ENDURING CHALLENGES OF STATEBUILDING

BRITISH-LED POLICE REFORMS IN SIERRA LEONE, 1945-1961 AND 1998-2007

Erlend Grøner Krogstad

St Antony's College, University of Oxford

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DPhil in Politics in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes two British-led police reforms in Sierra Leone from 1945-1961 and 1998-2007, exploring how reinterpretations of sovereignty, security and statehood affected strategies of statebuilding over time. Tracing the effects of reform from the first to the second period, it focuses on three practical questions facing reformers: what kind of coercive capacity the police should be invested with (force); where they should be and for what purposes (territoriality); and in what relation they ought to stand with nonstate policing actors (legitimate authority). A key finding is that reinterpretations of security and sovereignty to center on internal threats and state-society relations served to channel more international attention and resources to police forces in weak states. From a relatively restricted field whose impulses came from policing experiences in other colonies and in Britain, recent post-conflict police reforms were informed by knowledge about economic growth, social mobility and global security. However, strategy was muddled when donors committed to conflicting agendas entered the fray. As a result, the latest reform was profoundly shaped by negotiations of the meaning of key concepts like 'security'. The second part of the study draws on insights about reform to address debates on intervention and sovereignty. Against the image of Western-led interventions suspending local sovereignty, it is argued that the colonial legacy allowed the Sierra Leonean government to *prolong* and *deepen* the recent intervention. Contrary to the image of Sierra Leone's international relations as exploitative and personalized, the study explores how policing became a field where new and legitimate links with the outside world were established after reform.

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Abbreviations

Africa Conflict Prevention Pool	ACPP
Armed Forces Revolutionary Council	AFRC
Assistant Inspector General	AIG
All People's Congress	APC
Civil Defence Forces	CDF
Commonwealth Safety and Security Project	CCSSP
Court Messenger Force	CMF
Commonwealth Police Development Task Force	CPDTF
Department for International Development	DFID
Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group	ECOMOG
European Union	EU
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	FCO
Family Support Unit	FSU
Global Conflict Prevention Pool	GCPP
Haiti National Police	HNP
Illegal Diamond Bying	IDB
Illegal Diamond Mining	IDM
Inspector General of Police	IGP
International Relations	IR
Internal Support Unit	ISU
Justice Sector Development Programme	JSDP

Local Command Unit	LCU
Local Unit Commander	LUC
Local Needs Policing	LNP
Local Policing Partnership Board	LPPB
Military Aid to Civil Power	MACP
Ministry of Defence	MOD
National Provisional Ruling Council	NPRC
Overseas Development Assistance	ODA
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	OECD
Office of National Security	ONS
Operational Support Division	OSD
Private Security Company	PSC
Revolutionary Unitary Front	RUF
Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme	SILSEP
Sierra Leone Police	SLP
Sierra Leone People's Party	SLPP
Special Security Division	SSD
Security Sector Reform	SSR
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	TRC
United Kingdom	UK
United Nations	UN
United Nations Civilian Police Force	UN CIVPOL
United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone	UNAMSIL
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone	UNOMSIL

Acknowledgements

The list of people who have helped and inspired me since this project got off the ground in October 2008 is long, and definitely longer than the list of names below. My first thanks go to my supervisors, Christopher Hood and David Anderson. Christopher's immense learning, thoroughness and constructive advice has improved both my work and my thinking greatly. David's magisterial knowledge of Africa has been indispensable. When I managed to hunt him down (not always easy), his sharpness and ability to put me on the right track always struck me. If this study succeeds in making a coherent argument based on varied sources and works in different disciplines, then it is much thanks to Christopher's and David's advice. Needless to say, all errors and weaknesses remain fully my own.

I'm also greatly indebted to all those who have agreed to speak with me, and even share their private documents with me. The generosity and openness of all my SLP respondents made fieldwork much easier than it could have been. Yet most of the credit for how I got on in Sierra Leone is due to my research assistant and friend Musa Mewa. In him, I had a wise conversational partner who shaped the focus of the project in major ways. Outside Sierra Leone, I owe a great thank you to Adrian Horn and Ray England who generously shared documents and reports from their work with the Sierra Leone Police. This material greatly strengthened the study. Besides taking half a day to speak to me, Keith Biddle put me in touch with all the key players. Finally, it was a privilege to sit down with people who served in the colonial police service as long as 60 years

ago. I am particularly grateful to Ted Eates for the stories from his posting in Sierra Leone, and for entrusting me with all his written material from those days.

Numerous people have offered valuable feedback at various stages. Among my former colleagues at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, I would particularly like to thank Morten Skumsrud Andersen, Benjamin de Carvalho, Øyvind Eggen, Stein Sundstøl Eriksen, Nina Græger, Vegard Valther Hansen, Kristin Haugevik, Halvard Leira, Iver B. Neumann, Ole Jacob Sending and Ståle Ulriksen. I thank librarians Hazel Henriksen and Tore Gustavsson for excellent help. While wrapping up the thesis at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, I accumulated debts to Ingrid Samset for her excellent and thorough feedback, Arne Strand for his hospitality, and librarians Reidunn Ljones and Kirsti Hagen Andersen for all their help and support. Among the others who have commented my work, I wish to thank Joey Ansorge, Tarak Barkawi, Johanna Boersch-Supan, Nic Cheeseman, Marc Doucet, Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, Graham Ellison, Stefano Guzzini, Jana Hönke, David Keen, Anna Leander, Markus-Michael Müller, Conor O'Reilly, Anders Haahr Rasmussen, Paul Richards, Elena Schak, Ursula Schröder, Georgina Sinclair and Lars-Christian Talseth.

Last but not least, I must thank those who reminded me that work is not everything. The St. Antony's Football Club, whose grand old men are Hartmut Meyer and David Keen, was a home for me while in Oxford. I hope it will not be held against me that the battle against relegation has at times appeared more important than the thesis. But most of all, I wish to thank those closest to me. My mother and father would claim little credit for this piece of work, but they deserve a lot. Amo came into the picture about half-way and made even the tough periods seem easy.

Introduction

> The British have taken many useful things with them when they have gone out to colonise or administer other parts of the world, but history may well record that they took nothing which was to have a more profound and lasting influence than their own particular conception of the police and its functions.[1]

The wave of international statebuilding after the Cold War is often described as a result of three rapid changes in the international system. Sovereignty, it is argued, was reinterpreted from a 'negative' right guaranteeing the integrity of all recognized states,[2] to a 'positive' condition which the international community must step in to fulfil in states that failed to do so on their own.[3] Security was no longer limited to the state's military capability to protect itself from attacks by other states, but encompassed the protection of individuals from a range of unconventional threats, including underdevelopment and abuse by the state itself. Finally, states showed themselves liable to 'collapse' or 'failure', thereby fuelling the same security threats and threatening the stability of the international system as a whole.[4]

Although the depth and nature of these changes are debated, it is a common assumption that they were so fundamental as to constitute the wave of international statebuilding as

[1] Charles Jeffries, *The Colonial Police* (M. Parrish, London, 1952), p. 17.
[2] Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990).
[3] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), 'The Responsibility to Protect' (The International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, 2001).
[4] Robert Rotberg (ed), *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004); William Zartman (ed), *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 1995).

a historically unique, *sui generis* phenomenon.[5] There are compelling reasons for thinking so. Never did sovereign states become the theatres of such extensive, intrusive, systematic and prolonged attempts by external actors to shape the constitution and operation of their institutions. Never did so many and so diverse external actors join together in such attempts. And never, certainly, was so much written by so many about the issue of externally engineered social transformation.

Despite these unique features, international statebuilding has occasionally been studied in a deeper historical context. At the threshold of the 'new interventionism' in the 1990s, Mohammed Ayoob criticized Western security analysis for failing to appreciate that new states grappled with different a "security problematic" than old states:

> [T]he principal problem that seems to distort a great deal of Western analysis of the security of Third World states is the tendency to compare states (that is, industrialized states with developing ones) that are unlike each other in many respects. This is especially so in relation to the crucial variable of state making, where the commonality is simply that both are in formal possession of juridical statehood. […] Time is, therefore, the crucial variable in explaining the difference in the security concerns of the two sets of states" [6]

Two decades later, the same point was made to suggest that international statebuilding could not leapfrog the lengthy and violent processes driving state formation in Europe.[7] Others emphasized a different historical aspect, arguing that statebuilding built upon

---

[5] See Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk, 'Understanding the Contradictions of Postwar Statebuilding', in Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk (eds), *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operation* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2009).

[6] Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Problematic of the Third World", *World Politics* **43**, 2 (1991), pp 257-283, p. 265.

[7] Antonio Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion: The Primitive Accumulation and Management of Coercive Power* (Colombia University Press, New York, 2011); Robert Egnell and Peter Halden, "Laudable, Ahistorical and Overambitious: Security Sector Reform Meets State Formation Theory", *Conflict, Security & Development*, **9**, 1 (2009), pp. 27-54.

many of the same assumptions as imperial rule.[8] Together, these contributions have moderated the impression of historical uniqueness.

This thesis builds on these valuable but as yet underdeveloped insights. It starts from a claim that restricts the scope for comparison*: late colonial and post-Cold War statebuilding were remarkably similar in that they aimed to achieve a level of modernization or development in a short period of time, while relying on the use of force to create 'space' for such processes.*

This phenomenon, or, from the perspective of the statebuilder, problem, is in my opinion distinct enough to merit further attention. It captures a well-noted persistence of trusteeship: "the rule of one man over another, in lands that are not his own, so long as the power of dominion is directed towards the improvement of the incompetent and infirm".[9] However, it also captures a number of more specific but much less noted similarities with important practical implications. The first is that statebuilders in both periods were constrained by a sense of urgency; they knew they had to transfer responsibility to the locals in the foreseeable future. While colonial forecasts tended to grossly overstate the distance to independence,[10] the colonial bureaucracy started to

[8] William Bain, *Between Anarchy and Society: Trusteeship and the Obligations of Power* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003); Roland Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'", *Review of International Studies*, **28**, 4 (2002), pp. 637-656; Simon Chesterman, *You, The People: The United Nations, Transitional Administration and State-Building* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004); Ralph Wilde, *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never Went Away* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008).

[9] Bain, *Between Anarchy and Society,* p. 23; M.P. Cowen, and R.W. Shenton, *Doctrines of Development* (Routledge, London, 1996); Neta Crawford, 'How Previous Idea Affect Later Ideas', in Robert Goodin and Charles Tilly (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Analysis* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996).

[10] For instance, the Police Commissioner in Uganda was told by the Colonial Office in 1957 that independence was fifteen years away. Uganda gained its independence in 1962. Georgina Sinclair, *At the End of the Line: Colonial Policing and the Imperial Endgame, 1945-80* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2006), p. 71.

discuss "the specific means of getting from *now* to *then*".[11] This ushered in a problem familiar in recent debates about exit strategies. The second is that statebuilding took place in stressful contexts – during decolonization, or in the aftermath of war or authoritarian rule. The third is that the statebuilding project as defined by external actors was met with local resistance, and that such resistance was confronted with the use of force in one form or another.

However, this description also leaves open a number of key issues. The first is how 'modernization' or 'development' was defined. According to Astri Suhrke, the 1950s and 1960s understanding of modernization as a 'package' consisting of mutually sustaining elements such as economic growth, political democracy and Weberian rationality in state bureaucracies survived in "particularly concentrated form" in current post-conflict reconstruction programmes.[12] But others, such as David Chandler, see current statebuilding as predicated on "very different" assumptions than earlier forms.[13] In fact, very little attention has been paid to how prevailing understandings of such fundamental concepts have shaped strategies of statebuilding over time. As a consequence, we know little about how practical strategies changed (or not) in step with revised understandings about the beneficiaries and agents of development and modernization. What counted as relevant knowledge and appropriate strategies to achieve these goals remains unexplored. So does a second issue left open by our definition; which agencies of the state, or indeed of society, were invested with the capacity to use force in the service of development. Finally, the definition leaves the

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[11] John Cell, "On the Eve of Decolonization: The Colonial Office's Plans for the Transfer of Power in Africa, 1947", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* **8**, 3 (1980), pp. 235-257
[12] Astrid Suhrke, "Reconstruction as Modernisation: The 'Post-Conflict' Project in Afghanistan", *Third World Quarterly,* **28**, 7 (2007), pp. 1291-1308.
[13] David Chandler, *International Statebuilding: The Rise of Post-Liberal Governance* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2010).

relationship between coercion and social transformation open-ended. In our case it points to a tension between the use of force as something which enabled statebuilders to create space for peaceful development, and the risk that the use of force could undermine development and foster more, rather than less, violence.

Research questions

This study will make two principal contributions to existing work on statebuilding and intervention. The first is to study a case of post-Cold War statebuilding through a detailed empirical comparison with earlier, colonial statebuilding in the same location. The second is to focus on statebuilding through the police; an institution which has gained increasing prominence in reconstruction efforts but which has still received little sustained attention outside Criminology and Police Studies.[14] Analyzing two periods of British-led reform of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the first during decolonization from 1945-1961, and the second as part of international post-conflict reconstruction from 1998-2007, the thesis is devoted to the overarching question: *How did reinterpretations of sovereignty, security and statehood affect strategies of police reform in Sierra Leone?*

Police reform in Sierra Leone is commonly identified as a success story and a "test bed" for present donor thinking on police reform policy and practice in other post-conflict countries.[15] It is therefore a well suited case to explore thinking and practices that have

[14] Alice Hills, "The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria", *Journal of Modern African Studies,* **46**, 2 (2008), pp. 215-234.
[15] Bruce Baker, "Community Policing in Freetown, Sierra Leone: Foreign Import or Local Solution?", *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding,* **2**, 1 (2008), pp. 23-42; Paul Jackson and Peter Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict: Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone* (Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 2011); Lisa Denney, "Reducing Poverty with Teargas and Batons: The Security-Development Nexus in Sierra Leone", *African Affairs,* **110**, 439 (2011), pp.275-294; C. Stone,

recently had influence beyond Sierra Leone. Yet the focus of the research question is on then-now dynamics. It asks about the effect of three abstract concepts in one historical and one recent case with reference to how these concepts were reinterpreted in the meantime. In order to successfully answer this question, 'sovereignty', 'security' and 'statehood' must be broken down into empirically observable entities. I have chosen to do so by investigating three practical questions faced by reformers in both eras. The first question regards force: *what type and what level of coercive capacity should the police be invested with?* The second question regards territoriality: *where should the police be and for what purposes?* The final question regards legitimate authority: *what, if any, should be the appropriate role of nonstate or quasi-state policing authorities, and in what relation should they stand with the state police?*

These questions broadly correspond to Max Weber's definition of the modern state as a "human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory".[16] They represent elements long considered as problematic in the developing world, and particularly in the African context. They are also the fulcrum of contemporary debates about security sector reform (SSR), described by the OECD as international efforts to "to increase the ability of partner countries to meet the range of security and justice challenges they face, in a manner consistent with democratic norms, and sound principles of governance and the rule of law".[17] This means that this study has relevance to both analytical and policy-oriented debates.

'Supporting Security, Justice and Development: Lessons for a New Era' (Vera Institute of Justice, New York, 2005).

[16] Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Edited by H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills* (Routledge, London, 2009).

[17] Organization for Economic Cooperation in Europe, 'OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform: Supporting Security and Justice' (OECD, Paris, 2007), p. 21.

In what follows, I do not adopt Weber's method of conducting sociological research, but use his concepts as variables in analysis. Recent debates on statebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction have revolved around the need for, or impossibility of, creating 'Weberian' states out of 'failed' or 'fragile' ones. Yet what 'Weberian' means has rarely been explored in any detail. To raise analytical precision, it is better to treat Weber's concept of the state as a set of characteristics (force, territoriality, legitimate authority) rather than as a 'package'. This analytical approach has been tried before, but primarily in studies focused on bureaucracy.[18] A more general application of it allows us to explore whether these core characteristics may in fact be in conflict; an issue discussed in the concluding Chapter 7. Chapter 1 lays out the analytical approach out in more detail.

I return to advantages and problems with this method at the end of this chapter. However, a clarification of how I will understand two key concepts – contexts and institutions - is in order right away. The approach chosen here is to register changes in sovereignty, security and statehood inductively by analyzing and comparing the strategies reformers chose to deal with practical questions in the two periods. In other words, I will work my way backwards from police reform in Sierra Leone to the fundamental concepts that shaped statebuilding. However, strategies are not just made according to prevailing understandings of abstract concepts, but also in response to local events and processes that occur at the time of reform, such as the ebb and flow of

[18] In a comparative study of 35 developing countries, Evans and Rauch developed a "Weberianness Scale" and argued that meritocratic recruitment and predictable career paths were positively correlated with economic growth. Page drew on Weber's approach to bureaucracy to explore the nature and scope of political leadership within the bureaucratic systems of France, Britain, Germany and the United States. Peter Evans and James E. Rauch, "Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of 'Weberian' State Structures on Economic Growth", *American Sociological Review*, **64**, 5 (1999), pp. 748-765; Edward Page, *Political Authority and Bureaucratic Power: A Comparative Analysis* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1992).

conflict. This study is therefore concerned with the interplay between two aspects of context. The first is the normative regime shaping reformers' understandings of sovereignty, security and statehood. The second is the operational environment in which those understandings were acted on and revised. I will distinguish these aspects of context in more detail in my discussion of methods below. Throughout the thesis, the term 'context' will mainly refer to the operational environment.

The first aspect of context, it must be noted, comes close to how 'institutions' have been understood in existing scholarship. According to Kathleen Thelen, historical and sociological institutionalists have defined 'institution' as "a set of shared understandings that affect the way problems are perceived and solutions are sought".[19] This conceptualization fits the present study very well; but for the sake of clarity the term 'institution' will be reserved to the police organization, while the term 'regime' will be used to refer to the understandings of sovereignty, security and statehood that underpinned police reforms.

The first part of the thesis is concerned with questions about how and why certain strategies were selected. The second part builds on analysis of police reform to contribute to debates about international intervention and sovereignty in Africa. Two dominant understandings are challenged. The first is that sovereignty is a shield weak states use to protect themselves against interference from stronger states.[20] Contrary to

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[19] Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", *Annual Review of Political Science*, **2** (1999), pp. 369-404, p 371; see also Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo 'Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics', in Kathleen Thelen, Sven Steinmo, and Frank Longstreth (eds), *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridgem, 1992).

[20] I.e. Mohammed Ayoob, "Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty", *The International Journal of Human Rights* , **6**, 1 (2002), pp. 81-102; David Chandler, *Empire in Denial: The Politics of State-building* (Pluto Press, London, 2006); Christopher Bickerton, Philip Cunliffe and Alexander Gourevich

what this understanding suggests, Chapter 6 argues that the Sierra Leonean government requested a higher degree of formal and direct influence than the United Kingdom (UK) was willing to supply. This dynamic may be understood as a form of 'extraversion', a concept developed by Jean-François Bayart to capture how African states used their weakness to derive benefits from the outside world.[21] Secondly, however, the study also challenges the tendency in the extraversion literature to describe sovereignty in Africa as manipulation of public power for private, often criminal, purposes.[22] Challenging this this view, Chapter 7 explores how Sierra Leone's reputation as a success story of post-conflict reconstruction enabled the country to expand its legitimate links with the outside world. This was particularly visible in the field of policing.

The Introduction proceeds with a discussion of the advantages of the approach I have chosen here. These include a better grasp on how historical continuities shaped reforms, and a handle on how different agendas of statebuilding converged and competed in the field of policing, creating contradictory imperatives for reformers. The conceptual separation between the police institution and policing as a field of social control is also discussed. Next, it briefly chronicles the renewed international attention to police forces after a period of neglect during the Cold War. In order to explain this resurgence and to specify the parameters of this study, I review the impact of three dominant discourses

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(eds), *Politics without Sovereignty: A Critique of Contemporary International Relationa* (UCL Press, London, 2007).

[21] Jean-François Bayart, "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion", *African Affairs*, **99**, 395 (2000), pp. 217-267; Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly, Second Edition* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2009).

[22] Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis and Beatrice Hibou, *The Criminalization of the State in Africa* (James Currey, Oxford, 1999); William Reno, 'How Sovereignty Matters: International Markets and the Political Economy of Local Politics in Weak States', in Thomas Callaghy, Ronald Kassimir and Robert Latham (eds), *Intervention & Transnationalism in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001); William Reno, 'The Changing Nature of Warfare and the Absence of State-Building in West Africa', in Diane E. Davis and Anthony Pereira (eds), *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003); Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument* (James Currey, Oxford, 1999).

on the field of policing: human security; the merging of security and development; and the securitization of weak statehood. These interrelated discourses were all important in elevating the police to the foreground of international statebuilding, but they have forerunners with little noted policy implications. The final part of the Introduction discusses the selection of cases, as well as the methods and sources the study builds on.

Relevance and advantages of this approach

Because questions about the police's deployment, armament and relation to societal actors are deeply political, they have real consequences for those living in states which become the theatres of statebuilding. In this thesis, however, questions of whether statebuilding is morally just, worth the effort, or of how it may be improved upon, are avoided. Instead, statebuilding is treated as a field where changes in sovereignty, security and statehood can be studied.

This naturally raises the question of how statebuilding will be understood. According to Stepputat, Andersen and Møller, statebuilding names the practices deployed "to assist war-torn countries escape the scourge of violent conflict and achieve lasting peace and sustainable development".[23] They find that these objectives are shared with "peacebuilding", but argue that statebuilding is more focused on institutional capacity, and increasingly on the traditional security institutions of the state.[24] Call and Wyeth define statebuilding as "actions undertaken by international or national actors to establish, reform, or strengthen the institutions of the state" and peacebuilding more

[23] Finn Stepputat, Louise Andersen and Bjørn Møller, 'Introduction: Security Arrangements in Fragile States', In Louise Andersen, Bjørn Møller and Finn Stepputat (eds), *Fragile States and Insecure People? Violence, Security and Statehood in the Twenty-First Century* (Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2007), p. 33.

[24] See also Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk, 'Understanding the Contradictions of Postwar Statebuilding'.

narrowly as “actions undertaken by international actors to consolidate or institutionalize peace”.[25] There appears to be no agreement on this distinction. Thus, two influential authors on police reform understand “peacebuilding” in a sense which would also cover statebuilding, namely as “foreign stabilization and reconstruction […] operations [that] cover both military and police operations as well as political and economic development”.[26] For the purposes of this study, distinguishing clearly between “statebuilding” and “peacebuilding” is not essential. Stepputat and colleagues ultimately opt for an approach that “look[s] at the dynamics of specific institutions, practices and processes of security provision”.[27] This is good advice, but it can be further enhanced by a historical perspective.

The first benefit of a historical approach is to gain a clearer idea of what was new about the recent wave of international statebuilding – of which problems were unprecedented and which were recurring, of how they were solved and with what consequences. That such questions are pertinent has been suggested by several writers who hint at continuities in different ways. James Fearon and David Laitin argue that major international interventions to “prop up and rebuild” failed states in the 1990s and 2000s were not an aberration from the normal course of international relations, but reflected “more durable, even structural characteristics of the present international system”.[28] Christopher Clapham thinks African conditions were never particularly supportive to statehood, but sees state failure or collapse as “hastened and intensified” by colonial

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[25] Charles Call with Vanessa Wyeth (eds), *Building States to Build Peace* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 2008), p. 5.
[26] David H. Bayley and Robert M. Perito, *The Police in War: Fighting Insurgency, Terrorism, and Violent Crime* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 2010), p. 68.
[27] Stepputat, Møller, Andersen, ‘Introduction: Security Arrangements in Fragile States’, p. 10.
[28] James Fearon and David Laitin, “Neo-Trusteeship and the Problem of Weak States”, *International* Security, **28**, 4, pp. 5-43.

"overambitious attempts to impose on societies a level of state control that they were ultimately unable to bear".[29] Based on a historical reading, he therefore advises a "considerable measure of modesty" for those engaged in their reconstruction. Krause and Jutersonke argue that statebuilding "has a long pedigree" and continued to follow essentially the same logic as during colonial times.[30]

These claims of historical continuity are plausible but, as I will argue in Chapter 1, almost never examined in any depth in a narrative that treats post-Cold War statebuilding as founded upon unprecedented notions of sovereignty, statehood and security. As a consequence, we have little comparative evidence against which to judge how current statebuilding changed (or not) in response to reinterpretations of these concepts. We also have little grasp of the practical implications of claims such that "understandings of security are in important measure a reflection of historical and sociopolitical context".[31] A historical approach allows us to reconstruct such understandings, and thereby reduces the risk of reproducing the ambiguities attached to quasi-academic terms like 'fragile' or 'failed' states. Such terms, it has been argued, allowed statebuilding to operate on apolitical and ahistorical assumptions, and to neglect the social functions of existing institutions.[32] As I will argue below, most diagnoses of Sierra Leonean institutions emphasized how "corrupt", "spent" or "malfunctioning" they were, but rarely took the trouble to specify what that meant or how they came to be that way, and what it implied for reconstruction.

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[29] Christopher Clapham, 'The Global Local Politics of Decay', in Rotberg, *When States Fail*, p. 83.
[30] Keith Krause and Oliver Jutersonke, "Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments", *Security* Dialogue, **36**, 4, pp. 447-462.
[31] Neil MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, 2005), p. 19.
[32] Morten Bøås and Kathleen Jennings, "Insecurity and Development: The Rhetoric of the 'Failed' State", *The European Journal of Development Research*, **17**, 3 (2005), pp. 385-395.

A second advantage of the historical approach is that it enhances our understanding of the specific institutions that become the subject of international statebuilding. Historical institutionalism, argue Hall and Taylor, emphasizes how continuity or path dependency in organizations "structure[s] the very choices about reform that the individual is likely to make".[33] This study does not aim to identify path dependency, but it shares with institutional analysis the idea that reformers confront

> a collection of institutions, rules of behavior, norms, roles, physical arrangements, buildings, and archives that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals, and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals.[34]

The emphasis on institutional resilience seems particularly appropriate for our purposes, both because reformers were foreigners and because the police are said to be among the public agencies most resistant to change.[35] Resilience is also the reason why two observers recently argued that "understanding the historical legacy and the structural roots of the policing 'problem' is essential for those eager to participate in the reform of police agencies on the African continent".[36]

African policing in particular has described in terms of strong continuities. Alice Hills found that "there has been no fundamental evolution of [African] police systems since independence". "The management and training of the police, as well as their

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[33] Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms", *Political Studies*, **XLIV** (1996), pp. 936-957.
[34] James March and Johan Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life", *American Political Science* Review, **78**, 3, pp. 734-749, p. 741.
[35] Gordon Peake and Otwin Marenin, "Their Reports Are Not Read and Their Recommendations Are Resisted: The Challenge for the Global Police Policy Community", *Police Practice and Research*, **9**, 1, pp. 59-69.
[36] Janine Rauch and Elrena Van der Spuy, 'Police Reform in Post-Conflict Africa: A Review', (Institute for Democracy in South Africa, Pretoria, 2006), p. 12.

relationship to the state", Hills argued, "has changed little".[37] Scholars of statebuilding and intervention, however, often pay more attention to general models or philosophies such as the 'the liberal peace' or 'community policing' than to concrete efforts to change institutions. This is an analytical strategy with obvious costs. For instance, it has been argued that 'community policing' has such a capacity for stretching that it "has not and will not be subject to clear definition".[38] Similarly, I will argue, it is problematic to speak of something like a Western model of statebuilding containing clear practical guidance. It seems more promising to do as Antonio Giustozzi proposes with regards to research on policing, namely to "identify different tasks that police forces have been assigned to do and see how different regimes have been prioritising them: territorial control, protecting the social order, enforcing the rule of law, etc".[39] A focus on the police over time helps us appreciate how institutional continuities constrained or enabled reformers at critical junctures.

Thirdly, the field of policing offers a fruitful site for analyzing how different agendas of statebuilding clashed with one another, shaped one another or merged over time. David Bayley's recent argument that the emergence of the police as an objective of foreign policy has gone unrecognized indicates that this is uncharted territory.[40] This is in large part because what is called 'executive policing' – situations where international police forces take over day-to-day control of law and order from local forces – has received disproportionate attention. Although executive policing is important, the tendency to

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[37] Alice Hills, *Policing Africa: Internal Security and the Limits of Liberalization* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 2000), p. 5; see also James Opolot, "The Resilience of the British Colonial Police Legacies in East Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa", *Police Studies*, **15**, 2 pp. 90-99.
[38] Mike Brogden and Preti Nijhar, *Community Policing: National and International Models and Approaches* (Willan, Portland, 2005), p.1.
[39] Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion*.
[40] David Bayley, "Police Reform as Foreign Policy", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, **38**, 2 (2005), pp. 206-215.

focus on international forces rather than local police forces obscures longer-term effect international interventions have on statehood. As Bayley and Perito point out, "foreign security forces are outsiders; they will go home".[41] Furthermore, when domestic security forces receive sustained attention, the police often end up in the shadow of the military.[42]

Police and policing

This study concentrates on efforts to reform 'the police', defined as the "specialized body of people given the formal responsibility [by the state] for legitimate force to safeguard security".[43] Nevertheless, it does so with constant attention to 'policing', understood more broadly as organized activity by formal or informal agencies designed to maintain social order in situations "where there is at least the potential for conflict, deviance, or disorder".[44] The distinction between police and policing is unstable. David Bayley elides it when he claims that "a police force is an organization authorized by a community to regulate social relations within itself by utilizing, if need be, physical force".[45] This definition reserves 'the police' for the state's specialized agency only if the community is taken to be the collective of the state's citizens. This corresponds to the implicit understanding of 'community' in the doctrine of community policing. Yet as we will see in the case of Sierra Leone, there were several possible definitions of community.

