



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

**Post-conflict Security Sector Governance in
Sierra Leone: Deficits as Inhibitors of
Sustainable Development**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
University of Birmingham, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2024

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, and that it is the result of my own independent work.

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Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In achieving this significant academic milestone, I first acknowledge the divine favour of the Almighty God. That I was able to muster the passion, courage and physical ability to navigate and obtain financial support in the highly competitive scholarship to undertake PhD study is mainly because of His grace. What have I ever been able to achieve without his divine grace?

I also acknowledge my supervisors, Professor Stefan Wolff and Professor Paul Jackson for their invaluable time and meticulous perusal and appraisal of this thesis and general mentorship. The journey of four years with you as my academic shepherds has been long and arduous but worthwhile.

It would obviously not have been a possible venture without the required funding. For that I extend profound appreciation to the UK government through the Commonwealth Scholarship Secretariat. The entire process to obtain the scholarship was an ordeal on its own – from attaining national nomination to selection by the CSC – a very highly competitive but fulfilling one.

To those who gave their cooperation to share their perspective as interviewees and discussants, this research will not have been possible without your valuable insights and rich contributions to the subject. Your expert analyses have helped shape the outcome of this research. Knowing and working with some of you have had a wholesome effect on my professional and personal development.

My transition from a lecturer, confined to the four walls of a classroom delivering the similar material year after year, to an officer in the Office of National Security (ONS) helped to not only start a new career in national security but also create opportunities for me to attain higher

academic heights. I therefore acknowledge my time at the ONS as highly valuable in both my professional and academic development – a period during which I have been able to attain masters and doctorate degrees.

Along this journey I have been privileged to bring my loving family – wife Bridget and son Julian – whose presence around me has been supportive in helping me maintain the necessary mental and emotional stability to deliver on my research. My parents are also hugely acknowledged. They have been the main driving force behind my entire academic sojourn, the best gift from them being belief in me. My dad has transitioned to the great beyond but I am sure he remains immensely proud of me.

Special mention for my friends, mentors and key inspirers – Dr. Ibrahim Bangura, Dr. Henry Mbawa and the late Dr. Lansana Kormoh. These gentlemen made me believe in my ability to undertake the research and provided the necessary inspiration and mentorship along the way. I deeply appreciate them.

May the state of Sierra Leone move on to be the one we all desire!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFRC – Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

APC – All People’s Congress

ASJP – Access to Security & Justice Programme

CCSSP – Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project

CDF – Civil Defence Forces

CDS – Chief of Defence Staff

CISU – Central Intelligence & Security Unit

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

DCAF – Democratic Control of the Armed Forces

DDR – Disarmament, Demobilisation & Reintegration

DFID – Department for International Development

DISEC – District Security Committee

ECOMOG – ECOWAS Monitoring Group

FCAS – Fragile & Conflict Affected States

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

FISU – Forces Intelligence & Security Unit

GoSL – Government of Sierra Leone

GHI – Global Hunger Index

GPI – Global Poverty Index

HDI – Human Development Index

IESPC – Integrated Elections Security Planning Committee

IGP – Inspector General of Police

IIAG – Ibrahim Index of African Governance

IMATT – International Military Advisory & Training Team

ISAT – International Security Advisory Team

ISU – Internal Security Unit

JSDP – Justice Sector Development Programme

LPPB – Local Policing Partnership Board

MACA – Military Aid to Civil Power

MACP – Military Aid to the Civil Authorities

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MOD – Ministry of Defence

NPRC – National Provisional Ruling Council

NSA – National Security Adviser

NSC – National Security Council

NSCCG – National Security Council Coordinating Group

NSCoord – National Security Coordinator

NTA – National Threat Assessment

ONS – Office of National Security

OSD – Operational Support Division

PCPB – Post-conflict peacebuilding

PPI – Positive Peace Index

PROSEC – Provincial Security Committee

PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

RSLAF – Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

RUF – Revolutionary United Front

SCSL – Special Court for Sierra Leone

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SILSEP – Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme

SLA – Sierra Leone Army

SLP – Sierra Leone Police

SLPP – Sierra Leone People’s Party

SSG – Security Sector Governance

SSR – Security Sector Reform

TRC – Truth & Reconciliation Commission

UNAMSIL – United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

UNCIVPOL – UN Civil Police

WGI – Worldwide Governance Index

WWGI - Worldwide Governance Indicators

ABSTRACT

This research examines how security and development have mutually interacted in Sierra Leone's post-conflict political history. Through the analytical lens of the security-development 'nexus', it is an exploration into how the security sector has/has not supported national socio-economic development while it has been consistently situated in post-conflict development and poverty reduction policy. While there is ample scholarly agreement on the normative interlinkages between the two concepts as well as being a widely-utilised policy approach, it is also argued that the two concepts are not seen to be working concertedly in practice; that there is inadequacy of evidence to provide it theoretical entrenchment. The study seeks to explore the nexus as the two concepts interact at policy, practice and scholarly research domains. Using Sierra Leone as a case study with particular utilisation of 'process tracing' to manifest co-variation and causal inferences, it juxtaposes the security and development realms in Sierra Leone through the exploration of its post-conflict history, with particular examination of the evolution of the security sector, its role in supporting or obstructing development, bringing out the relationship between security and development policy and how the 'securitisation' of development in the post-conflict era has manifested itself.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition of Problem

Post-war development in Sierra Leone remains stunted with a struggling (aid-dependent) economy despite several years of efforts at post-war stabilisation, recovery and resilience. The security sector, believed to be a key player for peace, stability and economic recovery and poverty reduction, has seen years of reform but still fails to deliver on its core mandate. The role which the security sector ought to play in promoting socio-economic development remains retrograde, due mainly to deficits in its governance. This functional disconnect and its effects calls for a renewed approach to, and respect for, proper sector governance if it has to deliver its role on attaining development objectives for a country still trapped in its post-conflict mindset.

This study explores deficits in security sector governance and its effect on the attainment of development outcomes. It examines instances of disconnect in policy and practice pertaining to state security and development approaches, aiming not only to manifest conceptual correlation between security and development but to provide evidence to illustrate causality between security sector governance and development outcomes, and in so doing, manifest a strong logic for commitment to better governance and prioritisation. To undertake such a venture, it is therefore important to lay out the history of the state of Sierra Leone, showing its geography, demographics and political trajectory, so as to provide a foundation on which to understand and analyse the issues under review.

1.2 Research Question

What role can a professional and effective security sector play in the post-conflict development of Sierra Leone?

1.3 Research Aim

This research has the aim of investigating the link between security and development in Sierra Leone in a bid to inform both donor and government policy in pursuance of national development goals. In order to facilitate a more meaningful inclusion and implementation of national security in development policy, it targets churning out empirical evidence on how the failure to achieve favourable development outcomes is attributable to poor security sector governance. On a broader note, this exploration of the type of conceptual interdependence between security and development aims to lend more theoretical credence to what has been labelled the security-development nexus.

1.4 Research objectives

In addressing the research aim, this research carries the following objectives:

1. Analyse postwar institutional evolution in the security sector to reveal the friction between externally-driven SSR and local ownership
2. Analyse efficiency of the security sector governance mechanism (structures and policy formulation/implementation) and its effects on professionalism and operational effectiveness
3. Assess Sierra Leone's post-war development trajectory and how it has been affected by security sector governance

4. Assess the quality of overall state governance and the peace and stability of the state within which security interacts with development
5. Reveal lessons on theory and context

1.5 Expected findings

Where there is poor security sector governance there is a weak, ineffective and unaccountable security sector. Such sectors are usually ill-placed to play their important role in promoting peace, security and development either by acts of commission where they act as vectors of insecurity, fragility and division, or acts of omission where they fail to protect the state resources and citizenry in daily livelihood and in times of crisis. This has a direct effect the achievement of development goals. This is premised on the caveat that the failure to achieve the key development goals of sustained GDP growth and poverty reduction is attributable to poor security sector governance, putting the latter at the heart of development programming.

The Sierra Leone case contextualises the relationship between security and development, articulated through the maxim that ‘there can be no development without security’, one that premises the realisation of development goals on the assurance of security. The post-war democratisation process has been impressive in view of the relatively peaceful and successful elections that have been held. The SSR process has also been touted as successful with security and development policy consistently integrated, premised on the assumption that the two are mutually interlinked. However, deteriorating democratic standards, as a feature political competition and state capture, has seen the sustainability of reforms emerge as a challenge. The

state of the security sector in effect is rendering this collocation of the two policy realms impracticable. While this may be consistent with existing literature, this study goes further to investigate the empirical relationship between security and development by attempting to establish a causal link between poor SSG and failed development outcomes in the post-war history of Sierra Leone.

1.6 Thesis Layout & Chapter Sequencing logic

This thesis comprises seven chapters overall. Chapter 1 defines the research concern, research question, defines the aim and objectives and surveys the main literature both on the case context of Sierra Leone and the wider theoretical field, bringing key debates relevant to this research. Chapter 2 lays out the general methodological approach and constructs the conceptual and theoretical basis of the research.

With a view to revealing how the security sector has been governed post-conflict, Chapter 3 undertakes a review of the reform origins, institutional evolution and current status of core security institutions which benefitted from the post-conflict SSR efforts as well as those that were locally prioritised for reform as the state stabilised from the effects of violent conflict. In order to set the stage to locate deficits in security sector governance, it interrogates the areas of funding commitments, recruitment patterns, operational capabilities/effectiveness and accountability systems.

Chapter 4 then analyses security sector governance against the backdrop of the institutional review done in the previous chapter by examining the policy/strategy realm starting with how

issues are securitised as threats and how successive governments have positioned themselves in policy to approach those threats using instruments of national power. The chapter also looks at how security and development policy have interacted in support of each other against the backdrop of the interrelatedness of the two subjects and then proceeds to examine the use or misuse of the existing governance and oversight mechanisms and the challenges of policy implementation – the apparent gap between policy and practice. The second part of Chapter 4 examines how these policies and strategies have been put (or not) into practice during emergencies and major operations such as managing elections, public health emergencies, natural disasters, land grabs and public order; the effectiveness of security services in protecting state resources, and finally the relationship of the sector with the general public.

Utilising global/regional indices as well as primary data from interviews, Chapter 5 (as the third findings chapter) then looks at the status of peace, democracy, state fragility/conflict potential and development, all of which culminate as either promoters or reversers of state resilience.

This is followed by Chapter 6, which is the analytical chapter wherein the causal-process analysis is done between security sector governance and socio-economic development, an assessment of quality of governance and the sustainability of reform standards, examines two other post-conflict contexts for comparison and concludes with an analysis on the achievability of development targets going into the medium to long term.

Finally, the conclusion chapter (Chapter 7) brings out main issues derived from analysis of findings relative to the research concerns, lays out the research contribution to both theory and policy/practice. The chapter also reflects on limitations, including generalisability, researcher

positionality, and some methodological limitations before touching on recommendations for further research.

Chapter sequencing logic

Using primary and secondary data in an attempt to answer the research puzzle, which is unravelling security sector governance deficits on the one hand, and the effect of these deficits on development outcomes on the other, the logic behind the sequencing of the chapters is that first, it is important to dig into the historical evolution of the institutions of the security sector during the course of the implementation of reform initiatives, both in terms of the policies and attitudes that shaped their development and the standard of their operational output. Second, an evaluation is done on how gaps in security sector policy in terms of their formulation and implementation has affected practice/operational effectiveness and accountability – two cardinal features of good SSR/G – and in the process revealing how these have direct or indirect effects on development.

Then the analytical net is cast wider to examine the broader governance space by evaluating the approaches of post-war administrations and the effects on the democratisation process, the type of peace being enjoyed and the potential (or not) of conflict relapse which remains a strong feature of post-conflict states. The security sector sits at the heart of all of these issues which also have a direct impact on whether development targets are achievable.

The final two chapters interpret the findings by discussing their implications for policy and practice on the one hand and for theory on the other and sum up by laying out the research outcome and contribution, its limitations and room for further research.

1.7 Literature Review

1.7.1 Introduction

To help investigate the research enquiry, this chapter will survey key perspectives and debates in the existing literature on the security and development links especially as it pertains fragile and conflict affected states. It starts with a broad scan bringing out relevant conceptualisations of theories and concepts before narrowing down to how these theories and concepts have played out in the literature on the Sierra Leone context. This research situates itself in this body of literature and attempts to add epistemological value to existing postulations on the type of conceptual and empirical interactions between security and development.

1.7.2 Normative Prescriptions – Security, Development and the Wider Theoretical Field

The literature that investigates and analyses post-conflict security and development, and what could be called their ‘auxiliary’ concepts and policy approaches such as conflict, peace(building), statebuilding, security sector reform and governance, human security and transitional justice, is quite vast, strewn with myriad debates and divergent viewpoints, but also with some consistency in consensus on theory, evidence and approaches. It is also quite vast spatially – wherein these concepts have been examined in several post-conflict contexts, as well as periodically – covering mostly the post-Cold War period. The review highlights the key debates, bringing out gaps to

which this research shall contribute. While it may touch on all relevant concepts, it shall have the security-development nexus at its nucleus, particularly focusing on security sector governance and its link to national socio-economic development outcomes.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals provides an overarching policy framework for national domestication and implementation as well as a platform on which to embark on scholarly investigations and assessments on member states. The SDGs place importance on both state and human security by advocating for conflict prevention, political stability, inclusive growth and economic resilience, poverty reduction, and social integration.¹ There is a tacit integration of both security and development concerns operating in a supportive way, reflecting what academic literature has concerned itself with especially post-Cold War.

The key development targets for post-conflict states are clustered around sound economic management and structural policies (which targets mostly macro-economic issues); social inclusion and human development (which includes poverty reduction and protection of vulnerable groups); good governance (which covers accountability and Rule of Law); and post-conflict risk management (which includes security, conflict management and recovery, and peacebuilding).² These benchmarks provide a useful gauge for evaluation of post-conflict socio-economic development performance and have been useful in the analysis of this research.

1.7.2.1 Security and Development Interactions: Economic and Political factors

¹ Of particular relevance to this research are SDG Goals 1 (no poverty), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

² World Bank's Post-Conflict Performance Indicators Framework at <http://www5.worldbank.org/ida/ISIA/PCPI2011-QAAug2012.pdf>

Much scholarly work has been done on how a state's economic performance affects conflict dynamics, hence ushering in the need for both human security and state resilience. The combination of the internal choices a government makes and external factors culminate into what how a state performs economically – the ability to generate revenue to provide essential goods and social services and the ability to withstand the negative effects of shocks. A look here at the economic drivers behind conflict and insecurity provides a background understanding of this.

A comprehensive study done by McIntosh & Buckley (2015) provides ample insight into the literature covering interactions between economic development and conflict taking as case studies five fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS): Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. It explores theory and evidence of these interactions in the above contexts taking six economic development objectives: private sector development – business climate reform; private sector development – market development; job creation; agriculture; infrastructure; natural resource management. At the *macro-level*, economic development includes both inclusive growth, which Ranieri and Ramos (2013) suggest must include impact on groups regardless of ethnicity, gender or geographical region, and transformational growth which, as noted by Melamed (2013), includes higher and more sustained production levels as well as social and environmental transformation 'if economic growth is to lead to sustained prosperity for all' (p.2). Social transformation involves greater distribution of growth's opportunities and benefits.

The report (McIntosh & Buckley, 2015) distinguishes between two types of shocks in economic development (referred to as economic shocks³): ‘positive shocks’ which include booms in production and revenue, and ‘negative shocks’ which may be precipitated by unanticipated events such as pandemics, both of which have their corresponding effects on conflict. These terminologies are later in this study applied to the selected case study context to reveal their respective effect on conflict potential.

It is important to note that ‘positive shocks’ are of two types: labour-intensive (such as agriculture) and capital-intensive (such as oil booms), of which the former can decrease the potential for conflict while the latter can have the opposite effect (Dal Bó and Dal Bó, 2011); the reason being that labour-intensive boom tends to be more inclusive, reducing grievances, increasing the opportunity cost of engaging in violence, and making it less feasible for warring factions to recruit, while capital-intensive booms contract growth and make society more unequal, precipitating corruption and increasing the possibility to fund war (Dube & Vargas 2013, in McIntosh & Buckley, 2015). McIntosh & Buckley’s (2015) report also highlights income shocks as potentially causative of ‘conflict and crime by lowering police and military capacity, by affecting the recruitment strategies and incentives of armed groups, or by inducing migration or increasing tension over limited resources, such as water’ (p.8).

At *meso-level*, corruption and mismanagement in business, especially pertaining to natural resources and large infrastructural projects, as well as the role of the financial sector and foreign

³ An economic shock refers to any change to fundamental macroeconomic variables or relationships that has a substantial effect on macroeconomic outcomes and measures of economic performance, such as unemployment, consumption, and inflation. Shocks are often unpredictable and are usually the result of events thought to be beyond the scope of normal economic transactions. (Investopedia, July 2021)

direct investment are noted as contributors to conflict. Specifically on the role of the financial sector, elite manipulation of the system can accumulate wealth and exacerbate inequalities (McIntosh & Buckley, 2015). All of these point to poverty reduction failures through dysfunctional or corrupt state institutions such as the finance ministries and the central banks.

Finally, at *micro-level*, the report notes that among the mechanisms through which economic development might affect conflict are job creation which reduces the recruitment appeal for extremist groups and contributes to sustaining long-term economic growth, and a policy of 'economic inclusion irrespective of average economic conditions' (McIntosh & Buckley, 2015. p.10).

A leading theory dealing with the (economic) causes of conflict is that postulated by Collier et al (2009) which lists three related causal paths: opportunity/greed, grievance and feasibility. The wider breadth of the theory is discussed later in this section. Specific to micro-level economic development though, the theory posits that macro-level growth can promote job creation which reduces the recruitment appeal for extremist groups and contributes to sustaining long-term economic growth. In other words, states with high growth and per capita income are less likely to experience conflict.

One criticism of this theory though is that as exemplified by research done on sub-Saharan conflicts on the key drivers of youth's propensity toward political violence is that in most of these states, unemployment does not offer exclusive cause for an individual's participation (or willingness thereof) in violent acts (Mercy Corps 2015, p.17). It appears then that rebellions can

be driven by non-economical motivations if the prevailing circumstances appeal more to political and ideological consciousness than economic deprivation.

1.7.2.2 State fragility & Conflict Potential

The threat of the lapse or relapse into violent conflict stands as an impediment to the achievement of development objectives. A number of theoretical debates have been postulated as to what causes conflict. Fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS), as they have consensually come to be labelled by development actors, refer to ‘those where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor.’⁴ When states get trapped in a constant condition of fragility where peaceful coexistence is consistently undermined and local communities face threats to life and livelihoods, the overall development objectives of inclusive growth and reduced poverty remain elusive. Sitting at the core of this challenge is the manner in which security services, as the instrument of the state’s legitimate use of force, are managed. Such states are considered inherently conflict-prone and, on a wider scope, considered ‘weak links’ in the international system and therefore threats to global peace and security (Patrick, 2011).

This view of state fragility has been contested. Boege et al. (2009) submit as misleading the theory that perceives ‘fragile states’ as being an obstacle to peace and development, hence creating the need to build Western-style Weberian states. Believing there is a shallow understanding of local dynamics of global Southern states, they advocate that a wider examination of such states can deliver deeper understanding of issues at stake and thus reveal

⁴ DFID. 2005. Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States, Department for International Development, London.

inherent strengths of the states concerned which can be leveraged for building resilience. They 'posit that rather than thinking in terms of fragile or failed states, it might be theoretically and practically more fruitful to think in terms of *'hybrid political orders'*'. (p.14) Reconceptualising this way can create more opportunities for peace, security and development. Rather than create blueprint models of states along the OECD lines, 'we should focus more attention on models of governance that draw on the strengths of social order and resilience embedded in community life of the societies in question and work with the grain of actually existing institutions on the ground' (p.14). This view however takes little cognisance of the multi-ethnic and fragmented nature of many of such societies which cause social rifts and, in many cases, actually generate conflict and weaken the cohesion necessary for peace and resilience. Nonetheless its reference to the relevance of models of governance and local institutions can be understood to include the governance of the security sector, a central concern of this research.

The following conflict risk indicators are the main hallmarks of a fragile state: security apparatus, factionalised elites, group grievance, economic decline, uneven economic development, human flight and brain drain, state legitimacy, public services, human rights and rule of law, demographic pressures, refugees and IDPs, and external intervention.⁵ This mixture of political and socio-economic indicators highlight the strong interrelationship between security and development.

What then has been said about causes of conflict in fragile and conflict-affected states? Stewart (2016) notes political, economic and cultural factors and theorise 'horizontal inequalities' (HIs) among groups, as a cause of conflict in multi-ethnic societies, suggesting that if HIs can be

⁵ Fragile States Index (Fund for Peace). <https://fragilestatesindex.org>

reduced, the likelihood of conflict can be lowered. They distinguish between the 'primordialist' and 'instrumentalist' positions on ethnic identity formation, the former of the view that ethnicity is naturally ingrained in the mentality and the latter believing that people cling to ethnicity in order to serve an economic/political purpose. A third view is 'social constructivist' wherein differences are emphasized or invented to create social groups for political purposes.

Four hypotheses are tested and verified through surveys:

- that conflict is more likely where there are significant political or economic HIs, or both
- that political mobilization is especially likely where there are consistent HIs, that is both political and economic HIs run in the same direction.
- that lack of cultural recognition and equity, or cultural status HIs, will be provocative, while cultural inclusion will help sustain peace.
- that political mobilisation and possibly conflict will become more likely where HIs are widening. (pp.18-22)

International organisations such as the UN and World Bank have placed strong emphasis on both 'horizontal' and 'vertical inequalities' – which is that among individuals – as conflict causes and the need to tackle both⁶, although the UN approach is strongly criticised in terms of vagueness in objectives and timelines (MacNaughton, 2017). Nonetheless, highlighting these inequalities, especially HIs as conflict triggers, links development targets with those of peace and security.

⁶ UN SDGs (Targets 10.1 and 10.2) and World Bank. (2011). *World development report 2011: Conflict, security, and development*. The World Bank).

The hypothesis of '*greed versus grievance*' is useful in understanding the conflict causes, especially intrastate conflicts. It was initially postulated by Paul Collier (1999) hypothesising that '[t]he true cause of much civil war is not the loud discourse of grievance but the silent force of greed' (p.8). From the point of view of political economy, using econometric tests to analyse 79 large scale conflicts within the period 1960-1999, Collier & Hoeffler (2004) argue that in contrast with the main argument flow of political science literature which analyses conflict as arising from acute grievances, rebellions are motivated by greed and that understanding civil wars as driven by greed has stronger explanatory power than driven by grievances. They submit that '...rebellion needs both motive and opportunity' (p.563). Three common sources of 'financial rebellion' are listed: extortion from natural resources, donations from diasporas, subventions from hostile governments. This theory is further expatiated (Collier et al, 2009) which lists three related causal paths of conflict: opportunity/greed, grievance and feasibility, with little evidence for motivation but with a strong additional feasibility hypothesis: 'that where a rebellion is financially and militarily feasible it will occur' (p.1).

Collier & Hoeffler's (2004) hypothesis is however vehemently criticised as 'filled with empirical, methodological and theoretical problems that lead to unreliable results and unjustified conclusions', and that the authors 'seek to ascertain the causes of civil war without studying civil wars, and attempt to determine the motives of rebels without studying rebels and rebellions' (Nathan 2008, p.263). Other scholars have criticised the greed theory mainly on grounds of methodological inappropriateness – that the qualitative and deductive methods used should have been replaced by qualitative and inductive methods 'that would take into consideration not only the existence of different levels of analysis of civil wars but also their dynamic nature'

(Ratsimbaharison, 2011, p.8); and the omission of ‘governance, management mechanisms for natural resources and the influence that charismatic leadership can have on rebel groups’ while downplaying motivation as a cause of conflict (Bensted, 2011, p.6). Ganesan and Vines (2004) also raise a missing element in the greed vs grievance debate, which is the role of governments: ‘predatory autocracies’ where control over resources provides strong incentives to remain in power, unaccountable regimes who divert wealth accrued to illegal purposes and ‘third-party governments seeking to profit from resource-rich neighbours’ (p.3). Notable in this debate is the role of the state in regulating societal inequalities. If distribution of state resources is inequitable with parts of the citizenry relatively underprivileged, grievances are bound to develop. Hence for states that are weak or captured, which have inequality as a hallmark of governance, the potential for conflict precipitated by grievances is high. The theory therefore continues to provide a ready reference and hypothetical foundation for many analyses and therefore continues to hold some validity.

Fragility and violent conflict (or its potential) present a critical challenge to the attainment of development in developing countries.⁷ Therefore, where the causes of, and motivations and potentials for, conflict are evident and persistent, they signal underlying security and development deficits, both operating in a reciprocal manner.

1.7.2.3 Peacebuilding & Statebuilding

Preventing conflict then becomes a key priority if development is to thrive. This has stood as a major pillar in post-conflict peacebuilding, statebuilding and development intervention

⁷ World Bank report on Fragility, Conflict & Violence, 2023 @ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>

strategies. Peacebuilding has its genesis in Galtung and Lederach's thinking but got adopted by the UN in 1992 when it was defined as 'a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation', and 'an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict'.⁸ A more specific definition has it as 'non-military interventions by external actors to help war-torn societies not only to avoid a relapse into conflict, but more importantly, to establish the conditions for sustainable peace' (Tschirgi 2004, p.2). Statebuilding 'is defined as an endogenous process to develop capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relationships' and encapsulates peacebuilding in that the latter helps 'to consolidate security and political stability and establish the foundations for trust and social reconciliation among societal groups'.⁹

Uvin (2002) provides a retrospective analysis of how the nexus between the concepts and practices of development and peacebuilding nurtured over time. Issues leading to violent conflict, such as social polarisation and inequities, human rights abuses, were not part of development practice prior to 1990. The end of the Cold War and the strengthening of the hegemony of the Western liberal peace model prompted a change in approach. The nature of development practice changed post-1990 when new research proved that 'insecurity and violence are crucial dimensions of deprivation and poverty'. The nexus between development and peace has now become a central focus of development thinking and practice.

⁸ Boutros Boutros-Ghali - *An Agenda for Peace*, 1992, (p.11).

⁹ OECD, D. (2008). *State Building in Situations of Fragility: Initial Findings*.

Peacebuilding and development have thus been intrinsically related in post-conflict contexts. Smoljan (2003) provides a succinct explanation of two opposing approaches: *exclusivist methodology* (adopted by Winrich Kuhne, 1996) which says 'peace building is a political endeavour entered into in response to security problems for a limited period of time, whereas development is a long-term strategy carried out under generally peaceful conditions', and *inclusivist methodology* (adopted by Boutros-Ghali and the UN, 1995): which 'contends that development underlies the philosophy of peace building, which, ultimately, cannot succeed unless integrated with a development initiative' (p.234-235). Smoljan argues that the inclusivist approach has proved to be more successful on the ground, which reinforces Uvin's point above.

This joint approach though is not a walk-in-the-park endeavour. Krause & Jütersonke (2005) note that '[t]he magnitude of the task...entailing the breakup of existing patterns of politics and forcing a reconstruction of social and political relationships into a non-violent or non-coercive mode – is consequently enormous' and warn that '[i]f local dynamics are not taken into account, if practices and approaches are not contextualized to meet the requirements of a particular case, PCPB efforts will continue to remain a frustrating, and often seemingly hopeless, enterprise' (p.459).

While it is acknowledged that developed countries experience instances of instability, mostly resulting from ideological differences, development is recognised as a key requirement for peace. Where conflicts are driven by the absence of available and equitably distributed resources and needs, it becomes inevitable that development becomes central to peacebuilding efforts. As Krause & Jütersonke (2005) have it, drawing from Johan Galtung's initial postulation, peacebuilding 'entails building political, social and economic institutions, and revolves around notions of capacity-building, good governance, inclusion, economic opportunity and individual

well-being. Hence, in order to incorporate this comprehensive understanding of peace, we need to add the concept of development into the peacebuilding equation' (p.454).

An assessment of peacebuilding processes reveals the quality of peace being enjoyed in post-conflict and transitional contexts. Since peacebuilding primarily targets conflict prevention, with conflict itself being a major reverser of development, it becomes central to the requirements for both security and development – where security services are adequately reformed to not only refrain from conflict-induced unprofessional behaviour but to also promote the foundations of peaceful co-existence, and where open social and economic activities at all levels are not threatened.

1.7.2.4 The Role of Political Settlements and Elite Bargains

In the peacebuilding and statebuilding contexts, literature abounds with caveats surrounding political settlements and the role of 'elite bargaining'. Whaites (2008) describes political settlement as 'the forging of a common understanding, usually among elites, that their interests or beliefs are served by a particular way of organising political power' (p.4). Mainly a post-conflict transitional concept, 'elite bargains' refers to 'a discrete agreement, or series of agreements, that explicitly sets out to re-negotiate the distribution of power and allocation of resources between elites' and 'are the product of conscious, calculated behaviour to determine who holds political office, governs economic resources and controls the means of violence' (Cheng et al. 2018, p.11). Comprising the elite are the following groups: main capitalists who possess valued assets in agriculture and manufacturing services, traditional chiefs who control the distribution of property rights, traditional and religious leaders who carry the authority to advocate on behalf of rural communities, and political party leaders (Di John & Putzel, 2009, p.15).

Lindemann (2011) also distinguishes between *inclusive* and *exclusive* elite bargaining which involves whether or not the dominant social cleavages are accommodated, inter-group competition over the distribution of state power is stabilised, and whether or not as a result civil war is avoided. A further sub-division of inclusive elite bargains is horizontal inclusion which is relationship between different elite groups, and vertical inclusion which is relationship between elite groups and their constituencies. For it to have a substantial effect on peace and conflict prevention it must take into full consideration 'the types of violence surrounding elite bargaining; how resources and 'rents' are allocated between elites; and who is included and excluded, and on what basis' (Cheng *et al*, 2018). Lindemann (2011) finds in his research using the 'deviant' case study of Zambia, that while elite bargains may support the prevention of the outbreak of civil war, they cause stagnating impact on long-term economic development, which he labels the 'dilemma of unproductive peace'. A notable conclusion in the literature is that 'the character and shape of political organisation has been decisive in determining whether a state moves towards resilience or fragility, or indeed, takes measures to foster the capacity to promote development' (Di John & Putzel 2009, pp.14-15).

Elite bargaining that characterises peace agreements after conflicts determines the medium- to long-term political landscape of states. In contexts where power is strongly contested between factional or political party elites, elite bargains embedded in political settlements tend to lose their value over time through breaches of, or dereliction on terms, especially by the dominant faction, and in the process undermine the peace. In such situations, there is a tendency for security sectors to be poorly governed and highly politicised as means of securing ruling elite interests and tightening the grip on power. This compromise of peace and security stands as

major impediments to progress in advancing development objectives. Exclusive elite bargaining relates to an earlier made point of the role of the state in determining inequalities and consequently the quality of peace as well as driving conflict dynamics (see Section 2.1.2 of this chapter). How elite bargaining affects peace/conflict dynamics is applied to the case context later in this study.

1.7.2.5 Sequencing: 'Security first'?

Unpacking the security-development nexus raises questions on how they can be complementary in terms of approaches in implementation, which relates to a central inquiry in this study. While there is general consensus in the security-development nexus literature that the two are normatively interlinked, there is a debate between two major schools of thought – a hybrid development-security approach and a 'security-first' approach.

While analysing why fragile states are more than a development challenge, Zoellick (2008), to ensure such states do not breakdown, proposes '*securing development*', a hybrid approach which requires 'bringing security and development together first to smooth the transition from conflict to peace and then to embed stability so that development can take hold over a decade and beyond' (p.69). 'Securing development' must be thought about in terms of simultaneity rather than sequencing since they are mutually reinforcing.

The merging of development and security had been seen as 'securitizing development', meaning that poverty and lack of development were increasingly considered causes of insecurity rather than issues of inequality or injustice (Duffield, 2002). A counter argument to this is that, as it emerged in the late 90s, it was more of a '*developmentalisation of security*' evidenced by the

emergence of security sector reform which had security central to its aims with accompanying development objectives (Albrecht & Stepputat, 2015).

Mark Duffield (2014) also introduces the concept of '*radicalisation of development*' wherein the changing world order now dictates a need for development aid interventions to incorporate conflict prevention, security and stability. 'The commitment to conflict resolution and the reconstruction of societies in such a way as to avoid future wars represents a marked radicalisation of the politics of development' (p.15). Duffield buttresses the theoretical stance that development and security are mutually reinforcing in that one is essential towards achieving the other. 'Development is ultimately impossible without stability and, at the same time, security is not sustainable without development'. (p.16)

These arguments, while articulating the reinforced interlinkages between security and development, appear to put security only as a necessary addendum to development intervention programmes. The 'security first' approach however argues that this hybrid approach has been reversed with the understanding that it is the provision of basic security that is a *precondition* for development; the view that economic development is a precondition for security is put in doubt since the inequitable distribution of resources can itself deepen social cleavages and precipitate conflict (Krause & Jütersonke 2005). Security is also a vital pre-requisite for the establishment of liberal democracy, which is understood to also enable development (Paris, 2004). This is a recognition that has driven recent international peacebuilding intervention approaches.¹⁰

¹⁰ European Union, OECD-DAC, DFID, UNDP, covering thematic security issues such as DDR and small arms control, arms for development and security sector reform.

While sequencing peacebuilding tasks, Stefan Wolff also notes the consensus on the 'security first' approach but indicates that it should not be 'security only'; that it should be taken in the broadened sense where other human security issues would be included (2011).

There could however be potential challenges to the security-first approach in that security may eventually be under-prioritised and under-supported by governments if progress made in development does not reflect the capacity of governments to do so. For instance, Godwin & Haenlein (2013) warn about Sierra Leone that '[w]hile security is now deemed fundamental to socioeconomic development, the growth of security will eventually be stunted without a corresponding increase in the economic and institutional capacities that will allow the government to assume full responsibility for supporting it' (pp.36-37).

1.7.2.6 Creating the 'nexus' – the role of human security

Linking security and development, scholars have posited the concept of 'human security'. In an old study that is a watershed for the concept of 'human security', Ul Haq (1995) predictively noted that the world was entering a new era when 'security will be interpreted as security of people, not just security of territory; security of individuals, not just security of their nations; security through development, not security through arms; and security of all the people everywhere - in their homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities, in their environment' (p.68). In this study, Ul Haq stresses that emphasis on achievement of economic growth without equitable distribution is undesirable, therefore we should 'treat GNP growth as a means, not as an end'.

Consistent with this view, Newman (2011) argues that post-conflict peacebuilding cannot be effective if it focuses only on building the liberal democratic state and ignores basic everyday needs of local populations, as postulated in the concept of human security. An alternative *human security approach* to peacebuilding then would make such interventions more sustainable. Newman analyses that the general reduction in intra-state conflict means there is some success for international peacebuilding. However, in terms of promoting positive peace and development, the record is pretty poor, as evidenced by some countries that have seen such interventions. This strategic failure results from two reasons: the rationale that stabilising fragile states is good for international security, and problems with the liberal institutionalist models of post-conflict peacebuilding (Newman, 2011). He adds that economic liberalisation, with heavy focus on growth and macro-level development also brings in dangers of exclusion of certain sections of society, and that building strong institutions is not an end in itself but a means to an end: they must serve the interest of the citizenry. His concluding position therefore is that a human security approach ensures that while the institutionalist statebuilding model is being constructed, individual safety and needs are also attended to.

Human security has however seen some radical shifts in perspective. For instance, human security is believed to be a new tool for neo-imperialist control and domination (Duffield, 2007) while, as a new understanding of security, its vastness in interpretation is criticised as vague, almost meaningless, and does not offer adequate utility for research and policy making (Paris 2001, p.102).

McCormack (2011) argues 'counter-intuitively' against the links between security and development through human security. She places 'human security' within what she describes as

the changing relationship between the developed and developing worlds post-Cold War. She argues that 'rather than representing the merging of security and development, human security is representative of a period in international relations in which there is a separation of security and development' since the end of the Cold War has seen the developing world less strategically important to the developed; that while intervention into developing countries remains part of the agenda of the West, it is more of a risk mitigation strategy than one targeted at assuaging an existential threat (p.236).

The critical views of the relevance of human security in interventionist approaches does not take away its importance in the security-development nexus discourse and practice. Most of the criticism appears to consider global ramifications more than internal affairs of developing states. The centrality of the human security concept and approach to peace, security and development is pivotal in the analyses of this study.

1.7.2.6 Creating the 'nexus' – the Role of Security Sector Reform and Governance

Security sector reform and governance (SSR/G) presents an alternative but more constructive way of creating the security-development nexus. It does not however come in contravention of the relevance of human security; instead, it incorporates it just as much as development programming does. The centralisation of the fundamental needs of the individual and of local communities, basically issues of lives and livelihoods, as referent areas in both SSR and development establishes this link.

A standard and widely quoted definition of SSR is:

The transformation of the security system which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions, so that it is managed and operated 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. (DfID, cited in Wulf, 2004, p.3)

The DfID posit further that ‘responsible and accountable security forces reduce the risk of conflict, provide security for citizens and create the right environment for sustainable development. The overall objective of security sector reform is to contribute to a secure environment that is conducive to development’. This definition/description basically incorporates others posited by several international development bodies.¹¹ The ‘uncontested core’ that forms the objectives of the concept though is two-fold: reducing *security deficits*: turning a dysfunctional sector into functional one, and reducing *democratic deficits*: establishing effective civilian oversight mechanisms (Bryden and Hanggi 2005, p.27).

The OECD acknowledges the centrality of security sector reform to fragile states but admonishes a cautious approach in its implementation: ‘that SSR is a high priority for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development. But given the sensitive role of the security system in society, there is a risk that if assistance programmes are not carefully targeted, they could inadvertently exacerbate tensions. For example, increasing the operational capacity of law enforcement agencies without improving their governance could fuel repression’.¹²

¹¹ UN, AU and the OECD-DAC. This basically covers issues of building effective security sector that is accountable to civilian leadership and fundamental democratic principles.

¹² OECD, 2007, p.30

Security Sector *governance* then refers to ‘the process by which security institutions are subordinated to oversight mechanisms, in order to deliver transparent and accountable public services as a public good’.¹³ Proper governance and management are pivotal because, as Ball (2004) suggests, poorly managed security sectors that engage in political and economic affairs devoid of accountability tend to be unprofessional and incapable of providing adequate protection for people and the state from security threats in general.

Ball further observes that that poor SSG is a major contributor to the decline of state governance which carries the consequence of conflict in weak states; therefore strengthening governance generally cannot occur without requisite attention to the security sector. Therefore, good security sector governance is essential for the sector to be effective so as to create the favourable security conditions for effective and sustainable development (2004, p.4).

Roberts (2020) submits that the main objectives of SSR are, ‘[a]long with preventing a return to violence, ...to address politicization of forces, militarization of internal security, ethnicization of the security sector, corruption and patronage, and lack of professionalism’ (p.395). Added to these are adequate understanding of the workings of the security sector among governance structures, adequate funding and adequate policy, strategy and legal frameworks, as well as strong complementarity between the security and justice sectors. Also stressing the vitality of security governance, Graben & Fitzgerald (2013) note that SSR programming will encounter difficulties if it is operationally-focused on training and equipping forces without the accompanying efforts to develop local structures to oversee and superintend their activities.

¹³ DCAF at <https://www.dcaf.ch/about-sogr>

They advocate an approach that reflects widely-accepted SSR guidelines and norms that 'prioritise governance, oversight and accountability' (p.286).

1.7.2.7 The Security Governance Mechanism – the Normative versus the Practical

What then comprise the governance mechanism and what are their roles? It is a combination of actors (state and non-state) which ensure that the sector is managed and operates within the ambit of democracy, respect for the Rule of Law and human rights. Two broad categories of governance actors are listed by Ball *et al.*: **civil management and oversight bodies** such as the head of state/government; national security advisory bodies; Parliamentary committees; ministries of defence, internal affairs, foreign affairs; traditional authorities; financial management bodies; and statutory civil society organisations (civilian review boards and public complaints commissions) on the one hand; and **non-statutory civil society bodies** such as professional organisations, including trade unions; research/policy analysis think tanks; advocacy organisations; the media; religious councils; non-governmental organisations and the concerned public, on the other (Ball *et al.*, 2003, pp.32-33). Also key to the whole governance mechanism is the democratic control of the armed forces (DCAF) which caters for subjecting the military to civilian democratic oversight since they are, in most fragile contexts, the most potent source of insecurity and democratic reversal if not properly governed (Born, 2006), as well as a rich source of man power and logistical support for both internal security and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) responses (Canyon *et al.*, 2020). These systems suggest a whole-of-society governance approach wherein such bodies usually carry a degree of independence and substantial responsibility to ensure proper functioning of the sector by holding it accountable for its (in)actions.

However, this is the '*deeply normative*' (Schröder & Chappuis, 2014) standard which is heavily positioned within prescriptions of Western liberal democratic statism (p.215). They do come with challenges. Ball (2004) provides the three main challenges: first, develop and implement a democratically-oriented legal framework respectful of international law; second, develop a functioning civil management and oversight system; and third, develop capable, effective and accountable security bodies that can secure the state and individuals. What is evident in this is not so much the establishment of these regulatory bodies as the challenge of *functionality* of the said institutions as well as *implementation* of established systems within which they operate. Ball concludes that there is need for more 'policy and operationally-oriented' research on a number of governance issues, key and most contextually relevant being 'information about how the security sector actually functions in individual countries: who the key players are, how the relationships among them are structured, what drives those relationships, and how they affect the functioning of institutions' (Ball,2004, p525). These standards prove useful in the analysis of the security sector of the case context of this research.

As Schröder & Chappuis (2014) explain, in most fragile and post-conflict contexts, 'governance of the security sector can be characterized by alternative mechanisms of control based on patronage politics or rooted in informal power structures' (p.215). They argue that attempts at instituting international standards of democratic security governance in such contexts have largely failed. This owes mainly to the fact that local political actors only selectively adopt those systems that are consistent with their interests rather than adopt them entirely – hence '*hybrid security governance*' which combine domestic and international tenets. This point is also made by Bagayoko *et al.* (2016) who, also postulating the importance of 'hybridity' to integrate formal

and informal actors, stress that the theoretical understanding how the sector operates, especially relating to the intricate relationship between formal and informal actors and institutions and how this impacts the lives of citizens and the security of the state, is incomplete (p.2). *(See next section for further dilation).*

These systemic chasms in security sector governance, especially as they pertain to post-conflict contexts, on which these studies highlight the need for further research and more empirical evidence set the stage of inquiry for investigating deficits in sector governance in the case of this research – Sierra Leone.

1.7.2.8 The case for a second generation SSR: conceptualisations, contextual hybridity, and local ownership

Practitioners and policy makers have been faced with two competing models of SSR – ‘the monopoly model’ which aims at establishing state monopoly on the use of force, and the ‘hybrid model’ which acknowledges the inadequate (and sometimes contested) authority of states over their territories and incorporates the multiplicity of alternative security and justice provision (Anderson, 2011). The difference between these two models tallies with differentiating between first generation SSR (also called traditional or orthodox SSR) and second generation SSR.

The main premise for the call for a second generation SSR resides in Jane Chanaa’s (2002) ‘conceptual/contextual divide’ concept which has provided theoretical foundation for recognising and analysing the distinction between concept (dominant SSR thinking) and context (the realities on the ground) in SSR programming. MacColman (2016), in differentiating between

SSR theory and practice finds that while SSR gained plenty of policy and funding support and saw its expansion to many states roughly between 2005 and 2012, gaps emerged between SSR as conceptualised and SSR as implemented. He highlights four key criticisms of traditional SSR, which have precipitated a renewed approach, as follows:

- i. *weak civil society participation*: (reflecting Lederach's conflict transformation model¹⁴), preference for technocratic Western-style NGOs instead of the autochthonous CSOs (mid-range and grassroots actors) who represent the actual local interests have constrained successful adaption of programmes. This also counters the concept of local ownership, which is itself usually underspecified.
- ii. *state-centric approaches to security governance*: Interventions to rebuild failed states have focused more on what is missing rather than what is inherently useful. The focus on building state institutions ignores the usually influential local security providers. Acknowledgement of 'hybridity' in such contexts has offered some awareness and helped reshape new approaches.
- iii. *superficial comprehension of relational dynamics between local actors*: the lack of knowledge or failure to acknowledge and appreciate local power dynamics (relations between the ruling elite and citizens) affect SSR efforts.
- iv. *constrained temporal horizons*: project-based approaches have constrained the achievement of long-term goals.

¹⁴ Lederach's peacebuilding pyramid highlights the important role of three levels – top, middle range and grassroots leaderships in transforming conflict and building peace.

The future challenge for SSR, MacColman concludes, covers both conceptual and practical concerns wherein there is need for empirical knowledge to inform better theory building and the reverse need for such theory to improve transformational practices (2016, p.85).

To achieve SSR goals, Jackson and Bakrania (2018) observe linearity in traditional approaches characterised by ***state-centrism*** – preference for building formal institutions and systems instead of informal actors, ***techno-centrism*** – approaches that target technical input through programming and ignore local political sensitivities, and which have construed ***local ownership*** as the acceptance of the liberal standards of SSR interventions ignoring ‘spoilers’ and other local agents. Linearity exists in the input to output impact evaluations embedded in project delivery mechanisms which adopt ticking of boxes to indicate completed tasks and measurable outcomes within a bound timeframe, rather than theory of change approaches which (re)iterate the process and incorporate long-termism for sustainability.

Also incorporating Lederach’s peacebuilding model, Jackson and Bakrania (2018) propose a non-linear approach operating at societal level, targeting the agency of mid-range and grassroots local actors which serve either as providers or consumers of security and justice. This approach addresses three concerns:

- *institutions and institutional power*: While Institutional strengthening remains a key feature, it becomes an issue if an understanding of how it relates to local power relations is absent – the extent to which institutional power relates to political dynamics and is influenced by the ‘infrapolitics of ethnicity, corruption, kinship, personal rule and regional bias’ (p.23) must be understood and incorporated.

- *developing processes rather than structures*: a reliance on processes through dialogue when reconstructing institutions, which can in turn contribute to sustainability. Such dialogue can reveal existing security and justice frameworks and processes which should be incorporated rather than ignored.
- *engagement with hidden politics*: Acceptance of views and input from local consumers, especially those outside capitals many of whom tend to be illiterate, to develop integrated approaches rather than imposing external conceptualisations or replicating foreign contexts.

Therefore, for the development of a second generation SSR, there must be more attention paid to political networks and a recognition of processes that may improve security in addition to institution building (Jackson & Bakrania, 2018).

Operationalising the conceptual-contextual divide in Liberia, Sukanya Podder (2013) brings out the friction between externally-driven SSR and local social and political dynamics. Noting the tension between efficiency and effectiveness of output, that is the actual reform achieved versus the utility of such reform, Podder postulates that external social engineering cannot replace nor accelerate organic state formation. She raises two dichotomies in security and justice provision – between “international approaches” and “local realities”, and between “the state monopoly model of security” and “the reality of a mix of formal and informal actors” – as the factors that have influenced (negatively so) the outcome of SSR efforts in Liberia. In the attempt to duplicate international standards, issues of sustainability and local spending capacity have been ignored.

While the SSR process has considered rebuilding state structures in the capital as well as decentralised ones in Liberia, Podder observes, there has been a clear dichotomy in the construction of the security architecture at the centre and at the periphery where there is a 'distance between the formal reality of SSR (rules, funding and procedures) and the informal reality of context (trust, sanction and coverage)'. The resultant effect on security sector governance is that the existing structures are 'mere provisions' and "'lip service" to accountability and oversight' where there is a clear stipulation of such mechanisms but where there is little auditing outside of these bodies by the general citizenry. Forensic assessments such as Podder's not only manifest the complexity of the task but also teach lessons on the applicability and utility of donor-led technocratic approaches that are disrespectful of the multifaceted nature of local contexts.

Hybridity

It is noteworthy to consider different forms of hybridity in local contexts. Boege *et al* (2008) have suggested that rather than understand states as fragile, we should instead understand them as hybrid political orders where state authority may not cover the entire territory and where alternative forms of governance and security provision (hence hybrid security governance) exists to either complement or rival central government authority.

Hybridity also exists in the form of hybrid security governance in the provision of security in two ways: the mixture in approach of political leaderships in SSG standards, such as the selective adoption of liberal democratic standards of SSR to suit the autocratic domination of power in

Rwanda (Wilén, 2012), or the holistic approach to security with apparent democratic oversight but with latent co-optation of the security sector as in Sierra Leone; and the relationship between formal and informal actors in security and justice provision as in Liberia where the existence of sub-national security and justice providers continue to affect intended SSR outcomes.

