years, local policy-makers started working on longer-term policy documents such as the Sierra Leone's National Vision 2025 (National Long Term Perspectives Studies, 2003), the country's Security Sector Review, and the PRSP. On the British side, IMATT produced in 2004 the 'Plan 2010', a document that planned the future developments of the team, secured more ACP funding until 2010, and established the goals to be achieved in restructuring the RSLAF. Training of senior RSLAF officers continued at the IMATT-sponsored Horton Academy. IMATT approached DFID to ask for financial assistance to provide new accommodation to RSLAF through Operation Pebu. The programme started in March 2003 and ended in 2008, achieving only 30% of the initial planned project (Gaeta, 2008).

With regards to police reform, the SSD changed its name to OSD and was ready to take over responsibility for internal security after UNAMSIL's withdrawal from the country. Vehicles, communications, and infrastructure support favoured the SLP presence in the internal provinces. Yet the force remained under-numbered, so in response, recruitment and training programmes to increase the size of police from 6,000 to 9,500 were launched in collaboration with the UN Civil Police Force team in the country. In June 2003, Sierra Leonean Brima Acha Kamara replaced Keith Biddle as country IGP. Police reforms lost some impetus following the slow replacement of Adrian Horn with a new CCSSP leader in 2003. The replacement of the two key UK figures in the police sector weakened the links between the SLP and British police advisers; furthermore, uncertainty on the future of the programme also contributed to create a management vacuum.

In addition to the reforms in the security fields, the Sierra Leone TRC, established in the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999 and tasked with investigating human rights violations committed during the war, was constituted and operated from November 2002 to October 2004. It presented its final report to the GoSL and to the

UNSC in November 2004. Likewise, the GoSL and the UN established the Special Court for Sierra Leone in January 2002. The Special Court for Sierra Leone's mandate was "to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996" (Special Court for Sierra Leone, 2000). Prompt economic development was not forthcoming despite these improvements in the security and justice sectors and an increased stability. As a result, the country remained at the bottom of the UN Development Programme Human Development Index (HDI) for several years.

2005 was a very important year for British SSR intervention in Sierra Leone, as it marked the opening of DFID's Sierra Leone office in Freetown and the closure and re-organisation of some SSR programmes in the country. The opening of the country office and the relocation of part of DFID staff to Freetown allowed a better interaction between HMG street-level bureaucrats and local and international partners based in the capital city. The LPD and the CCSSP ended, and police and justice reforms were incorporated into the new JSDP, a comprehensive programme involving local partners and targeting broader elements of the justice sector which had been previously neglected such as prisons, probation, legal reform, legal advice, the MIA, and non-state and traditional justice (Howlett-Bolton, 2008). The police element of SSR was split, with JSDP overseeing broader justice aspects of police reform such as the FSUs, while SILSEP absorbed the security aspects of police reform such as the OSD. JSDP, SILSEP, and IMATT remained, for a number of years, the main UK-sponsored programmes targeting SSR in Sierra Leone.

In particular, the fact that the JSDP initially focused on the pilot area of Moyamba District and that, in the words of a British manager of the programme, "more than 90% of the programme was staffed by locals",<sup>98</sup> denotes a progressive stability and security in the provinces as well as British willingness to enhance the professional capacity of Sierra Leoneans. Improvements in security are confirmed by the words of a researcher working in the country during the same time period, who noted how, differently from other post-conflict environments, in Sierra Leone "you can move around freely, and you never, you never sense a danger".<sup>99</sup> Likewise, the increased

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<sup>98</sup> Interview n. 20, Skype, 28 August 2012.

<sup>99</sup> Interview n. 32, Skype, 14 March 2013.

capacity of the local population was underlined by the process that brought about the publication of the PRSP and the Security Sector Review in 2005. The production of the two documents followed consultation processes owned and driven by Sierra Leoneans, with the Poverty Alleviation Strategy Coordinating Office and the ONS collaborating and coordinating the PRSP and the Security Sector Review, while British street-level bureaucrats supported the domestic policy process by maintaining an advisory role and editing parts of the documents (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, pp. 118-124; Conteh, 2007; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, pp. 125-131; Kondeh, 2008b). In particular, the Security Sector Review was published after a consultation process that defined security in the context of Sierra Leone, gave clarity about the institutions comprising the country's security system, addressed the actual national threats, and developed an overarching national security framework. The links between security and development were officially formalised by the inclusion of peace and security in the first pillar of Sierra Leone's PRSP (Denney, 2011; White, 2008). Furthermore, at the end of 2005 the Sierra Leone MOD undertook a Core Review focusing on the sufficiency, efficiency, sustainability, and quality of the Defence Forces.

UNAMSIL completed its mandate in December 2005 and was replaced by the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) until September 2008 and by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) since the end of UNIOSIL. The departure of the UN peacekeeping troops shifted the responsibility for the country's internal security onto the shoulders of the new security institutions. In particular, the police assumed a primary role in internal security, while the reformed Army had to deal with external threats and occasionally assist the SLP in the provision of internal security during emergencies or for specific support operations through the Military Aid to Civil Power (MACP) framework. As part of this framework, the Army supported the activities of the SLP during the 2007 Presidential elections – a peaceful vote that replaced President Kabbah with his opponent Ernest Bai Koroma (International Crisis Group, 2008). This non-violent transition of leadership between the two principal political parties of Sierra Leone, together with the leadership of the ONS and the role played by the SLP and the RSLAF in maintaining stability during the elections, provided further proof of the re-establishment of security in Freetown and the provinces. At the same time, the 'peace dividend' of economic development slowly

materialised, and Sierra Leone's HDI progressively increased, particularly in recent years (UNDP, 2013).<sup>100</sup>

Following the 2007 elections, stability continued to improve: with the country's priorities rapidly moving from security to development, the GoSL channelled progressively less attention and resources to the SSR process. On the British side, SILSEP was not extended after 2007, but received funding to sustain the ONS and CISU for another year, eventually ending this financial support in March 2008. The UK government supported the first year of the exit strategy with £1.3 million provided through the ACP from April 2008 to March 2009 (Albrecht, 2009, p. 12). The JSDP ended in 2011 and was replaced with the ASJP, a new, four-year programme funded by DFID and implemented by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI). The ASJP focused on improving local ownership of the security and justice provision at community level. IMATT was progressively downsized to become a small contingent of a few dozen staff who remained in the country through the peaceful 2012 Presidential elections which saw confirmation of the APC and President Ernest Bai Koroma's leadership. IMATT was eventually replaced by ISAT in April 2013. This new multilateral team continues to advise and support the RSLAF, providing additional support to other elements of the security sector such as the police force, the ONS, the National Fire Force, the Prisons Department, the Immigration Office, and the Joint Maritime Committee. ISAT also works alongside DFID and the UNDP on operations dedicated to the justice sector.

The conditions of democracy, basic security, and stability in the country radically improved over the last 15 years, together with an increased capacity and reliability of the security forces in the country. For example, soldiers from the RSLAF have been successfully deployed in international peacekeeping operations, such the joint African Union/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur in 2009 and the African Union Mission in Somalia in 2013. Oversight and sustainability of the reforms nonetheless remain a challenge, as these issues were partially neglected in the early stages of SSR in the face of more pressing demands. Additionally, the oversight capacity of the MOD, MIA, and the Parliamentary over the security system continues to be limited (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, pp. 165-167; Gbla, 2008). In particular, the MOD was restructured to ensure civilian oversight over the country's Armed Forces, but the same process did not occur

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<sup>100</sup> In spite of these recent improvements, Sierra Leone remains nonetheless among the countries with low HDI.



with the MIA in relation to the SLP, in part because of the unreliable and corrupt reputation of some of the Ministers of Internal Affairs (Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, pp. 162-163; Osho Coker, 2008). Likewise, the issue of sustainability of the Armed Forces was not considered in the early stages of SSR, as the unstable security situation forced British street-level bureaucrats to maintain all the different armed groups in the formal system. For a number of years, the Armed Forces have thus remained excessively large in number and mainly internationally-funded. Because such a large military force was difficult for the GoSL to sustain in the long term, the RSLAF progressively downsized in recent years.

### **6.3 The policy and research evolution**

A progressive growth and institutionalisation of SSR in the British and international research and policy agendas occurred while British street-level bureaucrats were already operating in Sierra Leone and the UK was supporting SSR programmes or initiatives in a number of other countries like Ethiopia, Uganda, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. The impact of these engagements on SSR thinking thus prompted the UK to invest more in SSR research. As a result, most of the interviewees agreed that the evolution of the SSR research and policy agendas were a ‘post-hoc rationalisation’ of events that happened on the ground, and concurred with this assertion from Albrecht & Jackson (2009, pp. 7-8) and Jackson & Albrecht (2011, p. 24):

“One of the core questions for security system transformation – or SSR – in light of the Sierra Leone experience – is whether or not SSR can be referred to as a coherent cluster of activities. As the experience in Sierra Leone attests, there is an element of SSR as a post-hoc rationalisation of events that happen on the ground. It can be argued that initial SSR efforts, particularly those that occur in an immediate post-conflict environment, are, by definition, fragmented and incoherent. Only after experience on the ground can enough specific context and information be gathered and analysed in order to begin the construction of a coherent and appropriate set of SSR strategies”.

Comprehensive SSR policies and strategies of intervention, as well as deeper research investigating, analysing, and reflecting upon these policies, were thus developed and

rationalised during and after the UK interventions in Sierra Leone and in other conflict-affected countries. A British adviser recalls how the SSR policy and research structure “appeared after we started, while we were involved in Sierra Leone”,<sup>101</sup> following “some sort of rationalisation: there was an element of rationalisation, as well as forward looking”.<sup>102</sup> Referring in particular to research, he further explains:

“The research effort sort of gradually grew up through this process, and I would argue that Sierra Leone was the major catalyst to the research efforts. Maybe others will disagree, but I mean basically it was a reaction to the fact that we were drowned deeper and deeper into involvement in Sierra Leone”.<sup>103</sup>

One of his colleagues also concurs that a comprehensive SSR agenda developed as a post-hoc rationalisation of events happening on the ground. In pointing out how SSR policy was shaped by the events in the country as much as the intervention in Sierra Leone was shaped by the policy and research framework developing in the UK, he warns against “a danger to make sure that people don’t retrospectively apply frameworks that exist now to a tiny, rich experienced-framed framework”.<sup>104</sup>

The next sections of the chapter give an account of this post-hoc rationalisation and the evolution of SSR policy and research from the end of the war in Sierra Leone to the current time.

### *6.3.1 The policy evolution in the UK*

Figure 16 presents the network of the main policy actors that supported the evolution of the SSR policy agenda in the post-conflict years and formulated British HMG SSR policy at headquarters level.

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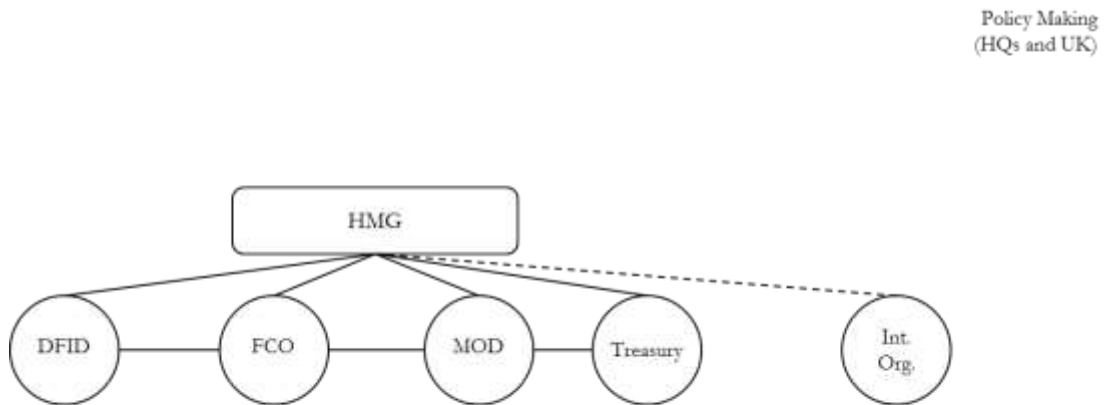
<sup>101</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

**Figure 16** Second period, post-conflict years: the policy actors in the UK



Policy Implementation  
(Fragile countries)

The white circles in the figure identify the main policy actors responsible for SSR at British and international levels. These actors include HMG and British departments and ministries such as DFID, FCO, MOD, and the Treasury, as well as international organisations like the OECD. As underlined over the course of the thesis, throughout the last decade the British and international SSR policy agendas rapidly evolved alongside Sierra Leone's post-war development, informed also by UK SSR engagements in a range of other countries, including Uganda and Indonesia. The activities of multilateral organisations such as the OECD DAC and bilateral donors like the Dutch government contributed to the expansion and promotion of the SSR policy agenda at international level: thus international organisations are also one of the main policy actors in Figure 16. Differently from the first period of 'fire-fighting' solutions, the figure connects the international actors' circle to British HMG with a dotted line. This

interconnection symbolises how the British and international SSR policy agenda developed in concert over the last decade, with DFID promoting SSR at the OECD level and piloting some OECD DAC programmes, and the OECD supporting donors' efforts to develop a joint approach to SSR.

In Britain, efforts toward a more joined-up approach were progressively reinforced. In June 2002, ministers from DFID, FCO, and the MOD approved a tri-departmental SSR strategy. £2.8 million were allocated to SSR for the year 2002/03 through the GCPP (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2003b, p. 40), whereas the 2003/04 GCPP allocation for the SSR Strategy increased to over £5 million (Ball, 2004b, pp. 46-47). Furthermore, in November 2003, the three departments published an SSR policy brief that set out the UK government's policy approach to SSR (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2003a) and the SSDAT continued to support HMG SSR initiatives and activities.

The tri-departmental publication of the SSR Strategy in 2004 (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2004) further formalised the UK's SSR policy agenda. Two different bodies were created to manage this new strategy: the SSR Steering Group, which met monthly to discuss priorities and approve projects supported by the SSR programme, and the Policy Committee, which gave wider policy input through quarterly meetings. In order to foster a better coordination among SSR activities, the two managing bodies were constituted by HMG officers and representatives of the ACPP, GCPP, DAT, and the GFN-SSR.

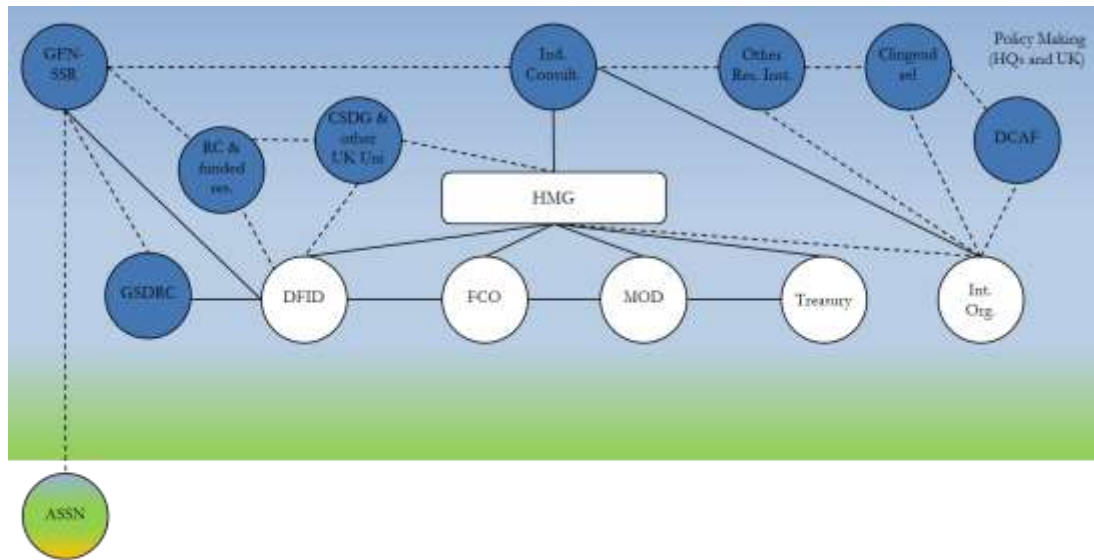
Increased efforts toward a more coordinated approach to dealing with countries affected by conflict resulted in the creation of the PCRU in 2004, renamed the SU in 2007. The Unit was conceived as a tri-departmental entity working with government departments and the military to facilitate joint military-civilian assessments and planning, share lessons to improve the effectiveness of UK stabilisation activities, and enhance government capability to deploy civilians in conflict-affected countries to develop and oversee the implementation of these joint plans.

HMG SSR policy activities and the related joined-up institutional structure to support these efforts were progressively consolidated over the last decade. As a consequence, Figure 16 connects the different governmental departments and HMG with solid lines. These solid connections symbolise how institutional collaboration among different HMG departments progressively improved, in line with a promotion of tri-departmental strategies and approaches to SSR.

### 6.3.2 The research evolution in the UK

The policy evolution of SSR at headquarters level was accompanied by a progressive use and account of research in HMG policy practices. Figure 17 develops from Figure 16 and shows the different research actors that contributed to the evolution and promotion of the British and international SSR policy agenda over the last decade.

**Figure 17** Second period, post-conflict years: the research actors in the UK



The number of actors involved in state building and SSR research and supporting SSR policy developments at international and bilateral levels increased exponentially over the last 10 years, extending from Western donor countries to fragile and conflict-affected states.

In particular, the British SSR policy network progressively expanded as a consequence of the early conceptualisation and institutionalisation of SSR at HMG level. This evolution was also fostered by an initial difficulty for British street-level bureaucrats on the ground in reforming the security sector of conflict-affected countries. As recalled by one of the early SSR researchers:

“After year two, three, lessons were starting to emerge about some of these experiences on the ground such as Sierra Leone. Of course the key lesson was: ‘this is much more difficult than we realised, and we haven’t, we don’t understand the situation well enough, we don’t understand the context, we don’t understand the actors, etcetera’. Not surprisingly, so, as you are very well aware, DFID got involved in Sierra Leone quite quickly because of the security situation there, and they had to be seen to be doing something quickly, and the situation was deteriorating”.<sup>105</sup>

DFID consequently enhanced its mechanisms to support its SSR programmes with more research. Bradford University inherited the CSDG contract in 2002. At the same time, DFID established the GFN-SSR, a hub for SSR resources and practitioners to provide “the intellectual engine to support forward thinking, and networking and capacity building” (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2004, p. 7). The GFN-SSR – symbolised in one of the blue circles of research actors in Figure 17 – was based for four years at Cranfield University: Ann Fitz-Gerald became Director of the Network until 2006, and published in 2004 a report on SSR in Sierra Leone (Fitz-Gerald, 2004).

Mechanisms to include local researchers in the process were also envisaged. For instance, in 2003 DFID started sponsoring the ASSN through the GFN-SSR, which became a hub for African researchers, policy analysts, practitioners, and serving and ex-members of the security forces working on SSR. Figure 17 identifies the ASSN as one of the research actors in the policy network. However, ASSN’s circle has a particular colour that incorporates the blue of international research with the yellow of local research. This choice of colour symbolises how the network is comprised of both African researchers such as Eboe Hutchful, who participated to the early policy developments of SSR at headquarters level, but also local researchers who studied in depth the local security dynamics. The dotted connection of the ASSN circle with GFN-SSR shows how the studies carried out by the ASSN were sponsored by the GFN-SSR and contributed to the wide research activities of the centre.

The Governance Resource Centre in Brimingham was expanded in 2005 to become the GSDRC, a centre providing DFID and other international clients such as

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<sup>105</sup> Interview n. 25, London, 23 October 2012.

the EC with applied knowledge services on broader state building-related issues such as governance, social development, humanitarian response, and conflict. The Centre provides DFID with applied knowledge on demand and produces Topic Guides that are requested and agreed by a Steering Committee in DFID. Recently, the centre has been expanded and has started working in close collaboration with Coffey International Development and a large group of consultancy partners to provide expanded and integrated governance, social development, conflict, and humanitarian Professional Evidence and Applied Knowledge Services for DFID. Figure 17 therefore connects the circles of GSDRC and DFID with a solid line that symbolises the strong link and collaboration of the centre with the Department.

Birmingham University was awarded the contract of the GFN-SSR in 2006. Directed by Paul Jackson, the Network started organising quarterly Security and Justice training courses for HMG and international SSR officers and practitioners. The courses aim to give a practical, case study-orientated introduction to security and justice by mimicking the real-life experience of designing, implementing, and reviewing a security and justice intervention in a developing country. The organisation of these courses, together with the recognition in the HMG's SSR 2004 Strategy of GFN-SSR as one of the essential, central bases "for resources, policy advice and information" (DFID, FCO & MOD, 2004, p. 6), denote the importance of the Network for HMG work on SSR. This strong policy role of the GFN-SSR is symbolised in Figure 17 by the solid connection between the Network and its main funder, DFID. Furthermore, the circle of GFN-SSR is also linked through a dotted line with the GSDRC. This connection symbolises how the co-location of the centres ensured an indirect collaboration between the two centres, to the point that even though GFN-SSR is no longer active today, its website remains and the materials have been incorporated into the GSDRC's document library.