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[41] Bayley and Perito, *The Police in War*.
[42] Otwin Marenin, 'Restoring Police Systems in Conflict Torn Nations: Process, Problems, Prospects' (Occasional Paper No. 7, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Geneva, 2005).
[43] Robert Reiner, *The Politics of the Police* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000), p.6.
[44] *Ibid.*; *see* Bruce Baker, *Security in Post-Conflict Africa: The Role of Nonstate Policing* (CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL, 2010).
[45] David Bayley, 'The Police and Political Development in Europe', in Charles Tilly and Gabriel Ardant (eds), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1975), p. 328.

This conceptual tension is also highly relevant at the level of practice. The attempt to reform the police inevitably involves engaging with structures of policing more broadly; by neutralizing them, co-opting them, authorizing them, deferring to them, or tacitly accepting them.[46] It is here, on the boundary between 'the police' and 'policing', that the relevance to issues of sovereignty, statehood and security becomes visible. In Helene Kyed's succinct phrase, "policing itself is an avenue to power, prestige and resources over which different actors compete".[47] Moreover, this competition is particularly strong where nonstate policing structures have historically been strong. As Hansen and Stepputat argue, the colonial world was a "twilight zone of multiple, indeterminate configurations of power and authority"; a trait which still characterizes postcolonial countries.[48] Precisely because policing takes so many different shapes in postcolonial countries – civilian, paramilitary, commercial, 'native'[49] or voluntary – its reform will always involve attempts to remake social and political boundaries on a number of fronts. To capture the layered effects of this process in Sierra Leone, Chapter 5 introduces the literature on security assemblages. This concept has been described as "settings where a range of different global and local, public and private security agents

[46] See Jonny Steinberg, *Thin Blue: The Unwritten Rules of Policing South Africa* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, Jeppestown, 2008).
[47] Helene Kyed, 'The Contested Role of Community Policing. New Non-State Actors in the Plural Legal Landscape of Mozambique', (Working Paper, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, 2010:26), p. 4.
[48] Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, "Sovereignty Revisited", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, **35** (2006), pp. 295-315; John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, 'Law and Disorder in the Postcolony: An Introduction', in John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (eds), *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2006).
[49] Throughout this study, I will use the terms 'native', 'traditional' and 'customary' interchangeably when referring to forms of authority perceived to rest on historical foundations. This is not because I consider such terms as imbued with an essential, pure or static quality, but because they were used that way by reformers and donors.

and normativities interact, cooperate and compete to produce new institutions, practices, and forms of security governance".[50]

The issue of positioning the police in relation to nonstate authorities points to a significant overlap between the field of policing and recent donor conceptions of statebuilding more broadly. When donors advocated that "development of core state functions" must be part of a "'bottom-up' approach" that "engages at the interface between state and society", they in effect marked out the field of policing as central to the enterprise as a whole.[51] In fact, such a description of statebuilding could easily be applied to post-Cold War police reforms, which emerged as a "highly diverse and dispersed pattern of […] activity reflecting a range of agendas".[52] Almost all the countries that became subject to international statebuilding in this period were judged to be characterized by "collapse of local police authority and […] ensuing disorder".[53] Yet, police reform became more than a first step towards the restoration of law and order; the state of the police was often taken to be a yardstick of statehood. Thus, policing has been described as "a crucial instrument that reveals the relations between a state and its citizens",[54] and as "an indicator of the level of democratisation in a given state".[55] Of course, efforts to reshape the boundary between the police and policing take place

[50] Rita Abrahamsen and Michael Williams, "Introduction: The Privatisation and Globalisation of Security in Africa", *International Relations*, **21**, 131 (2007), pp. 131-141; Abrahamsen and Williams, "Security Beyond the State: Global Security Assemblages in International Politics", *International Political Sociology*, **3**, 1 (2009), pp. 1-17; Rita Abrahamsen and Michael Williams, *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Relations* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011).
[51] Department for International Development, 'Building Peaceful States and Societies: A DFID Practice Paper' (DFID, London, 2010).
[52] Andrew Goldsmith and Sinclair Dinnen, "Transnational Police Building: Critical Lessons from Timor Leste and Solomon Islands", *Third World Quarterly*, **28**, 6 (2007), pp. 1091-1109, p. 1095.
[53] Francis Fukuyama, *State-building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (Profile Books, London, 2004).
[54] Laura Kalmanowiecki, 'Policing the People, Building the State: The Police-Military Nexus in Argentina, 1880-1945', in Diane Davis and Anthony Pereira (eds), *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003), p. 209
[55] Andy Aitchison "Police Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: State, Democracy and International Assistance", *Policing and Society*, 17, **4** (2007), pp. 321-343

precisely at the interface between state and society. This refocusing of statebuilding to the home ground of policing, as it were, marked a significant shift from approaches dominant in the 1970s and 1980s, which were much more concerned with the size of the state and with relations between the military and the government.[56] The thesis aims to add to existing scholarship by exploring policing as a frontier in the donor struggle to achieve a number of core goals: bureaucratic rationality; individual security; and repair of 'damaged' state-society relations.

A final advantage of the focus on policing is to bring out under-appreciated tensions concerning the relationship between development and force that recur in statebuilding over time. It has been argued that "the distinctiveness of the police lies not in their performance of a specific social function but in being the specialist repositories for the state's monopolization of legitimate force in its territory".[57] This definition, which implies a successful European-style monopolization and specialization of force, illustrates a tension between ends and means in police reforms in countries which have not followed the European trajectory. In fact, the very problem motivating international statebuilding from the 1990s was the 'inadequate' specialization of force. The failure to amass the means of force under state control and divide them accountably between military and police, it was argued, led both to repression by state security forces and by various militias, guerrillas or vigilante groups. SSR, the doctrinal heading under which police reforms were conducted from the late 1990s, sought to redress this weakness by bringing the means of violence under state control.[58] A cursory glance at any SSR

[56] See Chris Smith, "Security-Sector Reform: Development Breakthrough or Institutional Engineering?", *Conflict, Security & Development*, **1**, 1 (2001), pp. 5-20.
[57] Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*, p. 6f.
[58] Rita Abrahamsen and Michael Williams, "Security Sector Reform: Bringing the Private in", *Conflict, Security and Development*, **6**, 1 (2006), pp. 1-23.

handbook or manual will confirm that a predominantly civilian, accountable police force was seen as a crucial component of democratic and peaceful order – an end in itself. But on the other hand, relying on the coercive capacity of the police was perceived as a temporary but necessary means to create space for peaceful development. As a consequence, police forces took on a double importance in international statebuilding. They were at one and the same time conceptualized as a coercive agent that could be used to confront those who opposed liberal democracy, and part of a projected liberal democracy. This gave rise to a fundamental tension that I will explore throughout this study. Chapters 2 and 4 analyze how major turmoil or war shaped reform during decolonization and in the later stages of Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 war. The Epilogue discusses to what extent Sierra Leone is likely to retain its relatively low level of police violence in the future.

The resurgence of policing in global security governance

From 1945 onwards, the role of local police forces in global security governance seemed to follow a U curve. Even if police forces were often the first feature of European statehood to be introduced in the fledgling colonies in the early 19th century and remained a backbone of rule, they took center stage during the decolonization phase.[59] Driven by increasing unrest, imperial military and police forces were strengthened considerably between 1945 and 1960.[60] As colonial police forces were handed over to independent states, their make-up and operation dropped as an international concern. Even though United Nations (UN) police contingents that

[59] David Anderson and David Killingray (eds), *Policing and Decolonisation*: *Nationalism, Politics and the Police* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1992); Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[60] David Killingray, "The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa", *African Affairs*, **85**, 340 (1986), pp. 411-437.

accompanied missions in the Congo and in Cyprus in the 1960s represented a new phenomenon, these were sparsely equipped and their tasks were limited to observing and reporting. The revival of international policing, argues Annika Hansen, started with the UNTAG mission in Namibia in 1989.[61] Since then, civilian police missions became steadily more comprehensive, intrusive part of international interventions. An important milestone in this regard was the so-called Brahimi report, which called for a "a doctrinal shift in the use of civilian police and related rule of law elements in peace operations that emphasizes a team approach to upholding the rule of law and respect for human rights and helping communities coming out of a conflict to achieve national reconciliation".[62]

In conjunction with these missions, policing strategies and materials became a "major part of the export drive from the West to so-called failed and transitional societies".[63] In 2005, Bayley estimated that the United States (US) spent $750 million a year on programs to develop police forces abroad.[64] The growth in funding for police reform was accompanied by a geographical expansion of international involvement. In 2005, the UN was involved in police reform in no less than 28 countries,[65] and the number of deployed UN police officers increased from 5,840 in 1995 to over 17,500 in 2010.[66] Other international organizations played important roles regionally, illustrated by the

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[61] Annika Hansen, 'From Congo to Kosovo: Civilian Police in Peace Operations' (International Institute for Strategic Studies, Oxford, 2002)

[62] United Nations, 'Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations of 21 August, 2000' (UN Document A/55/305-S/2000/809); see also Hansen, 'From Congo to Kosovo'; Charles Call and Michael Barnett, "Looking for a Few Good Cops: Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and CIVPOL", *International Peacekeeping*, **6**, 4 (1999), pp. 43-68; Beth Greener, *The New International Policing* (Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 2009).

[63] Mike Brogden, "'Horses for Courses' and 'Thin Blue Lines': Community Policing in Transitional Society", *Police Quarterly*, **8**, 1 (2005), pp. 64-98, p. 65.

[64] Bayley, "Police Reform as Foreign Policy".

[65] William O'Neill, 'Police Reform in Post-Conflict Societies: What We Know and What We Still Need to Know' (Policy Paper: The International Peace Academy, New York, 2005).

[66] UN figures, available at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/sites/police/policing.shtml (accessed 14.11.2011).

European Union (EU) initiatives to rebuild police forces in the former Yugoslavian republics. The trend in the United Kingdom (UK) was also one of steeply growing assistance to police forces in developing countries, with particular priority accorded to Sierra Leone.[67]

The increased spending indicates that statebuilders found police forces useful for an increasing number of tasks. According to Andrew Goldsmith and James Sheptycki, the list of economic, social and political goals police reform was thought to serve had grown to include humanitarian concerns with preventing predatory and violent behavior; establishing rule of law in periods of transition; building capacity to fight transnational crime; nation-building; and efforts to close down illicit markets.[68] To this list should be added a task familiar from colonial times, namely counterinsurgency. While the scale and cost of British-led police reform in Sierra Leone represented an "enviable" example of long-term engagement and was widely held as a success story,[69] the increasing priority of police reform as part of global security governance was indisputable.

How do we account for this resurgence? A growing and diverse literature offers different clues. David Bayley, the doyen of international police studies, argues that the attention to democratization led to a rethinking of the relationship between the police and the state:

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[67] Numbers on UK spending in Sierra Leone will be presented in Chapter 2. For details on UK spending in the 1990s and early 2000s, see C. Raleigh, K. Biddle, C. Male and S. Neema, 'Uganda Police Project Evaluation. Evaluation Study', EV 591, DFID, London, December 1998); Jeremy Ginifer (with input from Kaye Oliver), 'Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: Sierra Leone', (Evaluation Report EV647, DFID, London, 2004).
[68] Andrew Goldsmith and J.W.E. Sheptycki, *Crafting Transnational Policing: Police Capacity-Building and Global Policing Reform* (Hart, Oxford, 2007).
[69] Rauch and van der Spuy, 'Police Reform in Post-Conflict Africa', p. 17.

[W]ith the ascension of democracy as the dominant goal of political development, views about the role of police in government changed. Rather than being seen as a necessary evil, a standing threat to freedom, police became co-producers of a desirable political order. As a result, assistance to security institutions abroad, apart from the military, was no longer viewed as dangerous, unsavoury, diversionary, and politically retrograde, but as a key component of social stability and economic development.[70]

Caparini and Marenin support the impression of police forces as useful to a range of donor goals, arguing that donors slowly but surely became aware that the police mattered in "processes of state creation, the reproduction of peaceful social relations, [and] the peaceful resolutions of conflicts".[71]

Yet, the literature on police reform in post-conflict countries has been slow to pick up the implications of the donor association of policing with the production of social order, state creation and justice. As Hills argues, most of it is "published in conference or workshop proceedings, and/or in reports written on behalf of donors" and has made "little headway in explaining the political and social realities of policing".[72] In particular, there has been little engagement with insights from earlier and historically oriented work on policing and political development. This is surprising, because the frequent observation that the aftermath of conflict and social upheaval "offer unparalleled opportunities to reconceptualise and to reshape policing institutions and doctrines",[73] indicates awareness of the importance of context. However, the instability in which police reforms took place was often described in the literature as a window of opportunity to achieve radical change, or as a temporary obstacle that required the support of (international) military forces for a time. Social and political context, in other

[70] David Bayley, *Changing the Guard: Developing Democratic Police Abroad* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006), p. 19.
[71] Marina Caparini and Otwin Marenin, *Transforming the Police in Central and Eastern Europe*: *Process and Progress* (Lit Verlag, Münster, 2004).
[72] Hills, "The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria".
[73] Rachel Neild, "Democratic Police Reform in War-Torn Societies", *Conflict, Security & Development*, **1**, 1 (2001), pp. 21-43, p. 38.

words, has not been treated as a factor which exerted significant pressure on the nature and course of reforms. That it should do so was indicated by Bayley when he argued that national characteristics of policing were formed by historical trajectories of "prolonged violent popular resistance to government".[74] Yet the barrage of arguments one can now find in support of reforming local police forces in fragile or failed states typically assume, at least implicitly, that instability will subside if only reformers 'get it right'. Arguably, this is connected to a tendency to think of statebuilding as a "virtuous" process where coercion is an attribute of "rogue" actors instead of a key ingredient in the process.[75]

Our understanding of the role of the police in statebuilding processes is further hampered by a scholarly compartmentalization which long relegated the study of policing to disciplines such as Police Studies and Criminology.[76] According to Hills, "there is little evidence of any sustained attempt to place the analysis of police reform into its broader intellectual context".[77] This means that it will be necessary to consult a wider literature in order to understand how reinterpretations of sovereignty, security and statehood attracted renewed attention to policing. Illustrating the dearth of knowledge in this area, Brogden and Nijhar argued in a recent book on Western export of community policing that "we have little perceptive analysis of […] the motives of the often misnamed donor countries, of the nature of the commodity, of the conditions of

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[74] Bayley, 'The Police and Political Development in Europe'.
[75] Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion*, p. 6.
[76] Mathieu Deflem, *Policing World Society: Historical Foundations of International Police Cooperation* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002; Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security Beyond the State*.
[77] Hills, "The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria", p. 220.

delivery, of the processes of installation in the 'host' society, of the reactions of the recipient institutions and their agents, and the consequences of installation".[78]

However, three broad shifts seem to have been particularly important in directing attention to police forces: the increasing emphasis on individuals as the referents of security; the rise of the so-called security-development nexus; and the identification of global threats associated with nonstate actors operating in 'fragile' states. The following section will consider the impact of these notions in turn, and place them in historical context.

The human security paradigm

The first notion concerns the relationship between policing and a concept of security increasingly focused on the individual. The image that security was predominantly a matter of protecting the state from military threats was not only false, argued Richard Ullman in a seminal article, but caused states to ignore the many non-military threats which could "degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state".[79] The focus on "threats to the well-being of individuals" deriving from such things as "economic collapse, political oppression, scarcity, overpopulation, ethnic rivalry, the destruction of nature, terrorism, crime, and disease" gained prominence in donor circles in the 1990s in the term 'human security'.[80] Human security was described by the UNDP as a variety of individual freedoms and entitlements, notable among which were freedom from poverty and physical security from such things as torture, war, criminal attacks,

[78] Brogden and Nijhar, *Community Policing*, p. 13.
[79] Richard Ullman, "Redefining Security", *International Security*, **8**, 1 (1983), pp 129-153; see also Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for Security Studies in the Post-Cold War World* (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 1991).
[80] Kenneth Booth, "Security and Emancipation", *Review of International Studies*, **17**, 4, 313-326, p. 318; see also Emma Rothschild, "What is Security?", *Daedalus*, **124**, 3 (1995), pp. 53-98; Lawrence Freedman, "International Security: Changing Targets", *Foreign Policy*, 110 (1998), pp. 48-63.

domestic violence, and drug use.[81] The nature of 21st century challenges, argued the Commission on Human Security, meant that "attention must […] shift from the security of the state to the security of the people – to human security".[82]

If this seemed like a drastic shift, it did not mean that the state was viewed as irrelevant to human security. All the documents reviewed by MacFarlane and Khong in their history of the concept made the point that "the answer to state dysfunction in the area of protection of civilians is the reconstitution of the state so it can do its job properly".[83] This was also recognized by the Commission on Human Security, which admitted that the state remained the "fundamental purveyor of security" and that human security should be seen as a "supplement" to state security.[84] Indeed, most of the recommendations on how human security could be enhanced addressed states. Rather than a displacement of a traditional discourse on state security, therefore, what occurred was a reorientation in the relationship between state and security in which attention moved from the state's capacity to ward off military threats to how the state ought to use its capacity to provide individual safety.

An important effect of this reorientation was the elevation of the police – the institution tasked with protecting citizens from many of the everyday threats identified by the human security paradigm – up from a position in the shadow of military forces. As was argued in the OECD handbook on SSR, "the police are often the security institution that

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[81] United Nations Development Programme, 'Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security' (United Nations Press, New York, 1994).
[82] Commission on Human Security, 'Human Security Now: Final Report' (Commission on Human Security, New York, 2003)
[83] MacFarlane Khong, *Human Security and the UN*, p. 200.
[84] This entangling of state and individual security is supported by Christian Reus-Smith who argues that "the principle of [state] sovereignty and human rights norms are best conceived as two normative elements of a single, distinctly modern discourse about legitimate statehood and rightful state action". Reus-Smit, "Human Rights and the Social Construction of Sovereignty", *Review of International Studies*, **27**, 4, pp. 519-538, p. 520.

most impacts on people's daily lives".[85] It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find frequent arguments to the effect that functioning and accountable police forces were fundamental to human security,[86] or that police assistance "should be given primarily for addressing the security needs articulated by individuals rather than those articulated by governments".[87]

In light of critiques that human security was an extremely vague term unable to serve as a guide for policy, it is worth asking just what the contribution of police towards the security of individuals was expected to be.[88] The UN Commission on Human Security emphasized the importance of police forces in protecting refugees and in rebuilding trust in state institutions. Their contribution, the Commission argued, was rooted in the fact that the police represented an antidote to "military" security:

> By emphasizing public security – not military security – civilian police forces can help prevent abuse and corruption among local law and order officials. They can also assist in building capacity and rebuilding trust and legitimacy in the new national law and order institutions.[89]

As guardians of law and order, police forces were increasingly described as crucial for protecting vulnerable individuals in the precarious period following just after conflict. Call and Barnett saw the issue as developing "civilian, apolitical police forces that […] will protect citizens, uphold the rule of law and help to maintain order with a minimum of force".[90] Similarly, Call and Stanley emphasized the potential role of the police in enhancing human rights protections, investigating past transgressions and disarming

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[85] OECD, 'OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform'.
[86] Marenin, 'Restoring Police Systems'.
[87] Bayley, *Changing the Guard*, p. 82.
[88] Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?", *International Security*, **26**, 2 (2001), pp. 87-102
[89] Commission on Human Security, 'Human Security Now'.
[90] Call and Barnett, "Looking for a Few Good Cops", p. 44.

combatants and civilians.[91] Weighing different options for addressing security in postwar settings, they found that preexisting local forces had the advantage of being experienced, deployed, armed and paid for. On the other hand, police forces were described as janus-faced organizations that could easily do as much to harm human security as to protect it: "existing local police forces often include large numbers of individuals with histories of political violence, provocation and extensive human rights violations".[92] This risk was considered particularly acute in post-conflict countries with recent histories of state repression,[93] and undoubtedly elevated civilianization of police forces to an important donor goal.

Did the idea of human security also usher in a fundamentally new way to approach police reform? It has been argued that the idea of human security "springs from the same values that during the second half of the twentieth century led to the greater articulation of norms for securing human rights, civilizing the conduct of war, and protecting the vulnerable".[94] To MacFarlane and Khong, human security represented a "recovery of older discourses on the rights and interests of the individual" with roots in antiquity.[95] A substantial part of the agenda later dubbed 'human development', they found, was contained in documents of human rights that emerged from the 1940s to the 1960s. In his famous 1960 *Winds of Change* speech delivered to the South African parliament, Harold MacMillan did in fact speak of an imminent trial for African nations which would involve much more than "military strength" and "diplomatic and

[91] Charles Call and William Stanley, "Protecting the People: Public Security Choices after Wars", *Global* Governance, **7**, 2 (2001), pp. 151-172.
[92] *Ibid., p. 157*
[93] Bayley and Robert M. Perito, *The Police in War*; Bayley, *Changing the Guard.*
[94] Astrid Suhrke, "Human Security and the Interests of States", *Security Dialogue*, **30**, 3 (1999), pp. 265-276, p. 268.
[95] MacFarlane Khong, *Human Security and the UN*, p. 199.

administrative skill". He identified his government's goal as helping to create a "society which respects the rights of individuals". However, his general appeal to African nations to come down on the side of "freedom and order and justice" was squarely framed as a choice of alignment in the Cold War conflict; not as an obligation of newly independent states to protect their citizens.[96] Similarly, a 1954 extensive discussion of relations between colonial police forces and the public recognized the need to "establish friendly and frequent contacts", particularly with children and old people, to counteract the resentment towards the police as the "strong arm of imperial power".[97] If this sounded like a call for civilianization, the backdrop for this discussion was the issue of how to gain the trust of local populations in counterinsurgency campgaigns. The wish to improve police-public relations therefore had a quite different purpose than securing individuals. It is quite clear that concerns with abuse of individuals that characterize today's policing discourse was absent in the late colonial period.

The security-development nexus

As we have seen, an important effect of the focus on individuals as referents of security was to call attention to conflict and poverty-related threats such as criminal attacks, domestic violence and drug trade; issues which police forces seemed uniquely placed to handle. The second factor which affected the perceived utility of police forces in international statebuilding was intimately related to the identification of threats to individuals, namely belief that violence and conflict were related to poverty. As Ken Menkhaus argued, the security-development nexus is founded upon the image of a

[96] Excerpt of speech retrieved at
http://africanhistory.about.com/od/eraindependence/p/wind_of_change2.htm (accessed 28.11.2011).
[97] *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces, July 1954*. National Archives (UK), CO 885/124.

vicious circle: “Endemic insecurity blocks progress in economic rehabilitation and recovery. The lack of economic recovery and employment opportunities in turn impedes demobilisation and reinforces criminality and armed conflict”.[98] Inversely, development and security were assumed to be related in a virtuous circle, so that investing in one would also amount to investing in the other. In the donor literature as well as in much of the policy-oriented academic literature, the link between security and development was sometimes taken to be so close that it was difficult to tell the two apart. Thus, the United Nations Panel on High Level Threats, Challenges, and Change argued that the pursuit of development was a security policy in itself:

> Development is the first line of defence for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously. Combating poverty will not only save millions of lives, but will also strengthen states’ capacities to combat terrorism, organized crime, and proliferation. Development makes everyone more secure.[99]

A somewhat different statement of the link between security and development with a significant implication for policing was championed in the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development’s (DFID) so-called ‘security first’ principle. This principle recognized the need to quickly restore the capacity of institutions such as the police, gendarmerie, national guard and border guards in order to remove obstacles for economic and social development.[100] Indeed, DFID explicitly mentioned policing as a way to protect fragile livelihoods and thereby foster development:

> DFID is concerned with poverty reduction and sustainable development in Africa and it recognizes that security is a fundamental pre-condition for development. Many of DFID’s

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[98] Ken Menkhaus, “Vicious Circles and the Security Development Nexus in Somalia”, *Conflict, Security & Development*, **4**, 2 (2004), pp. 149-165, p. 149; Paul Collier, V.L. Elliot, Håvard Hegre, Anke Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol and Nicholas Sambanis, ‘Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy’ (World Bank and Oxford University Press, Washington D.C., 2003).
[99] Quoted in Denney, “Reducing Poverty”.
[100] Susan Willett, “New Barbarians at the Gate: Losing the Liberal Peace in Africa”, *Review of African Political Economy*, **32**, Issue 106 (2005), pp. 569-594.

programmes in Africa tackle the underlying causes of conflict on the continent. One of the root causes in Africa is the high incidence of poverty. Much of DFID's conflict-related work aims to protect fragile livelihoods, and promote good governance and access to justice, through police, judicial, and security sector reform.[101]

Such arguments, now axiomatic in donor circles, placed pressure on development institutions to "coherently integrate crime prevention, conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, demobilisation, security [sector] reforms and good governance into development intervention".[102] According to one influential analysis, the merging of security and development opened up a deepening and radicalization of already intrusive Western involvement in poor regions.[103] In Menkhaus' view, it had "stark policy implications" in that it "propel[led] development work far beyond conventional sectors such as health and education and directly into work in security sector reform".[104]

Even so, the novelty of the idea of a link between security and development should not be overstated. Development studies as a discipline has long taken an interest in the impact of conflict on development, and in the effect of civil-military relations on development.[105] Modernization theory was not foreign to such a connection either. Although it was rarely spelled out, modernization theory's idea of "intertwined, perhaps mutually reinforcing" processes of economic development and state subordination of traditional and rivaling political units certainly supported the idea of a connection.[106] To take a historical example of policy, the Marshall Plan was based on a belief that

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[101] Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, 'The Africa Conflict Prevention Pool: An Information Document' (DFID, London, 2004).
[102] Lars Buur, Steffen Jensen and Finn Stepputat, 'Introduction', in Lars Buur, Steffen Jensen and Finn Stepputat (eds), *The Security Development Nexus: Expressions of Sovereignty and Securitization in Southern Africa* (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, 2007), p. 19.
[103] Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (Zed Books, London, 2001).
[104] Menkhaus, "Vicious Circles", p. 151; see also Krause and Jutersonke, "Peace, Security and Development".
[105] Smith, "Security-Sector Reform".
[106] Claude Welch, *Political Modernization: A Reader in Contemporary Political Change* (Wadsworth Publishers, Belmont, CA, 1967).

economic reconstruction was essential to avert the security threats posed by poverty in Europe. Finally, the link between economic growth and security were asserted by successive UN resolutions and Committees throughout the Cold War. In 1980 the Brandt Commission stated that "wars produce hunger but we are less aware that mass poverty can lead to war or end in chaos". This point was reiterated by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 which "clearly securitized economic development issues, noting that the real sources of insecurity also encompass unsustainable development".[107]

Did a similar belief about development and security influence late colonial police reform? After 1945, a shift in thinking occurred whereby the colonial service's purpose was redefined from the *administration* of the colonies to their *development*.[108] Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Conservative Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1954, summarized the colonial mandate as follows: "to reduce want, insecurity and disease among the 60 million people living in vast territories, to lead them, via trusteeship, to full partnership, making political and economic changes not outrun each other but move in harmony together". [109] The reference to a connection between the sphere of the economy and political stability was not exclusive to Britain: "Throughout the 1950s the prevailing assumption of American policy was that economic development – the elimination of poverty, disease, illiteracy – was necessary for political development and political stability".[110] Evidence of the same thinking is found in the field of policing in

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[107] MacFarlane Khong, *Human Security and the UN*, p. 103.
[108] Cell, "On the Eve of Decolonization".
[109] *Lennox-Boyd to House of Commons 29.7.1947*, retrieved at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1947/jul/29/colonial-affairs#S5CV0441P0_19470729_HOC_289 (accessed 13.12.2011).
[110] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (Yale University Press, New Haven, NJ, 1968), p. 6. It was Huntington's thesis that the increased incidence of violence and instability in the late 1950s and early 1960s was caused by a gap between rapid social change and slow evolution of political institutions, and that "the apparent relationship between poverty and backwardness, on the one hand, and instability and violence, on the other, is a spurious one" (p. 41).

the same period. Thus, British colonial police commissioners recognized the importance of economic progress for successful policing: "If it is true that no scheme of economic and social progress can succeed without the co-operation of the local people, *a fortiori* it is true of the public peace. The peace cannot indefinitely be imposed from above".[111] Particularly noteworthy was the view that threats posed by communism were inseparable from the development process: "Communism is a symptom rather than a root cause of the social ferment of our times, and it is no use trying to pretend that if we could eradicate communism there would be no labour troubles".[112] In other words, the concept of development was politicized well before donors described global terrorism as a development issue.