To consolidate the argument for hybrid political orders rather than fragile states, Bjarnesen (2023) illustrates hybrid security governance in Liberia. While institutional rebuilding and strengthening has been obvious, he notes, overall SSR success has been debatable. There was little effort to build local institutional capacity to regulate and oversee reform efforts. The deficits in reform outcomes, especially the lack of trust in institutions such as the police, has created room for non-state actors to remain relevant as informal providers of security. There is continued entanglement between state and non-state actor security provision. Assessing progress in security governance and peace must not stop at reviews of formal security sector; it must acknowledge the relevance of non-state actors.

Local ownership

Strongly related to hybridity in political order and security governance is the concept of local ownership. For SSR to be successful, there is strong emphasis on local ownership. Yet, local ownership is ‘underspecified’ in the literature: whose ownership, what is owned and how is ownership exercised? (MacColman, 2016). Does ownership stop at the extent to which a government adopts set liberal democratic governance standards, or is it whether the participatory space that absorbs the views and interests of local consumers of security is open or constricted?

Donais (2008) distinguishes between a minimalist (where those who matter are the political leaderships with both the capacity and legitimacy to execute and ensure public support for reforms) and maximalist (where it is the entire citizenry, especially its CSOs) positions of ownership is useful in this regard. Donais notes that both positions carry their respective shortcomings. SSR's success depends on established democratic governance systems, yet these are hardly found in contexts where SSR is being implemented. Hence, where democratic standards are deficient, political leaders themselves, or their institutional heads, may be averse to the power redistribution elements of SSR. On the other hand, ownership at societal level is based on the assumption of social and political homogeneity which is hardly present in states emerging from conflict.

Laurie Nathan (2007) places high importance on local ownership by calling for 'national ownership' rather than 'government ownership', insisting that such ownership must not stop at executive level but must include parliament and civil society. While he acknowledges divergence in societal politics, he notes that as an advantage in promoting SSR as a democratic project. For SSR to succeed and be more sustainable, he notes, it must be 'process-oriented' wherein local actors are respected and empowered than a product-oriented one that ignores them (p.3). A major caveat is that if SSR is delivered under international tutelage and along the liberal democratic statebuilding model without adequate inclusion and prioritisation of local interests, dynamics and perspectives, sustainability becomes imperilled over time. Donais however warns that local ownership, despite the strong emphasis on it does not guarantee success, especially in post-conflict contexts, where local elite interests may be incompatible with a professional and accountable security sector (2008).

Local ownership is generated at elite level where both political leaderships and their supporting professional caste are empowered to drive SSR processes even without the sustained participation of externals. Therefore, there must also be the necessary and complementary capacity building of all local actors through trainings and mentorship, to nurture the required skill levels. The capacity to develop, plan and implement policy at strategic level, the quality and effectiveness of oversight mechanisms, the management of security sector expenditures, and the quality of professionalism in the security sector are among the cardinal outputs in assessing the overall democratic governance of the sector (Ball, 2004), all of which emanate from enhanced local ownership.

There is consistency then in the recognition of the importance of local socio-political context, all articulated in concepts of conceptual-contextual divide, hybrid political orders, hybrid security governance and local ownership, as a means of redefining SSR interventions – the so-called second generation SSR. It becomes clearer in understanding how SSR fails to reflect the anticipated liberal state with sustainable peace in some cases and fails to be sustained over time after an initial period of relative success in some others. This provides a useful theoretical backdrop for analysing the sustainability of SSR progress in this study.

1.7.2.9 Challenges to Democratic State Governance and their Effects on SSR/G

The establishment of a liberal democratic state is the normative objective of peacebuilding and statebuilding, especially after violent conflicts, as the broader enabler of the realisation of development objectives. Central to this is reforming (sometimes completely rebuilding security

sectors) to match the ideals of a such a state. It is therefore important to unpack, even if cursorily, the underlying causes of democratic governance deficits more generally and security sector governance deficits more specifically, and how both theoretically interact.

Democratic reversals/autocratisation

Instances of autocratisation, where the interests of leaders start dominating those of the state, directly weaken democratic governance standards. Gradual erosion of democracy wherein '[r]uling elites shy away from sudden, drastic moves to autocracy and instead mimic democratic institutions while gradually eroding their functions' is now more regular than sudden disruptions such as coups but in contrast much harder to identify empirically (Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019 (p.1096).

For the security sector to be well governed and service delivery enhanced, the right political landscape must exist. The fact that democratic oversight is key makes SSR directly relevant for democratic governance. The standard of democratic governance can therefore have direct effect on security governance wherein instances of '*democratic reversal*' can directly lead to '*SSR reversal*' (Chappuis & Siegle, 2015).

The distinction made between *rapid* and *gradual* SSR reversal is noteworthy when analysing the reversal in the quality of SSG in that, as it is in the case of state governance, it is the latter that is more common and harder to detect since there is a façade of compliance with democratic principles while undemocratic manipulation is done from underneath.

Neopatrimonialism

Neopatrimonial governance system reflects its patrimonial predecessor, originated by Max Weber, where there is an element of individual rule; however, as Nicholas Van de Walle (2007) notes, there is a hybridised system where the autocratic governance model is dominant, concealed by the existence of democratic institutions and systems which are not always respected.

The end of the colonial administrative system left local regimes that needed some form of legitimacy, loyalty and support. Such loyalty was obtainable either through the use of repression or clientelism. *Clientelism*, became the more regular option although some leaders adopted a hybrid of both. Van de Walle postulates the idea of hybrid regimes in Africa wherein there is parallelism between constitutional rule and elements of patrimonialism where office holders personalise state resources (2007). Of the three types of clientelism which Van de Walle distinguishes - *traditional*, *mass* and *elite* – it is the latter which is most incompatible with (and therefore counteractive of) democratic norms that is most common and which precipitates unconstitutional reactions as the only viable change for disadvantaged masses (p.3).

There has been considerable criticism of the use of the theory, however. It is noted that current usage of theories of patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism by scholars is misrepresentative of Weber's original meaning. There is a call for a rethink of the use of the term(s) to refer to illegitimate use of power by regimes in the extraction of state resources for personal and clientelist use. In Weber's understanding, there was legitimacy based on an understanding of relationship between the governor and the governed, which also included some form of accountability by the governors. Such misconceptions should be cast aside in order to better analyse Africa's political and economic challenges (Pitcher *et al.*, 2009). Pitcher *et al* raise

Botswana as an example of a state that is neopatrimonial but democratic; having built a democratic state on 'a foundation of traditional and highly personalised reciprocities and loyalties' (p.145).

This criticism is extended to the idea of universalising the concept of neopatrimonialism to cover the many ills of African statehood based on a Eurocentric logic, thereby ignoring the social and political realities that are normally inherent in African societies (Wai, 2012). Wai does admit however that there is consistency in the thinking of scholars on the point of the 'rent-seeking behaviour of the political elites and the clientelist politics they practise' (p.33).

The concepts however still hold explanatory value. Specific to the Sierra Leone situation for example, the *crisis of patrimonialism* is used to explain the process of state contraction that led to the outbreak of war wherein as the economy contracted resulting from a drop in the international price of raw materials and reduction in foreign aid in the 1990s, the patrimonial system which existed no longer played out since the leaders no longer had the accumulation of resources to maintain their clients, precipitating the RUF drive to fill that space (Richards, 1996). This explanation has been rejected on grounds of failing to include the fact that it was the government officials, or 'patrons', that continued to collect rents from the informalised market for the state's resources and as such were still in position to maintain the patron-client relations that existed, thereby making the argument untenable (Bangura, 2004). *(Neo)patrimonialism* is therefore of explanatory utility in this research in analysing power relations within the state as it affects security and development governance.

State capture

In neopatrimonial states, regimes tend to capture and privatise the state. In a study on state capture and SSR, recalling Abby Innes' classification of two varieties of state capture – corporate and political party – Gajić, & Pavlović (2021) focus on the latter to highlight a shift in understanding of the concept from private business entrepreneurs to *political parties*. Political party state capture repurposes public resources to serve two purposes: acquisition of private benefits, and 'to enable the advantage of the incumbent and handicap the opposition on the political market' (p.92). Political party patronage is about rewarding party members and henchmen who held the trenches during election campaigns and are rewarded with public sector positions or procurement contracts.

Gajić & Pavlović, (2021) highlight a 'conceptual bias' wherein many SSR programs have targeted the stabilisation of fragile states so as to establish allies in the global security context, especially fighting terrorism and other transnational threats, rather than on good governance and democratic control of security institutions (p.90). Observing the 'under-researched' links between security governance and state capture, they raise two key points: that state capture has transcended the economic system into other systems such as the security sector; and that state capture is undertheorised in SSR analysis but that it can help us understand how the course of SSR can be derailed (pp.99-100).

According to Gajić & Pavlović, state capture inevitably targets security and justice institutions as it serves the following purposes:

a. Impunity: bringing under control the state's capacity to investigate, prosecute and convict for wrongdoings and abuse of the Rule of Law. Defence forces are of less importance here except in contexts where they are the dominant security institution.

b. Selective law enforcement and justice: In addition to providing protection, the security sector may, '[b]y its action or inaction in favour of a client (company, political party, network), ... influence the chances for potential competitors in the political or economic market, as well as enable the criminalization of the state' (p.107).

c. Securitisation: helps us understand the process of legitimisation of governance strategies deployed by state captors. 'By focusing on who can be a securitizing actor, what or whom is to be protected (referent object), who is the key audience and what is the context in which the adoption of proposed measures could take place, we will be able also to analyse the nature and freedom of political competition' (p.110). The language and policy instruments articulate subjects/objects as security threats and dedicates resources to tackling them. Quite easily, such measures can limit freedoms and rights of certain groups in the citizenry.

On SSR, state capture provides 'a unique political and economic context that can assist in the understanding of how the course of security sector reform may be perverted' (p.12). Attempts at transforming the security sector and democratising its governance paradoxically disguises the capture of the sector for private advantage. Security and justice sectors are 're-purposed' to serve the interests of those in power and not the citizens or the state (Gajić & Pavlović, 2021, p.101).

A key use of the security sector in party state capture is the use of the combined competencies of formal training and informal social/political operational networks, targeted at compromising opposition agents, rent seeking through secrecy and obscuring legal implications of decisions/operations undertaken. The capture of the security sector is not obvious to non-security experts since there is an ardent attempt by authorities to present a façade of professionalism and democratic governance (Chappuis & Siegle, 2015).

Having established that a liberal democratic system provides the overarching context for the delivery of good, inclusive governance of the state generally and governance of the security sector more specifically, it is clear that there are instances that compromise this enabling environment that could be classified into two categories: instances of *commission* such as autocratisation/democracy in reverse, the existence of neopatrimonial patron-clientelist networks and political party state capture; and instances of *omission*, encapsulated in a general lack of political will: such as lack of knowledge of security sector structure and strategies, inadequate resource allocation, apathy to the security threat landscape during peace time, weak institutional management and wrong policy prioritisation. These instances fit into a framework of challenges that can help explain a key area of enquiry in this research, which is why the so-acclaimed reformed security sector has failed to positively impact development despite the clear articulation of a mutually dependent relationship in post-conflict policy of Sierra Leone and more broadly, how and why the elusive development outcomes can be attributed to deficits in governance of the security sector.

1.7.2.9 'Emerging' Threats to Livelihoods and Development

Post-conflict development is, in addition to bad governance, also threatened by emerging threats such as transnational organised crime (comprising crimes such as drugs and arms trafficking, trafficking in persons, smuggling and money laundering) and the activities of regional terrorist networks. Organised crime, in its myriad forms poses a direct threat to states and has a debilitating effect on particularly weak ones which have weak state institutions mandated to tackle them. These threats are usually labelled 'emerging' and external but are by no means new and can carry the potential to capture the state by the criminal cartels and enterprises which benefit from them. 'Criminal operations are planned, designed and implemented by mafia bosses, drug kingpins, paramilitary and insurgent commanders, warlords and gang leaders – but also by, and with, politicians, military and police officers, civil servants, investment bankers and accountants, among representatives of many other professions' (Schultze-Kraft 2018, p.1).

Schultze-Kraft highlights four dimensions of 'non-development' which organised crime promotes: *economic* – where the formal market system is distorted by the siphoning of crime proceeds into informal 'shadow' economies; *political and governance* – where the political economy of developing states is altered through the domination of illegal interests across the public and private sectors by a mixture of state and non-state actors; *social* – where criminal subcultures undermine traditional values and norms; and *human security* – where the security of both the state and local communities are threatened by organised criminal activities (pp.11-18).

Terrorist networks also persistently aspire to spread their influence through direct internal and cross-border attacks as well as radicalisation of members of local populations, especially youths, and the establishment of local cells. As Sandler & Enders have it, terrorist incidents can divert

foreign direct investment, destroy infrastructure, precipitate a redirection of investment funds to security or impede trade. 'If a developing country loses enough FDI, which is an important source of savings, then it may also experience reduced economic growth' (2008, p.1).

The prevalence and pervasiveness of these threats, the absence or weakness of prohibitive laws, and the lack of capacity and capability of the security apparatus to tackle them, are all hallmarks of fragile contexts. They pose a direct obstacle to stability, security and governance, thereby compromising the state's ability to achieve development outcomes.

1.7.2.10 Post-Conflict Development – Security's Role through SSR

Security and economic growth

The UN sets the strategic target and benchmarks for development to include the promotion of sustained and inclusive growth which supports 'full and productive employment and decent work for all'.¹⁵ Key threats to this target are (perceptions of) instability, high crime rate and limited revenue collection. Political instability, crime and corruption can jeopardise investment returns and make investment altogether unattractive and thus compromise growth prospects¹⁶ while weakened revenue collection capacity can degrade national coffers, which has a direct effect on the state's ability to cater for the needs of its citizenry.

A key requirement for the attainment of sustained and inclusive growth is the roles the security sector can play which are the provision of effective security service for the creation of the

¹⁵ SDG Goal 8.

¹⁶ Dfid, G. B. (2008). Growth: building jobs and prosperity in developing countries. London: Department for International Development.

necessary stability for foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as support to revenue generation efforts through effective security of natural resources (land and marine), proper border management to limit smuggling of essential commercial goods, disruption of the shadow economy which undermines the formal financial system, and mitigation of high corruption and graft in the public and private sectors. Economic growth is therefore an important macro-level indicator of development necessary for analysing the security-development nexus.

Security and poverty reduction

A micro-level indicator of underdevelopment and state fragility is pervasive poverty, categorised into three broad dimensions (and their indicators) as follows: poor health (nutrition, child mortality), inadequate education (years of schooling, school attendance) and poor living standards (cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, assets).¹⁷

Barber (2009) warns about the need for conceptual clarification of *poverty reduction* for purposes of contextual relevance by suggesting it is not a one-dimensional concept. He posits three ‘trade-off’ points as follows: ‘broad vs deep’ wherein there is a trade-off between reducing poverty for a larger number of people or targeting a smaller number that are in deep and chronic poverty; ‘today vs tomorrow’ wherein there is a trade-off between poverty reduction activities now and in the future; and ‘sustainable vs temporary’ wherein there is a trade-off between the provision of programmes that target immediate income redistribution and provision of public goods, and

¹⁷ Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (2018), Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI); related to SDG Goal 1.

short-term programmes which target stimulating economic growth and socio-economic transformation (p.1). The soundness of development policy targeting poverty reduction can be assessed using the appropriateness of such trade-off benchmarks according to the prevailing context.

Many states especially in Africa after the Cold War (both conflict-free and post-conflict) have developed and adopted poverty reduction strategies as a means of situating themselves on pathways to recovery and socio-economic stability (Obwona & Guloba, 2009). There is a strong interaction between security and poverty reduction at policy level in these states, based on the realisation of the effect of poverty on insecurity and vice versa (Garrasi *et al*, 2009). However, Obwona & Guloba note that despite this recognition, there is a difference in the poverty reduction strategies of non-conflict states such as Zambia, Ghana and Malawi and post-conflict ones such as Sudan, Burundi and Sierra Leone, wherein in the latter there is a stronger articulation of importance of security and its role in support of the realisation of programme outcomes. This is an understandable demarcation given the experience of violence and insecurity suffered by post-war states. It does not however take away the centrality of security's role whether or not a state has experienced violent conflict – the role of the security sector is way too important receive any less articulation in development policy.

Poverty reduction is subsumed in 'human security' which advocates freedom from both fear and want. This can be strongly supported by security in the areas of conflict prevention, crime reduction and provision of safety to promote daily micro-economic activity. The main argument here is that insecurity 'increases the vulnerability of poor people and is a key factor in the perpetuation of poverty traps' (Garrasi *et al*, 2009, p.1). The majority of populations in developing

states depend on daily commuting to access social services and undertake trading activities to provide for their livelihoods. Threats to such activities such as armed violence, crime and local disasters can generate fear and cause regular disruptions to these activities and aggravate poverty and hardship.

Brzoska (2003) lists four areas through which SSR as a 'concept' has been directly linked to poverty reduction:

- i. Reduced security expenditure can see the redirection of funds to poverty alleviation efforts.
- ii. Increased personal safety and security (through crime and violence reduction) can help promote economic growth
- iii. The security sector's role in preventing and managing conflict which is a direct impediment to development
- iv. Increased participation over decision making on security forces as well as access to security and justice through enhanced and inclusive (pro-poor) oversight (p.25-26).

Though there are gaps discernible in these propositions especially premised on the fact that the security sector itself, where poorly governed, can be a threat to the realisation of development goals, SSR is clarified as a necessary programmatic process to deliver good security sector governance.

Both *economic growth* and *poverty reduction* are pivotal developmental targets in post-conflict environments. In Sierra Leone, the first Security Sector Review was strongly linked with the first PRSP making it the first country to recognise the importance of security in facilitating economic

development in a PRSP (Albrecht & Jackson, 2010, p.126). This has been the pattern throughout the entire post-war period. The strong recognition of this twinning process stresses the centrality of economic security in both development and conflict prevention efforts and provides a policy background for evaluating the research question of how security and development have operated as a mutually reinforcing nexus and, more specifically, whether the failure to achieve stipulated development outcomes can be attributed to deficits in security sector governance.

Ebo & Powell suggest that '[i]deally, SSR should begin at the outset of a peace process and should be incorporated into early recovery and development strategies' (2010, p.50). A key study on SSR as it relates to the security-development nexus is one undertaken by Albrecht Schnabel (2015). According to Schnabel, SSR can be understood as the manifestation (or 'linchpin') of the security-development nexus; an interdependence which remains understudied, presumed but yet untested (p.116), suggesting a gap between theory and practice. The impact of SSR on development remains 'still mostly unknown, vague and merely assumed' (p.132). Using SSR to analyse the nexus provides theoretical underpinning to a concept that has so far lacked theoretical soundness.

The initial adoption of SSR by the development community resided in its desire for the security sector to support rather than threaten development ('*push factor*'), which then developed into a recognition of security as supportive of broader peacebuilding, democratisation and development goals ('*pull factor*') (p.128). Schnabel however concludes that 'without further, empirically-informed, explanation the presumed SSR-security-development dynamic thus constitutes a weak basis from which to draw convincing, empirically-based conclusions about the symbiotic relationship between security provision and sustainable development efforts' (p.130).

This stark call for empirical evidence is also strongly echoed by the evidence mapping review (Jackson, *et al*, 2019) and other scholarly work such as Stern & Öjendal, (2010) who maintain that ‘academic discourses have not – in spite of the high stakes – adequately addressed this ‘nexus’ (p.7). More specifically relevant to this research, a recent literature survey has raised the complexity of finding direct causality despite the existence of evidence to suggest the association of safety, security and justice with development (Bakrania & Haider, 2016). This provides an opportunity to further refine a theory that has provided much of the direction for international intervention into especially post-conflict contexts.

Therefore, to create a logical nexus between security and development, SSR/G serves as a useful connecting link in that: first, it is a political process that has to be evaluated against the backdrop of wider democratic governance; second, it touches on economic factors by way of how effective security sectors help facilitate macro-economic growth as well as by way of how poor economic performance derails sound and inclusive governance, generates citizen disaffection and grievances and either causes a perpetual state of fragility or precipitates conflict; third, that SSR sits as a key aspect of post-conflict peace- and statebuilding; fourth, that SSR/G is a central aspect of elite bargaining in political settlements, especially after demobilisation where the future welfare of combatants is decided (whether they turn out to be inclusive or exclusive); and fifth, in the sequencing of programmatic activities in post-conflict stabilisation there is the issue of whether SSR, in its broadly-understood sense, ought to be prioritised first or whether prioritising development with security components as secondary is a more viable approach. Central to all of this is the consideration that human security, which pertains both life and livelihood issues –

protection from physical harm as well as poverty-induced want – is inclusive as a key objective in both SSR and development approaches.

1.8 Sierra Leone – Research Inquiry Case

Central to this research is investigating the manifestations of the security-development nexus in post-conflict contexts, using Sierra Leone as a case study. On that, a series of questions have been asked, pertaining to whether post-conflict security governance has led to a more effective security sector; whether the SSR process has positively influenced socio-economic development, and whether Sierra Leone is *en route* to actualising its development aspirations or remains a fragile state tethering on the brink of a relapse into violent conflict. Answers to these questions have been provided, with ample consensus on the fact that while the so-called ‘nexus’ has been touted in theory as a necessary symbiosis, evidence of how it manifests in practice is limited. Explanations are also provided on the issue of how development aspirations are being imperilled by simmering legacies of war, failed implementation of post-war reconciliatory overtures, weak and politicised institutions and zero-sum political competition. These demerits have characterised the entire post-conflict period and are reflective of similar challenges in the immediate decades preceding the war.

In this study, against the overarching context of how security and development have mutually interplayed, I ask the yet unexplored question of the extent to which we can attribute the failure to achieve post-conflict development outcomes in Sierra Leone to security sector governance (SSG) deficits. There have obviously been other variables that have provided causal basis for this

failure; however, this study focuses on SSG's role, potentially contributing to theory refinement and helping to reshape policy approaches in post-conflict contexts, not least that of Sierra Leone.

To investigate these questions, a survey is taken into the literature covering relevant thematic areas commencing with the nucleus of the research – evaluation of pre-war security sector governance and the post-war reform processes, then moving on to post-conflict peacebuilding as an overarching package for delivering peace, recovery and stability, and armed conflict causes and effects on security and development. Security sector reform and governance is examined as a process through which both security and development are delivered with human security as mutually encompassing aspect. Sierra Leone's post-conflict development itself is broadly considered at micro-level (poverty reduction) and at macro-level (economic growth) as well as non-monetary aspects that affect quality of life.

1.8.1 Post-War Security Sector Reform, Peacebuilding & Economic Recovery

A significant body of scholarly literature exists on Sierra Leone's Security Sector transformation, peacebuilding and development processes, including studies by Roberts (2020), Godwin & Haenlein (2013), Gbla (2008), Ebo (2008), Denney (2011), Albrecht & Jackson (2015), Bangura (2016), Solà-Martín (2009), Neethling (2007), Castañeda (2009), Bryden & Hänggi (2005), Fitzgerald (2008), all of which elaborate the fact that while the SSR process in Sierra Leone has been widely touted as exemplary, it was generally *ad hoc*, programmed on emerging circumstances and tailored to react to those circumstances. They also highlight the fact that the process was basically aimed at creating a liberal peacebuilding model which in many ways failed to consider the local political dynamics and cater for strengthening peace in the long term.

Gbla (2006) particularly stresses weaknesses in democratic oversight which he notes affects accountability and transparency. He fails however to evaluate how this affects effectiveness in service delivery, which is a key aspect of SSR. Bangura (2016a) does quite a comprehensive mixed method assessment of the impact of orthodox SSR in Sierra Leone. Using an evaluation framework of eleven indicators on a scale of A to E, he gives an overall rating of C+, which is an average grade.

Adedeji Ebo acknowledges that Sierra Leone has indeed made significant gains in its post-conflict SSR but that operational and governance deficits, both necessary ingredients of peace consolidation, still plague the process. Progress made in post-conflict reconstruction remain fragile, meaning that its claim to be a success story is questionable (2006, p. 482). This view holds true in 2006 as it does currently; and provides a solid premise for further investigation to refine SSR as a viable interventionist policy.

Lisa Denney's (2011) position also consolidates Ebo's stance: 'In Sierra Leone newfound security has so far failed to produce the anticipated development, suggesting that the causal link between security and development may not be as straightforward as implied'. She concludes that more precise investigations of the manner in which security and development interact in practice are needed (p.275).

Other recent studies have suggested that since the political transition in 2007, focus on exclusive development agendas has led to less attention on security sector needs: 'The Agenda for Prosperity, formulated by the APC government in 2013 as the vision for Sierra Leone's path to middle-income status over the following five years, cemented this [development] focus, and

inevitably had consequences for the attention that the executive was prepared to give the security sector as a whole, in both political and financial terms' (Albrecht & Jackson, 2013, p.17). Albrecht and Jackson further note that the security sector also faced a situation in which its newly-established agencies like ONS and CISU had to prove their relevance and trustworthiness as well as bear the brunt of increased political pressure.

In another of their seminal studies on Sierra Leone's security sector reform and governance, Albrecht & Jackson (2015) set out to evaluate how the UK-funded SSR has panned out in Sierra Leone after 15 years (1997 – 2013) of implementation, and what the experience has contributed to conceptualizations of SSR universally. The study particularly analyses the political transition period – 2007 onwards when the APC took over from the SLPP, the two biggest political parties. They warn that despite clear evidence that SSR has contributed to stability, '...there is also an evident danger that the institutions established through SSR may be exploited by the country's leaders for their own benefit' (p.3). Also, the frequently transitioning political context, which in itself is an impressive democratic feat, presents unwanted challenges to the security sector, mainly emanating from trust issues, leading to its *inevitable politicisation*.

Another early assessment of the SSR process, around the five-year point into the SSR process, highlighted two related concerns: on the one hand, the ability and robustness and newly-created oversight institutions such as the Office of National Security (ONS) to measure up to big tests due to the relative inexperience of their staff; while on the other hand there was concern about their management: that if they were well-managed they would be useful in the development of a national security strategy and support with valuable intelligence, but if not appropriately

managed may become tools of misuse by corrupt politicians in intimidating and hunting their political opponents (Horn *et al*, 2006).

Castaneda (2009) suggests a lopsided approach to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, heavily inclined towards security at the potential detriment of other matters of equal importance. Analysing three policy documents based the language contained herein (discourse analysis) – the Security Sector Review report of 2005, the first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which was the strategic roadmap for post-conflict recovery, and the Food Security Strategy – along with interviews of key actors, finds that the liberal peacebuilding approach, *circa* 2005, which centralised security as the main driver of peace and development from the macro-level downwards to community level ('trickle-down peace') was flawed, and therefore the peacebuilding process would not be sustainable. She notes that though Sierra Leone may no longer be a failed state in active conflict, the 'trickle-down peace' which posits top-down macro-economic to social realm approach could keep the state in a perpetual state of fragility on the brink of returning to failure.

Examining the contents of the Security Sector Review, she brings out flaws in Sierra Leone's broadened perspective of security threats and the actors responsible for mitigating them. She finds that the manner in which the twenty-two security threats are listed suggests that the government's sole responsibility then is to tackle security and leave other social responsibilities to other players. The framing of social and political issues in security terms manifests more concern for security than social justice, human rights and equality. 'This conceptualisation of security', she insists, 'traps the country in a conflict mindset, and limits its ability to build peace' (Castaneda 2009. p.241).

Indeed, the linking of the PRSP and the Security Sector Review became the first instance of the security and development nexus in Sierra Leone policy realm. This was based on a recognition, especially the UK, that socio-economic development would not be promoted in the absence of a competent security sector that could support such a process. Mark White assesses how this initial linkage turned out to be a practical challenge. He observes that after the failure of the PRSP, the security sector found itself frustrated to support governance by creating an enabling environment for poverty reduction when the governance system itself was weak. 'Any security sector intervention, if undertaken in the absence of a broader level of political will was doomed to failure, and the political will simply wasn't there'. According to White, the main lesson that emerged was that it was a threat to security itself if the competency of the security sector is developed in a vacuum without the accompanying plan for the rest of government (White 2008, pp.115-116).

A more recent study is one done by Elise Roberts (2020) wherein she claims Sierra Leone's security sector development over the past twenty years (post-war) can be considered a success though there are lingering inherent threats to this. Utilising case study (process tracing) to analyse the impact of post-conflict interventions in the development of the security sector, her study attempts a 'medium-term' assessment of SSR in Sierra Leone, claiming a knowledge gap on the real impact of reforms following the early 2000s, a period during which there were many of such assessments. In addition to the broad goals of SSR, Roberts notes that countering threats driven by local political dynamics such as 'politicization of forces, militarization of internal security, ethnicization of the security sector, corruption and patronage, and lack of professionalism' are of more urgent need. She comes up with the following observations:

Key Challenge 1 (military): despite admirable forward strides in reform, '[s]till, politicization remains a problem. Selection for prestigious posts often requires a vetting process to make sure a candidate is loyal to the party in power' (p.405).

Key challenge 2 (police): structural and procedural reform measures taken do not seem to be yielding the intended dividend. The SLP remains perceived as highly corrupt and estranged from the people it is designed and mandated to protect and serve. Ministerial oversight has also remained weak.

Key challenge 3 (intelligence): The fear that improving intelligence gathering and analysis capacity could tempt politicians to use it to their political advantage was warded off by the leadership. 'Professionalization of the ONS [Office of National Security] ensured that the body remained an independent agency, rather than acting as an advisory body to the president personally' (p.408).

Also, overall, decisions regarding appointments and promotions are still often made on personal or partisan motives, rather than merit. Roberts concludes however that major successes have been gained in reforming and professionalising the security sector in Sierra Leone if a comparison can be made between now and the pre-war era. This is attributable more to the insistence on professionalism by the security sector leaders than political will from government. She issues a caveat however that 'Sierra Leone continues to face significant obstacles to a democratic and accountable security sector. Continued progress will likely require sustained pressure by both donors and civil society leaders' (p.412).

Robert's methodological approach is closest to the approach adopted in this study, albeit the variables being the correlation between intervention strategies and sector professionalism, differing from those targeted herein. The findings reveal a realistic picture and analysis though the many caveats have a somewhat attritional effect on the concluding optimism. The findings turn out to be reflected in my concluding position. However, there is a less optimistic outcome wherein some of the predictions mentioned in Roberts' study have indeed been actualised, meaning that the new sector professionalism and effectiveness claimed is evident only in comparison to the dismal pre-conflict era, but remains questionable.

Godwin & Haenlein (2008) opine that 'Sierra Leone now seeks to make the transition from 'post-conflict' to 'low-income' nation, underpinned by a shift from stabilisation to development efforts'; but observe that 'with both economic development and good governance depending heavily on the effective provision of domestic security, there is a growing need to balance the military and civilian elements of the sector to avoid creating a potentially 'unsustainable peace' (p.34).

As the transition from post-conflict to development is being sought, Sierra Leone remains classified as highly fragile.¹⁸ This suggests that while aspirations for development remain in state policy and planning, threats to these aspirations ensconced in simmering instances of poor governance and political competition continue to plague the state as conflict-prone, constraining

¹⁸ The Fragile States Index measures the vulnerability in **pre-conflict**, **active conflict** and **post-conflict** situations and comprises 12 conflict risks: *security apparatus, factionalized elites, group grievance, economic decline, uneven economic development, human flight and brain drain, state legitimacy, public services, human rights and rule of law, demographic pressures, refugees and IDPs, and external intervention*. The higher the value of the index, the more "fragile" the country is. Sierra Leone placed on rung 9 (high warning) on a 12-rung scale (90.54 on a 10 – 120 scale).

it to its post-conflict, fragile state status. For example, one study (Christensen & Utas, 2008) argues that despite the success of the 2007 election as the watershed moment in the consolidation of the democratization process (especially because of its highly competitive nature), the remobilisation of ex-combatants, labelled '*mercenaries of democracy*', this time into national politics rather than the war bush, for protection and votes blemish that epoch and manifests that the democratic success was built on fragile grounds. The remobilised ex-combatants were opportunistic and played 'politricks' to gain rewards and security for themselves (see p.532). Importantly, it reverses gains made in DDR as part of SL' post-conflict peacebuilding. This pattern still continues to present time, as revealed in a more recent study by Kars de Bruijne, (2020). De Bruijne (2020) is strongly doubtful of Sierra Leone's so-called peace when he analyses that rising political violence since 2014 has meant that claims of peace remain a 'myth'. He observes in his analysis, drawing from existing local and international data, that there are signs of regression into pre-war status of continuous low-level violence (pp.10-12)

Despite these observed challenges, some scholars have maintained a positive perspective and do not envisage the probability of instability. For example, while acknowledging that concerns over the root causes of the violent conflict still remained, Mitton (2018) argues that the fact that a relapse into conflict has been avoided following successive elections is a pointer to the fact that the UK-led intervention has been generally successful. Mitton highlights a number of factors responsible for sustained post-war stability, key among which are the existence of more peaceful and legitimate channels through which marginalised factions of society can express their frustrations, 'war exhaustion' by all members of society and a shared determination to focus on welfare and development. He concludes that Sierra Leone is a post-conflict 'success story' and

that ‘the most conservative assessments of the country’s prospects do not see Sierra Leone at risk of a return to large-scale violence’ (Mitton 2018, p.15).

This position however holds true as at its time of writing and fails to recognise that the persistence of those ‘root causes’, namely ‘high unemployment, monopolisation of opportunities and resources by a political elite, and the marginalisation of youth’, keep the economically marginalised youth population vulnerable to remobilisation by the political elite along the existing (and deepening) ethno-political bipolarity which characterises the recent political landscape.

1.8.2 Sierra Leone’s Post-War Political Settlement & Elite Bargaining

The elite bargain in the Sierra Leone Lomé Peace Agreement involved the government ceding some power to the RUF leadership. However, while the accord manifested a semblance of concern for the interest of the youth rank and file of the RUF, they were not included in the negotiations that drove the process (Bangura, 2016). Most of them became disgruntled by unfulfilled promises due to the failure of reintegration programme which had earlier promised meaningful post-war livelihoods (Mitton, 2018). While there may not have been a return to arms, the disgruntlement has remained and contributed to widespread deviant and anti-social behaviour on many local communities. Conflict in the more recent post-conflict history of Sierra Leone has metamorphosed from the standoff between rebels and government to a re-emergence of acute rivalry between the two dominant political parties.

The security sector’s role in these strategic lacunas entrenches the tendency by the ruling elite to quickly co-opt it once they assume power. This explains the deficits in governance of the sector

and the persistence in deterioration and lack of sustainability in overall SSR standards. On a wider note, this manifests an instance of Lindemann's (2011) 'unproductive peace', as he describes it in Zambia, which may continue to undermine peaceful coexistence and negatively affect progress in achieving long-term development targets.

1.8.3 Analysing Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Development

The literature on Sierra Leone's socio-economic development is predominantly grey. At policy level, a number of post-conflict development plans or 'agendas' have been developed with declarations of full commitment by successive administrations.¹⁹ Scholarly assessments on these plans/agendas have been infrequent. However, there have been some assessments and reports, the most comprehensive being those done by the UNDP. An overarching global study, the Human Development Index (HDI)²⁰, indicates that Sierra Leone has low human development (a score of 0.438), meaning that it is at the lowest rung of the assessment of key livelihood and human capacity indicators such as life expectancy and per capita income.

The UNDP summarises²¹ the history of its development assessments from the 1st report (1996) to the current one (2019), the effects of different 'shocks' such as the civil war, Ebola and the drop in iron ore prices in 2015 on national development strides. The 1st report (1996) themed

¹⁹ Vision 2025, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Agenda for Change (PRSP2), Agenda for Prosperity (PRSP3), Medium Term National Development Plan (PRSP4) [with significant prioritisation of Human Capital Development], among others. Virtually all of these plans have been various versions of domesticated agendas of the UN MDGs and SDGs according to the priorities of the government in power.

²⁰ HDI is ranked on a scale from 0 to 1.0, with 1.0 being the highest human development. HDI is broken down into four tiers: very high human development (0.8-1.0), high human development (0.7-0.79), medium human development (0.55-.70), and low human development (below 0.55).

²¹ Preface of the 4th National Human Development Report (*based on three international strategic documents – the UN SGDs, African Agenda 2063 and New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*)

'From Civil Conflict to National Security' particularly targeted 'chart[ing] a new path to peace, security, healing and reconciliation' following what appeared to be a cessation of hostilities. Rather unprophetically and prematurely, a 2nd report targeted 'Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Human Development' but failed to take off as violence broke out again in 1999. The 3rd report (2007) 'Empowering Local Government for Sustainable Human Development and Poverty Eradication' also got interrupted by Ebola and the drop in global iron ore prices.

'The 4th (and current) report captures the country's strengths as well as its vulnerabilities, and defines a pathway to build on its strengths, minimize its vulnerabilities, and harness its vast potential through developing a resilience-sensitive long-term development plan'. The report 'identifies systemic and perennial sources of vulnerability and notes that most of them are anthropogenic—a function of human behaviour' and suggests that the answer to this is building individual and societal resilience and that a comprehensive multi-hazard approach consistent with implementing the SDGs should be followed to reduce vulnerabilities. 'At its core is the assertion that Sierra Leone cannot achieve real sustainable development without exploring and addressing its social, economic, political, and environmental vulnerabilities, and building resilient governance systems'.²²

The available scholarly work on development policy and practice has been critical of the viability of the development approaches, especially as it pertains to security and political competition. While giving a chronological account of development planning in Sierra Leone as entailed in 'visions' and policy papers, Sheriff *et al* (2020) note the changes in focus administration after

²² Same source.

administration and add the caveat that achieving domestic realisation of the SDGs will become an ‘impossible theorem if the current pattern of national planning continues’ (p.31).

Bangura (2017) observes that Sierra Leone’s ‘overall post-conflict reconstruction agenda appeared skewed towards “hard” reconstruction, such as the establishment of institutions. Also, it did not go far enough towards improving the culture of governance, service delivery and the responsiveness of state institutions to the needs of the people of Sierra Leone’ (p.45). This is reinforced by Jackson (2010) who reckons that by the very fact that Sierra Leone has remained in the bottom rungs of the Human Development Index despite claims of a successful security sector reform programme means the UK-led SSR programme has not yielded the development dividend it ought to have due to an inclination towards the construction of systems mostly of foreign interests rather than local preferences.²³

While there is evidence of acquiescence of the security-development links at policy level, Mark White (2010) clarifies the apparent lack of clarity in practical procedures of actualising this by first generalising that ‘there remains a clear gap between policy and practice ... as evidenced by the fact that a significant proportion of the population in sub-Saharan Africa receives security and justice services from non-state actors’ (p.75); and specifically on Sierra Leone, as indicated in the centrality of security in the PRSP (*circa* 2005 – 2007), ‘there was security but there was no development, and while it was true to say that security now required development, no one was sure how best to achieve this’ (*Ibid*, p74).

²³ Paul Jackson – *The Risk of Security-led Statebuilding*: IDD Policy Brief, University of Birmingham, Nov. 2012.

Biswas (2016) asks the direct question: can SSR alleviate poverty in post-conflict countries? He finds that in Sierra Leone and Liberia, based on conventional economic indicators²⁴, SSR has shown no direct positive impact on growth and poverty reduction during the periods of implementation. Does this then imply that the security-development nexus is *a flawed concept* or is it due to *poor implementation*? He concludes that it is more of the latter wherein SSR should be considered an aspect of a broader approach rather than a stand-alone process. Biswas' study, while it consolidates the presumed correlation between SSR and development, highlights the absence of evidence to illustrate a direct causal link not because of conceptual incongruity but due to implementation deficits. This leaves room for the possibility of the existence of that causal link by deriving evidence from observed processes and perspectives.

How far then have the successive post-conflict governance agendas been attendant to these observed gaps in human security and, more specifically, poverty reduction? The just-concluded development plan instituted by the current administration, the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019 – 2023) had a strong prioritisation of education as an aspect of Human Capital Development. However, also included under Policy Cluster Four, titled “Governance and accountability for results” and more germane to this research are ‘*Political development for national cohesion*’, ‘*Promoting inclusive and accountable justice institutions*’, and ‘*Strengthening security institutions*’, all of which summarily raise the need for a peaceful, cohesive and secure state to promote development. At the expiration of the implementation period for the MTNDP 2018-2023, a new plan was announced in January 2024²⁵ laying out five main pillars (‘big 5 game

²⁴ GDP growth rate, per capita income/poverty line, GINI coefficient.

²⁵ MTNDP 2024 – 2030 A Transformative Acceleration Agenda for Food Security, Human Capital Development and Job Creation @ [28.01.24.Abridged Version MTNDP2024_2030.pdf](#). The five pillars are Feed Salone, human

changers’) – ‘that define the strategic priorities of the state and the people of Sierra Leone for the period 2024-2030’, with ‘Feed Salone’²⁶ as the flagship programme.

A key lesson to be learnt from the post-war development trajectory is that it is not feasible to embark on comprehensive development plans during active conflict. Also, it is clear from these programmes that there is a consensus in the development realm that a state, if it is to achieve its development targets, ought to be peaceful, stable and secure from natural (mainly pandemics and environmental), conflict-induced (mainly political and socio-economic) and global economic ‘shocks’, thus within the context highlighting a key role for the security sector, *inter alia*. This explains why each of the principal programmes have included an aspect of security governance and effectiveness as a pillar, acknowledging the importance of creating a stable and secure state if the broader development goals are to be actualised.

1.9 Conclusion

Despite debates on some aspects, most of the literature articulate conventional understandings of the link between security and development in post-conflict contexts, most of which are not contended herein. The main takeaways are that SSR is the main conduit through which security is intended to lead to the developmental goals of growth and poverty reduction, but that it

capital development, youth empowerment scheme (500,000 jobs), technology and infrastructure, and transforming the public service architecture. They will be fully aligned to the UN SDGs for the rest of the strategic period (up to 2030). Also listed are ‘enablers’, including Enabler 2: **Governance and Accountability which covers Security Institutions:** Build an efficient, effective, highly apolitical and professional security sector, that can contribute significantly to sustainable development, advancement of democracy, rule of law, and can ensure a robust response to national threats and emergencies.

²⁶ ‘Feed Salone’ aspires for a food sufficient nation.

remains more of a correlational relationship since there is no genuine ‘success story’ where empirical evidence can be found. The Sierra Leone case, which this research deals with, has been cited as a not-so-successful case as has been so widely suggested. The literature deals mainly with how the nexus has not worked but there is some inadequacy as to why. The call is for more research into empirical evidence first to provide theoretical underpinnings to the nexus and second how SSR practically contributes to development having been the interventionist approach since the 1990s. This study rides on that call to attempt empirical enquiry using the case of Sierra Leone to further investigate the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ questions from the perspective of key authorities on the subject as well as the researcher’s inside observations over time.

To investigate the call in the literature for more empirical evidence to consolidate the link between security and development, this study focuses on security sector governance deficits in Sierra Leone and to what extent they account for the post-conflict development shortfalls. It is premised on the proposition that while it may not be the *only* factor, poor security sector governance contributes to poor development outcomes. Security sector governance deficits inhibit the security sector’s capability to support national development efforts. Therefore, while security remains normatively aligned to development and integrated in development policy, it fails to play its role comprehensively in post-conflict development strategies.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research seeks to investigate the relationship between security sector governance and socio-economic development using the security-development nexus theory as an analytical lens, on the hypothesis that the relationship transcends a merely correlational one to a more causal one where deficits in SSG cause deficits in the achievement of development targets. To investigate this hypothesis, the following research design and methodology was adopted:

2.1 Methodological Choice

The type of data most suited for this type of enquiry are deep insights and analytical perspectives gleaned from individuals with the requisite objective knowledge, experience and analytical prowess, either in groups or individually. This research requires qualitative evaluative perspectives rather than just facts that can be accrued from quantitative surveys. It is therefore a multi-source qualitative study that utilises a strategy of causal-process observations through process tracing. Most of the methodology adopted for studies on security and justice have been observational case study utilising the same mainly qualitative techniques, plus a few experimental/quasi-experimental studies (Jackson, Bell & Bakrania, 2019). This use of process tracing through a closer examination of the causal mechanisms is a minor but useful point of departure in this research. *(See Section 2.5 for more details).*

2.2 Philosophical Underpinnings

2.2.1 Ontology:

This research seeks to establish causation through a subjective/interpretivist approach since the link between the two key variables – SSG and development – is a social construct. This research adopts the interpretivist philosophy as it deals with social and political concepts that are subject to a wide range of views and subjective interpretations. In order to grasp a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of phenomena and their contexts, it is important to adopt an empathetic stance through which the researcher can ‘enter the social world of the research participants and understand that world from their point of view’ (Saunders *et al*, 2009, p.149). This research, being targeted at exploration to provide empirical evidence for a widely researched phenomenon, establishes interpretivism as best suited to reveal new and richer evidential detail necessary for revealing the reality of the research hypothesis in the context.

2.2.2 Epistemology:

Due to the inclusion of the researcher in the research context, the relationship between the knower and the known, between the researcher and the research phenomenon, is one of *mind-world monism*. Since the researcher is part of the research phenomenon; knowledge production is derived from the social construction of the causal process between the key variables. (See *reflections on positionality in Section 2.9*)

2.3 Strategy

This research utilises a single case study to investigate the main research puzzle which is finding empirical evidence to explain the relationship between security sector governance and

socioeconomic development in Sierra Leone, analysed through the security-development nexus theory. It is a *within-case* ideographic investigation and analysis targeted at problem-solving at case level on its own merit. While the scope covers the post-conflict period, comparison lies in pre-war versus post-war analysis as well as two time periods 2000 to 2007 and 2008 to 2023, with micro case studies within the case to investigate the research question. However, while this research is not undertaken as a *cross-case* analysis, a cursory examination of two other post-conflict scenarios is done in Chapter 6, Section 6.7 to analyse the typology and trajectory of SSR and its effect on development.

The description of case study as ‘the overall methodology of using causal-process observations in conjunction with generalisations’ and ‘can be used as a method for evaluating hypotheses about the causes of a specific outcome in a particular case’ (Mahoney 2012, p.571), depicts this strategy as suitable for this research enquiry. This study utilises case study by adopting historical analyses to support qualitative methods with the objective of deriving situational evidence through interpretation of causal-process observations of the research expectations on the link between security and development in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone is selected as the case for this research mainly precipitated by my interest in answering a specific research enquiry on Sierra Leone that is yet to be answered in the literature. I am myself not only an indigene but also a serving member of its security sector which forms the pivot of the study, seeking to problem-solve. This backdrop risks the criticism of selection bias; however, the study is intended to elucidate the underlying dynamics behind manifestations of sector governance challenges and contribute towards problems-solving. Additionally, as many scholars have suggested, Sierra Leone serves a brilliant example to elucidate the security-

development nexus, having been one of the first to benefit from UK-led peacebuilding interventionist strategy which was predominantly guided by security sector reform (Roberts 2020, Albrecht & Jackson 2015, Denney 2008, Bangura 2016, Fayemi 2004, Godwin & Haenlein 2013). For instance, Fayemi (2004) notes that 'Sierra Leone was the test case for UK's new SSR policy and has thus far been the country where SSR thinking has been most fully applied by donors anywhere in Africa' (Fayemi 2004, p.22). Jackson & Bakrania (2018) also find that for SSR, Sierra Leone is the most studied country with Afghanistan, Liberia, Timor-Leste and Bosnia Herzegovina following.

Prior to fieldwork data collection, findings were projected to prove Sierra Leone as a potential 'most-likely' case with obvious features of the research phenomena, or a 'deviant case' in which exceptions to established theory would be found; with either instance still carrying epistemological value. Findings however proved the case to be a 'crucial case'²⁷ (Levy, 2008; George & Bennet, 2005) where empirical evidence was found to establish causal links between two variables in a theory that was hitherto based only on correlation.

Therefore, to operationalise the method of case study, *process tracing* is adopted for this research, which is the overall methodology of using causal-process observations in conjunction with generalisations and 'can be used as a method for evaluating hypotheses about the causes of a specific outcome in a particular case', and that through process tracing, the researcher is able to establish that '(1) a specific event or process took place, (2) a different event or process

²⁷ One in which a theory that passes empirical testing is supported and one that fails is impugned.

occurred after the initial event or process, and (3) the former was a cause of the latter' (Mahoney, 2012, p.571).

Consistent with George & Bennett (2005), I examine histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process the security-development nexus theory hypothesises or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in the case. According to Trampusch & Palier (2016), in establishing causal inference mechanisms, two ontological conceptions of causality are encountered: a *deterministic conception* (interested in what is constant in a mechanism) and a *probabilistic conception* (which does not assume that the same mechanism always produces the same outcome since mechanisms vary in their operation'. Deterministic causation points to the law-like assertion that A must and always cause B (all things being equal) while the probabilistic causation means that the occurrence of A increases the likelihood for the occurrence of B and that B is less likely to happen if A had not happened first. Since this study strives to establish causation, these two divergent approaches are utilised in the analysis of the causal process (p.439).