DFID-sponsored SSR research has also grown exponentially over the years, with the Department funding, for instance, a guide for donors to operationalise their policy commitment to local ownership of SSR, a comparative study on the politics of security decision-making, a research project on SSR provisions in peace agreements, and a six-year research programme investigating the provision of security and justice in

fragile, conflict-affected situations (CSDG, 2008; Hutchful, 2009; Nathan, 2007).<sup>106</sup> Alongside this HMG-sponsored research, studies produced by British universities, research centres such as CSDG, and NGOs such as Saferworld have contributed to the expansion of the SSR knowledge-base at British level. ‘Research Consortia and funded-research’ and ‘CSDG and other UK universities’ are thus two additional circles of research actors in Figure 17. These circles are connected to the other research actors, as well as with DFID and HMG, with a series of dotted lines. These particular connections symbolise how concepts, ideas, and reflections on SSR from different research institutions interacted with each other and contributed to the increasing evolution of SSR as a policy practice and as a related research agenda.

This increasing interaction between SSR policy and research has been reinforced by the progressive creation of policy mechanisms and intermediary roles aimed at ensuring the use and translation of research in policy. Today, intermediary figures such as FCO analysts or DFID’s evidence brokers facilitate the use of research in government departments. Furthermore, DFID’s RED invests every year just under 10 per cent of its total research expenditure on state-building, governance, conflict, and social development research (NAO, 2011). The production of SSR research and the channels through which this research is accounted for in HMG policy have evolved over the last decade. Some of the mechanisms that DFID supported to enhance the interaction between the research and policy world include institutional collaborations with research institutes and universities and increased funding of research programmes. Collaborations were fostered with increased consultations with reference groups, expert panels, academic specialists, and Senior Research Fellows. The Department also promoted context-appropriate policies through the use of evidence-based business cases.

The role played by research in SSR and state building policies at HMG level thus improved progressively over the last decade, with the development of different institutional mechanisms and intermediary roles to facilitate the use of research into policy and increased government funding of studies and research. Policy-makers and practitioners on the ground witnessed a distinct increase of SSR and state building-oriented research in the last decade, as recalled by a British adviser in Sierra Leone: “we

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<sup>106</sup> See also the website of The Justice and Security Research Programme, based at LSE: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/JSRP/jsrp.aspx>.



saw that growing, if you like the research industry, academic research industry growing in parallel to our exploratory efforts in Sierra Leone”.<sup>107</sup> Likewise, another colleague recalled how “the architecture began to grow, and then there is the king, the major thing of commissioning research”,<sup>108</sup> further adding that “even the MOD has all sorts, or had its own sort of research establishments”.<sup>109</sup>

This engagement of HMG with research resulted in an increased involvement of SSR and state building researchers in the policy process. An SSR researcher witnessed “a closer and closer relationship between some of the policy-makers and researchers working in these areas”.<sup>110</sup> A colleague confirms how among policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats “there is more awareness of what academics can offer them”.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, another researcher reflects on the increased use of research in HMG policy:

“What I think it’s very important is that HMG supported a lot of research. So HMG understands the importance of research and they put their money where the mouth is, they commissioned a lot of research over the years, increasingly in the area of SSR so I think that that is a very, very positive thing”.<sup>112</sup>

This increased interaction between policy and research in the UK was mirrored at the international level by a growth in the number of researchers working on SSR. The work of independent consultants remained extremely influential for HMG and international organisations and multilateral donors working on SSR. Figure 17 therefore connects the circle symbolising international consultants and these policy actors with solid lines. Furthermore, the activities and studies of independent consultants were part of a wider and international network of SSR researchers, whose creation was facilitated by the existence of centres such as the GFN-SSR. For this reason, Figure 17 connects the independent consultants and the GFN-SSR with a dotted line symbolising these increasing exchanges and collaborations between international SSR researchers. Alongside the activities of independent consultants, a growing range of centres and institutes contributed to the expansion of the SSR research agenda at the international

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<sup>107</sup> Interview n. 31, London, 19 November 2012.

<sup>108</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Interview n. 26, London, 26 October 2012.

<sup>111</sup> Interview n. 23, Leeds, 26 September 2012.

<sup>112</sup> Interview n. 25, London, 23 October 2012.

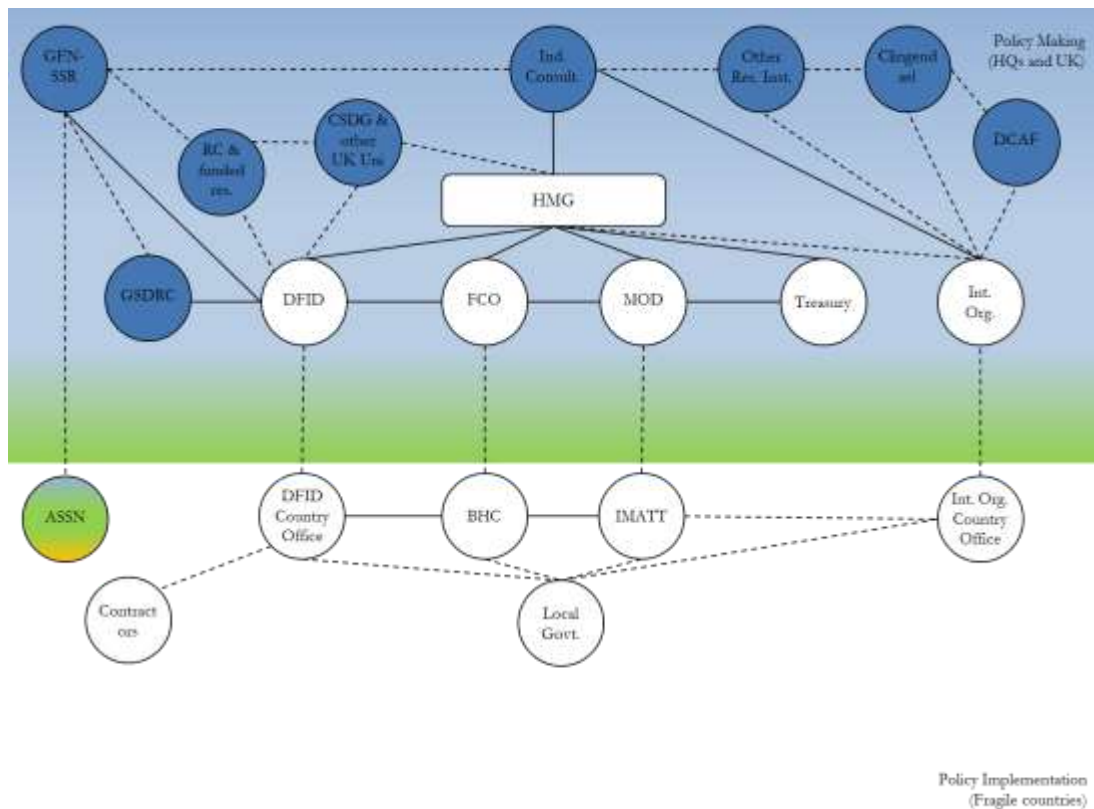
level. Universities, NGOs, and research centres such as the Berghof Conflict Research Center and BICC in Germany, Clingendael in the Netherlands, DCAF in Switzerland, and the Security Governance Group in Canada were all part of this growing network. Their work and publications on security and development shaped the SSR policy agenda of international organisations and bilateral donors directly and indirectly. Furthermore, their reflections and analyses contributed to a growing knowledge of SSR, indirectly feeding in the work and research of SSR researchers and practitioners. Figure 17 connects these different research actors (the blue circles named ‘Clingendael’, ‘DCAF’, and ‘other research institutes’) with dotted lines and links these centres to the circles of independent consultants and international organisations with similar dotted lines. This symbolises how the contribution of these research activities shaped both SSR policy at the international level and the increasing academic reflection on SSR.

Finally, the blue area in Figure 17 extends to fragile, conflict-affected countries and progressively changes to green. This colour transition symbolises how concepts, ideas, and themes emerging from international research have merged progressively with studies and reflections conducted in fragile environments. The next sections of the chapter will clarify this point by analysing the extent to which international and local research interacted with each other and influenced SSR policy and programmes implementation in conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

### *6.3.3 The policy evolution in Sierra Leone*

The preceding sections of the chapter have illustrated the progressive evolution of the network of British and international SSR policy-makers and researchers working at headquarters level. Over the last decade, new research centres and policy initiatives were promoted in the UK and internationally, contributing to the recent development of SSR as a policy practice and as a related field of research. Figure 18 expands on Figure 17 and introduces the network of British and international policy-makers and researchers described in the previous parts of the chapter along with the different policy actors tasked to implement British-led SSR programmes and activities in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

**Figure 18** Second period, post-conflict years: the policy actors in Sierra Leone



The intensified efforts toward a more coordinated approach at headquarters level and the years of collaboration among DFID, FCO, and MOD improved the relationship between the three departments and their officers and advisers in Sierra Leone. However, the late decision to include justice among British-led SSR programmes and activities in Sierra Leone with the start of the comprehensive JSDP programme only in 2005 (as recalled by an interviewee, “there was not really strong engagement with the justice sector until JSDP started”),<sup>113</sup> created some consequences for the different SSR elements in the country. In particular, the beginning of the new programme resulted in the split of the different police elements between SILSEP and JSDP, with the security aspects of police reform such as the paramilitary force being absorbed under the first programme while elements of policing more linked to justice fell under JSDP purview. This decision created some uncertainties within DFID as to whether policing projects were undertaken as part and parcel of SSR projects, which were often under the lead of CHAD, or whether they were separate and linked to justice projects under the lead of the Governance Department. An SSR researcher recalls: “even in late 2007 there were

<sup>113</sup> Interview n. 29, London, 19 November 2012.

serious disagreements within DFID about whether, to what extent police was part of SSR or was part of governance or was part of justice”.<sup>114</sup> This lack of co-ordination between different DFID departments has been redressed in recent years with the consolidation of all security and justice work under the CHASE policy lead.

The progressive promotion of a holistic approach, together with the opening of DFID country office in Freetown, facilitated improved relationships between British HMG departments operating on the ground. DFID, FCO, and MOD street-level bureaucrats collaborated in close arrangement, as a DFID adviser working in the country in the early post-conflict years reminisced:

“The UK policy process there was driven by three main UK people/positions: IMATT, the head of DFID, and the High Commissioner. These three met together every two weeks to see the Sierra Leone President, then they reported back to us as we had regular meetings with them. I would say that there was a good consultation among us”.<sup>115</sup>

This collaboration further improved in the course of the years. A Programme Manager of the JSDP remembers his “excellent relations”<sup>116</sup> with the other UK street-level bureaucrats in the country:

“I used to meet with the UK country team once a week or once every two weeks to discuss all issues. It was a routine meeting where I would meet with the head of the Army, the Head of the Foreign Office, the Head of the Governance section of DFID. So, that was the sort of way we worked, it was a very much joined-up approach. No problematic issues related to coordination”.<sup>117</sup>

In recent years, the success of tri-departmental collaboration has eventually boiled down to personal relationships. As underlined by an FCO officer in Freetown, “personal relations are very important in terms of how HMG works as a whole in the country”,<sup>118</sup> particularly among the top British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. The High

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<sup>114</sup> Interview n. 27, London, 5 November 2012.

<sup>115</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

<sup>116</sup> Interview n. 20, Skype, 28 August 2012.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Interview n. 6, Freetown, 19 June 2012.

Commissioner, the DFID Head of Office, and the IMATT Commander (until 2013), worked in close agreement while maintaining their autonomous agendas, priorities, and programmes, with the High Commissioner ultimately representing the UK in the country.

British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone established very good HMG relations during the post-conflict years, and today follow a cross-governmental country strategy. In particular, the British High Commission and DFID country office are located within walking distance from each other. Over the years, they developed a good collaboration which helped create a stronger understanding of each other's cultures, mind-sets, objectives, and priorities. While maintaining their differences, FCO and DFID personnel currently working in Freetown try, for example, to maximise and share their resources: they often travel together to different provinces, they push and support each other's agendas in multilateral arenas, and they share information within the limits of their reciprocal mandates and autonomous agendas.<sup>119</sup> Figure 18 connects the DFID country office, the British High Commission, and IMATT with solid lines to symbolise the high degree of collaboration between personnel from different HMG departments currently working in the country.

In spite of the current positive cross-governmental cooperation, some differences in the mind-sets, mandates, and objectives of the three departments still remain, as each HMG actor "seems to have its own culture".<sup>120</sup> Whilst these differences are never related to ideological issues, nonetheless they can create at times small underlying tensions between street-level bureaucrats on the ground. For example, some military personnel noted how development actors still view them with "institutional mistrust".<sup>121</sup> This perception, which can be linked to the burgeoning academic debate on civil-military relationships in conflict and post-conflict situations, was confirmed in some of the interviews with both military and development actors.

In order to overcome this problem, improve collaboration with the civilian element of British presence in Sierra Leone, plan the long-term activities of the military contingent in the country, and address the consequences of the high turnover of its personnel, IMATT produced in 2003 its 'Plan 2010'. The Plan was, in the words of a

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<sup>119</sup> Interview n. 5, Freetown, 19 June 2012.

<sup>120</sup> Interview n. 23, Leeds, 26 September 2012.

<sup>121</sup> Interview n. 8, Freetown, 21 June 2012.

DFID adviser, “primarily a plan for HMG rather than a plan for the RSLAF”.<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless, the Plan did not completely bridge the distance between civil and military personnel on the ground. As explained by an IMATT member, the contingent remained a *sui generis* structure until its drawdown in 2013, quite “unique as an international organisation led, financed and policy driven by one nation”.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, the fact that it was located in Leicester Peak and remained physically detached from DFID country office and the British High Commission reinforced the perception of an ‘IMATT bubble’<sup>124</sup> and did not help overcome this feeling of separation.

DFID’s activities and understanding of the country greatly improved following the opening of its country office. Its presence on the ground fostered better interactions with local, British, and international policy actors based in Freetown, as well as with NGOs working in the capital city and in the provinces. As agreed by several interviewees, the opening of the country office ensured “a much deeper understanding of the issues, by people being on the ground on a regular basis”;<sup>125</sup> it “made relations with the other departments, and with the Force Commander, so different”<sup>126</sup> and improved HMG linkages on the ground and, by extension, the British policy process in the country.

However, several practical difficulties and a lack of planning characterised the opening of the office. A DFID adviser recalls:

“If there should be a major lesson from it, it’s the one on transition, that such transition processes should be thought and planned in a better way, because we had to start recruiting people. Plus, the people who were in charge in London were not those who moved to Freetown. The transition was instead a difficult process, not thought through”.<sup>127</sup>

This difficult transition phase caused a gap in the programmes, as DFID was at the same time opening its country office and replacing the CCSSP and the LDP with JSDP. The result was a hiatus in the programmes, with some reforms being paused for a while

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<sup>122</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

<sup>123</sup> Interview n. 8, Freetown, 21 June 2012.

<sup>124</sup> Conversation with a UNIPSIL officer, Freetown, 29 June 2012.

<sup>125</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

<sup>126</sup> Interview n. 27, London, 5 November 2012.

<sup>127</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

and restarting only once the office effectively opened. The same adviser remembers this complicated transition:

“I think that actually the transition process was not very good [...]. CCSSP to JSDP was a microcosm of a wider problem and that happened with the devolution of DFID Sierra Leone, so the office for the first few months was quite chaotic in the fact that there was not an office”.<sup>128</sup>

Problems in the transition between programmes remained a common feature for British-led activities in Sierra Leone, as poor information sharing and continuity gaps also characterised the transition between successive programmes, such as the recent shift from JSDP to ASJP. An SSR subcontractor working for ASJP recalls “a very long gap between the British Council leaving and us taking over”,<sup>129</sup> and further explains that “when we got in the country, there was a huge problem in getting any information at all for the whole programme”.<sup>130</sup> An SSR researcher reflects more widely about the problems entailed in the transition between programmes: “there was something about that transition, problems of transitions, because it was also JSDP. CCSSP from JSDP was a huge internal battle for that programme and they reproduced that to a certain degree between JSDP and ASJP”.<sup>131</sup>

Several street-level bureaucrats bemoaned the lack of a clear structure and routine governing the transition or the drawdown of a programme. An SSR subcontractor commented “that is often the experience with DFID programmes, one just ends, and another one starts”.<sup>132</sup> Likewise, an IMATT officer in the country noted how, in view of the contingent’s drawdown in 2013, few examples guided that transition process. He underlined how they tried to learn from the negative experience of Ghana, where BMATT withdrew in 2009 with only 28 days of notice and, according to his point of view after visiting the country, “it still rankles”.<sup>133</sup>

Whilst people on the ground maintained a high degree of autonomy in their decisions, their relationship with their respective headquarters became more structured

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Interview n. 29, London, 19 November 2012.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Interview n. 32, Skype, 14 March 2013.

<sup>132</sup> Interview n. 29, London, 19 November 2012.

<sup>133</sup> Interview n. 8, Freetown, 21 June 2012.

in the course of the post-conflict years. Nonetheless, different street-level bureaucrats who worked in Sierra Leone noted a division between country and headquarters levels, underlining how working on the ground entails dealing “with the specific country level and an ever changing environment”.<sup>134</sup> British street-level bureaucrats observed an “immense difference between the work on the ground in country and back home”<sup>135</sup> in terms of priorities and needs and a higher devolution of responsibilities to people on the ground. A DFID adviser for example explains: “actually almost all of the decisions are done by DFID on the ground, I mean, it’s probably the most devolved organisation I think that I say I have ever worked with”.<sup>136</sup> Figure 18 therefore links the circles representing HMG policy actors on the ground and their respective headquarters in London through dotted lines. These lines symbolise the high degree of autonomy and responsibilities of people in the country.

Nonetheless, collaboration between headquarters and street-level bureaucrats on the ground improved over the years. Chapter 5 has underlined how British street-level bureaucrats implementing the first ‘fire-fighting’ solutions did not have a pre-planned strategy to guide their early SSR activities, and how this SSR strategy “came afterwards”.<sup>137</sup> In contrast, today the HMG country strategy is developed both in London and in Sierra Leone; it is usually derived and filtered down from high-level policy documents such as the *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* or the *Building Peaceful States and Societies Practice Paper*. It is agreed, reshaped, reverse-engineered through discussions on the ground, and driven in-country following an integrated approach.<sup>138</sup> Street-level bureaucrats in Freetown admit to be “constrained from the beginning”<sup>139</sup> by “a chosen set of priorities from the headquarters and by the minister”.<sup>140</sup> They always remain accountable to London, reporting to the headquarters regularly and maintaining frequent contacts, phone and video conferences, and exchange of views. However, they all remarked how their work in the country maintains a high degree of discretion and autonomy from London and in their day to day activities act as “intelligent customers, not a franchise that is repeated everywhere”.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Interview n. 12, Freetown, 25 June 2012.

<sup>135</sup> Interview n. 5, Freetown, 19 June 2012.

<sup>136</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

<sup>137</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.

<sup>138</sup> Interview n. 8, Freetown, 21 June 2012.

<sup>139</sup> Interview n. 4, Freetown, 18 June 2012.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Interview n. 13, Freetown, 28 June 2012.



Furthermore, the growing tendency of DFID to outsource the implementation of its SSR assistance programmes to private contractors has added a third layer to the policy process.<sup>142</sup> These contractors sometimes further subcontract particular tasks to other private companies or partners through a delegated model composed of numerous layers of partners and responsibilities. In some circumstances, this sort of delegate model has created a vertical disjuncture between DFID headquarters and street-level bureaucrats on the ground. An SSR subcontractor reflects:

“I think there is a structural issue for DFID, I think you got various disjoints. You got the disjoint between Palace Street and DFID country offices; you got the disjoint between DFID country offices and contractors; you then got a disjoint between contractors’ intellectual knowledge and the team in the field. So you got a team leader, you got advisers out there who know a lot about security and justice. But I think it’s an issue”.<sup>143</sup>

Moreover, this tendency to outsource the implementation of some SSR assistance programmes or parts of them to private contractors sometimes resulted in poor information sharing and continuity gaps between successive programmes. Figure 18 visualises the relationship between DFID country office and contractors by connecting the circles of the two policy actors with a dotted line. This dotted connection symbolises the different dynamics and problems hindering at times continuity between successive programmes and exchange of information between private contractors and the DFID country office.