The novelty, then, does not seem to be the belief in a causal connection between security and development. Instead, it is found in the new institutional links that the security-development discourse helped forge among donors. As Krause and Jutersonke argue, "ideas about development and security were pursued in parallel but disconnected institutional and political structures" throughout the Cold War.[113] Barriers between these structures started to break down in the late 1990s. Crucial in this regard was the UK government's 2001 by creation of an Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) and a Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) (merged into a single Conflict Prevention Pool in 2008) designed to harmonize programming, funding and expertise among DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD). This institutional rapprochement was encouraged by the human security agenda. According

[111] *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces, July 1954*. National Archives (UK), CO 885/124
[112] *Conference of Commissioners of Police April 1951: Speech by the Secretary of State*. National Archives (UK), CO 537/6941
[113] Krause and Jutersonke, "Peace, Security and Development", p. 454.

to Roland Paris, an important upshot of the rise to prominence of 'human security' was to glue together diverse actors with a common interest in shifting attention from conventional security concerns "toward goals that have traditionally fallen under the rubric of international development".[114]

While the UK pooling arrangement remains unusual in an international context, it illustrates a wider but little noted phenomenon: by virtue of their claim to protect civilians as well as their capacity to confront 'spoilers' with force, the police became blessed with more supporters in the donor community. The qualities that were perceived as useful during decolonization were further valued in post-Cold War complex emergencies where "humanitarian concerns [were] linked with large-scale violent conflict".[115]

The (re)discovery of these useful functions is not the only factor that encouraged a donor convergence in the field of policing. The convergence may also be seen as a political compromise within the donor community itself. Firstly, there was a "developmentalization" of security whereby increasingly assertive development agencies moved beyond protection and relief to express views on civil-military relations and the funding and constitution of state security forces.[116] Conversely, there was a "securitising of development" in which the traditional security community sought to strategically brand their activities as development efforts.[117] Anxious not to be associated with military forces and under constraints on what may be counted as development assistance under the international aid regime, development agencies

[114] Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?", p. 88.
[115] David Keen, *Complex Emergencies* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2008).
[116] Smith, "Security-Sector Reform".
[117] Willett, "New Barbarians at the Gate".

trained their sights on civilian police forces. However, in this field they were accompanied by a security community who saw police forces as valuable players in long-term 'hearts and minds' operations. These various agendas were reflected in the international reform of the Afghan National Police. Reform started out in 2001 as a German-led project of professionalization, and was later taken over by the European Union. As the security situation in the country deteriorated, the United States military added its own training program, turning police officers into "little soldiers" in the frontline of counterinsurgency.[118] The field of policing was therefore the frontline in the struggle between agendas of security and development.

Securitization of weak statehood

Alongside the discourse on human security and the merging of security and development practices, a third and related shift has helped local police forces to the forefront of global security concerns. This is the belief that weak or 'fragile' statehood was in itself a source of global insecurity. "State collapse", Zartman argued in an early volume on the topic, "is a deeper phenomenon than mere rebellion, coup, or riot. It refers to a situation where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart and must be reconstituted in some form, old or new".[119] This idea was influentially popularized in Robert Kaplan's widely read dispatch titled *The Coming Anarchy*. It argued that Sierra Leone was a microcosm of what was occurring throughout much of the underdeveloped world: "the withering away of central

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[118] Robert Perito, 'Afghanistan's police: the weak link in security sector reform' (Special Report 227, The United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, August 2009).
[119] William Zartman, 'Putting Things Back Together', in William Zartman (ed), *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 1995), p. 1.

governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, the unchecked spread of disease, and the growing pervasiveness of war".[120]

Of course, the idea that African states were weak was not new.[121] However, diagnoses of state weakness failed to make much impact on Cold War security thinking, which "defined the concept of security in external or outward-directed terms, that is, as external to the […] state".[122] According to Milliken and Krause the high-profile attention to state failure in the 1990s was fueled by "dashed hopes of development" and deep-set fears that failing states, besides creating a "Hobbesian nightmare" for the local population, constituted insecurities for the very core states of the system.[123] Indeed, if Kaplan's prediction about a coming anarchy appeared rather apocalyptic, his argument that failing states like Sierra Leone were ignored by the West at its own risk became a staple of security discourse. Policymakers and scholars alike routinely presented a laundry list of dangers emanating from dysfunctional states, ranging from "transnational terrorism to weapons proliferation, organized crime, humanitarian catastrophes, regional conflict, mass migration, pandemic disease, environmental degradation, and energy insecurity".[124] Fragile states, it was argued, constituted threats with wide repercussions:

Fragile states are more likely to become unstable and fall prey to criminal and terrorist networks, which aggravate their instability. The impact of instability can spread well beyond national borders […] This can be seen in refugee flows, the spread of HIV/AIDS, arms

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[120] Robert Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation and Disease Are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of Our Planet' (Atlantic Monthly, February, pp.44-76); see also Gerard Helman and Steven Ratner, 'Saving Failed States' (Foreign Policy No. 89, pp. 3-20).
[121] See for instance Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood", *World Politics*, **35**, 1 (1982), pp. 1-24; Jackson, *Quasi-States*; Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1988).
[122] Ayoob, "The Security Problematic of Third World States", p. 262.
[123] Jennifer Milliken and Keith Krause, "State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction: Concepts, Lessons and Strategies", *Development and Change*, **33**, 5 (2002), pp. 753-774.
[124] Patrick Stewart, *Weak Links: Fragile States, Global Threats, and International Security* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011), p. 3.

smuggling and the breakdown of trade. On average, growth is reduced by 0.4% a year if a neighboring country is fragile.[125]

The threats said to derive from the break-up of states received a further and unexpected boost after the attacks on September 11. These attacks inaugurated a period where the capacity of nonstate actors to inflict harm was seen as further proof that security, as the ability to govern generally, was slipping from the state's grasp.[126] Thus, the loss of state power to control activities in its territory became firmly established as a global threat in itself. The possible consequences of weak state control were dramatically sketched by Tony Blair:

We know that poverty and instability lead to weak states which can become havens for terrorists and other criminals […] Even before 9/11, al-Qaeda had bases in Africa […] They still do, hiding in places where they can go undisturbed by weak governments, planning their next attacks which could be anywhere in the world, including Africa.[127]

These examples show that state fragility has become firmly established as a threat. However, just what makes a state weak and what are the implications for statebuilders? According to DFID, states may be fragile firstly because they lack the *capacity* to do such things as "control its external borders or significant parts of its internal territory", and secondly because they lack the *willingness* to stop (its own) systematic violence against groups in society.[128] The image of state fragility as a function of capacity and willingness broadly corresponds to what Milliken and Krause called the "institutional" and "functional" dimension of state failure. The institutional dimension referred, in their view, to the "empirically-observed decomposition or collapse of the institutions of governance", and the functional dimension referred to the "normative and practical

[125] DFID, 'Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States' (DFID, London, 2004).
[126] See James Rosenau and Ernst Otto Czempiel (eds), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992).
[127] Quoted in Buur, Jensen and Stepputat, 'Introduction', p. 9.
[128] DFID, 'Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States'.

implications of such a failure". What actually collapsed, they suggested, was as much our expectations of what the state was supposed to do rather than its actual institutions: the "*vision* (or dream) of the progressive, developmental state [rather] than any real existing state.[129]

Whatever collapsed, in academic and policy work alike the police appeared central to its reconstruction. Robert Rotberg distinguished "failed" from "strong" states with reference to their inability to "control their peripheral regions, especially those regions occupied by out-groups […] Plausibly, the extent of a state's failure can be measured by the extent of its geographical expanse genuinely controlled (especially after dark) by the official government".[130] As a result, he reasoned, territorial control would have to be extended primarily by a reinvigoration of the state's coercive apparatus: "a renewed police force and correction facilities are critical".[131] A functioning police force was therefore of high priority in the restoration of state capacity. However, since state security forces were the principal means regimes use to thwart demands for representation and legitimacy, police forces were also gatekeepers to improvement along the other axis of statehood; that of willingness. Even if governments were willing to make their security forces operate more responsibly, they may lack the ability to do so. In other words, "capacity" and "willingness", the two axes of state strength, may be unified in the police or military, adding further urgency to their reform.

This problem is recognizable as one that much predates the modern state, namely as the risk captured in Weber's paradox of sultanism: "The more reliance a ruler places on his

[129] Milliken and Krause, "State Failure, State Collapse", p. 762.
[130] Rotberg, 'The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States', p. 6.
[131] *Ibid.* ; see also Susan Rose-Ackerman, 'Establishing the Rule of Law, in Robert Rotberg (ed), *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004).

military force in order to hold down the subject population, the more dependent he becomes on the support of that force in order to maintain himself in power".[132] However, this problem took on a different significance as a result of the reinterpretations of statehood and security reviewed above. Huntington argued that the involvement of the military in politics had less to do with the military itself than with the "absence or weakness of effective political institutions" that characterized what he called "praetorian societies". To Huntington, the most important distinction among countries concerned not their *form* of government but their *degree* of government. This influential statement broke with the more or less explicit view in modernization theory that a high degree of government – statehood – would materialize along with democratization. The belief in the twin progress of democratization and statehood was also evident in late colonial statebuilding. This can readily be seen in the emphasis placed on appropriate police-government relations and the lack of attention to how policing would affect state-society relations. What colonial reformers feared was not a decay of the social and political institutions keeping the police in check, or even the decay of the police themselves, but the communist "police state" where the police were *too* strong. This illustrates that late colonial police reform was characterized by what Huntington thought was a peculiarly American tendency to direct energy "not to the creation of authority and the accumulation of power but rather to the limitation of authority and the division of power".[133]

This allows us to see that the insecurities seen to emanate from weak states placed today's donors of police reform under a cross-pressure unknown in the colonial era.

[132] Reinhart Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Anchor Books Max, New York, 1962), p. 244; Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1978).
[133] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 7.

Firstly, they were constrained by a set of familiar 'sultanist' or 'praetorian' risks associated with the police; although these are now posed primarily as a risk to "society" and not to governments. As Marenin argued, "the state and its agencies continue to be part of the insecurity generating elements in society through arbitrary, brutal and corrupt actions".[134] Secondly, however, reformers were faced with a proliferating set of risks stemming from an inadequate *degree* of government and the insurrection of violent elements in society. As Marenin went on to note, "nonstate actors are free to roam and inflict violence on people". While "terrorists" or "extremists" gave colonial governments headaches during decolonization, their infringement of individual security was not seen to feed a vicious cycle with adverse effects on development and statehood. The cross-pressure is evident in the policy implications following from these two sets of risk. Where the first set seemed to dictate a reduction of the coercive capacity of the police and tight democratic controls, the second set may require highly coercive counterinsurgency campaigns and a higher degree of operational freedom. However, the coercive capacity and operational freedom acquired to neutralize rogue actors in society may obviously exacerbate the threat to individual security. The police therefore appeared as indispensable agents, whether in the service of security or insecurity.

Having now outlined the implications of dominant views on security and statehood for police reform, a few general points can be made. Firstly, conceptions of security and statehood increasingly turned on conditions directly relevant to the police: the safety of individuals; the damaging effects of organized crime; and the safeguarding of territory from internal threats. Descriptions of state failure emphasized lack of policing, especially lack of territorial control. Conversely, policing was described as an indicator

[134] Marenin, 'Restoring Police Systems', p. 12.

of the quality of state-society relations. Where states had used police forces to suppress their own populations, as was typically the case in post-conflict contexts, reformed versions of those same forces were presented as crucial to re-establish more healthy relations.

Taken individually, none of these traits appear new. As we saw, evidence can readily be found both in 1950s colonial discourse and 1960s social science of the importance of respecting individual rights, and of adequate control of armed forces. Moreover, the need to overcome a past of police repression was a problem that colonial reformers were keenly aware of. What was new was the *accentuation* of familiar aspects of statehood and security, and the belief that they influenced each other in mutually beneficial or harmful ways. The recurrence of adjectives like “holistic” and “comprehensive” in the donor discourse is testimony to the belief that humanitarian, developmental and security agendas were (or should become) integrated means to reach the same overall goal. Crucially, policing was identified as essential to ensure that “virtuous” cycles between security and development and between a healthy state and society took hold. This reorientation goes a long way in explaining why police forces saw their star rise in the donor community since the end of the Cold War.

However, the review has also shown that the implications for reformers were ambiguous and sometimes conflicting. The threats to individuals posed by abusive police forces dictated their civilianization. The threats posed by militias or other violent groups dictated their militarization. Compounding these difficulties, operational context typically varied so that one policy could quickly seem outdated. Unstable situations where security forces of different stripes and allegiances operated seemed to call for police primacy, but it also offered the possibility of joining forces against common

enemies. Finally, the expanded range of concerns police forces are now involved in created sharper ambiguities and conflicting imperatives. This means that the effect of reinterpretations of sovereignty, security and statehood must be traced in the choices reformers make in concrete situations.

These points strengthen the case that was made initially for analyzing the choices made by reformers along three different dimensions; force, territoriality, and legitimate authority. Before we can do this, two essential tasks remain. The first is to analyze the effect of the sovereignty regime framing reforms in the two periods. Whereas this chapter has concentrated on reinterpretations of security and statehood, sovereignty requires careful attention, simply because Sierra Leone was not a sovereign state during the first reform. In Robert Jackson's influential formulation, the postcolonial achievement of sovereignty had profound effects on both on the internal and external relations of ex-colonies.[135] This raises the question if it is possible to speak about sovereignty at all during the first period, and therefore poses a potential problem for the then-now approach of this study. These issues are dealt with in the first part of Chapter 1. The second remaining task, dealt with in the second part of Chapter 1, is to provide a more adequate account of the specific problems reformers faced in the two periods. This means that we must narrow the discussion that has so far dealt with 'weak' or 'fragile' states to conditions that are particular to Africa and Sierra Leone. The most obvious factor to keep in mind here is the form of colonial rule and its legacy. Indirect rule in Africa was founded on a governmental doctrine which contained clear guidelines in all the three areas considered in this study: where the state needed to be present, the level of coercion it needed to support itself, and the sort of societal partners it enlisted in

[135] Jackson, *Quasi-States*.

rule.[136] Problems along the three dimensions of Weber's concept of the state are therefore discussed in relation to scholarship on African statehood.

This Introduction closes by a discussion of case selection, methods, and sources, followed by a brief outline of the thesis.

Case selection, sources and methods

This study aims to present arguments of general relevance to statebuilding by comparing two cases of police reform across time within a single country. If Sierra Leone, in one period or both, were a highly atypical case, it would obviously cast doubt on generalizations. With regards to the first period, it is undoubtedly true that a different picture of colonial policing would have emerged if Malaya, Palestine or even Cyprus were chosen as alternative case studies. In these cases policing revolved around neutralizing acute and lasting threats to colonial order and was more strongly militarized. However, existing scholarship shows that the introduction of a militarized policing model characterized most of British colonial Africa.[137] Paramilitary legacies were also strong in French and Portuguese ex-colonies.[138] The use of coercive policing to deal with local resistance to state-led modernization and development was a general phenomenon.[139]

[136] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1996).
[137] Killingray, "The Maintenance of Law and Order"; Mathieu Deflem, "Law Enforcement in British Colonial Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Imperial Policing in Nyasaland, the Gold Coast and Kenya", *Police Studies*, **17**, 1 (1994), pp.45-68; John McCracken, "Coercion and Control in Nyasaland: Aspects of the History of a Colonial Police Force", *Journal of African History*, **27** (1986), pp. 127-147; Sinclair, *At the End of the Line.*
[138] Hills, *Policing Africa*
[139] Anderson and Killingray, *Policing and Decolonisation.*

The key reason for selecting Sierra Leone is specific to the second reform, namely that it is a success story in the donor community. Through its status in a tightly knit 'Global Policing Policy Community',[140] the reform in Sierra Leone is credited with influencing police reform elsewhere. However, Sierra Leone is now one case among many in 'post-conflict' or 'post-authoritarian' locations across the globe. These include countries that were never formally colonized. Indeed, a case is found next door to Sierra Leone. Comparing SSR in Sierra Leone and Liberia, never formally a colony, one observer was struck by how the UK's historically constituted influence in Sierra Leone allowed British reformers to bypass normal decision-making procedures.[141] The difference between Sierra Leone and Liberia, however, pales in comparison with another widely set of discussed cases in Eastern Europe. For instance, the sharp ethno-political divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina presented police reformers with a challenge of matching parallel state structures very different from the challenge of matching state and traditional structures in Sierra Leone.[142] Similarly, the attempt to integrate recruits into forces dominated by a majority ethnic group in Kosovo and Southern Serbia also presented problems less relevant in Sierra Leone.[143] This means that Chapter 5's arguments on the effects of strategies towards nonstate policing agents will speak primarily to a subset of cases in sub-Saharan Africa with a legacy of indirect rule.

However, the fairly wide scope conditions for statebuilding defined in the beginning – the attempt to achieve a level of modernization/development, limited time, and

[140] Peake and Marenin, "Their Reports Are Not Read".
[141] Kayode Fayemi, J. 'Governing Insecurity in Post-Conflict States: The Case of Sierra Leone and Liberia', in Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds), *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* (Lit Verlag, Münster, 2003), p. 24.
[142] Aitchison, "Police Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina".
[143] Gordon Peake, 'Policing the Peace: Police Reform Experiences in Kosovo, Southern Serbia and Macedonia' (Saferworld, London, 2004).

instability – means that findings from the Sierra Leonean context travel reasonably well across time and place. A stock-taking study of police reforms acknowledged the general importance of these conditions when it argued that police reforms involve "transforming power relations in a society"; "take a long time"; and that they and that they are "doubly" difficult in post-conflict or "crisis" countries.[144] Thus, in Bosnia and Herzegovina as in Sierra Leone, police reforms took place after a history of "public alienation" and "police militarisation", and was seen by DFID as a way to move "into broader issues of rebuilding divided communities, resolving local conflicts, and ensuring the safety of displaced persons returning to their pre-war homes".[145] Illustrating the importance of the operational context, Goldsmith and Dinnen found that transnational police building in general occurred in "stressful moments" and argued that police reforms in Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands were hampered by a failure to match universalistic goals to environmental and political contexts.[146]

To achieve the objectives of this study, a mixed methods approach has been chosen. To collect data on the first reform I have relied principally on archival research in various locations in Freetown, and in the National Archives at Kew, London. While the time elapsed puts a cap on the number of available respondents from this period, I was able to do one highly useful interview with a British ex-police officer who served in Sierra Leone between 1954 and 1957, as well as four interviews with ex-officers serving elsewhere in British Africa. Others have shared their recollections with me via e-mail. Data on the recent case has been collected through 43 semi-structured interviews with British reformers, SLP officers in various locations in Sierra Leone, and individuals

[144] O'Neill, 'Police Reform in Post-Conflict Societies".
[145] Aitchison, "Police Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina".
[146] Goldsmith and Dinnen, "Transnational Police Building".

working in the country's security sector. In addition to the interview material, I have benefited greatly from a substantial collection of reports, memoranda, and notes documenting developments from 1998 to 2005 that was shared by two senior British reformers. These documents, along with the substantial grey literature that now exists on SSR in Sierra Leone, were highly useful in correcting for familiar biases in elite interviewing such as exaggeration of one's own role or faulty memory.[147]

Besides being a useful source, the grey literature presents analytical problems. Written to influence or evaluate policy, its critical distance from the subject matter is limited. I have endeavoured to use this literature carefully according to type. At the most policy-oriented end, there are briefings and evaluations commissioned by agencies such as DFID. Such material has been used to verify dates, numbers, and other 'raw data'. In addition, it has been used to reconstruct how policy thinking changed underway (as a supplement to the documents shared by reformers). At the other end of the spectrum, there are more independent and scholarly working papers by research institutes and think tanks. These form a significant part of the material I draw on. As far as possible, I have weighed both sets of material against scholarly sources. This is not always easy since one and the same source often pass through several incarnations and ends up as an academic article or book.[148] Conscious of this process, I have tried to include the generation of grey literature in my analysis. Chapter 4 discusses how policy was shaped by the interaction between reformers and social scientists.

[147] Jeffrey Berry, "Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing", *PS: Political Science and Politics*, **35**, 4 (2002), pp. 679-682.
[148] The most notable example is Paul Jackson and Peter Albrecht's edited series of practitioner working papers, which later formed the basis of a two-author monograph published online by the Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform. Finally, this monograph was published as an academic title by Palgrave. See Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson, 'Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007' (Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform, Birmingham, 2009); Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*.

Another problematic aspect of the materials gathered for the two periods must be noted. The dearth of interview material for the first period means that I was forced to rely more heavily on written and official sources than in the second period. This obviously means that the description is not as thick as of the second period, where triangulation between written primary sources, interview data and secondary literature was possible. Partly offsetting this bias, my colonial SLP respondent allowed me to photocopy a complete collection of his reports and letters. Since this well over 150 page collection includes operational orders and minutes from meetings, it supplemented the archival material produced for public or high-level consumption with an 'operational' perspective otherwise lacking. Coupled with the fact that the secondary literature on imperial security in some regards is stronger than the secondary literature on the recent period, this allowed the construction of a relatively balanced account. One major exception stems from the fact all the primary sources for the first period is of British origin. While this has been impossible to correct for, a chapter has been devoted to how Sierra Leoneans and Britons alike were able to mobilize narratives about colonialism during the second reform.

Comparative historical analysis, argue Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, typically pose "big questions" about "large-scale outcomes". It is characterized by "a concern with causal analysis, an emphasis on processes over time, and the use of systematic and contextualized comparison".[149] Left out of this definition is "scholarship that avoids causal analysis in favour of 'interpretive' approaches aimed at uncovering the culturally situated meanings of human behaviour".[150] The objective of this study requires a

[149] James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, University Press Cambridge, 2003), p. 10.
[150] *Ibid.*

combination of these two analytical approaches. The outcome of interest here are the *strategies* of police reform as much as the observable effects of reform. This means that the impact of understandings of sovereignty, security and statehood must be traced inductively from how reformers perceived problems and designed solutions rather than from whether they actually succeeded. Yet as students of social movements tell us, strategies are not made in a vacuum. Just as "political context" [...] sets the grievances around which activists mobilize, advantaging some claims and disadvantaging others",[151] so the operational environment shaped the actions of reformers. It was argued initially that successfully drawing conclusions about the impact of revised notions of such concepts required taking local context into account. The term context was reserved to what I called operational environment – the local processes and events occurring at the time of reform.

Operational environment resembles what Tilly and Goodin call an "environmental mechanism", namely "externally generated influences on conditions affecting social life".[152] Environmental mechanisms pertain not to actors, but to their settings. For instance, the ebb and flow of conflict in Sierra Leone from 1998 to 2002 was largely independent of the reformers' doings, but it profoundly impacted theirs.

Context, however, cannot be understood just as a constraint. A deterioration of the operational environment actually created new opportunities for reformers. Those opportunities had to be squared with understandings of the basic concepts guiding reforms. Revision of strategy in response to changed context involved emphasizing

[151] David Meyer, "Protest and Political Opportunities", *Annual Review of Sociology*, **30** (2002), pp. 125-145, p. 127f.
[152] Charles Tilly and Robert Goodin, 'It Depends', in Goodin and Tilly, *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Analysis*.

different aspects of 'security', or coming up with new explanations about what kind of policing was conducive to statehood in Sierra Leone. This allows us to see that environmental mechanisms interacted with "cognitive mechanisms", namely "alterations of individual or collective perception".[153] To pick out this dynamic, I have followed George and Bennett's recommendation to combine within-case analysis with cross-case comparison.[154] This study is therefore relatively thick on empirical detail; but primarily as a means to draw cautious inferences about sovereignty, security and statehood, and only secondarily to fill a gap in historical scholarship.

Three potential shortcomings of this method must be noted. The first is that careful attention to historical continuities and to the interaction between concepts and contextual factors must be bought at the price of reduced generalizability. According to Charles Ragin, comparative social research typically aims to combine two goals. It is *interpretive* in that it aims to "account for significant historical outcomes or sets of comparable outcomes or processes by piecing evidence together in a manner sensitive to historical chronology". It is *causal-analytic* in that it aims to "produce limited generalizations concerning the causes of theoretically defined categories of empirical phenomena [...] common to a set of cases".[155] Undoubtedly, the causal-analytic goal of this study – to present relevant insights about statebuilding and police reform beyond Sierra Leone – could have been better served if more cases had been chosen. Hopefully, the gains from paying close attention to how historical continuities shaped reform in a single case outweighs the benefits from adding more cases. To make up for the lack of

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[153] Tilly and Goodin, 'It Depends'.
[154] Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004).
[155] Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1987), p. 35.

comparators, aspects of reforms in Sierra Leone will be illustrated with examples from other countries as often as possible.

The second shortcoming is connected to the reduction of local context to an exogenous "operational environment". With some justification, this may strike the reader as doing little to correct a bias often criticized in the project of statebuilding: according primacy to the perspective of outsiders and exaggerating their power.[156] My own choice to accord analytical primacy to the doings of foreign reformers has been made for two reasons. The first is that there are few available sources to shed light on Sierra Leonean perspectives on late colonial reforms. The primacy given to British perspectives is therefore an unfortunate but necessary outcome of the historical approach. The second reason is that this thesis is concerned with the strategies through which strong states attempted to govern weaker ones. This means that the bias of statebuilders will to some extent be reflected in analysis. That said, the material available for the second period allows us to construct a fuller picture of Sierra Leonean perspectives.

A final pitfall stems from the risk of drawing false conclusions from comparison of cases that are not independent of each other.[157] Today's statebuilding is related to earlier, colonial forms of statebuilding through institutional continuities. The continuities in the field of policing are such that the recent attempt to correct the paramilitary nature of policing in Sierra Leone makes little sense without taking into account the colonial roots of these characteristics. The approach chosen here is therefore to treat the concepts of sovereignty, statehood and security as variables that both shape and are shaped by the efforts through which strong states have historically sought to

[156] Ole Jacob Sending (ed), 'Learning to Build a Sustainable Peace: Ownership and Everyday Peacebuilding' (Chr. Michelsen Institute, Report No. 4, 2010, Bergen, 2009).
[157] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*.

transform colonies or weak states. As George and Bennett argue, uncovering linkages between cases may help us to uncover processes of learning (or lack thereof) in between. I therefore think of the selection of partially dependent cases as strength rather than a weakness.[158] Since this study asks precisely how diachronic reinterpretations of key concepts and institutional continuities affects a recent case, this choice should be ideally suited for the study's objective.

Plan of the thesis

As indicated above, Chapter 1 has two aims: to analyze how sovereignty regimes shaped statebuilding, and to present the study's analytical framework. Its point of departure is the largely unexamined assumption that a post-Cold War reinterpretation of sovereignty as a 'responsibility' or variable 'capacity' had unprecedented consequences for statebuilding. Focusing on the onset of the 'negative' sovereignty regime, it shows that the concern with preparing the colonies for sovereignty created a situation distinctly similar to that facing recent statebuilders. The second part of the chapter argues that academic debate on international statebuilding has been surprisingly silent on its effect on states. To rectify this, it elaborates on the three dimensions along which the two police reforms will be analyzed in subsequent chapters: force, territoriality, and legitimate authority.

Chapter 2 analyzes late colonial reforms in the field of force and territoriality. Starting with an account of the origins of policing in Sierra Leone, it argues that the three-tiered structure of a native, a quasi-state and a state force that evolved in the early 20th century came under pressure as a result of the diamond boom in the 1930s. Discussing the

[158] *Ibid*.

implications of the centralized imperial policing policy that developed in the late 1940s, the chapter explores how differing perceptions of Sierra Leone's status – colony or would-be state – affected when reforms happened and why. Despite goals to civilianize the SLP and extend their control across the territory, a paramilitary force with weak presence in rural areas was handed over to Sierra Leone's first independent government in 1961.

Chapter 3 briefly describes key developments in the field of policing in the period between independence and the outbreak of war in 1991. These developments created distinct challenges for reformers in the 1990s and must be understood in the context of neopatrimonial rule. The fragmentation of the SLP's coercive capacity across various units and the establishment of links with foreign security patrons at opposite sides of the Cold War divide were especially notable tendencies.

Chapter 4 analyzes reforms of the SLP's territorial deployment and coercive capacity between 1998 and 2005. Despite even higher political and infrastructural obstacles to success than in the colonial period, a policing model based on strong local SLP presence everywhere in the country was selected. The argues that the experience of state 'failure' along with the specific demands of a (post-)conflict environment – both unknown to reformers of the colonial era – added a forceful set of arguments in favour of using the police to establish strong territorial control. The second part deals with reforms of the SLP's armed wing, paying particular attention to how the conflicting agendas of development and counterinsurgency complicated reform. The security-development discourse, it is argued, was characterized by an ambiguity where force was both what stifled development and what enabled it. Much like in the late colonial period, this

ambiguity allowed reformers operating in highly unstable contexts to strengthen the state's coercive capacity, even if civilianization was the goal.

Chapter 5 analyzes late colonial and recent efforts to position the SLP in relation to nonstate policing groups. The chapter introduces the theoretical literature on security assemblages and argues that a then-now comparison offers useful insights on the effects of attempts to marginalize, shape or directly engage traditional or commercial policing actors have had over time. It shows that colonial policing became much less effective after moves were made to replace formal state authority for informal control ahead of independence. The recent reform was based on strong suspicion of the motives of traditional and commercial policing groups, but fared little better in establishing SLP primacy.

In Chapter 6, focus is shifted to the social dynamics of the recent intervention. Analyzing the significance of the seemingly positive memories about colonialism in Sierra Leone, I argue that the history of colonialism constituted a subtext which greatly buttressed the (re-)introduction of a British-style policing model. However, it was also an idiom through which the Sierra Leonean executive sought to integrate its former colonizer into domestic politics. Against the image of Western-led interventions suspending local sovereignty, the chapter argues that colonialism was a backdrop which allowed the Sierra Leonean government to exercise sovereignty and local ownership with the aim of *prolonging* and *deepening* the intervention.

The concluding Chapter 7 draws together the study's findings and reflects on continuity and change in international statebuilding. Addressing the debate on sovereignty in Africa, it considers two kinds of effects of police reform in Sierra Leone evident a few

years on. The first is the new international connections the SLP have been able to make as a result of the intervention. The emergence of new and legitimate relations with the outside world through policing, it is argued, breaks with usual descriptions of Sierra Leone's foreign relations as exploitation of sovereignty for private purposes.

Finally, the Epilogue discusses the prospects that Sierra Leone will retain its status as a success story of SSR in light of the risk associated with arming the police in a state universally described as corrupt. At the time of writing, police involvement in political violence raised fears as the autumn 2012 national election was coming up.