2.4 Contextual Background: Introducing the Case

2.4.1 Geography and demographics

Sierra Leone is small country located in the west coast of Africa, sharing land borders with the Republic of Guinea in the north-west, north and north-east, and the Republic of Liberia in the south-east. It is situated in the coastal corner of the West African sub-region with the west and south-west facing the Atlantic Ocean. The wider West African neighbourhood (*see regional map*

at Figure 2), comprising a mixture of Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone nations, has a history of violent conflicts, dictatorship, bloody putsches, terrorism and has been consistently target as a transit point for cocaine trafficking from across the Atlantic in Latin America.

It has a land area of 27,699 square miles (21% of which is arable), with tropical rain forests, mangrove swamps, a vast savannah grassland and some mountainous regions. It is divided into the five administrative regions of the Southern Region, Eastern Region, North-West region, North-east Region and the Western Area which hosts the capital city of Freetown. Overall, it is sub-divided into 16 Districts (*See district map at Figure 1*) and 190 Chiefdoms, each with its own local administrative system subordinate to the upper echelons of state authority. It comprises 16 ethnic groups, the largest being the Temne, resident mainly in the North and western regions and accounting for 35%, while the second largest is the Mende, resident mainly in the south and east and accounting for 31% of the population.²⁸

²⁸ World Population Review 2023 @ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/sierra-leone-population>

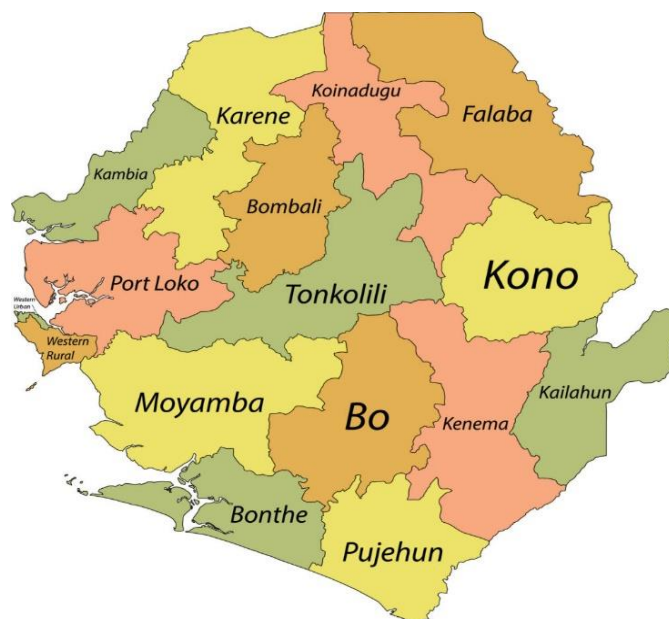


Figure 1 - District map of Sierra Leone (Source: mappr.com)

Sierra Leone has a total population of 8.8 million with the age distribution as follows: 0-14 years: 40.54%, 15-64 years: 56.89%, 65 years and over: 2.58%.²⁹ It has a median age of 19.3 years as at 2023, infant mortality rate of 72.3 deaths/1,000 live births³⁰ and life expectancy of 60.8 years.³¹ With a bugling youth population of (60% under the age of 25), unemployment and underemployment remain key social challenges. While official unemployment figures may be low, underemployment rates remain high, with the latter more of a challenge in Sierra Leone due to a dearth of job opportunities in the formal sector, illiteracy and lack of/requisite skills and academic qualifications.³²

²⁹ CIA World Fact Book, estimated as at 2023.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Worldometer.com @ <https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/sierra-leone-demographics/>

³² Sierra Leone's National Threat Assessment 2021.

Poverty remains chronic and a big threat to livelihoods. In 2021, it was estimated that nearly 60% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty while an additional 21% is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty.³³ Literacy rate is also low with only 47% of the population aged 15 and above able to read and write English, Mende, Temne or Arabic.³⁴



Figure 2 - Sierra Leone's West African neighbourhood (Source: stock@adobe.com)

2.4.2 The Economy

The main sources of income for the Sierra Leone economy are the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector which contributes 55.1%, involves about 70% of manpower, with fishery contributing 12%)³⁵, mining (which come from ample deposits of diamonds, bauxite, gold, iron ore and several

³³ UNDP Unstacking global poverty: data for high impact action @ <https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MPI/SLE.pdf>

³⁴ CIA World Fact Book.

³⁵ SLIEPA, 2021.

other minerals), manufacturing, construction and services (including tourism). However, for a nation which boasts of such vast natural resources, it remains one of the poorest countries in the world at 179 in terms of GDP (purchasing power parity) per capita income with roughly 16.6% of its GNI coming from ODA³⁶, making it an aid-dependent economy.

2.4.3 Political History

Independence and immediate post-independence

This tiny West African coastal country was founded in 1462, subordinated to British colonial rule for 153 years before being granted independence in 1961. Colonial rule was delivered through indirect rule where chiefs were allowed to preside over locals at the lowest administrative stratum. Two separate administrative systems were set up over the colony of Freetown and the protectorate hinterland, characterised by segregation where the inhabitants of the colony were more privileged than those of the protectorate.

Independence in 1961 saw the commencement of self-rule which initially showed promising signs of progress and development but, within three to four years brought with it serious ethno-political squabbles. Many analysts believe that the first half-decade post-independence saw the embryonic stages of Sierra Leone's socio-political challenges which thenceforth permeated and devastated its public life. Two Margai brothers, Sir Milton and Sir Albert, both of whom were Southerners from the Mende tribe, became the first two Prime Ministers respectively, between the years of 1961 and 1967. While Sir Milton, the first PM was deemed popular and of high integrity, it was his half-brother and successor, Sir Albert, who is discredited for initiating moves

³⁶ World Bank, as at 2021.

to ethnicise governance by dominating his cabinet and the army with fellow tribesmen and cronies and making the first (though failed) attempt at establishing a one-party state (Harris, 2014). State economic decline and social division was rapid ushering in heightened political competition and a series of military coups between 1967 and 1968 after Siaka Stevens was installed as Prime Minister.

The transition to a Republic in 1978 which made Stevens the first President made little difference in transforming the affairs of the state. For 23 years, rent-seeking and patrimonial governance dominated the political space, occupied by only two overly corrupt and despotic leaders – Stevens and his designated protégé and fellow tribesman, Joseph Momoh, who was then the head of the military. This period saw the state contract into a one-party republic with critics and opposition actors alike reported to be systematically silenced and frequently eliminated through the deployment of the notorious Internal Security Unit (ISU), a paramilitary unit which Stevens had constructed for his personal protection (Gberie, 1998). Only a very popular military coup staged by a group of disgruntled junior army officers which eventually formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) halted the co-option and privatisation of the state by the APC party and brought welcome change in the political landscape. After a junta rule that initially filled the citizenry with hope, but which became as corrupt as their predecessors, the NPRC were pressured to open the political space to democratization and by 1996, multi-party general elections were conducted. This was however not before a brutal civil war had broken out.

The Civil Conflict & post-war state rebuilding

It was out of this grim scenario of corrupt governance and a highly contracted state that violent conflict broke out in March 1991, when Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels attacked the

eastern village of Bomaru in the Kailahun District. Sustained by open access and illicit extraction of diamonds, the conflict was to last for almost 11 years with 50,000 deaths and thousands of mutilations of limbs, razing of whole communities, destruction of state infrastructure and precipitating an almost total collapse of the state.

It took some robust international interventions for peace enforcement and peacekeeping, in the form of first ECOMOG, the ECOWAS peacekeeping force led and funded mainly by Nigeria, then UN peacekeeping mission, the United National Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the largest in the world as at that time, and finally British troops whose deployment to flush out the West Side Boys in the outskirts of the capital proved crucial in finally ending the rebel resistance, leading to the eventual declaration of the end of the war.

It was a near-collapsed state that President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah assumed leadership of in 1996 after the multi-party elections. He was however deposed by yet another military coup the following year in May 1997 by renegade soldiers who declared a merge with the RUF, thereby confirming persistent suspicions and allegations of collusion with the enemy by the military. On restoration to power after 9 months of military interregnum in 1998, ending hostilities, attaining peace and rebuilding the state became the immediate priorities President Kabbah, instigating a series of peace talks with the rebels, most of which were abrogated by a recalcitrant RUF. Donor-supported state programmes of DDR and SSR, transitional justice programmes of TRC and the Special Court were all rolled out to consummate these aspirations, with mixed success rates.

The civil war was eventually declared over in January 2001 following the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord and a DDR programme which was not as successful in its reintegration as in its

demobilisation and disarmament. In the overall reconstruction of the state, significant attention had to be paid to the status of the various armed factions of the war, ushering in a need to overhaul the state's security sector, with the military especially carrying the most urgency. Steps taken in this direction, as random and uncoordinated as they initially were, turned out to be SSR in its totality in Sierra Leone and has served some good lessons on post-conflict SSR globally.

Democratisation

Sierra Leone had been a one-party republic for most of the period under Stevens' rule, relegating free and fair elections to the backburner. Total rigging of elections with open intimidation of political opponents were commonplace and only served as an attempt to attach some credibility to the image of the dictatorial APC regime under Stevens to the international community. It took a stage-managed referendum in 1985 for Stevens to relinquish power to his chosen successor who in turn was removed only through another military coup in 1992.

Following the end of the civil war, the state has sought to be established as a liberal democracy with an open participatory space. The successful elections of 1996 despite the hostile environment with rebel activity still raging, has been followed by a series of relatively free and peaceful ones in 2002, 2007, 2012, 2018 and 2023. While the fairness of some of these elections have come into question based on attempts at shifting the electoral goalposts for incumbent advantage, the sustained rate of their relatively successful conduct, some of which have led to regime change, has earned the state some accolades. However, despite this semblance of a liberal democratic state, Sierra Leone's governance pattern throughout its political history has consistently manifested serious deficiencies of equity, integrity and inclusivity, as Carol Lancaster succinctly summarises: 'Whatever the structure of government—whether it has been

democratic, a one-party state or a military junta (and it has been all of these since independence) governance has been about elites enriching themselves and their patronage networks with little effort to use the country's resources for the good of its people' (2007).

The political space continues to be dominated by the two main political parties – the APC and the SLPP, creating a deepened sense of ethnicity and regionalism and driving a wedge further down national cohesion. The rotational assumption of power by these parties has seen patron-clientelist rule sustained and ethnic jingoism intensify, with the security sector in the forefront of projection of power and execution of party elite interests. This political competition continues to dominate state governance and create a semblance of state instability despite the ambience of peace being articulated in political speeches and global and regional indices.

National development

Pre-war development was burdened by a constricted economy made anaemic by rampant high-level corruption, shackling the state to huge international debt and its asphyxiating conditionalities from the IMF, relegating the state to the doldrums of chronic underdevelopment. The onslaught on the national economy for personal and crony aggrandisement which had been started by Sir Albert Margai (Harris, 2014), compounded by Stevens (with the highlight being the ego-induced hosting of the 1980 OAU summit), was entrenched even deeper under Joseph Momoh who oversaw the deterioration of the state to its worst socio-economic condition. The downward spiral finally consummated in civil war, the debilitating effect of which drove the state to near total collapse.

Sierra Leone has obviously rebounded from the devastation of the civil conflict and is a functioning republic with development aspirations. Successive post-war administrations have adopted and rolled out development plans, all of them consistent with the requirements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, their differing and sometimes competing preferences have tended to affect progress on this front (Sheriff *et al*, 2020). It remains among the world's 46 least developed countries, ranked 182 out of 189 (based on the UNDP's Human Development Index), worse than Mozambique and Eritrea, both of which are in active conflict. The immediate post-war state development priorities were economic recovery and restoration of social services. With national stability assured, development has more recently generally targeted health care, education, human capital development and food security. Supportive of these priorities has been national security which, as recognised in policy, plays a fundamental role in establishing the required climate for the achievement of development objectives.

The objectives in successive national development plans have been generally elusive not least due to a combination of internal governance deficits and vulnerability to external shocks – mainly the public health emergencies of Ebola (2013/14) and COVID-19 (2020/21), both of which severely reversed progress and hampered the state's ability to self-sustain. Underlying these shocks though were the state's deep vulnerability and shambolic response approaches and underutilisation of existing capabilities, as infinitesimal as they may have been.

Key development challenges remain high youth unemployment, persistently high infant mortality rate and chronic poverty in the face of rising inflation. The affordability of basic services remains constrained by rising prices and generally meagre stagnated earning power of the wider

population. Power and water supply, despite recent improvements, remain luxuries to a large portion of the population. Proper health care and quality education have also seen recent improvements but remain elusive to many. Food scarcity has worsened with many homes still struggling to afford essential meals and basic nutrition.³⁷ The disaffection created by these development deficits is perennially compounded by widening social cleavages between the predatory political class and their clientele and the wider impoverished citizenry, deceptively disguised by the existing ethno-regional political standoff. Many analysts maintain that Sierra Leone's post-war peace can be commended since there has been no relapse into war, but that it is imperilled by the persistence of pre-war socio-economic challenges, many of which the state has failed to address (See Mitton 2013; Bangura 2016, 2018; Roberts 2020; Adebajo 2021 for example).

2.5 Approach to Theory Development

To test the functionality of the security-development nexus theory through investigating the causal link between SSG and development utilising an interpretivist philosophy, a deductive approach was adopted in this research. This is guided by the fact that while interpretivist research philosophy tends to direct researchers to an inductive approach, '[a] topic on which there is a wealth of literature from which you can define a theoretical framework and a hypothesis lends itself more readily to deduction (Saunders et al, 2009, p.157). A deductive approach, according

³⁷ World Bank, Sierra Leone Economic Update 2023: Macroeconomic Stability Key to Attainment of Food Security @ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/sierraleone/publication/sierra-leone-economic-update-2023-macroeconomic-stability-key-to-attainment-of-food-security>

to Wilson (2010), is concerned with 'developing a hypothesis (or hypotheses) based on existing theory, and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis' (p.7). Similarly, Hyde (2000) describes deductive reasoning as 'a theory testing process which commences with an established theory or generalisation, and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances' (p.83).

We learn further from Hyde that 'to operate in a deductive mode of enquiry one should seek objectively to falsify one's initial findings, and to look for support for alternative explanations. The deductive process remains intact if new data are available to test initial propositions – data which were not utilised as the basis for theory building' (p.88). It is hence a juxtaposition of new and old data to reveal new details that test or refine existing theory or hypotheses. This study adopts a deductive approach through which, the overarching theory of the security-development nexus is explored by going beyond the established correlational links (which, evidenced by the literature, points to the absence of enough evidence to establish causation despite the strong conceptual correlation) to examine the causal relationship between SSG and development. Causality is found wherein the case context provides evidence of poor SSG contributing to failed development outcomes.

Beach & Pederson (2013) recommend a series of models to be used for process tracing. Relevant to this study is the theory-testing model (Figure 3) which explains the causal mechanism in the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y). Following this advice, it is best to unpack causal mechanisms looking at entities and the change-producing activities that they generate, with both (entity and activity) needing to be depicted in causal mechanism models.

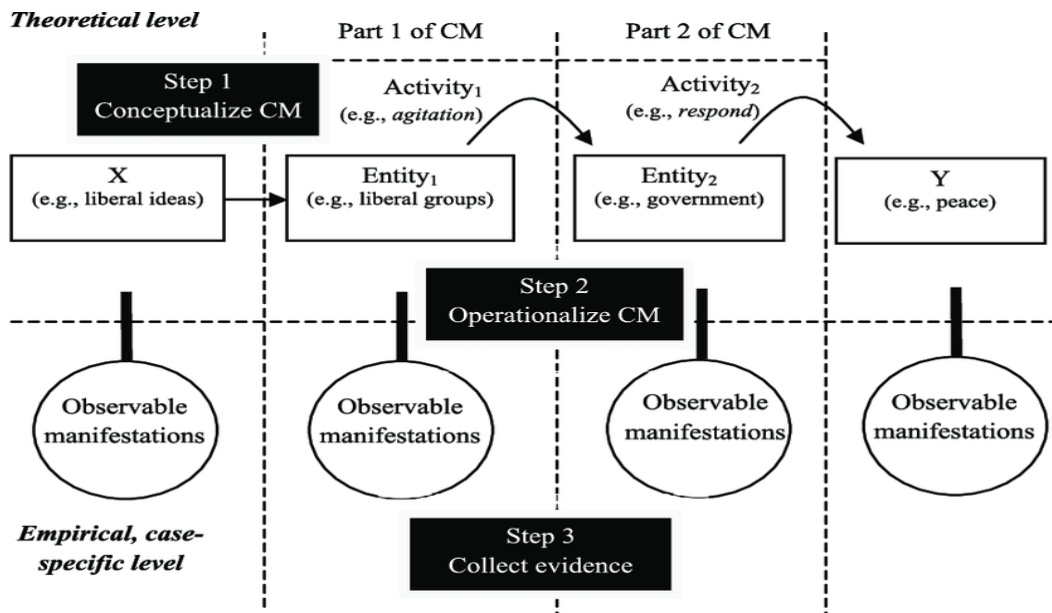


Figure 3 - Theory testing process tracing (Source: Beach & Pederson, 2013)

Generally, in the theory-testing model, three key steps are postulated: there first needs to be *conceptualisation* of the causal mechanism at theoretical level, *operationalised* as a second step before ultimately providing empirical evidence at the case-specific level. To fulfil step 3, each concept must be accompanied by observable manifestations.

Taking it a step further, Beach & Pederson warn that causal mechanisms are more than just showing intervening variables because they are ‘grey-boxed’ if the actual causal force transmission between X and Y is not revealed. The mechanism needs to be unpacked further by listing the entities that create these changes. In other words, all of the parts of the mechanism must be present, or the mechanism itself is not there. ‘Understanding mechanisms in these terms enables us to capture the process whereby causal forces are transmitted through a causal

mechanism to produce an outcome, forces that are black-boxed or gray-boxed when they are understood as events or intervening variables' (2013, p.40).

This approach is adapted to analyse the causal process in this research (Chapter 8) through the unpacking of the causal mechanism to arrive at a viable conclusion. This was considered important in view of the non-linear link between the two main variables created by two sets of intervening variables operating as part of the causal mechanism. This analytical process is particularly useful in establishing the causal link to a non-specialist audience, especially political leaderships who tend to misconstrue the significance of such a link as it affects policy and practice.

2.6 Data Collection Techniques

For this research there was use of a combination of documentary research into existing literature such as research articles and books, grey literature (policy papers and speeches), archival data review, and interviews (mostly semi-structured with open-ended questions) and focus group discussions to elicit facts and viewpoints; both methods to juxtapose existing knowledge with new knowledge derived from primary data obtained from the interviews and discussions. There were also instances of participant observation wherein, in view of the fact that the researcher is a serving member of the security sector, sat in attendance in some relevant engagements. This is justified on the basis that there is a strong emphasis on the importance of participant observation in observing causal processes. Maxwell (2004), summarising Becker & Geer (1957), explains that in order to obtain more complete data about specific situations, long-term participant observation is better than any other method mainly because it provides more and

different kinds of data that are less dependent on inference. The longer the presence of the researcher in the research context, the clearer the picture of the causal process and the higher the possibility of ruling out theories that may be spurious and premature. This sustained presence also allows a greater opportunity for causal hypotheses to be tested (Maxwell 2004, p.254). The researcher in this study is both a participant and investigator of the phenomena over a period of two decades, virtually comprising the entire research time scope – the post-conflict era of Sierra Leone. Meticulous observations and notetaking have taken place over time helping the researcher to develop and test hypothesis and draw epistemologically useful conclusions.

In addition to participant observation, the entire data collection exercise was clustered into categories, each with its respective set of questions/interview guide; all of them speaking to the same themes stipulated in the Conceptual Framework. Participants were selected based on the researcher's knowledge of individuals first with the required knowledge base, and second with the necessary honesty and objectivity considering the existing political atmosphere in the country. Effort was also made to make the sampling as regionally representative of the country as possible with interviewees hailing from various regions and focus groups held in the main regions.

The individual interview categories are listed as independent thinkers (comprising researchers, governance experts, enlightened senior citizens and journalists), security sector practitioners (serving and retired) and former advisors (UK and UN). For focus groups, there were four groups of two tiers as follows: strategic level security sector actors and civil society organisations to provide national perspectives and security providers and consumers at regional level to provide local perspectives. At regional level, FGDs were held in Kenema to cover the Eastern Region, Bo

to cover the Southern Region and Makeni to cover the Northern Region. Riding on the existing collaborative culture to facilitate open and frank discussions, Provincial Security Coordination Committees (PROSECs) were utilised, slightly adjusted to be more representative. Group demographics were taken into account, such as gender, age and ethnicity. Switching between English and Krio (which is the *lingua franca*) was allowed to cater for varying education levels. In addition to encouragement, facilitation of discussions required some amount of firmness in maintaining order and specificity to prevent cross-speaking and digressions. All sessions were audio recorded while notetaking was done through assistance provided by the committee secretaries who were adopted as research assistants at each location.

In all, the numerical breakdown of fieldwork engagements was as follows: independent thinkers – 12, serving and retired security sector experts – 5, former advisors – 9, focus groups (national and regional)– 4. The number of participant interviews terminated when saturation was reached with no new data emerging from the engagements.

Individual interviews generally lasted well beyond the targeted 30-45 minutes mainly due to the participants' tendency to digress in a bid to showcase their work and competences. Focus groups had varying number of participants ranging from 16 and 21, with discussion time generally elapsing a bit beyond two hours. There was also a latent reluctance in a few participants to be overly honest on some questions which were perceived to be sensitive, but the mixture of both providers and consumers of security neutralised that and brought out the objective facts.

In order not to influence opinions and analyses in the interviews and discussions, there was careful consideration for the use of *clean language*, the elimination of personal metaphors in the

interview questions which helped improve co-construction of data (Cairns-Lee et al, 2022), and *epoché* wherein I made effort to withhold my own assumptions to enable the interviewees to use their own words to articulate their perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). Two types of triangulation, as suggested by Natow (2020), have been used in this study: *data source triangulation* which have included in-depth key informant interviews, secondary and archival data and scholarly research, and *methodological triangulation* wherein while the methodological strategy is qualitative, data from findings such as global and regional indices are mostly quantitative.

2.7 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilised using coded data from the main themes emerging from the interviews and discussions. Interview data were analysed, bringing out results along the following themes:

- i. The security sector: weak oversight mechanisms – expected and supported, operational (in)effectiveness – expected and supported, politicisation – expected and supported, under-prioritisation – expected and supported, funding challenges – expected and supported, policy vs practice (good legal and policy framework but poor implementation) – expected and supported.
- ii. democratic state governance which is the overall governance pattern is retrograde – expected and supported

- iii. peace, fragility and conflict potential (peace is negative, state remains highly fragile and the potential for conflict is high) - expected but partly supported in that while the state remains fragile, relapse into violent conflict remains possible but is less likely.
- iv. development deficits of poor economic growth and poverty reduction evident, resulting from poor security sector governance – expected but partly supported, due to the presence of other distinct but complementary factors.

(See Table 3 in Chapter 7 for a more detailed juxtaposition of expected outcomes and results)

Interpretation and analyses of data collected for this research does not stop at the semantic level; they are analysed at latent level to reveal underlying meanings and impressions due first to the reluctance of some serving participants to be overly honest in some cases for fear of political and administrative repercussions, and second to the inability of some others to express their opinions clearly in English as moderately-educated and non-native speakers, especially in focus groups.

2.8 Sampling of Participants

According to Patton (2014) what is required for this kind of study is a purposive sampling strategy of ‘key informants, key knowledgeable and reputational sampling’ which involves ‘Identify[ing] people with great knowledge and/or influence (by reputation) who can shed light on the inquiry issues’ (p.549). For this research I used non-probability purposive sampling to select a broad range of participants straddling both the security and development realms, comprising officials from security and development sectors, civil service, key civil society activists, independent researchers/intellectuals, former foreign advisers and international organisations, ensuring that a vertical spread in perspectives (strategic policy actors, middle level actors and grassroots

actors) and a lateral spread in perspectives (local and international actors; government and non-governmental actors) are all integrated to deliver a well-balanced data set. Snowballing also occurred regularly, either solicited or as and when the opportunity arose.

Interviewee sampling was based primarily on eliciting elite perspectives. No direct individual or group grassroots engagement was done due to constraints on time and resources. However, local insights were obtained from representatives in focus groups at regional level, such as representatives of Paramount Chiefs, women's and youth group leaders, all of whom competently articulated perspectives from below.

2.9 Positionality Statement

The research process for this study has followed the requisite traditional requirements. Commencing with identifying the problem, I have formulated a research question, outlines objectives, designed a plan, and collected, analysed and interpreted the data with clear conclusions following. To complement this process, positionality becomes imperative. According to Hammersley (2004), 'ideally a researcher should reflect on how he or she has influenced the situation and the people being studied ... so as to minimize any distorting effect on the research findings' (p.934). Recognising the effect of biases, perspectives and experiences on my world view and the research process, I have followed an effective process of reflexivity to mitigate such effects. In several ways, my personal experiences have not only shaped my ontological perspectives, they have also affected this research process in both positive and negative ways, with steps taken to mitigate the latter.

Demographic, professional & academic background

I was born in the Southern Region of Sierra Leone to Mende-speaking parents hailing from the Sherbro District of Bonthe. One of four children of long-term teachers with limited economic means, we were taught of the value of attaining the highest possible level of education as a means of establishing ourselves in life and being among those that contribute positively to society. I have since pursued this trajectory over the course of my 52 years on earth and have come thus far combining both academic and professional endeavours in order to make a difference.

My professional and academic history have both been transitory. Having started post-university employment as a lecturer and teaching assistant at tertiary level, I made the transition into public service with a strong desire to establish myself as a national security professional. This desire was driven by the skills I believed I had to render sound analysis of both overt and covert information, my reasonable awareness of national and world affairs, but more importantly by my longstanding observation of the role of the security services in politics and how this shaped the socio-economic challenges that faced the state and its people.

I have thus served in the national security for twenty years, a period during which I have both participated and observed in detail the mindsets, attitudes and power dynamics behind decision making and execution of directives, interfaces between local and international actors and the (non)participation of civil society in influencing state policy. During my professional journey, the trainings, brainstormings and collaborations (both local and international) have helped hone my technical skills needed for task execution but also an understanding of the interpersonal and

intergroup relational dynamics that accompany them. These engagements have also helped shape my view of reality and how we interpret reality at individual and at state level.

I did all my primary, secondary and initial postgraduate education in Sierra Leone but had the opportunity to study internationally in later years. After graduating from secondary school, I proceeded to university to study arts and humanities in 1991. I emerged with an honours degree in English & Literature in 1996 and started assisting with teaching in the English Department. Having done five years teaching English and Literature, I did not wish to continue on this educational trajectory. My interest in international affairs, especially those that have to do with global/regional politics and security, prompted me to yearn for a career in public service and drove my academic path.

While at the Office of National Security I have completed two master's degrees, one locally acquired in Peace & Development Studies and one internationally in International Relations (Security). This research now forms part of the requirements to obtain a PhD. My research interests are investigating into conflict and peace, security sector reform and governance, and political factors behind development failures. This aligns with my professional background, personal experiences and my philosophical convictions which are articulated below.

Philosophical convictions & personal values

The moral values I have nurtured the most are fairness and justice in individual relationships and between state and people, respect for order and established systems, and integrity and professionalism in the delivery of tasks and jobs. On the local political stage, I have refrained from being openly political despite my own political beliefs and loyalties, consistent with the codes of

conduct for public servants, not least those in the sensitive realm of national security. I have come to be known for these during my sojourn as both a lecturer and a security professional over the years, offering me an opportunity to obtain honest perspectives for this research. My philosophical convictions are that our views of the reality of our world are subjective and that actions and reactions are based on how such views are interpreted, hence my interpretivist approach in this research.

Research Ethics & Access

Ethical considerations have been acknowledged throughout this research process. This has included obtaining ethical approval through application for ethics review covering issues pertaining to consent, privacy, anonymity, ownership copyrights, freedom of information and data protection. Data and risk management plans (DMP and RAMP) were developed and approved before commencement of field work. After the initial sampling, informed consent of participants was sought through the distribution of recruitment emails, consent forms, and concepts notes highlighting the research concerns, expected roles of the participants, modes and times of engagement with the option to withdraw at any time if so wished as well as the option of confidentiality. Participants who opted for confidentiality have their input fully anonymised. Participants were also informed of how the data will be used, including the option of sharing excerpts with them.

Barriers to a more comprehensive engagement of participants were costs and time. I was able to use my own funds to complement funds accessed through the School of Social Sciences to defray unexpected expenditure. Some participants in certain FGDs did not respect time so I had to

exercise the required patience to get them all together with the incentive of a good lunch provided.

For cognitive access to documents (relevant scholarly literature and policy documentation), authorial/organisational consent was sought through both the institution of study and my work organisation. Physical access to the sampling categories such as local security sector employees, development officials and experts and international expatriates who had contributed to implementing DFID's programmes was sought through the institutional support as well as the researcher's own personal contacts. On the whole however, both physical and cognitive access was not straightforward. Institutional restrictions prevented some UK interviewees from cooperating (especially those from the Ministry of Defence) while access to a few relevant institutional reports/assessments got delayed because of a mixture of bureaucracy and lethargy on the part of those contacted. In the end though, interviewees and documentation accessed eventually proved to be fit and adequate for purpose.

I hold an insider position in relation to both the research subject and the research context. Holmes' (2020) summary of the insider/outsider debate analysing advantages and disadvantages was helpful in the reflexivity process. He finds that the insider has the advantage of easier access due to being part of the research context/entity, may ask more meaningful and insightful questions due to *a priori* knowledge, may acquire more honest answers because of trust, may produce more authentic understanding of the culture, may not encounter culture shock which may disorientate an outsider, and familiarity with local colloquial language and non-verbal cues.

Holmes however notes disadvantages of the inside researcher being unwittingly biased or sympathetic to the culture, familiarity with the context precipitating a myopic view or cultural prohibitions limiting room for asking taboo questions, failure by participants to articulate views considering the knowledge base that the researcher may already have, the inability to include external perspective in the process, and less willingness to reveal sensitive information to an insider who may be encountered again later (pp.5-6).

As a Sierra Leonean by birth and by nurture, I have experienced both my academic and professional development in the country. During this time, I have experienced firsthand the dynamics of both constitutional and unconstitutional political change and the socio-economic effects that accompanied them. This experience includes the decade-long civil war which, though it had no direct physical impact on me and my family, has left simmering psychological effects which are felt to this day. Engaging with Sierra Leonean research participants against the backdrop of being compatriots with shared culture and experiences meant that there was no need to explain or clarify certain local/traditional dynamics, thereby enhancing co-production of knowledge. Engaging with foreign advisors, while based on common understanding of local issues, tended to be mixed in output: while some took strength from my request to speak freely and honestly, some tended to be somewhat diplomatic caring not to sound too critical of the country from which the researcher hails.

I also carry an insider perspective in that I am a serving member of the security sector, which is the central subject of this research. This mind-world monistic relationship grants me the opportunity to have observed processes, preferences and attitudes while also participating at different levels over time, providing a background for the formulation of the research enquiry.

My insider position generated a bifurcated effect: served as an advantage in that I was able to carry out sampling of participants in an informed manner, conduct interviews with hindsight of how and from whom to elicit relevant data. It however served a slight disadvantage in that despite reassurances of confidentiality and anonymity in some cases (as required), the prevailing sensitivities around partisan politics tended to precipitate some amount of reticence in some participants, especially in the large FGDs. For interviewees in the security sector, knowledge of the researcher (values and principles) provided the freedom to express opinion though mostly in confidence.

The research also made imperative access to state archives and material. Being a member of the ONS meant there was already access, institutional clearance had to be obtained. The sensitivity attributed to classified national security material has been fully observed and protected since the researcher has access and is himself under oath of secrecy. All quotes and extracts are carefully selected against this background. There were instances of adopting a covert research role which, as Bruce Berg (2001) warns, 'must be carefully considered, for in addition to potentially violating the rights of the subjects, there is a real possibility that the researchers themselves might come to some harm or legal complication' (p.54). The analysis of such documents and data obtained covertly have all been in full recognition of these risks and requirements through assurance of full confidentiality.

2.10 Time Horizon

This research is a longitudinal one done both retrospectively to cover data on past events as well as prospectively to bring in data on the present status quo and predict the medium- to long-term

future. The periodic scope of the study is the post-war years of Sierra Leone, 2001 to present time, within which security and development have been in consistent interaction at policy, practice and scholarly research levels.

2.11 Conceptual Framework

2.11.1 Introduction – Mapping the Concepts and Theories

The survey of the literature in the previous chapter revealed the need for further investigation into the how the link between security and development empirically manifests itself. Undertaking this raises the need for a framework of concepts to serve the purpose of answering the research enquiry. The conceptual framework for investigating the research enquiry (Figure 1) presents a collection of theory, concepts and strategies of Western intervention and state governance, all of which link reciprocally, analysed from the backdrop of the security-development nexus.

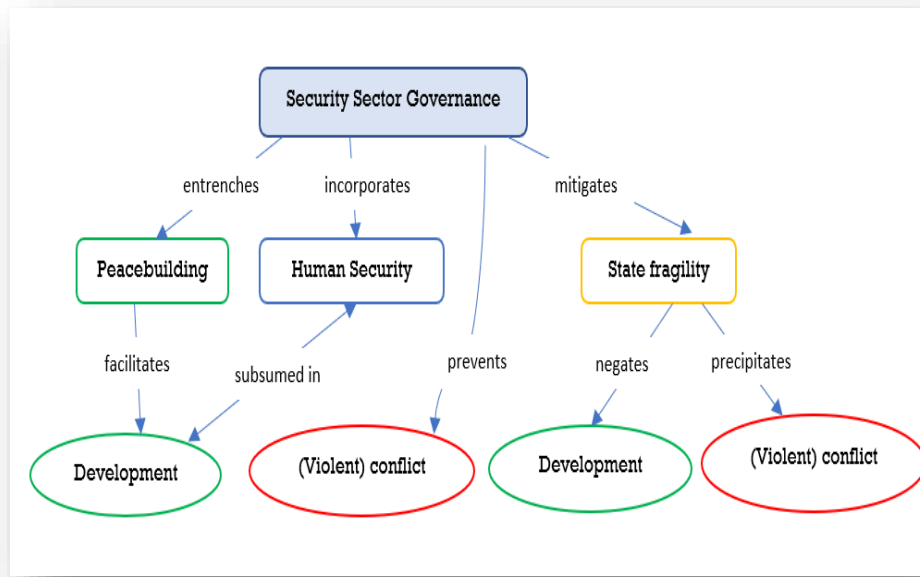


Figure 4 - Concept map

2.11.2 Conceptual interrelationships

Good security sector governance entrenches peacebuilding; peacebuilding facilitates development.

Security sector reform, which aims to achieve good democratic governance of the security sector, is an integral aspect (a ‘tool’ or ‘thematic area’³⁸) of post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. The establishment of post-conflict peace goes in tandem with ensuring a secure state in all kinetic aspects, its regime, safe local communities with protected lives and livelihoods. This is delivered through proper governance of the security sector as the main institutional provider of that

³⁸ SSR and Peacebuilding: Thematic Review of Security Sector Reform to Peacebuilding and the Role of the Peacebuilding Fund (United Nations, 2012)

essential public good. Since the security sector is the ‘face of the state’ to its citizens (Kilfe *et al*, 2014, p.65) its proper governance has a broader effect on general governance of the state. Peacebuilding is undermined where the security sector is not only ineffective and unaccountable, but also where it actively threatens lives and livelihoods. As such since peacebuilding is the standard approach to immediate recovery, stability and eventual development in post-conflict contexts, if the SSG aspect is not effective, the path to achieving development targets is jeopardised. Kilfe *et al* (2014) stress the deep reliance of peacebuilding on SSR ‘both as a tool and a factor of success, without which development gains can be quickly overturned by the next crisis, which may be caused by poorly governed security institutions or opposition to them’ (p.65).

Good security sector governance incorporates human security; human security is subsumed in development.

Human security plays a conceptual intermediary role between security and development (see *Figure 3*) in that proper SSG has its foundation in ensuring that individuals and local communities are free from fear, want and can live dignified lives – the fundamentals of the human security concept. Development is linked to security through its emphasis on and incorporation of human security.³⁹ The broad goals of macro-economic growth and reduction of micro-level poverty embedded in development policy pool together the need for both state economic resilience and poverty reduction among the citizenry. The more economically buoyant a state, the better it can provide for its citizens, assuming that the necessary political climate exists. In reverse, the safer

³⁹ World Development Report, 2011 and SDG Goal 16.

individuals and local communities live and go about daily socio-economic activities, the stabler the state, making it viable for robust macro-level advancement.

Good SSG prevents violent conflict

To understand how SSG contributes to conflict prevention is to examine how ‘insecurity often intensifies uncertainty and disaffection, undermines legitimacy and respect for state institutions, and provides a context in which political, social or criminal groups are more tempted to pursue their goals through violence’ (Greene 2003, pp.3-4).

A means of maintaining peaceful post-conflict societies is through an effective, professional and inclusive security sector. Effective security sector reform not only targets effectiveness and accountability but also ensures a governance strategy of inclusion during the reform process to make it representative of previously conflicting factions, in most cases tribal groups. This minimises bias in operational approaches and ensures impartial service delivery, reduces renegade conduct and improves relations with the wider public.

Good security sector governance mitigates state fragility; state fragility negates development and precipitates violent conflict.

State fragility has direct negative effects on development, specifically economic growth and poverty reduction initiatives. On the effect of fragility on development, the OECD posit that poverty is intensified by fragility wherein fragility limits the chances for individuals and societies to escape poverty. Fragile contexts, characterised by high level of violence, can also aggravate extreme poverty rates due to displacement of people, destroyed livelihoods, and damage of the broader macroeconomic environment through falls in FDI, trade and growth.

Specifically on growth, for the business environment to thrive, there need to be safeguards that guarantee the collection of returns by investors and that an unstable political climate, corruption and widespread crime can jeopardise investment returns, the investment climate and cripple growth prospects.⁴⁰ On poverty, Corral *et al*, observe that extreme poverty, a key hallmark of underdevelopment, is increasingly concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCS) and typically involves simultaneous deprivations in multiple (monetary and non-monetary) dimensions (2020).

Some key indicators of FCS specific to the security apparatus are: a) monopoly on the use of force, including whether the military is under civilian control, the existence of private militias and other paramilitary activity; b) the relationship between the security sector and the general public, including whether political violence is state sponsored and politically motivated and police professionalism; c) law enforcement including proper use of force by the police and military, instances of police brutality; and d) small arms proliferation.⁴¹ Where these poor sector governance indicators are evident and sometimes ingrained, such states are considered unstable and achievement of development targets are imperilled. Proper sector governance therefore can mitigate these deficits, strengthen service delivery and support broader development outcomes.

In summary, this network of concepts indicates that in post-conflict states, security promotes development if the security sector is effectively governed and is respectful of human rights and

⁴⁰ Dfid, G. B. (2008). Growth: building jobs and prosperity in developing countries. London: Department for International Development. p.19

⁴¹ Fragile States Index, Fund for Peace @ <https://fragilestatesindex.org>

the Rule of Law; but that poor security governance may compromise gains made in peacebuilding and contribute to state fragility which means that the state may perpetually be on the margins of violent conflict. This condition negates the achievement of development goals because if conflict does break out, the whole development process is put in reverse. *(Figure 5 illustrates the stratification of the concepts in order of their inclusivity).*

This framework therefore not only explains the already established correlational relationship between security and development, it also sets the stage for exploration into causal links which have hitherto not been supported by empirical evidence – the causational logic that, to achieve the grand goal of development, security is a key requirement, credited by the hypothetical stance that once security sector governance is poor, development targets are less likely to be achieved.



Figure 5 - Conceptual stratification matrix

CHAPTER 3: POST-CONFLICT INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION – EXTERNAL

SOCIAL ENGINEERING VS LOCAL OWNERSHIP

3.1 Introduction

There has been improved coordination and collaboration among security sector institutions during the course of reform in Sierra Leone. The SSR process has delivered a national security architecture which has ensured interoperability, with security institutions drawing upon each other strengths and mandates to achieve the overall goal of national security. The core security sector institutions (police, military, intelligence and security service, were in the centre of the British-led reform process. Others such as the correctional, fire and immigration services underwent their individual reforms, all culminating into a fluid architecture which delivers an early warning and early response system for Sierra Leone.

The challenge has been adherence to laid down strategies and procedures in utilising this framework especially during emergencies as well as garnering the necessary political will to provide it policy and funding support. Overall security sector governance continues to manifest significant deficits which has perennially hamstrung operational effectiveness and accountability systems in the sector. It is assessed that the morale, professionalism and productivity of the security sector institutions has continued (and will continue into the near future) to be hampered by inadequate manpower, misconduct by some personnel, funding, allowances, accommodation,

medical, logistics and training needs. The impact of these deficits on the state's national security is assessed as HIGH.⁴²

This chapter examines how the core institutions have evolved during the post-conflict period and evaluates their contribution to the wider architecture in delivering national security and, through that, providing the foundation for socio-economic development. While they differ by context, the state security providers are understood to be typically armed forces and their auxiliaries, public law enforcement and auxiliaries, executive protection forces, intelligence services, border guards and customs authorities; reserves and local security units, civil defence forces, national guards, civil protection and emergency formations, and commercial security providers contracted by the state.⁴³

For the purpose of this study however, the key aspects of the sector which have been brought under review are defence (to cover the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces), policing and law enforcement (to cover the Sierra Leone Police and auxiliary systems), intelligence and security collection and coordination (to cover the Office of National Security and the Central Intelligence & Security Agency), correctional service (to cover the Sierra Leone Correctional Service), immigration and border control (to cover the Immigration Department) and finally the fire service (to cover the National Fire Force). Acknowledged is the point that it is arguable whether the Fire Service is usually considered integral to the sector and therefore a subject of SSR; however, it has been part of the Sierra Leone security sector (and therefore a beneficiary of post-war reform

⁴² NTA 2021-22. HIGH impact is second highest impact rating.

⁴³ The Security Sector - Roles and responsibilities in security provision, management and oversight. DCAF SSR Background, @ https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/195675/DCAF_BG_3_The%20Security%20Sector.11.15.pdf

projects) based on a recognition of its role in providing safety from fire hazards⁴⁴, considered a human security requirement, its supportive role in elections and other disaster management operations. Under the ministerial supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, its policy and legal provisions have on occasion been on the agenda of the National Security Council. Customs, which also has security functions and usually considered part of the security sector in other contexts, is however not included since it is incorporated under the National Revenue Authority, the main revenue generating organisation.

3.2 Security Sector Governance History – Derelict Foundations of State Use of Power

The Truth & Reconciliation (TRC) Report provides a concise insight into the causes of the war within which is a microscopic account of how the security sector was governed and managed⁴⁵, and serves a useful reference for a comparative assessment of sector governance before and after the civil conflict. From this report we learn that the governance and use of the security sector was at the heart of the causes of war. Though covering only the army and the police in the post-independence years of 1961 to 1985, it remains overwhelmingly useful in exposing the key administrative and policy mistakes that were made, summarised as follows:

⁴⁴ The National Security & Central Intelligence Act (2023) for instance defines ‘security service’ as ‘such services connected with the security of Sierra Leone, including (a) protecting or safeguarding life and property...’ (Part One, Preliminary, p.3 @ https://www.parliament.gov.sl/uploads/bill_files/The%20National%20Security%20and%20Central%20Intelligence%20Act%202023..pdf)

⁴⁵ Truth & Reconciliation Report, Vol. 3A – Chapter Two: *Governance*. Security Institutions in Sierra Leone.

3.2.1 The Army

Exposure to politics. There were mixed effects of the existing conditions of service: while earnings and facilities such as medicals and international study for officers seemed impressive, 'inadequate accommodation in the barracks led to many low-ranking soldiers moving outside the barracks and becoming much more susceptible to party politics right up to the time of the conflict' (p72).

The genesis of ethnicisation. The rapid promotion of junior officer David Lansana, ostensibly to Africanise the army after the disbandment of the colonial army, but latently smirked of tribalism because of his common ethnicity with the Prime Minister Albert Margai, did not go down well with other officers in the army. Also, recruitment in 1967, occasioned by arrests made from an alleged Brig. John Bangura-led coup plot, led to the domination of the senior cadre of the army by Mendes. 'Of the seventeen cadets recruited in 1967, thirteen were Mendes' (p.73). A coup did take place in 1967 leading to the installation of a military regime, the National Reformation Council (NRC), led by Col. Juxon-Smith.

Military co-option and politicisation of the Police. The appointment of the head of the police, William Leigh, as Juxon-Smith's deputy marked this change.

Mass unmerited promotions. The Juxon-Smith junta also saw a plethora of unmerited promotions, led by the regime leader himself who moved in rank from Colonel to Brigadier: 'The actions of the NRC formed a blueprint for subsequent military regimes to distort ranks in the military by giving themselves unmerited promotions' (p.74).

Policies of discriminatory recruitment countered and exacerbated by Stevens. By the time Siaka Stevens took over the reins of power, the army was an unstable and divided institution resulting from the divisive policies of his predecessor, Albert Margai. Stevens' policies of "tribal returns" which involved levelling the tribal numbers in ranks, "AWOL Recall" which involved reinstating those who had abandoned the ranks to join the brewing pro-Stevens counter coup training in Guinea, and "Specific Special Recruitment" which targeted only those able to lift a bag of rice over their heads. 'Such a baseless method of enlistment', it is observed, 'sapped the sense of professionalism from service and promotion in the Army, a trend that was never corrected in the decades preceding the conflict' (p.74).

Use of security forces to suppress opposition. The creation of 'special' security units such as AMIPOL (a combination of army and police elements) and the Internal Security Unit (ISU) – a specially recruited and armed police unit – were latent measures to tackle political opposition and to neutralise the threat posed by an untrusted army, which was concurrently deliberately under-equipped.

Loose administration. The army enjoyed the largesse of the political class – unaudited finances, open and loose recruitment at the whims of party leaders.

Entrenchment of politicisation. The appointment of head of the military, Joseph Momoh as member of Parliament and Minister of State in 1978.

Prioritising regime security over development. In a statement made by the APC during the TRC hearings, they admittedly conceded to the fact that the threat emanating from opposition forces to remove the regime by force compelled it to prioritise regime protection over

development. This basically characterised the entire Stevens era (p75). The succeeding President Momoh simply just sustained the status quo bequeathed by Stevens making the army ill-prepared when the war broke out in 1991.

3.2.2 The Sierra Leone Police

Politicisation of the police. The first instance was the inclusion of both heads of the police into the National Reformation Council junta regime in 1967, the head becoming the Deputy Head of State.

Limited capacity. Under Stevens, ‘the police became so incapacitated that it struggled to provide even the most basic of services to the general populace’ (p.76). This continued right through the Momoh administration.

Weak Command and Control in law enforcement. Recruitment into the ISU was based on ethnicity (predominantly Limba) and strict loyalty to the President. Mostly illiterate, they were deployed to ruthlessly suppress any iota of opposition. Command and control from HQ was limited as they considered themselves independent under the political patronage of the President, which eroded cohesiveness among the rank and file.

Estrangement from the populace. Large scale corruption and deviant behaviour dug a wedge between the police and the citizenry.

Further politicisation. The Head of the Police, as was that of the military, was appointed Member of Parliament in 1978 thereby neutralising the Constitutional political neutrality of the institution.

For 15 years (1970 to 1985), the report concludes, the force was characterised by corruption, division (precipitated by political protection for some and some not), bullying of junior officers by their seniors thereby sowing the seeds of early discontent and rebellion, arbitrary and opaque HR system and sycophantic service delivery. ‘... the SLP was shaped into a force that acted as a ready tool in the perpetration of state terror against dissenters and political opponents’. Added to these were human rights violations, crooked investigations, and unlawful incarceration and torture. The succeeding President failed to make any transformation of the police.

These summarised anecdotes from the TRC report set the stage for a retrospective longitudinal, comparative evaluation of sector governance later in this thesis to see whether the vestiges of maladministration remain even after the post-war reform processes, and how they potentially affect sector effectiveness to maintain national stability and support development initiatives.

3.2.3 The intelligence and security (ISS) sub-sector

Hardly any literature exists specifically analysing the structure and use of the intelligence and security sub-sector in Sierra Leone’s pre-war history. I therefore rely studies done on post-war reforms highlighting what types of reform measures were needed in this area.

It is unclear what intelligence and security structures existed in the immediate post-independence period of Sierra Leonean history. However, from the Stevens era (the late 1960s) up to the civil war period, respective governments relied on intelligence from the units which

existed, mainly the Police unit of Special Branch (SB) and the Military Intelligence Branch (MIB), plus informal information inflows from informants – mainly loyalists and henchmen generally untrained in intelligence tradecraft. Such information/intelligence was largely unprocessed and uncorroborated since the agencies worked in silos (sometimes in competition) and were operating on the whims of leaders who were mostly desirous of regime protection through the targeting of opposition and disloyal elements.