In the post-conflict years, the UK has remained the most important bilateral donor in Sierra Leone and maintained its influence on the country’s policy process. Nonetheless, the British role in local policy-making became less prominent over the years, moving away from the direct production of policy papers toward a more advisory and mentoring role. Starting from the end of the Civil War, revived local institutions took increasingly ownership of SSR policy in the country. The production of domestic policy papers such as the Defence White Paper (GoSL, 2003), the Security Sector Review, or the PRSP (GoSL, 2005) usually followed consultation processes owned and

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<sup>142</sup> The JSDP was for example funded by DFID but managed by the British Council; likewise, the current ASJP is funded by DFID and managed by DAI.

<sup>143</sup> Interview n. 29, London, 19 November 2012.

driven by Sierra Leoneans. British street-level bureaucrats in the country sustained this domestic policy process by maintaining an advisory role, consulting their local counterparts and editing parts of the documents.

For example, British street-level bureaucrats played an advisory role in the formulation of the Sierra Leone's Defence WP. As recalled by Al-Hassan Kondeh (2008b), the Deputy Secretary in the Sierra Leone MOD who was in charge of producing the WP, despite some tensions that "arose between Freetown and London on the nature and scope of the Paper" (p. 4), "contributions from the UK SILSEP were tremendously helpful in terms of contents, style, and presentation of the final Paper" (Kondeh, 2008b, p. 4). DFID provided "opportunities for overseas study tours for comparative country case studies in South Africa and the UK" (Kondeh, 2008b, p. 5), and British advisers had a fundamental role in "editing the final version of the publication" (Kondeh, 2008b, p. 5). Likewise, IMATT and the MOD's Civil Adviser provided technical advice to the Command Structure Review Committee, which was exclusively composed of Sierra Leoneans and tasked to review the structure of the local MOD and RSLAF.

Similarly, from 2003 to 2005 British street-level bureaucrats supported the ONS-led preparation of the Security Sector Review. They set up a complementary advisory committee that provided "advice and support, bringing experience of other similar Security Sector Reviews"<sup>144</sup> and of initiatives that were developing at the same time in other countries such as Kosovo and Uganda. Moreover, since at the same time the Sierra Leone Ministry of Development and Economic Planning was producing the PRSP with the support of the World Bank, British street-level bureaucrats in the country ensured "that the analysis that was undertaken through the Security Sector Review was utilised by the PRSP secretariat that was drafting the first pillar of the PRSP, which is about governance and security".<sup>145</sup>

At the same time, British support was of paramount importance for the new Sierra Leonean institutions. DFID regularly and continuously assisted the ONS "in terms of resources and finances".<sup>146</sup> Likewise, in 2007 the Department's financial support through the JSDP was fundamental for the creation of the JSCO, a unit within the Sierra Leone Ministry of Justice tasked to co-ordinate, plan, budget, and

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<sup>144</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Interview n. 17, Freetown, 29 June 2012.

operationalise the 2007 Justice Sector Reform Strategy. A Sierra Leonean working for the JSDP recalls: “JSCO was in fact receiving resources from the government [of Sierra Leone] main budget. But it was not sufficient, as you could expect”.<sup>147</sup> The JSDP supported the work of the government office: “we were kind of paying the salaries of some of the staff and providing the basic working equipment”.<sup>148</sup> A British manager of the programme further expands: “we established that office. [...] We developed the JSCO, we funded some of the posts within government, so to ensure the government were, essentially, the drivers”.<sup>149</sup> At the end of the JSDP in 2011, JSCO was maintained as a unit within the Ministry of Justice. Today, its main responsibility is supporting the GoSL to drive forward the justice sector reform.

In this way, the policy process in Sierra Leone evolved over the post-conflict years. As security and stability were increasingly re-established in the country, the urgency characterising the period of ‘fire-fighting solutions’ was replaced by a more institutionalised policy process. DFID opened its office in Freetown, the policy agenda progressively moved from security to development, and British street-level bureaucrats in the country actively collaborated with local, international, and private partners in the implementation of post-war SSR and development programmes and policies on the ground. The UK’s role in the Sierra Leone policy process was nonetheless less direct and prominent than it had been throughout the years of conflict, and Figure 18 depicts this different interaction between British actors and the local government by connecting them through dotted lines.

During this period, personal meetings between British personnel and the President of Sierra Leone became less frequent; however, the policy process still remained centralised and personal. Several interviewees confirmed the importance of personal politics and relationships in the country.<sup>150</sup> A JSDP Programme Manager recalls:

“We were particularly fortunate inasmuch as the vice president himself met with us every quarter, so the vice president and all the top people such as the chief of justice, the ombudsman, the head of the police, the

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<sup>147</sup> Interview n. 21, London, 29 August 2012.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Interview n. 20. Skype, 28 August 2012.

<sup>150</sup> Interview n. 5, Freetown, 19 June 2013; interview n.10, Freetown, 22 June 2012.

head of the prisons, all these people, we all met around the table every quarter to ensure there was a proper ownership for programmes”.<sup>151</sup>

As the former colonial power and the major bilateral donor in the country, today the UK maintains a special role in the local policy process: the President of Sierra Leone still has regular meetings with the British High Commissioner; similarly, as part of his prerogatives as Military Adviser to the GoSL, the IMATT Commander had access to the President and to the National Security Council Coordination Group until the drawdown of IMATT.

Today, in addition to the UK and the local institutions, several multilateral and bilateral actors are present in Sierra Leone. The activities of other donors in the country have increased over time, and British street-level bureaucrats in Freetown have often collaborated with other multilateral institutions and bilateral donors working on the ground. For example, the JSDP was developed alongside other activities funded by different donors in the country: the Programme Manager of the British Council-led programme held regular meetings with other donors to enhance opportunities for possible synergies and avoid programme overlap and duplication of efforts. A local World Bank officer recalled how its institution partnered and “had a small joint work with JSDP in local court and justice”.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, a JSDP Programme Manager remembers how one of the JSCO’s goals was “to coordinate all the efforts, not just the JSDP, but those that involved the other donors as the Germans, the UN, the World Bank and so forth”.<sup>153</sup>

British street-level bureaucrats in Freetown currently engage on a regular basis with local ministries, hold joint co-ordination meetings, and share policies with multilateral institutions such as the UN or the EU. In 2007, DFID for example agreed with the EC a multi-year Country Strategy Paper for Sierra Leone (GoSL, EC & DFID, 2007). The paper represents a strategic framework of co-operation between DFID and the EC, covering the period 2008-2012 for DFID and the period 2008-2013 for the EC. Likewise, UNIPSIL today has a role in police reform and supports the work of the Local Policing Partnership Boards, which were originally established within the framework of the early police reforms in 2002-2003. As of 2013, the UK had a

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<sup>151</sup> Interview n. 20, Skype, 28 August 2012.

<sup>152</sup> Interview n. 16, Freetown, 29 June 2012.

<sup>153</sup> Interview n. 20, Skype, 28 August 2012.

seconded Senior Police Adviser to UNIPSIL. Finally, British activities in the country are today developed in line with the international policy agenda of multilateral organisations like the OECD DAC, the UN, and the World Bank. Some of these international donors collaborate with HMG activities in the fields of security and justice, governance, and development. International organisations' country offices thus represent the last circle of policy actors in Figure 18, connected to the headquarters through a dotted line symbolising the relative amount of freedom for street-level bureaucrats on the ground. Dotted lines, which represent an improved collaboration among these different policy actors over the post-conflict years, link these international actors to the circles of British street-level bureaucrats and to the Sierra Leonean government.

As demonstrated throughout this section, the UK has maintained a deep engagement in the reconstruction and development process of conflict-affected Sierra Leone over the last decade. Strong historical ties and reputational interests still link the two countries, as more than 15 years of direct British involvement in the West African state have produced extensive gains in terms of peace, security, and development. These gains have been obtained and are today supported by an active collaboration between British street-level bureaucrats in the country, local government and institutions, and international partners. A recent example of this collaboration was the extensive process of consultation with different domestic and international stakeholders – the Secretary General of the Mano River Union, numerous Ministries of Sierra Leone, the World Bank and several NGOs – to review IMATT's role and establish the future of the contingent after the 2012 elections. Over the last 15 years, the UK has thus developed a firm and respected presence in Sierra Leone. However, this 'UK brand' could also prove to be problematic in some circumstances, as, according to some interviewees currently working in the country, local people sometimes ask British street-level bureaucrats for services and implementation of policies that are outside the UK mandate and are part of the GoSL's responsibilities.

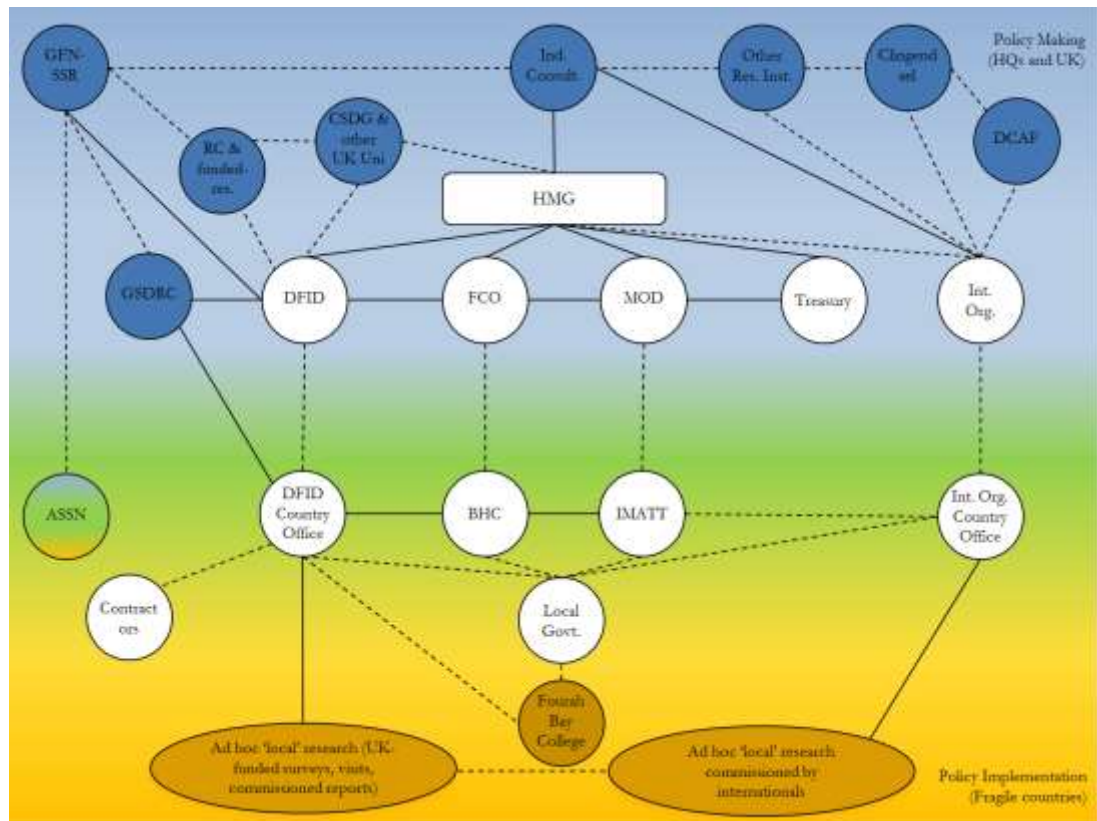
This part of the chapter has described the recent evolution and institutionalisation of the SSR policy and research agenda in the UK and at the international level. It has shown how the network of policy-makers and researchers working on SSR at headquarters level has evolved and expanded over the last decade. The chapter has also introduced the main British and international policy actors working in Sierra Leone tasked to implement SSR policies and activities on the ground.

The next part of the chapter analyses the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR programmes and activities implemented by street-level bureaucrats working in Sierra Leone during the post-conflict period. In exploring the network of local researchers that influenced British SSR policy in the country, the chapter underlines some unique features that currently characterise the research-policy nexus in conflict-affected environments, deriving wider insights on the role research can play in internationally-led SSR policy from the Sierra Leone case study.

#### 6.4 The role of knowledge in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone

The following Figure 19 incorporates Figure 18 and visualises the different research actors that interacted with the SSR programmes and activities implemented by British street-level bureaucrats, international actors, and local government and ministries in post-conflict Sierra Leone. In analysing the extent to which knowledge and research influenced British-led SSR activities in the country, this section of the chapter explores the following policy network, describing in depth the different relationships between research and policy actors on the ground.

**Figure 19** Second period, post-conflict years: the research actors in Sierra Leone



As this section will show, the use of research in British-led SSR programmes and activities in Sierra Leone increased progressively over the post-conflict years. Several reasons can explain this improved influence and interaction of research and policy. Firstly, re-established security and a more institutionalised British presence in the country augmented the opportunities for research in the provinces. Secondly, more governmental funding for research at the UK and local levels resulted in a more systematic and structured use of knowledge in HMG policy, with research embedded in institutional policy approaches to state building and SSR. The uptake of research in policy was also strengthened by regular professional relationships between policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and international or local researchers. Thirdly, an increased availability of research, materials, case studies, examples, and lessons learned from different countries of the world constituted an important repository of knowledge that could be used and accessed by British street-level bureaucrats in the country, eventually feeding into the Sierra Leone's policy process.

Positive changes in the two main variables determining the use of research in policy, namely the stability of the context and the evolution of the SSR policy and research agenda, resulted in the progressive incorporation of research into policy programmes and activities on the ground. In particular, the return of peace and the increased stability and security gave street-level bureaucrats more time to read and commission research, as well as reflect on their policy. In the words of an SSR researcher, “the further you get away from conflict, the more time you have to look into this stuff”,<sup>154</sup> as the first street-level bureaucrats who were operating in a war zone “did not have time to be reading reports, they were just making decisions sort of, on the flight”.<sup>155</sup>

The opening of DFID's country office also corresponded to an increased use of research in policy programmes and activities. The Department itself was transforming into an “organisation more research-led”<sup>156</sup> and the permanent presence of DFID personnel in the country gave the opportunity to access numerous research and researchers in a more informal way. It also allowed them to have more relationships with civil society's organisations and to gather more insights and a better understanding of the situation on the ground. A DFID adviser recalls:

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<sup>154</sup> Interview n. 26, London, 26 October 2012.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Interview n. 1, Birmingham, 10 May 2012.

“[It] was an access to a much wider group of, one of the better term, it was not just the research community. I think it was a wider sort of civil society, wider advocacy community etcetera. And, because I think all of a sudden what you were getting was that people within the DFID office could go along to, I don’t know, Action Aid that organised a seminar, or something rather, or Fourah Bay College, a couple of students may get attached to the DFID office and say: ‘we are doing research on this, can we come and talk to you?’. So all of a sudden we had a much better idea of what was being done around of the country, what people were discussing, what people were thinking about etcetera. And DFID actually at that time, and I know it because I was involved in it, we had to do this slightly under the radar from here, we actually started sponsoring quite a lot of different people research, people, master’s courses and all of the other stuff. Partly because it was putting us in touch with people”.<sup>157</sup>

Research was thus progressively used in HMG, particularly in DFID’s programmes and activities in the country. As explained by an SSR researcher, “more research has influenced the ASJP than the JSDP, and more research has influenced the JSDP than the CCSSP”.<sup>158</sup> Figure 19 shows the increased role of ad hoc, local, HMG-funded research by connecting through a solid line commissioned reports, surveys, and visits on the ground to DFID country office, the UK policy actor that funded the majority of HMG research in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, as some of the British-led programmes in the country developed alongside the activities of other international actors on the ground – especially in the field of justice reform – Figure 19 connects HMG-commissioned research with similar ad hoc research funded by international actors in Sierra Leone. The circle of international research is linked to HMG-funded research through a dotted line, and to the circle of the international country offices through a solid connection. The solid line symbolises how concepts and notions emerging from studies funded by international actors directly shaped the activities of these international and bilateral donors working on the ground alongside UK institutions. Likewise, British street-level bureaucrats did not necessarily prioritise government-funded research over

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<sup>157</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

<sup>158</sup> Interview n. 26, London, 26 October 2012.



other studies funded by different donors, despite the former having a more direct influence on their activities and the potential to be disseminated more widely through different avenues such as websites, video conferences, or the DFID intranet. Thus the two circles of UK-funded and international research are linked through a dotted line to symbolise this indirect connection between research themes and studies funded through different channels. Nonetheless, at the same time DFID's country office is connected through a solid line to GSDRC, as DFID street level bureaucrats have the capacity to directly contact the centre and request desk-based research on questions related to governance, social development, conflict, and humanitarian topics.

Research interacted at different stages with the design and implementation of JSDP. As stated by a DFID adviser, "when the JSDP was developed, the process of putting together the *Project Memorandum*, there was a quite extensive amount of research undertaken".<sup>159</sup> Before the publication of the *Project Memorandum* in 2004, DFID conducted an early mission in the country in June 2002, held stakeholder workshops in December 2002 and August 2003, and created a Justice Sector Task Force to carry out "individual institution/organisational appraisals, public consultation and research" (JSDP, 2004, p. 7). The Task Force commissioned the *Voices of the Poor* survey and report that were received in November 2003, and produced its own report in January 2004. During the initial phase of the programme, from 2005 to 2007, research and analysis were undertaken "to identify and plan the activities and outcomes of the main phase of the programme" (JSDP, 2004, p. 4) and to "target, prioritise and strengthen programme interventions and monitoring" (JSDP, 2004, p. 11). £420,000 was budgeted under the heading 'Research and Policy Implementation Facility' (JSDP, 2004, p. 17) to conduct a baseline survey and other research on the justice sector of Sierra Leone. A local participant in the JSDP explains:

"We had two years of inception phase. We did a lot of research and work in the community which has been more useful for the implementation. The important thing is that it was from the people who said: 'these are the issues'. We also had input from other countries, consultants with experience, showing best practices and adapting to context; bringing people from outside, plus understanding from the

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<sup>159</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

bottom. [...] We had this professor from South Africa to develop a legal aid act based on extensive experience in that country”.<sup>160</sup>

Research remained an important element of JSDP for the whole length of the programme: as explained by a Programme Manager of the programme, “we did not do anything without researching at first”.<sup>161</sup> A local participant in the programme further expands:

“All the projects of JSDP would involve a desk review/literature review as a standard start point. We focused largely on academic work, looking at research across the board in this process. We commissioned to hire a person to go to the internet and download research documents on the Sierra Leone justice sector”.<sup>162</sup>

This research was not necessarily linked to general academic studies that were published in the same years, but it was conversely policy-oriented research focusing on ad hoc issues that were meant to directly influence the programme. A Programme Manager of the JSDP reflects:

“I don’t think academic research helped influence what I was doing, it was a question really of what I called focused research. Practical based, PRA and this sort of research where you are sort of looking at issues, you have a focus and you drive that research, you drive that reports to ensure that you are covering the areas you are particularly interested in, as opposed to a general research”.<sup>163</sup>

Research, Information, and Monitoring and Evaluation was one of the four main components the programme and was led by a Research Adviser supported by a local Research & Information coordinator. The programme conducted several studies, such as a baseline survey and two scoping studies in Moyamba district, two SLP perception surveys, two reports mapping the Justice Sector and two Justice Sector surveys (JSDP, 2006, p. 7). These studies were usually carried out by local researchers or external

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<sup>160</sup> Interview n. 14, Freetown, 28 June 2012.

<sup>161</sup> Interview n. 20, Skype, 28 August 2012.

<sup>162</sup> Interview n. 7, Freetown, 21 June 2012.

<sup>163</sup> Interview n. 20, Skype, 28 August 2012.

consultants. Finally, the JSDP regularly commissioned “tailor-made research”,<sup>164</sup> and funded the creation of a library of resources which was then transferred to the JSCO. The resource library informed JSDP work and it is still accessible in person and online. It is a useful and important repository of materials, an institutional memory, and a library for researchers working on Sierra Leone and for local policy-makers interested in governance, justice, human rights, SSR, police, anti-corruption documents produced over the years by local and international bodies as well as by civil society organisations.

The JSDP’s successor, the ASJP, was equally informed and shaped by research, at least in its preliminary and inception phase. DAI, the company that won the contract from DFID, consulted researchers and commissioned studies to develop its proposal. Studies, articles, and reports written by international researchers such as Dylan Hendrickson, Richard Fanthorpe, Lisa Denney, and Peter Albrecht were taken into consideration and informed the early phases of the programme. An SSR researcher comments:

“I was a little bit involved when they were drafting, when all these companies were developing their proposals... DAI who has won the proposal... and I had been to help them write their bid, and one of the interesting things I think, [...] they really did try and seek to engage few academics, so both Dylan [Hendrickson] and I were consulted”.<sup>165</sup>

Another researcher reminds how “Fanthorpe also did a report for ASJP [...] on the influence of chiefs in the justice system. I am not sure how they have used that [...] but it definitively was good, it was a good report. I think it was well received in general”.<sup>166</sup> Likewise, Peter Albrecht co-authored an ASJP-commissioned report on community policing that was used to develop the programme in Sierra Leone and has directly informed the ASJP strategy (Albrecht, Garber & Gibson, 2013). Once the report was completed, he also worked for one year as a technical adviser to the programme, implementing many of the recommendations of the report. Research also influenced the work of DAI’s subcontractors. One of them for example reminds:

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Interview n. 26, London, 26 October 2012.