Chapter 1: Statebuilding and sovereignty regimes

Introduction

The previous chapter analyzed the implications of revised understandings of security and statehood for strategies of statebuilding in general, and for police reform in particular. In this chapter the focus will shift to the concept of sovereignty. Its aim is to conceptualize further the relationship between notions of sovereignty and the practices of statebuilding. Despite a flurry of writing on how sovereignty changed after the Cold War, surprisingly little is known about the effects that such changes had on statebuilding in individual circumstances.[1] I suggest that this lacuna exists because the scholarship on statebuilding has actually given a much more convincing analysis of the (eroded) barriers against intervention than of the form of statehood that interveners helped produce once the barrier was crossed. It often appears as if the eagerness to deconstruct and critique the project of statebuilding has taken precedence over analysis of its object – the state – leaving debates on statebuilding oddly decoupled from wider debates on statehood.[2] The diagnosis that the spirit in the international statebuilding machine is a set of liberal precepts with little local relevance may be correct, but it is surely interesting to know how statebuilders attempted to reconcile these precepts with each other, and what happened when they were acted on.

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[1] For an exception, see Dominick Zaum, *The Sovereignty Paradox: The Norms and Politics of International Statebuilding* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007).

[2] There is also a "substantial disconnect between scholarly work on African statehood and the reconstruction policies applied in the continent". Pierre Englebert and Denis Tull, "Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States", *International Security*, **32**, 4 (2008), pp. 106-134, p. 109.

This chapter starts by analyzing changing notions of sovereignty in the late colonial period, challenging the view that this period was marked by the emergence of negative sovereignty expressly designed to allow the colonial powers to disengage from reforms in the colonies. It goes on to contrast the practical implications of late colonial changes in thinking about sovereignty and statehood with those that follow from the new sovereignty regime said to prevail today. Setting up analysis of police reforms in Sierra Leone later in this study, the second part of the chapter lays out three dimensions along which statebuilding can be studied under various sovereignty regimes: territoriality, force, and legitimate authority. These dimensions correspond to a classic Weberian conception of statehood, and represent elements that African states in particular were said to be lacking. By tracing strategies in specific areas over time, we will get a clearer idea of whether or how statebuilding changed in tandem with changing notions of sovereignty and statehood. Secondly, it marks out clear areas where we can assess the practical effects of any liberal bias of the statebuilding project. Thirdly, by isolating these dimensions we set the scene for a dialogue with a rich literature on non-Western statehood that is only partially engaged by current scholars of statebuilding.

The presentist bias

"Beliefs about sovereignty", Dominik Zaum argues, "are reflected in the practices and interactions of international actors, and it is necessary to analyse these practices to discern the different properties of sovereignty at various points in time".[3] One such point in time that has received an impressive amount of scholarly attention has been the post-Cold War period. It is commonly argued that this was a period of transformative thinking about sovereignty and statehood; ushering in an era of "new interventionism"

[3] Zaum, *The Sovereignty Paradox*, p. 27.

based on a "particular understanding of sovereignty drawn from the disastrous development of some post-colonial states".[4] Besides lowering the barrier against international intervention, the transformation of sovereignty appeared also to have shifted the *goal* of statebuilding once that barrier has been crossed. According to David Chandler, "few people engaged in the field of international statebuilding would argue that international policy interventions in non-western states should be based on the desire to create or support traditional sovereign entities".[5] Zaum claims that since "sovereignty is closely related to the notion of statehood, arguably even constitutive of it, it is the institution which necessarily incorporates the relevant elements of the normative framework that shapes statebuilding".[6] Reinterpretations of sovereignty, he contends, "has affected the practices of international administrations engaged in rebuilding state institutions in post-conflict societies" by directing statebuilding towards

a "specific model of domestic society" which emphasizes administrative efficiency, respect for human rights, rule of law, and a free market economy.[7]

If it is true that that the prevailing idea of sovereignty substantially affects the goal and practices of statebuilding, and that sovereignty has undergone a transformation, then we might expect that statebuilding under the current sovereignty regime looks very different from statebuilding during earlier regimes. Yet this expectation is rarely investigated in any empirical detail, and as will be argued in the later chapters, it is contradicted by striking strategic similarities over time. Scholars of statebuilding are almost uniformly happy to accept the claim that post-Cold War statebuilding was

[4] Bickerton, 'State-Building: Exporting State Failure', p 94; Ayoob, "Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty".
[5] Chandler, *International Statebuilding*, p. 47.
[6] Zaum, *The Sovereignty Paradox*, p. 27.
[7] *Ibid.*

motivated by a 'positive' conception making sovereignty conditional upon certain forms of institutional capacity and behaviour, and therefore marked a radical departure with more modest forms of intervention under the 'negative' regime focused on international recognition which prevailed roughly from 1945 – 1990. An example from Chandler's most recent book illustrates this. He opens by highlighting important questions such as: "How do international statebuilders understand the world? How are different problems constructed or understood within an international statebuilding paradigm? […] How does the international statebuilding paradigm relate to previous paradigms of understanding and theorizing the world?"[8] These are questions that direct our attention to the shared understandings that statebuilders draw on in specific contexts, and to the historical constitution of those understandings. Alluding to Thomas Kuhn, Chandler argues that paradigms are "not commensurable" with one another, meaning that "no meaningful comparison between" them is possible. Curiously, Chandler thinks this very incommensurability is "particularly useful for students" because it "enables them to see that [post-Cold War] international statebuilding appears to be premised on a very different criteria [sic] of meaning or a very different way of understanding of the problems of the world and of making policy in relation to these problems, than was the case prior to the rise of international statebuilding".[9] This labelling of current statebuilding as "very different" from any previous paradigm is surprising, especially since he makes no real attempt to show what earlier paradigms have looked like. Instead of inviting students to investigate how the problems identified by recent statebuilders compared with earlier problematizations, and whether the strategies and effects of statebuilding differed as a result, international statebuilding is analytically sealed off as

[8] Chandler, *International Statebuilding*, p. 10.
[9] *Ibid.*

a *sui generis* project. But as Chandler points out himself, the myopic framing of international statebuilding in reference to a 'liberal peace' that allegedly emerged on the scene in the 1990s "seems to be driving the approach to the study of post-Cold War interventions in ways which have tended to produce a fairly one-sided framework [that] appears increasingly emptied of theoretical or empirical content".[10]

Indeed, just what historical understandings of sovereignty and statehood have implied with regards to the practical activity of statebuilding remains unclear. Instead, recent scholarship is characterized by rather confusing claims that current statebuilding is unprecedented in scope and intellectual basis, but somehow also directly related to imperialism or colonialism. On the one hand, a strong narrative has emerged in which the end of the Cold War unleashed a host of specifically new problems associated with state weakness, problems which have triggered unprecedented forms of intervention in the form of statebuilding. On the other hand, terms like colonialism, empire and imperialism are "promiscuously used in reference to the practices of state-building",[11] presumably to suggest that statebuilding is not so new after all. One way of addressing this confusion is to pay more attention to how sovereignty, or the preparation for it, shaped how late colonial statebuilders formulated problems and how they tried to solve them. This is consonant with the approach suggested by George Steinmetz when he argues that students of state formation must "reconstruct the ideology of state officials and the broader cultural discourses in which they participate before one can make sense

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 31.
[11] Philip Cunliffe, 'Reconstructing Sovereignty, Deconstructing State-Building: The Question of Context', in Aidan Hehir and Neil Robinson (eds), *State-Building: Theory and Practice* (Routledge, London, 2007), p. 51.

of their social-political interventions and reactions".[12] In this chapter I do so focusing on British thinking, fully aware that significant differences existed between British and French, Belgian or Portuguese imperial approaches.[13]

Beyond the absolutist view

According to a common definition, sovereignty is a "legal, absolute, and unitary condition".[14] This means that, externally, a sovereign state cannot be subordinate to another sovereign state, but is legally equal to it. Internally, final authority must rest with a government that has supreme jurisdiction within its territory. The idea that sovereignty is either present or absent (absolute), sets a clear limit to the concept's relevance; intermediary conditions like trusteeship and associate statehood belong to "different legal categories altogether".[15] The onus is therefore on whether a political community has achieved the *status* as a member of international society through recognition by other states; what Krasner calls "international legal sovereignty".[16] On this definition, it is irrelevant to speak of sovereignty in Sierra Leone before its formal independence in 1961.

However, recent scholarship has challenged the view of sovereignty as an absolute and unitary condition in various ways. Firstly, the notion that sovereignty was a principle

[12] George Steinmetz (ed), *State/Culture: State Formation After the Cultural Turn* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1999).
[13] For instance, Frederick Cooper attributes the comparatively late independence of the Portuguese African colonies (1975) to Portugal's denial of the force of ideas of self-determination and citizenship. Belgian decolonization, he claims, "cynically calculated that an ill-prepared independence would result in continual dependence on Belgium". In the event, their loss of influence after Congo collapsed in 1960 proved them wrong. While space does not permit further discussion, differences between the French idea of a "Greater France" and the British Commonwealth are highly pertinent to the question of how notions of sovereignty shaped statebuilding. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002).
[14] Alan James, *Sovereign Statehood: The Basis of International Society* (Allen and Unwin, Hemel Hempstead, 1986).
[15] Jackson, *Quasi-States*.
[16] Stephen Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1999).

that evolved among European states and was later "extended" to the non-European world has been refuted by accounts that stress how sovereignty was forged through colonial relations in the attempt to legitimate a relationship of inequality.[17] Edward Keene argues that "the extra-European [imperial] order was based on the principle that sovereignty should be divided across national and territorial boundaries, creating hierarchical institutions through which colonial and imperial powers transmitted the supposed benefits of their civilization to the rest of the world".[18] The idea of shared sovereignty, Keene holds, resonated with elements in Hugo Grotius' thinking and proved practicable for the governance of colonies as diverse as North America and the East Indies.

Secondly, sovereignty has influentially been explored in institutional, rather than in legal, terms. Stephen Krasner has distinguished between four different aspects of sovereignty – recognition by other states, internal authority, autonomy in decision-making, and control over transborder flows – aspects that historically "have not fit together like some organic whole".[19] In his view, sovereignty is best described as "an institutional arrangement associated with a particular bundle of characteristics". In other words, a state may be sovereign in one regard but not in others.

Thirdly, a substantial strand of literature has criticized the absolutist view arguing that sovereignty is a social concept whose meaning has changed through the course of modern history.[20] Coupling insights from this literature yields a rather different picture

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[17] Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005).
[18] Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism, and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002), p. xi.
[19] Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, p. 226.
[20] See for example R.B.J Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993; Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty* (Cambridge University

of sovereignty than the one introduced above. As well as a legal principle, sovereignty is a composite institution which has changed through a history of interactions between "actors holding beliefs about sovereignty".[21]

This is a history in which colonial relations occupied a central part.Sovereignty structured relations not just between recognized states, but also among imperial powers and their dependent territories. Although the latter were not sovereign in a legal sense, and were therefore deprived of the external privileges of sovereign status, they were assessed and treated according to how they lived up to "standards of performance" including the "protection of basic rights of their citizens, standards of honesty and efficiency in their administration".[22] Gerrit Gong argued that the standard of 'civilization' which crystallized in the early 20th century required that the "state exists as an organized political bureaucracy with some efficiency in running the state machinery, and with some capacity for self-defence", as well as "published and publicized civil and criminal codes available for scrutiny in European languages; independent court systems; and acceptable jurisprudential underpinnings for their domestic legal systems".[23] The standard of 'civilization' was therefore more than a legal principle regulating relations between the European and non-European world; "its application in practice often made it into a guideline and stimulus for reform".[24] Indeed, in his introduction to Gong's book Hedley Bull suggests that the demise of the standard during decolonization affirmed its efficacy, since the colonial revolt was formulated as claims to the privileges of

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Press, Cambridge, 1995); Thomas Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds), *State Sovereignty as a Social Construct* (Cambridge University, Press Cambridge, 1996).
[21] Zaum, *The Sovereignty Paradox*.
[22] Hedley Bull, 'Foreword', in Gerrit Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization" in International Society* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985), p. viii.
[23] Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization"*, p.14f.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

European civilization. The disappearance of the distinction between full and partial members of international society therefore "reflected a continuing process which tended to lead to greater homogeneity of political communities".[25]

Towards independence

In other words, it is clear that colonial statebuilding proceeded according to understandings of 'civilization' consisting of clear demands for domestic law and order; understandings which were explicitly linked to prospective membership of international society. Yet the significance of this connection is rarely appreciated in the sovereignty literature. In Jackson's words "there is no better place to look for changing norms and assumptions about sovereign statehood [...] than in the sphere of decolonization".[26] The remaking of the world political map during these short years, he argues, was possible because the change was essentially normative – what changed was not the colonial territories' actual preparedness for sovereign statehood, but the paternalistic idea that they could be denied sovereign status because they were immature, backwards or otherwise unfit for self-government. This had an important effect: sovereignty became a question of status (international recognition) rather than economic viability or political maturity, which had previously guided colonial policymaking. In Jackson's words, "decolonization was divorced from the capacity for both self-government and political development in the plans of the Colonial Office".[27] The "revolution" in sovereignty that occurred during colonial independence was therefore a rapid, willed and exclusively normative change "fashioned expressly" for the Third World" and designed "to incorporate a multitude of new and often very weak states into the international

[25] Bull, 'Foreword', p. ix.
[26] Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p. 82.
[27] *Ibid.,* p, 95.

community".[28] Clapham supports this view, arguing that sovereignty offered a "framework in which [the colonial powers] could disengage relatively peacefully from empire which they were no longer able or willing to control".[29]

The emphasis on normative change leads Jackson to an important analytical conclusion, namely that "the correct level of analysis for understanding these problematic entities consequently is not the state as such but the states-system and particularly its new accommodating norms".[30] For our purposes, the problem with this one-sided focus on systemic norms is that it obscures an interesting feature of statebuilding. Towards independence, elements of statehood that were previously exported in an arrangement where sovereignty was shared between the colonial power and various native agencies had to be reconceived. In policy terms, such notions were expressed in the ideal of gradual self-government, which had a long pedigree in British imperial thinking and was "institutionalized in the British Cabinet, Foreign Office and Colonial Office".[31] It was a flexible concept which helped attune the pace of the statebuilding process – such as the degree to which natives were allowed to assume senior positions in government, and the level of competences granted to parliamentary assemblies – to assessments about the colonies fitness for self-government. A 1959 Cabinet Office paper assessing probable developments in Africa in the following decade stressed its immaturity compared to imperial possessions in Asia:

In other areas of the world where the Western Powers have transferred sovereignty to the native

[28] *Ibid.;* Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2002).
[29] Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996), p. 18.
[30] Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p. 26.
[31] Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*; Alison Brysk, Craig Parsons and Wayne Sandholtz, "After Empire: National Identity and Post-Colonial Families of Nations", *European Journal of International Relations*, **8**, 2, pp. 267-305.

population—e.g., in India and the Far Eastern territories—the political immaturity of the new society has been to some extent compensated by the fact that the peoples have an indigenous culture of their own, with roots stretching far back into the past. They have inherited a tradition of social organisation, even if they have had little experience of political unity. In most of tropical Africa this element of stability is lacking; and in transferring sovereignty to the local inhabitants the West will in many cases be surrendering power to peoples who are not far removed from primitive savagery.[32]

Significantly, however, colonial officials did not take "self-government" to mean unconditional sovereignty for all the colonial territories. Instead, they imagined various sorts of future attachment through the Commonwealth where some would enter as members in an "arrangement fully compatible with sovereign statehood, but involving close operation in military, commercial and monetary affairs", and others would probably never be independent at all.[33] A 1954 Cabinet Office Memorandum reasoned that Sierra Leone belonged to "an intermediate group where the future course of political development is uncertain".[34] While sovereignty was not a predictable outcome until the late 1950s or early 1960s, imperial statebuilding proceeded according to differing prognoses about when each territory could be expected to become independent.

The most important practical upshot was that the colonial power could no longer rely on direct supervision of the state apparatus. Instead, it hoped to exert indirect control over its former colonies through the kind of Commonwealth arrangement noted above. Further, imperial forces like the Royal West African Frontier Force could no longer be deployed to rescue the integrity of postcolonial regimes. This was a problem because "the European powers in Africa raised local colonial military forces to fit their world-

[32] *Africa: The Next Ten Years*. National Archives (UK), CAB 129/98, June, 1959.
[33] Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, p. 172.
[34] Quoted in Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, p. 178.

wide strategic needs; and their criteria, therefore, rested inevitably on imperial rather than local policy".[35]

This point was not lost on colonial officials who worried that the colonies would be unable to withstand Soviet courtship. It was only at the end of empire that features of statehood such as the police, the bureaucracy and representative assemblies became problematic as parts of a hierarchical arrangement where European officers occupied the top positions and oversaw development. This created conflicts between the tried and tested practices of imperial rule embodied by the colonial officers on the spot and the Colonial Office policy of standardizing institutions like the police on a British standard. The effect was a gearing of colonial rule towards new objectives, as was evident in the field of policing:

> Before 1939 the aim of robust 'imperial policing' had been the maintenance of political control […] but by the early 1950s such aims were outdated. In areas of disturbance or open rebellion, now described in low-key terms as 'emergencies', security operations were designed to gain time and, with regained initiative, to find new 'moderate' allies and marginalize 'extremists', if necessary by force […] Time gained could also be used for political, economic, and social restructuring aimed at creating new moderate interlocutors who would co-operate in the preservation of Britain's long-term economic and strategic interests after independence".[36]

The period of upheaval in the years before colonial independence is particularly interesting because it offers a way of understanding how the *strategies* of statebuilding changed as new calculations about the future status of the colonies and the challenges they would face in a post-imperial age impressed themselves upon late colonial statebuilders. Obviously, the process of furnishing colonies with trappings of European statehood started long before decolonization. As John Stuart Mill remarked about

[35] William Gutteridge quoted in Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2000), p. 80.
[36] Anthony Clayton, '"Deceptive Might": Imperial Defence and Security, 1900-1968', in Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999), p. 296.

constitutional government, Britain had "always felt under a certain degree of obligation to bestow on such of her outlying populations as were of her own blood and language, and some who were not, representative institutions formed in imitation of her own".[37] Nevertheless, the end of World War II unleashed a new sense of purpose in the form of a modernizing mission planned from the Colonial Office: "Officials after 1945 saw themselves as engaged not only on what they called 'a new policy for Africa' but also 'a gigantic experiment', 'a worldwide experiment in nation building'".[38]

In sum, decolonization put colonial powers on the defensive, but it is inaccurate to say that they gave up all ambitions to restructure the colonies. Instead it created a situation recognizable in many statebuilding campaigns today – to achieve a level of modernization or development considered necessary for sovereign (but dependent) states while relying on a substantial element of force in order to create 'space' for such processes. Police forces, as the repositories of the colonial states' coercive power, therefore became key targets for reform. This difficult balancing act inevitably created tensions not just between colonial administrations and emergent elites in the colonies, but also between colonial administrators and their increasingly interventionist home governments.[39] Such conflicts are poorly visible in the standard account of decolonization as an imperial retreat from concerns about statehood. I will return to how these tensions played out with regards to specific statebuilding strategies in the final part of this chapter. Before we get there, it will be necessary to analyze recent reinterpretations of sovereignty.

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[37] Quoted in Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p. 87.
[38] Ronald Hyam, 'Bureaucracy and "Trusteeship" in Colonial Empire', in Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford, University Press Oxford, 1999), p. 276.
[39] According to Philpott, "the epicenter of developmental imperialism was the Labour Colonial Office, the ministry charged with overseeing colonial policy". Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty,* p. 175.

Post-Cold War reinterpretations

A 1960 UN resolution affirmed that "inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence".[40] This resolution signalled the core of negative sovereignty: a state's right to non-intervention irrespective of its size and power, as well as exclusive and indivisible authority within its territory. Put differently, the state's actual capacity to achieve whatever social, economic and political goals it set for itself should neither qualify its status as a state, nor its autonomy to pursue those goals free from outside intervention. Of course, the numerous cases of superpower meddling in the affairs of weaker states during the Cold War shows that sovereignty was not always an effective shield protecting weak states from outside interference. However, even if such interventions were often designed to topple governments and shape internal authority structures, notably military capabilities, they were typically covert and never challenged the validity of the principle. This started to change in the 1990s with the advent of a series of interventions undertaken on behalf of the 'international community' in order to achieve 'universal' and 'humanitarian' objectives in explicit contravention of state sovereignty.[41]

A seminal contribution in this regard was Jackson and Rosberg's 1982 article asking why Africa's weak states persisted despite their inability exert domestic control. The explanation, they argued, was found in *de jure* rather than *de facto* attributes of

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[40] United Nations, 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples' (General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960).
[41] Ayoob, "Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty".

statehood. [42] “By enforcing juridical statehood”, they argued, “international society [was] in some cases also sustaining and perpetuating incompetent and corrupt governments”. Jackson later dubbed this regime “negative sovereignty” and reasserted that it “impinge[d] on human rights and socioeconomic development” within the “quasi-states” of the Third World.[43] By drawing attention to the detrimental effects the negative sovereignty regime had on the institutional and administrative capacity of African states, Jackson and Rosberg identified an issue that would occupy a central place in academic and policy debates in the decades to come. State sovereignty, it was claimed, could not serve as a cover for the perpetration of mass infringements of human rights by despotic rulers. The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was held up as a particularly egregious example of what could happen if the international community failed to intervene.

The justification of international interventions as morally necessary *breaches* of sovereignty in the service of humanitarian goals was gradually superseded by a discourse which represented interventions as in the *service* of sovereignty. This discourse turned on a reinterpretation of sovereignty from a sacrosanct privilege that could be exercised freely, to a government’s responsibility towards the population. The idea of was expressed in former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s 1999 statement that “the state is now widely regarded to be a servant of its people, not vice versa”.[44] Two years later, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) presented to the UN an influential report which stated that “sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe – from

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[42] Jackson and Rosberg judged the capacity of African states to exercise control as dependent on three factors: ”domestic authority, the apparatus of power, and economic circumstances”. Jackson and Rosberg, “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist”, p. 7.
[43] Jackson, *Quasi-States*.
[44] *Speech before the General Assembly,* 20.9. 1999. http://www.un.org/News/ossg/sg/stories/statments_search_full.asp?statID=28 (accessed 6.2.2012)

mass murder and rape, from starvation – but […] when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states.[45] According to Carsten Stahn, the articulation of the responsibility to protect through successive UN documents was a "remarkable achievement" indicative of a "systemic shift" in international law: "matters affecting the life of the citizens and subjects of a state are no longer exclusively subject to the discretion of the domestic ruler but are perceived as issues of concern to the broader international community of concern to the broader international community (e.g., third states, multilateral institutions, and nonstate actors)".[46]

Much attention has been paid to how the doctrine on the responsibility to protect (R2P) has provided an ethical and legal framework normalizing intervention in states deemed to be weak or failing, and justified semi-permanent forms of international administration. Whitfield and Fraser claim that the

> range of situations in which the international community believes it should intervene under the 'responsibility to protect' has expanded in recent years, creating a slippery slope from exceptional situations to a norm of early interventions whose political character is defined less by the facts on the ground than the interests and perspectives of powerful states.[47]

However, while the ICISS was mainly concerned with the question of "when, if ever, it is appropriate for states to take coercive – and in particular military – action, against another state", the notion of sovereignty as responsibility implied an assessment of a state's capacity to provide adequate protection.[48] In clear contrast with the 1960 UN

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[45] ICISS, 'The Responsibility to Protect', p. viii.
[46] Carsten Stahn, "Responsibility to Protect: Political Rhetoric or Emerging Legal Norm?", *American Journal of International Law*, **101**, 1 (2007), pp. 99-120, p. 100f.
[47] Lindsay Whitfield and Alastair Fraser, 'Introduction: Aid and Sovereignty', in Lindsay Whitfield, *The Politics of Aid: African Strategies for Dealing with Donors* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009), p. 14.
[48] ICISS, 'The Responsibility to Protect', p. vii.

resolution, this indicated a move towards making sovereignty conditional upon the internal conditions of a state. The responsibility to develop and maintain such capacity was in fact assigned both a domestic and an international dimension by the way the Commission defined 'responsibility'. It broke R2P into every state's "responsibility to prevent" internal conflict and man-made crises from occurring. If prevention failed, it assigned to the international community a "responsibility to react" (intervention) and a "responsibility to rebuild" states that had to be intervened in. Sovereignty in this conception was both a responsibility and a capacity that individual states and the international community had a common stake in.

This proved to be an influential conception. "The consensus now emerging from global economic, military and political institutions" argued a 2005 Overseas Development Institute working paper, "[signals that] the challenge is to harness the international system behind the goal of enhancing the sovereignty of states – that is, enhancing the capacity of these states to perform the functions that define them as states".[49] Critics hold that this produced a hierarchy of states according to their capacity to exercise sovereignty in a responsible manner with clear echoes of the "standard of civilisation argument".[50] One important difference, however, is that while lack of 'civilization' automatically meant denial of recognition as a state, 'irresponsibility' did not threaten the international recognition of statehood. As Zaum argues, "sovereignty can be withheld, completely or partially, and restored by the international community" while the status as a state remains unchallenged.[51] In a sense, sovereignty was divorced from statehood. It must be continually earned internationally and domestically; firstly by

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[49] Ashraf Ghani, Clare Lockhart and Michael Carnahan, 'Closing the Sovereignty Gap: An Approach to State-Building' (Working Paper 253, The Overseas Development Institute, London, 2005), p. 4.
[50] Ayoob, "Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty".
[51] Zaum, *The Sovereignty Paradox*, p. 35.

acting as a responsible member of the international community and secondly by providing protection and services to the population. Statebuilding, Chandler argues, has taken the form of "ongoing relationship management" between Western states and weaker states who fail or refuse to earn sovereignty on their own.[52]

The R2P doctrine and the framing of sovereignty as a capacity cannot be understood apart from the contribution donors started making in the 1990s. In this period, there was a rapid growth of grey literature where donors expressed views on the relationship between development and political structures. The proliferation of reports and policy papers directly addressing statebuilding contributed to a problematization of sovereignty at the level of state-society relations. In Chandler's words, statebuilding became based on the belief that "the export or development of good governance can remove the institutional blockages which prevent state-society relations from creating a stable social order and which prevent the state from benefiting from the stable social and economic order of international society".[53] Thus, DFID recognized the importance of "engag[ing] at the interface between state and society" and defined state-society relations" as "interactions between state institutions and societal groups to negotiate how public authority is exercised and how they can be influenced by the people". In their view, the "effectiveness of the state and the quality of its linkages to society largely determine a country's prospects for peace and development". The development of "core state functions" was therefore no longer an aim in itself but a means to correct "weak state-society relations based on patronage and lack of accountability".[54]

[52] Chandler, *International Statebuilding*.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 6f.
[54] DFID, 'Building Peaceful States and Societies'.

The picture that emerges is that sovereignty in weak states could be jointly fostered by host states and external partners through the reconstitution of "oppressive or violent means of maintaining authority".[55] This goes to the heart of a Weberian definition of statehood and was perceived to require intrusive forms of intervention which donors readily acknowledged as political. The tying of sovereignty to the domestic exercise of state power was illustrated by the gradual deepening and broadening of international interventions over the last two decades. Paris and Sisk argue that there were 21 major peacebuilding operations in the world between 1989 and 2007.[56] It is now common to talk about different generations of peace operations evolving from 'peacekeeping' (largely constrained to monitoring former warring parties) through 'peacebuilding' (a range of actions designed to "consolidate or institutionalize the peace") to 'statebuilding' ("actions undertaken by international or national actors to establish, reform, or strengthen the institutions of the state").[57] In an influential book, Roland Paris criticized the belief that "democratization and marketization will foster peace in war shattered states" for its negligence of the harmful effects such policies could have on states without working institutions. Bolstering the increasing concern with the state's institutional capacity, he therefore marketed "institutionalization before liberalization".[58]

Statebuilding in this guise, some argued, inevitably relied on external actors and effectively divorced sovereignty from the society supposed to embody it. Some though it was bound to produce "hollow institutions with shallow roots in the societies for

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[55] *Ibid.*
[56] Paris and Sisk, 'Understanding the Contradictions of Postwar Statebuilding'.
[57] Call with Wyeth, *Building States to Build Peace*.
[58] Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004).

which they are being built".[59] This is a powerful normative critique, which is backed by the common diagnosis that there are few success stories in statebuilding to show for after the Cold War. However, even if international statebuilding "fails" to achieve the goals it set for itself, a number of interesting questions remain about the form of statehood it tries to promote, and the effects it has in specific areas.

The remainder of this chapter relates the above discussion of sovereignty in two periods of sweeping change to statebuilding in the areas of force, territoriality, and legitimate authority in the same periods, elaborating further on how dominant notions of sovereignty influenced practical strategies. In order to introduce these aspects we must briefly consider the idea that current statebuilding is based on a flawed attempt to export what is often referred to as 'Weberian' states.

Exporting 'Weberian' states?

In an influential volume from 1985, Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol argued that "the optimal strategy for research on states" is to do comparisons across countries and time periods with "an emphasis on historical depth" and "the tracing out of processes over time".[60] While comparisons between statebuilding in different countries are common in the literature, emphasis on historical depth is not. Ironically, the discipline devoted to *state*building and state weakness appears weak on states; more concerned with the intentions of the external promoters of statebuilding and with the catalogue of problems which occur during external interventions than the effect of such interventions on states.

[59] Bickerton, 'State-Building: Exporting State Failure', p 93f.
[60] Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, 'On the Road toward a More Adequate Understanding of the State', in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985), p. 348.