3.2.4 Other Security Sector Agencies – Immigration & Border Control, Fire Safety and Prisons

Hardly any scholarly or grey literature exists on the history of immigration, fire safety and prisons services. However, measures taken to reform these sub-sectors suggest long periods of neglect, under-prioritisation and mismanagement, similarly reflective of the general state governance malaise that has characterised the entire post-independence period. The struggle for political power, particularly in the late 60s up to the outbreak of the civil war, meant that most of the attention to the security sector was more inclined towards armed and paramilitary aspects leaving deficient attention to non-combat aspects.

The Fire Service was potentially the most neglected with poorly paid servicemen and very low capability nationwide. While many Districts had fire stations, capacity to competently and promptly tackle fires remained derelict for decades, leading to growing public mistrust and antagonism.

Lack of political interest in proper immigration and border control meant that the Immigration service suffered decades of corrupt abuse with the illegal sale of national passports and other

travel documents being a key means of making dirty money and boosting private pockets. Attempts at cleaning up the service, such as transitioning from civilian to police administration and back, have only helped to entrench corrupt service delivery and crony compensation.

Sentence periods for incarcerated criminals and remand suspects and their welfare under the justice system were also not a priority for reform under successive administrations. On the contrary, there was heavy emphasis on the punitive aspect of the prison service and it became a key institution for restraining and punishing political opponents. There is a long history of consistent and rotational incarceration of political prisoners, some of whom were eventually executed at the gallows or by firing squads. Over time, the number of inmates the prisons are capacitated to hold has been substantially exceeded. The central prison for instance has seen its original capacity quintuple over time⁴⁶, causing overcrowding and congestion with the attendant effects of infectious disease contagions, violence, sodomy and the occasional attempts at brazen prison breaks. Officers also remained poorly paid and with generally dismal conditions of service.

The period 1985 up to the outbreak of war in 1991 under Joseph Momoh was similarly characterised by consistent maladministration of the security services, exacerbated by the effects of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) which saw the country's economy brought to its knees, plunging it to the bottom of the UN Human Development Index (Zack-Williams & Riley 1993, Gbla 2002). By the time the war ignited in the East of the country, '[n]ot only was the state ill-prepared to counter a rebellion, it had also made many enemies within its own borders, which

⁴⁶ National Threat Assessment, 2021 – 2023. See Section 5.7 for more details.

could potentially fuel the insurrection’ (Harris, 2012, p.86). The state of the security forces, especially the military which had seen a hasty assemblage and enlistment of shady and undisciplined individuals to stall the rebel advance, meant that they were ill-prepared and underequipped for purpose (Gbla 2002).

A number of other studies, such as anthologies by David Harris (2012) and Joe Alie (1990) also provide varied assessments of the pre-war political history while a significant body of scholarly literature (Keen 2005, Richards 1996, Reno 1995, Reno 2003, Smillie *et al* 2000, Abdullah *ed.* 1998) deliver a number of viewpoints on the causes, motivations, actors, benefactors and victims of the decade-long civil conflict. In all of these studies, there are ample accounts of state misgovernment and its misuse of the security sector.

What progress has been made and what deficits are still inherent in the security sector since the commencement of post-war reform? The following sections present a deep-dive description and evaluation of the evolution of the key sections of the sector.

3.3 Defence

Defence reform in Sierra Leone started with the Kabbah administration requesting ECOWAS, through its peacekeeping force ECOMOG to provide both direct security and reform of the military in 1998 after his restoration to power. The inclination towards a well-reformed military, or no military at all, was proof of mistrust in the institution and the fear of coups in a country with a poor record in that regard. The determination to completely overhaul a renegade and untrusted military was symbolised by the appointment of a Nigerian as head of the army,

Maxwell Khobe, who became the first foreign Chief of Defence Staff in April, 1998. Khobe had little time to mount any meaningful reform as he had cause to lead the army into battle when Freetown was invaded by rebels on 6 January 1999 which ultimately led to his death in 2000. ECOMOG was eventually replaced by an UN peacekeeping mission, UNAMSIL, whose mandate did not include core defence reform aspects. This apparent gap was filled by the United Kingdom when its Defence Advisory Team arrived to start the first phase of the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme (SILSEP) in June, 1999. The target was to establish a new military force with a new Ministry of Defence akin to the UK model, bringing it under civilian control (Horn *et al.* 2008; Kovacs 2014).

The Lomé Peace Accord signed on 7 July 1999 also provided an opportunistic entry point for reforms, for it was its provisions which were aimed at permanently ending the war that set the stage and provided an opportunity for SSR and the peacebuilding process as a whole. Specifically for the military, Article XVII entitled '*Restructuring and Training of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces*' had the following key provisions:

- i. The restructuring, composition and training of the new Sierra Leone armed forces will be carried out by the Government with a view to creating truly national armed forces, bearing loyalty solely to the State of Sierra Leone, and able and willing to perform their constitutional role.
- ii. Those ex-combatants of the RUF/SL, CDF and SLA who wish to be integrated into the new restructured national armed forces may do so provided they meet established criteria.

iii. Recruitment into the armed forces shall reflect the geo-political structure of Sierra Leone within the established strength.⁴⁷

While some of these clauses were highly contested, they paved the way for comprehensive attention to be dedicated to military reform and formed the basis of what was to be a completely transformed service.

The challenge was to transform a shambolic and untrustworthy army into an effective, loyal and dependable one. The British reform efforts which had started in 1999 was officialised by the signing of ten-year MOU between the two governments in 2002 ushering in IMATT which succeeded the initial Defence Advisory Team.

3.3.1 Evolution over time

The personnel strength of the renamed Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) in 2002 was 12,000 after the Military Reintegration Programme which saw the incorporation of 2,091 fighters from various sub-state factions – RUF, CDF and AFRC (Albrecht & Jackson, 2015). As the war had officially ended by this time, it became increasingly necessary to downsize the force to make it more manageable. Therefore, from a bloated rank and file of 17,000 during the war, it was eventually downsized to 8,500.

There was also cause to restructure the military not only to improve management but also to refresh attitudes away from the ignominious reputation which the military had suffered during the war period. A new organogram was developed incorporating a civilian arm to work side-by-side with their military counterparts at MOD symbolised by the joint leadership of the military

⁴⁷ The Lomé Peace Agreement, 7 July 1999.

Chief of Defence Staff and the civilian Director General. It had a Deputy Minister of Defence as political head and was overseen by a Defence Council headed by the President.

A Defence White Paper, developed in October 2003, articulated the national defence posture and the government's aspirations on the use of military resources (examined more closely in Chapter 5). UK reform efforts continued through the technical input of IMATT which provided support through training, mentorship and direct participation by taking up some appointments in the MOD. British presence is now represented by the International Security Advisory Team (ISAT) which commenced its activities in 2013 and has a wider remit covering the whole security sector.

There were a few changes circa 2007 when a new government under the APC's Ernest Koroma took over. This period signalled a new approach to security in that it transitioned from post-war recovery to a more developmental one, articulated in the new national development Agenda for Change (PRSP 2). Key among the defence changes was the removal of the role of Minister of Defence from the President by the appointment of a full-blown Minister. While this enhanced less political manipulation in matters such as recruitment, it also slightly alienated direct contact between IMATT and the President and instead channelled international input through the Minister (Albrecht & Jackson, 2015).

Another strategic move by the new government was an attempt to establish a Ministry of Defence & National Security as this was understood to be one and the same; but this was rebuffed by both the ONS and the UK as it was considered a possible means of politicising the

sector (Le Grys, 2008). General Kellie Conteh, who was the National Security Coordinator by then, explained:

The idea of combining these two [defence and national security] came as a result partly out of the ignorance of his [President Ernest Koroma's] close associates who designed his initial team and partly out of the ambition of those vying for the position at the time. During a few advisory meetings with him, I got him to understand the implications of combining the two. Importantly, I wanted him to consider the issue of keeping the National Security bit directly under his leadership of the National Security Council thereby encouraging inclusive approaches in decision making in such a sensitive area.⁴⁸

This period also marked the return of patrimonial skulduggery to the MoD as it was a period of transition in IMATT's role from a direct supervisory one to an advisory one. As more and more civil servants were appointed on grounds of patronage and political loyalty, dealings in the ministry became permeated by corruption.

The Bio regime which commenced after the April 2018 elections, probably as a means of reminding the rank and file of the military that the President was also commander-in-chief, saw the allocation of the Minister of Defence role to the President but was later restored by the appointment of a full Minister.

Leadership of the military, specifically the Chief of Defence Staff position, has also reflected ethno-political considerations. In the entire post-independence history of Sierra Leone, there have been 21 Chiefs of Defence Staff. Nine of them have been made in the post-war period (about 43%) since the death of Nigerian General Maxwell Khobe, with tenures ranging between 22

⁴⁸ Interview conducted by author on 30 June, 2014.

months (Alfred Nelson-Williams) and 58 months (Edward Sam-Mbomah, who incidentally transited the 2007 regime change).

The Kabbah administration appointed Tom Carew, Edward Sam-Mbomah and Alfred Nelson-Williams, all of whom oversaw most of the core SSR deliverables. While Carew's appointment may have included some compensation from the political leadership following his arrest and torture by the AFRC elements⁴⁹, these appointments were generally devoid of ethnic and partisan bias. Former President Koroma had exhibited a reluctance to make obvious and expected changes when he took over, keeping both SO Williams and John Milton in succession until he changed to a more trusted crony, Brima Sesay who oversaw the military through the 2018 transition. The current CDS, Peter Lavahun, the then Joint Force Commander, rather suddenly replaced his predecessor, Sullay Sesay, following the violent riots of August 10, 2022, when questions arose around loyalty in the army in what the government referred to as an 'insurrection'. This became President Bio's first change of military leadership since he became Head of State. Rather like his predecessor, as if to reassure himself of a loyal military, it was time to appoint someone akin to his ilk after the first few years of his term without any significant changes. 'These frequent changes at the top', as Julius Spencer observes in an interview, 'indicate the possibility of perceptions of distrust and disloyalty by the executive. This is a tactic to keep the military loyal not to the state but to the party in power'.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ The AFRC arrested 15 pro-Kabbah supporters, including Tom Carew, on 6 June 1997, accused of conspiring to overthrow them. See <https://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/amnesty-international-again-calls-human-rights-be-respected>

⁵⁰ Interview held with author in November 2022.

3.3.2 Current status

3.3.2.1 Governance

It is strongly integrated into the National Security Architecture. At the NSCCG, the second highest stratum of the architecture sits both the civilian DG and the CDS, plus other key military officials in charge of intelligence and operations. In addition to the civilian oversight provided through the MoD, it is also overseen by a Defence Council chaired by the President and a Committee on Defence and National Security.

3.3.2.2 Operational capabilities

With a current strength of 7,443, the RSLAF comprises three arms under a joint force command – the army, which carries the largest personnel, the Navy (Maritime Wing) and the Air Wing. On operational capabilities, perspectives are that there have been improvements since reform efforts post-war commenced, although there is a lot still to be desired. On land operations, joint border patrols with the Police are going on routinely even though with much of the funding and logistics coming from the military. Maritime patrols are also done intermittently. Members of the Sierra Leone military are regularly involved in foreign peacekeeping missions, feedback on which has been positive both on the professional and the financial fronts.

One interviewee reckons that while there have been post-war improvements, major challenges remain: ‘As occurred in the early ’90s, a major breakdown in a neighbouring country, possibly more likely to be Guinea than Liberia in the future..., would test the professional ability of the RSLAF to respond to such an incursion once again but I believe they are much better placed to

do so now than 30 years ago... certainly on land if not at sea'.⁵¹ Another assessment adds that most of the funding for the military came from donors during the reform period, the withdrawal of which, around 2005, saw the dwindling of funding support to the military. That is when it started getting difficult to fund major areas of operational capacity and welfare. This has caused a drop in the level of professionalism. Capacity is low to tackle threats that pertain to the mandate of the military; welfare areas such as accommodation are inadequate. 'The military is not currently in place to deploy with appropriate precision; it is not prepared to take on traditional threats according to its mandate. This unpreparedness is due to a long lack of commitment to improve the forces over time'.⁵²

3.3.2.3 Conditions of Service/welfare

Serious challenges also remain in the area of welfare, especially the areas of accommodation and salaries. Initiatives by succeeding administrations have all not been of significant impact. In recent efforts to further reform the institution, the current President has made commitments to increase female intake and improve on accommodation, among other initiatives. The current gender percentage is 87% male and 12.5% female. The last recruitment in October 2022 brought in 29 specialist cadets and 267 specialist recruits.

Initial projects at improving living conditions for soldiers was delivered in 'Operation Pebu', a jointly-funded project (GoSL and UK) which targeted the provision of accommodation by constructing new barracks as well as refurbishing existing ones. Unfortunately, this project failed to make any meaningful difference. In 2014, President Koroma turned the sod for the

⁵¹ Interview with (Rtd) Comdr. Pat O'Byrne, former UK Advisor for the JMC, October 2022.

⁵² Interview with a senior security actor, Oct. 2022.

construction of fifteen accommodation blocks for personnel of the 5th Infantry Brigade headquarters at Gondama, in Bo District. More recent efforts at improving accommodation for officers and men include President Bio's commissioning of accommodation at Gondama, Southern region, for 300 personnel and the Myohaung officers Mess for 150 single officers. Despite these efforts however, the majority of the military is still hosted in civil communities. 'Terms and conditions of service submitted just after the war ended remain unapproved. The 75% salary increase for all ranks has not made much difference because, for example, a private soldier's take home pay is still less than Le1 million [approximately \$50]', observes a senior military officer.⁵³

3.3.2.4 Public Perception

Public perception of the military has been generally better than those on the Police. All 25 interviewees (both local and international) construed the military as having a more professional and disciplined outlook than their police counterparts. The public reserves both fear and respect for soldiers. For example, a former UK Advisor believes that 'while the population of Sierra Leone have a dim view of the average policeman or woman ..., they generally look more favourably upon the soldiers and sailors of the RSLAF'⁵⁴. 'In terms of reform [impact]', says governance expert Andrew Lavalie, 'the military has been rated quite highly while the SLP has been the lowest'⁵⁵. It is this perspective, which also appears to be the impression of political leaders that pre-empts regular directives, sometimes unnecessarily, for the soldiers to get involved in public order management. During the August 10 (2022) riots, it was clear how much respect the rioting

⁵³ Confidential interview with a senior military officer, 3rd February 2023.

⁵⁴ Interview with Pat 'O'Byrne, 2nd September 2022.

⁵⁵ Interview conducted on 31st October 2022.

public manifested for soldiers when they were deployed to quell what had been a bloody confrontation with the police, as evidenced by social media videos. It is obvious that the ignominious reputation which the RSALF carried prior to reform, with frequent coups and failed coups and, especially during the war when there was open collaboration with rebels, precipitating the moniker 'sobel' for soldiers, is now a thing of the past.

3.3.3 The Military and politics

Another challenge that remains with the military is that vestiges of patrimonial politics continue to plague defence reform efforts. In a recent study, Elise Roberts (2020) observes that despite admirable forward strides in reform '[s]till politicization remains a problem. Selection for prestigious posts often requires a vetting process to make sure a candidate is loyal to the party in power'. This point is reinforced by a view from a retired senior army officer:

That particular aspect of politicisation of the army is highly secretive since it [the military] is considered with some sensitivity. But it can be seen that over the years, people are placed in key positions or given certain opportunities based on their level of loyalty to the ruling party. It is something that should be understandable because one [the government] has to ensure loyalty, but to do it at the detriment of others who probably deserve it better, just because of their ethnic background or suspicion of where their loyalties lie, it's not a fair thing.⁵⁶

Further corroborating this point, Julius Spencer, a former Government Minister under the Kabbah administration, opines that the connection between the military and politics has been one in which the former is on the receiving end rather than the other way round as it was before reform. 'The military has so far refrained from direct political involvement such as coups. However, frequent changes at the top indicate the possibility of perceptions of distrust and disloyalty by

⁵⁶ Confidential interview conducted 6th January 2023.

the executive. This is a tactic to keep the military loyal not to the state but to the party in power'.⁵⁷ This apparent clientelisation by political incumbents, as Jimmy Kandeh (2021) notes in another recent study, reduces the possibility of military usurpation of state power, at least by the senior cadre; meaning that coups have been and still remain likely to emanate, though now with reduced probability, from subaltern ranks. However, a military with demotivated factions due to political manipulations remains a source of insecurity in itself even if it never surfaces in outright renegade manoeuvres or other acts of subversion. The factors which Kandeh lists as responsible for coups, such as weak institutions, endemic corruption, politicisation of the military and failure to deliver development, remain latent features of state governance. Distancing politicians from the military which he posits as one of the critical recommendations in preventing military subversion is stressed in a group discussion: 'In the pre-war period, the military had a lot of insincerity in its leadership. The mixture of politicians with the military has paved the way for insincerity to creep into military thinking and discipline. The NPRC for example, got corrupt and mishandled the war due to bad advice from politicians'.⁵⁸ This delink however also remains improbable owing to the very set-up of the governance mechanism itself which, rather than strengthening the fundamental tenet of democratic control of the armed forces, is exploited as a conduit for direct political manipulation.

⁵⁷ Interview with Julius Spencer in Freetown, 9th November 2022.

⁵⁸ Focus group discussion held in Freetown, 10th November 2022.

3.4 Policing & Law Enforcement

The core roles of the police in any state are crime detection and prevention, maintenance of public order and service assistance to the public.⁵⁹ These functions must be carried out in full respect of fundamental human rights and obligations. As the main executors of law, they are the main projection of state authority and reflect how general governance is executed. The functionality and professionalism of police forces are judged by these standards and are particularly germane to states that tend to uphold democratic norms such as respect for the Rule of Law. Yet in fragile contexts, these standards usually are severely challenged.

As Schwartz (2015) explains, many (mostly authoritarian and patrimonial) governments rely on the security forces, mainly the police, to maintain their grip on power. In such situations, state police and the courts that prosecute cases can be highly corrupt and oftentimes severely underfunded. Arbitrary abuse and impunity are propagated where there are deficient accountability rules and norms. Accountability and oversight systems meant to ensure transparency are often considered asymmetrical to the whims of the corrupt ruling elite. Schwartz (2015) further postulates that in such contexts, reform efforts targeting oversight and accountability must be based on three related priorities: establish firm civilian control, build public confidence by upgrading service provision and eliminating impunity, and reducing corruption within the force. These were the aspirations behind the reform of the police in Sierra Leone during and immediately after the war years.

⁵⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Handbook on Police Accountability, Oversight and Integrity (Vienna: UNODC, 2011)

Police reforms started in mid-1998 after the reinstatement of President Kabbah, on his request to the Commonwealth Secretary General. The first technical team engaged was the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force (CPDTF) which operated for two years and served as the forerunner of the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP) which commenced operations in 2000. During this time, on Kabbah's request as well, a retired British Police officer was installed as the first post-war Inspector General of Police. Considering the dysfunctional state of the Sierra Leone Police before then, the task of reform was unenviable. Horn et al (2006) observe that 'undertaking fundamental change in organisations with jaundiced public reputations, steeped in mismanagement, and without the basic tools, policies and procedures needed to do the job is a monumental task' (p.110). Such was the task of transforming an institution, very much like its counterparts in the entire bureaucracy of Sierra Leone, which had suffered the effect of long periods of mismanagement and that of violent conflict.

The reform process was officially enunciated by a Sierra Leone Policing Charter signed between the state and the Commonwealth Commission which was premised on the maxim a 'force for good' with a mission statement emphasising the following: **duty** – aimed at providing professional and effective service in the protection of life and property while taking primacy of internal security; **values** – unbiased service provision that is free of corruption and with regard for fundamental human rights; **priorities** – responsive to local needs; **aim** – regaining the respect and confidence of the public. As it was promulgated during war time, it aimed at providing service along the following lines:

- Eventually remove the need for the deployment of military and para-military forces in villages, communities and city streets
- Ensure the safety and security of all people and their property
- Respect the human rights of all individuals
- Prevent and detect crime by using the most effective methods, which can be made available to them
- Take account of local concerns through community consultation
- At all levels be free from corruption (Gbla, 2007, pp.25-26)

It was important to secure the highest level of support to ensure the political will was present to push reform projects forward, hence the Charter which was signed by the President (Horn *et al*, 2006). Another key challenge was inside acceptance and understanding of the aims of the reform process to counteract resistance to change which became mitigated through sustained internal educational engagements (Horn *et al*, 2006).

3.4.1 Command and Structural Adjustments

Throughout the 2001 – 2006 period, there was continued input into the police reform process, mainly driven by the CCSSP in collaboration with the UN through its UNCIVPOL. Among the key achievements were improvement in relations with the public through the concept of local needs policing – the establishment of Local Police Partnership Boards (LPPBs) served as a forum for such collaboration; rank system reviewed and flattened; recruitment of personnel to cater for wider state presence including targeting more academically qualified people to fill the middle level

cadres, procurement of equipment and vehicles to facilitate proper delivery of duties, and the establishment of an Independent Police Complaints Board which dealt with complaints from the public about police corruption and indiscipline.

Biddle served as IGP until June 2003 when a new Sierra Leonean IGP was appointed. Brima Acha Kamara became IGP when the senior-most police officer by then, Kande Bangura who served as Biddle's deputy, was retired. The succession plan for police leadership was transparent and based on competence. Top officials were made to prove their strengths through presentations to the Police Council and made to brief the President as well as accompany him to state functions. Although this was limited in terms of gender, there was no regard for ethnic affiliations (Albrecht, 2010). This is credited to the liberal governance approach of the Kabbah administration. While Acha Kamara and many of the top officials were retained when the APC's Ernest Koroma took over, appointments of IG has more or less reflected ethnic and/or political loyalty. Acha Kamara was eventually replaced by Francis Munu, another Northerner who was perceived as an APC party loyalist before Richard Moigbe, who though from the East was also reputed to be fiercely loyal to the ruling party. Bio's ascension to the Presidency eventually saw Moigbe replaced by Ambrose Sovula, a Southerner and trusted Bio stalwart. Sovula's apparent misdemeanour surrounding a suspicious imported container led to his replacement by the current IG, William Fayia Sellu, who is believed to be another Bio loyalist. 'In all of these cases it must be noted that those appointed were not necessarily the most qualified', says a retired senior police officer. 'The wider management also saw officers elevated and appointed to important positions; some others

perceived to be opposition sympathisers posted to less important areas while some were retired'.⁶⁰

The rank structure had been reviewed under Biddle from twenty-two to nine strata with concurrent change in rank nomenclature. 'The previous bloated structure had been very inefficient, making oversight and decision-making difficult, distorting roles, and hiding and allowing the promotion of incompetent officers' (Charley & M'Cormack, 2012, p.54). Recently the structure has been re-expanded to 17, restoring some of the ranks that were jettisoned early in the reform process, in order to make room for more frequent promotions, facilitate motivation and prevent boredom.⁶¹

3.4.2 General perspectives on policing: Political oversight & Operational Deficits

The SLP is statutorily supervised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with strategic guidance from a Police Council chaired by the Vice President. It is also an integral agency in the national security architecture coordinated by the ONS. Technically it sits astride both the security and justice sectors and has benefitted from funding support from both realms. As the agency with primacy for internal security, the reform limelight has been heavily on it, while the general public sees it as the face of government authority.

While there has been a substantial improvement on the status of the SLP, various studies and perspectives on SLP reform standards have remained scathingly negative. Godwin & Haenlein for instance submit four cardinal challenges on the SLP which form part of the wider challenge of

⁶⁰ Confidential interview held on 13th January, 2023.

⁶¹ Statement by IG Sovula, in Politico Newspaper of 24 August 2020. <https://www.politicosl.com/articles/sierra-leone-police-review-ranking-structure>

continued reform of the sector: institutional capacity, efficiency undermined by critical deficiencies in personnel – such as basic literacy and leadership training, addressing the potential for politicisation – recruitment and OSD deployments, highly negative public image which brings in questions of its legitimacy (2013).

An unpublished assessment done ahead of the 2012 elections⁶² had the following key observations, among others:

- The SLP's effectiveness to provide basic policing services has declined since the mid-2000s.
- The SLP's current capability to provide policing functions in general, and to police the 2012 elections in particular, is assessed as poor.
- The police remain very poorly paid and allowances have not kept pace with inflation.
- There is general concern that the SLP is becoming increasingly politicised and militarized...There is evidence that political pressure is placed on the police to take unacceptable actions, for example directing arrests or a particular course of action.

While these observations may have been made several years prior to this study, many believe they still hold currency as corroborated by other primary sources in this study. It is noteworthy that around the mid-2000s is when there was transition between the Kabbah and Koroma administrations as well as the period during which funding responsibilities for the security sector was effectively transferred to the Sierra Leone government.

⁶² Sierra Leone Police Review of Capabilities – Adrian HORN, Martin GORDON, Peter ALBRECHT, March 2011

A more recent study notes that reforms done on structures and procedures do not seem to have led to intended outcomes. Perception of the SLP remains as highly corrupt and largely unconnected to the populace it is designed and mandated to serve and protect while oversight from the Ministry of Internal Affairs remains substandard (Roberts 2020, pp.405-407).

Interviews with informed members of society have quite consistently backed up these views of the police. A renowned lawyer shares his perspective: ‘The SLP have not lived up to expectation – ‘orders from above’ have become a cankerworm. The IGs who are appointed by the President believe they owe such appointments to them and work to serve their interests. This has undermined professionalism. Keith Biddle serves as an example of how professional the police should be when they have no strings attached’.⁶³ ‘The Police as it stands is still a far cry from what it should be. For the past two and more decades of my legal practice, the Police has been a tool of politicians. The politicians will dictate who to arrest and detain and for how long, the laws notwithstanding’.⁶⁴ These so-called ‘orders from above’ are delivered through threats of dismissals, demotions or transfers which compels officers into complying with orders which are most times in direct contravention of good policing standards.⁶⁵ The SLP are, says another governance expert, characterised by corruption, lack of professionalism, extortion, high-handedness during public order management. Regime protection is their main mantra rather than citizen protection. Training is also inadequate as exemplified by their performance.⁶⁶

⁶³ Interview with Pa Momo Fofanah, 4th October 2022. Mr. Biddle is reported to have charged to court a very influential member of Parliament in 2001 for assaulting a police officer on duty.

⁶⁴ Same person, in an unpublished monograph titled *Lifting Our Country Up: Sierra Leone Will Rise Again!*, 24 September 2022.

⁶⁵ Focus group discussion, Makeni, 16th November 2022.

⁶⁶ Interview with Valnora Edwin, 25th October 2022.

The SLP currently boasts of a 13,500-personnel strength following recent recruitment of 2000 personnel between late 2022 and early 2023, justified by the government to be for purposes of effectively policing the June 2023 elections. However, most of the recruitment has been retrograde with party loyalists with questionable qualifications and integrity levels being conscripted.⁶⁷ Fundamental policing deficits have remained ingrained causing over-reliance on military assistance for basic law enforcement and public order management. This overreliance is also being caused by allocation of police personnel to protect VIPs and commercial enterprises creating personnel deficits. Armed military presence during ordinary civil situations is creating a semblance of militarisation of governance.⁶⁸ In operations, there is perpetual high-handedness and impunity which seems to suggest a lack of essential training. There are widespread instances of unlawful detention. There is general intolerance to public demonstrations which is considered by governments as unwarranted criticism of their policies. This intolerance is projected through police militant and confrontational attitude to protesters. 'Public order management is far from being professional. Security forces seem to think it is normal for people to be beaten and shot. There is a regularity of high-handedness and disproportionate use of force'.⁶⁹ Relations with the public remain critically compromised due to a dismal public perception.

There was some acknowledgement of progress in the quality of policing. A couple of interviewees for example noted that the police generally have a human-right's approach to policing and seem to attribute policing deficits to political manipulation. 'At individual level, the SLP is creditable in

⁶⁷ Interview with lawyer Augustine Marrah, 17th November 2022.

⁶⁸ Augustine Marrah, same interview.

⁶⁹ Interview with Julius Spencer, a former Minister of Government, 9th November 2022.

that they seem to handle individual complaints and situations professionally; although it is not the same when it comes to confrontations between the government and the people'.⁷⁰

One governance expert opines: 'The SLP have imbibed the human rights culture through training during the reform programmes. Unfortunately, while they may not be oriented to be repressive, political manipulation and structural weaknesses have impaired their professionalism'⁷¹. A more extreme view was that the SLP is no better than how it was in the pre-war years. 'The SLP no better than they were before the war. Extortion is a regular malaise. Their conduct is smearing their reputation. Corruption is deeply embedded in the force. No improvement, even after the post-war reform interventions'.⁷²

Operationally, three key challenges remain perennial. First, logistical challenges such as inadequacy of policing equipment and especially vehicles (and the fuel to run them consistently) remain a key deficit in police operational capacity, making it difficult to police hard to reach areas. There is reliance on Chiefdom Police, the unarmed low-capacity and mostly illiterate units in villages, to complement police efforts in such areas.⁷³ Second, there is inadequate understanding, failure or refusal, even at the highest police cadre, to follow existing operational procedures during response to major incidents despite intermittent practice through national security exercises and study days. 'During emergencies', says a senior security analyst, 'there always seem to be uncertainty and deviation from laid down policy and procedures. There is also a lack of knowledge and a mixture of frequent postings, apathy and other political preferences'.⁷⁴ Third,

⁷⁰ Interview with governance expert Andrew Lavalie in Freetown, 31st October 2022.

⁷¹ Interview with researcher, Charlie Hughes in Bo, 12th November 2022

⁷² Interview with Jimmy Kandeh in Freetown, 9th November 2022.

⁷³ Focus group discussion, Bo, 14th November 2022

⁷⁴ Confidential interview held in 3rd November 2022.

inappropriate mode of deployment in public order management leading to a poor human rights record. There is a plethora of instances in which police engagement with protesters have led to unnecessary injuries, fatalities and destruction of private property (*See Appendix B for a chronology of major incidents*). ‘These actions violate international standards and the police’s own rules of engagement which state that lethal force should only be used as a last resort where it is strictly unavoidable in order to protect life, not for dispersal of a crowd. However, the police seem to use firearms as a standard tool to handle assemblies. Tear gas has also been used by the police in an unnecessary and disproportionate manner’.⁷⁵

3.5 Intelligence & Security

3.5.1 Origins

Before the attack on the capital city of Freetown in 1999, the executive had been made aware of the attack. However, the information was largely unprocessed and failed to influence informed action. Since the information flow was uncoordinated and unassessed, it failed to qualify as intelligence and made it difficult for policy makers to distinguish between useful security information and gossip, reflecting similar deficiencies at the start of the war in the early 1990s (Albrecht 2010, p. 71). This scenario succinctly summarises the state of affairs in the intelligence community during the war; a situation which, in consequence, affected the overall performance of the security sector. The urgent need for intelligence and security reform was clear.

⁷⁵ Amnesty International Report, 2018, p.9 @ <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2018-02/annualreport2017.pdf>

The first move made by then President Kabbah just after his reinstatement to power in 1998 was to put together an intelligence unit, which he called the National Intelligence Unit, populated by a small number of highly trusted individuals and led by a National Security Adviser (NSA). Later in 2000, there was need to create an overarching coordinating office not just for intelligence but for the security sector as a whole. This group comprised only five individuals but was later to develop into an outfit of meticulously selected and tested staff who served up two cardinal functions – intelligence collection and intelligence assessment.

The enactment of the National Security & Central Intelligence Act (2002) which not only established the ONS and CISU but also the national security architecture, created the highest political forum for the consideration of national security matters – the National Security Council. There was need for this council to be supported by a secretariat since it comprised the political leadership which had the wider governance of the state to contend with. As such the ONS became its exclusive secretariat while it also had several sub-committees which the ONS coordinated as an early warning and early response system. This is when the title National Security Adviser was changed to National Security Coordinator (NSCoord) to enunciate the coordinating aspect of the ONS.

The holder of the NSCoord position then, Kellie Conteh, explains the Presidential initiative behind it all: 'President Kabba[h] wanted a more detached coordination outfit which would both coordinate the intelligence services and more generally the overall security sector encompassing more especially the military and police. He had been misled more than a couple of times already

by both official organs of Government and private ones including so called party stalwarts, etc. He was keen to clean this up'.⁷⁶

The post-war reform context made imperative the central coordination of sector activities and operations since agencies had become highly politicised and operated in silos, upward flow of intelligence was raw, uncorroborated and unassessed, creating confusion in decision making rather than providing clear pictures for informed decisions to be taken while also creating room for the oftentimes wrongful suppression of political opponents. This abysmal system needed immediate correction. The creation of the ONS therefore represented the establishment of a forum through which intelligence collected could be channelled, collated and assessed to enable the NSC to take informed decisions on matters of national security. This process creates the opportunity for collaboration among the collecting agencies, intelligence corroboration and the provision of well-balanced assessments.

While in exile in Guinea, then President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah had experienced first-hand what it meant to have a shambolic security system. With renewed hope for development initiatives to take root, government 'embarked on a programme to establish a coordinated security and intelligence architecture with oversight mechanisms. The focus and key principle were: without security, there could be no sustainable development' (Conteh 2010, p.172). The creation of the ONS and CISU emerged out of the Intelligence and Security Service (ISS) reform which, according to Ashington-Picket (2010), became an integral part of the SILSEP but needed to attain a separate identity and strategy from the MOD programme.

⁷⁶ Interview held in July 2014.

The necessity to create a coordinating secretariat went parallel to that of creating an exclusive civilian intelligence outfit to provide accurate and reliable intelligence to advise policy and operations. This was borne out of the urgency of the moment since there had been instances of critical intelligence failure in the past. However, this did not mean input from other more traditional outfits – the SLP’s Special Branch and the RSLAF’s Military Intelligence Branch (MIB), later renamed Forces Intelligence & Security Unit (FISU), was going to be ignored. They all went through their respective reform aspects to raise standards to fit them into the wider intelligence community. While each had its own mandate and operational outlay, they were all required to collaborate as necessary. The ONS therefore became the conduit through which all reports were channelled for collation and assessment.

3.5.2 Evolution over time

What started as a five-man unit circa 2000, housed in the West Wing of State House and funded exclusively by the UK through DFID, eventually blossomed into an admirable outfit whose output was highly appreciated by the executive in the immediate years following. The NASCI Act which was enacted in 2002 saw the separation of the originally twinned functions of intelligence collection and intelligence assessment. Originally with one centralised administration, the two institutions eventually split around 2010 with CISU establishing its own administrative system by becoming autonomous, housed together in new building away from State House while their core functions remained strongly related.

Recruitment into these institutions started and remained of very high standard in the earlier years. Kellie Conteh explained the process:

Our first batch of recruits went through a thorough assessment and scrutiny. The process kicks off with the ONS requesting from credible citizens to talent spot individual Sierra Leoneans fitting key criteria suitable for the outfit. This group of credible citizens were themselves carefully selected from amongst those who have established their mark in society and have maintain a high level of credibility and respectability and would support the high aspiration of such an office as the ONS. On receiving the names, we went through series of screening processes to eliminate weaker candidates mainly focused on intellectual strength and being apolitical and objective in thinking. At the end we select the best available within the limits of the total number to be recruited – usually 12.⁷⁷

As Ann Fitzgerald acknowledges, the intelligence and security reform process has been helped by the ONS recruitment process in which it was mandatory for recruits to have maximum academic qualifications with the ability to undertake further training, with emphasis on analytical and report writing skills. This quality recruitment process has led to the assemblage of intelligent and motivated staff with adequate ability and professionalism to provide support to other agencies which may not be similarly capacitated (Fitzgerald 2004, p.20).

Thus, the years that comprised the rest of the Kabbah administration was a busy but thriving period for ONS during which relations with the executive was cordial and support from DFID was consistent, despite the challenging conditions of service such as relatively low salaries for staff. Oftentimes the ONS saw itself being involved in many activities which was viewed by some institutions and the general public as outside its mandate. This indeed owed to the perceived professionalism and effectiveness of the institution.

⁷⁷ Interview held in July 2014.

The democratic transition in 2007 brought about serious challenges for the ONS and CISU. While both institutions were being run on high professional standards and making good impact in security policy making and operations (as shown in the management of the elections themselves), due mainly to the political cooperation and buy-in by the Kabbah administration under which they had been established, it became clear that the new government had a different understanding (at best) of what the whole security architecture was about, much less the mandate and operations of ONS and CISU. As was observed by Albrecht & Jackson (2015), the technical and professional capability exhibited by ONS and CISU before and after the political transition of 2007 'has not automatically equated to buy-in from the executive' (p.107).

Kellie Conteh again clarifies the situation:

Like most of our compatriots, President Koroma, had very little idea about the ONS; he thought for instance that we number in the hundreds – certainly not as small as he later found out; he thought we could arrest and enforce laws especially in response to his direct orders. His frustration came as a result of the series of compromises he experienced in the hands of the police who severally represented to him a highly corrupted institution with doubtful credibility. He acknowledged the popularity and respectability of the ONS and thought of considering establishing some parts of it to carry out high level police-like investigations, arrests etc, which he felt should be carried out by an institution which he (more or less) believed he had direct control over.⁷⁸

The apparent confusion around this was first exhibited by an announcement by President Koroma of a Ministry of Defence and National Security just after he assumed power perhaps with the understanding that the two issues were one and the same. Conteh eventually succeeded in getting him to understand the implications of such a merger.

⁷⁸ Kellie Conteh, same interview.

While appreciative of the efforts of the ONS and CISU, especially its performance over the course of the elections, the President needed to assure himself that institutions that had been established during the tenure of his predecessor could be trustworthy. He introduced deputy positions to both heads, positions which at that time were non-statutory, and installed two of his trusted ex-police and ex-military officers to occupy them, as if to shadow the activities and directives of the heads.

The struggle to have a credible replacement for Conteh (who was leaving for the UN) as NSCoord took about a couple of years. Conteh had remained apprehensive of the potential to reverse the standards he had set for the institutions by the appointment of an unfit successor. Eventually Conteh was replaced in 2012 by Mustapha Dumbuya, a retired General and perceived party loyalist. CISU was also at this point being headed by a retired Police officer, Christopher John, who was also a perceived party loyalist. From then on, everything became starkly politicised in both institutions.

The beginning of the Bio regime saw the almost immediate reversal of the leadership of the two institutions. Ismail Tarawalli, also a perceived APC party loyalist who as NSCoord oversaw the 2018 electoral transition, was replaced after a few months by a retired General and apparent Bio loyalist John Jah-Tucker. Retired Captain Saio Marrah, also a perceived APC party stalwart, was replaced by Ansumana Idriss. The case of Idriss is however a peculiar one. He had served as Director General of CISU under the APC's Ernest Koroma but got shifted to the ONS as Tarawalli's deputy. It was rather surprising to many when President Bio reinstated him as head of CISU. However, it could be argued that he has been one of the more professional officers who, having been involved since the genesis of the institution, also carries both the institutional memory and

the levels of integrity necessary to run such a service. ONS is currently led by Abdulai Caulker who, like Tarawalli, is another appointed from the professional cadre but is more notably a perceived SLPP and Bio stalwart. So continues the leadership merry-go-round regime after regime with clear Presidential preference for staunch party loyalists who, in most cases appear to be compensated for such undiluted loyalty which stands in direct contravention of institutional codes of conduct.

3.5.3 General perspectives

3.5.3.1 Coordination & Policy Advice

The core function of coordination has been at the heart of the success story for ONS. The national security architecture remains very well coordinated with regular attendance at coordination meetings from the strategic to the lowest command levels. The output of these meetings though is reported to be dwindling in quality. One senior security sector member observes: 'Coordination was more challenging just after the war as compared to now. There was isolation and resistance to change. Eventually there was improved acceptance when institutions started seeing the benefit of collaboration. That remains at a high standard. However, the output quality from the coordination is dropping'.⁷⁹ This has been attributed to intermittent underrepresentation of agency heads as well as latent apathy on the part of attendees. 'The manner in which meetings are conducted also generates unproductive output since there is more of routine adherence to

⁷⁹ Confidential interview held on 3rd November 2022.

agendas rather than intellectual interaction’.⁸⁰ On a broader note, another view picks out the loopholes in the ONS coordination role:

...the ONS is not appropriately empowered or resourced to direct the activities of the security forces on behalf of the government of the day. For example, the highest official in the ONS is titled the National Security Coordinator – empowered to convene and chair high level meetings but not to allocate resources or direct activities. This has complicated cross- security sector activities (like borders and fisheries) because there is no clear lead, or operating budget. Instead, contributing agencies (police, military, etc.) fiercely protect their limited budgets and resources to the detriment of the task.⁸¹

Such lapses are a direct result of the absence of a standing centralised budget for national security operations which has been the call for many years.

Another core function, that of providing assessments derived from early warning reports (intelligence and security information) which forms the basis of policy advice, also appears to be waning in quality and frequency. ‘The quality of assessments and reporting (intel and information) has been dropping due to some reluctance from providers to share their products through the designed process. Choosing rather to share directly with the customer, reflecting what used to happen before the reform process. So there is a direct effect on the quality of the assessments done by the ONS. There is even a deviation from the early warning process in preference for direct briefings for the President’.⁸²

Weekly Presidential Briefs (PBriefs) were introduced in late 2018. It comprises a team of top national security officials including the NSCoord, the IG of Police, the CDS, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the DG of CISU. This was novel in that prior briefings

⁸⁰ Confidential interview with senior security actor, 28th October 2022.

⁸¹ Interview with Martin Travers in UK, 7th October 2022.

⁸² Confidential interview with senior security actor in Freetown, 28th October 2022.

were done in isolation by each head of agency sometimes causing conflict in update details. The Pbriefs however appear to have been prioritised over the traditional early warning system which dictates that intelligence and security information must reach the President in an assessed form and must be processed through input from key stakeholders operating just beneath the level of the NSC to add value to the decision-making process. There is also the risk of inadvertently excluding some security institutions which may also have urgent Presidential policy requirements. As the Chief Fire Officer notes, 'it [Pbrief] is limited only to the primary security forces through the ONS. The preference for PBriefs over the usual NSCs [National Security Council meetings] suggests a circumvention of laid down processes. This crucially leaves out input from other agencies, probably being the reason for neglect or non-prioritisation. There is need for a review of the whole structure'.⁸³

3.5.3.2 Funding and logistical support

Like the rest of the security sector, funding challenges have remained perennial since donor support terminated. Intermittent support has flowed in from UNDP and ISAT but GoSL has carried the brunt since 2012. The result is that every fiscal year, budgets submitted with fierce justifications and significant support from civil society are almost always approved at Parliamentary level but hardly ever fully delivered. 'Quite a good level of response from GoSL', says a senior security sector official. 'A significant percentage of budget proposals is approved every year. The challenge however is what is made available as well as delays in disbursements

⁸³ Focus group discussion held in Freetown on 10 November 2022.

which affect the functionality of the office. This may be due to the prevailing economic situation. Other logistical facilities such as vehicles are hardly provided. The entire fleet and other equipment come from donor funding'.⁸⁴

Both operations and logistics have suffered as a result of inadequate funding. In the past few years, both ONS and CISU have been unable to deliver significant portions of their annual work plans, as reflected in the annual reviews.⁸⁵ The vehicular fleet, ICT equipment and other appliances have mainly come from donor funds, notably the UN Peacebuilding Fund in 2008/9. Replacement of dilapidated items from GoSL funds have been sporadic at best. Only leftover fleet and equipment from concluded public health responses and goodwill from bilateral relationship with other countries have provided a sustainable means of replacement of outworn ones.

3.5.3.3 Intelligence generation

Intelligence generation has also faced its own challenges. The challenge of parallelism has been persistent wherein successive administrations have continued to encourage alternative *ultra vires* information flows from trusted party agents rather than trust the formal system. Due to recruitment of party loyalists over time, both ONS and CISU have found themselves populated by staff polarised along party lines; and while both institutions should operate on the principle of being apolitical, such loyalties have had the tendency to creep into social relations and institutional output as a whole. Especially for CISU, it becomes extremely difficult to allocate case officers to politically sensitive operations. This precipitates instances wherein some officers are

⁸⁴ Confidential interview held on 3rd November 2022.

⁸⁵ Focus group discussion held in Freetown on 10 November 2022.

privity to certain types to cases while others are not. There is also the risk of some officers exposing the cover of others, thereby flouting institutional codes of conduct and risking the lives of colleagues and their families.

Owing to the overall dearth of funds, basic agent running and case management has also remained a key challenge since donor support ended. Approved budgets are not always delivered, causing operational constraints. This in turn affects regular production of reliable and actionable intelligence.

Taking appropriate action on intelligence produced, either for policy or for operations, is another challenge. Intelligence production is only meaningful when it is used to inform sound policy and operational planning. 'There appears to be a delink between intelligence provided and the response accorded to such intelligence', says a senior intelligence officer. 'In the post-war years', he continues, 'intelligence has always been provided for political leaderships but there have been errors in processing, operational planning and response. Most of the key security situations that have happened were detected and reported by the intelligence services. Some of them went wrong as a result of poor response to those reports'.⁸⁶ The grey area referred to in this response is when the process of decision making at political level for those intelligence reports that are rather sudden have not gone through the formal assessment process. Most times, responses directed do not necessarily utilise the right instruments of national power. Even intelligence reports that are assessed do not always have their key judgments adhered to since they are considered in the context of the political interests of regimes.

⁸⁶ Same focus group discussion, November 2022.

3.5.3.4 Politicisation

The biggest challenge for the security and intelligence is systematic politicisation. A senior security sector member puts it bluntly:

For ONS ..., resisting politicisation has been the main battle. The end of the Kabbah administration was the turning point – ONS lost professionalism. More specifically, the end of the tenure of Gen. Kellie Conteh saw a deterioration of standards. Staffing has been exclusively based on political loyalty. Appointment of heads has been based more on partisan political support and less on professional competence.⁸⁷

In order to enhance trust in both institutions, successive administrations have either tended to ignore them or capture them. Since both institutions have exhibited high levels of professionalism, the tendency has been to capture them first by installing party stalwarts as heads, and second by injecting streams of loyalists into the staffing core in turns, sometimes bypassing the established system meant to ensure quality recruitment. The latter has been seismic in impact. Conteh's description above of the early recruitment standards, also extolled by Ann Fitzgerald, appears to be a distant memory judging by current circumstances as assessed here:

Strength in recruitment is waning if you compare the initial recruitment to recent ones. There is interference and circumvention of the actual process to accommodate favourites. Some recruits have come in without going through the actual system. This is seriously affecting institutional output. The staff who benefit from this malaise manifest output that is not befitting of the standard expected of ONS. Reasons are that the reigning political parties simply try to secure jobs for their loyalists with the institutional leadership trying to please political masters.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Same focus group discussion, November 2022.

⁸⁸ Confidential interview held on 3rd November 2022.

In recent years, only the senior cadre can be relied upon for producing output that is worthy of consideration at high level. The lower rungs of staff remain analytically weak due to the diluted standards under which they were recruited. Such a situation cannot be expected to produce a neutral and apolitical institution and is in complete contravention of its vision of ‘providing a transparent apolitical and operationally effective structure, staffed by high calibre individuals of great integrity safeguarding a free, independent and democratic Sierra Leone and the wellbeing of its people’.⁸⁹ ‘The system is expected to resist political manipulation by staff who are expected to be apolitical’, says another security expert. ‘Frequent requests from the customer tend to be prioritised instead of the other way round. There is no clear demarcation between national issues and partisan political issues. Also, the recruitment is based on political loyalties’.⁹⁰

On these dwindling recruitment standards of the institutions, Kellie Conteh ominously predicts: ‘Recruit people out of merit; they will be trainable to do the right thing in time. Recruit people only out of party lines and other sentiments; wait for the ultimate destructions – for that day will surely come to pass’. Asked about the general future of the institutions, he adds:

With the way things are going, it is simply a matter of time until it [ONS] is dragged into the gutter the police found itself before the war and that is again beginning to re-emerge. From the look of things, our politicians have yet a lot to learn to be able to take Sierra Leone forward as a united country aspiring to harness its collective strength for the benefit of its people.⁹¹

⁸⁹ ONS Vision Statement. See <https://ons.gov.sl>

⁹⁰ Confidential interview held on 3rd November 2022.

⁹¹ Interview held in July 2014.

Currently running on core personnel strength of 147 (ONS) and 70 (CISU), both institutions remain relatively small outfits but still carry significant levels of respect from the government bureaucracy and general public at large. However, the alarm bells are ringing on their dwindling output and levels of professionalism and apolitical standards necessary to serve the state and people in an impartial manner.