<sup>166</sup> Interview n. 32, Skype, 14 March 2013.

“During the inception phase we did a lot of investigatory works, we went out [...] we did have a different focus, so we were going out to new districts where the British Council hadn’t been working, so for example we did a district assessment study and that was going out to different districts, so working out which one we should working and which ones we should working first”.<sup>167</sup>

The examples of research that shaped, interacted with, and influenced policy during the post-war recovery phase are numerous. They range from DFID-commissioned studies such as the *Drivers of Change* report and CSDG’s study on the politics of security decision-making to academic outputs such as Clare Castillejo’s Working Paper *Building Accountable Justice in Sierra Leone* (Brown et al., 2005; Castillejo, 2009; CSDG, 2008). Most of these examples could be inferred from conversations with street-level bureaucrats, who did not hesitate to indicate studies, articles, or reports that directly or indirectly influenced their work in the country. For example, in the post-conflict years the UK MOD conducted an internal study of IMATT, which was extremely influential in so far as it gave British street-level bureaucrats a sense of the so-called ‘IMATT effect’. Local people consulted as part of the study perceived the IMATT presence as larger than it actually was, and assumed that the military would have rapidly intervened to re-establish peace in the case of security problems. British personnel benefitted from this perception, and IMATT maintained a small contingent in the country until 2013. A British adviser recalls:

“I remember sponsoring a piece of research on IMATT and perceptions of IMATT, which actually was incredibly useful for IMATT, and incredibly useful for DFID, because it actually gave us access to what people were thinking about IMATT what it was doing [...] The perception was positive, but the thing that was worrying about it was that people did not really have any understanding of what IMATT was doing, so the perception it was positive was the fact that if the country... if the RUF appeared again, all of these people on the hill will come down and deal with them basically; and the message about what IMATT was doing with the RSLAF, the role it was playing in

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<sup>167</sup> Interview n. 29, London, 19 November 2012.

terms of helping Sierra Leone own institutions wasn't understood, they were... no one really was worried about that. There was also quite interestingly, it is much talked about the IMATT effect, one of the research questions was [...] to ask how many people were in IMATT, and the answers were quite interesting, I mean the multiplier effect... [...] There were people that did were under the impression that were thousands of people that was still in the country, which from an IMATT perspective they were also quite keen not to necessarily leave it because it was also quite good for a security perspective".<sup>168</sup>

Another example of the direct influence of research on policy was the use made by IMATT personnel of the book by Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007* (2009). The book, a comprehensive account of UK-led SSR policy in the country since the conflict, was on the desks of some IMATT senior officers. Interviews with IMATT members confirmed how they considered the book to be a good source of information, extremely useful as a means to understand what happened in the past in Sierra Leone, and easy to consult as it is structured in different short parts that can be read according to different needs. An IMATT member explains: "the book is pretty good and laid down in a way I can read the bit of interest, otherwise I need an executive summary and if there is something in it that catches my attention I may use it. Of course, these things will inform my general understanding".<sup>169</sup> The same member pointed out how, in view of the contingent's drawdown, he had read the part of the book about exit strategy to understand previous plans for an exit strategy that could influence future developments of the contingent. Furthermore, he recalled how he referred to the book in conversations with his colleagues to enhance the credibility of his arguments, denoting in this way a political use of research.

Likewise, personnel in the ONS recognised how research played – and still plays – an important role in their daily work. For example, a local officer declared that they developed over the years "links with academic institutions, even in the UK".<sup>170</sup> He further recalled how the ONS regularly engaged in security-related issues with "Cranfield University, King's College London (Funmi Olofinakin), University of

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<sup>168</sup> Interview n. 24, London, 19 October 2012.

<sup>169</sup> Interview n. 8, Freetown, 21 June 2012.

<sup>170</sup> Interview n. 17, Freetown, 29 June 2012.

Bradford (David Francis), DCAF in Geneva<sup>171</sup> and with country experts such as Paul Jackson. However, ONS's research capacity is sometimes thwarted by economic constraints, which also hinder the long-term sustainability of the office's activities. For example, personnel in the ONS underlined the office's limited capacity to conduct research on natural disasters and disaster management, one of the ONS tasks. They bemoaned the lack of adequate resources for research, as the group that deals with natural resources is composed of only four people and lacks "library or resource centre for reference point".<sup>172</sup>

Research therefore played an increasing role in British-led and local SSR policy in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, not all the UK SSR activities in the country were planned and implemented following systematic analysis and research. One negative example is Operation Pebu, a GoSL-owned project, funded by DFID and the same government and supervised by IMATT, aimed to build accommodations for RSLAF soldiers and their families. The project started in April 2003 and, according to the then Civil Adviser to the Sierra Leone MOD (Gaeta, 2008), experienced problems since its inception, with changes in the initial design of the accommodation, requests for additional funding, and lack of investment appraisal. Difficulties continued in the successive phases of the project, which were characterised by bad or no project management, skyrocketing of costs, unrealistic timeframe, as well as conceptually flawed and over-ambitious goals. These goals were nonetheless pushed forward, as the Army wanted to have the same accommodation standards of the SLP, who were rebuilding their accommodations in the framework of another DFID-funded programme at the same time. Problems worsened in the construction phase, following the decision to change the construction method from mud blocks to Hydraform blocks, without doing a preliminary study on the feasibility and the advantages of this new material. In the words of Gaeta (2008):

"To the best of anyone's knowledge, Hydraform blocks had never been used on a major construction project in Sierra Leone. The decision to purchase Hydraform machines was based on an advertisement in the back of a local magazine. No trials of the machines ever took place, nor

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

did anyone visit South Africa (where they are produced) to carry out a proper appraisal of Hydraform's applicability to Op. Pebu" (p. 4).

In 2004, DFID funded an independent review of Operation Pebu by an international housing consulting firm, who produced a critical report on the project. The project was thus scaled down in 2005: "70% of the project was cancelled and focus was on the remaining 30%" (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009, p. 146; Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, p. 149) and on completing the accommodations in the two sites of Kailahun and Pujehun. These goals were achieved in 2008, when the project ended. The final balance of Operation Pebu was thus extremely negative; the project failed in many aspects, achieved only a minimal part of the planned objectives, and, in the words of a DFID adviser, "was a good lesson learned on how not to implement and do a policy, as everything went wrong since the beginning and things kept snowballing to the worst".<sup>173</sup>

As happened in the first period of 'fire-fighting' solutions, experiences from other countries also informed SSR policies and programmes. For example, Brima Acha Kamara, Keith Biddle's successor as Sierra Leone IGP, studied in Northern Ireland and took from there the idea of policing boards, which were then introduced and established as Local Policing Partnership Boards in each police division of the country (Jackson & Albrecht, 2011, pp. 107-109). Likewise, ONS personnel used, imported, and followed British practices and examples in some of their policy decisions, such as the definition of the limits and responsibilities of the military in internal security. An ONS local officer recalls:

"One of the things we had to do was to circumscribe the role of the military only to external aggression. After a comprehensive review and research we created the MACP, getting the idea from the Military Aid to the Civil Authorities in the UK, where it was developed. Military can therefore intervene only when the police cannot deal with internal security".<sup>174</sup>

As in the earlier conflict phase, British street-level bureaucrats working on SSR policy and implementation had extensive professional experience in developing countries. For example, Peter Viner, the JSDP Programme Manager from 2007 to 2011, was a senior

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<sup>173</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

<sup>174</sup> Interview n. 17, Freetown, 29 June 2012.

UK police officer who had worked in international development programmes in sub-Saharan Africa for 16 years. Before moving to Sierra Leone, he participated in a police programme in Botswana and managed a justice programme in Lesotho. Likewise, senior British street-level bureaucrats currently working in Sierra Leone combine professional experience in different countries with a good understanding of the research agenda, as they are well aware of the main ideas and themes that have emerged from state building and SSR research in recent years.

As the research-policy nexus evolved over time, British street-level bureaucrats built formal and informal professional relationships with a group of trusted researchers and academics over the years. Several interviewees stressed how these relationships, usually born and maintained through professional collaborations, are extremely important to ensure a better interaction between research and policy. A DFID adviser for example remarks:

“A lot of cases, is being around for a lot of time and build up networks [...] Doing things together, yes. Being in a team writing up strategic conflict analyses, or government analyses, or something like that or, for that matter, just planning a programme somewhere, things like that”.<sup>175</sup>

His colleague adds: “a lot of people in DFID are just out of university and writing policy. They think they can change the world, whereas in the field you have lots of interaction with individuals and personal connections that these people don’t understand, as they have no experience of this”.<sup>176</sup> Likewise, a British officer based in Freetown describes his interactions with researchers on the ground:

“Between researchers and policy-makers, we have interaction. Researchers in country act as a sort of memory. When we come in to the country, we don’t know anything so we will go to them first. These researchers have knowledge, biographies of key people; they are the academic repository to rely on. We develop strategy at a regional level and such academic repositories can help in this respect”.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.

<sup>176</sup> Interview n. 10, Freetown, 22 June 2012.

<sup>177</sup> Interview n. 6, Freetown, 19 June 2012.



His colleague points out how in a fragile country there is a continuous flux and exchange of information: “in London you can switch off, but here you are constantly talking to people about the issues. You work 24/7, you have meetings at dinners, etc. So you learn a lot informal”.<sup>178</sup> His words are echoed by a DFID adviser, who stresses the importance of informal relationships for his work: “the best search function is to have other people in your network to find out research. We are overwhelmed by the mass of information; this is a good way, have people two phone calls away. It gives us easy, quick access – networks”.<sup>179</sup>

On the other hand, several researchers are equally well aware of the importance of building long-lasting good formal and informal relationships with practitioners to increase the chances of uptake of their work into policy in the long run. Researchers recognise that street-level bureaucrats and policy-makers “have their preferred suppliers”<sup>180</sup> of research, and are aware that “personal relationships do make quite a difference, particularly when you actually met people for long time”.<sup>181</sup> An SSR researcher recalled how interactions with street-level bureaucrats on the ground had always been an important aspect of his professional career: “I started as a decentralisation adviser. [...] There I met Garth [Glenworth] [...]. Soon I started working in areas such as Kono [...]. I guess that what I have done has been read in DFID, because after some years they asked us to reassess it again”.<sup>182</sup> His colleague working for a DFID-sponsored research centre further explains how they: “developed a relationship with advisers. Usually they use the helpdesk question form, some policy-makers call or write personal emails”.<sup>183</sup>

Paul Jackson and Peter Albrecht are two examples of researchers who built long-term professional relationships with British policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats. Their book on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone (Albrecht & Jackson, 2009) was quoted in a report by the UK Parliament’s House of Commons International Development Committee (2012). They also maintained over the years a close collaboration with the Sierra Leone programmes, based on their expertise on the country. Paul Jackson has become a major expert of SSR at global level (for example, he

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<sup>178</sup> Interview n. 5, Freetown, 19 June 2012.

<sup>179</sup> Interview n. 12, Freetown, 25 June 2012.

<sup>180</sup> Interview n. 23, Leeds, 26 September 2012.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Interview n. 1, Birmingham, 10 May 2012.

<sup>183</sup> Interview n. 2, Birmingham, 10 May 2012.

sits on the advisory board of DCAF). He acted as Director of the GFN-SSR until 2011 and has worked with several international policy actors such as European governments, the EU, the UN, and the World Bank. He has collaborated extensively with the UK government in the production of some security-related British policy papers and as a Senior Security and Justice Adviser to the SU. Likewise, Peter Albrecht has become one of the major experts on SSR in Sierra Leone over the years. He participated in a HMG-sponsored review of the SLP capabilities (Horn, Gordon & Albrecht, 2011), wrote a report for the ASJP, and worked as technical adviser to the same programme (Albrecht, Garber & Gibson, 2013). His PhD dissertation focuses on SSR in Sierra Leone (Albrecht, 2012) and he has collaborated on SSR issues and publications with international donors such as the OECD and research centres such as Saferworld (Albrecht, 2009), DCAF (Jackson & Albrecht, 2010), and the Danish Institute of International Studies (Albrecht, 2010).

Richard Fanthorpe is another researcher who participated in numerous DFID-funded studies on conflict-affected Sierra Leone and influenced several policy programmes in the country. During the period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions, he was contacted by British police advisers in the country to conduct a study on formal and informal police and justice systems at community level (Fanthorpe, 2001). The importance of his report was acknowledged in one of the CCSSP’s Output to Purpose Reviews (Bredemear et al., 2002). Since then, he occasionally collaborated with the activities of DFID in Sierra Leone. He led a two-year DFID-sponsored research project that monitored Sierra Leone’s chiefdom system and looked at the viable political structures for post-war reconstruction in the country (Fanthorpe, 2004). Furthermore, he was one of the authors of the influential *Drivers for Change* study sponsored by DFID in 2005 (Brown et al., 2005). Finally, in 2011 his consultancy company led an eight-month, DFID-funded project focusing on the impact, constraints and prospects of decentralisation in Sierra Leone (Fanthorpe, Laval & Gibril Sesay, 2011).

Ad hoc studies and reports prepared by British researchers were thus influential in the design and implementation of several SSR policies and activities in the country. The expertise of some of these academics and researchers was also requested at headquarters level and helped shape SSR policy documents and strategies at the British and international levels. This increased interaction between research themes, activities, and studies produced both at local and international levels is symbolised in Figure 19 by

the green area created by the overlap between the blue of international research and the yellow of local research. Themes and reflections that emerged from international and local research were progressively harmonised throughout the post-conflict years. More numerous research centres and activities at the international and local levels ensured a growing exchange of ideas and notions between research produced in donors' and fragile countries. SSR themes and concepts therefore percolated from the international to the local level and vice versa, eventually interacting and indirectly influencing policy papers and doctrine at headquarters, as well as the design and implementation of SSR programmes and activities on the ground. The activities of experienced researchers were seminal in creating and reinforcing this exchange, as most of the top experts and academics contributed to both policy at headquarters level and programme activities on the ground.

Local researchers hardly entered into this well-established network of researchers. Instead, they remained under-utilised to some extent in the course of the entire SSR process. Their limited exposure and access to international street-level bureaucrats, together with the fact that international or bilateral donors tend to rely on the work of well-known international researchers without investing adequate effort in harnessing local knowledge, are two of the main reasons for the limited reliance on local researchers.

However, British street-level bureaucrats' reliance on local research improved slightly over the course of the years. A DFID adviser who worked on the early SSR reforms in the country admits a limited interaction with local researchers: "to be honest, I would say not existent. I don't ever recall any. I mean there were local consultants, but not in the military, nothing to do with security. You could get a local social development consultant with tribal background or traditional authorities, things like that".<sup>184</sup> The creation of the ASSN in 2003 did not necessarily improve the exchange of information between local researches and British street-level bureaucrats on the ground. The Network harmonised the various Western African organisations carrying out activities in the general area of SSR, transformation, and governance. However, its work hardly influenced the SSR programmes and activities in Sierra Leone, as the ASSN was rarely quoted by the street-level bureaucrats interviewed in the course of the study. This limited influence of the ASSN on country policy is visually shown in Figure 19 by the

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<sup>184</sup> Interview n. 19, London, 12 July 2012.

lack of connection between the ASSN and the circles of British and local policy actors in the country. Likewise, the participation of street-level bureaucrats and researchers in seminars, such as the one on post-conflict challenges in Sierra Leone organised at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in 2005 (Albrecht & Malan, 2006), facilitated an increased interaction between street-level bureaucrats and local and African researchers in the region. However, the seminar was not seen as an opportunity for research to feed into policy, as explained by one of its participants: “we all attended, but I would say that it was a kind of ‘food for thought’ rather than research”.<sup>185</sup>

Informal relationships between international and local or African researchers were nonetheless stressed by some interviewees, and the work of these researchers increasingly fed into programmes sponsored by DFID and other donors. The use of local expertise improved thus over time, particularly with a progressive reliance on the work of the Fourah Bay College, a College in the University of Sierra Leone where the Centre for Development and Security Analysis was set up. The founder and leader of the Centre, Osman Gbla, became for example a trusted figure for British street-level bureaucrats in Freetown, and participated in the preparation of the PRSP, the Sierra Leone Vision 2025, and the DFID Review Team of the Sierra Leone Governance and Civil Service Reform Programme II in 2007. Policy inputs from local researchers thus improved over time, as recalled by a DFID adviser: “there were some good ones, particularly at the Fourah Bay College. We used to talk with them, with locals, as well as with senior people. A name that comes to my mind is Osman Gbla, who had a very clear idea of the history of the country and of policy. We used to talk with them”.<sup>186</sup> Fourah Bay College is thus one of the circles of research actors in Figure 19. It is linked to DFID country office and to the GoSL through a dotted line symbolising the increased interaction between the research activities of the college and British as well as local policy.

Likewise, several local researchers worked in the JSDP or in other SSR programmes or participated in studies as part of the staff or as consultants and researchers. For instance, Momo Turay worked as Research and Information coordinator in the JSDP and produced an early situational analysis and report on the district of Moyamba. Likewise, James Vincent collaborated with Peter Albrecht and

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<sup>185</sup> Interview n. 3, London, 6 June 2012.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

Paul Jackson in the preparation of their book. The work of local researchers was thus extremely important in data collection at the district level. It improved especially with the recent funding of programmes in the field of justice, as local people could better understand local dynamics and informal justice mechanisms in the country.

British street-level bureaucrats' accounts of the work of local researchers were mixed and mainly dependent on personal experiences. Some street-level bureaucrats and international researchers praised the capacity of local researchers; conversely, others noted poor organisation, problematic access, and lower standards of work. An SSR researcher reflects on the issue of access:

“There is more of local researchers who I think they are excellent [...] But again, I think that the challenge for them is the platform to access DFID, so, unless you become a consultant, who somehow gets an international project, if you are a researcher at the University of Sierra Leone, how do you get your research to DFID?”<sup>187</sup>

Likewise, another SSR researcher expands: “the raw material can be superb; what they do, they don't make the most of it. They don't have the access, they don't have the money, a lot of them don't do the travels, some do, but most don't”.<sup>188</sup> Conversely, other accounts are more negative. For example, a DFID adviser commented: “we worked with someone in the University of Sierra Leone who was a private consultant, but generally, the quality is poor. Fourah Bay College is a mess”.<sup>189</sup> As a result, British street-level bureaucrats have not always relied on local knowledge: most of the time, local researchers have participated in some British-sponsored programmes and, sporadically, some of them have been used as private consultants. Nonetheless, some issues preventing the greater use of local researchers, such as the HMG tendency to commission research by international researchers “particularly for work over certain amounts”<sup>190</sup> remain, and British street-level bureaucrats did not necessarily use local researchers as much as they could.

The colours on the background of Figure 19 visually show the limited influence of local researchers at headquarters level. While the indirect interaction between

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<sup>187</sup> Interview n. 26, London, 26 October 2012.

<sup>188</sup> Interview n. 23, Leeds, 26 September 2012.

<sup>189</sup> Interview n. 4, Freetown, 18 June 2012.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

international (blue) and local (yellow) research is symbolised by the overlap of the colours in the green area, the blue of international research remains predominant in the background if compared to the ideal policy network presented in Figure 9 in Chapter 3. The amount of blue on the background visually captures how ad hoc, policy-driven research commissioned in country had a limited reach at the international level, mainly exerting a direct influence only on implementation activities on the ground. Furthermore, it symbolises how the limited participation and access of local researchers to the international debate make hard for them influencing policy papers and strategies at headquarters levels.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

The chapter has analysed the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone during the post-war recovery period. It has provided examples of research and researchers that proved influential for the activities of British street-level bureaucrats working on the ground. Furthermore, the chapter visually depicted how the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and international and local researchers evolved and expanded from an early period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to the post-conflict years. It argued that developments outside (an increased stability and security) and inside (a progressive evolution of SSR policy and research) this network shaped the policy process in the country and the interaction between policy and research. External and internal factors and variables interacted with one another and supported the expansion of the network of policy and research actors, ultimately contributing to an increased influence of research on British-led SSR policy. Positive changes in the stability of the country and a progressive evolution and institutionalisation of SSR policy and research at headquarters and country levels thus constituted the two main variables favouring an increased use of research by people implementing British SSR policy in Sierra Leone during the post-conflict years.

The empirical Chapters 5 and 6 have described the narratives and dynamics of research utilisation in British-led SSR policy during the conflict and post-conflict years. The chapters illustrated how the influence of research in policy increased from a period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to the present time. Furthermore, the chapters visually showed the changes and expansion of the network of SSR policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and international and local researchers throughout these two periods. The

analysis noted how developments outside and inside this network resulted in an increased interaction between policy and research in the post-conflict years. The third part of the thesis concludes the PhD by synthesising and reconnecting the theoretical and empirical parts of this study.