The relevance of historical depth for understanding the effects of international statebuilding has recently been highlighted by Antonio Giustozzi:

> [Th]e primitive accumulation of violence (state formation) and the consolidation of the monopoly of large-scale violence are two substantially different processes, with widely differing requirements and 'rules of the game' […] The assumption that more or less any state endowed with international recognition has completed the process of its own formation, so common among policy-makers, is of course completely inadequate from an analytical perspective. This assumption can easily lead to the adoption of misplaced policies of state consolidation in a context where the monopoly of large-scale violence has not yet been established, so is at best a waste of resources and at worst has negative if not disastrous consequences.[61]

Concepts like "good governance" and "SSR", Giustozzi argues, do not recognize that the processes of state formation and consolidation are fundamentally different, and they "reveal more about the way Western powers try to present themselves than about how they operate on the ground, not to mention actual state-building process per se".[62] Understanding the effects of such concepts, he goes on, requires splitting them into their constitutive elements such as police reform. As the above quote illustrates, the success of such practices will depend on the existing organization of coercion within the state. By identifying coercion as the key variable of state formation and state consolidation – the former requiring a process of "ruthless" accumulation, and the second requiring techniques for the "taming" of violence – Giustozzi challenges the tendency in Western democracies to view statebuilding as a "virtuous" process and to treat violence as "the realm of extremist groups and terrorists, or of rogue and dysfunctional states or politicians".[63] The central place of force has also been identified in work on colonial statebuilding in Africa. Focusing on Kenya, Berman and Lonsdale argued that "the British were able to control the process [of statebuilding] and impose their own sense of

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[61] Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion*, p. 227f.
[62] *Ibid.,* p. 4.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

direction because the disciplined, uniformed core of violence was unequivocally theirs".[64]

The focus on coercion clearly evokes Weber's definition of the state. The relevance of his writings on the state has obviously not been wholly lost on the scholars of current statebuilding. Indeed, a frequent criticism of international statebuilding is that it is committed to the utopian ideal of exporting 'Weberian' states to polities that have never had a state which has enjoyed anything remotely like a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within its territory.[65] Thus Ian Taylor argues that "the empirical state in Sierra Leone does not conform to Western liberal (pre)conceptions of the Weberian state, something that the liberal peace assumes as a given".[66] However, in much of the critical literature, the term 'Weberian' appears – like the term 'liberal' – more as a metaphor for the inappropriateness of Western assumptions guiding the project of statebuilding than as a practical and political category that has to be acted upon in a specific context. This is unfortunate, since even in theory the term 'Weberian' is applicable to a wide range of state forms. A federal state like the United States is considered no less 'Weberian' than a centralized state like France, but presumably the strategies needed if they were to be reproduced somewhere else would look very different. This lack of attention to just what the 'Weberian' goal is transformed into when acted upon by statebuilders is even more surprising when we consider the extremely common finding that statebuilding is characterized by substantial gaps between policy and practice. Promises to "identif[y]

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[64] Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa. BOOK TWO: Violence and Ethnicity* (James Currey, Oxford, 1992), p. 16.

[65] Louise Andersen, *Post-Conflict Statebuilding in Africa: From State Failure to Tacit Trusteeship*, (Copenhagen University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 2010); Englebert and Tull, "Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa".

[66] Ian Taylor, "Earth Calling the Liberals: Locating the Political Culture of Sierra Leone as the Terrain for 'Reform'", In Edward Newman, Roland Paris and Oliver Richmond (eds), *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding* (United Nations Press, Tokyo, 2009), p. 159.

the Weberian underpinnings of the international policy makers' mindset" sound promising, but they often amount to little more than document analyses that predictably reaffirm how the statebuilding discourse has a strong commitment to the state over other agencies.[67]

The weakness of the 'Weberian' critique is striking in the field of policing. The differences between the French "top-down" gendarmerie model and the US "bottom up" model in which "police authority was highly decentralized and remained that way" indicate very different statebuilding processes.[68] The English model in which "provincial police forces were primarily supervised by, and responsible to, local authorities" represents yet another variation.[69] Beyond the supposed goal to build sound 'Weberian' states out of 'failed' or even 'collapsed' ones lie practical strategies of statebuilding, and how much these varied across time and place is an empirical question. But in order to better analyse these strategies and their effects, we have to be specific about which aspects of statehood we are interested in. In the following I will link three sets of practical questions faced by reformers in both eras with core aspects of statehood that have long been viewed as particularly problematic in the African context. It is worth recalling these. The first question regards *force*: what type and what level of coercive capacity should the police be invested with? The second question regards *territoriality*: where should the police be and for what purposes? The final question regards issues of *legitimate authority*: what, if any, should be the appropriate role of nonstate or quasi-state policing authorities, and in what relation should they stand with the state police? While the fact that these practical problems presented themselves in

[67] Andersen, *Post-Conflict Statebuilding in Africa*.
[68] Kalmanowiecki, 'Policing the People, Building the State", p. 211; Clive Emsley, *Policing and its Context, 1750-1870* (MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1983).
[69] Emsley quoted in Kalmanowiecki, 'Policing the People, Building the State", p. 212

both periods suggests strong continuities, the last chapter showed that they were framed according to different understandings of security and statehood; most conspicuously by the problems identified within the special class of 'fragile' states. Using examples from Sierra Leone that will be explained more fully in the following chapters, the following section introduces key sets of general questions within these three dimensions and sets the stage for later chapters that will deal with them individually.

The means of force

Weber famously started his essay "Politics as a Vocation" by claiming that the state cannot be identified in terms of its ends but "only in terms of the specific *means* peculiar to it […] namely the use of physical force".[70] There was a time when it was "quite normal", Weber argued, that "the most varied institutions" used physical force, but "today the relation between the state and violence is a particularly intimate one".[71] As Jackson and Rosberg argued, this sociological definition of the state primarily in terms of the means of force "emphasized the empirical rather than the juridical, the *de facto* rather than the *de jure*, attributes of statehood" and yielded a "basic test of the existence of a state": "whether or not its national government can lay claim to a monopoly of force in the territory under its jurisdiction".[72] This was a test they found that many African states flunked, challenged internally as they were by rivals to the national government. As the global occurrence of civil wars spiked following the end of the Cold War, that test came to carry an exceedingly clear policy implication for international statebuilding: the first step must be to enable the state to reassert its control

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[70] Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, p. 78.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] Jackson and Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist", p. 2. In this test, they leave out the crucial dimension of the *legitimate use* of (physical) force, something that will be dealt with below.

over the means of violence. Thus SSR, the part of statebuilding specifically directed towards reform of the state's coercive apparatus, has been "characterized by an almost exclusive focus on the public security forces" and "perceived predominantly in terms of establishing, or re-establishing, public monopoly of security".[73] This framing appears powerful indeed, but even if such a (re-)establishment was possible it leaves open several questions with important strategic implications: Which public agencies should get the guns? What kind of guns should they get? And under what conditions should they get them? If the state appeared as the logical answer to the question of *who* should control the means of violence, re-establishing its monopoly of force would still require making tough priorities between state agencies that typically have a history of internal rivalry. These choices are by no means inconsequential.

Moreover, the question of what represented an appropriate *means* of violence cannot be deduced from a widely shared definition of the state. If the state is under siege by armed insurgents, which is not an unlikely prospect in post-conflict situations, statebuilders seem to be left with little choice but to ramp up the state's coercive capacity, possibly along with deploying foreign troops if politically and practically possible. On the other hand, statebuilders will be wary of handing over huge amounts of arms, the use of which they have little chance of controlling in the future. As we have seen, recent statebuilding aimed to correct a mismanagement of sovereignty, and the problem was

[73] Abrahamsen and Michael Williams, "Security Sector Reform: Bringing the Private in". Recent anthropological work draws an interesting analytical conclusion from the observation that states rarely if ever exercise complete control over the means of force. Against the tendency to treat sovereignty as "an ontological ground of power", Hansen and Stepputat further a view of sovereignty as "a tentative and always emergent form of authority grounded in violence". Defining "de facto" sovereignty as "the ability to kill, punish, and discipline with impunity", however, Hansen and Stepputat's definition is compatible with the Weberian focus on force as a foundational trait. Hansen and Stepputat, "Sovereignty Revisited", p. 295.

typically identified as how "overdeveloped" states with too much force at its disposal have terrorized disaffected populations.

In other words, there appears to be strong reasons why statebuilders could pursue opposite strategies with regards to the means of force. On the one hand, the need to make up for an insufficient process of state formation by defeating the state's internal rivals dictated a policy of strengthening the coercive capacity of public agencies such as the police and the military. As Fearon and Laitin have laconically noted, "counterinsurgency often requires tactics of intimidation and threat".[74] There seemed to be particularly strong reasons to pursue this strategy in African states because they were regularly threatened by armed internal challengers.[75] On the other hand, since a state's transgressions against its own people stifled the kind of state-society relations which were said to be conducive to statehood, excessive use of state force were seen as part of the very problem that made states weak. This seemed to dictate a policy of reducing the state's capacity to use force. Again, the starkest example of this stems from Africa. The state-sponsored genocide in Rwanda made a deep impression on the intervention discourse, but state-sanctioned attacks on civilians in Sierra Leone support the same point. Ultimately, these conflicting imperatives reflected a tension between coercion and control that is inherent in the political use of force everywhere; too much of it can erode legitimacy, and too little of it can inspire armed challengers to usurp power. As Giustozzi argues, "all states must develop a strategy for maintaining internal order, but the emphasis placed on consent and coercion is variable. Even in liberal democracies it is not unusual for the police to act outside the law, while even the most authoritarian

[74] Fearon and David Laitin, "Neo-Trusteeship and the Problem of Weak States".
[75] Jackson and Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist".

state imposes certain limits on police actions".[76] This tension is particularly acute in the field of policing because it concerns the question of what kind of agencies are useful during different stages of state formation:

> In Europe it is often debated whether gendarmeries are now redundant and should be disbanded or 'civilianised', but historically, gendarmeries played an important role in securing control over territory and population, particularly in rural areas and against organised opposition. Cheaper than armies and more disciplined than police, gendarmeries acted both to address initial threats to the monopoly of large-scale violence and deal with small-scale violence, even if lacking the sophistication and specialisation which characterises, in principle, the police.[77]

The tension between coercion and control, manifested in the problematic specialization of the police, appeared to present itself with particular urgency for a form of statebuilding motivated by a twofold conception of sovereignty: as a responsibility and as a capacity. If the postcolonial experience showed that the two key ingredients of statehood were the "empirical" capacity to control and regulate society, but also the responsible exercise of governmental power so that society was not alienated from the state, what did that imply for statebuilders with regards to appropriate levels of force? The emergence of 'fragile' statehood as a global pathology had the effect of catapulting the question of the constitution and exercise of state power in marginal locations to the forefront of debates which included a much wider audience than colonial officials and political elites. In this light, there is surprisingly little attention to just what changes in sovereignty implied with regard to force in international statebuilding. To the extent that the question is discussed, it is typically with regards to the much publicized military involvement of external countries. As a result, the less spectacular but ultimately more important question of how domestic forces were armed recedes to the background.

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[76] Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion*, p. 211.
[77] *Ibid.,* p. 9.

In sum, while the image of the state as a monopoly-holder on the legitimate use of force provided a powerful drive to focus attention on state agencies at the expense of commercial or popular groups, these contradictory imperatives suggest that it is impossible to read out of any inbuilt 'Weberian bias' which strategies statebuilders will choose when it comes to the question of force. Instead, these strategies must be understood with reference to who was intended as the beneficiary of statebuilding, and the perceived risks associated with transferring control of the means of force. For instance, considerations about the police's coercive capacity in the late colonial period were not made in a situation where the state was threatened by internal rivals, but at the height of Cold War competition for influence in Africa. The *state's* survival was not the issue, therefore, but the security of a regime loyal to Britain was. This meant that calculations about what type and level of force was necessary were made primarily according to assessments of external rather than internal threats. The fear of Soviet infiltration meant that certain aspects of the state's capacity for defense seemed more relevant than others; good intelligence capabilities and continued British presence at military bases mattered more than the police's capacity to respond quickly to riots in provincial locations. These considerations, with their obvious importance for statebuilding strategies, may seem to have less to do with notions about statehood and sovereignty than with the geopolitical conditions which happened to exist at the time. That, however, is only part of the story. The recent view that external threats were no longer important was not only the result of the disappearance of Cold War rivalry, but also based on the observation that postcolonial rulers had used the means of force to support a policy of snuffing out political opposition and siphoning off the country's resources. In Sierra Leone as in many other 'fragile' states, donors reasoned, this policy had effectively produced the war and made it a volatile place that had to be stabilized in

the name of global security. This created a dilemma since the means of force could demonstrably be used in a rational strategy to erode the state, at the same time as a strong coercive capacity was considered necessary restore the state and lay the foundations for peaceful development. Unlike in the colonial period, the question of force had become entangled with various other agendas which were also dependent on a capable state. The beneficiaries, as well as the potential victims, of the choices on how to rearm the state had therefore expanded along with the problematization of statehood more generally.

Territoriality

Territory, for Weber, was the prerequisite which allowed the state to muster control over the use of force. It was therefore a foundational trait, but Weber did not attempt to analyze how state power played out within spatial domains. Instead, Weber accepted territory as what bound political subjects together and what enabled the internal exercise of organized violence. The issue was therefore effectively reduced to "one point on a definitional checklist that could simply be presupposed in any discussion of modern bureaucratic states".[78] After Weber, the spatial character of state power has been analyzed from a variety of angles and disciplines. Most relevant among these is the literature on state formation. Territoriality, John Ruggie argued, is a system of rule that developed through the constitution of two fundamental spatial demarcations: "between public and private realms and between internal and external realms".[79] In early modern Europe, the point of reference for the seminal contributions to the literature on state

[78] Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones and Gordon MacLeod, 'Introduction: State Space in Question', in Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones and Gordon MacLeod (eds), *State/Space: A Reader* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2003), p. 2.
[79] John Gerard Ruggie, "Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations", *International Organization*, **47**, 1 (1993), pp 139-174, p. 151.

formation, gradual monopolization of the use of force by central authorities secured for the state two sovereign rights which constitute these demarcations: the exclusive right to enforce the law within the territory, and the sovereign right to make war. Over centuries, the police evolved as the primary enforcer of the first right. For Charles Tilly, 'state making' was the "elimination or neutralization of other wielders of organized violence inside the territory", in other words processes that led to public/private and internal/external demarcations in the realm of violence.[80] Similarly, Michael Mann argued that what constitutes the state as an autonomous actor is its peculiar socio-spatial organization: "[o]nly the state is inherently centralised over a delimited territory over which it has authoritative power [...] Territorial-centralization provides the state with a potentially independent basis of power mobilization being necessary to social development and uniquely in the possession of the state itself".[81] As these quotes illustrate, the state's power was said to derive from its mastery of territorially defined space. In a typical conception, it "radiate[s] authoritatively outwards from a centre but stop[s] at defined territorial boundaries".[82]

As a definitional trait, this is often turned on its head when it comes to African states. Lack of territorial-centralization is often held up as their defining feature. For Herbst, weak territoriality is mainly a function of the physical environment; of large and often inhospitable territories within which sparse populations are only tenuously connected by

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[80] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1992; Charles Tilly, 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime', in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985).

[81] Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results", *European Journal of Sociology*, **25**, 2 (1984), pp. 185-213, p. 198f.

[82] *Ibid*.; see also Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*.

a rudimentary infrastructure.[83] Having few Europeans to protect, colonial rulers in particular lacked incentives to develop the state's territorial power. Indeed, nothing epitomizes the failure to develop empirical statehood so much as the "small size of the security forces that existed in the colonies through the terminal colonial period".[84] While many have taken issue with his emphasis on the physical environment as the dominant causal factor, there is no doubt that colonial states were spatially clustered around capitals, typically on the coast, and in pockets of resource extraction in the hinterland. State-sponsored infrastructure, most importantly the railway, was built to connect these points. Colonial police forces were instrumental in protecting these pockets, but they were far too small to provide anything like the surveillance and control that their European counterparts did, even in a small territory like Sierra Leone's.[85] On the contrary, it is commonly agreed the autonomous power that Mann thinks derives from territorial-centralization never developed in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet in the face of constraints like inhospitable territories and dwindling colonial budgets, an extension of territorial control was nevertheless attempted during decolonization. This was also attempted beyond Sierra Leone in the same period; "it was only with the 'second colonial occupation' of Africa after 1945 that the colonial authorities attempted to extend government police into the rural areas".[86]

The pursuit of this strategy is all the more interesting for its apparent defiance of structural constraints and entrenched practice, and must be understood in relation to the revised notions of statehood that started to inform imperial statebuilding in the period.

[83] See also James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2009).
[84] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, p. 79.
[85] Killingray, "The Maintenance of Law and Order".
[86] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

Many African states were characterized by an ambiguity about the internal/external demarcation that Ruggie saw as foundational for territoriality. Frontiers were not just conventional “international” frontiers against foreign powers – France in the case of Sierra Leone – but also internal frontiers differentiating settler populations or European nationals from natives in rural areas. Between the outer, “international” limit, and inner limits separating citizens from subjects or “protected persons”, was a space subject to indirect rule, the workings of which I will discuss in the next section. This internal partitioning of sovereignty was never fixed despite the substantial legislation that cropped up to stabilize it. According to Berman and Lonsdale the permeation of the boundary between an official sphere of state jurisdiction and the domain of ‘native’ authority was a necessity: “public power (an innocuous term for British force) was shared in private African hands. It was the only way in which external force could become socially engaged.”[87] The weak territorial penetration of state power meant that it had to connect itself intimately with ‘native’ forces, even for the limited objectives of colonial rule. The instability inherent in this system of internally divided sovereignty meant that the colonial state oscillated between virtually no presence, through occasional campaigns designed to “show the flag”, to more or less permanent presence in areas of particular strategic significance, such as the diamond areas. Besides a limited number of District Commissioners, the police were the agents of this precarious territorial control. It was precarious not just because the police were few in number and because the roads were bad, but also because control was left to chiefs who could mobilize their own apparatus of territorial control. The late colonial goal of increasing territorial control in view of Sierra Leone’s attainment of sovereignty must therefore be

[87] Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, p. 31.

understood in conjunction with a broader campaign to rein in the chiefs' power. Together, these efforts constituted an attempt to change a crucial dimension of state territoriality, namely the "intra-national geograph[y] of state territorial organization and internal administrative differentiation".[88]

As we shall see, this situation appeared curiously inverted as the British returned to rebuild Sierra Leone. Chiefs had become targets in Sierra Leone's civil war, several had been killed, and many others had been forced to flee. Police stations across the country were devastated and deserted. As reformers saw it, the problem was not a competing structure of territorial governance, but a vacuum of authority in rural Sierra Leone. Adding to the imperative to stabilize Sierra Leone, a new and powerful incentive to rectify the state's absence arrived through the emergence in the 1990s of the discourse on failed or fragile states. This incentive did not come in the form of new expected benefits of territorial control to state rulers, but by the global threats allegedly produced by individual states' inability to project power across their territories. Sierra Leone was not considered a haven for terrorism, but a rebel insurgency threatening to swallow up the bastion of state power in Freetown provided a strong incentive for the extension of the state's territorial control. Moreover, diagnoses of how the rural population had been marginalized and ultimately radicalized by a distant state who could offer nothing to them raised the risk of regional instability. Englebert and Tull argue that the "consequences of state failure [...] reverberate more broadly in Africa" than on other continents, and note that "state decay in Ivory Coast throughout the 1990s was partly

[88] Brenner, Jessop, Jones and Gordon MacLeod, 'Introduction: State Space in Question', p. 6.

induced by failure in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and has severe repercussions for other countries in West Africa".[89]

However, as reformers were well aware, in a context where the "Sierra Leonean state had effectively ceased to exist" extending state control to the periphery would be difficult.[90] This brings us to the final dimension of statehood that will be explored here. Did territoriality imply strengthening the state, or could nonstate actors be enlisted as partners of control?

Legitimate authority

Legitimate authority, for Weber, was integrally linked to the means of force. It did not imply, as is sometimes mistakenly argued, that the state was the only actor that can legitimately *use* force. Rather, Weber claimed, "the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it. The state is considered the sole source of the 'right' to use violence".[91] In other words, what the state claimed monopoly over is not the use of force, but the authorization of its use. Again, this shows that the 'Weberian' definition of the state did not in itself dictate a clear policy of statebuilding, since the state could confer the right to use force upon a number of nonstate institutions, or to none at all, while remaining a state in the Weberian sense. As Giustozzi argues, "pre-empting hostile collective action through co-option, alliances, manipulation and intimidation is as important as the mere accumulation of means of coercion, and entire agencies of the state have been

[89] Englebert and Tull, "Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa", p. 109.
[90] Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*, p. 1.
[91] Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, p. 78.

developed historically to implement this task".[92] For instance, long before Sierra Leone was considered failed or collapsed, the country's criminal code gave wide powers of arrest without warrant to private persons, empowering individuals to "use sufficient force to effect the arrest" in a range of cases.[93]

Whatever the degree of authorization to third parties, the key was that the state must legitimate the sanctioning of violence in the eyes of those it dominated . It is well established that police behaviour will have key "de/legitimating consequences" in relation to society. "Police reforms are not self-sustaining but require civic legitimation, both to be effective and to be accorded normative status".[94] Yet how such legitimation will be achieved is by no means a given. Here, Weber famously considered three ideal-typical legitimations; traditional, charismatic and legal. Tradition worked through "the mores sanctified through the unimaginably ancient recognition and habitual orientation to conform"; charisma through the "personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership"; and legality worked "by virtue of the belief in the validity of legal statute and functional 'competence' based on rationally created *rules*".[95] Weber's policy relevance for current international statebuilding was therefore not drawn from his definition of state, but from his historical analysis that modern states relied on the third form of legitimation; legality. Modern states exercised domination through bureaucracy; a form of administration ordered by rules and a stable hierarchy of competences which was open only to those with expert

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[92] Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion*, p. 9.
[93] Government of Sierra Leone, *The Criminal Procedures Act, 1965*, 4(2). http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/1965-32.pdf (accessed 30.8.2011). Paragraph 4(3) even authorizes taking life in special cases: "Nothing in this section gives a right to cause the death of any person except when a constable or private person is legally attempting to arrest the person killed, upon a charge or treason, felony or inflicting a dangerous wound and the arrest of such person cannot be otherwise accomplished."
[94] Marenin, 'Restoring Police Systems', p. 28.
[95] Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, p. 78f.

training. It stood in "extreme contrast to the regulation of all relationships through individual privileges and bestowals of favour" which characterizes patrimonial systems.[96]

Significantly, the impetus for bureaucratization was the same that drove the state's control of the means of force and the provision of internal order:

> [T]he bureaucratic tendency has chiefly been influenced by needs arising from the creation of standing armies as determined by power politics and by the development of public finance connected with the military establishment. […] Among purely political factors, the increasing demand of a society, accustomed to absolute pacification, for order and protection ('police') in all fields exerts an especially persevering influence in the direction of bureaucratization".[97]

As discussed above, Africa has lacked the military competition between densely populated polities which drove territorial consolidation in Europe, and has in a Weberian reading consequently lacked the conditions conducive to legal-rational domination through bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the introduction of the state in Africa meant that strategies had to be found to control and legitimate the use of violence. Such strategies had to resolve the question of who, if any, should be authorized to use force on behalf of the state.[98]

Starting in the early twentieth century, legitimation strategies changed momentously as a response to the problem of ruling areas and populations added to the colonial portfolio after the 1884 Berlin Conference. While colonial rule was initially embedded in a single legal order creating opportunities for selected ethnic groups to rise in administration and police; indirect rule as conceived by the colonial administrator and policy maker

[96] *Ibid*., p. 198.
[97] *Ibid*., p. 212f.
[98] This raises the further question of whether such authorization had to be explicit, such as in the form of law, or tacit. Since a tacit authorization does not allow for formal sanctions in the case of transgressions, it means, all things being equal, more autonomy for the agent empowered to use force at its discretion. This places the state's legitimacy at risk.

Frederick Lugard was presented as a dynamic form of administration building on 'traditional' authority: "indigenous political institutions, under the guidance of the resident European political officer, would be continually developing into more efficient units of administration, responding to and adapting themselves to new situations created by colonial rule".[99]. Beyond administration, indirect rule also mean critical shifts both with regard to agencies invested with the capacity to use force and of their legitimation.

In an influential statement of the impact of indirect rule on postcolonial state formation in Africa, Mahmood Mamdani identified the raising of native police forces as part of a critical shift in the colonial state's legitimation strategy: "indirect rule came to be predicated on a form of decolonization that was more cultural than territorial. More than just a search for personnel to augment the few European officials available on the ground, it was a search for institutional forms of control anchored in a historical and cultural legitimacy".[100] At first glance, it seems like the colonial state switched from a legal to a traditional form of legitimation. In practice, however, indirect rule involved a complex and unstable combination of the two. The maintenance of law and order was increasingly left to the chiefs according to a reinvention and codification of what the colonial government defined as "customary" or "traditional" practice.[101] The effect, according to Mamdani, was an extension of state-authorized use of force in a system of "decentralized despotism":

> So long as the use of force could be passed off as customary it was considered legitimate […] No wonder then that when force was needed to implement development measures on reluctant peasants, its use was restricted to Native Authorities as much as possible. In the language of

[99] Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (Hutchinson, London, 1968), p. 169; Frederickk Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1922).
[100] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, p. 76f.
[101] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*; Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992).

power, custom came to be the name of force. It was the halo around the regime of decentralized despotism".[102]

In Mamdani's view, indirect rule produced a powerful postcolonial legacy: a "bifurcated state" characterized by a deep urban-rural divide where the tribe remained the administrative unit outside the capital. As we will see, the extent of this bifurcation should not be exaggerated since there was extensive migration of personnel and continuous negotiations of authority between the SLP and nominally 'native' or private policing agencies in the late colonial period. Even in a settler colony like Kenya, the socio-legal separation was incomplete. White settlers were separated from African migrant workers and peasants by a "flimsy fence, full of gaps"; a metaphor for a fissured state in which "the opposition of capital and labour sprouted up in an intricate patchwork all over the African lands".[103] More generally, postcolonial states seemed to be characterized less by bifurcation than by "a horizontally woven tapestry of partial sovereignties: sovereignties over terrains and their inhabitants, over aggregates of people conjoined in faith or culture, over networks of relations, regimes of property, domains of practice, and, quite often, over various combinations of these things".[104] Whatever the sharpness of the bifurcation, however, it is beyond doubt that the state relied heavily on nonstate security agencies, be they private, quasi-state, or native. Nonstate and largely autonomous policing authorities were therefore accepted as necessary wielders of coercion throughout Africa.

However, the structure of authority supporting policing started to cause severe problems in the late 1950s. From the perspective of the Colonial Office, the plurality of

[102] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, p. 286f.
[103] Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, p. 2.
[104] Comaroff and Comaroff, 'Law and Disorder', p. 35; Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Exploration of the Postcolonial State* (Duke University Press, Durham, 2001).

authorities appeared as a threat to sovereignty, particularly as it created fertile terrain for communist infiltration. This is evident in increasingly frequent observations to the effect that "no man can serve two masters".[105] On the other hand, colonial officers realized that the lack of control over how chiefs exercised their policing authority was not merely a local problem, but created grievances severe enough to constitute a threat to the existence of the colonial regime. Using law, the colonial state attempted a radical reduction in the authorization of nonstate agents as legitimate users of force.

The question of who, if any, should be authorized to use force did not seem less important during the second reform. However, certain strategic and political changes suggested that legitimate authority would be the dimension of statehood where statebuilding strategies would have changed the most since the late colonial period. The absence of demands imposed by extractive colonialism meant that the British reformers faced no need to buy off and empower local chiefs in resource-rich areas. Operating in a context where they enjoyed widespread popular support, they also did not need to play different groups off against each other to avoid revolt. Finally, while indirect rule aimed to "freeze colonial societies, to slow and control the pace of change",[106] post-conflict statebuilding justifies itself as a means to increase social mobility and spur development. In other words, it would seem like the British were in a less constrained position regarding the question of what type of authority they would recognize and try to empower in the post-war settlement.

[105] *Review of Police and Security Forces in Relation to Communist Infiltration. 1949*. National Archives (UK), CO 537/442.
[106] John Cell, 'Colonial Rule' in Judith Brown and William Roger Louis (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999).

Between the two periods, however, the question of legitimate authority became bound up with the problematic sovereignty of African states. Despite reports stating that "local governance and justice [in Sierra Leone] are delivered less by formal, modern state structures […] than by a complex network of institutions ranging in formality and sources of authority",[107] the capacity and operational mode of these networks were more opaque to the British in the second period than during colonialism. Even more importantly, empowering such networks risked undermining a "responsible" exercise of sovereignty which now made up a key goal of statebuilding. As DFID later formulated, problems with informal systems included "corruption and abuse of power; non-compliance with international human rights standards, such as discrimination or inhuman and degrading punishments; [and] lack of accountability".[108] Perhaps most importantly, postcolonial state decay in Africa was associated with a *disintegration* of a state monopoly on violence and a resulting loss of state legitimacy. In this framework, the widely different policing authorities operating in Sierra Leone and elsewhere were united by one thing; they were outside – and therefore in potential conflict with – the state's security forces. Bruce Baker has argued that nonstate policing groups in Africa tend to be caricatured by outsiders as violent and criminal "vigilantes" with "no part to play in assisting the internal security of the new post-conflict era".[109] This perception was not just rooted in the observation of the damage inflicted by nonstate groups – the RUF's amputation of arms offering a particularly grim example in Sierra Leone – but also by a commitment to essential traits of Western statehood. As Abel argues, informal

[107] Ryann Manning, 'Landscape of Authority in Sierra Leone: How "Traditional" and "Modern" Justice and Governance Systems Interact', in Yongmei Zhou 'Decentralization, Democracy and Development: Recent Experience From Sierra Leone' (World Bank Country Study, World Bank, Washington D.C., 2000), p. 127.
[108] DFID, 'Non-State Justice and Security Systems' (DFID, London, 2004), p. 3.
[109] Baker, *Security in Post-Conflict Africa*, p. 9.

providers of law and order "obliterate the fundamental liberal distinctions between public and private, state and civil society, what is forbidden and what is allowed".[110] While these distinctions were surely also fundamental during colonialism, they had become absolutely central to goals like anti-corruption and national reconciliation; goals which were lodestars for the statebuilding project as a whole. This meant that authorizing nonstate groups to do policing, either by materially equipping them or by providing a legal framework sanctioning their operation, represented more than a question of how to make policing as effective as possible. It also directly affected the two other dimensions considered here, territoriality and force, since the nonstate policing groups operating in Sierra Leone are often (but by no means always) rurally based and armed in various ways.