3.6 Fire Safety

As Ibrahim Bangura (2016) suggests, the SSR process was far from holistic. The main thrust was primarily on immediate needs and identified threats which directed prioritisation towards institutions like the military, the police, ONS and CISU, leaving out other relevant institutions which needed overhauling as well as civil society. Since fire safety was not part of the reform interest, one such institution which had been left derelict was the National Fire Force. With inadequate personnel located in a rather derelict office, the grossly under-equipped institution could not even provide adequate service for the capital, let alone the whole country.

Following some donor interventions, especially during the post-war years, the NFF has been able to improve its service through raised recruitment standards which has brought in more academically competent personnel, and wider service provision with an increased logistics base. 'When I came to this department', says the Chief Fire Officer, 'there was just one station... and just one fire engine. Today, we have fire stations scattered all over in the country. Now, we can have two or three different fire engines responding to a particular fire. Some amount of efficiency

has been established because of what we now have. It is now a different story'.⁹² Fire Stations have now been established in Freetown (4), one of which serves as the training school, one each in Bo, Kenema, Kono, Makeni, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kailahun and Kabala, basically covering the length and breadth of the country. A Fire Safety Bill has also been passed making imperative safety compliance standards for the general public as a preventive measure. While under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it also is subsumed as part of the National Security Architecture with its head as a member of the NSCCG.

Despite these developments however, there is still a huge shortfall in overall capacity, leaving the general public, private and public property and critical national infrastructure highly vulnerable. The Chief Fire Officer laments: 'Capacity is still grossly inadequate, causing big vulnerability for citizens. Only 19 fire engines exist for a country of almost 8 million people. In Freetown, only 10 hydrants are available. There is also inadequate personnel...It is traditional practice by different administrations to treat the Fire Service like a dumping ground for party loyalists without regard for skill levels or academic qualification'.⁹³

There is also the complaint of inadequate budgetary support which, as the CFO notes, continues to suggest governmental neglect. In March 2021, new funding was announced by the government for the NFF to cover rice supplies for staff, furniture and vehicle spares. Reacting to that, the CFO clarified:

You must know that this funding was not just for rice for officers! It was also meant for creating three additional fire stations and purchasing additional fire engines. In fact, we

⁹² Interview done with with *Tie u Orja* magazine @ <https://www.tieuorja.org/interviews/nazir-bongay-chief-fire-officer-sierra-leone>, July 2021.

⁹³ Focus group discussion, October 2022.

are in the far advanced stage of the procurement for these engines and stations. Of course, if you ask me as a professional or as a Chief Fire Officer, I will say that we need more. We need more stations, more equipment, more manpower. But then we must be realistic here. The government has taken some bold steps in giving us more fire engines and commissioning fire stations. So, there is some amount of growth.⁹⁴

3.7 Corrections & Penal System

Prison conditions in Sierra Leone have for a long period been a human rights challenge. Since independence, the Pademba Road Central Prison has been the main holding centre for incarcerated offenders. It is estimated that the rate of overcrowding in correctional centres nationwide as against the actual capacity stands above 100%. There is an estimated 80% overcrowding rate in prisons nationwide – a capacity of 2,495 as against 4,555 inmates. The central prison for instance, originally created to hold 324 prisoners, was holding 1,793 as at October 2021.⁹⁵ This congestion is exacerbated by poor hygiene and malnutrition causing intermittent spread of contagious diseases. The Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission reports that in 2021, ‘conditions were harsh and sometimes life threatening due to food shortages, gross overcrowding, an inefficient justice system, lack of sufficient correctional facilities and personnel, physical abuse, lack of clean water, inadequate sanitary conditions, and a lack of proper medical care in prison facilities.’⁹⁶ ‘In some prisons, cells measuring six by nine feet held nine or more prisoners’, says Ibrahim Sei Kamara in an investigative article.⁹⁷ These conditions are a violation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The main driver

⁹⁴ Interview with *Tie u Orja* magazine, 2021.

⁹⁵ National Threat Assessment, 2021 – 2023.

⁹⁶ Sierra Leone Human Rights report, 2021

⁹⁷ Sierra Leone: Prison Reforms Bring no Relief, August 2016 @ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57bad4794.html>

behind this is the obsolete laws which allocates stiff custodial sentences even for minor offences and long remand periods. Despite several steps taken by government to expedite trials, the population burden on the correctional system remains perennial.

All of these challenges reached to a head on 29th April 2020 when a violent riot broke out at the central prison which, due to police inability to control it, necessitated the intervention of a military squad. It eventually led to 31 fatalities including one prison officer. It also led to the destruction of property estimated to be worth around 20 billion leones (approximately \$950m). Official investigations revealed that among the causes of the riot were overcrowding (about 400%), staff shortage (40% understrength), the outbreak of COVID19 which led to restriction of movement with the centre, suspension of court sittings and the closure of the retail outlet within.⁹⁸

In 2014, the Prisons Act (1960) was repealed by the Sierra Leone Correctional Service Act which changed the service from prisons to correctional one. Among the main objectives was to provide an alternative to incarceration, a move clearly targeting reduction of overcrowding. There is also a consideration to upgrade trade training for inmates as a means of ‘correcting’ their minds and attitudes and prepare them for reintegration into society after serving their sentences. The Act itself, according to Walter Neba Chenwi, a UNDP Rule of Law specialist, ‘did not fully encompass key principles recognized in international and national laws, nor best practices required to transform the SLCS from a prison service to a correctional service’.⁹⁹ However, its targets have

⁹⁸ Sierra Leone Telegraph report, 8 July 2020 @ [Freetown Correctional Centre publishes report into Pademba Road prison riot - Welcome to the Sierra Leone Telegraph](#)

⁹⁹ UNDP project @ [From Prisons to Corrections: Promoting Institutional Reform of the Sierra Leone Correctional Service - South-South Galaxy \(southsouth-galaxy.org\)](#)

been subsumed in strategic plans sponsored and coordinated under the JSDP and ASJP projects as well as the UN Peacebuilding Fund. More recently, a number of prison industries have been implemented in different correctional centres, such as carpentry, bread baking and agriculture with bank accounts opened to deposit earnings for participating inmates.

However, the challenges still remain while the service remains under the governance of the central government. A senior Correctional Officer opines:

The JSDP and ASJP programmes made some difference. However, there is still inadequate manpower, inadequate equipment and there is general neglect of prisoners. The transition from Prisons to Correctional Service was rushed and not well-planned. The correctional aspect has not been enhanced; it is in fact deteriorating. Oversight structures are not as effective as they should be. These deficits are due to lack of funding and political commitment.¹⁰⁰

The SLCS is an integral part of the national security architecture and its head sits at the NSCCG. It is supervised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Its leadership trajectory has also been quite frequently changing regime after regime, manifesting aspects of political loyalty to the ruling party in choice of new heads when substantives retire. In an unprecedented move, government was recently compelled to second a military officer (a Colonel) to serve as deputy head of the service, approved by Parliament, following the violent riot of April 2020. This further suggests another instance of the apparent militarisation of governance which some interview participants have herein referred to.

¹⁰⁰ Focus group discussion, Freetown, 10th November 2022.

3.8 Immigration & Border Management

The Immigration Department is one of the core services embedded in the national security architecture. Supervised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it has traditionally been one of the relatively neglected institutions in terms of comprehensive reform and political will. While it may now also fall under ISAT's purview, international interest in immigration reform in the post-conflict period has also been relatively minimal.

The importance of the role of the service though, especially as it complements the rest of the security sector, has compelled calls for meaningful reform over the years. Once a mainstream civil service institution, it was brought under police supervision and staffing just after independence. A major policy initiative which started in 1998 saw it restored to its civil service status in 2002, with police officers who staffed it given the choice to civilianise and stay as employees or return to normal police service. This move was justified by a 'high number of cases of illegal migration with subsequent rise in associated criminal activity' as well as allegations of corrupt practices around the issuance of passports and visas.¹⁰¹ This did not prove to be a remedy though as the institution became even more corrupt under the police with a series of allegations of illegal international passport deals and other malpractices.¹⁰²

Out of a need to harmonise an incoherent statutory framework, a National Immigration Policy was recommended. Among other key recommendations deserving of being addressed were 'developing a comprehensive structure for both Headquarters and provincial offices, updating

¹⁰¹ Management & Functional Review of the Immigration Department, 2011 @ <https://psru.gov.sl/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/reports/IMMIGRATION%20Dept%20MFR%20Final%202011.pdf>

¹⁰² Focus group discussion, Freetown, 10th November 2022.

the staffing structure, recruitment of middle and senior staff, and effective financial and strategic management practices’, and along these lines instigate an improvement in conditions of service for personnel.¹⁰³

Over the years, the Immigration Department has tended to focus more on the revenue generating function than its role in national security. It is estimated to be the third highest revenue generator for government. The irony of this though is that, like the Fire and Correctional Services, it has been at the worse end of government neglect in terms of budgetary support relative to other security institutions like the police, military, ONS and CISU. More crucially though, intermittent lapses in its operations and handling of national documents under its purview have tended to negatively affect wider national security. While there is an acknowledgment of improvement in Immigration services such as national decentralisation, the poor handling of national documents such as passports and resident permits, is contributing to illegal immigration and residency, some which lead to other related criminal activities which have HIGH impact on national security.¹⁰⁴

In a recent strategic plan, five key strategic targets are listed – development of a national migration policy, improvement in core services, capacity and capability building, improvement of staff and welfare conditions and establishment of a semi-autonomous status.¹⁰⁵ These targets are expected to uplift a struggling service into a more functional one that can contribute to the security of the state. A Migration Policy has indeed now been developed, outlining

¹⁰³ Same discussion

¹⁰⁴ National Threat Assessment 2021 - 2023

¹⁰⁵ Sierra Leone Immigration Department Strategic and Implementation Plan 2021-2025 @ <https://slid.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Strategic-Plan-2020-2024-2.pdf>

comprehensive approaches to immigration challenges. However, logistical challenges, staffing and recruitment issues (there are more volunteers than officially recruited staff) and low salaries for personnel remain the most biting challenges. The borders are largely porous and unmanaged as a result.¹⁰⁶

Leadership at the Immigration Department has not been spared nepotistic appointments following the transition from the Kabbah regime. President Kabbah had appointed as Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) a lady, Gloria Newman-Smart, who had no known ethnic or political links with the Presidency. Her successor after her death was Alice Kamara, who after the 2007 elections was followed by Alpha Kholifa Koroma, a relative of President Koroma, who served throughout Koroma's two presidential terms, making him the longest serving CIO. At the re-entry of the SLPP into governance in 2018, President Bio appointed a southerner and known associate, Andrew Jaiah Kaikai as CIO. His recent replacement, Hon. Alusine Kanneh is also a Southerner and SLPP party stalwart. As with other institutions, the pattern of nepotistic party-based appointments continues.

3.9 Conclusion

This review of core aspects of security and safety reveals the evolution of the security sector as a whole; how its respective agencies have benefitted from reform efforts and how they have been managed over the post-war period. The evidence is clear that there has definitely been progress in the status of these agencies from their pre-war dysfunctional conditions, resulting

¹⁰⁶ Focus group discussion, Makeni, 16th November 2022.

from the SILSEP and other related projects. It can be observed that in the midst of acute political competition between the two main parties, turns in governance following relatively peaceful and successful elections have seen the security sector becoming the most affected by politicisation and nepotistic manipulation since it is the instrument of the expression of power, coercion and dominance. As can be observed in the next chapter, this has to a large extent affected strategic policy approaches, capabilities and resultant operational performance of the sector.

CHAPTER 4: GOVERNANCE OF THE SECURITY SECTOR – INTERPLAY BETWEEN POLICY AND OPERATIONAL OUTPUT

4.1 Introduction

As the reform of individual agencies has continued, the national security architecture that was created out of the necessity for interagency collaboration and sound coordination of activities for effective service delivery and to enhance civilian control and oversight was to be guided and driven by an overarching national security policy and a number of strategies. This was however to be preceded by an evaluation of threats to national security to guide appropriate allocation of state resources to protect the state and its citizens.

Consistent with Kaunert & Ezeokafor's (2022) twist to securitisation theory in the context of Africa's neo-patrimonial statehood, as opposed to democratic political environments envisioned by Buzan & Waever, the rationalisation behind threat formulation process in Sierra Leone

dictates a need for clarification of the identity and role of actor and audience and the relationship between them. This chapter traces how threats have been framed, or securitised, and how they have been addressed in both policy and practice by successive administrations in Sierra Leone over the course of the post-war period. In this way it interrogates the quality of security sector governance approaches that have been in place to support the achievement of development outcomes.

4.2 Policy: Formulation & Implementation

4.2.1 Threat securitisation, policy formulation & implementation

Issues considered as threats to Sierra Leone's national security are stipulated in its biennial National Threat Assessment (NTA)¹⁰⁷. The scope, which is usually designed by security professionals, sets five broad categories – public order and social issues, corruption, organised crime, economic security, health & environmental issues, terrorism & external security. In addition to these traditional security threats to state and communities, a plethora of both direct and structural threats, including kinetic and other social and economic issues like *unemployment/underemployment, undermining educational standards, health care challenges, discrimination faced by vulnerable groups, hoarding of commodities, inflation, sale and consumption of fake or expired food and medicines, lawlessness and indiscipline*, are all securitised and included. This human security conceptualisation of threats accounts for a whole-

¹⁰⁷ The NTA profiles threats posed to Sierra Leone's national security thereby empowering policymakers, state security actors, resource planners and other authorities with the requisite information to take informed decisions in determining security requirements and accordingly allocate adequate finance and logistical resources to deal with the identified threats (ONS).

of-government and whole-of-society approach which explain the broadness of existing structures to include actors from across the public service as well as civil society.

The broad scope of the NTA also suggests that the national security net may have been cast too wide with the inclusion of issues that should otherwise be normal governance issues. This practice of securitising virtually all issues of national concern under the umbrella of threats to national security correctly reflects the widened and deepened understanding of security but also narrows state focus to treating wider governance challenges as security threats.

The designation of these ‘threats’ involves two sets of actors – the professional cadre led by ONS which collates (in consultation with other MDAs) and drafts the compendium, and the political cadre in the form of the National Security Council which, after consultations with the former, provides the endorsement for policy adoption and implementation. What is missing in this arrangement though is the wider citizenry which should form the ‘audience’ to accept the formulation of these threats. The process lacks this wider public consultation, an *actor-audience disconnect*, which as far as securitisation theory is concerned, raises questions of legitimacy and improper prioritisation. However, due to the fact that it is professionals who engage in the brainstorming only for the political leadership to provide an endorsement after being briefed, it can be taken as a given that key issues of human security are comprehensively covered.

The NTA also sets parameters of likelihood and impact of threats which dictate prioritisation and funding allocation. A combination of likelihood and impact deliver a rating range from low to critical, the latter dictating the highest prioritisation for resource allocation.

Despite the apparent lack of actor-audience collaboration, there is general corroboration of threats enlisted in the NTA. Providers and consumers of security at regional level¹⁰⁸ jointly list community threats as follows:

- i. Drug abuse and unemployment leading to regular crime, especially by the youths;
- ii. Industrial strike actions especially in mining areas that get quite violent and aggravate poverty. There is perceived preference for companies by government as well as in police responses over locals' interests. There is also perception of bias the locals.
- iii. Gang robberies that seem to proliferate mostly at the change of police command.
- iv. Regular gender-based/domestic violence making women and girls sometimes live in fear. Delays in investigation of such offences are quite perennial.
- v. Forceful initiation into secret societies for both genders, mostly in the regions, which violates human rights as well as disrupts development work by government and NGOs;
- vi. Lawlessness and indiscipline especially from bike riders who frequently flout the law and, when arrested, tend to be riotous. They also accuse the police of harassment.
- vii. Frequent fire outbreaks; late response due to logistical and access challenges leading to public antagonism.

¹⁰⁸ Summary from all focus group discussions conducted in November 2022.

- viii. Deforestation: disappearing forests mainly due to logging and charcoal harvesting leading to low scale humanitarian disasters and livelihood challenges. Also, construction on wetlands negating agricultural activity and causing flooding.
- ix. Political party confrontations: violence between supporters of the two main political parties.

Specifically in the Northern communities, which is largely a stronghold of the All-Peoples' Congress, the main opposition party, participants reported inter-political party tensions and violence – that people in the region tend to be more loyal to the APC party than the state, precipitating regular clashes with authorities. Participants also reported regular clashes between cattle herders and farmers, some of which have led to injuries and fatalities.

Audience consultation is however sought in another policy formulation process which delivers the Security Sector (SS) Review document. Security sector reviews are necessary (recommended to be done periodically) to identify and assess emerging national security threats and adjust national capacities to deal with them (Fitzgerald, 2004). Two reviews have been undertaken in Sierra Leone – the first which was conducted between 2003 to 2005 targeted post-conflict stabilisation while the second, conducted between 2012 to 2014, had the objectives of first capturing the new wave of security threats, and second to make the architecture much more responsive to these emerging security challenges. A third SS review is proposed to be done, this time covering the positioning of the security sector in promoting the achievement of development targets outlined in the national development policy. In the development of both SS review documents, nationwide consultations were conducted eliciting public perspectives on what constituted threats to them and their communities. In contrast with the top-down approach

adopted in the development of the NTA, the SS reviews take a bottom-top approach in threat prioritisation. The lacuna however lies in the rolling out of implementation process which calls into question the alignment of public views with those of the political leadership and the necessary political will to execute appropriate responses to them.

The tendency to securitise state challenges too broadly to the extent of framing social and political issues in security terms, such as has been done in the SS reviews, is a criticism highlighted by Castaneda (2009) as an approach that centralises security as the main driver of peace and development and therefore the peacebuilding process would not be sustainable. How this has affected security provision and the peacebuilding process as a whole is discussed in Chapter 8. What can be understood from Castaneda though is that viewing virtually every governance challenge as a security threat and framing them as worthy of a security response is an imprudent peacebuilding approach.

4.2.2 Integration of Development in Security Policy

The existing policy framework that enunciates government's posture against national security threats is championed by an overarching National Security Policy which was first drafted in 2013 premised on the details of the first and second Security Sector (SS) reviews. It first lays out national interests and values and then lists threats to them, articulating government's desire to prevent or mitigate them. Sierra Leone's aspiration to establish itself as a resilient state that can withstand existential threats and economic shocks as well as stand as a middle-income economy that can protect and provide for its citizens, highlights a strong acknowledgement of the security-

development nexus. However, the fact that up till the time of writing it remains to be officially endorsed and published suggests a serious lack of political commitment.

In addition to the need to keep pace with the dynamic security threat landscape, the need for consistent SS reviews is further made imperative by the changing development priorities of successive governments. The national security posture must be adjusted to support those development targets. The first SS review was strongly aligned with the first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP1)¹⁰⁹ on the realisation that there was a need to create a stable environment for poverty reduction and other development initiatives to thrive – basically threats to attaining the goals of Vision 2025 which was the strategic roadmap for long-term political and economic progress. The second SS review became aligned to the Agenda for Prosperity (PRSP2) but with a different mindset from that of 2005 – it was no longer a matter of post-conflict stabilisation but a focus on long-term economic development.

The perspectives, analyses and recommendations captured in the SS reviews had to be utilised by an implementation plan. To implement the first SS review, a Security Sector Review Implementation Plan (SSR-IP) was developed and funded by DFID. However, while some of the objectives were implemented, the inability of or non-prioritisation by government to commit resources to complement international funding proved crucial in stalling progress towards implementing the second SS review. This perhaps provides an explanation why the rather long overdue third and fourth reviews remain outstanding despite two more development plans propagated by the last two administrations. So far, despite consistent integration of security and

¹⁰⁹ Pillar One: ‘Good Governance, Peace and Security’.

development policy, the necessary SS reviews which should clarify the security posture have failed to keep pace with changing development priorities.

Development aspirations are also incorporated in the Defence White Paper, which is an integral part of the security policy framework, and has the following policy statement in which there is a strong acknowledgment of the centrality of security in development policy approach:

The nation faces the daunting task of addressing the widespread poverty and socio-economic inequalities resulting from a decade of civil strife and war. The key to resolving this problem rests with the Government's reconstruction and reconciliation programme. But it is important to understand that this cannot be achieved without a robust and reliable basis for security¹¹⁰

The Defence White Paper highlights the military's role in protecting national territory and its people and natural resources as well as contributing to ensuring an enabling environment for development. The Military Aid to Civil Authority (MACA) policy which it references clarifies how the military can support civil authority in various facets of governance, including disaster response and public health emergency management. This is covered in more detail in Section 6.3.2 of this chapter.

Throughout Sierra Leone's security policy framework, there is direct or indirect reference to development as it benefits from effective and accountable security service provision. It appears then that the security-development correlation will remain a permanent policy feature as the state strives to achieve socio-economic resilience.

¹¹⁰ President A. Tejan Kabbah, Foreword of Defence White Paper, 2002.

4.2.3 Integration of Security in Development Policy

Following the declaration of the end of the civil conflict with all hostilities ended, it was time to rebuild local communities and their livelihoods in tandem with the wider statebuilding efforts. Clear recovery, stabilisation and development plans were promptly needed to assuage the throes of the suffering masses. Hence poverty became the prime target as a means of eliminating the causes of the war and ensuring that the country was put on a firm ground for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Guided by the human-security approach, a series of development plans have been in place during the course of the post-conflict period, all of them being domestically reflective of regional and international development goals such as the UN Millennium Development Goals, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) launched by the government and supported by the IMF, provided the generic roadmap for poverty reduction. The PRSP followed the National Recovery Strategy and the Interim PRSP both of which targeted the elimination of the immediate vestiges of the war. The PRSP comprised three pillars, all of which were linked to the Millennium Development Goals, first among which (and understandably so) was promoting good governance, peace and security¹¹¹. Entrenching national security within the broader development agenda was therefore imperative.

The Agenda for Change which was adopted when the Koroma regime took over in 2007 became known as the PRSP2, while carrying different priorities, also had a recognition for security as a

¹¹¹ Pillar One of the PRSP.

key requirement for economic growth. Section 8 acknowledged the threats raised in the SS review and stressed ‘enhancing national security’ as a priority and maintained that ‘the main goal to be achieved...is for the security forces to be able to prevent and respond to external and internal security threats and provide an enabling environment for poverty reduction’.

Koroma’s second term which commenced in 2012 saw the adoption of the Agenda for Prosperity (PRSP3) which was construed as the beginning of the ‘road to middle-income status’ against the strategic backdrop of the Vision 2013-2035. With a strong emphasis on economic growth, it included the need for improvements in the security sector¹¹² by highlighting challenges to specific agencies and committing to strategies that could improve them.

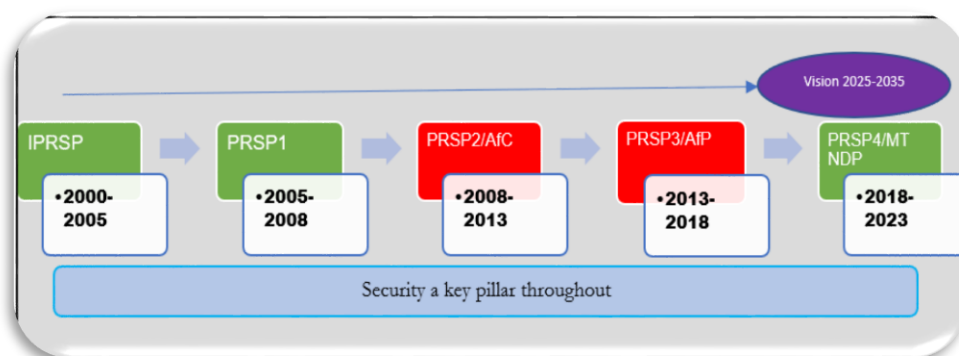


Figure 6 - PRSP timeline

The current development plan, the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023), also known as the PRSP4, was promulgated after the transition of 2018 when the SLPP’s Julius Bio assumed the Presidency. Prioritising human capital development, especially education, there is an acknowledgement of security’s role in supporting the goals therein, with the strategic

¹¹² Pillar 7, Section 3.7.5 - Improved Justice, Safety and Security Sector delivery systems

objective of having ‘a security sector that is effective, efficient, highly apolitical, and professional, one that can contribute significantly to sustainable development and the advancement of democracy and the rule of law, and can ensure a robust response to national threats and emergencies’.¹¹³

The process of integrating security and development policy has not gone without criticism. ‘This innovative approach’, note Garrasi et al, (2009)¹¹⁴ ‘faced several challenges; for example, concerns were voiced by some members of government about a “securitization” of the development agenda, particularly with regard to the high costs envisioned for the security package within the PRSP’.

The majority of interviewees for this study strongly acknowledged the importance of a peaceful, safe, stable and secure environment if development goals are to be met. One particular view was totally doubtful of political commitment to all plans that have been in place: ‘These so-called development plans have been only to manifest compliance with Western criteria without the accompanying political commitment to human development. The current one for example which touts human capital development and FQE [free quality education] is just a propaganda tool. The public sector is largely unproductive’¹¹⁵

There was common agreement that politicians and their advisors seem to acknowledge this fact and is the reason why the two realms have always interacted in policy. However, it was raised that commitment to these policies has been grossly inadequate. Participants also raised the point

¹¹³ MT National Development Plan, Policy Cluster 4.

¹¹⁴ At https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/un_integrated_technical_guidance_notes_on_ssr_1.pdf, p.120.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Oswald Hanciles, 31st October 2022.

that political leaderships are actually failing to see the crucial role security can play in boosting economic growth and promoting poverty reduction, which accounts for its poor governance as well as a tendency to heavily prioritise the development sector for funding support.

On the question of whether we can attribute development failures to poor security sector governance, there was an acknowledgement that it was indeed the case – that if the security sector is not well managed and cannot play its role effectively, then we have an unstable and impoverished state. One submission went thus:

I think there is a direct link. First of all, investors are wary about operating in a country where security is perceived as weak. ...I also think that poor security force coordination in the provision of border and maritime security has a direct impact on the country's achievement of development goals. Food and income are being stolen from Sierra Leone in great quantities.¹¹⁶

Construed as a core security function, tackling corruption was raised as a key challenge: 'In so far as combating corruption is a responsibility of the security sector, I think its failure adequately to (*sic*) address corruption must have affected development outcomes across the board'.¹¹⁷

Participants however observed that other factors should be considered such as the effect of toxic partisan politics. Bad politics based on ethnic patronage systems has been the main impediment to achieving development targets. This has not excluded the politicisation of security sector, making it incapable of ensuring a stable society.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Martin Travers, 7th October 2022.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Andrew Cordery, former UK advisor, 14th August 2022.

One participant though attempts to completely disconnect development failures from the security sector governance and performance and rather blames income inequalities:

I don't believe that the primary cause of this failure is or was due to the performance of the security sector... wealth inequality lies at the root of failure to see the country rise out of developing status.... In developing nations, it [income inequality] sees a large, disenfranchised section of society languish well below the poverty line, with little resource to pull themselves or their families out of it.¹¹⁸

This view however ended with an acknowledgement that while the police may be viewed dimly by the public, a favourable view of the military may help in building a strong sense of national security and confidence for both citizens and outside donors and investors.

An assessment of the success rate of these integrated security-development policies as they align with international development requirements, including the political commitment around them, is done in Chapter 8.

4.2.4 Effectiveness of the Security Sector Governance Mechanism

Sierra Leone's security sector is governed by a statutory state governance mechanism that comprises the National Security Council chaired by the President with a membership of key Ministers and heads of select security agencies. This committee, which is the highest for the consideration of all matters of national security, is designed to meet monthly to consider issues presented through the early warning system for policy deliberation and decision-making. The regularity of these meetings has been varied from administration to administration, but at best it has been woefully intermittent considering the backlog of issues that often need clearance at that level. Most of its work has been undertaken by the committee just below it, the NSCCG,

¹¹⁸ Interview with Pat O'Byrne in UK, 2nd September 2022.

which sits administrative heads of institutions alongside heads of security institutions but lacks the authority to make ultimate decisions on policy matters. The relative dearth of engagements at the highest level, observes a senior security practitioner, is another pointer to the tepid political enthusiasm especially when there are no emergencies.¹¹⁹

The Defence and Police Councils are chaired by the President and Vice President respectively. Ministerial oversight derives from the Ministry of Defence which deals with the RSLAF, Ministry of Internal Affairs which oversees the SLP, Immigration, National Fire Force, the SL Correctional Service and the National Registration Secretariat; and the Office of the President which oversees the ONS and CISU (recently renamed Central Intelligence & Security Agency [CISA]). The ONS serves as the secretariat for the NSC and provides coordination for interagency collaboration at all levels of the national security architecture. All of these committees carry their respective mandates and functions in the spirit of democratic oversight.

Providing checks and balances is the Parliamentary Committee for Defence and National Security comprising a cross-section of MPs. The Constitution makes provision ‘to investigate or inquire into the activities or administration of such Government Ministries or Departments as may be assigned to them and such investigation or inquiry may extend to proposals for legislation’.¹²⁰ The Committee on Defence & National Security is one of the 31 Departmental Oversight Committees in the Sierra Leone Parliament. To ensure that the committee has the right level of expertise, appointees are requested to submit their résumés during the briefings and orientation sessions (Gbla in Bryden *et al* Ed. 2008). Adedeji Ebo (2008) submits that an effective

¹¹⁹ Focus group discussion, Freetown, 10th November 2022.

¹²⁰ Constitution of Sierra Leone, Section 93 (3), subsection (2)

Parliamentary committee on security must have ‘the Trinity of As’ – authority, ability and attitude. While the authority is usually established in national constitutions, it is usually the ability and attitude areas that score low points (pp.10-11). ‘In order to effectively exercise oversight responsibilities’, Ebo recommends, ‘relevant committees (on defence, security, internal affairs, intelligence) require adequate financial, human, and technical capabilities to conduct independent research and investigations’ (p.16). On attitude, Ebo finalises that the crucial element is integrity which, in many West African contexts, is sometimes questionable considering the inclination towards securing the interests the executive rather than the electing public.

Also providing weight for checks and balances is the inclusion of civil society at lower levels to not only include local perspectives, buy-in and interests but also include their participation in security matters that affect them and the state. The NACSI Act (2022) makes provision for co-optation of members of the public at different levels of state security (NSCCG, PROSECs, DISECs and CHISECs) according to issues on the agenda of meetings. Civil society organisations also play their part in holding the sector to account for instances of unprofessionalism and human rights abuse, although its effectiveness has been questioned. Ball and Fayemi (2004) distinguish between two types of accountability for the security sector – direct and indirect – with civil society providing a platform for the latter, comprising groups such as the media, human rights organisations, non-governmental bodies and community organisations. The myriad of such groups in Sierra Leone has played and continue to play a competent role in setting and executing accountability standards for the security sector. Perspectives from some enlightened citizens however remain retrograde: ‘As guarantors of good governance in general civil society voice is

loud but its influence remains weak, captured by both the government and the donors who sponsor them', says Jimmy Kandeh.¹²¹

The national security architecture outlines the interconnected strata of the sector from the highest (national) to the lowest (chiefdom) levels and is guided by the Standard Response Guidelines which provides a generic guidance for response operations and the decision-making process during normal and emergency times.

The overall sector governance and coordinating system, as it exists in law and in policy, is designed to improve sector effectiveness and accountability within the context of democratic standards. However, feedback from interviewees reveals a stark demarcation between policy and practice and manifests a strong awareness of deficits among both sector practitioners and observers in the wider citizenry.

At a national level focus group discussion¹²², participants generally agreed that the post-conflict security architecture has manifested a lot of improvement from its corrupt, dysfunctional and politicised pre-war and war period state. Participants noted that the security architecture is well-designed in a way that can ensure checks and balances and enhanced civilian control and coordination. The reform process ensured oversight mechanisms were established and accountability enhanced in addition to individual agency rebranding. SSR allowed the state to take stock of national interests. 90% of threats were human security related.

¹²¹ Interview held in Freetown, 9th November 2022.

¹²² Focus group comprising senior security sector actors, held in Freetown on 10th November 2022.

However, there is still a lot to be desired. While the initial post-war years saw impressive reform effects, there has been a downward trend in standards and performance, mainly due to the withdrawal of donor support and direct/indirect involvement of foreign experts in service delivery, but also attributable to some adherence to the old pre-war tactics by political parties to dominate the political space. Successive governments have failed to manifest the desired commitment to sustain gains made and instead have steadily reversed those gains by systematically re-politicising the sector. Other individual interviewees (both security sector practitioners and independent thinkers) strongly highlighted a regime protection approach wherein the sector is deemed up to its task only when it can defend the interests of the regime in power instead of (and sometimes against) that of citizens.

The governance structures are considered ineffective. The Executive is allowed to capture the sector due to the corrupt, unknowledgeable and decrepit nature of the Parliament and the systematic co-optation of the Judiciary. 'The [Parliamentary] Oversight Committee', observes one senior security actor, 'has been very ineffective in discharging its functions. You only interface with them when it's time for budget hearing in which you're mandated to make "brown envelopes" [cash donations] for all the committee members. Also, when it's time to present Acts or other documents for repeal or amendment which hover around security...most time members actually go around institutions under their purview requesting fuel and making cash demands'.

The Defence and Police Councils are appropriate in structure and mandate but are populated by the Presidency and party stalwarts who only seek the interest of their political parties. Accountability gaps (causing underperformance) and oversight gaps also exist caused by

corruption and inadequate knowledge on the part of both the Government and CSOs. One interviewee observes the weaknesses in the governance system:

For the Parliamentary Committee, there are deficits in both understanding and interest in how the sector works as well as how to use their authority to address problems. The Police and Defence Councils, being headed by the top two political figures, lack the impartiality that should go with their roles. It is advisable to divorce the security sector from political structures, although our system is not yet mature for that.¹²³

Another participant questions the very membership of these oversight committees:

The question is: who constitutes these oversight bodies. How much interest is there? Very little. Police and Defence Councils are good arrangements but those who constitute these bodies misuse their privileges. These deficits have direct effect on sector performance.¹²⁴

In the policy space, participants observed, there are still crucial gaps exemplified by the absence of a national security policy (NSP) which makes the sector very reactive. The Defence White Paper was drafted to fill the gap created by the absence of an NSP but even that one is now outdated.

4.3 Operations: Failures, Successes and their Effect on Development

State responsibility under the social contract involves protecting the territory, its resources, its government (including state infrastructure) and its citizenry (including lives and livelihoods of local communities). This responsibility is executed through the instruments of national power, the most important of which is the security sector. Failure to protect the aforementioned could directly or indirectly affect peace, state economic development and human security – a requirement which puts significant emphasis on proper governance of the security sector to

¹²³ Confidential with senior security sector actor, in Freetown, 3rd November 2022

¹²⁴ Confidential with another senior security sector actor in Freetown, 3rd November 2022

enhance its effectiveness. *(See Table 1 for a summary of the effects of policy and operational deficits on human security and development in Sierra Leone's recent history).*

4.3.1 Managing democratic transitions (elections)

Securing elections at all levels in Sierra Leone, from Presidential to Ward level, has traditionally been challenging for the security sector due mainly to the highly contested political space compounded by state co-optation of security forces. This section draws on the capability deficiencies highlighted in Chapter 4.

In 2002, the elections were pretty much a referendum on the toppled and restored Kabbah government and was less contested due to the poor state of the rival political parties at that stage (Kandeh, 2003). It was overseen by UNAMSIL since our security agencies were just being brought under complete transformation. Providing security around elections by state security forces started after the withdrawal of UNAMSIL in 2005. The precarity of the security situation in the run-up, during and after the 2007 elections, keenly contested between the traditional political party heavyweights – SLPP and APC – but also involving the strongly emerging Peoples' Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) meant that public order and state security at large were going to pose a serious test for the reformed security sector. So has been the succeeding elections since then – 2012, which saw the APC retain power and 2018, which saw a return to power by the SLPP. All of these events have bordered on the brink of a breakdown of law and order due to the high level of political intolerance generated by the ethno-regional political messaging during campaigns. 'Previous elections in the country have always been marred by violence and intimidation perpetrated by even some of our security personnel', observes Francis

Keili, Chief of Staff of the ONS.¹²⁵ What has been the posture of the security sector around these sensitive and keen contests?



Figure 7 - Armed soldier around polling station in 2018 (Source: 'Five Things to Consider in Sierra Leone's House of Cards', DIIS Policy Brief, March 2018)

The Office of National Security leads an interagency Integrated Elections Security Planning Committee (IESPC) which develops an Elections Security Strategy around each general election, trains security personnel on the existing Standard Response Guidelines as they apply to election management utilising simulated scenarios. In the past there have been full-blown national security exercises to test interagency operational collaboration and command and control systems. Lessons identified and learnt in these exercises have revealed very little to be desired, manifesting an appreciable level of awareness and competence in the security rank and file.

¹²⁵ Statement made during the training of security personnel on elections security, 2 March 2023. Francis Keili is also the Chairman of the IESPC in Sierra Leone.

The general posture has been that the SLP, having primacy over internal security, fully deploys across the country, complemented by members of other forces – the Fire Service, the Correctional Service and Chiefdom Police. The military is usually on standby in specific locations and on call under an invocation of emergency MACP (further discussed in Section 6.3.2 of this chapter). A national situation room is stood up at the ONS and populated by a cross-agency team to monitor incident reports around the country and direct such reports to the operations centre.¹²⁶

However, the actual situations do not always reflect lessons learnt either from previous experiences or from trainings undertaken prior to these events. Carrying the primary onus of the task, the usually SLP comes under particular focus. In a 2011 assessment in the run-up to the 2012 elections, the SLP's ability to provide basic policing services, not least the mammoth task of policing the 2012 elections, was assessed as poor.¹²⁷ Peter Albrecht, in a policy brief ahead of the 2018 elections, noted that the role of the police on polling day was considered by the opposition SLPP as 'the most significant threat to a free, fair and transparent election and by extension threat to national security' (p.2).¹²⁸

Without full trust in Police capacity and perhaps to add an element of intimidation against the opposition, there has been a tendency by political parties to engage the services of ex-combatants and party thugs, and by government to openly deploy armed soldiers around polling

¹²⁶ This is a summary of the arrangements stipulated in the Elections Security Strategy.

¹²⁷ Horn, Gordon, and Albrecht, Sierra Leone Police Review of Capabilities, 6 @ [2011_SLP_Review_report_.pdf \(diiis.dk\)](https://pure.diiis.dk/ws/files/1394190/Sierra_Leone_Police_Review_of_Capabilities.pdf)

¹²⁸ Quoting Julius Maada Bio, the then opposition candidate, in 'Five Things to Consider in Sierra Leone's House of Cards'. DIIS Policy Brief – March 2018 @ https://pure.diiis.dk/ws/files/1394190/Sierra_Leone_House_of_Cards.pdf

stations, justified by the excuse of complementing police numbers and helping to maintain order. The incorporation of ex-combatants, which became noticeable ahead of the 2007 elections¹²⁹, has compounded the task of securing elections for the security forces. This explanation remains true now as it was then and has been for most of Sierra Leone's post-conflict political history:

The police is technically able to organize peaceful elections, but there are concerns about their political neutrality. Politicization of state institutions, including the police, has been considerable during Koroma's tenure. No candidate in post-conflict Sierra Leone has fully trusted the formal security forces, especially during the elections. This has meant that politicians have remobilized ex-combatants from the war and other marginalized youth into their campaigns for security.¹³⁰

Discussants in general expressed apprehension about the ability of the security sector to manage the 2023 elections since it would be more keenly contested than ever before. With political violence being raised as a key threat at community level, it becomes even more volatile around partisan electoral activities.¹³¹ A retired police officer predicts:

Unfortunately, the Police, despite recent recruitment to get more coverage, still falls short of being at the level required. Apart from physical presence, responding adequately and impartially to incidents will be questionable. We don't know how the army will behave. We expect more from them, but you never know what directives they may be given by the political masters. Neutrality of the security forces in these situations is always a problem.¹³²

In the June 2023 elections, the security sector, while it claimed success in provision of a secure environment for the elections, provision of adequate security for all ECSL facilities, key personnel

¹²⁹ ONS integrated security updates, 2007.

¹³⁰ Same source.

¹³¹ Focus group discussion, Freetown, 10th November 2022.

¹³² Virtual interview held on 13th January 2023.

and sensitive materials, prompt response to emerging public order issues, and robust response to social media abuse to counter misinformation and disinformation; also, quite contradictorily, admitted failing to effectively link with Situation Rooms that signed MOUs with the IESPC, failing to effectively prevent and respond to political violence, and failing to control social and political threats generated from public social media misuse. Recommendations also reveal further deficits such as late delivery of operational orders at command level, late and inadequate resources for the forces, and inadequate sensitisation of the public on the joint deployment of police, military and other security agencies in elections management.¹³³

There was a strong emphasis on the link between the National Situation Room and the IESPC since the latter is the information hub of the early warning system and its outputs being fundamental to operational planning. ‘The close collaboration between the IESPC and the NSR is key in responding to national security threats and addressing violence before, during and after the elections’, emphasised the National Security Coordinator.¹³⁴ This link was however crucially unobservable, probably deliberately obscured for unexplained reasons, as evidenced by the post-elections report referenced above.

In general, though the elections were considered generally free and safe, the pre-election predictions of fair and transparent service delivery and underperformance in public order control by the security sector were all quite manifest.

¹³³ IESPC Post-Elections Report, 2023

¹³⁴ Statement made while addressing members of the National Situation Room in the run up to the elections @ <https://www.undp.org/sierra-leone/announcements/office-national-security-activates-two-election-security-secretariats-sierra-leones-general-elections>

4.3.2 Managing Pandemics and Natural Disasters

The role of the security services in emergency response to natural and manmade disasters in support of other government departments in rescue, response and recovery exercises is traditionally and statutorily recognised. However military support to public health responses is relatively recent following responses to public health emergencies, especially Ebola and COVID19. A 2020 WHO conference saw the adoption of an ‘all-hazards, multisectoral, coordinated approach to preparedness for health emergencies’ which called for the institutionalisation of such collaborative efforts ¹³⁵.

Sierra Leone has a Military Aid to Civil Authority (MACA) policy in place that mainstreams the use of military resources in support of civil power, other government departments as well as local communities. These interventions are classified into standing and emergency tasks, all of which must receive ministerial clearance. Military incorporation into recent major emergency responses – Ebola in 2014/15 and COVID19 in 2020/21 and the flooding and mudslide of August 2017 that came in-between – have all been premised on Military Aid to other Government Departments (MAGD), one of the strands of the MACA policy. The Standard Response Guidelines of the national security architecture, which roles out this policy, is well constituted to facilitate an interagency and multi-sectoral approach to emergency response wherein there is room for incorporation of the relevant agency which will provide technical lead while the ONS coordinates the input of other agencies in support.

¹³⁵ National civil–military health collaboration framework for strengthening health emergency preparedness. @ <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/343571/9789240030343-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

With this structural background, how then did the security sector fail to position itself to protect the state from the outbreak of both the Ebola disease and the COVID19? When it was indeed stood up and utilised, how did it so poorly manage the flooding and mudslide events that interspersed the two disease outbreaks?

4.3.2.1 Ebola Response

At the onset of the disease outbreak, with the infection of ‘patient zero’ in the Guéckédou Prefecture of the Nzérékoré Region, in southern Guinea, the early warning system kicked into gear, raising the alarm that it could quickly become an epidemic due to general public ignorance of measures that could prevent its spread.¹³⁶ Initial engagements at Presidential level revealed the shallow understanding of the government that it was exclusively an issue for the Ministry of Health, due mainly to the inadequate knowledge on the national security architecture through which such responses were to be coordinated and delivered.¹³⁷ Also, the ONS failed to present itself as the agency responsible for disaster management and the coordinator of emergency responses such as that of public health. A former UK Advisor to the ONS explains that ‘the ONS and the national government had been unable to take charge of the response to the Ebola outbreak initially for a number of reasons including the scale of the outbreak, poor preparedness,

¹³⁶ An ONS assessment was done on the contagious nature of the disease and the general unpreparedness of the country to handle a major public health emergency.

¹³⁷ The architecture is stratified into national (National Joint Operations Centre) and regional and district arrangements (PROSECs/Incident Command Centres; DISECs/Forward Control Points) through which reports are generated and sent upwards and operational directives given downwards. All relevant actors, including local authorities, intelligence (surveillance) officers, military deployments, are included, rallied to support a lead agency according to the emergency being dealt with.

a lack of resources and a lack of understanding, mirrored internationally, about how the virus may take hold and spread'.¹³⁸

Another scathing view explains:

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation attempted to deal with the crisis as if it was the sole deliverer of emergency response and predictably failed. That is not to say there was an agency in Sierra Leone in 2014 that was fit for purpose in this regard. The ONS, which had a[n] emergency response department, was woefully undermanned, [under]resourced and [in]experienced to respond to such a challenging and unforeseen crisis. I saw first-hand how the early response failed and how we slowly developed meaningful structures to reverse the spread of the virus.¹³⁹

A more vexed perspective further highlights the reasons behind the missed opportunity for the existing structures to be utilised to prevent the epidemic:

The current [2014] Ebola crisis presented a challenge which ONS woefully failed to address timely as evidenced in the sloppy way it is being handled. Even while it was only in Guinea, there were already calls for our security system to kick in. Nothing was done; because the whole issue was being politicized – both by the opposition and by the ruling Government. Whilst that was going on, the outfit meant to kick off early warning mechanisms was deeply asleep. The ONS was nowhere! Whoever said such an epidemic is simply a Ministry of Health issue alone? But that was how it was seen by the powers that be back home. Where was the ONS? Sleeping with very short-sighted leadership shirking away and kind of decision (*sic*) for exactly what it is being paid. What a shame!¹⁴⁰

With the outbreak rapidly approaching crisis levels five months later, with the failure to position existing capabilities to control the outbreak, a new structure was established called the National Ebola Response Centre/NERC, chaired by the President but with the Minister of Defence having

¹³⁸ Interview with John Collicutt, UK, 11th August 2022

¹³⁹ Interview with (Rtd) Cmdr. Pat O'Byrne in UK, 2nd September 2022.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with General Kellie Conteh, July 2014.

direct operational control as CEO at national level. District level structures were also created (called District Ebola Response Centres/DERCs) to serve as command-and-control hubs in all districts (Ross *et al*, 2017). With the Ministry of Health serving as the technical pivot, there was a strong incorporation of the army and the police to support with manpower and logistics and to enforce quarantines, as well as the creation of disease surveillance systems and a national situation room. It took this establishment, staffed by a wide range of local and international experts and supported by a legion of international agencies and a budget of almost \$1bn spanning across two years to eventually bring the epidemic under control.

Incidentally, the entire NERC/DERC structure almost exactly mirrored the national security architecture which had already been in place. Little wonder that, as the awareness of the national security architecture eventually became more understood, including the role of the ONS, a significant part of the response capability created during this time had to be transferred to the ONS after the NERC and DERCS were decommissioned.

The mistrust in the ONS's ability to coordinate public health response which had emanated was not enough to change the existing mechanism at the time. In a submission done by a development expert, the point was made that there is increased realisation that security is central to public health, but suggested 'a review of the Sierra Leone Security system with a view to re-positioning it in the context of the current epidemic, national recovery, and building resilience for future outbreaks and sustainable development'.¹⁴¹ According to John Collicutt 'there was a

¹⁴¹ Presentation done by Dr. Sheka Bangura at a National Security Conference convened by the ONS, March 2015.

common belief among internationals that the response organisation should be completely changed, which may have been a good long-term outcome, but required a change of national law which was not going to happen at that time’.¹⁴² In consequence, a new National Public Health Agency has been created by an Act of Parliament but without stipulated SOPs, it remains unclear how it links in with the rest of the security sector as a means of collaboration in times of public health emergencies.

4.3.2.2 Flooding and Mudslide Response

The response organisations remained the same when torrential rains caused serious flooding and a devastating mudslide in Freetown in August 2017, killing several thousands of people. Once again it was time to stand the system up to ensure proper use of resources, provided by both the state and the international community, to provide humanitarian assistance for survivors. The APC government was still in power and lessons had been learnt from other disasters about how the disaster response system is set up and should be utilised. The necessary protocols of standing up emergency committees and response pillars were immediately followed, with GOLD (national level) and BRONZE (field operations) commands established interacting through the National Situation Room. The initial critical omission of a silver command level which should provide direct supervision over field operations was proof that the security sector was still struggling to implement what existed on paper.

¹⁴² Interview with John Collicutt in UK, 11th August, 2022.

The biggest challenge though was the highly politicised nature of the response which created serious challenges for the security architecture to roll out an effective response exercise. First, there was a critical disconnect between what the security professionals and crucially the international partners considered prudent and the preferences of the political leaders. Briefings between GOLD command, chaired by the ONS, and the Presidential committee were far from fluid as feedback to the GOLD from those briefings sometimes caused irritation, frustration and confusion among members.

Second, the registration of survivors, a key aspect of the response, was fraught with fraud and nepotistic manipulations as the inclusion a significant number of non-eligible people kept the list bloated and unrealistic, causing frustration for funders and planners and slowing down the exercise for weeks. Temporary camp sites had to be closed down at a relatively early time with no interim shelter plan ahead of the proposed new community that was to be constructed at Mile 6, just outside the capital city.