## **PART III – SYNTHESIS**

The first and second parts of the thesis introduced the theoretical foundations of the PhD research and presented the main empirical data collected in the course of the study. The analysis of the Sierra Leone case underlined how research has increasingly influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Policy-makers at headquarters level, street-level bureaucrats in Freetown, and researchers built over the years a policy network which progressively consolidated in the post-conflict phase. This network grew as the stability on the country improved and SSR evolved as a policy and related research agenda, supporting an increased use and uptake in research in policy over time.

The third part of the thesis is divided in two chapters that synthesise the main findings from the Sierra Leone case study and conclude this PhD research, respectively. Chapter 7 assesses the main empirical findings of the thesis. It analyses when, why, and how different types of research have different kinds of policy impacts – or not. The chapter builds a typology to explain how various types of research interacted differently with policy over the conflict and post-conflict years. It presents the main ingredients and indicators of high impact research and explores the various ways in which research has been used in British-led SSR policy, programmes, and activities at headquarters level and in conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by presenting the main explanatory and normative conclusions of this PhD research. The chapter explains the ways in which the thesis has addressed and explored its main question and related sub-questions. It provides some practical recommendations to increase the influence of research on SSR policy and points to future research that could stem from this ground-breaking study.



## **7. Research influence on policy: when, why, and how?**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Chapters 5 and 6 showed how the use and influence of research in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone increased over the years from a period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to the more stable post-conflict years. The chapters showed how the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working at headquarters and country levels evolved over the course of British intervention in the country. They identified in the stability of the country context and the progressive evolution and institutionalisation of SSR in policy and research two main variables that contributed to the increased use and uptake of research by HMG policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats.

Chapter 7 synthesises, analyses, and assesses the main findings of the case study and links them to the main theories on policy networks and research utilisation presented in Chapter 2 of the thesis. The chapter derives from the Sierra Leone case a thorough reflection on when, why, and how research – and different types of research – have or do not have different kinds of policy impacts. It is divided in three main parts, respectively addressing and analysing the three questions above. Part 7.2 systematically compares and contrasts the first conflict phase of the UK intervention with the successive post-conflict period. In arguing that research had an increasing influence on the work of policy-makers in the UK and street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone, it develops a typology explaining how different types of research have different types of impact on policy. Part 7.3 examines the reasons why research is or is not used in policy. It argues that networks matter for a positive uptake of research in policy and analyses some main ingredients and indicators that favoured the use of research in the Sierra Leone case and, more generally, in fragile, conflict-affected countries. Finally, Part 7.4 links the case study to the literature on research utilisation and, in particular, to the different models in which research is used and influences policy. It recapitulates some examples of direct utilisation of research in policy and provides cases in which research has been used politically as ‘ammunition’ in policy negotiations or to justify predetermined policy decisions.

## 7.2 When research influences policy: a typology

The narratives from Sierra Leone demonstrated how research has increasingly influenced and interacted with SSR policy designed and implemented by the UK in the West African state. In this respect, the first main finding of the case study is that research was important for British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. During the conflict, British street-level bureaucrats in Freetown eagerly looked for research, rough data, and information that could help the design and planning of their first ‘fire-fighting’ solutions. Likewise, the work and expertise of Sierra Leone experts contributed to and fed into several security and justice programmes funded by the UK in the post-conflict years, while policy-makers at headquarters level progressively funded research institutes and university studies to conduct research on SSR and state building-related issues.

Figure 20 is derived from the data presented in Chapters 5 and 6. It presents a typology which summarises how different types of research had various policy impacts and influence in the conflict and post-conflict periods analysed. In line with the distinction between different types of research provided in Part 1.1 of the thesis, the figure analyses the policy impact of academic and ad hoc, policy-driven research. The table also adds a third type of research – Southern research – intended as the work of local researchers from Sierra Leone and from the wider West African region. Figure 20 also lists four different kinds of policy impact. These types of impact are derived by Waldman, Barakat and Varisco (2014), and represent four main ways in which research directly, indirectly, and widely influences and interacts with policy. Headquarters policy impact is “the uptake of research on formal government policy documents” (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 89) such as cross-governmental SSR strategies. Country level policy impact is the use of research in “specialised, programme-oriented policy documents” (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 89), programmes and activities. Conceptual impact indicates “less direct and widely adopted conceptualisations” (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 89) that shaped the SSR and state building debate in the course of the years such as the concept of fragility, the necessity to integrate security and justice within the SSR agenda, or the recent debate on the future of SSR and its second generation (Sedra, 2010). Lastly, a fourth type of impact is policy relevant research influence, defined by Waldman, Barakat, and Varisco (2014) as “the capacity of a piece of research to give rise to further policy relevant research and to

have a multiplier effect on research and policy environment” (p. 89). The scores and values in the table are derived from the interpretation of the data collected in the course of the study<sup>191</sup> and provide an indication of how various types of research impacted policy differently in the case of Sierra Leone and might influence similar SSR and state building programmes in fragile countries.

**Figure 20** The impact of research by type

Types of Impact	Academic Research		Ad hoc Research		Southern Research	
	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Post-confl.</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Post-confl.</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Post-confl.</i>
<b>Headquarters</b>	High	High	Low	Medium	Low	Low
<b>Country level</b>	Low	Medium	Very high	Very high	Low	Medium
<b>Conceptual</b>	Med.-high	High	Med.-low	Medium	Very low	Low
<b>Policy Relevant</b>	High	High	Low	Medium	Very low	Low

In the conflict period, academic research had a high influence at headquarters level, a low impact at country level, medium-high conceptual influence and high policy relevance. New research centres such as the CSDG at King’s College London were funded by DFID to support the emerging SSR policy agenda and collect lessons learned from the field. As explained in Chapter 5, some of the researchers of these centres worked as additional members or staff of CHAD and contributed to policy initiatives such as the writing of the DFID guidelines on SSR in 2002. Their influence at headquarters level was therefore high; their capacity to shape conceptually the emerging policy agenda was medium-high – HMG already had its own agenda when it launched SSR in 1999 – and their capacity to generate further research and policy debate in the long term was high. Conversely, these kinds of academic studies had low impact at country level: in the first phase of the intervention, street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone rarely consulted international academic studies, but looked at ad hoc pieces of research to guide their programmes in the country.

Ad hoc, policy-driven research consists in those studies commissioned by street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone to better understand the local context and collect rough data to guide their policy solutions. Its influence at country level was very high during the conflict years and Chapter 5 provided several examples of studies, surveys, and reports which were used instrumentally in the design and implementation of some of the ‘fire-fighting’ solutions. Conversely, this type of research had a low impact on

<sup>191</sup> The scores have not been calculated through a rigorous statistical methodology.

SSR policy at headquarters level and a low capacity to generate new research, as most of the times these studies were commissioned to respond to specific policy problems on the ground. Nonetheless, this type of research had a medium-low impact at conceptual level because the direct uptake of some of these studies in country policy eventually contributed to change policy practices in the long run. For instance, the report on formal and informal systems of justice commissioned by DFID to Richard Fanthorpe in 2001 represented an initial engagement of the Department with those issues.

Southern research had a minimal role in the conflict years. Street-level bureaucrats' limited knowledge of the local researchers in the country, their lack of time to seek out local advice while facing a highly unstable and insecure situation, as well as the lack of access of local researchers to HMG policy actors are some of the reasons explaining the limited influence of this type of research on policy. As a result, Southern research had a very low conceptual and policy relevant impact, and a low influence at headquarters and country levels. The scores related to the headquarters and country levels are due to the fact that, as shown in Chapter 5, institutional relationships between Western and African universities facilitated the participation of researchers from developing countries in the early evolution of the HMG SSR agenda. Likewise, facing an unstable situation on the ground, street-level bureaucrats looked for and – when these were available – consulted studies or books written by local researchers to have a better understanding of the Sierra Leone context and culture. For instance, the list of recommended readings included in the Background Brief of one of the first British military advisers also contains a few studies and reports on the history of the country written by local or African researchers (Anon., 2002).

In the post-conflict years, academic research maintained a high impact at headquarters level, high conceptual influence, and high policy relevance. Numerous centres and research institutes working on SSR such as the GFN-SSR or DCAF emerged in the last decade. The work of academic researchers resulted influential in the publication of SSR strategies and papers at HMG and OECD levels. SSR and state building themes and topics progressively shaped the development policy discourse and had a cumulative influence that gave rise to further policy-oriented research. Academic studies on SSR had a medium influence on policy at country level. Street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone mainly relied on ad hoc, policy-driven studies to implement their programmes in the country. Nonetheless, Chapter 6 showed how the work of

some Western researchers and academics such as Paul Jackson was read and quoted by British personnel in the country.

Policy-driven research maintained a very high impact on the work of street-level bureaucrats on the ground. Chapter 6 has demonstrated how, in the post-conflict years, HMG personnel and advisers in Sierra Leone commissioned numerous ad hoc pieces of research that directly influenced their SSR programmes and activities in the country. This type of research also had a medium impact at headquarters level and a medium conceptual influence and policy relevance. Lessons learned and examples coming from developing countries fed more systematically in HMG and other donors' headquarters policy approaches. They contributed to shape conceptually the SSR policy discourse and to foster new research and studies commissioned by other international and bilateral actors in the country. This increased impact is also a consequence of a better interaction between policy and research in the post-conflict years. Enhanced HMG mechanisms favoured the use of research in policy and enabled the direct contribution of some researchers such as Peter Albrecht to policy papers and programmes both at headquarters and country levels.

Southern research maintained a limited influence on policy also in the post-conflict years. Studies and research conducted by African researchers had a low impact at headquarters level, as well as a low conceptual influence and capacity to give rise to further policy research. However, some positive developments such as the creation of the ASSN or the inclusion of Southern centres and academic institutions in some Research Programme Consortia justify an increase from the very low score of the conflict years to the low values of the post-conflict period. African researchers had an increased influence on policy at country level and medium impact on street-level bureaucrats' policy programmes and activities. As shown in Chapter 6, professors and students from the Fourah Bay College or local researchers such as Momo Turay or James Vincent collaborated with HMG-funded SSR programmes in Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, their access to British street-level bureaucrats and influence on UK-led policy in the country remained limited if compared to their Western and British colleagues.

The typology presented in Figure 20 also indicates how all the three different types of research analysed in the table increased their impact and influence on policy from the conflict to the post-conflict period. As demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, two

main variables accounted for the improved influence of research on policy: the increased stability of the country context, and the progressive evolution of SSR as a policy and related research agenda. As a result, positive shifts in these two variables contributed to a more consolidated policy network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers, which in turn facilitated an increased use and policy uptake of research in the post-conflict years.<sup>192</sup>

Some of the narratives and accounts of the Sierra Leone case study are in line with Hall's work on first, second, and third order change, and his suggestion that paradigm shifts in policy-making emerge in times of crisis. Hall states that paradigm changes "can rarely be made on scientific grounds alone" (Hall, 1993, p. 280), and "politicians rather than experts" (Hall, 1993, p. 288) play a dominant role at the beginning of such processes. The process of change rapidly spills "well beyond the boundaries of the state" (Hall, 1993, p. 288) to involve other actors such as the media, researchers, as well as outside interests. In his account of third order changes, Hall asserts that "the play of ideas was as important to the outcome as was the contest for power" (Hall, 1993, p. 289). In particular, the author underlines that "new research institutes sprang up, [...] something similar to a 'policy network' or 'issue network' sprang up to provide outsiders with influence over a formerly closed policy process" (Hall, 1993, p. 289).

The case of Sierra Leone presents some of the features of Hall's account of third order changes. As explained in part 1.1 of the thesis, the launch of the SSR policy agenda in the late 1990s and the decision to intervene in the country followed a moment of crisis, as previous solutions in Sierra Leone were not working and HMG required a longer-term and more integrated approach to reform the security sector of

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<sup>192</sup> The fact that the improved stability of the country context was one of the main variables favouring an increased use and uptake of research in policy in the post-conflict years does not preclude the possibility that research itself could contribute in a variety of ways to the nurturing, structuring, and creation of these improved conditions of stability. The main aim of the thesis – and of its related ESRC/DFID project – is to investigate the ways in which research has influenced and interacted with British policy in fragile, conflict-affected countries. This PhD thesis and the related project therefore explore the different dynamics of research utilisation in policy and the interactions between policy and research, without looking at policy outcomes and at the ways in which the use of research in policy actually contributed to change the conditions of stability in conflict-affected environments. As a result, in the case of Sierra Leone analysed in this PhD, research conducted in the conflict phase was surely instrumental in improving the stability of the country (for instance, through the direct uptake in policy programmes that contributed to an increased stability). However, the thesis – in line with the overarching ESRC/DFID research project – only investigates the ways in which research has interacted and influenced with British HMG SSR policy in Sierra Leone, without looking at the ways in which the policy use and uptake of such research has actually changed the conditions of stability in the country.

the West African state. Furthermore, Chapter 5 demonstrated that the intervention in Sierra Leone represented an important policy shift for different HMG departments that had never collaborated before. The chapter showed how, in line with Hall's account of third order changes, politicians such as Tony Blair and Clare Short, developments on the ground, political calculations, as well as ideas and the media<sup>193</sup> all contributed to the decision to intervene in Sierra Leone. Likewise, Chapters 5 and 6 underlined how, in accordance with Hall's account of third order changes, new research institutes and a policy network sprang up over the years, providing important guidance and direction to HMG policy-makers and British street-level bureaucrats working in conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

### **7.3 Why? The role of policy networks and the ingredients of high impact**

The Sierra Leone case study also shed light on the different reasons why research influences policy. Chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis underlined how the progressive consolidation and institutionalisation of the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers was an important factor determining an increased use of research in British-led SSR policy in the country. Policy networks thus matter and play an important role in the take-up of research. Narratives of research utilisation from the post-conflict phase highlighted how networks can foster formal and informal relationships between policy-makers and researchers; they give street-level bureaucrats the possibility to consult experts and knowledgeable people on a regular basis; they define insiders and outsiders; and they help build long-term trust and collaborations with a defined group of researchers.

Marsh and Rhodes's theoretical understanding of policy networks differentiated networks from their various degrees of membership, integration, resources, and power. Likewise, the dialectical approach to policy networks focused on conceptual, environmental, contextual, political, ideological, institutional, cultural, and ethical variability within and across networks. In line with these theoretical approaches, the analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 and the descriptions of the policy networks in the conflict

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<sup>193</sup> Part 5.4 of the thesis reported that allegations about British involvement in the 'arms to Africa' affair, the legacy of Rwanda genocide, and the possible criticisms about the different UK engagement in the Balkans and in Sierra Leone also contributed to the decision to intervene in the country. In line with Hall's account, it is also important not to neglect the importance of media in policy change. In 1994, the very influential article 'The Coming Anarchy', written by Robert Kaplan and circulated to every US embassy around the world, indicated conflict-ridden Sierra Leone as the epitome of a future world "in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real 'strategic' danger" (Kaplan, 1994).

and post-conflict years have demonstrated how the characteristics and nature of policy networks are important factors explaining the differential impact and uptake of research in policy. In this respect, the connections and linkages in the figures of the policy networks in Chapters 5 and 6 symbolised different levels of interactions between research and policy actors. The descriptions of the networks in Chapters 5 and 6 and the presence (or lack) of solid and dotted lines connecting the different actors can help explain the reasons why only some researchers and studies have influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone.

The different connections and the background colour of the policy networks in Chapters 5 and 6 visually symbolised politics/power relationships underpinning the linkages between research and policy actors. These different relationships imply that, in line with the dialectical approach to policy networks and with Marsh and Rhodes' model, conceptual, environmental, contextual, political, ideological, institutional, cultural, and ethical variability exists within and across networks and networks differ for levels of membership, integration, resources, and power. Ultimately, these politics/power relationships determine the reasons why specific pieces of research influence policy or not. For instance, narratives from the Sierra Leone case study showed how HMG-funded research centres like the GFN-SSR and GSDRC or intermediary figures working for HMG such as Senior Research Fellows, DFID knowledge brokers, or FCO research analysts have a high level of membership, integration, and resources and, ultimately, more chance that their research products can feed into policy papers and programmes at both headquarters and country levels. Likewise, cash-transaction research and studies commissioned ad hoc had a high level of uptake at country level. Conversely, the absence or low influence of Southern research is a consequence of the limited level of membership, integration, resources, and power of Southern researchers and academic institutions. In practical terms, this entails a limited access to donors' funding, a low level of interaction with street-level bureaucrats and policy-makers, and, ultimately, a very low influence of such research on policy.

The Sierra Leone case study highlighted some main factors facilitating the use and uptake of research in policy. These factors can be considered as the principal ingredients needed for research to have high impact on policy. Some of these factors have been already analysed in the literature on research utilisation (Edwards & Evans



M., 2011) and indicate those cognitive, institutional, and environmental ingredients, as well as those supply and demand dimensions that underpin the research-policy relationship and ultimately favour the utilisation of research in policy. Waldman, Barakat and Varisco (2014) divided these factors in four main structural, policy, research, and translation sub-sets, which encompass the various ingredients needed for research to have high policy uptake. Chapters 5 and 6 showed how these ingredients also underpinned the use and uptake of research in policy in the Sierra Leone case.

At structural level, Waldman, Barakat, and Varisco (2014) underlined that some underlying factors such as a country's context and stability, institutional dynamics, as well as politics and ideology can all impact on research use in policy. Indeed, Chapters 5 and 6 repeatedly indicated how an increased security in Sierra Leone and the progressive creation of institutional mechanisms to account for research in policy were instrumental in improving the use and uptake of research in policy in the post-conflict phase. Likewise, the political circumstances or ideological preferences can contribute to the emergence of research on state building or SSR topics. In particular, the politicisation of particular issues can "serve to catalyse research use" (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 194), as policy-makers might seek research to justify or support their policy agenda. In this respect, the role of media can contribute to explain why policy-driven research tends to cluster around certain cases and issues. As already underlined, allegations about British involvement in the 'arms to Africa' affair increased media attention on the UK role in the Sierra Leone conflict and contributed to the decision to intervene in the country.

At policy level – the demand dimension of the policy-research interaction – Waldman, Barakat, and Varisco (2014) underlined how improvements in research management, organisation dynamics, and processes of research utilisation are important ingredients that favour the impact of research on policy. These same ingredients contributed to an increased use of research in the case of Sierra Leone. A growing interest for research at HMG and DFID level fostered over the years the creation of numerous mechanisms to promote evidence-based policy as part of the UK state building and SSR policy process. This progressive push toward a more rigorous utilisation of research in policy "was manifested in clear commitments to improving research uptake in various high level policy documents [...]; increased funding for research and research activities; new research funding frameworks; innovative roles and

positions devoted to improving uptake in government; and organisational restructuring” (Waldman, Barakat & Varisco, 2014, p. 194). This appetite for research fostered increasing funding for researchers, fellows, Research Programme Consortia, centres, and teams producing research on state building and SSR topics. Eventually, it contributed to a progressive evolution of state building and SSR in policy and research, a second important variable explaining the increased utilisation of research in HMG policy in the Sierra Leone case.

At research level – the supply dimension of the policy-research nexus – Waldman, Barakat and Varisco (2014) noted how important ingredients determining the high impact of research are the quality of its format and presentation, its dissemination and communication, its focus, content, and quality. The particular attributes of a research can therefore affect its potential influence on policy. Findings from Sierra Leone confirmed this general point, as in hectic, unstable fragile countries research needs to be timely, usable, accessible, and relevant. In particular, the way a research is presented, disseminated, and communicated can make a considerable difference in its ultimate uptake in policy. Clear and well-written studies that avoid dense and technical language, or reports with a concise executive summary and actionable recommendations have more chances to be read by busy policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats. Likewise, the presentation of a research product to policy-makers in seminars or workshops accrues their engagement with the study and might foster trust and personal interactions between researchers and policy actors.

Waldman, Barakat, and Varisco (2014) further indicated that translation factors at the research-policy interface such as the presence and role of intermediaries and formal and informal networks are additional important ingredients that favour the high impact of a research on policy. This section has already underlined how networks matter in the ultimate use and uptake of research in policy. Likewise, the case of Sierra Leone has demonstrated how the creation of intermediary roles such as DFID knowledge brokers or the FCO research analysts, as well as the increasing collaboration of senior academics with HMG improved the linkages between research and policy and fostered a better uptake of research findings in policy.