Conclusion

This chapter challenged the tendency to confine the study of statebuilding to the post-Cold War period, and showed that emerging notions of sovereignty during decolonization changed the calculations of colonial rule in ways that mattered for reform. To set the stage for further analysis of reforms in the two periods, the unhelpful term 'Weberian' was broken into three concrete dimensions of statehood. The problems identified by reformers along these dimensions were linked to predominant thinking about sovereignty and statehood. This revealed that colonial and current statebuilders arrived at many of the same conclusions about the need to increase territorial control and limit the role of nonstate wielders of coercion, although by way of different reasoning. With regards to the fateful question of coercive capacity, to which

[110] Richard Abel, "The Contradictions of Informal Justice", in Richard Abel (ed), *The Politics of Informal Justice* (Academic Press, London, 1982), p. 6.

territoriality and legitimate authority are inextricably linked, the picture is more open. This means that the claim that the recent transformation of sovereignty ushered in an unprecedented form of statebuilding must be qualified in important ways. It is certainly true that the postcolonial problematization of sovereignty and statehood drew together a vast number of international actors in a historically unique project of reconstructing 'fragile' states. However, with regards to the problems and solutions statebuilders identified in concrete instances, similarities seemed to be more striking than differences.

The chapter also argued that the scholarship on sovereignty and statebuilding have placed excessive emphasis on normative change, neglecting the practical implications of such changes. Only in the interplay between the normative regime and the local context in which statebuilding takes place can we understand how and why certain strategies were selected and revised, and hope to identify patterns over time. Shifting attention to policing in Sierra Leone, the next chapter begins this task.

Chapter 2: Police reform during decolonization

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the interplay between local and global factors that shaped how policing developed in Sierra Leone, focusing on reforms of the SLP's territorial reach and coercive capacity between 1945 and 1961. This was a period of rapid SLP expansion, and reforms during these years laid down the basic framework of policing for decades to come. These reforms cannot be understood properly unless we identify which problems they were designed to solve. The chapter therefore opens with an account of the origins of the SLP, showing that policing developed as part of a structure of indirect rule that came under intense pressure as a result of the diamond boom in the 1930s. The difficulty in controlling the diamond trade was a local driving force of police reform, causing a tentative expansion of the SLP to rural areas in the 1940s.

However, reforms in the closing years of colonial rule were also driven by centralized efforts to standardize police forces before independence. The recommendations made by policing experts at the Colonial Office reflected the idea that the colonies needed to be prepared for independent statehood. After identifying the implications of these policy recommendations for reforms in the field of territoriality and force, the second part of the chapter analyzes how they were received and acted on by SLP officers. This reveals a fundamental tension rooted in diverging understandings about Sierra Leone's status and the correct purpose of policing. Regarding the issue of the SLP's territorial deployment, the centralized policy had a concrete implication: it broke firmly with the existing tendency to take a dual structure of Colony/Protectorate as the unquestioned

basis for policing. This led to the formal nationalization of policing in 1954. With regards to the question of coercive capacity, London's policy advice dictated a move away from the paramilitary tradition of policing, although with substantial reservations. In the context of this ambiguity, influences from other colonies with much stronger violent opposition to the colonial regime pushed SLP reform in the direction of further paramilitarization. In closing, the chapter summarizes the state of the SLP at independence in 1961, and discusses what the reforms revealed about contemporary interpretations of security and statehood.

Origins of policing in Sierra Leone

Originating under violent circumstances after a French attack on Freetown in 1794, three persistent traits characterized the police in Sierra Leone: they were concentrated in Freetown; they were paramilitary; and they were concerned with the protection of commercial interests. The first British settlement in Sierra Leone dates to 1787 when a group mainly consisting of black ex-servicemen from the British army settled in what is now Freetown.[1] In 1807, the settlement was acquired by the British government and made a Crown Colony. This formal colonization did appear to have an immediate impact on the organization of security, but it inaugurated an important dynamic which would persist throughout the colonial era: the transfer of police practices and personnel between Sierra Leone and other colonies. In 1861, an officer from the Metropolitan police in London arrived to reshape the police, which had around 1845 been uniformed and increased to 100.[2] Further reforms followed after 1863, as Governor Blackall, an

[1] Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone* (James Currey, Oxford. 1996).
[2] Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1962).

ex-officer from the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), set out to create a "disciplined, strong police force instructed in the use of firearms".[3]

In the second half of the 19th century, the desire for a stronger police in Sierra Leone was fueled by three processes which affected calculations about the police's reach and armament. The first was the arrival in Freetown of tens of thousands of 'repatriated' slaves from North America and the Caribbean. Their descendants became the ethnic Krios. A small and chiefly Freetown-based ethnic group, the Krios dominated African recruitment to the police and civil service well into the 20th century. The second process was the colonial expansion into the hinterland, requiring after 1870 frequent incursions to settle disputes among rivaling chiefdoms and keep roads open for trade.[4] The third was the intensified European territorial competition in continental Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1885. These factors eventually led to the division in 1890 of the existing police into a Colony Division reserved to Freetown and a military Frontier Police assigned to rural areas. The Frontier Police were "stationed in small groups in towns [in] the area where the roads were cut", had European officers and Krio sub-officers.[5] It was thus an example of the colonial practice of strangers policing strangers.[6]

The Frontier Police quickly became the main instrument in the state's attempt to establish a measure of control in rural areas. To understand the conditions for achieving such control, it is worth dwelling for a moment on the significance of territory. According to Jeffrey Herbst, broadcasting state power across the territory has been "the

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[3] Nicholas Etheridge, *The Sierra Leone Frontier Police: A Study in the Functions and Employment of a Colonial Force* (University of Aberdeen, unpublished MLitt Thesis, 1967), p. 5.
[4] Christopher Fyfe, *A Short History of Sierra Leone* (Longmans, London, 1979).
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Mike Brogden, "The Emergence of the Police: The Colonial Dimension", *British Journal of Criminology*, **7**, 1, pp 4-14

fundamental problem confronting leaders of almost all African states".[7] In his view, rulers in very different contexts have responded to a highly constraining physical environment in the same way:

> Allowing for different historical contexts and variations in technology and political norms, precolonial, colonial, and postindependence leaders also developed remarkably similar strategies in the face of a sparse and unforgiving physical setting: gaining clear control over a core political area, defined as either the capital or the critical urban areas and those rural areas with critical economic assets (e.g., mines and plantations), and then ruling over outlying areas in a varied manner depending on the degree to which infrastructure could be developed and the extent to which armies and police forces could be deployed.[8]

This impression of strong physical limitations on the state's reach does not fit Sierra Leone well. Although compactly forested, Herbst himself notes that the conditions for achieving a measure of control over its small territory were far better than in much larger and more sparsely populated African states.

[7] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, p. 3.
[8] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, p. 252.

Figure 1: Map of Sierra Leone.

Source: http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/sierraleone.html

As in many other African countries, however, the capital represented one of the poles in a long history of violent opposition between 'bush' and 'town'.[9] Unlike in Europe, where police forces emerged at the tail end of a process of state formation connecting urban with rural areas, the police in Sierra Leone were introduced to strengthen the state's position in areas where it had little or no foothold. This fact is essential to keep in mind when we consider questions about their reach, armament, and relation with other policing agents.

[9] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*; Richard Fanthorpe, "On the Limits of Liberal Peace: Chiefs and Democratic Decentralization in Post-War Sierra Leone", *African Affairs*, **105**, 418 (2005), pp. 27-49.

At the turn of the 19th century, Sierra Leone's Governor was optimistic about the prospects for using the Frontier Police to extend state control into the interior. This was illustrated by his pleas to London for finances to strengthen the force: "the thousand and one other concerns which keep arising [increase] the duties of the Frontier Police every day and require more and more men".[10] A rare study found that "the police became the one effective instrument by which Freetown could maintain its influence" in rural areas.[11] Besides spearheading efforts to extend state rule, a process greatly bolstered by the creation of railway lines between Freetown and Makeni in the north and Pendembu in the east in the 1890s, the police provided a template for the nascent rural administration.[12]

However, rural policing remained violent and ill-disciplined and the police did as much to alienate the rural population as to consolidate the state's grip on it. During the widespread anti-tax rebellion in 1898 known as the Hut Tax War, the Frontier Police engaged in punitive raids alongside the 1st West Indian Regiment.[13] On the recommendations of a London-appointed commission, the Frontier Police, whose renegade methods the commission felt had fueled the rebellion, were absorbed into the West African Frontier Force in 1900. The latter was raised among fears of French expansion as a regional military stand-by force made up of units from Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Gambia and Sierra Leone.[14] This signaled a degree of separation of civil and military duties which was observed elsewhere in British Africa, but it also removed a

[10] *Letter from the Governor of Sierra Leone to the Secretary of State of the Colonies, 3.7.1900*. Unmarked folder, National Archives, Freetown.
[11] Etheridge, *The Sierra Leone Frontier Police*.
[12] Arthur Abraham and E.D.A. Turay, *The Sierra Leone Army: A Century of History* (MacMillan, London, 1987); Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*.
[13] Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*.
[14] William Gutteridge, "Military and Police Forces in Colonial Africa", In L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960. Vol. 2* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1970).

significant degree of permanent coercive capacity from the direct control of the colonial government.[15]

The removal of the Frontier Police capped a process of colonial territorial expansion in which policing was instrumental. In this regard, Sierra Leone illustrated an African tendency where colonial armies and police forces played a considerable role in "effecting social and political change" across the African continent.[16] Even so, no clear specialization between administrative, police and military power existed in Sierra Leone as the 20th century dawned. At this point, however, the police were incorporated into a new structure of rule in which their functions, deployment and relations with other agencies changed and solidified. Since it has been argued that the dual structure of government emerging in this period has had "profound effects" on current governance and has perpetuated a core-periphery split "at the heart of Sierra Leonean politics",[17] it is necessary to understand how it worked.

Indirect rule and three tiers of policing

Following a treaty fixing the border with French Guinea in 1895, a British Protectorate was declared over what remains Sierra Leone's territory in the following year. It is in this context we must understand the emergence of a structure of indirect rule which subjected the capital and the periphery to separate political and legal institutions. While the Colony in Freetown remained governed by English law, the British created the title Paramount Chief to designate the highest customary leaders in the Protectorate.

[15] Killingray, "The Maintenance of Law and Order"; Deflem, "Law Enforcement in British Colonial Africa".
[16] Gutteridge, "Military and Police Forces".
[17] Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*, p. 7; Fanthorpe, "On the Limits of Liberal Peace"; Bankole Thompson and Gary Potter, "Governmental Corruption in Africa: Sierra Leone as a Case Study", *Crime, Law and Social Change*, **28** (1997), pp. 137-154.

Paramount Chiefs were made constitutionally responsible for "security, tax collection, labor recruitment for public works, and other minor tasks".[18] The Protectorate became divided into five districts which were jointly governed by a Paramount Chief and a European District Commissioner.

The traditional opposition between 'bush' and 'town' was thereby solidified by the socio-legal separation between Colony and Protectorate. According to Mamdani, this was a uniform colonial model that placed great power in the hands of chiefs:

> Like all colonial powers, the British worked with a single model of customary authority in precolonial Africa. That model was monarchical, patriarchal, and authoritarian. It presumed a king at the center of every polity, a chief on every piece on administrative ground, and a patriarch in every homestead or kraal.[19]

In the field of policing, the state recognized three forces which straddled the divide between capital and hinterland. The first was the Freetown-based Colony Division (later SLP) which had European officers, mainly Krio sub-officers, and an ethnically mixed body.[20] They were responsible for law and order in the Colony, but also for "serious crimes" in the Protectorate. Such crimes included murder, rape and matters involving trade, as well as all cases involving "non-natives". These responsibilities did not imply that the SLP spent much time in the provinces. On the contrary, the confinement of the SLP to the capital fits a typical colonial pattern and shows that developing territorial control was not a priority for the colonial state during the first decades of the 20th century.

The second force was the quasi-state Court Messenger Force (CMF), formally

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[18] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, p. 111.
[19] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, p. 39.
[20] In 1948, for instance, the force was composed of seven different ethnic groups. *Sierra Leone Colonial Report, 1948*. Freetown Public Library

established in 1907. Originally formed to quell disturbances during the Hut Tax War, the CMF was formed out of clerks originally employed by District Commissioners for administrative purposes.[21] Glancing towards the German colonies, the Governor argued that "native levies properly organised and fighting under their respective chiefs as scouts and even as a detaining force, would […] render invaluable service in the defence of the Protectorate".[22] The CMF were made legally responsible for "the preservation of the peace, the prevention and detection of crimes, the arrest and punishment of offenders and all other such duties as are usually performed by a Civil Police Force or Constabulary".[23] The CMF's function as a liaison between the District Commissioners and the Chiefs put them in a position of "great potential power" and made them "the only really effective check on [chiefs'] power.[24] Some even turned down offers of chieftaincy to stay in their positions.

The third tier was made up by the Chiefdom Messengers, a body recruited and directed by Paramount Chiefs and made responsible for "minor matters involving native customary law".[25] Unlike the CMF, who were armed and invested with powers of arrest, the state did not aspire to exert operational control over the "technically untrained" Chiefdom Messengers. It did, however, recognize their value in "dealing with more important cases until Court Messengers [CMF] arrive on the scene".[26] The size and functions of Chiefdom Messengers reflected the local politics and the financial strength of individual chiefdoms. From the perspective of the state, this made them the most

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[21] T*he Introduction of the Police Force in the Protectorate. Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1954*. Freetown Public Library.
[22] *Letter from the Governor of Sierra Leone to the Secretary of State, 25.7.00.* Unmarked folder, National Archives, Freetown.
[23] *Court Messenger Ordinance No. 31 of 1907.* National Archives, Freetown.
[24] Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*.
[25] *Sierra Leone Colonial Report, 1949.* Freetown Public Library.
[26] *Ibid.*

unreliable element in the policing structure. On the other hand, the fact that they were present everywhere in the country and did not require funding meant that colonial officials recognized their potential.

In sum, the Court Messengers were crucial middlemen in an assemblage where a state, a quasi-state and a native policing authority shared responsibility for law and order. The workings of this structure will be described in detail in Chapter 5 as we examine how policing changed in response to 'retraditionalization' and growth of commercial policing in the 1990s and 2000s. As elsewhere in colonial Africa, however, the structure of indirect rule was inherently unstable. The state's capability to perform the functions associated with European statehood, namely "to *penetrate* society, *regulate* social relationships, *extract* resources, and *appropriate* or use resources in determined ways" was very limited.[27] Indeed, statebuilding along these lines was both discouraged in London, where it was deemed both costly and risky.[28] Just as Mamdani describes, the basic policing structure greatly empowered chiefs, particularly those residing in areas where the state had economic interests.[29] The government's limited capacity to rule meant that it was forced to find accommodations with chiefs where state resources were traded for assurances of social peace.[30] This complex structure came under severe pressure as the discovery of diamonds introduced a new dynamic into the country's politics.

Local drivers of police reform: The diamond boom

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[27] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, p. 4; Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State".
[28] Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*.
[29] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*; William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995); Martin Kilson, *Political Change in a West African State: A Study of the Modernization Process in Sierra Leone*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1966), p. 27.
[30] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*.

A fateful shift in Sierra Leone's political economy occurred during the 1930s, when the value of trade in forest products like palm oil, palm kernels, coffee and cocoa was overhauled by trade in iron ore and diamonds. In 1932, the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST), a de Beers subsidiary, secured exclusive mining and prospecting rights for 99 years. In 1937, the company oversaw an annual production of one million carats, with a peak of two million carats reached in 1960.[31] By the early 1950s, diamonds were by far the state's largest source of revenue.[32] This allowed more resources to be freed up for policing (see Table 2). However, diamond mining also created unprecedented challenges to policing. As early as in 1939, Sierra Leone's Governor noted that "the changing conditions of the Protectorate and the tendency toward industrialization in the mining areas combines [sic] to demand an increased standard of efficiency in police work".[33] Concentrated in the Eastern province of Kono, an area remote from existing infrastructure, diamond mining attracted tens of thousands of 'strangers' from French Guinea, Liberia and other parts of Sierra Leone. This created great strain on a system of authority based on officially recognized chiefs and headmen ruling over their local subjects. The annual police reports in the late 1950s all pointed to the diamond trade as the major problem facing the force. By 1956, it was estimated that between 50 and 70 thousand people were mining illegally, a staggering number considering the population total of about two million.[34] The existing Diamond Protection Force was found "very

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[31] Ian Smillie, Lansana Gberie and Ralph Hazleton, 'The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds & Human Security' (Partnership Africa Canada, Ottawa, 1999), p. 3.

[32] According to Reno, the diamond trade accounted for 65 per cent of state revenues by 1951. *Corruption and State Politics*, p. 60.

[33] Quoted in Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*, p. 57.

[34] Fyfe, *A Short History of Sierra Leone*.

unsatisfactory"[35] and too dependent on chiefs and their allies to provide effective protection.

As the diamond boom took off, "direct control over the population, especially in the mining chiefdoms, became a high priority for the revenue-hungry government".[36] In the late 1940s, we see the first signs of a determination to use the SLP to exert more direct control over the Protectorate. The annual Police Report of 1948 mentioned that "a policy of decentralisation was vigorously pursued".[37] By 1949, extensive training of Court Messengers at the Police Training School at Hastings was reported "in pursuance of the policy that the Police Force should eventually be responsible for policing the whole territory".[38] In the rapidly growing city of Bo, a permanent police post of police-trained Court Messengers under the direction of an Assistant Superintendent was established in the same year. In 1951, approval was given for police detachments at the iron ore mines at Marampa and Pepel, and at the airport at Lungi.[39] Most important, however, was the establishment in 1952 of the Yengema Division, the first permanent police division to operate in the Protectorate. Established partly in an attempt to rein in the increasingly powerful and volatile local chiefs who acted as intermediaries in the diamond trade around the Yengema mine in Kono, it was to ensure "the prevention of illicit diamond mining and buying" while also investigating "all crime reported in the area".[40] This was no easy task. In the late 1940s, SLP reports typically mentioned transport as one of the major problems facing the force, and journeys frequently had to

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[35] *Testimony of Commissioner W.G. Syer to the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces.* National Archives, Freetown, CE M/2, date unknown.
[36] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*, p. 48.
[37] *Annual Report of the Police Force, 1948.* Freetown Public Library.
[38] *Annual Report of the Police Force, 1949.* Freetown Public Library.
[39] *Sierra Leone Colonial Report, 1951.* Freetown Public Library.
[40] *Annual Report of the Police Force, 1952; Annual Report of the Police Force, 1953.* Freetown Public Library.

be made on foot.[41] There was no motor road linking Freetown to the Protectorate until 1940, and the poor roads that were built thereafter took a heavy toll on the few vehicles available. While the 1953 report claimed that the Yengema Division had worked "most efficiently and effectively", it also noted that "the nature of the country and the absence of the Police in the Protectorate make [the protection of the diamond industry] extremely difficult".[42] Generally, it was reported that "the Police have found considerable difficulty in pursuing investigations outside the colony [...] The vacuum in the Protectorate has been a serious handicap".[43]

In other words, the socio-economic changes occurring in the Protectorate from the 1930s onwards created unprecedented challenges to state control, and motivated the first serious efforts to establish the police outside the capital. However, such local concerns were not alone in driving reforms. As indicated in the beginning, the late 1940s was a time in which colonial planners in London started to take an interest in the development of police forces in each colony. Before we go on to analyze how the emerging imperial policing policy influenced reforms in Sierra Leone, it is useful to map the sharp growth in SLP size and expenditure during the same period.

Table 1 shows that there was a four-fold expansion of the SLP between 1949 and 1960, the year before independence. This coincided with the diamond boom; but it also fit an imperial pattern. As David Killingray has showed, police forces and paramilitary units increased gradually in strength from 1945 onwards.[44]

[41] Edward C. Eates, personal interview, Exeter 1.10.2009.
[42] *Annual Report of the Police Force, 1953.* Freetown Public Library.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] Killingray, "The Maintenance of Law and Order".

Table 1: Size of the SLP in selected years, 1926-1960 and 1991-2007[45]

Year	All ranks	Population	Police/population ratio
1926	311	n.d.	
1939	290	n.d.	
1949	550	1,851,000	1: 3,366
1951	631	n.d.	
1953	717	n.d.	
1954	1,335	n.d.	
1957	1,696	n.d.	
1960	2,019	2,300,000	1: 1,139
1991	9,317		
2001	6,600	5,350,000	1: 811
2002	6,900		
2005	8,000	6,000,000	1: 750
2007	9,500		

Measured in terms of police to population ratios, the SLP expansion during the 1950s meant that the force grew from one of the smallest in the British Empire to average size. In this decade, Sierra Leone's ratio grew from Nigeria's level of 1: 3,300 – a colony with a population 15 times larger than Sierra Leone's that was considered "seriously under-policed" – to approach the Gold Coast figure of 1: 915.[46]

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[45] Sources 1926-1960: *Annual Report of the Police Force*, *Sierra Leone Colonial Report,* various editions, Freetown Public Library. The 1960 population figure is an estimate based on the 1963 census quoted in Benjamin Gyepi-Garbrah, 'Adolescent Fertility in Sierra Leone' (Harvard University: The Pathfinder Fund, Cambridge, MA, 1985), p. 7. Sources 1991-2007: Sarah Meek, 'Policing Sierra Leone', in Patrick Coker, Jeremy Ginifer, Mark Malan and Sarah Meek 'Sierra Leone—Building the Road to Recovery' (Monograph, No 80, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, March 2003); Bruce Baker, "Where Do People Turn to for Policing in Sierra Leone?", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, **23**, 3 (2005), pp. 371-390; Rauch and van der Spuy, 'Police Reform in Post-Conflict Africa'; Mark White, 'The Security Development Nexus: A Case Study of Sierra Leone, 2004-2006' (Working Paper No. 4, Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007. University of Birmingham, Birmingham, 2008). Numbers for this period have also been verified through personal correspondence at SLP Headquarters.
It must be kept in mind that SLP numbers after 1991 are estimates. The British reform team's reports contain no specific numbers (except for single units), showing that uncertainty about the size of the force continued well into the reform period. Population numbers are estimates based on varying numbers published by the World Bank, the CIA Factbook, and Wikipedia.

[46] David Killingray and David Anderson, 'An Orderly Retreat? Policing the End of Empire', in Anderson and Killingray, *Policing and Decolonisation*, p. 14. The comparison is based on 1956 numbers for Nigeria and the Gold Coast.

Similarly, Table 2 shows that police expenditure in Sierra Leone tripled from 2 per cent of government spending in 1952 to a peak of 6,2 per cent in 1959. Again, this brought Sierra Leone up to an imperial average which ranged between 4 and 8 per cent.[47] The table also shows that the police were prioritized ahead of the military until the sharp increase in military spending from 1958 to 1959. In all probability, this sudden jump was explained by costs associated with the creation of a national military out of the disbanded West African Frontier Force. After this abnormal year, spending on the police and the military was evenly distributed. Interestingly, we see a significant fall in spending on policing between 1961 and 1968. As we will see in the next chapter, this reflected neglect of the SLP in rural regions.[48]

Table 2: Police and military spending as a percentage of total government spending

Year	Police	Military
1952	2,0	n.d.
1957	4,6	1,7
1958	5,3	1,5
1959	6,2	8,0
1961	5,7	6,0
1966/1967	4,9	4,5
1967/1968	3,9	4,9
1974	5,9	6,7

Source: Sierra Leone Gazette, various editions. Government Printer, Freetown; 1952 figure quoted in Anderson and Killingray, *Policing and Decolonisation*, p. 14

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] The return to a colonial level of spending in 1974 is explained by Siaka Stevens' creation of the paramilitary Internal Security Unit (ISU) in 1971/1972. However, numbers from the late 1960s and onwards cannot be trusted. The postcolonial fragmentation of the SLP which will be described in Chapter 3 was accompanied by uneven accounting. Adding to this uncertainty, it is not clear whether spending on the ISU was classified as spending on police or military.

The reader will notice the absence of numbers for the recent period in Table 2. Since funding for SSR in Sierra Leone was provided by a variety of foreign donors over numerous projects and programmes, it has not been possible to compile year-by-year data. The bulk of police funding, however, was supplied from 2000 to mid-2005. In this period, the UK government spent just over £27 million on the SLP.[49] In comparison, it spent an approximate £39 million on the armed forces (RSLAF) between 2001 and 2004.[50] While this means that military spending overtook police spending from the first to the second period, it must be kept in mind that RSLAF had grown to almost triple the size of the SLP by 2000, counting around 15,500 troops in 2000.[51]

The most notable change between the two periods, however, was the British priority given to security in Sierra Leone. In the late colonial period, Sierra Leone was not considered important enough to merit an exception from the policy that each colony should meet the costs of its own internal security. The tripled spending was financed by revenues from diamonds. In the late 1990s, in contrast, post-conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone became a high priority for the British government. Between 2001 and 2005, more than 80% of UK expenditure on SSR in Africa went to Sierra Leone.[52]

Global drivers of police reform: London gets involved

As mentioned, part of the explanation for the sharp SLP expansion in the late colonial period must be sought in factors external to Sierra Leone. The previous chapter argued

[49] Nicole Ball, Piet Biesheuvel, Tom Hamilton-Baillie and 'Funmi Olonisakin, 'Security and Justice Sector Reform Programming in Africa' (Evaluation Working Paper 23, Department for International Development, London, April 2007).
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] Alfred Nelson-Williams, 'Restructuring the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)' (Working Paper No. 3, Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007. University of Birmingham, Birmingham, 2008).
[52] Rauch and van der Spuy, 'Police Reform in Post-Conflict Africa', p. 133.

that decolonization became viewed by the colonial powers as a transition requiring plans for how the colonies would attain adequate institutions before independence. As the first line of defence against growing violent protests, colonial police forces became key players to manage this process.[53] The expansion of policing was described as a direct effect of the preparation for independence:

> The policy of the British Government is to move progressively towards self-Government in these dependent territories, and […] such progress gives rise to political tensions which themselves may demand a very sudden increase in the strength of the local security forces, of whom in most instances, the Police will form the greater part.[54]

This consideration also illustrated that the Cold War demanded a new role of the colonial police forces. Besides the familiar challenge of dealing with riots and labor protests, worries now emerged that communist movements would gain foothold in the colonies, jeopardizing Britain's position after independence. "Suddenly the Colonial Office was preoccupied with global security", argues Sinclair.[55] These concerns meant that policing changed from a local to a Metropolitan concern: "politicians and officials in London drew upon the experience in one colony to inform the practice in another".[56]

Besides the reliance on police forces to 'hold the line' so that ambitious plans for colonial development could go ahead, the police forces themselves became subject to centralized planning. Colonial policing policy was thus re-described as "a partnership in nation building".[57] This momentum was evident in the proliferation of plans, conferences and memoranda on the future of the police forces in the 1950s. According to Sinclair, the year 1948 marked the start of the Colonial Office's efforts to standardize

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[53] Anderson and Killingray, *Policing and Decolonisation*; Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[54] *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces. July, 1954.* National Archives (UK), CO 885/124.
[55] Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*, p. 56.
[56] Killingray and Anderson, 'An Orderly Retreat?', p. 2.
[57] Jeffries, *The Colonial Police*, p. 213.

the colonial police forces. In this year the Colonial Office appointed a Colonial Police Advisor who was to provide an ongoing review of the "organisation, methods, administration, discipline and technical efficiency of all Colonial Police Forces".[58] To give further impetus to the process of standardization, all the colonial police commissioners were convened in the UK to share experiences and discuss reforms in 1951 and 1954.[59]

This activism created frictions between planners in London and police officers and administrators in the colonies. In the eyes of the former, the major purpose of reform was to ensure that notions of 'Britishness' was inculcated in the colonial forces before operational control was given up.[60] For this purpose, the Colonial Police Advisor was appointed from the Metropolitan police in London rather than from one of the colonial forces.[61] However, the colonial police service was characterized by strong cohesion and pride.[62] London's recommendations were therefore often received with skepticism by colonial police officers who felt the complexities and demands of colonial policing were not appreciated.[63] Thus, an officer who served in Sierra Leone during his visit in the mid-1950s recalled that the Advisor was received with reserved politeness. "Policing a colony with a handful of men is not the same things as policing London", he remarked.[64]

[58] Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[59] A highly valuable source of imperial policing policy was the *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces. July, 1954.* National Archives (UK), CO 885/124
[60] Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*, p. 56.
[61] Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[62] See for example Geoffrey Morton, *Just the Job: Some Experiences of a Colonial Policeman* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1957); Colin Imray, *Policeman in Africa* (The Book Guild, Sussex, 1996).
[63] Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[64] Edward C. Eates, personal interview, Exeter 1.10.2009.

This recalls the tension appearing among donors of various stripes as the field of policing was "developmentalized" and "securitized" in the 1990s that was outlined in the Introduction. In the final years of colonial rule, SLP officers had to reckon with an imperial policing policy that effectively reformulated the purpose of policing. Before we move on to explore how this policy was received and acted on in Sierra Leone, it is necessary to identify what it implied for reforms in the field of force and territoriality. These implications are briefly considered in turn, starting with guidelines on the role of coercion.