Third, as funds flowed in from international agencies and sympathetic states, the management of the funds became of serious interest to the general public as suspicions arose of pilfering and embezzlement by the government. The poor management of the response meant that there were times when funds were available but decision-making on areas to spend it on were unclear.

‘The response in the end’, laments one development expert who played a key role in the response, ‘exposed weaknesses in the disaster management system. ONS has a lot of

coordinating power, but it is important that agencies that are being coordinated show sincerity and honesty to fully cooperate with laid down procedures. If we can't manage a simple survivors' list, then we still have some way to go'.¹⁴³

4.3.2.3 COVID19 Response

By the time COVID19 broke out in Sierra Leone in 2020, the new government had been in place for a couple of years; a period during which the ONS had managed to conduct some study days to improve understanding of the national security architecture and the Standard Response Guidelines. However, there was need once again for the political leadership to be made to understand how it would be utilised to respond to this new public health emergency, which the ONS leadership at the time failed to articulate once again. In a rush to mount an immediate robust response and with the ONS missing the opportunity to lead from the front, the President resorted to summoning some of the actors who had been involved with the NERC during the Ebola outbreak.

The emerging architecture, which later became known as the National COVID19 Response Centre (NaCOVERC), mirrored the NERC one with a strategic layer operating at national level headed by the Minister of Defence who served as Coordinator, and comprising a technical team of strategic analysts and medical experts, a national situation room and several pillars. District level DiCOVERCs were also created to decentralise the exercise. Once again there was a strong integration of the army to provide support for logistics and enforce quarantines and public compliance with prevention regulations. This move precipitated questions from some members

¹⁴³ Interview held in October 2022.

of the general public who believed the response was part of the general tendency by government to unnecessarily securitise issues meant for other branches of governance.¹⁴⁴ This was however indemnified by invocation of the Military Aid to other Government Departments (MAGD) strand of the MACA policy.¹⁴⁵

As a spill-over effect of these deficits a new National Disaster Management Agency has been established, supported by an Act of Parliament, taking away the coordination responsibility from the ONS. With the creation of this new agency, what remains unclear however is the status of coordinating procedures that were refined after Ebola mainstreaming the full utilisation of the national security architecture.

4.3.3 Managing public order

Public order management falls primarily under the statutory purview of the SLP. Since the start of police reform in Sierra Leone, good policing standards established in Peelian policing principles since 1829 (*see Figure 9*), based on a philosophy that the power of the police comes not from the power of the state but from the common consent of the public, have been included in training programmes. Over the post-war reform period, they have been re-orientated and trained to handle public protests in a professional manner respectful of fundamental human rights. Processes and procedures have been established and several national security exercises executed to refresh on knowledge and sharpen response command and control and tactics. Yet such interventions have tended not to prove beneficial through the passage of time, resulting mainly from, on the one hand, deficits in operational logistics, integrity and professional

¹⁴⁴ Focus group discussion, November 2022.

¹⁴⁵ This is covered under the Strategic Policy Environment of the COVID19 Strategic Response Plan.

standards, and directives from the political leadership on the other. These issues are dealt with in Chapter 5.

Key to understanding these deficits is first, the use of intelligence. There is quite a consistent flow of intelligence and security information from the early warning system which informs policy and operational planning. Most intelligence generated are promptly assessed and forwarded to the police for timely execution. However, many of these pieces of intelligence have been botched over the years, mainly due to the lethargy or questionable integrity of the officer commanding the operation. 'We send most of the urgent intelligence we generate to the police for action', says a senior intelligence officer. 'Sometimes it's important info on organised crime, sometimes it's about sabotage and the like; we don't always get the results we want. We either go in too late or the commander may request more corroboration by his own people when in fact the intelligence is complete and time-bound. Maybe there is still room for trust-building, but it's a challenge'.¹⁴⁶

The second challenge is on the use of force, especially as it relates to inclusion of military support (MACP). All too often, public protests and demonstrations in Sierra Leone have either been disallowed by the police or, when they do take place, ended in fatalities, injuries or destruction of public and private property. The armed wing of the police, the Operational Support Division (OSD) comprises the Police Support Group, the Static Protection Group and the Armed Response Group. This wing is usually deployed, with available riot control gear, when the need for public order management arises. Over the years, due to continuous politicisation, surrogates of

¹⁴⁶ Focus group discussion, Freetown, 9th November 2022.

successive political parties have populated the rank and file in turns, culminating in a delicate mix of cross-party loyalty but also comprising a half-baked, trigger-happy group of low-integrity citizens who have a general tendency to deviate from established policing standards and procedures (*See evidence of law enforcement failures in Appendix B*).

Summary of Peelian Principles of Policing:

- *To prevent crime and disorder as an alternative to their repression by military force*
- *To recognise that police power is dependent upon public approval of their behaviour*
- *To recognise that obtain the respect of the public requires securing co-operation*
- *To recognise the extent to which public co-operation diminishes when physical force is resorted to*
- *To seek public favour, not by pandering to public opinion but demonstrating impartial service*
- *To only use physical force when persuasion, advice and warning is insufficient to restore order, and to only use the minimum degree of physical force necessary*
- *To maintain a relationship with the public that maintains tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police*
- *To recognize the need for strict adherence to police-executive functions, and to refrain from overstepping powers of judiciary or avenging individuals*
- *To recognise that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and*

Figure 8 - Principles of Modern Policing (Source: UNPOL)

The MACP policy advocates the use of military force to support police only when police resources have been overstretched beyond the capacity needed to manage a particular situation. However, the poor track record of police public order responses has precipitated a tendency by the government to rely on summoning the military, sometimes in flout of existing procedure, to provide support even for the most basic of operations. Police commanders on the ground have

also developed the habit of calling their military counterparts for their intervention outside due protocol and without first exhausting resources under their command¹⁴⁷.

Martin Travers observes: ‘The protocols for using military forces in support of civilian authorities are not fully understood by the political class, and potentially the security forces themselves. The danger is that without clear MACA protocols (and ROE), there is a danger that military power can be abused by politicians, or armed force is used when it is not required or justified’.¹⁴⁸ The explanation behind this is that, as Elise Roberts (2020) puts it, ‘the higher capacity of the military has contributed to a tendency among government officials to call on it for assistance in domestic affairs that should be handled by the police’ and ‘the military’s efficient and professional response to these issues has exacerbated the problem, contributing to public perceptions that it is more trustworthy than the police’.

4.3.4 Securing state resources (maritime and land)

The security sector also carries the traditional responsibility to protect the natural resources of the state. The most exploited land resources in Sierra Leone are marine resources (especially fish stock), timber and diamonds. To protect these resources and ensure they are harnessed for state economic and environmental security as well as local food security and other local uses, there is a requirement for relevant policies and regulations and the concomitant operational capability to enforce them. What has been the track record of this in post-war Sierra Leone?

¹⁴⁷ This was evident in all regional focus group discussions.

¹⁴⁸ Interview held in UK on 7th October December 2022.

4.3.4.1 Protecting marine resources

Between 103,000 and 127,000 tons, that is more than 26% of Sierra Leone's total fish catch per year, is estimated to be illegal catch, amounting to estimated \$50,000,000 annually being lost to Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing.¹⁴⁹ The most frequent committers are Chinese and Korean flagged vessels who also indulge in overfishing in coastal zones mainly at night when security agencies (the Maritime Wing and SLP) responsible for policing these zones were at very limited operational capability to do so. It is obvious that this is depriving an aid-dependent crippling economy of badly-needed revenue.

A more direct effect of overfishing is on communities which depend on fishing for their overall livelihood. It is reported that some households in communities such as Tombo, are struggling to have a meal a day especially due to Chinese overfishing in their coastal zones.¹⁵⁰

A more generic effect of these fishing patterns, especially the overfishing of commercially exploited fish stocks, is on food security. According to the FAO, fish accounts for 80% of the protein needs of Sierra Leoneans, with only about 20% coming from livestock. Government continues to face the limited availability of both marine and freshwater fish as a major challenge in its objective of achieving food security.¹⁵¹ 'Any threat to the long-term sustainability of this vital food source would undermine peace and security', observes a former UK Advisor.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ National Threat Assessment, 2021-2023

¹⁵⁰ *Illegal overfishing by Chinese trawlers leaves Sierra Leone locals 'starving'*, The Guardian article, 1 February 2022 @ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/feb/01/sierra-leone-families-starving-chinese-trawlers-industrial-overfishing-destroying-lives>

¹⁵¹ Aquaculture For Food Security, Livelihood And Nutrition In Sierra Leone; FAO project presentation @ <https://www.fao.org/3/ca5839en/CA5839EN.pdf>

¹⁵² Interview with Pat O'Byrne in UK, 2nd September 2022.

In terms of the current state capacity to tackle maritime threats including IUU, Pat O'Byrne further explains that, as at around 2016, apart from a derelict and hardly useful Chinese donated boat,

the MW relied on two UK-donated Rigid Inflatable Boats and other small craft, unsuitable for offshore operations. The MW [Maritime Wing] had a number of Forward Operating Bases along the coast from the northern border with Guinea to the southern border with Liberia. These were important to show presence in these areas as the sea border limits were disputed with both neighbours. The MW could just about manage to conduct riverine and coastal patrols, albeit with limited amounts of fuel, and so was a semi-effective force against piracy, smuggling and in the conduct of maritime SAR. However, its ability to conduct off shore patrols was very limited.¹⁵³

While a number of policy actions have been put in place to reduce this very high impact threat on the maritime front, issues raised in recent interviews were 'sea-blindedness' where there is the lack of Government concern or understanding as to the issues and opportunities across the maritime sphere, poor management of the huge potential of blue economy as shown in the absence of an overall maritime strategy, poor interagency cooperation, poor operational capacity to competently patrol the territorial seas – only semi-effective in riverine and coastal patrols but ineffective in off-shore patrols. 'Sierra Leone's failure to exploit any natural resource that was not metallic was, in my view, the greatest post conflict failure'.¹⁵⁴

This situation holds true in current time as corroborated by the NTA (2021-2013) which highlights 'logistical and financial constraints, inadequate trained personnel, low staff morale, corruption, inability to establish continuous presence at sea, undefined maritime boundaries between Sierra

¹⁵³ Same interview.

¹⁵⁴ Same interview.

Leone and Guinea, weak interagency collaboration and lack of alternative means of livelihood; as the main promoters of illegal fishing.

4.3.4.2 Protecting land resources

Timber

Sierra Leone is blessed with vast rain forests and woodlands because of its tropical weather and temperate climate. The total forest cover of Sierra Leone is estimated to be approximately 2.75 million hectares (38% of the land area).¹⁵⁵ The timber from these forests is for both local use and international export. However, such timber is randomly logged from different sources and from forest reserves around the country without proper regulation. There is a historical deforestation rate in excess of 3% per annum.¹⁵⁶ Intermittently, Government imposes and lifts bans on logging it as a means of controlling the rate at which it takes place, mainly to protect availability for local use as well as prevent widespread deforestation.

The improper regulation of logging and timber export carries two key challenges. First deforestation which, according to the NTA is a high incidence, high impact threat. Permitting the export of such large quantities implies that there would be a concurrent increase on logging activities, most of which are unmonitored. Meanwhile reforestation of depleted areas as well as afforestation of new areas remains grossly inadequate. Second, export processes including stacking of containers and loading on to ships are inadequately monitored, rendering the state vulnerable to revenue loss due to under-valuation and under-declaration. Between 3000-4000

¹⁵⁵ Miro Forestry Company Annual Report, 2016. <https://www.miroforestry.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Annual-Report-2016.pdf>

¹⁵⁶ Same report.

containers are exported every six months, according to credible research on deforestation in Sierra Leone, which is equivalent to thousands of lost acres of forest cover. With each container selling for \$4,000 in Freetown and buying for \$15,000 overseas, 1,000 containers will accrue \$15 million while 4000 containers will generate \$60 million of lost economic value.¹⁵⁷

Preventing illegal logging is the responsibility of the forest rangers recruited and regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture. These rangers are inadequate in personnel strength and in mandate to provide adequate security to protect community forests. Preventing smuggling at internal and international crossing points resides with state security, mainly the SLP who are sometimes not clear about existing policy and types of timber allowed to be transported across borders. Monitoring of export at the main port, the Queen Elizabeth II Quay, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, National Revenue Authority and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, but it is reported only Customs (NRA) are monitoring but the monitoring mechanisms remain haphazard.¹⁵⁸

While the high scale of exploitation of timber is more attributable to policy weaknesses and inconsistencies, security apparatus responsible for control remain fraught with inadequate knowledge, low capability and corruption.

Mineral resources

¹⁵⁷ Agricultural economist Kandeh Yumkella, quoted in *Sierra Leone's Unregulated Export Timber Trade*, Sewa News Stream, July 03, 2018 @ <http://www.sewa.news/2018/07/sierra-leones-unregulated-export-timber.html>

¹⁵⁸ Confidential interview held 13th January 2023

Artisanal extraction of minerals such as coltan, tin, diamonds and gold is reported to be widespread in the northern and eastern parts of Sierra Leone, undertaken illicitly mainly by Lebanese, Ghanaians, Guineans, Malians, Indians and Chinese, despite this aspect being reserved by law for indigenous Sierra Leoneans. This illegal act is reported to be on the increase though the actual magnitude is unknown.¹⁵⁹ Security support to the National Minerals Agency (NMA) through an MOU has been grossly inadequate principally due to the vastness and remoteness of some of the mining locations. The NMA itself lacks the funds to procure necessary equipment to undertake thorough monitoring. Mining Compliance Officers, who should collaborate with the police, are inadequate and mostly complicit with criminal extraction. The direct involvement of politically protected persons also compromises exiting security measures.¹⁶⁰

The twin human security threats of pollution and environmental degradation on the one hand, and livelihood challenges caused by land rights loss for locals has now been mitigated by the Customary Land Rights Act and the Land Commission Act passed in 2022 which empower local landowners to negotiate the value of their land with investors and prevent it being leased out without their express consent. This move will reduce the incidence of outbreaks of violent confrontations and destruction of property. These laws will however contribute little to controlling criminal artisanal extraction of minerals in these communities. In sum, the state, through its security apparatus at national and community levels, lacks the capacity to protect illegal extraction of its minerals, further constraining its ability to boost its coffers and improve economic security.

¹⁵⁹ NTA 2021-2023

¹⁶⁰ NTA 2021-2023

Task Category	Task/Threat	Policy/Operational Deficit	Effect on Human Security & Development
Managing elections	Joint security sector manpower deployment; armed military support (MACP)	Perceived police bias in operations; decision-making in the name of maintaining order viewed biased in favour of incumbent; armed military presence around some polling stations.	Successful elections but with questionable credibility on certain criteria such as intimidation of the opposition and disenfranchisement of some citizens. This is even more prevalent in bye-elections ¹⁶¹ .
Managing disasters	Ebola response	Failure to pre-position existing security architecture to control outbreak and spread	Over 8,000 infected leading to over 3,000 deaths; approx. \$1bn needed to eventually bring epidemic under control; devastated the socioeconomic and political fabric of the State ¹⁶² .
	Flooding & Mudslide response	Inconsistent interface between decision-making and professional strata; poor resource management	Human security challenges (especially shelter) for survivors ¹⁶³ .
	COVID19 response	Failure to pre-position existing security architecture to control outbreak and spread; manipulation of political economy of the response	Poor quarantine management raised serious human rights concerns; restrictions on movement during lockdowns helped save lives but imperilled livelihoods; negatively impacted national economy ¹⁶⁴ .
Managing public order	Police-military co-deployment (MACP)	Police operational deficiencies; disproportionate armed response to protests and demonstrations	Direct threat to human life and property - unnecessary fatalities and injuries, arbitrary detentions ¹⁶⁵
Protecting marine resources	Illegal fishing, overfishing in inshore coastal areas	Inadequate operational capacity; funding, absence of a maritime strategy	Loss of revenue (estimated \$50m annually); livelihood challenges for local families
Protecting land resources	Illicit mining	Poor monitoring; corruption through complicity of political elite.	Land claim and degradation causing livelihood challenges for locals; environmental challenges; revenue loss for government
	Illegal timber logging and export; widespread deforestation		

¹⁶¹ ‘By-elections in Koinadugu and Kono Districts in October and November 2021, respectively, were marred by violence, intimidation, and allegations of vote tampering’ (Sierra Leone Human rights Report 2002 by the US State Department) @ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/sierra-leone>.

¹⁶² 4.8% deficit in GDP as at May 2015 (Mercy Corps).

¹⁶³ For instance, a \$2m temporary housing scheme from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to serve as medium-term shelter for survivors while a new permanent community was being constructed at Mile 6 (just outside the capital) was rejected by government causing severe housing challenges for the survivors after the closure and tearing down of displaced camps. Reasons for this rejection remained unexplained.

¹⁶⁴ 2.0% GDP contraction in 2020 (Statistics Sierra Leone)

¹⁶⁵ See Chronology of Selected Incidents of Public Order Management by Law Enforcement Since 2007 at Appendix B.

Managing land resources for foreign investment	Local land grabs	Exclusionary and corrupt negotiation and decision making; accompanying heavy-handed deployment of security forces to maintain order and protect assets of MNCs.	Land degradation, deteriorating local livelihoods and disaffection; violent local clashes leading to loss of life and property; tendency for (re)mobilisation of civil resistance in some areas as an alternative pathway for redress. ¹⁶⁶
Maintaining internal stability	Subversive military activity (coup attempts)	Defence governance and professional deficits	Loss of life and a status of internal turbulence with direct inhibitive effect on of FDI.
	Foreign troop (ECOMISIL) deployment	National security and SSG deficits – inability of the state (through its security apparatus) to maintain internal stability	Status of internal turbulence with direct inhibitive effect on of FDI.

Table 1 - Security governance deficits and their effect on human security & development

4.3.5 Managing land resources for foreign investment

Opening up the state to foreign investment is a measure articulated in policy statements, adopted as a means of boosting the national economy. However, there is a demonstration of how development policy clashes with local human security with social interests, livelihoods and sometimes lives at stake.

Land is a crucial resource in this direction but has become a seriously contentious issue emanating from the skewed governance of tenure systems, especially those belonging to land owning families at local level. Huge hectares of land strew the rural hinterlands in Sierra Leone; yet most of the arable land does not exist in an unclaimed vacuum. The National Land Policy (2015) defines most of these lands as private lands owned by communities or family units of surrounding villages through traditional entitlements and land tenure systems established by customary law. Over time, government has endeavoured to exploit the commercial value of

¹⁶⁶ Podder, 2013

these lands by negotiating lease agreements with the locals and sub-lease agreements with multinational companies. The negotiation and decision-making layers involve the government (represented by the relevant ministry), members of parliament, paramount chiefs and the land-owning families. However, over time such negotiations have been characterised by exclusionary and corrupt manipulations, largely disrespectful of the interests and livelihoods of local landowners and residents of communities around such lands.

A recent investigative study done on pathways of redress for land grabs by aggrieved landowners and affected locals, Podder (2023) analyses two localities (Malen in Pujehun District and Bureh, Kasseh and Maconteh in Port Loko District) where MNCs have lease contracts to operate agricultural mandates but where, as in the case of SOCFIN's operations in Malen, there have been confrontations between the MNCs and aggrieved local community residents due to unfulfilled obligations and unpaid rents, and between the security forces and local residents who have employed strikes and demonstrations as a pathway for resistance to land grabs.

SOCFIN's landgrabs for their operations are affecting the livelihoods of 28,135 people in 65 villages, in the following ways: access to land for cultivation of crops (such as kola nuts, oil palms, coffee, cocoa and rice) which serve as a key source of income and food security for locals, and for non-cultivated products such as medicinal herbs, and wild fruits, honey and bush meat). There is also the social connection with the land as *cognitive, behavioural and emotional attachment to 'place'* which makes land ownership and its 'grab' so important in analysing the human security dimension of development initiatives in such micro contexts (Podder, 2023).

Disagreements have ranged from complaints over not being fully informed of the terms of the negotiations, lack of information of the actual size of land leased and failed corporate social responsibility. These disagreements have led to violent clashes between locals (prominently the Malen Land Owners and Users Association [MALOA]) and security forces involving both police and military, such as the one on 21 January 2019 in which two people were shot dead and raids carried out in the villages involving beatings, vandalism and looting of houses. It also led to 15 arrests and internal displacements of hundreds of people.¹⁶⁷

4.3.6 Maintaining internal stability

4.3.6.1 Subversive military activity (coup attempts)

Renegade military behaviour has been commonplace throughout Sierra Leone's history. With the commencement of reforms of the security sector as part of the overall peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts, there has been an improvement in professional standards of the military, making it less prone to subversive or renegade activity. Chapter 5 has shown us the post-war institutional evolution that took place but also laid out existing challenges. Despite progress made at professionalising the forces and rebranding institutional image, the post-war period has not gone without real or alleged attempts at renegade behaviour such as mutinies and attempted coups.

The most prominent instance is an attack on military barracks and several prisons, declared a 'coup attempt', on 26 November 2023 by some serving and retired military officers in league with

¹⁶⁷ International Federation for Human Rights @ <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/business-human-rights-environment/stop-land-grabbing-by-socfin-in-sierra-leone-stop-the-criminalisation>

retired police and other civil elements which led to brazen prison breaks and 20 fatalities, including 13 soldiers, and the escape of over 2000 prisoners from various prisons in the capital. While contentions over the election outcome may have been the primary driver, the attempt is a manifestation of failed security sector governance indices such as continued manipulation and politicisation of the forces, which has sharpened ethnic identity awareness and attendant political party loyalty over time.¹⁶⁸

4.3.6.2 Foreign troop (ECOMISIL) deployment

On 15 September 2024, ECOWAS deployed Phase 1 of a stabilisation force named ECOWAS Mission in Sierra Leone (ECOMISIL) with a political strategic end-state being ‘to ensure the Sierra Leonean institutions are able to maintain law and order, provide basic services, and facilitate economic facilities in the country’, and with a military strategic objective including ‘to deter any threat of instability within the Republic of Sierra Leone and create favourable conditions for democracy to prosper’. More specifically, the mission will:

- a. Support the defence forces to ensure a secured environment in the country
- b. Support the protection of vital state institutions
- c. Ensure security to the civilian population and support the defence and security forces in their efforts to improve security condition in accordance with international humanitarian laws
- d. Contribute to strengthening of trust between the population, the defence and security forces

¹⁶⁸ See perspectives in BBC report of 28 November 2023 @ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-67541285>

- e. The management shall include other assignments that the Authority may decide to entrust to the mission.

That Sierra Leone needs such an intervention suggests major national security and SSR deficits:

- It is highly suggestive of an international impression of latent internal instability and lack of capacity/heavy-handedness of defence forces to mitigate it, contrary to international impressions of peaceful nation.
- Manifests an inability by state security to adequately protect CNI, a major deficit in security sector effectiveness.
- Suggests the state is unable to protect the fundamental human rights of its citizens and may even itself be a threat.
- Suggestive of retrograde relationship between the security services and the general public.
- It effectively becomes an extension (a foreign 'arm') of the armed forces and leaves it open to being itself used as an instrument of repression.

These deficits bear all the hallmarks of retrogression in Sierra Leone's post-conflict SSR and continue to stagnate the state in its efforts at achieving development targets. Overall, the specifics of these objectives are heavily suggestive of a return to not only international technical tutelage but also an intervention to augment badly deficient kinetic capabilities.

A recent study¹⁶⁹ has analysed the direct consequences of political instability and violence on the national economy: Over a period of 36 months (2020-2023), 11 major incidents of violence led to 83 fatalities, mostly young men leaving poorer female-headed households, and grounded the economy for a total of 42 days. For the 20 days the country was shut down in 2023, it lost about an estimated \$21,000,000 for each of those days. This illustrates that as the security forces continue to manifest ineffectiveness and create a climate of instability as a result of SSG deficits, the effect is felt on both economic growth and human security.

4.3.7 Relations with the Public

The latest survey¹⁷⁰ on public trust in security institutions revealed contrasting perspectives for the traditional uniformed security services – the police and the military. For the police, those who responded ‘just a little’ polled a majority score of 37.0 while the second highest score was 29.4% of respondents who replied ‘not at all’. Question of trust in the armed forces revealed a highest percentage of 47% of respondents who replied ‘a lot’ while there was a close call between ‘just a little’ – 21.1% and ‘somewhat’ – 21.5%. Perspectives on corruption also characterize the relations between the police and the public. A majority of 44% think ‘most of them’ are involved in corruption, 26.6% believe ‘all of them’ and 24.1% think ‘some of them’.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Institute of Governance Reform @ <file:///C:/Users/Y460/Documents/SIERRA%20LEONE,%20-%20THE%20COST%20OF%20VIOLENT%20PROTESTS%20AND%20POLITICAL%20INSTABILITY.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ Summary of Results – Sierra Leone Afrobarometer Round 9, March 2023 @ <https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Summary-of-results-Sierra-Leone-Afrobarometer-R9-1Mar23.pdf>

¹⁷¹ Same report.

This discrepancy in views (between police and military) aside, the emerging picture, which triangulates with findings for this research expressed in Chapter 5 and Section 6.3.3 of this Chapter, is that the police which is the face of state authority and is established to serve and protect as a ‘force for good’ remains critically estranged from the general public as a result of lack of trust. While the concept of community policing stands as a key operational policy, respondents have shown that it is only the family support aspect which deals with gender and domestic issues that seems to be working well. Other areas of law enforcement, especially public order management, continue to reflect protection of government interest over those of citizens.

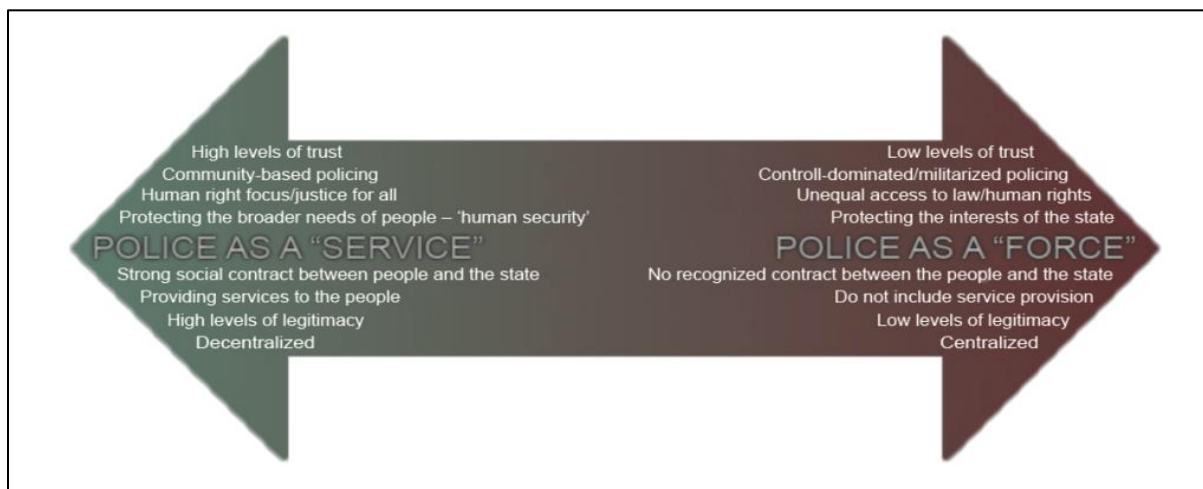


Figure 9 - Police governance approaches (Source: ICT4COP)

The principle of *local needs policing* which guides the SLP is derivative of the concept of *community-oriented policing* which stresses the importance of trust between the police and the public. As revealed in a descriptive study, trust aligns with legitimacy and accountability as key features of policing especially in post-conflict contexts, a dearth of which compromises the cordiality necessary for community-oriented policing. Two opposing features are proposed –

police as a service and police as a force (*see Figure 7 above*). Operating as a force is usually common in autocratic systems and suggests the use of a militarised approach with the main goal of protecting interests of the ruling elite at the detriment of broader community needs. This compromises both trust and legitimacy from the public. Operating as a service on the other hand, a feature of democratic contexts, the main function is serving local communities through a human security approach that addresses wider needs and insecurities (*see also the Peelian Principles of Policing in Figure 10 above*). This promotes high levels of trust and legitimacy which form the backbone of community-oriented policing.¹⁷²

The anaemic respect in public perspective for the SLP derives directly from its general conduct and performance. While the state itself may not be categorically labelled autocratic, the perennial posture of the SLP more as a force than a service, resulting from the continued retrograde standards imposed on it by political manipulation, perpetually defaces the democratic credentials of the state.

4.4 Conclusion

Following the historical analysis of the evolution of the security sector after the civil conflict, the emerging theme in this chapter is the concomitant effect on security policy making through threat securitisation, and the corresponding effect on the capabilities of security agencies to undertake their statutory duties to protect the state and citizens. In this vein, it is shown that deficits in

¹⁷² How Can We Understand Police-Community Relations? ICT4COP Centre @ <https://www.communitypolicing.eu/ehandbook/considerations-for-cop/how-can-we-understand-police-community-relations/>. ICT4COP is a European Commission Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation project exploring community-oriented policing and police reform in post-conflict settings.

security sector governance have a direct effect on performance effectiveness in protection of state resources (which undermine economic security and development) as well as protection of local communities and individuals (which undermine human security).

CHAPTER 5: PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT: RHETORIC VS REALITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having examined and revealed critical capability and implementation gaps in the modus of security governance in the previous chapter, especially that existing between policy and practice, this chapter follows on by seeking to assess the broader governance environment within which commitments and aspirations to establishing a resilient state have operated. Straddling the nexus between security and development are the *enabling* factors of peace, stability and democratic

governance with all its accompanying tenets, as well as the *disabling* factors of state fragility and (the potential for) violent conflict (*See Figure 5 in Conceptual Framework*). While striving to stabilise, re-establish state legitimacy and build resilience, post-conflict ruling elites in principle, enunciated through securitisation speech acts, aspire to mitigate threats to peace and economic revival by seeking to entrench liberal democratic governance systems. Yet these aspirations usually become fraught with severe challenges, most of which may have precipitated the conflict in the first place.

The claims of peace, democracy and progress in socio-economic development in post-conflict countries tend to be riddled with ambiguities in policy statements and documents and are relative in interpretation depending on the interests, standards and beliefs of the claimant. Global and regional evaluative indices also tend to create an illusory sense of progress. In effect, contexts in which there are claims of peace, democracy and development need to undergo more granular qualitative and/quantitative evaluations in order for the *reality* or *truth* on the ground to be observable.

Evidenced by policy statements in speeches and policy documents articulated by successive post-war governments, Sierra Leone makes its claim to be a peaceful and democratic state *en route* to achieving inclusive socio-economic development.¹⁷³ Global and regional indices, while they remain in the danger zones, have also apparently lent credence to these claims. Yet feedback from citizens do not necessarily corroborate them. What emerge are ambiguities in policy

¹⁷³ Presidential speeches delivered at State Openings of Parliament offer a source of examples. See speeches by Presidents Ernest Koroma and Julius Maada Bio @ <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Speeches/koroma-121412.html> and https://www.parliament.gov.sl/uploads/state_opening_speech/STATE%20OPENING%20SPEECH%20-%2018TH%20MAY,%202021.pdf

rhetoric contained in the policy framework and a strong incidence of relativism where peace and democracy in the country may appear impressive or mediocre depending on internal or external perspectives. Progress in development indices create an illusion of progress in human security – situations remain dire with all indications of chronic poverty, livelihood challenges and community unsafety.

This chapter then examines the status of peace and quality of governance in place and evaluates how they have affected both security sector governance and the achievement of development targets in the post-war period. This circumspective analysis provides the overarching backdrop against which the causal links between poor SSG and poor development outcomes can be understood.

5.2 Post-Conflict Development Trajectory

States have been compliant in domesticating both the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals into their national development plans and make efforts to fulfil them as part of a global aspiration to make the world a better place. The onus has especially been on developing states, especially those considered fragile and conflict-affected.

Overall performance for Sierra Leone on the MDGs (2000 – 2015), like the majority of its African counterparts, has been generally considered a failure although there was reported ‘significant progress’ on a number of indicators. Plausible explanation for this dismal performance were the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease and the drop in global iron ore prices, both of which dwarfed governance deficits that may have contributed to this. The UNDP noted ‘enormous remaining

and emerging challenges’ as the country transitioned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁷⁴ The SDGs which cover the period 2016 – 2030 also presents an average performance rating so far. Current index rank for Sierra Leone is 146 out 163 with a score of 53.0%, with 14 out 17 indicators having the status of ‘major challenges remain’ (*see Appendix A*). Posing significant challenges to the attainment of these goals have been a series of crises which have caused severe economic shocks – the civil war (1991-2002), the Ebola epidemic (2014-15), drop in global iron ore prices (circa 2014) and the COVID19 pandemic (2020-21). The implementation of national development plans through which the international requirements have been domesticated have encountered mixed outcomes. As has been presented in Chapter 6, only certain strands of the post-war recovery and development plans (PRSPs 1 – 4) were achieved, reflecting the global ratings above.

Overall, Sierra Leone’s Human Development Index value has changed from 0.312 to 0.477 between 1990 and 2021, an improvement of 52.9 percent¹⁷⁵. The country’s HDI has seen a steady increase since the end of the war (*see Figure 11*) understandably suffering setbacks only in 2015 and 2020, the years the country was struck by public health emergencies. Despite this steady increase though, it has stubbornly remained in the ‘low human development’ tier, the lowest rung of four tiers, with a current rank of 181 out 191 countries in the Human Development Index¹⁷⁶ (2022).

¹⁷⁴ UNDP MDG report, 2015. http://www.slurc.org/uploads/1/0/9/7/109761391/mdg_report_2015_final.pdf

¹⁷⁵ UNDP HDI country data, 2022.

¹⁷⁶ The HDI value is determined by aggregating a country’s score in a list of indicators including life expectancy, literacy rate, access to electricity by rural populations, GDP per capita, exports and imports, multidimensional poverty index, income inequality, homicide rate, internet availability, among others.

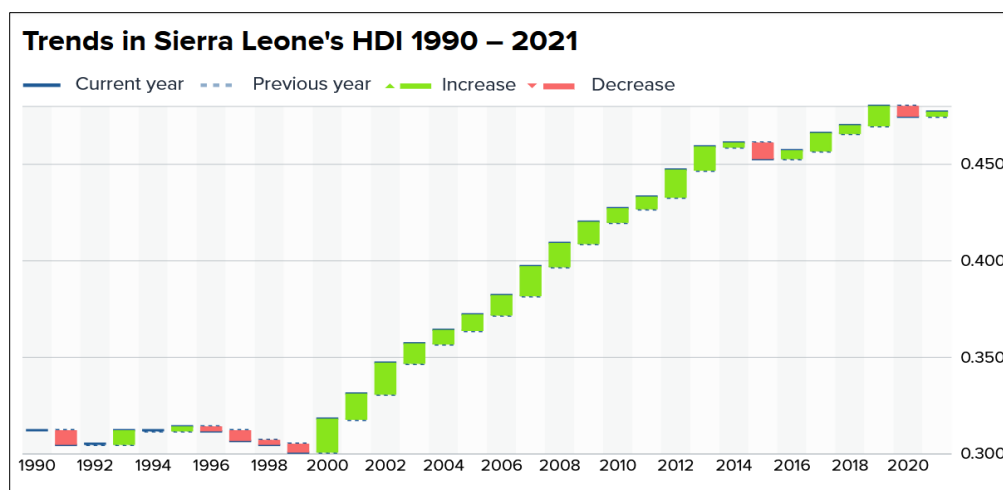


Figure 10 - HDI trend (Source: UNDP)

In a recent marketing strategy developed to promote foreign investment and diversify the economy as part of implementing the current Medium-term National Development Plan, Sierra Leone is declared 'open for business'. Highlighting investment opportunities in the agriculture, tourism, fishery, transport and mining sectors, as well as showcasing the reformed legal and regulatory environment that promotes gender equality, protects investors and improves transparency and accountability, several incentives are postulated as well as compliance with international requirements that should make the country attractive for foreign direct investment (FDI).¹⁷⁷ What this strategy lacks however is reassurance on the peace, security and stability of the state as part of the assessment of the investment climate; a requirement which is usually first and foremost in the consideration of would-be investors and tourists. Political violence and insecurity constitute the most important factors that discourage investment in many

¹⁷⁷ Presentation done by the Sierra Leone Investment & Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA), September 2019.

countries.¹⁷⁸ In Sierra Leone ‘there is tension between social, political, and cultural institutions over power and resources. Policies and positions are sometimes sought for the purposes of control over public finances’, notes a US Department of State report.¹⁷⁹ This policy omission is suggestive of the perennial tendency by policymakers to first disconnect the policy realms of security and development, and second to take for granted the role of insecurity in potentially derailing the facilitation of FDI to promote the realisation of development goals. The Global Peace Index warns that ‘violent incidents generate costs in the form of property damage, physical injury or psychological trauma. Fear of violence also alters economic behaviour, primarily by reducing propensity to invest and consume’. Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan once observed that while we seek to improve the macro-economic levels, there must also be consideration for the conditions that ensure human security: ‘Thriving markets and human security go hand in hand. Global corporations can do more than simply endorse the virtues of the market...Their active support for better governance policies can help create environments in which both markets and human security flourish’.¹⁸⁰

In this light, environments where human security is threatened are environments that are usually unsuitable for FDI. A flashpoint indicator in Sierra Leone is the perpetual visibility of armed soldiers on urban streets, engaged in near-emergency mode, while the government assures the world of a peaceful and stable nation ‘open for business’. Recent investigations into the August 10-12 2022 riots, which involved the use of armed security personnel and caused several

¹⁷⁸ International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) @ https://www.iisd.org/system/files/publications/natres_investing_stability.pdf

¹⁷⁹ Investment Climate Assessment, US Department of State, 2020 @ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-investment-climate-statements/sierra-leone/>

¹⁸⁰ Secretary General’s Annual Report on the Work of the Organisation, September 1999 @ <https://unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/pressrels/1999/sg2358.html>

fatalities, warned that such incidents ‘will significantly affect Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country which will subsequently affect the country’s developmental strides as outlined in the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023)’.¹⁸¹

In interviews for this study, participants raise the importance for security if development goals have to be realised. An independent researcher, Charlie Hughes, perceptively observes:

Insurance and transaction costs [of importation of goods and services] are high and prohibitive as a result of perceived risks and general insecurity. This is affecting FDI. The rather frequent deployment of armed military personnel in law enforcement, regular outbreaks of public disorder all suggest the existence of a volatile atmosphere which diverts foreign investments elsewhere. This has a direct effect on economic growth.¹⁸²

Veteran journalist Kelvin Lewis also opines that ‘FDI is dependent on security and stability. When they [investors] do come in without heed to the investment climate as it relates to security, it is the crooked ones who do so to exploit the weaknesses in the system’.¹⁸³ A senior security sector officer also notes: ‘Investment depends on assured long-term stability. The security sector should be able to build its capacity to create the enabling environment to welcome investment. At the moment, there are investments but they can be threatened by continued internal skirmishes’.¹⁸⁴

Yet another senior security sector actor maintains a similar stance:

We cannot sustain development without security. Regimes tend to underprioritise security when there is no major security situation to attend to. The FQE [Free Quality Education programme] for example can be significantly supported by the security sector but this is not countenanced. FDI is given confidence by security and stability but the

¹⁸¹ Investigation Report on August 10-12 riots by the Special Investigation Committee appointed by HE the President Brig, (Rtd) Julius Maada Bio.

¹⁸² Interview held in Bo, Sierra Leone, 12th November 2022.

¹⁸³ Interview held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 26th October 2022.

¹⁸⁴ Confidential interview held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 3rd November 2022.

state is generally reactive in ensuring a stable environment. The youth bulge and unemployment is (*sic*) also reacted to only when situations arise.¹⁸⁵

There is also an indication of a hungry, food insecure population. Sierra Leone ranks 112th out of 121 countries and carries a score of 31.5 – level of hunger that is rated serious.¹⁸⁶ The trend from between 2000 and 2021 indicates an improving situation, dropping from *alarming* in 2000 (57.5) to *serious* in 2021 (31.5) – understandably higher during the immediate post-war years (*see Figure 11*). Sierra Leone is placed just ahead of highly unstable countries of Chad, Niger, Central African Republic and Haiti. The high rate of hunger reflects the level of poverty, inequality, inadequate governance, poor infrastructure, and low agricultural productivity which serve as underlying causes, exacerbated by recent or ongoing crises of the COVID19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine which has driven food, fuel and fertiliser prices up (GHI, 2021).

In Sierra Leone, there was consensus in all four focus group discussions conducted at provincial level for this study that while communities may be in partial fear of threats from crime, violence and environmental disasters, fear induced by livelihood challenges such as sourcing the next meal is much higher. Participants noted that ingrained and perennial poverty which has characterised the average Sierra Leonean household, compounded by the rapidly increasing cost of living, most times compels household heads (including women) to defy risks and venture out to fend for daily living. Threats to human security persist while local residents hear plenty of policy rhetoric but little practical commitment by successive governments to assuage their lot. This means that

¹⁸⁵ Confidential interview held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 3rd November 2022. The Free Quality Education programme is a central aspect of the current National Development Plan.

¹⁸⁶ Rating: ≤ 9.9 – low, 10.0–19.9 moderate, 20.0–34.9 serious, 35.0–49.9 alarming, ≥ 50.0 extremely alarming. (Global Hunger Index)

despite an apparent correlation between improving GDP and HDI and improving levels of hunger, an overly hungry population suggests that intended development targets of poverty reduction and zero hunger have remained elusive.

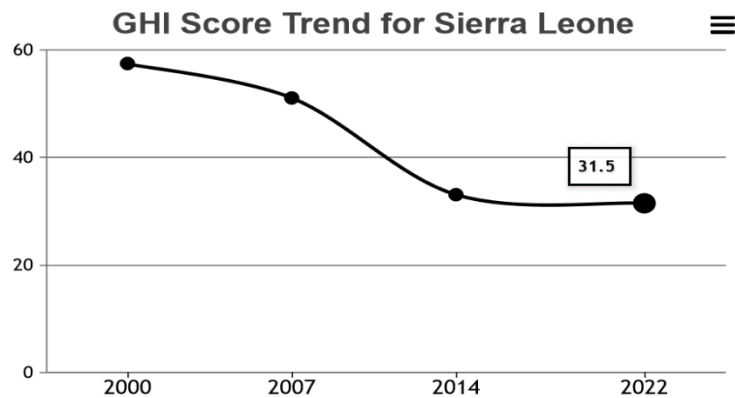


Figure 11 - Sierra Leone hunger trend, 2000-2021 (Global Hunger Index)

5.3 Democracy and Quality of Governance

A key prerequisite for overall good democratic governance is for the security sector to play its supportive role for development. Sierra Leone has aspired to be a liberal democratic state since the end of the highly corrupt autocracies and military junta rules circa the late 1990s. With the war providing the sobering lesson that society ought to be more cohesive and inclusive, the citizenry has persistently aspired for democratic multiparty governance. Defying bullets and machetes, civil society set the stage in 1996 when there was an overwhelming insistence on ‘elections before peace’ in place of the alternative of ‘peace before elections’ proffered by the

ruling NPRC junta. The ensuing two Bintumani Conferences (town hall meetings) launched the platform for the conduct of elections.

Since 1996, despite a military interregnum the following year, five general elections have been conducted, two of which have led to peaceful regime change, crediting Sierra Leone with international accolades. On the evidence of the relatively peaceful democratic transitions, it could be assumed that Sierra Leone is a democratic state and that the quality of governance is high and inclusive enough not only to prevent a relapse into violent conflict but to drive the state forward towards attaining sustainable development goals. Yet local opinions and international evaluations have tended to present a not-so-rosy picture.

Three indices are selected here to reveal public perspectives on the trust in democratic institutions and quality of governance – the Afrobarometer, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) and the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI).¹⁸⁷

In the latest Afrobarometer statistical survey ratings¹⁸⁸ on people’s beliefs in democratic standards, a significant majority (71%) strongly agree with elections to choose their leaders than other methods while a modest majority (44.3%) agree that it is better for power to change hands from one party to another rather than have one party ruling for a long time even if it is freely and fairly elected. In terms of elections ensuring that representatives to Parliament reflect views of voters, views are quite evenly spread among ‘very well’ – 27.1%, ‘not very well’ – 27.0%, ‘not at

¹⁸⁷ The WGI are a research dataset summarising the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprises, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. These data are gathered from a number of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and private sector firms. (World Bank)

¹⁸⁸ A result of a survey undertaken by the Institute of Governance Reform for the Afrobarometer. A nationally-representative random stratified probability sample of 1,200 Sierra Leonean adults were interviewed between 13 June and 9 July 2022.

all well – 22.8%, and ‘fairly well’ – 20.9%. However, a majority of 36.6% do not have trust in Parliament with 29.6% having ‘just a little’ trust; while the Electoral Commission drew a mixed response with a slight majority of 29.5% trusting them ‘a lot’, 19.5% ‘not at all’. Local government councils polled higher in ‘no’ or ‘little trust’ (33.3% and 34.4% respectively) than ‘somewhat’ and ‘a lot’ (18.7% and 13.3% respectively). Those who ‘very well’ believe elections empower them to remove leaders who do not do what they want amount to a majority of 42% while 24% believe ‘not at all well’.

The above statistics reveal that the citizenry, while it believes in the system of democratic governance and look up to it to provide equity and inclusivity, tend to have moderate or no trust in the institutions and individuals that should make it work. Yet the preference for democracy persists in view of the potentially catastrophic nature of alternatives such as junta rules or one-party dictatorships as experienced in the past.

In a study done in 2007, Carol Lancaster observed that since independence the governance pattern has been inclined towards self-enrichment by elites and their clientele with not much effort made to utilise the country’s resources for the general good. She asked a pertinent question of the landmark 2007 elections:

Does it suggest the beginning of that all important (sic) but very difficult shift from a politics of patronage where politicians are accountable to their patrons to a system where politicians are accountable to their constituents and the public which must underpin any real democratic governance? (Lancaster, 2007)

This question has remained relevant for that and all other elections that have followed, and both expert and survey results reveal that patronage politics has persisted, with a denigrating effect on the effectiveness of governments in securing the interests of the general population.

Evaluating the quality of governance, the WGI utilises six indicators – *voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, Rule of Law and control of corruption*. Most relevant for this section is the effectiveness of government over the course of the post-conflict history. Figure 13 shows the trending percentile of Sierra Leone’s government’s effectiveness as at the last review date of 23 September 2022.¹⁸⁹

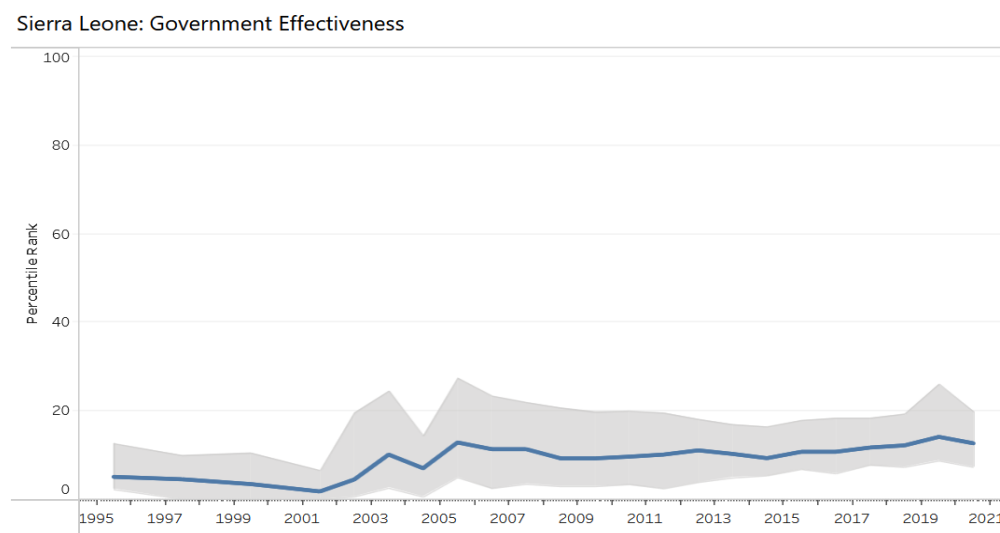


Figure 12 - Government effectiveness¹⁹⁰ (Source: WGI, 2022)

While there is a rising trend, Sierra Leone government effectiveness has consistently hovered below the 20 percentile, stagnating it in the lowest quartile in the global ranking.

¹⁸⁹ Composite governance indicators are gleaned from over 30 underlying data sources. Percentile rank indicates the position of the country globally, 0 being the lowest and 100 being the highest. The grey portions indicate the margin of error.