Finally, different indicators can suggest a high uptake of research in policy. The particular backward-tracking approach of the thesis entailed that Chapters 5 and 6 mostly focused on those pieces and studies that were deemed influential by the policy-

makers and street-level bureaucrats interviewed. As a result, many of the research studies presented in the thesis have been directly used in policy. Their authors established regular formal and informal connections with HMG personnel at headquarters level or in Sierra Leone, sometimes contributing to the writing of policy papers or SSR country programmes. The direct quotation of articles, books, and studies in policy papers – as in the case of Albrecht and Jackson’s book – is an obvious indicator of the use of research. Likewise, the authorship of a policy paper or a report, or the collaboration of a researcher in country programmes usually signal a long-term interaction between such researcher and his/her funders. Other indicators of high level uptake are less explicit and can be ascertained only following a thorough investigation. Content analysis of speeches, policy and country papers clearly demonstrated how main concepts emerged in the state building and SSR literature incrementally shaped the SSR policy discourse. Likewise, interviews with policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats often indicated policy actors’ wide knowledge of the main researchers and debates in the field of state building and SSR.

#### **7.4 How? The different use of research in policy**

The literature on research utilisation explored the different ways in which research is used as part of the policy process. Research is a heterogeneous product which is sought and used by policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats for the most disparate reasons. Research can drive the design and implementation of different policy programmes; it can indicate alternative policy solutions; it can question, legitimise, or justify current policy practices; it can elicit or satisfy the curiosity of single policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, it can provide sociological or anthropological information on a country, region, or culture; it can be commissioned as part of the policy process to evaluate the effectiveness of particular projects or programmes.

The empirical analysis of Chapters 5 and 6 highlighted the different ways in which research has interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. These different types of interactions encompassed several models described by the theoretical literature on research utilisation. In the majority of the cases presented in Chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis, research findings fed directly in SSR policy or programming. In line with Weiss’ problem-solving model, street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone commissioned studies and analyses to respond to specific policy

exigencies, find specific information and data on the situation on the ground, and guide or evaluate their policy programmes and activities. Sometimes, the authors of this research directly worked alongside policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, such in the cases of Dylan Hendrickson's coordination of DFID's guidelines on SSR and Peter Albrecht's work as technical adviser for the ASJP.

Research has been utilised politically as 'ammunition' in policy negotiations, as happened in the case of the IMATT member quoting the book of Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson to enhance the credibility of his arguments in conversations with peers. Research concepts and themes such as state fragility or the necessity to integrate security and justice in SSR progressively percolated and shaped the policy discourse, finding their way in speeches of policy-makers at headquarters level as well as in country papers and programming decisions of street-level bureaucrats on the ground. In line with Weiss' percolation model, this kind of influence has been more indirect. Policy actors got acquainted with concepts through a cumulative process of osmosis; over time, these concepts enlightened and shaped their policy practices and discourses.

Finally, interviews in Sierra Leone underlined how the recent organisational pressure to demonstrate the evidence-base of policy programmes has moved practitioners to use research in a justificatory way with the aim to support predetermined courses of actions or to abide by organisational requirements at headquarters level. A number of respondents acknowledged that research is often used or selected to cynically justify or support predetermined policy choices. Street-level bureaucrats tend to refer to the main research papers that set the tone of the conversation at headquarters level and look for evidence to back their decisions in country. The use of policy-based research evidence – the tendency of street-level bureaucrats to retrofit the evidence to fit decisions already taken – is a form of research utilisation different from the use of evidence-based research in policy. This particular form of research utilisation is rarely analysed by the literature on the subject. Nonetheless, interviews in Sierra Leone underlined how this justificatory use of research appears to be a common practice in HMG in current days, and it might be interpreted as a sort of defence mechanism against the recent increasing organisational pressure that requires British street-level bureaucrats to demonstrate their use of evidence in policy.

## 7.5 Conclusion

The chapter has synthesised the main findings of the thesis into a single analysis and assessment. It linked the empirical findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6 to the theoretical literature on research utilisation and policy networks introduced in Chapter 2. It analysed and assessed the Sierra Leone case study and clarified when, why, and how different types of research have different kinds of policy impacts – or not.

The chapter built a typology to demonstrate how various types of research – academic, ad hoc, and Southern – had different policy impacts during and after the Sierra Leone conflict. It explored the role played by policy networks in the take-up of research: it argued that the characteristics and nature of policy networks, their internal variability and different level of membership, integration, resources, and power, as well as the politics/power relations among the actors in the networks are important factors explaining the differential impact and uptake of research on policy. It described the cognitive, institutional, and environmental ingredients – presented in the form of structural, policy, research, and translation factors – that determine a high impact of research on policy. Furthermore, it gave an account of different indicators through which research uptake in policy can be ascertained. Finally, the chapter analysed the ways in which research is used in policy and reconnected the findings from the Sierra Leone case study to the theories and paradigms of research utilisation introduced in Part 2.4 of the thesis. It showed how the utilisation of research in British-led SSR in Sierra Leone followed most of the models presented by Weiss in 1979. It added that street-level bureaucrats in the country do not hesitate to use of research in a justificatory way in order to justify predetermined or ongoing policy choices.

The following Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by presenting the main conclusions of this PhD. It emphasises the relevance of the case study to contemporary SSR interventions, and derives some general reflections on the role of research in SSR policy from the Sierra Leone experience. Furthermore, the chapter abandons the descriptive, explanatory approach of the thesis to shift toward a more normative and prescriptive approach and provide a series of recommendations aimed to improve the use and uptake of research in SSR policies implemented by international organisation and bilateral donors in fragile, conflict-affected countries.

## 8. Conclusions and recommendations

### 8.1 Introduction

This PhD has examined the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Chapter 1 introduced the empirical context underpinning the research and the main question and sub-questions addressed by this study. The theoretical portion of the thesis then presented frameworks, ideas, and concepts that facilitated a deeper understanding and exploration of the principal question and sub-questions of the research. Chapter 2 outlined notions and ideas pertaining to the literature on the policy process and research utilisation. Chapter 3 then re-elaborated these concepts in light of the recent policy and research evolution of state building and SSR, presenting an ideal policy network of practitioners and researchers stretching from headquarters to fragile, conflict-affected countries. Following an overview of the methodology in Chapter 4, the empirical part of this research employed and operationalised these theoretical concepts in the context of conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Chapters 5 and 6 provided a visual conceptualisation of the evolution of the network of SSR researchers and practitioners from the UK to Sierra Leone to explain how the use and influence of research in British-led SSR policy improved from a period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to the more stable post-conflict years. The two chapters linked the theory on policy networks presented in the first part of the thesis to the empirical reality of conflict-affected Sierra Leone, showing how two main variables – the stability of the country context and the evolution of the SSR policy and research agenda – impacted on the use of research and knowledge by street-level bureaucrats on the ground. Finally, chapter 7 synthesised the main findings of the case study into a single analysis and assessment.

Chapter 8 completes this PhD research by revisiting the conclusions of the thesis and by deriving from the Sierra Leone case study a series of general recommendations aimed to improve the utilisation of research in SSR and state building policies. The chapter will also underline the importance of this PhD for the literature on post-war recovery and research utilisation. In particular, the recommendations section of the chapter shifts from the descriptive, explanatory analysis of the precedent chapters to a normative, prescriptive approach. The distinction between these two main categories is common in several academic disciplines, from linguistic to philosophy and

ethics. Generally speaking, explanatory approaches are fact-based accounts that describe a phenomenon as it is, and not as it should be. By contrast, normative approaches “posit some set of values and recommend action on the basis of those values” (Vanderheiden, 2010, p. 313), they relate to an ideal standard or model of how things ought to be, and prescribe the best means, rules, and recommendations “of achieving a desired condition” (Evans M., 2007, p. 141). In the context of this PhD, the precedent chapters of the thesis have used an explanatory approach to describe the ways in which research interacted and was used as part of the British-led SSR policy process in Sierra Leone. Conversely, the recommendations section of this chapter uses a normative, prescriptive approach to provide a set of general measures that could favour and increase the influence of research on state building and SSR policies in fragile, conflict-affected environments.

Chapter 8 is divided into three main parts. Part 8.2 provides the main explanatory conclusions of the thesis. It starts by recapitulating the gap in the literature identified in Section 1.2 and explains the ways in which this PhD research has originally addressed, analysed, and filled this gap. It summarises the main argument of the thesis to illustrate how the empirical analysis of the study has explored, investigated, and shed light on the main question and the different sub-questions of this study. From the main explanatory conclusions of the thesis and the empirical analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6, Part 8.3 derives a series of practical recommendations to improve the use and uptake of research in state building and SSR policy in fragile, conflict-affected countries. These recommendations constitute the main normative conclusions of the thesis and reinforce the methodological, theoretical, and empirical contribution of the study to the literature on research utilisation, as well as state building and SSR policy practices. They strengthen “researchers’ and policy-makers’ ability to interact in a manner conducive to evidence-based policies” (Anon., 2010, p. 6), helping them maximise the influence and impact of research on their programmes and policies. Finally, Part 8.4 concludes the thesis by underlining the importance of this PhD research for the general literature on research utilisation and post-war recovery. The analysis acknowledges the groundbreaking nature of this study and sets the thesis in a bigger context, highlighting the positive features and the limitations and potential weaknesses of this research, and pointing to future research directions that could stem from this work.

## **8.2 The influence of research on SSR policy: explanatory conclusions from the Sierra Leone case study**

Section 1.2 in the introductory chapter of this thesis identified a gap in the literature on research utilisation and post-conflict recovery. It stressed how, despite a growing importance of state building and SSR in post-war recovery policy practices and an increase of research on these topics, the literature on research utilisation has rarely explored the interactions between policy and research in such fields of enquiry. In underlining this gap in the literature, it argued that a careful analysis of the dynamics and key factors underpinning the use of state building and SSR-oriented research in policy was needed from both a theoretical and an empirical point of view.

From a theoretical point of view, such a study would test the applicability of the literature on the research-policy nexus in an international domain and under-studied and problematic fields of research like state building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected environments. Whilst several studies investigated the numerous factors impeding, hindering, or postponing the uptake of research into policy (Caplan, 1979; Carden, 2004; Coleman, 1991; Edwards, 2005; Garrett & Islam, 1998; Majone, 1989; Mulgan, 2005; Nutley, Davies & Walter, 2002; Perri 6, 2002; Porter & Prysor-Jones, 1997; Sen, 2010; Shaxson, 2005; Stone, 2002), the literature exploring the use of research in state building and SSR has thus far remained limited (Ball & Hendrickson, 2006; Barakat, Waldman & Varisco, 2011a; CSDG, 2008; Sugden, 2006). Because of its direct engagement with the relationship between research and policy in the SSR and state building sectors, such research would represent an important and ground-breaking reflection on the policy process and the utilisation of research in internationally-led state building and SSR policies implemented in insecure fragile, conflict-affected environments.

Likewise, from an empirical point of view, analysis that addresses the gaps identified in the literature would include significant advice for British and international policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats working in current and future conflict-affected environments, as well as important recommendations to guide their activities in war-torn societies. It would assess the extent to which street-level bureaucrats in fragile countries have the capacity to absorb and assimilate research findings. Additionally, it would devote particular attention to the cultural compatibility of research users within DFID and other UK governmental departments and research providers, as well as to



personnel processes and incentive structures, including staff continuity and mobility, which are likely to affect research use and influence within British street-level bureaucrats on the ground. It would examine the extent to which the increasing HMG investments in research are actually generating a 'return' in policy, providing useful recommendations to improve the use and influence of research in state building and SSR policy.

This PhD research has addressed and filled the gap introduced in Section 1.2 of the thesis in an original and systematic way. Drawing upon the literature on policy process and research utilisation in policy, this study re-adapted it to the post-conflict state building and SSR fields. The analysis started from the literature on policy networks to examine the extent to which research has influenced and interacted with policy in a particular case study – namely the British-led SSR assistance in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The empirical chapters of the thesis progressively constructed and explored the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers who worked on SSR in Sierra Leone during the conflict and post-conflict years. In presenting these networks, the chapters explained that the utilisation of SSR research in policy has progressively increased from an initial period of 'fire-fighting' solutions to the more stable post-conflict years. Furthermore, Chapters 5 and 6 introduced and analysed the main external and internal variables that determined the extension of the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers over time.

In addressing and filling the gap in the literature presented in Section 1.2, the different chapters of the thesis have also addressed the main question of this PhD research: to what extent has research influenced and interacted with British governmental SSR policy in conflict-affected Sierra Leone? The theoretical framework presented in Chapters 2 and 3, the solid methodology outlined in Chapter 4, and the narratives of research utilisation described in Chapters 5 and 6 clarified and deepened the understanding of the principal question of this study. The analysis of the Sierra Leone case study illustrated and proved the main argument of the thesis: two main variables – the country's increased stability and a progressive evolution of SSR as a policy practice and related research agenda – accounted for the increased influence and use of research in British-led SSR policy activities over time. Positive shifts in these two variables combined to improve the uptake of research into British HMG policy-making

and activities of British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone from a period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to the post-conflict years.

In particular, an improved stability in the country following the end of the Civil War in 2002 resulted in a better access to the different war-ridden provinces and regions which allowed street-level bureaucrats and researchers on the ground to collect an increasing amount of information. British street-level bureaucrats’ local and contextual knowledge improved progressively throughout this period, fostered by more regular visits to the different provinces of the country and by an improved understanding of the local culture. Furthermore, the re-establishment of security in the post-conflict period meant that British street-level bureaucrats faced less compelling policy decisions and therefore had more time to reflect on their policies and digest different studies and reports produced at local and international levels. The urgent policy and programme decisions taken in the conflict period were thus progressively replaced by a more articulated and structured policy process during the post-war years. As a result, British-led SSR programmes and activities were increasingly shaped and modelled by ad hoc, policy-driven research, studies, and surveys conducted by international and local researchers, but also by concepts and notions that emerged from the burgeoning SSR international research agenda during the same period.

Likewise, the evolution of the SSR policy and research agenda over the last 15 years also contributed to the improved utilisation of research in policy documents at headquarters level and in SSR programmes and activities in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. As the SSR policy agenda developed in the UK in the late 1990s was increasingly adopted at international level, SSR research also expanded. It progressively interacted with the policies and programme activities of international actors and bilateral donors. This evolution of the SSR agenda at British and international levels, combined with an improved level of organisation and technology in Sierra Leone country offices, increased the number of channels through which street-level bureaucrats on the ground could become acquainted with research. Today, research products have the potential to reach street-level bureaucrats in fragile countries through a variety of both institutionalised and more informal avenues. Findings based on the information provided in the interviews undertaken throughout the course of this study confirmed that street-level bureaucrats usually get acquainted with the latest developments in SSR research through the academic work of institutions like Birmingham University and

CSDG or through reports prepared by research institutes and organisations such as DCAF, Saferworld, ODI, and Chatham House.

The creation of institutional mechanisms and intermediary roles also facilitated the use of research at HMG level, increasing and strengthening the channels of research utilisation. Today, British street-level bureaucrats in fragile, conflict-affected countries can consult the work of intermediaries: resource centres such as the GSDRC; network hubs such as the GFN-SSR; colleagues specifically working on research such as FCO analysts or people in DFID's RED. They find most materials online, on the website of the SU, in emails with research summaries circulating among the advisory network, or in presentations and copies of reports, newsletters, workshops, video conferences, and annual retreats. Incentives from the Head of Office are an additional and equally important way through which research shapes the daily work of street-level bureaucrats in fragile countries, as some of the main concepts in the academic literature are usually filtered through policy guidance from headquarters or staff in higher positions. Some interviewees mentioned the role of DFID evidence brokers; however, few practitioners considered and relied on them as a first port of call for research, because their role in the Department is still quite new and not completely clear to street-level bureaucrats. Additionally, most practitioners prefer to rely on evidence coming from people based in-country. Likewise, most street-level bureaucrats had no clear idea about the possible future role of the DFID-sponsored PEAKS, centres providing knowledge services in the areas of climate, environment, infrastructure; livelihoods economics and private sector governance; social development, conflict and humanitarian health; and education.

The empirical analysis of the Sierra Leone case study has also investigated the different sub-questions of this PhD research. The first sub-question of the PhD inquired about the ways in which the network of researchers and policy actors working on SSR in conflict-affected Sierra Leone has evolved during the conflict and post-conflict years. The thesis explored this sub-question by providing a visual conceptualisation of the evolution of the network over the years. Chapters 5 and 6 graphically depicted how this network – and the relationships and connections of the actors within it – expanded and improved from the conflict period to the post-war years. The analysis argued that the two main variables that accounted for an increased use of research in policy acted as external (the stability and security of the country) and internal (the evolution of the SSR policy and research agenda) factors that determined

the shape and extension of the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on SSR in Sierra Leone. Policy-makers in London, street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone, and researchers informing HMG policy at the headquarters and country levels established a growing and consolidated network over the years. The number of actors in this network expanded over time, and their interconnections and links were progressively institutionalised and reinforced. Developments outside and within the research-policy network thus interacted with one another, eventually contributing to a more structured and articulated network of policy and research actors, and, by extension, to an increased use, influence, and interaction of research with British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone.

The second sub-question of this PhD sought to identify the main contextual factors and exigencies that hindered or promoted the uptake of research into British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone. The empirical chapters of the thesis examined and presented these factors and exigencies. During the conflict years, the compelling situation on the ground, the need for urgent solutions, and political considerations, limited the policy options of British street-level bureaucrats working in the country. Contextual factors, political necessities, and historical circumstances sometimes shaped the early SSR policies more than research, as the unstable situation on the ground necessitated urgent interventions and rapid decisions. For example, the decision to postpone the downsizing of the Army was dictated by the necessity to reintegrate the different rebel groups within the state system, as opposed to leave them unchecked and potentially dangerous outside the government's Armed Forces. Likewise, the decision to maintain the OSD was taken only as a result of the fundamental role played by the paramilitary forces in defending Freetown from the RUF attack in 1999. Similarly, the corrupt reputation of the Ministers of Internal Affairs resulted in the decision to limit the MIA oversight over the SLP. As a result, knowledge and research did not constitute the main drivers of some SSR policy decisions taken by British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone during the conflict period.

Conversely, the thesis has shown how enhanced stability on the ground, an increased access to both the provinces and to research, and improved technology in the country were the main contextual factors that coalesced to facilitate the better use of research in the post-conflict years. Nonetheless, interviews with British street-level bureaucrats and researchers have identified several issues and barriers that still hinder

the uptake of research into policy. The first and most common issue is time, which influences the research-policy nexus in at least three ways. Firstly, researchers usually do not have a great deal of time to conduct research, particularly when it is commissioned as part of the policy process. This short time frame puts pressure on researchers and might compromise the quality of their work, particularly when research requires long-term understanding of a particular situation in context. Secondly, street-level bureaucrats working in fragile countries are continuously under pressure and extremely busy with the day-to-day demands of running projects; as a consequence, they usually lack time to wade through long documents or to carefully read and digest research findings. This lack of time is also a consequence of an increasing pressure on staff in recent time: for example, DFID's commitment to 'doing more with less' has decreased the ratio of staff to funds, consequently squeezing out certain analytical and intellectual tasks. Thirdly, the long time needed for some research projects does not necessarily fit with the reality on the ground which is characterised by the necessity of taking quick decisions and by a high turnover of personnel. This rapid turnover of personnel can also impact upon the use of research, as the uptake of a commissioned study usually depends on the priorities of the next person arriving in a country.

Street-level bureaucrats in the country indicated several other barriers hindering the uptake of research into their programmes. Some of these barriers, such as the pressure to see quick results or the existence of several competing processes in the country, are inherent to the nature of the programme implementation process in complex and dynamic conflict-affected environments. Others are more linked to organisational issues of both local government and country offices, such as problems of accessibility and availability, lack of institutional memory, resources, funding, and capacity to commission systematic research which is sustainable in the long term. Likewise, DFID personnel noted how problems of dissemination and communication sometimes make it impossible for people on the ground to know about all the research being funded and conducted in the country, particularly when some of these studies are outsourced to the private sector.

The thesis has also investigated the third sub-question of this PhD research: what is the applicability of the literature on the research-policy nexus to the fast-paced, cross-governmental, institution-oriented, and internationalised challenge of state building and SSR in fragile, conflict-affected environments? The empirical analysis of

Chapters 5 and 6 has re-elaborated concepts, ideas, and theories pertaining to the literature on policy networks and research utilisation in light of the findings from the Sierra Leone case study. The chapters used the theoretical approach of the policy networks to show how the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone has evolved and expanded over the years. The figures in Chapters 5 and 6 proposed a new, original, and unique policy network model that stretched from the UK to Sierra Leone and visually illustrated the particular international SSR policy process and the different interactions between research and policy at headquarters and country levels.

Likewise, narratives from the case study have confirmed how some theoretical models and barriers to research utilisation that typically characterise the research-policy nexus in domestic policy processes have equally qualified the use of research in an internationally-led policy such as British-led SSR in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. However, the thesis has shown how the international dimension of state building and SSR policies adds a further layer of complexity to the use of research into policy. It also identified the stability and security of a country context as a main variable impacting on the use of research by actors on the ground. Peculiar challenges and barriers such as the lack of access to provinces, the presence of competing agendas from numerous international and local actors, or the need to take sensitive policy decisions in a limited amount of time characterise the policy process and might limit the uptake of research in policy in fragile, conflict-affected countries. As a result, narratives of research utilisation from the Sierra Leone case study have illustrated how street-level bureaucrats on the ground often rely on policy-driven, action-oriented research commissioned ad hoc in-country, whereas academic or theoretical studies produced in universities are most likely to influence policy papers and strategies at headquarters levels.