Two idealized representations – 'Irish' and 'British'[65] – structured discussions about appropriate armed capacity. The first model was adapted from the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and was based on the idea that "the police force would be a colony's first line of defence, as well as the providers of law and order".[66] The police force in the 'Irish' model was thus "centralized, usually under direct political control, barracked, generally armed, and often military or quasi military in nature, with officers having recourse to wide emergency and "special" legal powers".[67] 'British' policing, on the other hand, was identified with the model of the Metropolitan Police. It was unarmed, independent of the government and trained to civil duties in the community.[68] In reality policing in the colonies borrowed from both types and never followed a pure 'Irish' pattern. Nor did these types correspond to the police forces in Ireland and Britain accurately since there was an extensive two-way transfer of practices between them.[69] It

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[65] "British" and "Metropolitan" were used interchangeably in the colonial discourse.
[66] Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*, p. 4.
[67] Graham Ellison and Conor O'Reilly, 'From empire to Iraq and the 'war on terror': the transplantation and commodification of the (Northern) Irish policing experience', Police Quarterly, **11**, 4 (2008), pp. 395-426, p. 402.
[68] Anthony Clayton*: The Thin Blue Line: Studies in law enforcement in late colonial Africa* (Oxford Development Records Project Oxford: Oxford, 1985).
[69] Brogden, "The Emergence of the Police".

was widely accepted, however, that "the really effective influence" upon the colonial police forces did not come from the Metropolitan police but from the RIC.[70]

After 1948, official imperial policy was to tone down the RIC tradition and "extend and develop" the constabulary concept associated with Metropolitan policing.[71] However, the policing directives developed in London were characterized by a tension familiar to today's statebuilders: between exploiting the police's coercive capacity to maintain order in an inherently unstable context and reforming the police into a responsive constabulary.[72] One the one hand, it was reasoned that "it was most important for the police to establish friendly and frequent contacts with the public […] so that the confidence thus engendered in the public would serve to counteract their traditional feeling of resentment towards the police as being the strong arm of the imperialist power".[73] "The colonial episode would only have made sense', Charles Jeffries of the Colonial Office thought, 'if it resulted in the new countries and the old country continuing as friends [and if colonies were] started off with a democratic system, an efficient judiciary and civil service and impartial police".[74] The Home Office echoed this view: "[t]he important point is that without an independent and impartial police force which is respected by the community and which can rely on the citizens for information and help no democratic system can work efficiently".[75] On the other hand, an 'impartial' police was in no way interpreted as synonymous with a 'civilian' police. A 1959 Cabinet Office paper recommended that African states "should be encouraged

[70] Jeffries, *The Colonial Police*, p. 30; Clayton, *The Thin Blue Line*.
[71] Clayton, *The Thin Blue Line*; Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[72] Anderson and Killingray, *Policing and Decolonisation*; Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[73] *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces*. *July, 1954.* National Archives (UK), CO 885/124.
[74] Jeffries quoted in Hyam, 'Bureaucracy and "Trusteeship" in Colonial Empire', p. 278.
[75] Quoted in Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*, p. 67.

to maintain sufficient local forces for their own security" as well as their own intelligence organizations to make them "capable of meeting the threat of subversion, espionage and sabotage".[76] Indeed, the ultimate recommendations of the 1954 conference of colonial police commissioners were to retain, even strengthen, the paramilitary element of police training: "progress [towards self-government] gives rise to political tensions which in themselves may demand a very sudden increase in the strength of the local security, of whom in most instances, the Police form the greater part".[77]

In addition to debates on functions and armament, policy discussions in London also revolved around where policing was needed and why, creating guidelines for reforms in the field of territoriality. These discussions occurred in a context "of intensive renegotiation and restructuring of institutions linking state and countryside" across Africa as a whole.[78] In a 1952 assessment of the future of the imperial police forces after independence, Jeffries saw two possible developments which he deemed "not necessarily incompatible". The first was an extension of the state police force's jurisdiction over the whole territory. The second was to train "whatever organisations the African rulers, Chiefs or tribal authorities may possess into efficient police forces on the analogy of county and borough police forces in England".[79] However, the persistence of violent unrest across the Empire tended to push advice in the former direction. In 1954 the African Studies Branch at the Colonial Office emphasized how

[76] *Africa: The Next Ten Years*. National Archives (UK), CAB 129/98, June, 1959.
[77] *Ibid.*
[78] Catherine Boone, "State Building in the African Countryside: Structure and Politics at the Grassroots", *Journal of Development Studies*, **34**, 4 (1998), pp. 1-31, p. 3.
[79] Jeffries, *The Colonial Police*, p. 91.

the mounting threats to colonial regimes created a need to rethink the deployment of colonial police forces:

> In the first place life is no longer running on its accustomed groove. Agitators and criminals are mobile. In place of a fairly homogenous group of people personally known to him, the chief has to deal with numbers of strangers who may have no traditional contact with him.[80]

The Colonial Police Advisor devoted his 1949 report to recommendations for sweeping changes of the rural deployment of the forces. The various versions of Native Administration Police operating in rural areas, his report stated, were of "very variable standard". "With the trend towards self-government", he argued, "this existing 'patchwork' of policing will become an increasingly vital problem".[81] On this basis, the report recommended further territorial extension, claiming that "manpower must be more closely related to the spread of the population and numbers determined upon the correct appreciation of the duties to be performed".[82]

The framework of policing in question

As the account of the diamond boom made clear, the process of extending policing to rural areas was in motion in Sierra Leone before the Colonial Office started to make recommendations to the same effect. However, this extension proceeded in fits and starts and was not aimed at a full and permanent extension of police authority along the lines recommended by London. Why, then, did the Colonial Police Advisor see the incomplete coverage of state policing as an "increasingly vital problem" as independence approached? The "patchwork" metaphor is revealing because it took the

[80] *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces. July, 1954.* National Archives (UK), CO 885/124.
[81] *Report of the Police Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 28.12.1949*. National Archives (UK) CO537/5442. Sinclair provides a useful discussion of his role. Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[82] *Report of the Police Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 28.12.1949*. National Archives (UK), CO537/5442.

territory of Sierra Leone as the starting point and judged the effectiveness of the police based on its spatial reach within it. This frame of reference was new, and at odds with that of the officers serving in Sierra Leone. For instance, Police Commissioner W.G. Syer recalled in 1955 that at the time of his arrival in Freetown in 1951, "there was not the slightest prospect of the Police going into the Protectorate at all".[83] This shows that the understanding of territoriality held by the London-based officials formulating the broad strokes of imperial police reform differed from that held by officials on the ground. While the latter continued to take the dual structure of Colony/Protectorate as the basis for the organization of policing, the former tended to look at this divide precisely as what obstructed the development of proper policing.

This disagreement was rooted in a nascent redefinition of Sierra Leone's status, a redefinition with key implications for what the purpose of policing was. Having begun to consider Sierra Leone as a would-be state, the Colonial Office saw a need to develop a *de facto* national force. In contrast, the SLP leadership and the colonial administration in Sierra Leone continued to view policing as a matter of maintaining order from day to day using the tried strategies of indirect rule.

In the final instance, London's view prevailed. Following extensive discussions, the Protectorate Assembly approved a full application of the Police Ordinance to the Protectorate, which came into full effect on 1 September 1954. This meant that the SLP took over formal responsibility for policing everywhere in Sierra Leone, and that the CMF were disbanded. Legally, if not in practice, the territorial consolidation of the police in Sierra Leone was now complete. With minor modifications, the organizational

[83] *Testimony of Commissioner WG Syer to the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces. Sierra Leone.* CE M/2, National Archives, Freetown, date unknown.

structure persisted until the second British reform half a century later. However, the divergence of views between London and Freetown influenced when and how the reforms of the SLP's territorial jurisdiction and deployment were implemented. According to Anderson and Killingray, "the unwillingness of the administration to sacrifice its sole jurisdiction effectively delayed the extension of police authority".[84] This is evidence that differing interpretations of Sierra Leone's political status, as well as about the purpose of policing, had a significant implication for police reform.

Although a single state force was created in 1954, it did not cancel out the vast differences between what had been a European-led, paramilitary force and the native, loosely organized CMF. Many Court Messengers were quickly integrated into the SLP with little training and retained much of their operational autonomy. Future long-term President Siaka Stevens saw this coming when he commented that only thing Court Messengers needed to do to continue business as usual "would be to change their uniforms".[85] In 1956, the SLP's Commissioner was confronted with the "complete hiatus" of policing in the countryside: "your men have stayed in town, and there is nothing, as far as we can see, which does take the place of the Court Messenger in the Field?" To this, the Commissioner admitted that "[f]or about six months after the take-over the Police Force was a Court Messenger Force but wearing different uniforms. The establishment of the Police in each place was just about the same as the Court Messenger Force had been".[86] Indeed, the territorial expansion of the SLP was found to be "fraught with almost every conceivable difficulty: shortage of officers, buildings,

[84] Killingray and Anderson, 'An Orderly Retreat?', p. 7.
[85] *Proceedings of the Eighth Meeting of the Protectorate Assembly at Bo, 17-23. October, 1951*. Freetown Public Library.
[86] *Testimony of Commissioner WG Syer to the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces.* National Archives, Freetown, CE M/2, date unknown.

communications, vehicles and equipment generally".[87] The resources bound up in diamond policing, it was argued, "seriously depleted the strength of other general duty divisions" and came at the price of a "reduction of manpower elsewhere and the enforced withholding of a full and adequate service to the general public".[88]

Despite the recognized difficulties of poor infrastructure and tight budgets, the success of the unified SLP continued to be seen by London as inextricably linked with their achievement of territorial control. In 1956, a report commissioned by the British government concluded that the SLP "should be more extensively stationed" and they should be immediately increased, preferably by "at least 500 men".[89] The cost of these measures was considered "only the logical consequence of the perfectly correct decision to extend the duties of the Police to the whole Protectorate".[90]

The faith in a rapid establishment of police authority in rural areas was justified with reference to the British experience. Yet it contained an idealization of the long and violent process whereby the police had established themselves in the towns and cities of Britain.[91] As the account of the force's origins should have made clear, the extension of the SLP's authority represented a novel and rather dramatic break with the dual system of colonial policing.

From paramilitary to civilian policing?

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[87] *Annual Report of the Police Force, 1955*. Freetown Public Library.
[88] *Annual Report of the Police Force, 1958; Annual Report of the Police Force, 1959. Freetown* Public Library.
[89] *Report of Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces (November 1955, to March 1956).* London : Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administrations on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] Robert Storch, "The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880", *Journal of Social History*, 9, 4 (1976), pp. 481-509.

Having now analyzed what drove the strong devotion to increase the SLP's territorial control, the rest of the chapter is concerned with reforms of the SLP's coercive capacity. In this field, a similar interaction between local and global factors was at play, even if the imperial policy was more ambiguous. As we saw, it recommended civilianization while recognizing that a substantial paramilitary element might be necessary to handle protest and subversion. In the late 1940s, at any rate, the paramilitary element in the SLP was weak compared with other colonial forces. As the incoming Commissioner recalled:

My first impressions when I arrived in Sierra Leone in 1948 did not evoke much enthusiasm […] The attitude of the administration to matters relating to security was to my mind outdated; it had not, in all fairness, experienced the problems that had been encountered in Palestine. The police force was small, and its methods were strange to me.[92]

These impressions speak to the relatively peaceful situation in Sierra Leone in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but also to the imperial dynamic whereby strategies from one colony was carried over into others.[93] This dynamic served to strengthen coercive policing in Sierra Leone regardless of its insignificant strategic position and its relatively weak nationalist movement. Despite the fact that police records from the late 1940s and early 1950s betray no indication of looming trouble, the Commissioner drew upon his experiences in Palestine to found a Special Branch.[94] It is revealing that in the otherwise turbulent year of 1948, "nothing of consequence" with regards to intelligence was reported from Sierra Leone or Gambia. For Sierra Leone it was noted that

[92] Fforde, quoted in Clayton, *The Thin Blue Line*.
[93] Georgina Sinclair and Chris Williams, 'Home and Away': the Cross-Fertilisation Between 'Colonial' and 'British' Policing, 1921-85', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, **32**, 2 (2007), pp. 221-238; Brogden, 'The Emergence of the Police'
[94] This was supported by a centralized policy stating that: 'The fact that there is no evidence of immediate threat to public order or security should not stand in the way of [creating intelligence machinery]'. *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces. July, 1954.* National Archives (UK), CO 885/124.

“remarkably little interest have been shown in the press in world politics”. [95] His successor made further steps to increase the force’s coercive capacity based on his experience from Nigeria:

> When I came here in 1951 only 50 men were riot trained, it was a section called the Escort Police, and the rest of the Force was not trained. Having been in Nigeria quite a long time I felt that was not a very safe thing, and I used riot training, which I found very satisfactory in Nigeria, here with slight amendments […] All men in this Force are trained in all branches of police work now.[96]

The Sierra Leone Police Magazine, like many similar publications elsewhere, featured stories on how to tackle riots with reference to the emergencies in Malaya and Palestine. This helped constitute an understanding of even placid colonies like Sierra Leone as potentially dangerous. The call for swift action in establishing Special Branches is revealing: The fact that there is no evidence of immediate threat to public order or security should not stand in the way of [creating intelligence machinery]”.[97]

Beyond the impulses from other colonies, two developments in Sierra Leone galvanized the strengthening of paramilitary policing, and the shift of state force from the military to the police. The first was the diamond industry, whose implications for territorial policy were described above. From 1956, physical attacks on the police by increasingly well organized miners were a frequent occurrence. In 1957, a special Kono Division was created in response to increasingly organized miners who frequently resorted to violent opposition and outright attacks on the police. The following year it was estimated that “approximately one-third of the effective strength of the Force” was

[95] *Colonial Political Intelligence Summaries, 1948*. National Archives, CO 537/2677
[96] *Testimony of Commissioner WG Syer to the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces*, CE M/2, National Archives, Freetown, date unknown.
[97] *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces.* July 1954. National Archives (UK), CO 885/124.

deployed in the same division.[98] This meant that a large share of SLP officers became well-versed in paramilitary tactics in the final years before independence.

The second was a protracted protest against rising taxes in 1955-56 which resulted in several clashes between the police and the public, including the killing of one British officer. The disturbances led to the appointment of the Cox Commission, whose mandate was to assess the colonial state's handling of the disturbances and recommend reforms on behalf of the British government. The 1955-56 disturbances, the SLP Commissioner attested in his statement,

> [w]ere, of course, a very severe test. The fact that the Police had never been in the Protectorate till the end of 1954 meant to say all the officers were comparatively green in the country in which they had to operate. Our greatest shortcoming was lack of communication – wireless […] The people who were giving us the trouble were quite the most tenacious and aggressive I have experienced in my service, and I have had experience of riots in Jamaica and Nigeria before coming here.[99]

The severity of the disturbances, which this testimony reveals was connected with the problem of the SLP's inadequate control of rural areas, was confirmed by the Cox Commission's finding that the state of affairs could be "better described as a civil war than as a disturbance".[100] While the Commission found the numerous allegations of excessive use of force to be caused by a "misconception in the minds of confused crowds not familiar with the police, their uniforms and their equipment", they did note several interesting aspects with regard to their coercive capacity. Noting that the force was "fully trained in all varieties of anti-riot duties in accordance with the most up-to-date and accepted modern police practice", it also argued that the use of "non-lethal

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[98] *Sierra Leone Colonial Report, 1957*. Freetown Public Library.

[99] *Testimony of Commissioner WG Syer to the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces,* CE M/2, National Archives, Freetown, date unknown.

[100] *Commission of Enquiry. Miscellaneous Background Material* CE M/2. National Archives, Freetown.

deterrents", such as tear smoke and baton charges, seemed to have been "frequently unsuited to operations in bush territory".[101] The implications of this point were not spelled out, but it indirectly supported an increase of the armed capacity of the police and their expansion to outlying areas.

The War Office took a much more critical view on how the police had handled the disturbances. The delay in calling upon the military, which to the Cox Commission showed the "determination of the Civil Power", was seen as proof that the police "failed and/or refused to recognise their own weakness".[102] The Commission, it was claimed, had "drawn a polite veil over the fact that the Intelligence, Police and Administration arrangements were in such a shocking state that civil order suddenly gave way and the troops had to take over".[103] This disagreement only supported a further increase of the SLP's coercive capacity.

The reliance on troops during the 1955-56 disturbances was interpreted by one scholar as a single exception to a more general trend throughout the 1950s in which the military's "participation [in political confrontation] became increasingly marginal and secondary as the police force developed more of a paramilitary capability".[104] The "greater prominence" accorded to the police in this period, he claimed, enabled a "more flexible response to political disorders than previously".[105] There is no doubt that the riots accelerated a relative priority given to the police over the military, while also giving police reform a marked orientation towards increasing the force's coercive

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[101] *Ibid.*
[102] *Disturbances in Sierra Leone. Report by General O. E. Herbert, 1955*. National Archives (UK), WO 216/881.
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] Thomas Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of African Soldiers in Politics* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1976), p. 30.
[105] *Ibid.*

capacity. Once representing one of the more promising candidates for the introduction of a 'British'-style police force, the riots were a reminder that order could not be taken for granted even in placid Sierra Leone.

Notions of security

Finally, it is useful to contrast the late colonial considerations about appropriate levels of coercive capacity with recent framings of the same issue. Whereas police reform became conceptualized as a means to improve state-society relations in the 1990s, the Cold War concern with subversion suggests that late colonial police reform took *regimes* rather than the state as the referent of security. Strategic considerations about the police's coercive capacity were made in terms of its utility in fending off the challenges communist infiltrators and nationalist 'extremists' posed to the government, not in terms of how it would affect the integrity of the state over time. In an important sense, statehood after independence was taken for granted. As Herbst points out, "it was immediately assumed that the new states would take on features that had previously characterized sovereignty, most notably unquestioned physical control over the territory".[106] This point is important because it indicates that the goal of starting the would-be states off with a civilian 'British'-style police force was not grounded in an understanding of statehood as a precarious condition that had to be carefully nurtured. Treating statehood instead as a logical extension of the colonial experience, the discourse on policing dealt with what model was appropriate to the conditions in the colonies, not with the ways in which the police could help bring about socio-economic relations favorable to stability. Put simply, a police force was seen as part and parcel of

[106] Jeffrey Herbst, 'Responding to state failure in Africa', International Security, **21**, 3 (1996), pp. 120-144; see also Clapham, *Africa and the International System*.

an independent state. This meant that the question of force seemed more a matter of style than as an issue that could undermine statehood. Statements to the effect that the "the lack of co-operation and hostility between police and public […] was a natural phase [with] a precedent in the early history of the police forces in the United Kingdom", and that the "development of mutual confidence between them would unavoidably be a gradual process",[107] indicate policing was not yet tied to a concept of security that associated statehood with a secure and productive population.

Conclusion

In 2000, British SLP reformers described the police force handed over at independence in 1961 as "well trained and adequately equipped".[108] At independence, the SLP had more than quadrupled in just over 20 years. This chapter has shown that reformers in this period attempted to extend the SLP's control over rural areas despite evident barriers to success. Initial moves in this direction were explained by the problems associated with diamond mining. The choice to nationalize policing in 1954, however, must be understood as an attempt to prepare Sierra Leone for independent statehood.

This policy failed. Poor roads, limited resources for rural policing, and a lingering separation between 'bush' and 'town', meant that the institution handed over at independence was not in any meaningful sense a *national* force capable of controlling outlying regions. More generally, the late colonial attempts to consolidate territorial control proved insufficient to achieve what Catherine Boone calls "empirical

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[107] *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces*. National Archives (UK), CO 885/124.
[108] *Speech to Be Delivered by the Inspector General of Police on Tuesday 28 March 2000 to the Commonwealth Institute.* Adrian Horn private document.

statehood”: a “quasibureaucratic organization exercising some measure of control over most of the territory within its formal boundaries”.[109]

In the area of force, an imperial policy recommending a move from paramilitary to a more civilian style of policing appeared in the late 1940s. Yet clashes with armed diamond miners, a protracted tax rebellion, and above all practices carried over from other colonies, meant that the generation filling the ranks of the SLP in the fifteen years before independence was better schooled in paramilitary tactics than in the role as a civilian constabulary. In this regard, Sierra Leone represented an imperial trend. In Nyasaland, for instance, there was an “astonishing expansion of the police force from 1953”, with country-wide riots leading the “the main emphasis [to be placed] on the hastily-created Police Mobile Force, a para-military organisation”.[110] This trend reflected how the operational environment derailed reforms from their planned course, a dynamic we will recognize in the analysis of recent reforms.

[109] Catherine Boone, ‘“Empirical Statehood” and Reconfigurations of Political Order’, in Leonardo Villalón and Philip Huxtable (eds), *The African State at a Critical Juncture: Between Disintegration and Reconfiguration* (Lynne Rienne Publishers, Boulder, CO, 1998), p. 130.
[110] McCracken, “Coercion and Control in Nyasaland”, p. 139f.

Chapter 3: Policing in the neopatrimonal state

According to Hills' comparative study of African policing, "the critical break in policing in Africa occurred during the shift from colonial to postcolonial politics".[1] The persistence of the SLP's weak territorial presence and paramilitary character after independence means that this description seems to fit Sierra Leone poorly. The purpose of this brief chapter is nevertheless to introduce four novel developments affecting the SLP in the postcolonial period, presenting reformers in the 1990s with distinct challenges. The first was the fragmentation of coercive capacity across different units with various allegiances to the state. The second was the strategic ethnicization of the state's security forces. The third was the abandonment of the colonial goal of using the SLP to control rural areas. The fourth was the diversification of foreign security assistance from Britain to states at opposite sides of the Cold War divide. In order to explain these developments – often glossed over because of a tendency to describe the postcolonial period as an inevitable slide towards the chaos of war – the chapter introduces the concept of neopatrimonialism. The significance of neopatrimonial rule will be picked up in the discussion about the future impact of SSR in the Epilogue.

[1] Hills, *Policing Africa*.

Beyond collapse and decay

There is a tendency in the literature on post-conflict reconstruction to treat collapse, disintegration or decay as the beginning. With a few scholarly exceptions,[2] contributions to what is now a substantial literature on conflict and reconstruction in Sierra Leone tend to reduce the postcolonial period to a "downward spiral" including "the banning of opposition parties, the introduction of a one-party state, widespread corruption, the collapse of state institutions and a brutal insurgency".[3] The final report of the Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) summarized the country's trajectory in the following way:

> [Y]ears of bad governance, endemic corruption and the denial of basic human rights [...] created the deplorable conditions that made conflict inevitable. Successive regimes became increasingly impervious to the wishes and needs of the majority. Instead of implementing positive and progressive policies, each regime perpetuated the ills and self-serving machinations left behind by its predecessor. By the start of the conflict, the nation had been stripped of its dignity. Institutional collapse reduced the vast majority of people into a state of deprivation. Government accountability was non-existent. Political expression and dissent had been crushed. Democracy and the rule of law were dead. By 1991, Sierra Leone was a deeply divided society and full of the potential for violence. It required only the slightest spark for this violence to be ignited.[4]

In its lengthy report the TRC actually traced many of these features back to colonial rule, but it is snippets like this one that stuck with most observers. "In terms of policy statements and rhetoric", argued a DFID evaluation in reference to the same passage, "this analysis was well understood by both the political elite of Sierra Leone and the

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[2] I. e. Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest;* David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (James Currey, Oxford, 2005); Krijn Peters, *War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011).

[3] Lansana Gberie, *Rescuing a Fragile State: Sierra Leone 2002-2008* (LCMSDS Press of Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, 2009), p. 8; Smillie, Gberie and Hazleton, 'The Heart of the Matter'.

[4] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 'Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission' (GPL Press, Accra, 2003), p. 10.

international community".[5] That an image of decay culminating in total collapse was widely shared, matters greatly to how problems and solutions were defined in the post-conflict period. As an analytical starting point, it is problematic. In order to understand the situation facing reformers in the 1990s, it is particularly important that we identify changes in country's spectrum of coercion in response to neopatrimonial rule.

Neopatrimonialism

In the years before independence, there was "little evidence to indicate a discrepancy of views between members of the SLPP and their colonial overlords on the subject of internal security".[6] Two observers argued that a colonial mentality continued to characterize the SLP after 1961:

> The police in Sierra Leone, like most of their African counterparts, are a product of colonial rule. Contrary to the myth that British colonial legacies of policing in Africa were faithful models of the British paradigm, the Sierra Leone police force, as a colonial institution, was designed to serve and promote British imperialistic interests, of which profit was a key feature. Nor was the advent of independence matched by a transition in Sierra Leone from colonial policing mentality to one guided by the principles and values of liberal democracy".[7]

Indeed, the heavy-handed tactics employed during the labour riots in the mid-1950s remained a point of reference during the SLPP reign from 1961-1967.[8] Securing further continuity, British expatriates remained in key positions in the police for several years; as late as 1967 the Deputy Commissioner of the SLP was English. This willingness to keep the British closely involved in national security was not shared by the All People's Congress (APC), formed by labour union leader Siaka Stevens in a breakaway from the SLPP. Whereas the SLPP was dominated by ethnic Mendes hailing from the south and

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[5] Derek Poate, Paul Balogun, Ines Rothmann, Mark Knight, Fatmata Sesay, 'Evaluation of DFID Country Programmes: Sierra Leone' (Evaluation Report EV690, DFID, London, September 2008), p. 4.
[6] Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone*, p. 33.
[7] Thompson and Potter, "Governmental Corruption in Africa", p. 148.
[8] Kilson, *Political Change in a West African State*.

east, the APC drew its base from young people, chiefly ethnic Temnes, in rural areas in the north. Soon the opposition party in a bi-party system, the APC vociferously opposed any post-independence defence agreement between Sierra Leone and Britain. It was during the Stevens reign from 1968-1985 that the neopatrimonial regime became firmly established.

Little reliable information exists about the SLP in the decades after independence. Whereas information about the SLP was meticulously logged in the colonial period, the state's paper trail shrunk dramatically in the 1960s.[9] This dearth of information is a direct effect of neopatrimonial rule where bureaucratic procedure became increasingly erratic. According to Paul Richards patrimonial rule involves

> [R]edistributing national resources as marks of *personal* favour to followers who respond with loyalty to the leader rather than to the institution the leader represents. Patrimonialism is a systematic scaling up, at the national level, of local ideas about patron-client linkages, shaped in (Sierra Leone) in the days of direct extraction of forest resources […] In patrimonial systems of government 'big persons' at the apex of political power compete to command some share of the 'national cake' which they then redistribute through their own networks of followers.[10]

Patrimonial rule is thus extractive and personalized; a legacy which is traced in Sierra Leone to informal accommodations between the colonial government and chiefs.[11] However, as Richards points out, patrimonial accounts are not primarily for personal enrichment, they are political resources essential to the workings of the state. The loyalty of the ruler's entourage "must be won ever anew by donations or promises of high reward".[12] What adds 'neo' to patrimonialism is that legal-rational bureaucratic

[9] This can clearly be seen in the decreasing size of the Annual Gazette volumes containing official legislation and reports, stored at the Government Printer in Freetown.
[10] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, p. 34f.
[11] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*.
[12] Bendix, *Max Weber*, p. 341f. For a criticism of Richards' view of patrimonialism in Sierra Leone, see Yusuf Bangura, "The Political and Cultural Dynamics of the Sierra Leone Civil War: A Critique of Paul

elements coexist with (patrimonial) personal, face-to-face power relations.[13] In neopatrimonial societies, Erdmann and Engel argue, political and administrative decisions are not exclusively taken according to informal rules determined by private or personal interests: "The distribution of jobs, administrative careers, as well as credits and licences, is also exercised according to fixed procedures".[14] In other words, tools of the state are used to uphold private networks: "the distinction between private and public interests is purposely blurred".[15] In a landmark study, William Reno analyzed how Sierra Leonean rulers used state capacities such as armed forces and access to foreign credit to infiltrate and extract resources from informal sectors. The result was a "shadow state" emerging alongside formal state institutions and outside territorial boundaries.[16]

For our purposes, two implications are particularly notable about this form of rule. Firstly, state involvement in informal markets is at odds with core goals of statebuilding: "bounded territory and uniform hegemony are liabilities. Likewise, truly marginal areas are safely ignored".[17] Secondly, the ruler faces challenges both from competing elites and from his own security forces. According to Hills, policing in Africa was deeply shaped by this form of politics:

> If the police do their job well, they could threaten their regime. They might launch their own coup or, if they were truly independent, they would investigate regime officials suspected of

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Richards", in Ibrahim Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War* (CODESRIA, Dakar, 2004).

[13] This mix would have been fully expected by Weber, who thought that all forms of actually existing domination would involve "combinations, mixtures, adaptations, or modifications" of pure types. Bendix, *Max Weber,* p. 329.

[14] Gerd Erdmann and Ulf Engel, "Neopatrimonialism Reconsidered: Critical Review and Elaboration of an Elusive Concept", *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, **45**, 1 (2007), pp. 95-119, p. 104.

[15] Michael Bratton and Nicholas van de Walle, "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa", *World Politics*, 46, **4** (1994), pp. 453-489.

[16] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*.

[17] William Reno, 'Reconfiguring West African States', in Villalón and Huxtable, *The African State at a Critical Juncture*.

violating the law. It is thus not in regime interests that the police should become efficient, effective, or provide citizen protection. In general regime concerns ensure that African police forces remain urban, underresourced, brutal, and stagnant.[18]

While Hills' description resonates with most accounts of the SLP during the postcolonial period, finer distinctions need to be made. The neopatrimonial characteristics identified above allow us to make sense of four key developments in the field of policing after independence.