¹⁹⁰ Government Effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) for 2021 shows a slightly rosier picture for overall governance¹⁹¹: among African states, Sierra Leone scores 57.6 for security and the Rule of Law, 58.9 for participation, rights and inclusion, 47.5 for foundations for economic opportunity, and 44.9 for human development. Overall governance is rated at 52.2% with a ranking of 22 out of 54 states. Rwanda (12th position with 59.1% overall governance) and Cote d'Ivoire (20th position with 54.3%), both also conflict-affected states, are doing better in this index.

This shows that while it has claimed the status of a democracy, with institutions of government re-established after the war and power transitions through multi-tier elections successfully held, the actual functionality of the system independent of political pressures and elite interests, formulating and implementing quality policies for the state has fallen short of genuine democratic standards.

All participants interviewed in this study emphatically agreed that there is no genuine democracy in Sierra Leone. The only true tenet of democracy in practice is the conduct of relatively successful elections. There was agreement that institutions of government were not independent with all of them working in the interest of the ruling party of the day. There is complete executive capture of institutions, including the other arms of government – the Judiciary and the Legislature. The politics is that of 'winner-takes-all' which excludes and represses the opposition. 'There is elite capture of the state since independence in the form of an "agreement" to steal by the two main

¹⁹¹ Four main categories make up the Overall Governance score: security & Rule of Law, participation, rights & inclusion, foundations for economic opportunity and human development.

political parties’, says one interviewee. ‘It’s a predatory system which flagrantly loots state resources’.¹⁹²

The high illiteracy rate in the electorate is also responsible for poor democratic standards. We have an electorate that is mostly uninformed. ‘Our democratic system is characterised by identity-based voting – based on ethnic identities rather than on sound policy. Ethnic identity consciousness is on the rise’.¹⁹³ Another participant even questions the suitability of a democratic system of governance for Sierra Leone considering the uninformed electorate. ‘It is in fact not the best governance model for us based on the level of illiteracy in the electorate. Not enough effort has been made over time to adapt the governance system to our local context’.¹⁹⁴

Another response described it thus:

What we have is an electoral democracy, not a liberal one. It is dangerously fragile characterised by ethnic chauvinism. It is said that incumbents losing consolidates democracy. That has never happened in Sierra Leone, so we should not be carried away with elections leading to regime change.¹⁹⁵

This interviewee adds that the bureaucratic system competes with the patronage system, with the latter having a very corrupting impact on the former. The public space is bifurcated under two types of rule – formal rules and informal rules, the latter of which supports the patronage networks. State bureaucracy is not meritocratic, hence the reason for an ineffective state.¹⁹⁶ The nepotistic nature of patronage politics has direct effect on continuity in policy implementation, as observed here:

¹⁹² Interview with Oswald Hanciles in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 31st October 2022.

¹⁹³ Interview with Andrew Lavalie in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 31st October 2022.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Julius Spencer in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 9th November 2022.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Jimmy Kandeh in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 9th November 2022.

¹⁹⁶ Same interview.

Politics in Sierra Leone seemed quite tribal, with individuals influenced heavily by one of the two parties, and with the Government in power favouring those aligned to it (by geography, political persuasion or tribe). This also resulted in important contributors being deliberately isolated, development programmes being obstructed and priorities being readjusted every time new governments were re-elected.¹⁹⁷

Citizens voices and interests expressed mainly through CSOs are not always heeded. The CSOs themselves carry split reputation – some think they offer a relatively strong deterrence to bad governance while others think they have also been co-opted by the bipolar partisan positioning as well as by donors who sponsor them. The option of protests and demonstrations to express citizens' grievances are not always tolerated.

Most participants raise the point that democratic standards started being reversed around 2007 when ironically elections held that year actually led to the impressive feat of peaceful regime change. 'We have gravitated towards *winner-take-all* politics since the 2007 after the Kabbah administration', says lawyer and governance activist Augustine Marrah. 'Governance is not inclusive. Our democracy is not a genuine one; there is executive capture of institutions which has compromised true democratic governance'¹⁹⁸. This can be ascribed to the concept of democratic reversal ushered in by a neo-patrimonial governance system which captures the state for party interest; a process which has been called *autocratisation* at worst, or the creation of *hybrid regimes* at best (Gajic & Pavlovic, 2021)– the bifurcation (suggested by Kandeh above) of the governance system into formal and informal rules. With hybrid regimes, there is a preservation of a façade of democracy while decision-making and accountability for incumbents are maintained outside of established institutions. In the face of fierce ethnic-based political

¹⁹⁷ Interview held with Martin Travers in UK, 7th October 2022.

¹⁹⁸ Interview held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 17th November 2022.

competition, such regimes seek to create a 'hyper-incumbency' which entrenches the ability of the incumbent to hold on to power for longer than true democracy could permit (Gajic & Pavlovic, 2021). Both the APC and SLPP governments have manifested tendencies to create hyper-incumbencies as evidenced by systematic rotational politicisation of institutions, not least the security sector, each aspiring to create a hyper-incumbency for their party to continue in power.

What then does this overall toxic governance backdrop provide for an understanding of how the poor governance of the security sector accounts for deficits in socio-economic development? In a context such as this, the security sector, being the primary conduit for execution of laws and policies that directly bear on the state and its people, becomes the most 'captured' sector, co-opted and politicised to protect elite interests. Chapter 5 has shown the modes of state capture used to co-opt the security sector – from politicising leadership appointments, nepotistic recruitments, to lack of commitment to ratify and implement/adhere to some important policies and strategies – a pattern that has been extended to virtually the entire bureaucratic system including the legislative and judicial branches of government, the two which are responsible for checks and balances.

The result is a weak, ineffective, unprofessional and sometimes repressive sector that is considered effective only when it protects the interest of the ruling elite. Indeed, with local ownership of the SSR process coming into stark focus after donor drawdown, the sustained politicisation of the sector has tended to reverse gains made from the reform process since 2007. A senior security practitioner¹⁹⁹ puts it straightforwardly:

¹⁹⁹ Confidential interview held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 28th October 2022.

Unfortunately, the momentum [gained from early SSR efforts] has not been maintained. The whole process has not been nationally owned. Only donor policy and funding has promoted reforms; successive governments have not manifested the same commitment. The Koroma administration especially reversed reform gains by starting the politicisation of the sector. Donor funding was lost, command and control was compromised.

As a result, as shown in Chapter 6, the security sector has not only been a threat in itself to human security during major operations (either by commission or omission) as well as failing to engage promptly to forestall public health emergencies, it has underperformed in its role to contribute to the attainment of development goals by failing to prevent threats to economic security such as revenue leakages and illegal extraction of natural resources. Good democratic governance then ensures adequate and equitable distribution of funding, prompt and prudent policy adoption, and meritocratic appointments across the bureaucratic system, an approach which will not only boost security sector performance but also promote the ability of the state to achieve development goals.

5.4 Peace, State Fragility and Conflict Potential

In order to further evaluate the enabling environment for sustainable development in Sierra Leone, an examination must be made of progress made in peacebuilding. A cursory look back at the causes of the decade-long civil conflict is necessary as a baseline context. The TRC report lines out, among other causes, sustained bad governance, endemic corruption and violation of basic human rights as the main conditions that led to the inevitability of conflict. There was a recycling

of self-serving machinations regime after regime, ignoring the needs of the citizenry. Poverty and deprivation had reached superlative levels for much of the citizenry by the time the war started. Non-existent accountability systems, institutional collapse, repression of dissenting voices and total disregard for democratic systems and the Rule of Law were the main hallmarks of governance. A deeply divided society, it did not need much to ignite a full-scale insurrection.²⁰⁰

Sierra Leone commenced a peacebuilding process after the war was declared over in January of 2002. The composite approach targeted ensuring that all combatants were comprehensively disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated into society, that the relationship between perpetrators and victims of the war was repaired through a truth and reconciliation process, that retributive justice would be done in punishment for those who carried the greatest responsibility for war atrocities, that affected communities would be reconstructed and displaced people returned and resettled, and that the security sector which stood at the centre of the war dynamics would be completely overhauled to make it more inclusive (even of rival factions) and compliant with international reform standards befitting of a liberal democratic state. All of these programmes – Disarmament, Demobilisation & Reintegration (DDR), transitional justice – Truth & Reconciliation process (TRC) and Special Court (SC), Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (RRR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) – were internationally supported and had above average success rates. Some of them have received obvious criticisms – for example the DDR process has been criticised as failed in the reintegration aspect mainly due to insufficient funds and unfulfilled promises (Sola-Martin, 2009; Bangura, 2021); the effects of healing, reconciliation and reparation

²⁰⁰ Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 2004

which were the primary objectives of the TRC as largely not realised (Bangura *et al*, 2023), and also because of ‘compound friction’ wherein the parallel institution of the TRC with the Special Court compromised their intended effects (Millar, 2013); and the SSR as initially successful in stabilising the state but suffering inadequate national ownership causing it to have sustainability challenges after the drawback of donor support as well as executive domination of the governance mechanism (Ebo 2006, Denney 2010, Albrecht & Jackson 2014).

Considering the chaos and cataclysm that characterised the conflict years, the country has enjoyed a sustained period of peace and stability since then as evidenced by the absence of a relapse into violent conflict or outright war. It boasts an impressive 47th position (high peacefulness which is the second highest rating out of 5) on the Global Peace Index²⁰¹ for 2023, which is 3rd position in Sub-Saharan Africa, having improved by 0.011% from the previous year. A more granular index, the Positive Peace Index (PPI)²⁰², goes further to demarcate between *positive* and *negative* peace. Positive Peace is defined as ‘the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies...higher levels of Positive Peace are statistically linked to higher GDP growth, better environmental outcomes, higher measures of wellbeing, better developmental outcomes and stronger resilience’. A country is said to have *positive peace deficit* if it has a higher level of peacefulness than can be sustained by its level of socio-economic

²⁰¹ Done by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the Global Peace Index uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources, and measures the state of peace across three domains: the ***level of societal safety and security***; the extent of ***ongoing domestic and international conflict***; and ***the degree of militarisation***. (GPI 2022)

²⁰² Also done by the IEP, the Positive Peace Index (PPI) consists of eight pillars (See Figure 14), each containing three indicators. This provides a baseline measure of the effectiveness of a country’s capabilities to build and maintain peace.

development (IEP). In the PPI for 2022, Sierra Leone is at 110th position, a lower rating compared to its position in the GPI.

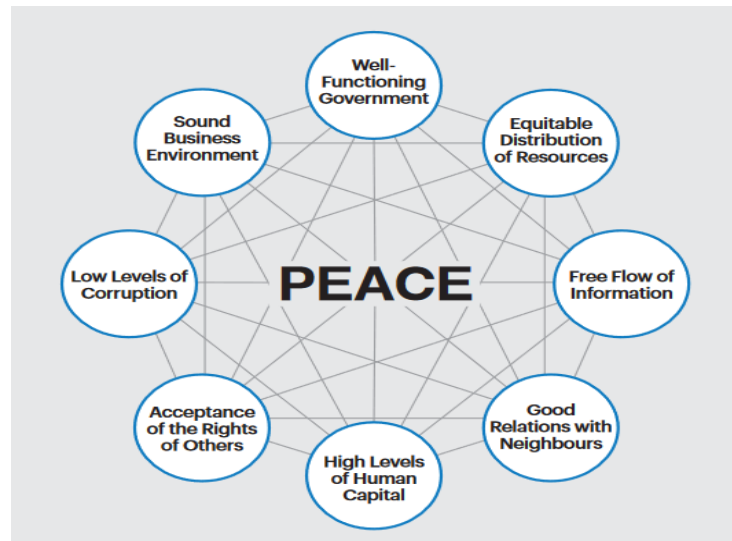


Figure 13 - The pillars of positive peace (Source: IEP)

Other global indices, scholarly research and interviews and discussions conducted for this study reveal doubts and warnings about the type of peace in Sierra Leone. The Fragile States Index 2023 reveals that Sierra Leone is the 51st most fragile country out of 177 globally, rated 81.4 index points (on a 10 – 120 scale) and placed on rung 9 (high warning) of a 12-rung scale and classed as 'highly fragile'.²⁰³ For the period of 2007 – 2022, Sierra Leone's average value was 89.58 index points with a minimum of 82.4 index points in 2022 and a maximum of 93.6 index points in 2010. The average global value during this period was 65.81 index points. Performance on five indicators selected out 12 (with each indicator scaling 0-10) trend thus: security threats declining but averaging 5.25, factionalised elite index averaging a high of 7.77 out of 10, group grievance

²⁰³ The higher the value of the index, the more "fragile" the country is.

average at 5.9 (appear to rise in election years – 2007 and 2018), economic decline reducing but on a high of 8.3, human rights and Rule of Law declining (5.2) but averaging 6.06.²⁰⁴

Drawing from various existing data sets on monitoring political violence in Sierra Leone²⁰⁵, Kars de Bruijne (2020) analyses that there are signs that political violence is on the rise in Sierra Leone despite the lack of real data to verify this. The author submits *inter alia* that political violence has become a tool in an increasingly competitive political field and has remained on the rise since 2014, and that institutions established to promote democracy and inclusivity are ironical drivers of conflict. He concludes that the label of a peaceful Sierra Leone is a ‘myth’ and that it ‘is no longer the peaceful country that miraculously buried a violent history during a brutal war. The collected data are an early warning that the country is regressing back into low levels of continuous violence that were typical during its pre-war political life’ (p.12).

De Bruijne (2020) further notes from the data that the main drivers of violence are communal violence; riots and protests over national issues; violence targeting civilians by state forces (which accounts for 14%) often directed against unarmed civilians, targeted at rioters and protesters and is often excessive; electoral violence (which carries the highest percentage of 26%); and political competition.

²⁰⁴ Fund for Peace. <https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/>

²⁰⁵ Datasets done by ACLED and WANEP who rely on daily newspaper reports and in-person reporting around the country respectively. Both collaborate with SL-LED who compile data acquired from various political actors and analysed into scholarly research. The paper is ethnographic where the author has also used interviews and his own local knowledge of the context to back up secondary data.

Scholarly research also reflects scepticism in the success of the peacebuilding efforts. Lauren Twort for instance, at the instance of IMATT's replacement by ISAT, opined in 2013²⁰⁶ that it is advisable to distinguish between positive and negative peace in the Sierra Leone case since there is an opinion of its peacebuilding model which could be misleading in the long term after the withdrawal of international attention and aid. It is important to keep these concerns in mind or else there is a risk of reversing gains made as a result of 'inflated perceptions of success'.

This is re-echoed by Bangura (2018): 'The conditions for a potential relapse into armed violence are still present and until they are effectively addressed, Sierra Leone is likely to remain in the post-war trajectory for a long time to come'. These views, while they fall short of warning about the potential for conflict relapse, nevertheless highlight the precarity around the peace being enjoyed. This 'negative peace' underlines a status of fragility which is in itself a state that threatens the achievement of development targets (Zoellick 2008). This perpetual state of fragility, precipitated primarily by the manner of governance of the security sector, dictates the status of peace and impedes progress towards the achievement of development.

Since 1960 countries that have experienced civil conflict have tended to relapse.²⁰⁷ Answering the question as to why Sierra Leone has not returned to war after the departure of peacekeepers, Adebajo (2021) believes it has been a 'mystery' of a success story and credits the efforts of a combination of domestic, sub-regional and external actors: The mystery of 'why Sierra Leone has not relapsed into conflict in two decades since 2002 after a devastating 11-year conflict, lies in

²⁰⁶ *Sierra Leone: A Post-Conflict Success Story?* RUSI Commentary, May 2013 @ <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/sierra-leone-post-conflict-success-story>

²⁰⁷ World Development Report, 2011.

the actions of these domestic, subregional, and external actors who somehow “muddled through” and improvised one of the few relative peacebuilding success stories of the last two decades’ (p.358). How sustainable will this ‘mystery’ of peace be in the face of perennial vestiges of war?

The two-decade post-war period has not experienced a relapse into violence between the corrupt rent-seeking elite and disgruntled rebels. While the masses remain largely impoverished and facing the effects a co-opted and underperforming security sector, conflict dynamics in Sierra Leone is now characterised by the perpetual and unbridled struggle for power between the two major political parties. This has been so highly contested that a form of elite bargaining was recently commissioned via a peace dialogue²⁰⁸ following the latest round of highly contested elections – July 2023. The outcome of the elections was rejected by the opposition APC as rigged and lacking in transparency. Terms of the peace consultation have been rejected by many opposition supporters as excluding their views and interests – a form of exclusive political settlement (Lindemann (2011) – leaving the ensuing collective bargaining agreement not more than just a symbolic piece of paper. Among the earlier demands had been a call for the resignation of the top security sector officials who had overseen the perceived repression and harassment of APC supporters, with some instances leading to fatalities and injuries. The security sector is viewed as highly politicised and biased in its operations in favour of the ruling government. This was however ignored in the agreement. ‘It is clear that the two parties to the agreement were solely focused on protecting and promoting their personal and political interests

²⁰⁸ Commissioned by the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Commonwealth; facilitated by the National Commission for Peace and Social Cohesion.

as against the national interest of ordinary citizens in the state’, notes Rashid Dumbuya²⁰⁹. While it has succeeded in ending the APC governance boycott, it has been criticised as ‘one that sets a dangerous precedent and further undermines the rule of law, democracy and transparent elections in the country in the future’.²¹⁰

Interviews and discussions done for this study though do not only maintain scepticism around peace, a good majority also warn about high potential for conflict relapse. All participants (individual and focus groups) maintained that the root causes of the decade-long war are still prevalent – gruelling poverty, socio-political exclusion, still largely inaccessible and biased justice system, widespread unemployment, among others. Institutions established in the peacebuilding process have all been ineffective in sustaining peace. The youths remain highly unemployed or underemployed and disgruntled, creating a ready source for recruitment for various misadventures.

Participants were confronted with three scenarios going into the medium to long term – potential for achievement of development goals, stagnation in a fragile state or relapsing into violent conflict. There was a slight majority (mostly Sierra Leonean security sector actors as well as independent thinkers) which fear that relapse into violent conflict is the most likely. However, some others, including former advisors, believe that while there are significant governance challenges, conflict relapse is less of a possibility. Two opposing views emerged, with one interviewee opining:

²⁰⁹ Examining the Highs and Lows in the Peace Dialogue and Collective Bargaining Agreement between the APC Party and the SLPP Government. Op Ed. @ <https://cocorioko.net/slpp-apc-peace-agreement-has-its-highs-and-lows/>

²¹⁰ Same report.

We could be going back down the same route. The most likely scenario going into the medium to long term is sliding back into violent conflict. The main factor this time is political competition and the recycling of grievances and revenge that goes with it. The Koroma and Bio regimes have traded reprisals across the governance system. Such conflict could start as low-level civilian-based clashes between ethnic groups. The increasing polarisation along ethnic lines has set the stage. The next elections could be the trigger for conflict due to the keenness of the contest.²¹¹

A contrasting opinion went thus:

There is only a 15% chance of a relapse into war. What we are most likely to have are intermittent outbreaks in violent confrontations between rival political actors. Therefore, the state will remain fragile in the long term and is not in a position to achieve its development targets.²¹²

Those who opined that conflict relapse is highly likely, assessed that conflict dynamics are somewhat different from the ones that characterised the war. Rather than a confrontation between the corrupt ruling elite and the deprived and marginalised masses, it is assessed as one that will be between the support bases of the two main political parties. While the hard socio-economic situation may be common to all citizens, there is less likelihood to be solidarity in such a highly divided society. Participants highlighted the recent August 10-12, 2022 protests – only the Northern regions and parts of the Western Area (opposition strongholds) joined in the demonstrations against the purported high cost of living, while the South and Eastern regions (the support base of the ruling party) were mostly quiet. Yet the effects of the high cost of living cuts across the whole country. It was unanimous though that development goals are not likely to

²¹¹ Interview with Julius Spencer in Freetown, 9th November 2022

²¹² Interview with Mahmoud Idriss in Freetown, 26th October 2022.

be achieved in the medium to long term due to general poor state governance induced by zero-sum politics and state capture of the bureaucratic system, including the security sector.

States that descend into violent conflict and those that remain in perpetual state of fragility both face serious development challenges. Fragility presents a major threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the analysis of 157 countries on SDG progress, fragile countries are consistently found in the bottom third, with extremely fragile countries clustered in the bottom three slots.²¹³

While the state of fragility threatens a state's aspiration for development, violent conflict has been referred to as 'development in reverse' (Collier, 2003). The World Development Report (2011) highlights direct correlation between civil war and key development indicators for countries affected by violence and those that are not. There is an increasing gap on many indicators such as poverty and infant mortality as well as economic growth. For example in 2021, Syria, South Sudan and the Central African Republic suffered the highest cost of violence equivalent respectively to 80, 41 and 37 percent of GDP.²¹⁴ Therefore, when the bulwark of state resilience and peace becomes highly fragile and can no longer hold up due to political, security and development pressures and war does break out, there is bound to be major reversals in human security and statebuilding gains.

The uncertainty around peace and security in Sierra Leone therefore, precipitated specifically by the poor governance of the security sector which reflects the overall politicised and patrimonial governance approach, signifies a state of fragility that may have direct effect on peace, human

²¹³ OEDC State Fragility Report, 2018

²¹⁴ Global Peace Index, 2022

security and economic growth. 'Defining the situation currently in Sierra Leone as 'stable', opines Natasha Louis (2018), 'would be a gross oversight and a complete disregard of its people and their persistent struggles'.

5.5 Conclusion

As has been demonstrated in this chapter, there is disparity embedded between claims of progress in policy rhetoric and global/regional indices and perspectives on the one hand, and opinions on the ground on the subjects of peace, democracy and development. The impression that is generated by the latter is one of general 'progress'; however, such 'progress' has been somewhat negligible, creating an illusory façade over the reality that the state remains in the ignoble 'red zones' of such indices, trapped in a post-conflict status. 'Truths' about Sierra Leone's reality are mostly articulated from partisan perspectives, meaning that each government in power (propagated by its propaganda machinery) articulates a rather idealistic message in order to manifest to citizens and the outside world a sense of commitment to liberal democratic governance. The combination of secondary data and perspectives from knowledgeable and experienced members of society (interviewed for this study) however expose the dismal reality beneath this illusory façade.

The emerging picture is one of a country that is highly fragile with negative peace whose claims to democratic standards are dubious at best; a system in which the security sector is politicised and co-opted to project and protect regime interests, representing total state capture of the bureaucratic body at large, virtual exclusion of opposition interests and inadequate regard for

wider societal challenges. Socio-economic aspirations of growth, poverty reduction, thriving community livelihoods, community safety, improved social services are all, in effect, compromised. As the state security forces continue to be inefficient, corrupt and politically manipulated and the state tethers on the margins of violent conflict, substantial FDI and other growth stimulators that may boost economic security also remain doubtful.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This study is premised on investigating how security and development have interacted as a mutually reinforcing nexus in post-war Sierra Leone, looking particularly at how far poor development outcomes can be attributed to how the security sector is being governed. This is done by taking a deep dive into security sector governance to reveal deficits as well as examine the state of socio-economic development to manifest the causal relationship between the two realms.

Enshrined in the security-development nexus theory is an admission of a strong conceptual correlation between security and development in both scholarly and grey literature. However, the absence of a true contextual 'success story' in terms of security interventions yielding development dividend makes questionable the theoretical strength of this nexus. Many researchers have suggested that finding a context where it is manifest could provide it theoretical entrenchment and help shape future domestic and foreign interventionist policy.

Such studies have revealed how the nexus has failed to work despite its strong correlation but mostly do not take a comprehensive deep dive into the more granular social, political and economic dynamics behind this, which could be helpful in providing deeper understanding the type of relationship between the two phenomena and inform policy and practice going into the future. This study has sought to build on existing knowledge by diving further into the reasons behind this functional disconnect covering the entire post-war period. The research is undertaken on the basis of understanding the underlying reasons through which, using the nexus as an analytical lens, it aims to provide an insight into the cause-and-effect relationship between security sector governance and sustainable development by examining their interaction within the context of SSR.

Sierra Leone a typical example of a state where SSR was expected to produce development dividend ('securitisation of development'). The evolution of the SSR concept to include a human security understanding was accepted as the way forward to not only stabilise a war-torn state by transforming its security apparatus but also to reposition it on a trajectory of recovery and resilience. A democratic civilian governance system was expected to deliver a professional, accountable and effective security sector which would make the achievement of development outcomes more feasible. However, twenty-two years after these interventions, has reformed SSG led to improved effectiveness and accountability of security services? Why has the co-location/integration of security and development policy (as in Poverty Reduction Strategies) not yielded the desired results? What role has the general post-war governance approach played?

Premised on the assumption that a state's security output derives from its quality of security sector governance, this chapter traces and analyses key deficits in both the progress of post-war

SSR/G and the status of security provision from data collected from the field, based on prescribed standards in the literature – those of DCAF (specifically articulated in a seminal work by Ursula Schröder [2010]) and Valters *et al.* (2014) who stress the use of the cardinal qualities of *equity* and *sustainability* in assessing progress in security service delivery. This chapter then proceeds to evaluate the wider national context bringing out key contextual lessons and their implications for policy and practice and ultimately analyses theory using process tracing (causal-process analysis) to bring out the causal links between the two research variables.

6.2 Analysing SSR Progress

As Ursula Schroeder (2010) has postulated, articulating a DCAF stance, measuring SSR progress requires an understanding of SSG as covering both the quality of service delivery (performance) and the quality of oversight and direction the security sector receives. The evaluation of SSG in this study therefore covers these two cardinal categories. Also important is the need to distinguish between ‘security governance’ and ‘security sector governance’ in that the former relates to the horizontal regulation of service provision/activities of both state and non-state actors while the latter specifically covers the vertical structure of decision making on state-run institutions pertaining to the state’s monopoly of the legitimate use of force despite the proliferation of security actors that may exist.

SSG is distinguished into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ forms (Schröder, 2010), what I have similarly labeled ‘good’ or ‘proper’ and ‘poor’ in this study based on the adherence to normative standards of transparency, accountability and effectiveness of service deliverers as well as the effectiveness

of the role of the governors and ‘watchmen’. Good or proper security sector governance therefore ‘refers to security sectors that are not only effective and efficient in providing security to the citizens of a state, but that are at the same time well governed’ (pp.10-11), while its bad or poor form refers to security sectors which, rather than providing security, are themselves threats to citizens or communities and/or where there is a lack (completely or latently) of democratic civilian oversight, sums Schröder.

Valters, Rabinowitz, & Denney (2014) also highlight the key concepts of equity and sustainability in evaluating overall progress in security. Focusing mainly on direct security service delivery, they suggest that there must be equal and impartial policy and operational output in terms of the divergent composition of society – geographical distribution, minority and opposition group interests, and domestic issues such as gender-based violence. Progress in security must also be sustainable with a commitment by governments to continuously maintain gains made as well as undertake reviews to incorporate emerging issues and to keep up with changing development priorities even after the withdrawal of foreign aid.

These prescriptions are fundamental in the analysis of SSG in Sierra Leone, based on the mixture of primary, secondary and archival data derived from the field. The selected security and development-relevant global and regional indices – the Fragile States Index, the Human Development Index, the Afrobarometer, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WWGI) to evaluate quality of governance, the Global Peace Index, the Global Hunger Index and the MDG & SDG performance ratings – all provide an ample picture for the case, backed by deep and objective perspectives from experts,

practitioners and experienced citizens provide a rich cocktail of interpretive epistemological knowledge to interrogate the research phenomenon.

6.2.1 Post-War Security Sector Status

6.2.1.1 Law/policy/strategy

Between 2000 (roughly the time the reform process set in in earnest) and 2007 when there was power transition, laws, policies and strategies guiding the status, affairs and operations of the sector were being drawn up and adopted. By the time of the transition, the NaSCI Bill (2002) had been enacted and a series of operational strategies had been developed. The National Security Policy however was still being nurtured, its absence creating an unwanted lack of policy direction. The Security Sector review had been developed and paired with the PRSP, signalling the significant link between the drive to stabilise the state and set it on a path to recovery and development.

6.2.1.2 Oversight/accountability

The oversight systems, including internal committees, Parliamentary and civil society structures have evolved upwardly over time following a series of engagements to improve knowledge and participation, but remain below par due to apathy, duty dereliction, corruption and still inadequate understanding of policy and operational mechanisms. As a result, there is still a gap in accountability systems for forces after operations which promotes impunity and dampens public confidence and trust. This is exemplified by a series of events between 2007 and 2023 which led to some serious human rights abuses, most of which went unpunished even after commissioned inquiries and investigations.

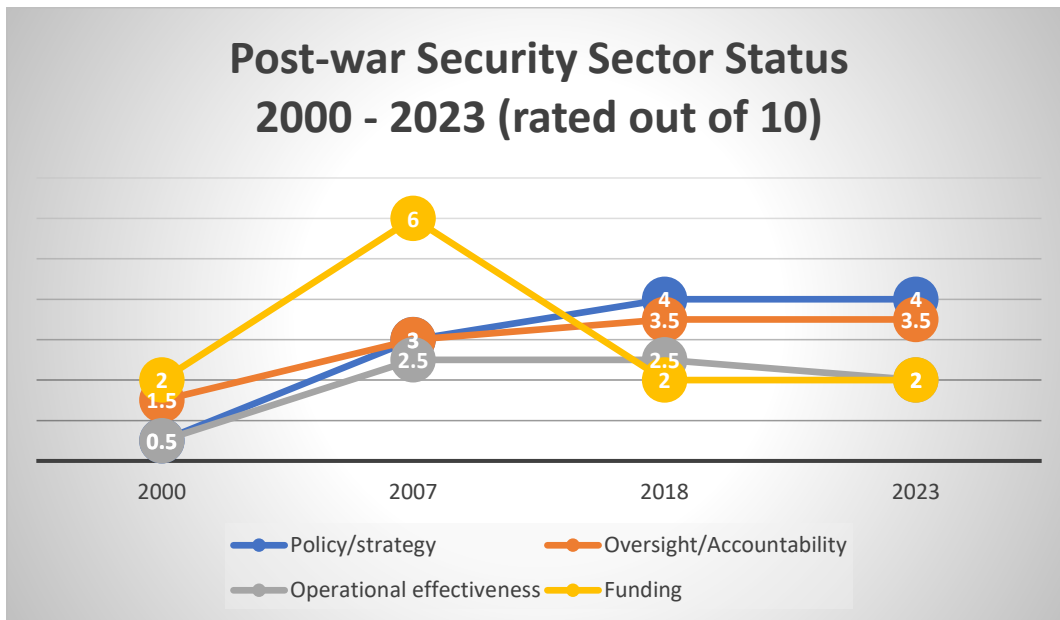


Figure 14 - Sierra Leone's post-war security sector status (Source: author)

6.2.1.3 Operational Effectiveness

There was as turnaround in operational effectiveness as the reform process developed. Consistent training and uplifting of standards for the uniformed forces, plus the overhauling of the intelligence and security service through the establishment of the ONS and CISU, have helped to upgrade service delivery. In terms of protecting state resources and preventing illegal extractions, there is still a lot to be required to make a difference as hardly any improvements have happened since 2007. In terms of protecting local communities and individuals, the principal actor being the police, there remain serious deficits by way of commission (direct pro-political party predatory behaviour and corruption) and omission (inability to provide security in times of increased violence and crime) (See Figure 16 for a more detailed categorisation). The military

being the most operationally and logistically capable, remain incapable of fully carrying out its constitutional defence mandate while it is also most times misused in the use of force to support civil authority. IMATT and now ISAT continue to provide training and advice, but the inadequacies remain.

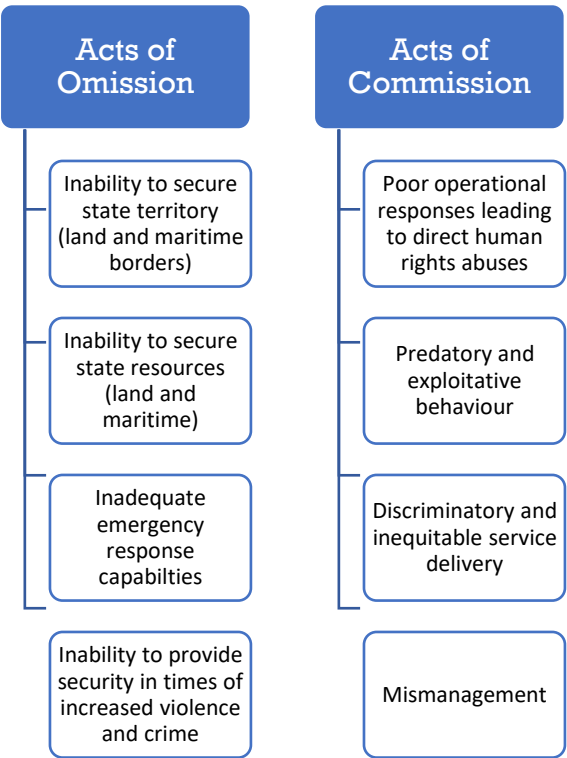


Figure 15 - Security sector performance categories

6.2.1.4 Funding

There was full DFID support through different projects for the whole of the security sector, save the Fire and Correctional Services, from the start of the reform intervention with contributions also from the UN and EU. With direct international funding ceasing between 2010 and 2012, and a reversion to normal government budgetary provision, funding dwindled badly with direct

consequence on operational and administrative costs. This is also resultant from budgetary prioritisation for other sectors in the face of the shallow national coffers and high aid dependence.

6.2.1.5 Politicisation

Post-war reform improved the security sector but, post 2007 saw reversion to politicisation. Perspectives from the data show a consensus on significant progress on reforming the security sector in contrast with the derelict condition of the security sector prior to and during the civil conflict. The highly politicised nature of the forces, especially during the two decades prior to the war, through total state capture meant that the sector existed and operated solely in the interest of the predatory ruling elite and became instruments of repression and terror against any form of criticism or opposition. The post-war reform process ushered in democratic governance standards which characterised wider state governance – policies and strategies which streamlined sector government and operations made a difference in mitigating the excesses of the past and helped enhance sector professionalism and service delivery.

However, the power transition of 2007 marked an era of reversion of gains made in reform standards when the sector faced repoliticisation, mostly out of mistrust and inadequate understanding of its reformed functions and mechanisms. Since then, there has been a consistent pattern of political party state capture of the sector, as the main parties take their turn in governance, thereby making it akin to the pre-war years in terms of prioritising interest of the ruling elite over those of the general public.

6.2.1.6 Disconnect between policy and practice

Findings from the data show consistency in views that Sierra Leone's legal and policy framework is quite admirable, showing a comprehensive and holistic horizontal approach to security in which all relevant actors are incorporated. There is also vertical integration evidenced by collaboration at the various strata of society – from strategic to the lowest Chiefdom level. The consistency of engagements at these various levels presents a strong semblance of SSR success which is highlighted internationally as a beacon of example for post-conflict states.

What is however also evident is that this well-touted legal and policy framework and its accompanying whole-of-society approach has in many respects failed to yield dividend during response operations. This is due mainly to logistical incapacity, professional deficiency (including failure to adhere to established procedures and low integrity), impunity and political interference.

6.2.1.7 Poor policy implementation

Post-war development plans have consistently integrated security; however, implementation has been poor, leading to under par development indices. This twinning of security and development policy, aimed at ensuring that security plays its supportive role to the achievement of development targets, while it has remained consistent, has hardly been followed up by commitment by governments to fully implement at programmatic level. The data shows that there is an impression of mere lip service by governments to create a good impression on donors.

Hence there is evidence of a form of localised conceptual-contextual divide (Sedra, 2010) which disrobes the security sector of the lofty impression it is known to have created.

6.2.1.8 Poor development indices resulting from poor SSG

Perspectives in the data are reveal mixed impressions, one being that achievement of development objectives (subsumed in national development plans) have been elusive due significantly to poor handling of security which has contributed to the state of fragility and is threatening economic growth, evidenced in threats to FDI, and human security evidenced by low livelihoods and chronic poverty. Other perspectives only place poor SSG as an accompanying cause for poor development outcomes and place higher responsibility on corruption and unrealistic policy targets. However, as a securitised threat which affects all levels of societal interaction, the security sector which includes the Anti-Corruption Commission, is put at the forefront of mitigating it. Ironically though, the security sector itself is not spared of corrupt manipulations which constrain it from performing to a substantial level.

6.2.1.9 Reform sustainability

According to DCAF (2005)²¹⁵ 'SSR is a long-term endeavour...achieving good SSG takes decades or generations, not months or years. Maintaining good SSG also requires constant ongoing adjustment as new challenges to state and human security arise, both externally and internally'. At policy level, security professionals have continually maintained policy compatibility with and incorporation of emerging challenges in reviews and assessments, especially made to match

²¹⁵ DCAF Backgrounder (2005), *Security Sector Governance and Reform*.

development plans as they emerge. However, these impressive deliveries have only been basic lip service as the required political commitment to implement them has been deficient. The data reveals that the delivery of basically all security requirements, whether on their own accord or as incorporated in development plans have been well below average, revealing a general lack of political commitment.

In sum, the graphical illustration (*Figure 15 above*) shows an improving trend between 2000 and 2007, understandably so since it was a period just following the complete collapse of state authority and functionality and for which there was a need for complete state reconstruction. The trend however plateaus (at best) or deteriorates (at worst) following the drawdown of international support and the resumption of state funding responsibility and fiscal superintendence. This clearly manifests the difference in commitment levels between local authorities and the international actors in sustaining reform standards and protecting progress made. There is the additional risk of further deterioration of standards in the face of continued state co-optation of the sector in the medium to long term which could further compromise the stability of the state and imperil the achievement of stipulated development outcomes.

6.3 Analysing Wider Context – Emerging Themes

6.3.1 Local under-prioritisation of SSR/G in development programming

Development cooperation policy and approaches, while they remain inclusive of Rule of Law considerations/requirements, currently exclude comprehensive funding regimes for security

sector reform/governance. SSR interventions remain key requirement for stabilising post-conflict and democratising states; however, donors tend to shift policy attention to more fundamental socio-economic development targets when perceived peace and stability have been attained.

The shift is precipitated by donor prioritisation for issues considered more fundamental such as health, education and climate needs. Prioritisation from global southern leaders have also been similarly inclined, relegating the importance of SSG progress sustenance. As a result, security sectors have suffered the unwanted effects of almost exclusive state funding and superintendence, making them vulnerable to political misuse and inadequate financial support.

In UK international development policy for example, while there is mention of playing a 'role in identifying and addressing the root causes of instability' through the mutually supportive interaction of defence, diplomacy and development, the four key policy priorities are supporting economic growth, supporting and protecting women and girls, promoting humanitarian response and prevention capabilities, and supporting climate change and public health issues²¹⁶, clearly excluding the need for effective security sectors in respect of its role in providing the necessary foundation for all of the other key priorities to take hold. Indeed, the acknowledgment of addressing causes of instability is undermined by this lack of prioritisation and calls for a rethink which may precipitate a return to SSR prioritisation as a key part of UK post-conflict intervention policy.

This transition in UK foreign policy was reflected in DFID's stand-down from funding Sierra Leone's security sector, transferring compete ownership and funding responsibility to

²¹⁶ UK Government's Strategy for International Development @ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-governments-strategy-for-international-development/the-uk-governments-strategy-for-international-development>

government; a move which has exposed both the inability and the under-prioritisation of national security matters at a time when the guns of war have gone silent. Subsequently, while there remains an ample articulation of security in development policy, implementation is inclined more to other social and economic realms, accounting for the sometimes grossly inadequate security sector budgets, oversight and policy deficits which also have a direct effect on operational effectiveness.

6.3.2 Retrograde democratic standards

The system of governance of the state reflects on the management of respective sectors. More specifically, as noted by Schröder (2015), ‘the type of political system in a country plays a crucial role in determining the quality of its form of security sector governance’ (p.24). Data derived for this study shows that Sierra Leone’s claim to a democratic state is evident mostly in relatively peaceful and successful elections, some of which have led to regime change during the post-war era. However, perspectives are that all the institutions of the state are captured and serve mostly political party interests. The security sector stands in the forefront of this state co-optation wherein allegiances are instantly switched every time power changes hands. This is ensured through appointment of loyalists as heads, nepotistic manipulation of recruitments as well as receipt of pro-party directives. The securitisation of threats through periodic threat assessments is also mostly a top-bottom process, critically relegating prioritised concerns from the wider citizenry. Where such assessments tend to be consistent with citizens’ concerns drawn from engagements at professional level, policy responses have been haphazard and disconcerted resulting directly from lack of political will.

6.3.3 Fragile peace; high conflict potential

It is shown in the data that Sierra Leone can make a serious claim to being one of the most peaceful countries in Africa. Obviously, the fact that it has not relapsed into violent conflict, as authoritatively predicted in studies and grey literature, is a key feature of the relative success of its peacebuilding efforts. While these peace indices are being touted as ‘achievements’ by respective administrations, perspectives and evidence exists that the peace being enjoyed is a negative one, with the state remaining highly fragile, split along ethno-political lines with a security sector being the vector through which political party power is projected.

Data evidence for this research shows divergence in views on the potential for conflict relapse; however, there is consensus on the state of fragility as evidenced by the persistence of the causes of the war, as highlighted in the TRC Report which successive governments have largely failed to address. Central to this is the handling of the security sector which manifests subtle similarities to its pre-war state of governance and remains a key derailing factor of the states’ ability to achieve its development targets.

6.4 Key Contextual Lessons for SSR/G and the Achievement of Development Targets – Implications for Policy and Practice

At theoretical level, the complexity of manifesting direct causal links has been highlighted. Contextually, Denney (2011) also notes that since security has so far failed to produce development as anticipated in Sierra Leone, the causal links may not be as straightforward as

implied, building on an observation which Ebo (2006) had earlier made. These studies explain how the evidence of success is absent; however, they do not go as far as to thoroughly unpack the black box of causal mechanisms to further investigate the more granular nuances that may be helpful in analysing the links. Roberts' (2020) study is one of the most recent assessments on SSR impact and utilises a similar approach to this study – process tracing – but only targets the security impact of SSR and not how it relates to the achievement of development objectives. As this study has shown, establishing those causal links are indeed not directly evident, especially to a non-specialist eye. The instrumental approach adopted herein in establishing causality has however proven helpful in that my professional practice, physical presence and insights from experts have helped in providing deep insights into the research phenomenon.

A deep dive into the accrued data for this study reveals the following key lessons:

i. Development policy recognises and includes security elements but fails to support them.

The consistency with which security and development policy integration has occurred complies with the theoretical acknowledgment of the link between the two realms; however, this has largely remained unimplemented resulting from lack of political commitment/will.

The dedication and hard work from the professional cadre to ensure the development of security policy that keeps pace with development objectives developed is not complemented by an equivalent commitment by the political leaderships for adoption and implementation.

ii. Maintaining SSR progress is heavily dependent on donor participation, even if only at advisory levels. A second major lacuna lies in the disproportionate levels of commitment for overall SSR progress in the donors and local political leaderships. While there may have been strong local inclusion in the reform process, local ownership has remained deficient evidenced

by the falling standards since 2007. It is clear that what drove progress and maintained standards was the strong inclusion of internationals whose participation provided technical guidance and whose presence went some way in providing a bulwark against political co-optation.

- iii. Persistence of traditional rather than the new understandings of security create inadequate assessment of SSR output.** Security is still being understood in its traditional kinetic sense and being the purview of uniformed security forces; the broadened and deepened understanding – human security – which makes imperative the whole-of-society approach is absent, creating a perennial underestimation of threats, misunderstanding of roles in service delivery as well as the role of the wider sector in providing the foundation for development from non-specialist policy makers and the wider public. Also, the output of SSR/G is usually assessed narrowly on direct security more than structural security (Schnabel, 2015), meaning that the security sector’s role in protecting national extractive resources and contributing to the economy is usually not as scrutinised as its capacity to protect the state.
- iv. Budgetary discrepancies between security and development portfolios result from under-prioritisation of security matters at peace time.** Funding national security is only prioritised when incidents of insecurity arise; relative stability extinguishes the need for physical security and diverts interest to more urgently perceptible development objectives, creating a gross imbalance in funding allocations. Considering the importance of an effective, accountable and professional security sector, funding support has to match the highest prioritised sectors.
- v. Top-bottom threat securitisation undermines citizen preferences.** The threat securitisation process which forms the basis of the formulation of biannual national threat assessments is

undertaken mostly at strategic level and leads to uneven allocation of response and prevention measures making some threats remain undressed, recurrent and perennial thereby undermining citizens' preferences and rendering some local communities perpetually unsafe with the additional effect of threatened livelihoods. The top-bottom process also tends to put higher prioritisation on the protection of political interests of ruling elites than on those of the wider citizenry.

- vi. *Checks and balances on security sector are compromised through state capture.*** Statutory measures stipulated to provide checks on excesses or underperformances of the security sector are usually compromised due to co-optation by the executive. Operational failures and administrative malfeasances do not always generate the requisite punitive or corrective measures, nor do they ignite the recognition of the need for improved standards.
- vii. *Armed military presence during benign situations creates a climate of instability.*** Regular, unnecessary and sometimes *ultra-vires* deployment of armed military force to maintain law and order during relatively benign situations, a stipulated police role, highlights major policing failures and signifies a reluctance to raise policing standards. This in turn creates an impression of high state fragility and instability and may undermine the impetus for FDI and other activities that may boost economic security.

6.5 Analysing Theory – From Correlation to Causation

Adapting Beach & Pederson's (2013) theory-testing causal process model, I have here unpacked the black box of the causal mechanism (CM) by highlighting conditions or states of affairs precipitated by actors rather than actions (*see Figure 16*). The theoretical level hypothesis is

evidenced by empirical indicators found in the case. Also included is the inclusion of a series of feedback loops to indicate counterfactual causation, crediting the model with more causal validity.

To reveal the causal links between the two main variables, I use the *instrumental approach* to causation which reveals that only a relationship of correlation is observable from the perspective of non-experts, and that both the insightful perspectives of experts interviewed for this study and the researcher's practical involvement in the phenomenon have been essential in revealing causal links. This is not to indicate that researchers who have hitherto suggested only a correlational relationship lack practical experience or analytical prowess; but by unpacking that black box through this model using available data collected for this research, causal links are observable (*Figure 16*). In this case the overall claim is that there is a causal relationship between the independent and dependent variable in the sense that changes in the former affect changes in the latter. That causal relationship though is not a direct and linear one. There are other variables that intervene in the causal process model, and have been endogenised, to provide cause and effect relationship. The model also carries feedback loops where some variables have a reverse effect on each other.

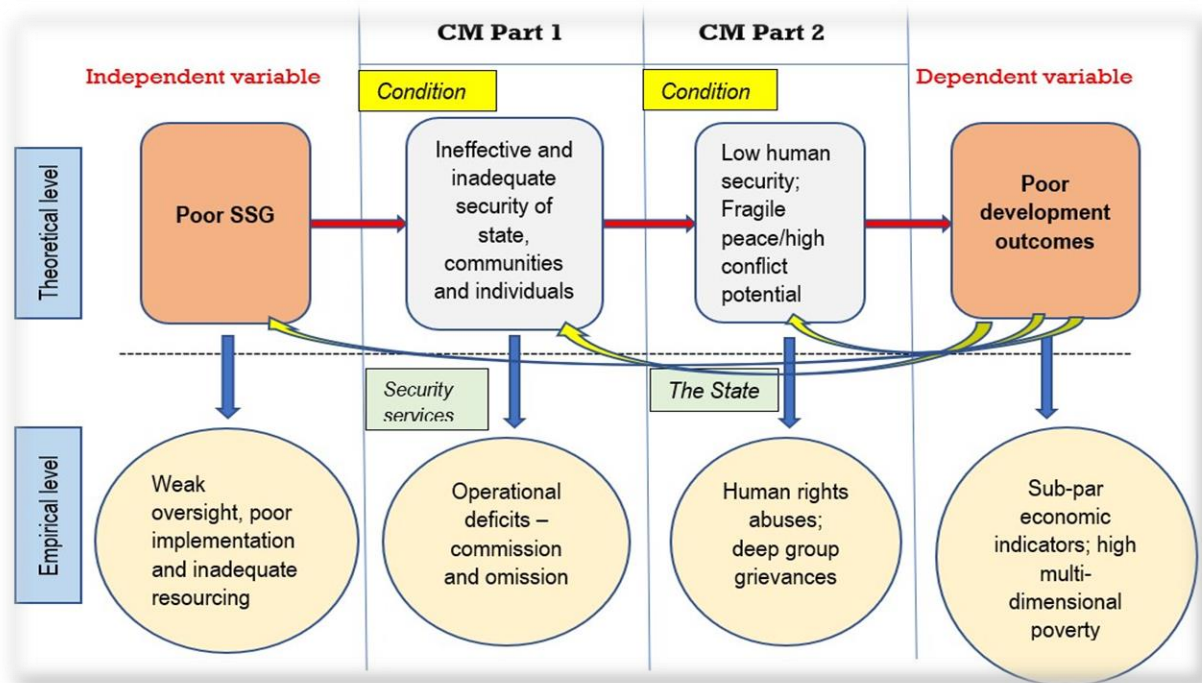


Figure 16 - Causal process model (adapted from Beach & Pederson, 2013)

Other variables that have been considered as complementary but not included in the causal process model are *democratic state governance (Rule of Law, human rights, functional oversight mechanisms)*. There are other variables such as *state fragility and conflict potential, neo-patrimonialism and state capture* which are complimentary and integral parts of the conceptual framework but have also not been included in the model. While they may have ample influence on the main variables by providing the overarching conditions and reasons, they are considered to be ‘understood’; rather than endogenised in the model.