Staff involved in implementing programmes considered some research of no utility for the particular context in which they operate. They noted how some academic studies, despite their influence at headquarters level, are sometimes unable to fully describe a complex country situation like the one in Sierra Leone, as they usually lack an element of political economy, history, or anthropology. Some influential research at headquarters level thus is not necessarily useful for people working in fragile countries, as it appears not sufficiently plugged into the realities of what people are facing on the ground. As shown by the Sierra Leonean example, conditions on the ground often

require street-level bureaucrats to get empirically sound and focused outputs, conducted rapidly enough to feed into and influence policy. Conversely, academic research requires a long time to be generated and feed into the policy process. As a consequence, academic research maintained a limited or indirect influence on the activities of British street-level bureaucrats in the country. In contrast, short-term, policy-driven research focusing on specific country issues was often extremely influential for the implementation of programmes. This created, and still creates, a ‘research-policy’ gap that is difficult for donors to narrow. Striking the right balance between long-term, innovative academic research and short-term, operationally-driven, policy-oriented research remains thus a challenge for international and bilateral donors working on SSR.

Through its engagement in each of the issues presented in the sub-questions, this PhD thesis is a unique and original study on the use of research in a specific internationally-led policy (SSR) designed and implemented by the UK in a conflict-affected country (Sierra Leone). This ground-breaking study explored an under-studied field of enquiry in a systematic way, highlighting the various dynamic interactions between policy and research in state building and SSR. The thesis identified, analysed, and addressed a gap in the research utilisation literature, employing theoretical notions and concepts pertaining to the literature on policy networks to examine the extent to which research influenced and interacted with British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone. The empirical analysis of the case study built and explored the unique network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on SSR in Sierra Leone during the conflict and post-conflict years. Furthermore, the narratives of research utilisation presented in the course of the thesis shed light on the principal question and the different sub-questions of this PhD research.

The fourth and final sub-question of this PhD asked what measures could favour and increase the influence of research upon state building and SSR policies in fragile, conflict-affected environments. Part 8.3 examines this sub-question in depth. It builds upon the empirical analysis of Chapters 5 and 6 and the explanatory conclusions presented in this section of the thesis to provide some recommendations that could promote the use of research in state building and SSR policy.

### 8.3 Recommendations

The Sierra Leone case study investigated the complicated and multifaceted subject of research utilisation, improving the theoretical and practical understanding of the interaction between SSR and state building-oriented research and policy. Lessons from the Sierra Leone case study – an intervention considered successful by some SSR scholars and practitioners – can improve the understanding of the research-policy nexus in similar SSR and state building engagements in fragile, conflict-affected countries.

As repeatedly analysed in the course of the thesis, two main variables – the stability of the context and a progressive evolution of SSR in policy and research – impacted upon the use and uptake of research in British-led SSR policy in Sierra Leone over time. In this regard, contemporary SSR and state building interventions in fragile, conflict-affected environments also benefitted from this progressive evolution of SSR in policy and research. Today, SSR is one of the main externally-led security policies promoted by the international community in the aftermath of a conflict. It has been adopted as a policy prescription by several bilateral donors and international actors as part of a burgeoning state building agenda that rapidly evolved over the last decade. Institutional structures such as cross-governmental units or advisory teams have supported SSR policy programmes and activities of numerous bilateral donors. Likewise, international networks and bodies such as the OECD International Network on Conflict and Fragility have promoted the SSR agenda at international level. At the same time, the theoretical literature and the amount of SSR and state building-oriented research has rapidly grown over time, and international, British, and local research centres today constitute invaluable sources of information for policy-makers at headquarters level and street-level bureaucrats in fragile, conflict-affected countries.

If the evolution of SSR in policy and research has therefore had a positive impact on the use and uptake of research in contemporary SSR and state building engagements in fragile countries, the instability of the context, the second variable identified by the thesis, has remained nonetheless one of the main factors hindering research utilisation in contemporary post-war recovery policies. The use of research in internationally-led SSR and state building policies in fragile, conflict-affected countries is therefore influenced by the same issues, themes, barriers, and limitations analysed by the general literature on research utilisation in policy. In addition to these factors, fragile contexts add particular security challenges that further complicate the collection and use



of information on the ground. Problems of access, capacity, lack of information, and instability characterise contemporary fragile, conflict-affected environments, and constitute unique challenges to the use and influence of research on SSR and state building policy processes.

In order to partially redress and tackle these unique challenges that limit the utilisation of research on SSR and state building policy in fragile, conflict-affected countries, the fourth and final sub-question of the thesis asked for measures that could favour the influence of research upon such policies. In this regard, interviews with policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers have underlined some of the problems characterising the SSR research-policy nexus in fragile states. Some researchers and street-level bureaucrats bemoaned a disjunction between headquarters, country offices, and contractors in fragile states, noting how it created at times a 'research-policy gap' and a difficult balance between academic concepts influencing policy practices at headquarters level and the policy-driven, ad hoc materials needed for policy implementation. Others pointed to organisational and structural deficiencies that hinder the use of research on policy programmes and activities.

Findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6 of this study and derived from interviews with policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers, as well as the explanatory conclusions in the preceding section have suggested some recommendations to redress these problems and some of these suggestions have been incorporated in Section 8.2 of the thesis. The following section abandons the descriptive, explanatory approach of the precedent chapters to shift toward a more normative and prescriptive analysis. Drawing from the network of policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers working on British-led SSR in Sierra Leone presented in Figure 15 of Chapter 6, as well as the interviews with the main actors of this network, it sets forth a series of recommendations to improve the commission, management, dissemination, and utilisation of research in SSR programmes and policy. Some of these recommendations are aimed to improve the interactions, relationships, and exchange between policy-makers, street-level bureaucrats, and researchers. Others are more closely linked to structural issues characterising the activities of international actors and donors in fragile countries, such as the high rate of personnel turnover or the recent tendency to outsource the implementation of SSR assistance programmes to private contractors.

Mainly rooted in the analysis of British-led SSR policy activities in Sierra Leone, the following set of recommendations can nonetheless be adopted by other international, bilateral, private, and non-governmental organisations and donors working in fragile contexts. Bilateral agencies like USAID, governments, or intergovernmental bodies such as the UN or the EU, international financial institutions like the World Bank, non-governmental or philanthropic entities such as the Gates Foundation, research sponsors like the ESRC or the Leverhulme Trust, and private sector actors could thus adopt the following recommendations derived from the main findings of this thesis. Recommendations derived from the Sierra Leone case study can thus carry international importance and improve the commissioning, management, dissemination, and utilisation of research by several policy actors working in post-conflict state building and development.

As previously underlined, the fragile stability and insecurity of a country context constitutes a major variable that hindered research utilisation in the Sierra Leone case study and in contemporary state building and SSR policies. As a consequence, interviews and conversations with street-level bureaucrats and researchers underlined how practitioners on the ground need, look for, and commission ad hoc operational, short-term pieces of research such as surveys and reports to improve their local knowledge and guide their activities in country. This policy-driven research is different from the academic research that is commissioned and tends to influence the activities of policy-makers at headquarters. The thesis has called this difference a ‘research-policy gap’ and has visually symbolised it by the predominant blue colour of international research in the background of the policy network of Figure 15 in Chapter 6. Ultimately, this gap entails the lack of a system within DFID and many bilateral donors that allows or adequately disaggregates between the long-term, innovative research needed at headquarters levels and the short-term, policy-driven research sought by street-level bureaucrats in fragile countries. Researchers also bear some of the responsibilities for this gap, as, according to some street-level bureaucrats interviewed, they sometimes tend to produce studies that are relevant only for the academic community rather than for practitioners in fragile countries, remaining in this way disjointed from the political realities faced by personnel on the ground.

Two different recommendations have been formulated with the aim to overcome this ‘research-policy’ gap and the apparent divide that sometimes emerges

between research and policy. The first of this recommendation for international organisations and donors is: *promote a better exchange between the policy and the research communities*. This recommendation aims at making research and policy actors aware of the different needs, requirements, and culture of their counterparts. This improved awareness could be obtained not only with better communication and more numerous initiatives to account for research in policy, but also with an increased flexibility and exchanges between the policy and the research world. For example, policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats working for international organisations and donors should be given the opportunity to take full or part-time paid leaves to attend Masters and academic courses (particularly with the recent offers of numerous online academic courses). On the other hand, academics and researchers should be afforded more opportunities to work alongside policy-makers at headquarters level or street-level bureaucrats in fragile countries to experience for some months the hectic dynamics characterising their daily policy work. Likewise, academia should be more open to outputs coming from the policy world, for example allowing policy-makers or street-level bureaucrats to teach short courses or lecture at the Masters level. In this way, students and academics would be exposed to the practical problems characterising the design and implementation of state building, security, and development policy measures in fragile countries. This exchange would enrich the academic debate with the experiences of practitioners, improving the reciprocal understanding between the policy and research world. Researchers working on governance issues related to SSR or state building in fragile countries should explicitly target some of their research outputs, such as briefings and reports, to policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats. International organisations' or governmental funding mechanisms for researchers should always include the preparation of a final report or policy briefing and its presentation in front of a policy audience. At the same time, academia should give more value to these policy-oriented activities, for example by linking career progression in universities not only to the publication of books or peer reviewed articles on academic journals, but also to the production and presentation of these policy-oriented research outputs to a policy audience.

Linked to this first recommendation, a second recommendation for donors to improve the use and influence of research on state building and SSR policy is: *increase the role and contribution of international and local researchers at every stage of the policy-making and policy*

*implementation process.* Steps in this direction would entail an increased collaboration between country offices in fragile countries and international or local country experts with expertise on particular countries or regional contexts. In the case of Sierra Leone, international researchers such as David Keen, Paul Jackson, Paul Richards, Richard Fanthorpe, Peter Albrecht, or Lisa Denney are examples of prominent names whose work has analysed in depth the causes and evolution of the war and the recent post-war recovery trajectory of the country. Besides them, local researchers such as Osman Gbla or regional experts working for the ASSN also have a greater expertise on the social, political, and economic history of the country and of the West African region.

In some circumstances, international organisations and bilateral donors working in fragile countries are already making good use of these researchers and experts, who, as seen in the case of Sierra Leone, have been sometimes influential in the design and implementation of some policy programmes. However, few practical activities could further promote collaboration between these experts and practitioners at headquarters level and in country offices. If hiring and embedding one or more of these researchers within the country offices would prove prohibitively expensive, international and local experts nonetheless could be called upon to brief and collaborate with street-level bureaucrats in the country on a regular basis. In the British case, international experts on Sierra Leone who are based in the UK could brief British street-level bureaucrats before their posting to Freetown, for example. Likewise, local researchers could hold regular seminars for HMG street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone. This would provide personnel on the ground first-hand information and understanding of the country. Furthermore, it would build and improve local researchers' capacity and access to international donors, two issues that, in the case of Sierra Leone, preclude a better use of local research by British street-level bureaucrats. In this regard, none of the policy actors interviewed – including those who worked in the country recently – mentioned the ASSN as a possible resource for their work. Considering the fact that DFID is one of the sponsors of the network, the role of the ASSN should be reinforced and the centre should be used more regularly as an important regional research hub. These kinds of efforts to foster regular collaboration between regional and local experts and HMG or international donors' country offices could be easily replicated in other regions or countries of the world where British or international presence and involvement is

high and relevant. DFID's creation of the South Asia Research Hub is an example of a positive step in this direction.

The recent evolution of SSR in policy and research has been identified as a second variable that positively influenced the use of research in British-led policy in Sierra Leone. The findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6, and the numerous interviews with street-level bureaucrats, have underlined how the increased production of research on state building and SSR-related topics has facilitated the utilisation of research in policy. However, the recent and positive outgrowth of research has consequently resulted in a large amount of available research for policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, who sometimes confessed the difficulties they experienced when searching for new research products, which eventually lead them to rely on a limited number of research suppliers. For example, HMG street-level bureaucrats in Freetown admitted that most of the times they do not have sufficient awareness of the work carried out by the different researchers in the country, even when this research is directly sponsored by DFID or HMG. Two additional recommendations have been thus formulated in order to overcome this problem and better align the burgeoning production and supply of research on state building and SSR with the increasing demand for research of street-level bureaucrats in conflict-affected countries.

The third recommendation addresses donors working in fragile countries: *create a virtual space where researchers can communicate to street-level bureaucrats the work they are doing on a country*. In particular, in the case of HMG the website R4D is an already existent hub for DFID-sponsored research. However, some interviewees judged it too dispersive, since the high amount of research in that website is difficult to manage for busy street-level bureaucrats lacking time to consult research products on a regular basis. The creation of country webpages – in the case of HMG, this would ideally be a page or a space in the website of DFID country offices – where researchers working on a fragile country can communicate the title and a short abstract of their research would help overcome this problem. Researchers might also register their names with DFID country offices and be given direct access to this page so that they can directly add new research outputs or update their studies themselves, without relying on help from DFID personnel, which may require street-level bureaucrats' extra time and delay the addition of new material on the webpage. Ideally, research carried out in the country should be organised by topic and themes and researchers interested in promoting their research to

street-level bureaucrats could communicate to DFID their contact details, together with a short summary or web-links to their work. In this way, street-level bureaucrats interested in a particular topic could easily find the names of the main researchers working in and on the same country, as well as the direct links to their research outputs. Street-level bureaucrats could regularly check new research carried out on a specific country, as the website would be regularly updated with new outputs and studies. This virtual library would grow over time to become an important hub of research to be consulted by different street-level bureaucrats working on a country over the years. Creating this page would cost HMG or international organisations and donors a limited amount in financial and human resources and the model could be also replicated in different country offices worldwide.

Linked to the previous recommendation, a fourth recommendation mainly targets HMG and proposes to: *further improve the mechanisms to account for research in HMG programmes*. As repeatedly underlined in the thesis, commissioned research in HMG has rapidly increased over the last decade. This growth was found to be one of the main variables that positively influenced the extent to which research was used in SSR policy programmes in Sierra Leone. This recommendation could be thus adopted by following a series of small changes and improvements aimed at smoothing the current use of research in HMG policy. Since some street-level bureaucrats found it difficult to know the different ways and mechanisms through which they can commission research, HMG should provide more communication on the available funding for research in-country. Ideally, each member of HMG or adviser arriving in a fragile, conflict-affected country should be provided with a small amount of money to be used exclusively to commission short-term research that could help his or her work. If this approach would prove to be impossible or too expensive, HMG should at least improve the mechanisms through which research can become an integral part of British policy in fragile countries by ensuring more linkages between the research activities of the different departments. In this regard, DFID is at the vanguard of HMG efforts to use more research in policy programmes. Some of DFID's mechanisms to account for research in policy could be replicated or used by other HMG departments. For example, researchers or staff from the GSDRC could be invited more often to DFID advisers or government retreats. Similarly, cross-governmental retreats and meetings could be organised more often, and the programmes and outputs of DFID's retreats could be circulated to other HMG

street-level bureaucrats interested in the topic discussed. HMG departments should also be allowed to use helpdesks such as the GSDRC, since at the moment only DFID has access to the service. Likewise, exchange of information between FCO advisers, DFID knowledge brokers, and research staff from the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre of the Defence Academy should be improved.

These four recommendations were made following an analysis of the current practices, mechanisms, and organisational aspects which characterise the utilisation of research in HMG policy at headquarters and country level. The following set of recommendations is linked to structural issues that characterise the activities of international actors and donors in fragile countries and ultimately impact on the use of research on policy programmes.

One of the main findings of this PhD thesis is that the volatile context of fragile, conflict-affected environments represents a key variable that impacts on the uptake and use of research in policy programmes and activities on the ground. The first British street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone needed and were able to adapt their policy decisions and activities to this changing environment, making urgent decisions and modelling their programmes according to the country context and needs. Such flexibility and capacity to rapidly adapt a policy to a volatile environment was one of the main factors ensuring the positive outcome of several early SSR reforms in Sierra Leone. However, the same flexibility and capacity to change a policy course is more difficult to maintain in contemporary times, as international organisations and bilateral donors often implement more structured and institutionalised large, multi-year programmes through private contractors, and such programmes do not always have the capacity to adapt themselves to a country context that rapidly evolves and changes. As a result, some street-level bureaucrats and researchers bemoaned the inability to use the research that has been developed in real time within a programme to inform its directions at strategic level. The fifth recommendation for international and bilateral donors and policy actors working in hostile environments is thus to regularly monitor and analyse, with the help of local researchers, a country's context situation to: *ensure flexibility in the policy programmes and adapt them to the changing situation on the ground.*

In the case of the UK, such analysis could take the form of regular, cross-governmental political economy or conflict analyses before and during the implementation of British programmes and activities in a fragile country. DFID's

Practice Paper *Building Peaceful States and Societies* already stresses the importance of such analyses, underlining how the Department “has developed a range of analytical tools to help understand state-building and peace-building dynamics” (DFID, 2010b, p. 39) and the implications of these analyses for its programmes. Preparing regular political economic analyses or conflict analyses in collaboration with other HMG departments working in a fragile country would help British street-level bureaucrats better understand and monitor the countries in which HMG operates, as well as the long-term direction of the cross-governmental state building efforts. This type of analysis should be conducted on a regular basis, in order to understand the different conflict dynamics and their evolution at local and regional level, map the various actors and their interests and capacities, and evaluate the effectiveness and the results of HMG state building efforts in a fragile environment. Such analyses should involve all the departments that have a presence in a country, as this cross-governmental approach would help them develop a shared view on the post-war trajectory of a state, align the different departments’ priorities to long-term HMG objectives, and allow them to adapt their programmes to the changes of a dynamic fragile context. Ideally, local researchers or international experts should be able to contribute to these analyses with their expertise. HMG street-level bureaucrats should be aware of the names of the most influential and trusted local researchers in their country of assignment. Their expertise and knowledge of the local context should be systematically sought and used for the production of such regular analyses, and for examining the main solutions that would solve a programme’s implementation problems. Likewise, HMG country programmes should have more flexibility and adaptability to new issues emerged from research. In order to obtain it, HMG street-level bureaucrats in country could organise yearly or quarterly meetings to discuss the potential impact on HMG programmes of new issues and findings arisen from research. Ideally, these meetings should be also attended (in video conference, if not in person) by the researchers who conducted these studies, in order to explore shared approaches for a programme to accommodate and tackle new issues and findings emerged from research.

Another problematic issue that emerged from this study and characterises international and bilateral state building and SSR engagements in fragile, conflict-affected countries is the rapid turnover of donors’ personnel on the ground. As shown in the case of Sierra Leone, this rapid turnover also affects the utilisation of research in



policy, as street-level bureaucrats have limited time to read research products in preparation for the next posting, and sometimes do not have enough time to spend in the country to ensure that the research they commission is used in policy. Thus, the sixth recommendation of this study for international organisations and bilateral donors is to: *improve street-level bureaucrats' pre-deployment and induction*. The rapid turnover of personnel on the ground sometimes means that street-level bureaucrats receive a limited informational briefing before they are posted to a new country. In these pre-departure meetings, they are usually briefed on the organisation's or donor's programmes and activities in the country, receiving only a small amount of information on the culture or history of the country. The handover of responsibilities between outgoing and incoming street-level bureaucrats should be improved and take place over a longer period of time. Ideally, the departing and arriving street-level bureaucrats should work alongside each other in the country office for a period of a week or at least three days to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and responsibilities to the newcomer. If such long handover would be too expensive, different and shorter briefings (i.e.: a three-day briefing at headquarters level, with video calls from the country offices) should be envisaged and instituted. Research should be part of these pre-deployment and induction practices: new street-level bureaucrats moving to a fragile country should be provided with a reading pack with information and research, in order to acquaint themselves with the main historical, political, and economic information of their new posting. They should be briefed by experts on the region before or at the beginning of their new placement, or at least receive a list of names of influential researchers who worked on a particular country, copies of their main studies, and their contact details.

Finally, findings from the analysis of the Sierra Leone case study and interviews with street-level bureaucrats and researchers presented in Chapter 6 have pointed to problems in the transition between successive programmes in fragile countries. These problems worsened with the growing HMG tendency to outsource the implementation of SSR assistance programmes to private contractors. In the case of Sierra Leone, some interviewees noted how the addition of a third layer of policy actors created a disjunction between headquarters, country offices, and sub-contractors working on the ground as part of some governmental-funded programmes. Figure 15 of the policy network in Chapter 6 has visually depicted this disconnect by linking DFID headquarters, DFID country office, and private contractors with dotted lines.