The claim in this research is primarily that poor security sector governance can be the main derailer of the achievement of development goals; meaning that there is also a valid opposite interpretation that good security sector governance fundamentally leads to development. Poor

security sector governance is situated here as the independent variable since it is the main problem to dissect while socio-economic development is the dependent variable since achieving it depends on other phenomena. I also argue that it (SSG) is independent since it is a *governance choice* of the regime of the day and does not fundamentally depend on other variables. This means that to achieve development, proper security sector governance is imperative (though not exclusive).

The direct effect of good security sector governance is the establishment of professional, effective and accountable security services. This in turn leads to better service delivery which contributes to securing the state and its resources as well as promoting human security in its broad sense. This then forms the basis for the achievement of socio-economic development goals which is strategically aspired for by the state to mitigate the possibility of instability and make it resilient to shocks and economic setbacks. However, where the state fails to achieve development targets, there are reverse effects on the security of the state and on the quality of life for citizens in general. Within this situation, the state is less able to manage its security sector wherein other sectors may be prioritised due to constricted state funds. This reduces the capacity of security services and sets in the undesired effects.

The causal link established for this case study is more *probabilistic* than *deterministic* (Trampusch & Palier, 2016) since the relationship is not law-like as to indicate that poor SSG **must** lead to poor development outcomes; rather that in the instance of poor SSG, there is highly likely to be poor development outcomes. This analytical point is premised on the finding that SSG is a sufficient, though not necessary condition for development outcomes to be achieved since the intervening causal variables of professionalism and effectiveness of the security sector and the

existence of a stable, peaceful and secure state are essential for development outcomes to be achieved.

Sierra Leone is therefore a 'crucial case' (George & Bennet, 2005) which this study has shown to reveal a more than just a correlative link between security and development; it has been shown that there are causal links, albeit probabilistic, to provide the security-development nexus more theoretical entrenchment. Figure 18 illustrates the centrality of this research outcome in relation to findings in the contextual and wider literature.

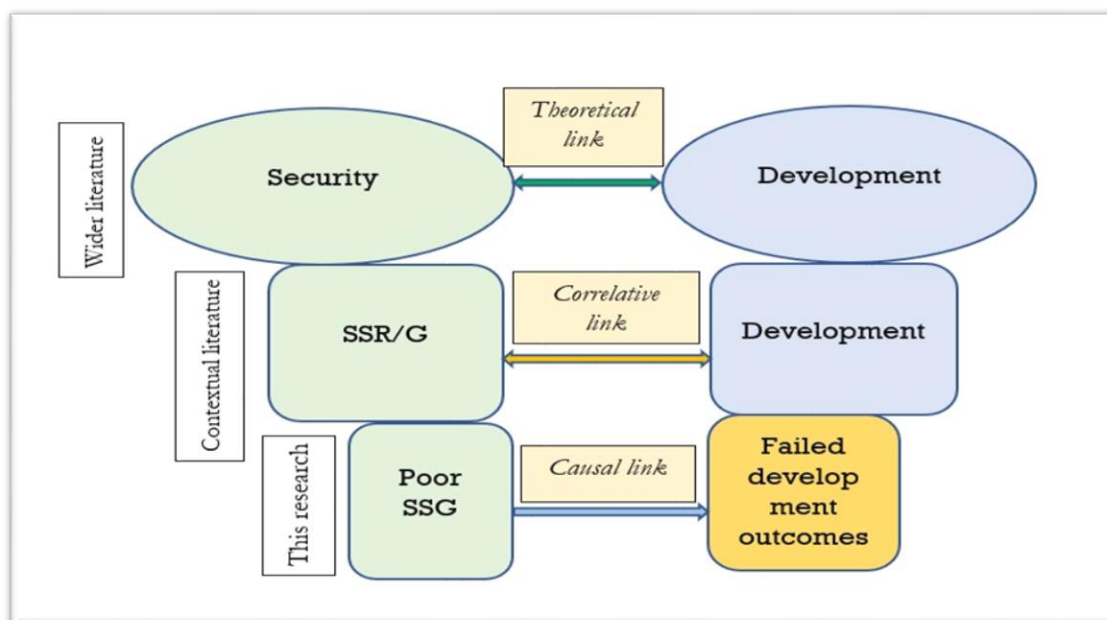


Figure 17 - Research outcome relative to existing literature

6.6 Rivalry or Complementarity of Alternative Explanations?

The data from interviews also brings out two additional explanations that account for poor development outcomes – political competition and corruption. While agreeing with the centrality of SSG as a cause, some respondents pointed out *competitive politics* as characterised by the fierce zero-sum rivalry between the two dominant political parties and the exclusionary governance approaches they adopt as a result – a scenario which has dominated the entire post-independence political history and which has become aggravated during the post war period. The highly toxic and intolerant politics belies the democratic accolades that have been granted to the state following successful (sometimes regime changing) elections. The democratic backsliding and state capture that result from competitive politics evidenced by latent autocratic executive domination of the governance space, constitutional and Rule of Law violations, co-optation of state institutions and human rights abuses are obvious features of a fragile state still reeling in conflict vestiges and development failures despite two decades and more of reform across various sectors.

Interview data also points to views that indicated ingrained *corruption* and high state graft as a key driver of development failures, characterised by the virtual privatisation of state resources by successive regimes – a feature that undermines the developmental value of both state-generated revenue and ODA. Data reveals negative perspectives towards the fight against corruption despite a recent apparent improvement and international accolades to the effect.

It is important to note that single causes are not always enough and that it is the combined effect of causes that explain most social phenomena (Ragin, 1987). This is manifest in this study wherein there are multiple pathways to poor development outcomes with competitive politics and corruption being the additional explanations with independent explanatory value. However, they form part of the poor SSG pathway since they tend to interact in a complex way due to their encompassing and mutually complementary nature. On the one hand, both alternative explanations are complementary in that the control of state resources, the 'booty' of electoral contests, is largely driven by identity politics with the goal of ethno-regional crony enrichment and aggrandisement; on the other hand both alternative explanations relate directly to security sector governance – competitive politics features the co-optation of the security sector to project political power and control while corruption is securitised and considered an integral aspect of threats to national security, with the security sector as a whole (including the anti-graft commission) carrying the responsibility of tackling it. Hence rather than compromising the significance of SSG as a key explanatory variable for development deficits, they enrich the explanatory value of the SSG pathway, reflecting the combined effect of variables that Ragin suggests.

6.7 Lessons from other Post-Conflict Contexts

Rwanda and Liberia offer two alternative but useful contexts for a plausibility probe of the SSR-development argument. Like Sierra Leone, both cases have had post-conflict SSR and DDR processes undertaken with the overall goal of establishing post-war stability, security and socio-

economic development. However, the results have been varying, attributable to the political relations and power dynamics that have existed beneath the façade of reforms. A cursory analytical recount here follows.

Rwanda

Rwanda's civil war (1990-1994), during which there was a devastating genocide, was mainly ethnic in nature and witnessed a mobilisation of several state and non-state groupings in perpetrating their various military political agendas. Despite what has been labelled a 'victor's peace' following a war in which the Tutsi dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front of Paul Kagame emerged victorious, the RPF-led government has endeavoured to adhere to the power-sharing elements of the Ausha Peace Accords as much as possible to grant it a face of national reconciliation and unity. However, only one leader has dominated the political space, winning successive elections with overwhelming majority votes and not providing much space for opposition and civil society to operate. Despite this, a relapse into war has so far been avoided and it remains on a strong footing towards middle-income status despite its lack of democratic credentials.

Key among steps taken in its postwar stabilisation efforts has been instituting an SSR-DDR process that has been widely known to be 'locally-owned' despite being predominantly externally supported. SSR has produced a competent army which, while a positive implication for stability, is also a barrier to a transparent security sector and consequently a democratic society. Strong preference for peace and security has dwarfed human rights and democratic requirements, generating both praise (for local ownership) and criticism (based on poor human rights and the

absence of political freedom) (Wilén, 2012). The failure of the international community to intervene decisively and end the war appeared to have precipitated the new regime to isolate itself and reject international interventions in its peacebuilding process.

It has consequently been able to resist external conditions and stay dominant in its reform process despite funding being mostly externally sourced. It has been very meticulous in its choice of donors, laying the foundation for a locally-owned processes to be initiated. The autocratic governance pattern, with criticism of preference for stability over democracy and ethnic favouritism under the façade of neutrality, suggests that it is more of government ownership of the SSR/G process targeted at protecting regime interests. However, regional peacebuilding involvements grant it a liberal outlook and minimise external criticism (Wilén, 2012).

Rwanda's SSR has been criticised as 'SSR without reform' (Wilén, 2012) in that first, the DDR programme was respective only of demobilisation and reintegration and devoid of a disarmament phase: while some members of the former government army, the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR), were integrated alongside other fighting elements, disarmament was unnecessary since the RPF simply transformed into the Rwanda Patriotic Army after the end of the war. Political requirements of the Arusha Accord which stipulated 2/3 for the Hutu majority and 1/3 for the Tutsi minority was applied but manipulated with Tutsis holding the high positions; second, civil society, political opposition and the press are all subjected to threats, preventing them from playing their 'watchdog' role; and third, a situation of "winner's justice" which is the indemnification of former RPF soldiers who perpetrated human rights abuses from facing retributive justice, instead facing only mild judgments from internal military tribunals (Wilén, 2012). SSR, DDR and transitional justice reform measures were generally implemented 'only to

the extent to which they contributed to, and did not threaten, the RPF-led political order' (Takeuchi, 2011).

Rwanda's HDI of 0.927 (2022) classifies it as very high and performing better than many post-conflict countries. In a study on Rwanda's future stability, Omar Macdoo (2024) notes that Rwanda's post-war reputation has been twofaced: economically, it has been hailed as a developmental state akin to Singapore while politically, it has been denounced as an ethnocratic dictatorship. This reveals the duality and contradiction in its statebuilding model and casts its future stability in doubt. Macdoo labels Rwanda's governance approach as 'securocratic statebuilding' which reflects two realities: prioritising security over freedom and equality by filling important government positions with military and intelligence elements, ruling by coercion and crushing dissent; and pursuing whatever policy is necessary to develop the state.

Liberia

Though it was not colonised by a Western power, Liberia's political history is similarly characterised by corrupt and repressive governance which reached a height during the period of the rule of by William Tubman and his successor William Tolbert. 'The Liberian social contract', as Ebo puts it, 'had been breached by a self-serving elite which misgoverned the people to the point of rebellion and anarchy' (2005, p.15) This laid the foundations for outright violent conflict leading to a breakdown of the state and the destruction of societal fabric of Liberia. Samuel Doe's military coup in 1980 to upstage Americo-Liberian domination and the rebellion launched by Charles Taylor's to neutralise Doe's tyranny and reverse Krahn privilege in 1990 were

culminations of long periods of volcanic accumulation of disaffection among marginalised and oppressed masses.

Under Tubman and Tolbert, the security sector had seen a long period of ethnicisation based on the tribe of the existing regime and personalised to protect the interests of the political elite. Doe and Taylor simply took it to another level, in the process creating a desperate need for reform. It was the realisation of the synergetic relationship between the 'state of security' and the 'security of the state' that created opportunities for SSR in Liberia (Ebo, 2007) wherein there was higher preference for the latter with its narrow focus on the state instead of the broadened human security scope of the former.

The Consolidated Peace Agreement signed in Accra, 18 Aug. 2003 provided the basis for DDR and SSR in Liberia. Mostly successful with a strong emphasis on human security approach and preventing conflict relapse, the technocratic SSR to outsourced private companies (for the army) and UNMIL (for the police) reflected a contrast between SSR as conceptualised and its reality on the ground and also manifested a dichotomy between *efficiency of output* and *effectiveness of output* (Podder, 2013), initially targeted reconstructing mainly the army and the police paid less attention to other security sector agencies (Griffiths, 2023), did not prioritise the need for instituting an effective democratic civilian oversight to accompany the quest for operational effectiveness (Ebo 2005, Podder 2023) and focused too drastically on state monopoly of force disregarding the multiplicity and utility of non-state actors as providers of security and justice (Bjarnesen, 2023). An early review of programmes done in 2009, five years after the end of the war revealed 'mixed results': that army reform was generally a 'provisional' success, police

reform poor with public perception and trust unfavourable, accompanied by growth of vigilantism²¹⁷. As things stand, high crime rate, mob justice, perceived extra-judicial killings, mistrust in the security services, and an inability of the police to respond to crime characterise the security climate.²¹⁸

Liberia has seen progress in its democratisation process with successful regime changing elections held. While respective governments have faced protests on grounds of poor governance and corruption, there have been consistent commitment (at least in policy) to maintain democratic progress and improve human security. Like Sierra Leone and many other post-conflict countries, Liberia has laid out a series of national development plans and poverty reduction strategies as the obvious roadmap out its human security challenges and in compliance with the MDGs and SDGs. These strategies have acknowledged and incorporated security in various ways with the current one addressing peace, security and the Rule of Law and Improving Security Service Delivery.²¹⁹

However, peacebuilding and SSR have so far failed to alleviate poverty, as normatively conceived (Biswas, 2016). Poorly governed, under-resourced and ill-equipped despite the establishment of reformed structures and systems, the security sector still manifests instances of executive politicisation and manipulation. Liberia remains at the bottom rungs of the Human Development Index with a ranking of 178 out of 191 countries and territories that has hardly been bettered in

²¹⁷ International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Uneven progress in Security Sector reform* (2009) @ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/liberia/liberia-uneven-progress-security-sector-reform>

²¹⁸ The State of Security Sector reform & Governance in Liberia, ASSN Report, 2023 @ <https://www.africansecuritynetwork.org/assn/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/The-State-of-Security-Sector-Reform-and-Governance-in-Liberia.pdf>

²¹⁹ Pillar 3 (Sustaining the Peace) of the POVERTY REDUCTION AND GROWTH STRATEGY of 2021 @ <file:///C:/Users/Y460/Downloads/1LBREA2021002.pdf>

its post-war history. Its GDP growth rate has performed just as poorly as its multi-dimensional poverty index.

Comparative Analysis (*See Table 2*)

Sierra Leone and Liberia reflect a similar causal relationship between security and development generally, and between SSR and the achievement of stipulated development targets – negative SSG = negative development, on the assumption that the security sector carries the mantle for contributing to growth, consolidating peace and creating the enabling environment for development. Through latent co-optation of the security sector, exhibiting a façade of commitment to good democratic governance while exerting control from underneath, regimes are able to drive strategic and operational output to protect their interests.

Rwanda manifests more starkly the effects of open co-optation, ethnisisation and securocratisation of SSG, a deficit in itself by established standards of democratic governance and a hallmark of autocratic governance; yet while this type of ‘ownership’ maintains peace and contributes to stronger development indices especially on growth, it is at the detriment of political freedoms and fundamental human rights. This ironic trade-off falls under the typology of *illiberal peacebuilding*, probably resulting from a victor’s peace which, as Piccolino (2015) notes, while sacrificing individual freedoms prevents relapse into armed violence, promotes peace and stability and through the generation of economic development and increased prosperity, aspires to overcome the root causes of war.

Aspect	Rwanda	Liberia	Sierra Leone
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Peace & stability	Stable (negative peace)	Stable but highly fragile	Stable but highly fragile
Democratic credentials	Poor (ethnocratic dictatorship)	Moderate (successful electoral transitions but latent autocratisation)	Moderate (successful electoral transitions but latent autocratisation)
SSR/G	Strong local ownership, effective but repressive security forces; no known alternative security provision	Weak oversight and democratic control, latently repressive security forces, high vigilantism due to policing deficits	Weak oversight (good structures but ineffective), politicisation, latently repressive security forces, moderate vigilantism due to policing deficits
Development & Human security	Relatively impressive development indices	Poor development indices	Poor development indices
Main lessons on SSR	Mainly locally driven SSR: mixed success with democratic oversight deficits, poor human rights, improving macro-level development but poor human security.	Mainly externally driven SSR (with minimal local ownership): mixed success with state security and justice provision below par and contested.	Mainly externally driven SSR: successful due to high initial local ownership but suffering reversals due to reduced external involvement, diminishing government ownership and repoliticisation.

Table 2: *Post-conflict statebuilding and SSR case comparison*

The different manifestations of local ownership provide explanatory value in understanding the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of SSR and its subsequent effect on development. The Rwandan political context has been stagnant (with one leader throughout) driving the post-war reform process with high national interests that utilised external funding but only selectively adopted external technical input. In Liberia, the reform process was entirely externally sourced with minimal national ownership. Despite power peacefully changing hands indicating improvements in the democratisation process, there has been little change in the approaches and attitudes to SSG. The Sierra Leone case is unique in that the post-war history shows two different epochs – one of initial relative success and another of more recent declining outcomes resulting from a change in political will. With power peacefully changing hands, there was higher SSR success during first

period and diminishing political will and local government ownership during second period, illustrating the centrality of local politics in SSR interventions.

A concluding analytical point is that if empirical causality rather than mere theoretical correlation between security and development generally, and between good SSG and the achievement of development outcomes more specifically, are articulated, recognised and incorporated into policy and practice, (in other words if ownership as construed in the wholistic, national sense, is entrenched) the security sector stands in a better stead to mitigate both acts of omission and acts of commission in its service delivery, thereby improving respect and protection of human rights, boost growth through more competent protection of extractive resources and promote positive peace and stability.

6.8 Conclusion

While revealing the deteriorating state of SSR/G in Sierra Leone, this chapter has revealed key lessons that can be learnt from how and why SSG deficits manifest themselves and how these deficits affect development outcomes. It has been demonstrated that failures in SSG have had both direct and indirect effects on development progress during the post-conflict period leading to the theoretical conclusion that the security-development nexus transcends mere correlation to one of causation as revealed by qualitative insights from data accrued in this research. Building on Biswas' finding (2016), it empirically illustrates that it is not a flawed theory; it is basically one that has been constricted by improper implementation.

The outcome of this study, in sum the articulation of a probabilistic causal relationship between SSG and development, analysed through the wider security-development nexus lens, can be viewed against the backdrop of existing literature as a novel thesis. Duffield (2014) and Schnabel (2015) among others, highlight an inadequacy of empirical evidence addressing the nexus. Duffield stresses strong mutually reinforcing links in that both are dependent on each other, albeit conceptually. Schnabel posits the presumed but understudied and undertested nature of the nexus and suggests that a deep dive analysis into SSR may provide it some theoretical foundation. In this study, the granular examination of Sierra Leone's SSR history and progress to reveal causal links between SSG and development outcomes goes some distance to not only evidence the presumed correlation but also provide that deficient theoretical soundness to the nexus (See Figure 15). Therefore, while the links between the two are conceptually and empirically evident, the absence of the intended impact neither suggests conceptual incongruity nor the impracticability of the nexus; rather it suggests that a deficiency in the other integral requirements, illustrated here as causal mechanisms, could impede the achievement of those impacts.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Problematizing the security-development nexus, the analytical lens used for this study, I have investigated how deficits in security sector governance, a key feature of security sector reform, have affected the achievement of development outcomes in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Unpacking this enquiry brought key questions – what have been the links between security and development in post-war Sierra Leone relative to debates on the security-development nexus? Where do these security sector governance deficits emanate from and how have they manifested themselves? How have they accounted for development failures? What lessons can be learnt from this to inform wider post-conflict SSR programming?

Answering these questions have churned out seven chapters comprising those that first set the stage by reviewing the literature, building the conceptual and philosophical foundation for the inquiry, and those that analytically narrate the historical evolution of the sector, analyse the research questions using existing literature and perspectives gleaned from key knowledgeable and analyse these data through process tracing.

In this closing chapter, a review is first undertaken into how the overall research aim and enquiry have been addressed through analysis of findings. Seven conclusion points are derived with relevant findings referenced, accompanied by a tabular summary for more concise presentation. The methodological design which directed the data requirements and collection methods and the analytical process are then summarised, including the challenges encountered and how they were surmounted. This chapter then proceeds to provide a demonstration of how this research contributes to knowledge in theoretical aspects adapting and explaining a causal process model used in presenting the research outcome, and in practical aspects which speaks to policy formulation relevant to both local and external actors. The limitations of the study are then articulated, covering generalisability, researcher positionality and other methodological approaches that may have been considered. The chapter closes with recommendations for future research before a closing summary is done.

7.2 Addressing the Research Aim²²⁰

The research is undertaken with the overall aim of manifesting the centrality of security in development programming through the investigation of links between SSR/G and socio-economic development in post-war Sierra Leone. By providing empirical evidence that poor development outcomes are attributable to poor SSG, in the process helping to provide theoretical entrenchment to the widely-held correlative security-development nexus, it strives to create a more meaningful integration of security and development policy and practice in the realisation of national development plans and the Sustainable Development Goals in Sierra Leone. By

²²⁰ See Table 3: Answering the Research Questions – Summary of Findings

unravelling security sector governance deficits and how they affect the achievement of development targets, it is hoped that the level of awareness and interest will be raised to ensure the right approaches in making the security sector more effective and accountable to ensure human and national security. Consequently, the political will necessary for sustenance of progress in the SSR process which commenced circa the start of the millennium will be reignited despite the incongruous rival political interests of the ruling elite.

In striving to achieve this grand aim, this research found that while Sierra Leone has been touted as a good example of post-conflict SSR and its security sector hailed as relatively compliant with liberal democratic standards, major deficits in SSG remain which are in consequence inhibiting the achievement of development objectives. The findings generally indicate that while there may be other responsible causes, SSG deficits play a significant role in development failures.

More specifically, this research brought out the following:

- i. As seen in Chapter 5 which details the post-war transformation of the security sector by examining the evolution and current status of the main institutions, the post-war SSR process has been largely successful if a comparison is to be made in the status of the security sector pre- and post-war. There was an improving trend in standards until donor funding and foreign participation dwindled, manifesting deteriorating and unsustainable local ownership and interest. The evolution of the sector under reform and its concomitant effect on performance involved the restructuring of individual agencies as well as the broadening of its remit and approach to a holistic one dictated by the 'new' understanding of security which caters for the protection of both the state and the individual. This understanding triggered a whole of

government/whole of society approach and has ensured the inclusion of a plethora of actors, including a hybridity of formal state structures and traditional ones, to cater for decentralised service delivery. With a significant role played by external actors working initially (roughly between 2001 – 2007) with a government with a desire and will to establish a sector (especially military elements) that was more accountable to civilian democratic authority, the restructured sector had gone a long way to raise its professional profile and service delivery **relative to** the dysfunctional state it was in prior to and during the civil conflict. However, reform gains have not been sustained due to the dwindling role of external actors as well as political transitions that have ushered in administrations that have not replicated the ambitions of their predecessors.

- ii. Proper governance of the security sector, in a bid to establish a professional, effective and accountable sector that is respectful of the fundamental principles of human rights and the Rule of Law, has suffered first, from anaemic political will and prioritisation; and second, from a gap between policy and practice wherein policies are adopted but fall short of full implementation; and third, where there is direct politicisation and co-optation originating from threat securitisation to manipulations in appointments and recruitments. These governance deficits speak to the independent variable of this research and set the premise for how it relates to, and accounts for, development failures which is the dependent variable. Findings discussed in Chapter 6 have demonstrated that, informed by the normative consensus on the security-development nexus, there is consistent integration of security in development policy and vice versa. However, this strategic policy integration does not necessarily translate into practical implementation where equitable premium is placed on the

importance of both realms. In the absence of direct violence, peace and security are assumed and taken for granted, precipitating a prioritisation for development objectives in latent disregard for the security that is necessary for them to be achieved.

- iii. Due to the deficits in capability and governance highlighted above, SSR goals of creating a sector that is subordinate to democratic principles and in a better position to support development have been systematically reversed. While it can be considered much improved, data in this study shows that the sector currently not only lacks the ability to adequately protect the state (its territory and extractive resources) and its local communities and citizens, it has also oftentimes proven to be predatory and exploitative, regularly itself a source of insecurity with a dismal human rights record due to poor operational outcomes. As shown in Chapter 6 (Section 6.3), the policy formulation/implementation gap compounded by inadequate political will has oftentimes led to poor operational outcomes.
- iv. The incapability, ineffectiveness and latent unaccountability of the security sector makes it unable to fulfil its role of creating a secure and stable society that is necessary for the achievement of development objectives. For the much-acknowledged security-development nexus to work, the security sector needs a certain level of professionalism and capability, backed by the appropriate legal and policy framework. However, while the policy framework does exist, implementation deficits have rendered the sector incapable of providing this supportive role for development. Development deficits, especially macro-economic growth and poverty reduction, have been shown to be partly attributable to these security sector incapacities. This theme runs through the whole of Chapter 6.

- v. The macro-economic challenges of a constricted, aid-dependent state economy and micro-level individual and community poverty remain ingrained, significantly but not exclusively attributable to the governance and resultant underperformance of the security sector. Other factors have been brought to account for, in relation to SSG deficits, failed development outcomes such as political competition and corruption. These factors are considered alternatives explanations rather than rival ones, in that they do not only relate to SSG, they are also complementary. The causal mechanism which articulates the link between the two main variables of poor SSG and failed development outcomes, also showing the intervening variables, is unpacked using causal process analysis (discussed in Chapter 6).

The peace being enjoyed is only a negative one, characterised by the absence of direct violence. Structural violence remains, including vulnerability to economic, environmental and public health shocks, which threaten lives and livelihoods. The findings data (detailed in Chapter 7) manifests that Sierra Leone is most likely to remain on a path of fragile stagnation, always tethering on the brink of conflict relapse, rather than on a path to achieving its medium to long term development objectives. This is attributable to poor SSG as much as it does to avaricious and exclusionary politics and high-level corruption.

7.3 Summary of Methodological Approach

To inform the research enquiry, the type of data required were deep individual and group insights and analyses from persons considered knowledgeable on the research issues, both local and

international, which were acquired through interviews and focus group discussions. With a combination of a purposefully selected sampling frame and some snowballs, qualitative perspectives were acquired that provided answers to the research questions. A case study approach was utilised using these qualitative data which were collated and analysed interpretively using thematic analysis.

To achieve the research aim of establishing a causal relationship between the two key research variables of SSG and socio-economic (national) development over a time scope of just over two decades, process tracing method was utilised in which causal mechanisms were unpacked to reveal other conditions that were required, and in so doing, revealed a non-linear causal chain with feedback cause and effect loops.

Initial thoughts around methodological choices pertained to making a choice among qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The literature survey revealed a strong inclination for qualitative approaches, but some authors have tended to utilise mixed methods bringing some survey aspects to validate hypotheses. There is little doubt that statistical surveys hold strong applicability in investigating social science phenomena, but I found that in-depth knowledgeable perspectives would be of better use since it is based on an interpretivist rather than positivist philosophy. Time and resource constraints also played a part in my qualitative method choice; nonetheless, perspectives gleaned could be said to be amply representative of the broad spectrum of Sierra Leonean and foreign experts on the subject. Another challenge was making a choice on an appropriate approach for the use of process tracing which eventually led me to adapting Beach & Pedersons' causal mechanism model which proved useful in explaining covariation. *(See 7.5.2 and 7.5.3 for details on methodological limitations).*

Among the administrative challenges were access to participants, some of whom tended to shift appointment dates and times; serving officials being open and frank with perspectives on issues considered sensitive, eliminating biases and extraneous material; and ensuring information from classified state material is properly utilised within both the state's and the university's codes of conduct.

What role can a professional and effective security sector play in the post-conflict development of Sierra Leone?				
Enquiry	Related theory/concept	Expectation	Findings	Data/Evidence
Is the security sector professional, effective and accountable?	Security sector reform/governance	Successful SSR depended largely on external involvement	Supported. With external support, SSR had successful impact from end of war up to around a decade. Reformed security sector ushered in more professionalism, better governance and improved effectiveness	Key informant interviews and secondary data summarised with direct quotes and paraphrases in Chapter 3.
	SSR reversal	SSR reversal precipitated by lack of local ownership and interest	Supported. Regime change in 2007 and eventual donor withdrawal impacted on SSR continuity. Challenges of politicisation/co-optation through nepotistic appointments and recruitments; funding under-prioritisation; poor policy implementation	Key informant interviews and secondary data shown in Chapter 3
	SSR/G and sector effectiveness; human security	The result of weak SSG itself creates unaccountable security sector which could be predatory rather than supportive of human security	Supported. The co-opted security sector operates largely on the whims and directives of the governing elite, ushering in a culture of impunity. Poor operational outcomes leading to human rights abuses.	Key informant interviews and secondary data shown in Chapter 4.
	SSG, state fragility, peace(building) and conflict potential	Poor SSG is a feature and precipitator of a fragile state with high conflict potential.	Mostly supported. The state remains fragile (with negative peace) where its security sector is poorly governed, incapacitated and unprofessional.	Interviews, FGDs, secondary data collated and presented in Chapter 5.
How far can the failure to achieve development outcomes be attributed to security sector governance deficits?	SSR/G and development	Development challenges remain ingrained, attributable to the governance and resultant underperformance of the security sector.	Supported in part on grounds that it does <i>significantly</i> but not <i>exclusively</i> . Zero-sum political competition and corruption are postulated as alternative explanations. Poor management of protests and demonstrations, and intermittent coup attempts are signs of SSG deficits. Such regular manifestations of instability (with the legitimacy of regimes sometimes contested) negatively impact FDI, ODA, tourism and other macro-economic stimulators.	Interviews, FGDs, secondary data and grey literature collated and presented in Chapter 6.

			Human security and poverty reduction also negatively affected.	
	Security-development nexus	Stagnated or reversed SSR gains have a direct impact on state and human security and socio-economic development	Supported. Security sector incapable of securing the state territory, resources and local communities. High rate of illicit resource exploitation; unsafe communities	Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and secondary data shown in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3).
How can this study contribute to the analysis of SSR and the security and development nexus?	SSR; security-development nexus	While SSR remains useful in creating a culture of professionalism in the security sector, its dependence for success on liberal democratic systems undermines its long-term relevance due to the existence of hybrid political orders in developing states. Probabilistic causality suggests security provision through SSR/G as a significant contributor to peace and development but only as a part of a range of factors; strengthens the case for more prioritisation of security policy implementation within the context of development. (Chapter 6)		

7.4 Research Contribution

7.4.1 Contribution to theory

The existing scholarly and grey literature consistently highlights a strong theoretical correlation between good SSG and the achievement of development, and on security and development on a wider scale.

Table 3 - Answering the research question: summary of findings This position has informed policy development

in many post-conflict contexts where there has been a consistent integration of security and development policy. There is unanimity in the stance that this link however stops only at being a correlative one since SSR appears to have, empirically speaking, fallen short of making the desired development impact. Theoretical correlations that inform policy making stop short of yielding the development dividend.

Using an adapted model from Beach & Pederson's theory-testing (2013) to unpack the black box of the causal mechanism between poor SSG as the independent variable and poor development

outcomes as the dependent variable, it can be seen that the causal link exists but is not direct nor is it linear; other conditions and the actors that precipitate them, with feedback effects on each other, increase the probability of the relationship and are therefore integral to the model (*Figure 16*). Therefore, to illustrate the outcome of this research relative to existing literature, an inverted pyramidal impression emerges where at the top the wider literature presents a theoretical link between security and development, at midlevel where the contextual literature presents a correlational link between SSR/G and development, and at the nucleus where this research presents a causal link between deficits in SSG and poor development outcomes (*see Figure 17*).

This research has helped to entrench the security-development nexus by establishing at least a probabilistic causal link between poor SSG and poor development outcomes in Sierra Leone. In so doing, it may help in solving the research problem by reconnecting the gradually diverging realms through re-informing policy makers of the benefits of understanding the causal links. An epistemologically valid conclusion then is that eliminating identified SSG deficits may considerably improve sector effectiveness, put it in a better stead to mitigate its acts of omission and commission and help create the necessary stability for human security and national development.

This research has followed Schnabel's suggestion that a better understanding of the relationship between SSR and development through the provision of empirical evidence to manifest a mutually beneficial relationship can help reconcile the apparent reluctance in collaboration between SSR and development practitioners. It is important to investigate and substantiate the assumed relationship between SSR and its impact on development by first, crafting a better

understanding of the relationship, then second, locating the space in which the interlinkages take place (2015). In this research, an attempt has been made to clarify these interlinkages by providing some empirical evidence and locating the space in which they interact. This should help practitioners from both fields to embrace each other's objectives in programming going into the future.

7.4.2 Contribution to policy and practice

The perennial struggle between externally-driven SSR and local ownership raises the question of whether SSR remains useful for development in post-conflict states. There is need first to clarify the ambivalence in understandings and approaches for what successful SSR is and what effective and professional security sectors are. Drawing from findings in this study as well as other contexts covered herein, the main conclusions on the key requirements for successful SSR are as follows:

i. Democratic civilian oversight:

Most developing states, especially post-conflict ones have governance systems that are illiberal democracies at best, with evidence of hybrid political orders, or autocracies at worst. Since the success and sustainability of SSR depends on liberal democratic systems, the promise of SSR as an integral part of broader peacebuilding, statebuilding and development remains is cast into doubt.

ii. Effectiveness (capacity vs legitimacy)

Since hybridity is a dominant factor, the effectiveness of security sectors in hybrid political orders tends to be a relative phenomenon – the ability to protect regimes and their interests as against the ability to protect the individuals and local communities. In Sierra Leone, perceived

effectiveness lies in the ability to respond to regime protection measures such as tracking and suppressing renegade and subversive behaviour as well as exporting security forces to foreign peacekeeping missions; much less protecting extractive resources and local communities from crime, violence and natural emergencies. In Rwanda the security forces are considered effective in the way they deploy their capabilities to protect the regime, while committing human rights abuses in the process, and their expeditions in peacekeeping in the region. The respected SSG requirements are only those that privilege domestic political interests. Hence any claim of effectiveness of such sectors is severely undermined.

iii. Accountability

Democratic oversight as a key requirement demands strong accountability standards. Yet in hybrid political orders where regimes' legitimacy may be questionable or contested, the democratic oversight element becomes deficient. The question of 'whose ownership' of security provision is then brought into perspective: since such governments often utilise security forces to promote policies and directives that often ignore local community interests and resist input and criticism from oppositions, civil society and the press, it is clear that local ownership is predominantly regime-centred.

The overall utility of SSR is however not extinguished since it helps to acknowledge the relevance to (and utility for) development policy, introduce a culture of civilian control of the sector, especially the defence forces, internally professionalise composite agencies, and improve

systems, processes and collaboration (whether they are adhered to during real-time situations or not).

As part of the call for a second generation SSR, acknowledging hybridity in the political orders of states and integrating adaptability and long-termism in projects helps to promote success rates by establishing the flexibility to absorb strategic deviations and providing safeguards against political misuse. Donors still seem to have second generation SSR, acknowledging conceptual/contextual divides and respective of local political dynamics, as the refined strategic posture especially for post-conflict stabilisation programmes. Local interests remain dominant but external technical and financial input remains vital for sustainability.

This study proves that the security sector's role, whether in providing protection for state and citizenry (acts of omission) or refrains from acting as an instrument of repression itself, commission, is obvious in ensuring development targets are achieved. This makes imperative proper SSG as a product of a successful and sustained SSR which includes acknowledging the multiplicity of actors as well as competing local political interests, in statebuilding programming and policy prioritisation.

It is the mode of state governance, which streamlines the *type* of local ownership and the extent of hybridity, that stands as a deciding factor in whether the sector can play this vital role or not. Local political commitment requires an acknowledgement of, and commitment to this, for that vital output to be realised.

For donors: There is still considerable donor interest in SSR/G as part of the wider governance of developing states, mainly premised on a principle of 'upstream' conflict prevention. The Sierra Leone situation taught some good lessons in shaping and programming the overall SSR approach. This research has however brought out additional lessons –

- that local political interest in SSR is mainly driven by the presence and participation of internationals, the termination of which sees a deterioration of standards and progress
- That policy and legal frameworks which create an impression of progress do not always translate into full implementation due to apathy and inadequate or under-prioritised resource allocation
- that the protection of elite interests drives a wedge between the political class and the professional cadre who have benefitted from ample training and experience
- that the continuous politicisation of the security sector does not only reverse gains previously made, it also alienates the sector from the citizenry it is supposed to protect
- That politicisation also creates an atmosphere of impunity from having to account for corruption and mismanagement in the sector
- That the capacity gaps created by poor SSG have direct and indirect effects on the achievement of development plans. This effect is mostly either overlooked or presumed non-existent.
- That based on the above, good SSG still holds some value in the development realm and ought to be supported.

For local political leaderships: Local political attention and interest in SSG has been lax and inadequate. The effect of this has seen the security sector poorly governed, with deficits creating instances of insecurity, compromising peaceful coexistence and impeding progress on the development front. Lessons learnt from this study make imperative the realisation that:

- That failed policy implementation creates ineffective and unaccountable security sectors. There must be firmer and more consistent adherence to existing policies and strategies
- That output from the professional cadre must be given higher consideration for adoption
- That the politicisation of the sector through nepotistic and sometimes retrograde appointments has a direct effect on sector output
- That an ineffective and unaccountable security sector is itself a direct threat to the state and its people.
- That the sector's inability to protect state territory, resources and local communities sit at the heart of development failures.

7.5 Limitations of The Study

7.5.1 Generalisability

This study is a close examination of the Sierra Leone situation with a hind view of it being representative of peacebuilding, SSR and development in post-conflict scenarios. While it is

acknowledged that contexts are unique and must be approached with acknowledgement of the specificity of their local dynamics, it was hoped that findings herein would be generalisable in both theory and practice. Generalisability deficits potentially arise based on the fact that the causal link established is only a probabilistic one, meaning that while it may hold value for informing practice and policy making, its contribution to theoretical refinement may not be seismic.

7.5.2 Researcher positionality

The position of the researcher as both an indigene of Sierra Leone and a serving member of the security sector has been acknowledged, with steps taken to mitigate the probable adverse effects on the objectivity of the research. However, in some instances, not all discussants were able to open up thoroughly knowing the status and values of the researcher. There was need to interpret such data beyond the semantics to bring out latent meanings, which may not indemnify it from some inaccuracies in their interpretation.

7.5.3 Methodological issues (sample size, time horizon and causal process analysis)

The methodology used herein include a purposeful sampling with interviewees and discussants (citizens and advisors) carefully selected based on the researcher's knowledge of their honesty and objectivity. Deliberately excluded were politicians and political party propagandists whose views, one way or the other, may have turned out to be of some value.

There could be some constraints with the longitudinal approach of this study. The research covers a time scope of roughly 23 years, which is Sierra Leone's post-war period, but the official research period is 3 years, meaning that while the researcher is in position to be a long-standing

participant observer, observations made and data obtained prior to the official commencement of this research sit outside of the ethical restraints of the university.

Also, while process tracing is a qualitative research exercise, most approaches on causal relationships call for quantitative data. In this study, there is an inclusion of quantitative studies on aspects of the research enquiry which helps in the triangulation of data. This may however leave room for more statistical data to embellish the research outcome.

7.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Some useful recommendations for future research on this topic are largely based on methodology – a wider sample size done through non-purposeful sampling, including those believed to be biased, to derive a broader range of views. A mixed method of both qualitative and quantitative approaches could also be useful in entrenching causal links between the main variables. Finally, it may also be more useful for the researcher to be outside of the research context to minimise any instances of positionality deficits. However, it is worth considering the recommendation that other post-conflict contexts could be analysed using the analytical approach in this study. A close study of such contexts revealing similar results may strengthen the outcome of a causal relationship between SSG and socio-economic development, and to a wider extent, theoretically between security and development.

7.7 Closing Summary

It is a viable conclusion therefore that SSR/G's relevance and importance for development remains a correlative one from the perspective of the governors and policy makers, which partly accounts for the dearth of political will for implementation of critical policies and strategies as well as resource provision. The persistence of the traditional perspective of the composition and role of the security sector as being mainly the purview of uniformed forces targeted at kinetic security provision more than a human security one, compounded by the apathy and inadequacy of knowledge in the role of the wider sector, aggravates this governance challenge. A realisation and adoption of the causal links may help in mitigating SSG deficits as an integral part of the march towards the achievement of development objectives.

The overall outcome of this research, as shown in Figure 18, is that by establishing a causal link between poor SSG and failed development outcomes in the Sierra Leone case, despite emerging to be only a probabilistic one, some empirical evidence has been provided to consolidate the relevance of SSR/G for post-conflict development by showing that the failure to yield the development dividend is more out of shortcomings in implementation than it being a flawed concept; and, on a wider note, gone some way in providing some theoretical entrenchment for the security-development nexus.

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APPENDIX A: SIERRA LEONE'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS SCORECARD

<i>SDG Goal</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Trend</i>
<i>1 – No poverty</i>	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>2 – Zero hunger</i>	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>3 - Good health and well-being</i>	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>4 - Quality education</i>	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	Major challenges remain	On track or maintaining SDG achievement
<i>5 - Clean water and sanitation</i>	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>6 - Gender equality</i>	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>7 - Affordable and clean energy</i>	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>8 - Decent work and economic growth</i>	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure</i>	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>10 - Reduced inequalities</i>	Reduce inequality within and among countries	Significant challenges remain	Trend information unavailable
<i>11 - Sustainable cities and communities</i>	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate

<i>12 - Responsible consumption and production</i>	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	SDG achieved	On track or maintaining SDG achievement
<i>13 - Climate action</i>	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	SDG achieved	On track or maintaining SDG achievement
<i>14 - Life below water</i>	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Major challenges remain	Score moderately improving, insufficient to attain goal
<i>15 - Life on land</i>	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions</i>	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	Major challenges remain	Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate
<i>17 - Partnerships for the goals</i>	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.	Challenges remain	On track or maintaining SDG achievement

APPENDIX B: CHRONOLOGY OF SELECTED INCIDENTS OF PUBLIC ORDER MANAGEMENT BY LAW ENFORCEMENT SINCE 2007

Date	Event
13 December 2007	Demonstrators protested against working conditions at the Koidu Holdings diamond mine in Kono (Eastern Province) and two people were shot dead by the police.
April 2012	Over a period of two days in April 2012, the police in Bumbuna (Northern Province) fired live ammunition at unarmed protesters and community members, used tear gas indiscriminately, raided homes and businesses and threatened numerous individuals. One woman was killed and at least 11 were injured, many as a result of gunshots. A child was hospitalized due to inhalation of tear gas. At least 15 people had their property looted or damaged.
16 August 2016	Two secondary school students were killed in Kabala (Northern Province). The OSD fired live ammunition to disperse unarmed young people protesting against plans to move an intended youth village, which would offer vocational training, from their district. Four people were also injured as a result of gunshots. One man who was shot in the back still struggles to walk and cannot work.
27 April 2016	29 people were arrested and detained for over a week following a parade organized by the SLPP in Freetown to commemorate the country's Independence Day and the day their party was founded. Police said the parade was unauthorized and they used tear gas to disperse peaceful protesters. Police also fired tear gas into the SLPP office in Freetown. Several people were injured during this incident
23 March 2017	On, a young boy was shot dead and two students were injured by gunshots in Bo (Southern Province) when the Operational Support Division (OSD) of the police fired live ammunition to disperse unarmed students protesting against the closure of their university. One student still has a bullet lodged in his right ventricle and suffers from health complications.
15 April 2021	A police officer shot dead a young man in Hastings over a private land dispute.
29 April 2020	A riot broke out at Pademba Road Correctional Centre in Freetown leading to 31 fatalities, including one Corrections Officer and 30 inmates. Thirty-two corrections officers and 21 inmates sustained injuries. After prisoners reportedly set fire to walls in storerooms and took hostages, security officials used live ammunition.
30 April 2020	A youth leader who had accused the Paramount Chief of embezzlement of government funds and called for his dethronement was arrested by the police, leading to riots in the town. Police are reported to have fired live ammunition. Fatalities and injuries as well as a vandalisation of property by the youths were reported.
6 May 2020	A riot in Tombo, outside Freetown left 2 dead and houses burnt down. the riot is reported to have started after the authorities instructed that only 15 boats out of over 400 are permitted to go fishing because of the COVID19 restrictions. The youths tried to negotiate but they were turned down. They went embarked on a running battle with the police and bullets and tear gas canisters were fired killing two youths. The youths

	also destroyed the FSU unit of the police station in Tombo, the community health centre and the chief's house.
July 2020	Alleged killing by security officers of six individuals in Makeni. The victims were participating in a protest against the government's relocation of a power generator and transformers from Makeni to Port Loko District to support the airport's operations. Residents reportedly burned tires on the streets and threw rocks during the protest. Authorities used tear gas and live ammunition in response.
12 April 2021	Students at the Institute of Public Administration and Management participated in a protest against the institution's release of an incomplete graduate list which omitted hundreds of would-be graduates. The police violently dispersed protesters, beating and stripping a woman of her shirt.
10 – 12 August 2022	Protests ostensibly against the high cost of living turned violent in Freetown, Makeni and Kamakwie over three days, in which six police officers and more than 20 protesters and bystanders were killed, including at least two women.

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Level/mode of participation	Participant(s) ²²¹	Position/Status
Focus groups		
Focus group 1 (national)	8 Strategic level security sector officers ²²²	- Senior officer, Office of National Security - Senior officer, Immigration Department - Senior officer, RSLAF - Senior officer, National Fire Service - Senior officer, Sierra Leone Police - Senior officer, Sierra Leone Correctional Service - Senior officer, Central Intelligence & Security Agency - Senior officer, Financial Intelligence Unit
Focus group 2 (regional) Southern Region	17 participants	A combination of regional administrators, commanders of military, police, immigration, fire service, national security, women's and youth representatives, representative of Paramount Chiefs.
Focus group 3 (regional) Eastern Region	21 participants	A combination of administrators, commanders of military, police, immigration, fire service, national security, women's and youth representatives, representative of Paramount Chiefs.
Focus group 4 (regional) Northern Region	16 participants	A combination of administrators, commanders of military, police, immigration, fire service, national security, women's and youth representatives, representative of Paramount Chiefs.
Individual interviews (Key informants)		
National	Andrew Lavalie	Governance reform consultant/senior civil society activist
	Professor Jimmy Kande	Academic and political commentator
	Charlie Hughes	Independent researcher, social and political commentator
	Mahmoud Idriss	Independent researcher and consultant
	Dr. Julius Spencer	Retired Minister of State and elder statesman
	Valnora Edwin	Governance expert/consultant/senior civil society activist
	Oswald Hanciles	Independent researcher and social and political commentator
	Ahmed Nasralla	Head of Sierra Leone Association of Journalists/senior journalist
	Name withheld	Retired Superintendent of Police
	Mohamed PaMomoh Fofanah	Senior lawyer/political commentator
	Kelvin Lewis	Veteran international journalist
	Augustine S. Marrah	Senior lawyer/ political commentator/human rights activist
	Idris Turay	Senior governance officer
	Name withheld	Senior officer, Office of National Security
	Name withheld	Senior Officer, RSLAF

²²¹ Some participants were interviewed in confidence.

²²² Members of this group preferred not to be listed.

International	Brigadier (Rtd) Kellie Conteh ²²³	Retired military/former National Security Coordinator and Minister of Defence
	Name withheld	Senior Officer, Office of National Security
	John Collicutt	Former ISAT Advisor (UK) to the National Security Coordinator and Office of National Security
	Andrew Cordery	Former UK Adviser to CISU
	Col. (Rtd) Russell Miller	Former IMATT Advisor for Intelligence & Security, RSLAF
	Garry Horlacher	Former UK Police Advisor working with the United Nations (UN ISOL); UK Govt Security Coordinator and Advisor to the Govt of Sierra Leone
	Cdr. (Rtd) Patrick O'Byrne	Former ISAT Advisor to the ONS, RSLAF Maritime Wing/Joint Maritime Committee
	Lt. Col. (Rtd) Martin Travers	Former ISAT Strategic Advisor to RSLAF, ONS; Tony Blair Institute for Global Change Strategic Advisor to the Mayor of Freetown.
	Lt. Col. (Rtd) Michael Edwards (snowball)	Former IMATT Advisor to the RSLAF; Advisor to the District Ebola Response (Westers Area)
	Adrian Roberts (snowball)	Former International Strategic Advisor to Sierra Leone Police (SLP)
	Gary McGurk (snowball)	UK government humanitarian advisor to the Western Area Ebola response centre.

²²³ Interview done for my Master's degree in July, 2014