Furthermore, the findings drawn from the analysis of the information provided in the interviews presented in Chapter 6 have underlined how this lack of cohesion between the various actors appears to be particularly marked during transition phases and has negative consequences on the use of research in policy programmes and activities. Since continuity gaps have often characterised the transition between successive programmes on the ground, several street-level bureaucrats bemoaned poor information sharing (or loss of information) when different private partners or sub-contractors are asked to implement successive programmes in a country.

The seventh and final recommendation of this thesis for international organisations and bilateral donors working in fragile countries thus suggests to: *improve coordination between headquarters, country offices, and the work of sub-contractors*. Exchanges between country offices and private sub-contractors on the ground should be improved. In particular, the passage of information between different programmes needs to be ameliorated and managed at country office level. This would prevent losses of information and data and it would avoid turf wars between different private contractors who do not want to share their data with the incoming competitors. It would also spare time and resources for new contractors starting or implementing new programmes. Country offices should always maintain ownership and oversight of the different activities and programmes they fund, as these are often implemented by private commercial actors that focus on specific tasks without necessarily having a grasp of the donor's broader cross-governmental strategy. Ownership over their different programmes within the country offices would give donors the capacity to maintain their programmes' focus on the long-term political and governance dimension of state building and SSR policies rather than on sub-contractors' short-term inputs and outcomes. International organisations' and donors' country offices should thus implement mechanisms such as electronic databases to own the information and data collected by private contractors in the course of the programmes. In this way, these data could be easily shared and accessed by street-level bureaucrats in the country, by researchers in need of information, and by different private actors implementing programmes in a fragile, conflict-affected country.

This normative section of the chapter drew from the analysis of the Sierra Leone case study a series of recommendations to improve the use and uptake of research in state building and SSR policy programmes and activities designed and

implemented by international organisations and bilateral donors working in fragile, conflict-affected countries. Together, Parts 8.2 and 8.3 presented the main explanatory and normative conclusions of this PhD research. The following and final Part 8.4 concludes the thesis by underlining the importance of this PhD within the broader literature on post-war recovery and research utilisation. It analyses some positive aspects of this research, as well as its limits and potential weaknesses. Furthermore, it points to promising future research that could stem from this ground-breaking PhD work.

#### **8.4 The bigger picture: the importance and limits of this PhD and possible future research directions**

This study represents a ground-breaking investigation on an under-studied field of enquiry: the utilisation of research in internationally-led state building and SSR policy in fragile, conflict-affected countries. By directly engaging with this little-examined area, this PhD research could assume great importance for the general literature on research utilisation and post-war recovery. The thesis – and the three-year project to which this work is linked – constitutes one of the first attempts to scrutinise and understand the unexplored dynamics of research utilisation in two prominent post-war recovery policy practices, state building and SSR. The analysis also sought to address and fill a gap in the current literature on research utilisation: it deconstructed and examined the ways in which research has influenced and interacted with a fast-paced, cross-governmental, institution-oriented, and internationalised policy such as British-led SSR in conflict-affected Sierra Leone.

The thesis also addressed the principal question and related sub-questions of the PhD in an original and systematic way. It introduced concepts and notions from the literature on the policy process and research utilisation and adapted them to the context of post-conflict state building and SSR. It built the unique policy network of research and policy actors who worked on SSR in Sierra Leone and traced and analysed its expansion across countries (from the UK to Sierra Leone), and over time (from a first period of ‘fire-fighting’ solutions to the more stable post-conflict years). The utilisation of the policy network analysis to visually describe the different interactions between policy and research in the case study of the thesis constituted a new and promising approach to the analysis of complex and international policy processes like British-led SSR in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. The originality of the policy network model, and

the possibility to use and replicate this analytical tool in studies focusing on different countries, historical periods, and policies, is thus one of the strongest features of this research.

A second hallmark of this PhD study is the utilisation of the backward tracking methodological approach to investigate the influence and role of research in British-led SSR policy. This approach proved to be extremely valuable in examining long-term and extremely technical policy programmes and activities such as those designed and implemented by the UK in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. Furthermore, it allowed a strong focus on those studies and research that actually influenced the activities of British street-level bureaucrats in the country, unravelling features of the policy process that would have been more difficult to discover using a forward tracking approach. The backward tracking approach is therefore a positive and promising aspect of this study which can be replicated in similar studies and evaluations.

The explanatory conclusions in Section 8.2 of this chapter already emphasised the theoretical and empirical importance of this research. In addition, the normative conclusions in the precedent Section 8.3 provided some actionable recommendations that can be adopted by international organisations and bilateral donors to improve their use of research in externally-led state building and SSR policies. The ground-breaking analysis of this PhD research could thus have a great theoretical value for the literature on the policy process and research utilisation. Furthermore, it can provide important insights that can guide the activities of international and bilateral donors in conflict-affected countries, as well as practical recommendations to maximise their use of research in state building and SSR programmes. Nonetheless, this final section of the thesis aims to situate this PhD study in a bigger theoretical and empirical context. It emphasises the great value of this research, but also underlines the possible limitations of the thesis. Acknowledging the potential weaknesses of this study is extremely important to rightly set and define the role of this PhD vis-à-vis the general literature on the subject. Furthermore, the analysis of the potential weaknesses of this study would enable new researchers to derive from this PhD some possible future research directions that, if pursued, could improve the theoretical and empirical value of this work and advance the research utilisation and post-war recovery disciplines.

A first potential weakness of this PhD thesis is the fact that it focuses on a specific and allegedly successful case study. British-led SSR programmes and activities in

Sierra Leone constituted a set of policies which was mainly designed and implemented (particularly during the conflict years) by a principal bilateral donor, the UK. Furthermore, this donor has emerged in the recent years at the forefront of the post-war recovery and development agenda as one of the actors that mostly looked at and promoted the use of research in policy. A thesis analysing such case study therefore has most likely focused on a 'best case scenario' of use and policy influence of research in state building and SSR policy practices. It examined a mainly bilateral set of policies, designed and implemented by a donor that, over the last decade, increasingly promoted the SSR agenda at international level while at the same time championing the use of research in policy. As a consequence, it would be worth exploring whether and how the utilisation of SSR research in internationally-driven policy followed similar dynamics and patterns in different case studies. Multilateral interventions comprising numerous and different policy actors, SSR initiatives of donors that promote the use of research in their practices in a less systematic way, less successful or more contemporary engagements such as Afghanistan or Iraq could constitute interesting case studies to be investigated and compared to the Sierra Leone case.

A second potential limitation of this PhD research is linked to the fact that its quantitative survey had a very low rate of response, equal only to 10% of the people approached. Such a low rate of response should be considered more as a missed opportunity for policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, rather than as an actual weakness of the study. The potential survey participants were contacted and reminded about it on several occasions; therefore the researcher put in place all the possible measures to assure policy actors' participation in the study. Nonetheless, this was not sufficient to prevent a low rate of response from HMG policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats. This circumstance – *per se* a potential finding indicating practitioners' lack of time to answer the questions of the survey or their limited interest on the subject – is particularly unfortunate and a missed opportunity, as collecting a larger amount of responses would have provided a valuable quantitative, cross-HMG measurement of the practices of research utilisation across British government over time. Furthermore, the questions of the survey would have constituted a useful methodological tool to be potentially re-utilised in similar research on the same issue. The survey could have been replicated in different contexts and policy programmes designed and implemented by the same HMG or by other international organisations or bilateral donors. The

comparison between findings and results from similar surveys targeting other HMG programmes, international organisations, and donors would have allowed a thorough investigation of the different international organisations' and donors' practices of research utilisation in state building and SSR policy, and of the evolution of these practices over time.

Future research could potentially stem from this study, partially redressing the limits of this ground-breaking PhD research. As previously underlined, a highly promising and important avenue of enquiry could explore the utilisation of research in different or more contemporary SSR case studies. It could compare the findings from Sierra Leone to other SSR programmes of different bilateral donors, or to SSR policy programmes and activities promoted in the framework of current multilateral engagements. Such a study would investigate different dynamics of research utilisation in policy, examining the ways in which various international organisations and bilateral donors account for research in their policy and potentially streamlining at international level current best practices of research utilisation.

A second promising avenue of research emerging from this study could look more systematically at one of the main themes emerged from this PhD research – namely the different research uses and needs of headquarters level policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats in fragile countries. This type of study could focus on the high level of autonomy and agency of SSR street-level bureaucrats vis-à-vis their respective headquarters. It could investigate the different interactions between headquarters, country offices, and private contractors and sub-contractors in different case studies and in contemporary SSR interventions. Starting from this enquiry, it could look how these different policy actors use research and envisage some mechanisms or solutions to address and narrow what the thesis has called the 'research-policy' gap. Such a study would be of extreme importance for the donors' policy-making processes, as it would investigate the headquarters-country divide and would potentially streamline organisational policy practices and delicate passages between successive SSR programmes implemented by different private contractors.

Thirdly, another possible avenue of enquiry arising from this thesis could examine the potential of the new technologies in promoting improved influence of research on policy. This type of research would consider the role and potential of new media and technologies in research utilisation, looking at the ways in which they could

foster better uptake of research into state building and SSR policy. The world today is increasingly connected by powerful social media platforms and communication technologies which allow real-time interactions at a global level. As a consequence, knowledge and research have the potential to be disseminated more widely and quickly, shaping the actions and policy decisions of policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats in real time. Conducting research on the ways in which new technologies and media can promote a better use of research in policy would help researchers disseminate their work and reach wider policy audiences. Furthermore, it would assist international organisations and donors maximise the impact of their commissioned studies on bilateral and multilateral policy. For example, new technologies could support the creation of global networks and online research repositories which could be accessed and consulted by international organisations, bilateral donors, and national governments. Likewise, mechanisms to account for a better use of research in policy such as the GSDRC could be promoted at the international level with the aim to provide knowledge on demand for a variety of international and bilateral policy actors. New technologies and media thus have the potential to favour a better interaction, communication, knowledge-sharing, and exchange of information between international research and policy actors. A future study could explore this immense potential and aim to improve and harmonise the use of research in policy at global level.

Finally, a fourth avenue of enquiry could link this research to the recent growth of the ‘government-to-government’ (G2G) trade (Fuller & Romer, 2014; *The Economist*, 2014). G2G trade aims to allow national governments or cities to join forces with or delegate to other governments the provision of part of their public services. This trend was presented in a recent, thought-provoking article of *The Economist* (2014), and development practitioners have analysed the possible threats and opportunities entailed in the growth of the G2G trade (Green D., 2014). Future research could start from the analysis of this PhD to look at the interactions between research and the emerging G2G trade, focusing on the role that international experts and local researchers could play in this growing phenomenon. This PhD thesis has demonstrated how, in the case of Sierra Leone, the use and imposition of external blueprints in different contexts necessarily required a re-adaptation to the local tradition and culture. A future study could thus examine the ways in which local and international researchers could shape and interact with the G2G trade. Such increased interaction

between policy and research would avoid a repetition of blueprint models of government in different countries and assure a fine-tuning and adaptation of foreign experiences to local realities. Studying the ways in which international and local researchers could integrate the technocratic G2G trade would thus constitute a promising future research avenue with the potential to shape international policies and the lives of people worldwide.



## **Appendix: distinctions between the PhD and its overarching project**

This PhD research is linked to the three-year ESRC/DFID funded Research Project ‘The Influence of DFID-Sponsored State Building-Oriented Research on British Policy in Fragile, Post-Conflict Environments’ (Grant Reference: RES-167-25-0596). Nonetheless, as a distinct and original piece of research, the thesis has re-elaborated, changed, and adapted the general goals, objectives, framework, and methodology of the project. Whilst being part of an overarching research project, this PhD study differs from it in four main aspects: (i) the use of a backward tracking approach to deconstruct the influence of research on policy-makers’ and street-level bureaucrats’ choices; (ii) a focus on the influence of research, rather than DFID-sponsored research, on British policy; (iii) a focus on one distinct policy, SSR, rather than general state building policy; and (iv) a focus on only one country, Sierra Leone, rather than on the three case study countries of the overarching project.

The backward tracking methodology, an approach introduced and analysed in the methodological Chapter 4, aimed to complete and incorporate the general forward tracking methodology of the main project. The project methodology began with a mapping of DFID-funded research to identify relevant state building-oriented studies since the end of the Cold War. From this first selection of research, the project identified three research clusters, defined as time-bound concentrations of research with similar findings and themes pertaining to DFID-sponsored state building-oriented research. DFID-funded state building research was then assigned to these three different clusters and the project looked at the influence of research studies and themes pertaining to the different clusters on British HMG policy at headquarters level as well as three conflict-affected countries: Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sierra Leone.<sup>194</sup> Conversely, this PhD research employed the backward tracking approach, which started from British policy and street-level bureaucrats in Sierra Leone to understand the role and influence played by research in the SSR process of that war-affected country. As explained in Part 4.2, the decision to adopt this approach was based on three reasons arising from the specific nature of the research, as well as operational and practical

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<sup>194</sup> The different steps of this preparatory phase have been summarised in the Project Progress Paper (Barakat, Waldman & Varisco, 2011b), presented to DFID in December 2011.

considerations. The backward approach thus complemented and enriched the forward tracking methodology of the main research project.

The second difference between the PhD research and its overarching ESRC/DFID project is that the latter focuses on DFID-sponsored state building-oriented research, whereas the former investigates the influence of general research into policy. The main reason behind this choice was linked to the previous decision to use a backward tracking approach. If a forward tracking approach starts from the identification of the specific research that needs to be tracked into policy, a backward tracking approach conversely starts from UK policy and street-level bureaucrats in a country. Given this different starting point and focus, a study evaluating the influence of research on such policies could not limit itself to a particular and specific set of research – in this case DFID-sponsored, state building-oriented. Instead, such a study needed to understand and capture all the possible research influences identified by policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats, not only those deriving from UK sponsored studies. A further reason for a wider focus on research was that, as shown in Chapter 3, in the last decade the UK state building policy agenda has developed in line with the international agenda. These policy agendas have interacted and evolved together with research and historical events, sometimes anticipating some research themes, more often adapting to them in a dynamic and evolving relationship. Focusing only on DFID-sponsored research would not have presented a comprehensive account of this general framework, capturing only a limited part of the several studies, reports, case studies, evaluations, articles, books and informal relations that could have shaped the thinking and the activities of UK street-level bureaucrats working in conflict-affected Sierra Leone. In order to prevent such a partial analysis, the thesis has thus chosen to focus on general rather than DFID-sponsored research and on its influence on UK SSR policy.

The third difference between this PhD thesis and its overarching research project is the choice to focus only on one distinct policy, SSR, rather than on general state building policy. A focus on state building would have been a too wide and general subject, difficult to be managed and tackled within the framework of a PhD thesis, given its excessive breadth and lack of specificity. Furthermore, such a general focus on state building would have somehow replicated the research in the overarching project, whose aim is to understand the influence of state building-oriented research on British

policy in three different conflict-affected countries. A more specific focus was therefore needed. Such a policy-specific attention is aimed at incorporating and implementing the more general analysis of state building of the overarching research project. In this sense, the PhD complemented the main ESRC/DFID research with a more in-depth investigation that shed light on the processes influencing the uptake of research into a peculiar British policy in a specific conflict-affected country. As explained in the introductory chapter of the thesis, the choice to focus on SSR followed an academic as well as a personal and professional interest, as I thought that my academic and professional background on security and disarmament studies would have enabled me to better evaluate such policies, compared to other state building activities promoted and implemented by the UK in conflict-affected countries.

The fourth and final difference between this PhD thesis and its parent ESRC/DFID project lies in the choice to focus only on one country, Sierra Leone, rather than on three case study countries: Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sierra Leone. The selection of the three case studies for the main project followed a multistage process based on several different criteria and explained in depth by Barakat, Waldman, and Varisco (2011b).<sup>195</sup> The criteria taken into account in the selection were: (i) the past and future commitment of DFID in the countries; (ii) the fragility and post-conflict situation of the states according to the DFID proxy list of fragile states (DFID, 2005) and the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA); (iii) a judgement based on an evaluation of country-related documents, historical considerations, security problems, and stability; and (iv) the geographical spread of the countries.

The selection process started from the identification of the countries where DFID has worked since the end of the Cold War and will concentrate its efforts until 2015. The rationale behind this first criterion was to focus only on those countries of policy relevance for DFID, in order to be up to date with the Department's activities and improve the relevance of the project's findings. The research team relied on public data and documents available from the DFID website such as the aid reviews on bilateral and multilateral aid announced in March 2011 by International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell (DFID, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d), as well as two documents produced by DFID to take forward the findings of the aid reviews at both multilateral

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<sup>195</sup> Part of the following description has been used in Barakat, Waldman & Varisco (2011b).

and bilateral level (2011e, 2011f) to derive an initial list of 27 countries. As a second criterion of selection, the research team considered among those 27 countries only the countries that were listed as fragile by the DFID 'proxy list' of fragile states (DFID, 2005), narrowing the number of states to 14. Since DFID's list of fragile states was from 2005, the research team cross-checked the 14 countries with the 2010 World Bank's CPIA index. The CPIA is the most prominent and widely used index to measure state fragility. It assesses each country's policy and institutional framework and consists of 16 criteria grouped into four equally weighted clusters: (i) economic management; (ii) structural policies; (iii) policies for social inclusion and equity; and (iv) public sector management and institutions. CPIA scores are used by the World Bank and the OECD DAC to determine the World Bank's Country Performance Rating, a score which is used to allocate aid and to categorise states as fragile or LICUS. Countries with a CPIA score below 3.2 are considered fragile states. The analysis of the 2010 CPIA scores – the most recent scores at the time of the selection process – excluded from the list of potential case studies every country with a CPIA above 3.2, restricting in this way the number of countries in the list to 11. The third criterion of selection was a judgement based on an evaluation of country-related documents, historical considerations, the presence of a clear peacebuilding and state building process, security problems, and stability. This process of selection resulted in a list of four potential case studies: Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, and Sierra Leone. Lastly, as a fourth selection criterion the research team considered the geographical spread of the countries selected and the future commitment of DFID and the British government to these states. This allowed the research team to exclude Liberia from the list of potential case studies, as Sierra Leone would have received a larger amount of aid compared to Liberia until 2015. Despite the same regional location, the research team decided to include both Nepal and Afghanistan, as the different historical experiences and conflicts characterising the two countries justified a deep study of both states.

Once the selection of the project's three country case studies was complete, the choice of Sierra Leone as the case study for this PhD came almost as a natural consequence of the decision to focus on SSR. As already underlined in the introductory chapter of the thesis, although the UK supported and participated in SSR policies and activities in Afghanistan and Nepal, British involvement in Sierra Leone SSR was the first and one of the most important examples of SSR in conflict-affected environments.

The choice of Sierra Leone as a case study for this PhD thesis was therefore dictated by the need to understand whether and how research and knowledge influenced and interacted with this early and allegedly successful SSR intervention.

## **Glossary: list of abbreviations**

ACPP	Africa Conflict Prevention Pool
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
ASJP	Access to Security and Justice Programme
ASSN	African Security Sector Network
BICC	Bonn International Centre for Conversion
BMATT	British Military Advisory Training Team
CCSSP	Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CHAD	Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department
CHASE	Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CISU	Central Intelligence Security Unit
CPDTF	Commonwealth Police Development Task Force
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CRISE	Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
CSDG	Conflict, Security & Development Group
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DAT	Defence Advisory Team
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
DISEC	District Security Committee
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
ECOMOG	Economic Community Of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union

FCO	Foreign & Commonwealth Office
FISU	Force and Intelligence Security Unit
FSU	Family Support Units
G2G	Government-to-government
GCPP	Global Conflict Prevention Pool
GFN-SSR	Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
HDI	Human Development Index
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IGP	Inspector-General of Police
IMATT	International Military Advisory Training Team
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISAT	International Security Advisory Team
ISU	Internal Security Unit
JSCO	Justice Sector Coordination Office
JSDP	Justice Sector Development Programme
LDP	Law Development Programme
LICUS	Low-Income Countries Under Stress
LSE	London School of Economic and Political Science
MACP	Military Aid to Civil Power
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MODAT	Ministry of Defence Advisory Team
NAO	National Audit Office
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee
ONS	Office of National Security
ORBAT	Order of Battle
OSD	Operational Support Division
PCRU	Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit
PEAKS	Professional Evidence and Applied Knowledge Services
PRDE	Poverty Reduction in Difficult Environments
PRDU	Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit
PROSEC	Provincial Security Committee
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
R4D	Research for Development
RAPID	Research and Policy in Development
RED	Research and Evidence Division
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RSLMF	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SILSEP	Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SSD	Special Security Division
SSDAT	Security Sector Defence Advisory Team
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STTT	Short Term Training Team
SU	Stabilisation Unit
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone



UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDOD	United States Department of Defense
USDOS	United States Department of State
WP	White Paper

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