Abandoning the goal of territorial rule

The first was the abandonment of the ambition to rely on the police for an extension of territorial rule. In Migdal's view, the SLPP, which were in government until 1968,

did not provide services, either rewards or sanctions, such as loans, marketing crops, and police forces, frequently associated with states. […] Appointments and manipulation [of indigenous institutions], not social control and mobilization, remain[ed] the outer limits of state capabilities".[19]

While Sierra Leone's postcolonial rulers faced the same barriers to territorial control as their colonial predecessors, they actively *weakened* the state's formal grip on rural areas. Nothing illustrates this better than Siaka Stevens' early decision to tear up the railway – the backbone of colonial territorial rule. The significance of this decision was illustrated by Mariane Ferme: "Just as the rise of the railroad helped shape the Sierra Leonean state in its twentieth century form, so too was its demise seen as symptomatic of the state's progressive weakening".[20] Rather than try to build strong bureaucratic institutions including a police force with anything like full territorial reach, Stevens ruled through informal accommodations with chiefs and businessmen coupled with a

[18] Hills, *Policing Africa*, p. 41
[19] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, p. 134f.
[20] Mariane Ferme, *The Underneath of Things: Violence, History, and the Everyday in Sierra Leone* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2001), p. 34.

capacity to "engage in exceptional intervention into segments of society from which challenges came".[21] Stevens actively sidelined "unreliable" local police detachments, preferring to send in loyal officers from Freetown when the stakes were high enough.[22] This may seem like a self-defeating strategy for a Prime Minister making lofty promises of national development. In fact, his decision was motivated by a wish sever the link between Freetown and his rivals' political bases in the south and east. The deliberate marginalization of rural areas has been described as a major explanation of why south-eastern areas later became the epicenter of war.[23]

Ethniticization of the SLP

The second development, well known from other African states in the same period, was the ethnicization and politicization of security forces.[24] This process must be understood as part of a "reordering of state-society relations along ethnoclientilist lines".[25] Stevens' amendment of the Constitution to make the Inspector General of Police (IGP) a permanent member of Parliament was the most striking example of politicization. Yet the recruitment of party stalwarts into the security forces started under SLPP Prime Minister Albert Margai, who during the election year of 1967 "never travelled outside of Freetown without an entourage of security police and armed troops".[26] When Stevens came to power in 1968, Albert Margai, who succeeded his half-brother Milton as Prime Minister for the SLPP in 1964, had caused outrage by doubling the rate of Mendes in the armed forces. He had also arrested several Krio and Temne army officers perceived

[21] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*, p. 185.
[22] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*.
[23] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*.
[24] To take one example, Malawi's long-time ruler Hastings Banda doubled the percentage of ethnic Chewas in the police between 1960 and 1970. McCracken, "Coercion and Control in Nyasaland".
[25] Jimmy Kandeh, "Politicization of Ethnic Identity in Sierra Leone", *African Studies Review*, **35**, 1 (1992), pp. 81-99.
[26] Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone*, p. 107.

as loyal to the APC.[27] According to Kandeh, "state formation under the SLPP was closely tied to the politicization of Mende identity".[28] Turning the tables, Stevens quickly purged nearly all Mende officers from the army and replaced them mainly with Temnes and Limbas hailing from the APC heartland in the north. This ethnic composition prevailed at the outbreak of war in 1991.[29] Though numbers are more uncertain for the police, there is no doubt they went through a similar process. Especially well known was the dominance of Limbas, another predominantly northern ethnic group supportive of Stevens, in the armed wing. This dominance increased after Stevens' handpicked successor Joseph Momoh became President in 1985.[30]

Breaking up the element of force

In this climate, a third distinct tendency appeared: the deliberate fragmentation of policing authority across various groups of uncertain sizes and functions. In Stevens' early reign, there was evidence of an "APC guerilla" trained in Guinea in 1968; the formation in 1971 of a "National Congress of Sierra Leone Volunteer Force" made up of the women's wing of the APC; and of a student militia to control the hotbed of opposition at Fourah Bay College.[31] The formation of the heavily armed Internal Security Unit (ISU) in 1971-72, infamous as "I Shoot U", came after army officers had twice attempted to assassinate Stevens in March 1971. The ISU has been variously described as an "APC militia",[32] **"**a paramilitary police force […] more heavily

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[27] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 'Witness to Truth'.
[28] Kandeh, "Politicization of Ethnic Identity in Sierra Leone", p. 97.
[29] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone.*
[30] Alfred Zack-Williams, "Sierra Leone: The Political Economy of Civil War, 1991-1998", *Third World Quarterly*, **20**, 1 (1999), pp. 143-162.
[31] Alpha Lavalie, 'Government and Opposition in Sierra Leone, 1968–1978' (Proceedings of the Fourth Birmingham Sierra Leone Studies Symposium, 13-15 July 1985, Fircroft College, Birmingham, 1985); Abraham and Turay, *The Sierra Leone Army*.
[32] Abraham and Turay, *The Sierra Leone Army*.

equipped than the national army”,[33] and a “force within a force” feared “even by police commissioners”.[34] An opposition leader’s testimony in Parliament in 1972 gave a vivid image of the uncertainty surrounding the organization of the state’s coercive capacity in the country a decade after independence:

> It appears to me that there is a constant conflict between the various security forces in this country. It seems to me that so many forces to maintain law and order, have been created […] The various divisions now tend to create quite a lot of confusion involving even members of the police force. You see it begins to let confidence dwindle in the minds of the police force themselves […] [I]n the present circumstance one is left with the view that there is a conflict of interest between various security forces which fall under the police in this country […] We know that there exists in certain parts of the country today, private and personal armies who tend to carry out functions pertaining to the police […] We hear of militia in various parts of the country. What is their job? Who accounts for them? Who pays them?[35]

The shifting around of the coercive capacity between various units from the late 1960s was a response to a situation where a major threat to the ruler came from the security forces *themselves*. As we have seen, this phenomenon is known as “sultanism” and “praetorianism” and should not be reduced to simple ‘decay’.[36] Giustozzi mentions the creation of parallel security forces as a “coup-proofing technique” which allows the ruler to combine a degree of loyalty and effectiveness.[37] Reno argues that the widespread tendency in Africa to undermine military command structures and create counter-forces is a rational strategy: “security for the ruler [...] has come to embody the opposite of the monopolization of coercion that Weber identifies as a cardinal feature of state-building”.[38]

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[33] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, ‘Witness to Truth’.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] M.O Bash-Taqi. *Fifth Session of the First Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone, 15.7.1972*. Parliamentary Debates, Volume VIII, Number 35. Freetown Public Library.
[36] Weber, *Economy and Society*; Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*.
[37] Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion*,
[38] Reno, ‘The Changing Nature of Warfare', p. 325.

In terms of policing, a gap opened between the paramilitary ISU and the rank and file, whose training was progressively neglected, "greatly affect[ing] the cohesiveness of the force".[39] The regime-serving function of the police familiar from colonial rule was therefore supplemented by a praetorian dimension. This made unraveling the same police force the colonial state had taken pains to unify a seemingly rational strategy.

New security patrons

The fourth and final development was the reorientation in foreign security assistance from Britain towards countries like Guinea, Cuba, Israel and Egypt.[40] This shift was enabled by Cold War security competition. Asked why five high ranking Israeli army officers were sent to train the Sierra Leonean army officer corps in 1966, the Israeli ambassador to Sierra Leone explained that "the Arab states, in particular Egypt, were ready and most willing to step in, and that this would have been against the interests of Israel".[41] The significance of the foreign competition can be seen in how the ISU originated and developed. In fact, the unit eventually emerged out of two distinct forces known as ISU1 and ISU2, which were trained and equipped by states at polar opposites of the Cold War divide. Two original members of the ISU2, both who went on to become commanders, described the ISU1 as a group that was trained by Israeli expats at the Police Training School at Hastings just outside Freetown. There is also evidence that

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[39] SLP Inspector General Brima Acha Kamara, quoted in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 'Witness to Truth'.

[40] Richards claims that Colonel Muammar Gadaffi's Green Book was popular among student intellectuals in the 1970s. The RUF later enjoyed Gadaffi's patronage. Richards, "To Fight or to Farm?". According to M.S. Dumbuya who became commander of the SSD in 1984, some officers were sent to Cairo for training in the 1980s. Dumbuya, personal interview, Freetown 4.6.2010.

[41] Abel Jacob, "Israel's Military Aid to Africa, 1960-66", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **9**, 2 (1971), pp. 165-187, p. 13.

"British military experts" were involved in training this group.[42] The ISU2, on the other hand, were made up of two successive bulks of recruits who were sent to do two years of "infantry and artillery training"[43] in Cuba between August 1972 and January 1974. In comparison with the ISU1, this unit was described as more heavily armed and better trained: "We had all these sophisticated weapons – they could not be compared to us".[44]

In sum, the Cold War therefore had important consequences for the arming and operation of the state's security forces. It was the mutual defence pact Stevens signed with Guinea in 1971 which provided the opportunity to establish the Cuban connection. Furthermore, training security forces in different locations suited Stevens' fragmentation strategy. As a prominent ISU2 officer put it, Stevens did not want to "put all the eggs in one basket".[45] However, as the ISU2 returned from Cuba in early 1974, rivalry seemed imminent:

> During this time Police was faced with two very highly trained and fully armed security units. One was a western oriented fighting force with western weapons ISU(1) and the other ISU(2) was an eastern bloc-oriented fighting force with eastern weapons.[46]

This inaugurated a period of mutual suspicion between different players in Sierra Leone's opaque field of coercion. One observer found that the ISU and the army "clashed openly" on more than one occasion, and that there was even talk of disbanding the army.[47] Eventually, the ISU1 and the ISU2 became locked in a "superiority conflict".[48] In this climate, the two ISU units were joined under a single command and

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[42] I.J. Vandy: *History of the Special Security Division*. Adrian Horn private document; M.S. Dumbuya, personal interview, Freetown 4.6.2010.
[43] David Sesay, personal interview, Bo 21.4.2010
[44] Thomas Kamara, personal interview, Freetown 29.4.2010
[45] Dumbuya, personal interview, Freetown 4.6.2010
[46] IJ Vandy: *History of the Special Security Division*. Adrian Horn private document.
[47] Lavalie, 'Government and Opposition in Sierra Leone'.
[48] Thomas Kamara, personal interview, Freetown 29.4.2010

renamed as the Special Security Division (SSD) in 1979.[49] This unit was nicknamed Siaka Stevens' Dogs.

Conclusion

The four developments described in this chapter – the territorial weakening of the SLP; the ethnicization of security forces; the deliberate fragmentation of coercive capacity; and the diversification of foreign influence in the security sector – formed the backdrop as war started in 1991. The next chapter will discuss how these factors, initially hidden behind the image of an annihilated institution, influenced reform strategies throughout the second period. In particular, the fragmentation of the SLP to support neopatrimonial rule meant that reformers faced the unprecedented challenge of what to do with a 'force within a force'. They were also dealing with an institution whose senior officer corps had received their formative training in Cuba and other countries with very different policing cultures than the British. This was perceived as problematic. In the midst of war, however, the paramilitary tradition was also a factor which could be capitalized on to deal with challenges similar to those who faced by late colonial reformers.

[49] Thomas Kamara, however, remembers this as happening in July 1980. Personal interview, Freetown 29.4.2010

Chapter 4: Post-conflict police reform

[T]he blessing of Sierra Leone is that it is a small enough country to put a ring around it and to deal with it as *a* country.[1]

I'm sure people in the police and the military will say, and rightly so, that part of the training package is instilling in them what the correct role of the police and the military are. But equally, the more proficient you make the police force or the military force, presumably it will mean that any action they take, they will do it more efficiently. If it is indeed taking over the government, they would do it very efficiently.[2]

Introduction

In Chapter 2, we saw that the emergence of an imperial policing policy in the late 1940s influenced reforms in the areas of force and territoriality, creating tensions between the visions of the Colonial Office and of reformers on the ground. This tension was particularly evident with regards to the question of where the police needed to be and why. This chapter analyzes SLP reform from 1998 to 2005, focusing again on the areas of territoriality and force. It argues that the association of policing with wider agendas of development, social mobility and global security created even starker tensions and contradictions than in the late colonial era. In the recent period, however, the disagreement did not concern territorial deployment, but what kind of coercive capacity the SLP were to be invested with in the service of development and democratization.

As the British reformers arrived in Sierra Leone in 1998, they developed a Local Needs Policing (LNP) model which contained a strong commitment to extend the police

[1] Adrian Horn, personal interview, Oxford 8.10.2010.
[2] Former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, personal interview, Oxford 19.10. 2010.

service everywhere in the country. This chapter asks what drove this confident policy despite barriers to success at least as severe as those facing reformers in the late colonial period. This question is important not just because it concerned the crucial operational issue of ends and means, and ultimately the long-term effects of reform, but also because the territorial deployment of the police is an important element of social order. As argued in the Introduction, any major reform of the police is simultaneously an attempt to position the state differently in relation to society. Where the SLP were deployed, and for what purposes, is therefore evidence of what kind of state reformers envisioned and how the police were supposed to help bring it about.

An unprecedented set of arguments for why the police must be present everywhere in the territory had appeared since the colonial period. Most important of these was the framing of state failure in terms of 'ungoverned areas'.[3] The aspect of failure in Sierra Leone considered most relevant for policing was the massive internal displacement caused by the war. This allowed insurgents to perpetuate threats to the government, and thereby to the international reconstruction effort as a whole. In this climate it was considered essential that the SLP were able to establish themselves in rural areas to encourage refugees to return. Yet precisely what form of social order the localized policing model would help reconstruct was not specified. This indicates a tension in the thinking about the role of the police in post-conflict situations: as agents on transformation, but also as apolitical enforcers of a normative order.

[3] Rotberg, 'The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States'.

In the area of force, the question of the armed SSD's place in the post-war order created a more explicit tension. It pitted DFID, which operated under legal constraints on the supply of weapons and munitions, against its own consultants in a struggle about the type and level of coercive capacity that ought to be made available to the police. In a striking turnaround of initial working assumptions about an unarmed SLP, the SSD was renamed the Operational Support Division (OSD) and supplied with more than £1m worth of weapons and munitions. Indeed, from making up about a fifth of the force[4] at the time the British started their work with the police in the late 1990s, the British left an OSD making up about a third of the force in 2005.[5] Drawing on examples from police reform in other post-conflict states, the second half of the chapter analyzes what caused this turnaround. Two connected factors are emphasized. The first is an ambiguity in the SSR doctrine, and in the security-development discourse generally, about what type and level of coercive capacity is conducive to development. In the absence of clear guidelines, the operational environment in which SSR took place ended up providing a powerful determinant of the type and level of force that the SLP were invested with. Since SSR – like late colonial statebuilding – took place in a period of instability and violence, the pendulum swung heavily towards more coercion. This raises questions about longer-term impacts on democratization and development in Sierra Leone that will be discussed further in the Epilogue.

The chapter begins with a brief account of the highly complex 1991-2002 conflict that brought the UK back to Sierra Leone. A mere summary of its many twists and turns

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[4] According to a Sierra Leone government report, the SSD consisted of 1,844 officers in 1996. *Report of the Dr. Banya Committee on The Republic of Sierra Leone Police Force. August, 1996*. Adrian Horn private document.

[5] *The Situation in Sierra Leone, A Security and Operational Perspective: A "Mismatch" of Policies and Reality, 8.8.2004*. Ray England private document.

could fill a short book, and the purpose here is to provide the reader with a selective introduction necessary to follow the analysis of reform below.[6] Next, it discusses the LNP model light of the doctrines of SSR and community policing and identifies what it suggested about reform of the SLP's coercive capacity and territorial deployment. Returning to the Sierra Leonean context, the chapter goes on to examine how the dynamic of conflict intervened to upset the establishment of rural policing promised by the LNP model. Two factors were particularly important in this regard. The first was the January 1999 rebel attack on Freetown which left thousands dead, including some 250 police officers. The second was the massive internal displacement caused by the war in rural areas. The final part of the chapter analyzes the controversy around the SSD/OSD. A rebranding of this unit from a symbol of political repression to a guardian of public safety was enabled by two factors. The first was their role in fighting back the rebel attack on Freetown in January 1999. The second was the importance donors accorded to conflict prevention.

The 1991-2002 war

Sierra Leone's war is estimated to have claimed up to 70,000 civilian victims.[7] It started in March 1991 as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a militia formally led by Foday Sankoh, charged in from Liberia to take control of significant swathes of territory to the south and east. The RUF, initially a "small but coherent movement" supported by Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia, soon established youth military training camps in areas under its control.[8] Relying partly on capture and indoctrination,

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[6] For a highly useful overview of British post-conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone see Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*.
[7] Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation'.
[8] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*.

recruitment was facilitated by a rural "socio-economic and political crisis of young people" over which an exploitative elite of elders was losing its grip.[9] If the initially limited insurgency mounted by the RUF appeared manageable for an army of 3,500, its real numbers were far lower and its operational ability had significantly declined since independence. Soon the RUF controlled the diamond fields in Kono, an asset it would be able to exploit both to secure connections with foreign investors and eventually to gain representation in government.[10]

A facilitating condition for the RUF's advance was a government severely weakened since the 1970s both by falling export revenues, and by structural adjustment programmes imposed by the International Monetary Fund. This had clearly diminished "the state's ability to secure the loyalty of peripheral populations and regions, and even of its own officials".[11] In this climate, junior army officers led by 25-year old Valentine Strasser organized a successful coup in April 1991 and formed a National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), which remained in government for five years. In 1994, the NPRC government was confronted with a country-wide RUF campaign causing widespread displacement. In January 1995, the RUF had almost reached Freetown. To stem the RUF's advance, the NPRC looked abroad for allies, recruiting first Gurkha mercenaries and later (with the help of a large diamond concession) the South African security firm Executive Outcomes.[12] Aided by Executive Outcomes, the government made sufficient gains to oversee a general election in 1996 which brought Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP to power.

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[9] Peters, *War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone*.
[10] William Reno, "The Politics of Insurgency in Failing States", *Development and Change*, **33**, 4 (2002), pp. 837-858.
[11] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*; Zack-Williams, "Sierra Leone: The Political Economy of Civil War".
[12] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*.

Kabbah soon found himself unable to repair a rift that had opened between his ethnically mixed army and the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), a Mende-dominated militia increasingly central to the government's campaign against the RUF. The CDF sprung out from a hunting society of Mendes known as *kamajors* or *kamajoisi* and has been described as a "militarization of a social network" rather than a hierarchical militia.[13] It proved a crucial ally for Kabbah's government, a position that was officially recognized by the naming of CDF leader Sam Hinga Norman as Kabbah's Deputy Minister of Defence. Distrusting the CDF, a group of army officers mainly hailing from the north and west staged another coup in May 1997 and formed the Armed Force Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Kabbah's government, although remaining internationally recognized, was forced into exile in the Guinean capital of Conakry and the AFRC invited the RUF to become part of government.

At this point, the spectrum of coercion in the country was characterized by dense entanglements between state, quasi-state, commercial and native forces. There was considerable uncertainty about the loyalty of many of them. Particularly infamous were the stories about 'sobels' – government soldiers carrying out rebel attacks, and rebels posing as government soldiers.[14] From his exile, Kabbah engaged the London-based Sandline International, another private military company, to supply weapons and train the CDF. The links between these foreign military outfits and the diamond industry earned the country the status as the prime example of modern-day privatized war.[15]

[13] Danny Hoffmann, "The Meaning of a Militia: Understanding the Civil Defence Forces of Sierra Leone", *African Affairs*, **105**, 425 (2007), pp. 639-662.
[14] See Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*.
[15] I. e. Peter Singer, "Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry and its Ramifications for International Security", *International Security*, **26**, 3 (2001), pp. 186-220.

Others interpreted their activities as “the ‘new face’ of neocolonialism” in the country.[16] As we will see in the next chapter, however, the role of companies providing everyday protection for banks and businesses proved to be a more lasting feature.

Despite the role of commercial outfits, it took a regional player to oust the AFRC/RUF into exile in the countryside in the spring of 1998. This was the Nigerian-led forces deployed in a West African Ceasefire and Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). As Kabbah returned to Freetown in March, his government relied for its security on a precarious alliance of ECOMOG, the CDF, makeshift urban militias, and loyal parts of the army. This was the context as British reformers arrived in Sierra Leone and started their work with the SLP. The next section describes the policing model they developed, and the implications it had for reforms of the institutions territorial deployment and armed capacity.

Local Needs Policing and its implications

“On its knees”, “spent” or even “non-existent” are typical terms used to describe the state of the SLP as the first members of the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force (CPDTF) arrived in Sierra Leone in the summer of 1998.[17] During the war, the force shrunk from 9,317 to 6,600, with some 900 officers killed and a considerable number suffering amputation (see Table 1).[18] Basic equipment such as uniforms and boots were not supplied for years, and was supposed to be purchased by officers who

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[16] David Francis, “Mercenary Intervention in Sierra Leone: Providing National Security or International Exploitation?”, *Third World Quarterly*, **20**, 2 (1999), pp. 319-338, p. 319.
[17] Kadi Fakondo, ‘Reforming and Building Capacity of the Sierra Leone Police, 1997-2007’. (Paper no. 8, Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007’, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, 2008); Meek, ‘Policing Sierra Leone’; Adrian Horn, Funmi Olonisakin and Gordon Peake, “United Kingdom-led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone”, *Civil Wars*, **8**, 2 (2006), pp. 109-123.
[18] Bruce Baker, “The African Post-Conflict Agenda in Sierra Leone”, *Conflict, Security & Development*, **6**, 1 (2006), pp. 25-49.

routinely went unpaid and had even been deprived of their rice rations.[19] Vehicles and radios were stolen, missing or broken. Police stations were often without pen or paper and records were destroyed. Training virtually stopped and the leadership had fled. A survey done by the CPDTF in 1998 showed that 100 per cent of respondents thought the SLP were corrupt and 83,3 per cent viewed them as generally 'bad'.[20] In this setting, the reform team was given extensive freedom by the Sierra Leonean executive to rebuild the SLP. Following Kabbah's express wishes for a foreign candidate, Keith Biddle was sworn in as Inspector General of the SLP in 1999. Shortly after the CPDTF transformed into the Community Safety and Security Project (CSSP) in 2000, an unprecedented amount of funding was poured into the SLP via the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (see discussion on p. 124).[21] Through Biddle and his team, the United Kingdom retained operational control of the SLP until Biddle stepped down in 2003. However, the fact that main funder DFID did not establish a country office in Sierra Leone until 2005 indicates that the reformers were granted a large amount of freedom by the British government as well.

The reform team's first move was to draw up ambitious plans for a community policing model. The slogan, which was considered an "important marketing tool", was "Local Needs Policing". The preoccupation with the name reflected a desire to stand out among the growing number of assistance missions that traveled under the name of community policing.[22] Thus, the team reasoned that the name LNP "focuse[d] minds on what [was]

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[19] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone.*
[20] Quoted in Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation'.
[21] Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*, p. 54.
[22] In the 1980s and 1990s, the United Kingdom alone ran police assistance missions in Indonesia, Namibia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nepal, St. Kitts and Nevis, Lesotho, and South Africa. See Raleigh, Biddle, Male and Neema, 'Uganda Police Project Evaluation'

required for Sierra Leone, rather than what has been experienced in other countries".[23] The principles of the model, however, did not break notably with the focus of community policing "on state police and neighbourhood working together in partnership, in order to address the local concerns of all citizens".[24] The cornerstone of LNP was the Local Command Unit (LUC): "A body of people, effectively and efficiently managed, accountable and with devolved authority, designed to deliver the policing needs of the local community".[25] To each LUC, a Local Policing Partnership Board (LPPB) would be attached. Chaired by significant members of the community, the LPPBs were supposed to provide information and channel views to the SLP about what kind of policing the local community wished for.

The first implication of the LNP model was therefore the creation of a decentralized force with relevance to people's lives everywhere in Sierra Leone. In 1996, a commission appointed by the Sierra Leone government presented a report concluding that the complete loss of governmental authority in rural areas during the war created an "urgent need to set up a Force in which the Police are seen as members of the community in uniform".[26] This view was wholly shared by the British reformers. They were quick to emphasize the police's weakness outside Freetown: "[T]here is little or no communication between police headquarters and the vast regions outside of the capital city". To remedy this weakness, they proposed to "totally revise operational police

[23] *Local Needs Policing. Concept Note, August 1998.* Adrian Horn private document.
[24] Baker, "Community Policing in Freetown", p. 24.
[25] Adrian Horn, *From Crisis to Confidence – Re-establishing the Sierra Leone Police: The Development of a Local Policing Model*. Information Paper, Police Council Meeting, 12 November 1998. Adrian Horn private document.
[26] *Report of the Dr. Banya Committee, Freetown, August, 1996.* Adrian Horn private document

management and to devolve as much power, decision making authority and operational independence as possible to the point of police service delivery".[27]

Besides reflecting the dominant doctrine of community policing, the goal of building a localized police made sense in light of two more general policy trends. The first was the widely shared donor view that the country's centralized system of government had been a major cause of the war. Decentralization received "strong emphasis" in post-war reconstruction efforts undertaken in the country by DFID, UNDP and the World Bank.[28] This mirrored the consensus that emerged in the development community throughout the 1990s that "control over rural political institutions should be decentralised to enhance local political participation".[29] The second trend lending support to the localized policing model was the emerging discourse on state failure. As was argued in the Introduction, the state's lack of territorial control over rural areas was identified by scholars and policymakers as one of the one of the key characteristics of failure.[30] "Police forces", Gordon Peake noted, "tend to be among the most visible symbols of the transition from conflict to peace, and are therefore almost always burdened with high expectations".[31]

The second implication of the LNP model seemed to be that the SLP's coercive capacity would be scaled down. This followed from the first promise of the widely publicized 1998 Policing Charter, which was to "remove the need for the deployment of military

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[27] *Commonwealth Police Development Task Force Sierra Leone. Interim Report, September 1998*. Adrian Horn private document.
[28] Paul Jackson, "Reshuffling an Old Deck of Cards? The Politics of Local Government Reform in Sierra Leone", *African Affairs* **106**, 422 (2005), pp. 95-111.
[29] Boone, "State Building in the African Countryside".
[30] DFID, 'Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states'; Rotberg, 'The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States'.
[31] Peake, 'Policing the Peace'.

and para-military forces in our villages, communities and city streets".[32] In a context where the boundaries between police and military power had broken down, it was considered essential to instill in the SLP a sense of civilian duties. Pride of place was given to ensuring behavioural change "of all police officers together with a critical shift in the management culture of the organization".[33] "Merely supplying materiel" would not work, it was claimed, what was needed was a "managerial approach to resourcing and operating a police service in a modern democracy".[34]

The plans to "decentralise control to the lowest possible level" so the organization's leadership could focus on "the imperative tasks of ensuring that the police service is properly resourced, trained and marketed to the people"[35] indicates how a developmental rationality had made inroads into strategies of police reform. An academic volume published in 2000 emphasized how police forces could produce a "socio-psychological effect – a 'sense of security' among the general public" wherein "much of the linkage between security and development" was said to lie.[36] In fact, reformers saw police reform *itself* as a development project. For instance, ensuring a steady supply of drugs and basic equipment to the police hospital was presented as an initiative intended to help "police officers and their families out of the poverty trap".[37] To this end, policing was conceptualized as a service that should be marketed to the population. These were not just words; reformers took marketing seriously indeed. Notes from an early meeting with President Kabbah revealed extensive discussion on

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[32] *The Sierra Leone Policing Charter*, quoted in Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation'.
[33] *Commonwealth Police Development Task Force Sierra Leone. 'Interim Report', September 1998*. Adrian Horn private document.
[34] *Ibid*.
[35] *Ibid*.
[36] Espen Barth Eide and Tor Tanke Holm (eds), *Peacebuilding and Police Reform* (Frank Cass, London, 2000), pp. 2f.
[37] *Commonwealth Police Development Task Force Sierra Leone. 'Interim Report', September 1998*. Adrian Horn private document.

the media strategy.[38] Today, the ubiquitous road signs advertising the new SLP as "A Force for Good" are the most immediately visible results of reform.

Strikingly, discussions of the SSD did not figure in the reform team's early reports at all. Rather, the twin concerns with management and community policing seemed to be based on an implicit assumption that, through behavioral change, the police would be reformed from a repressive arm of the state into a civilian service. This initial evasiveness when it came to the question of armament reflected a deeper ambiguity of the SSR doctrine emerging at the time. The observation that "numerous guidelines and policies on [SSR] aim primarily at reforming a security apparatus that is too strong, too effective"[39] indicated that international donors saw too much force as the problem. On the other hand, Jackson and Rosberg's seminal article on empirical statehood inspired a flood of analysis attributing the weakness of African states to their failure to control the means of force within their territories; indicating that too little force was the problem.[40] SSR circumvented this tension by highlighting the importance of democratic control over armed forces. As DFID noted, "security forces may usurp power […] an effective security sector therefore requires well-managed and competent personnel operating within an effective institutional framework, defined by law".[41] However, how much, and what kind, of force should be made available to them were questions to which the security-development logic gave few clues – especially because of the tendency to conceive of SSR as a fair weather project implemented *post*-conflict. Those who looked to the international policing community for guidance were also disappointed: "there is

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[38] *Note of Meeting with His Excellency, The President of Sierra Leone, 11.8.1998*. Adrian Horn private document

[39] Stepputat, Andersen and Møller, 'Introduction: Security Arrangements in Fragile States'.

[40] Jackson and Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist".

[41] Global Conflict Prevention Pool, 'Security Sector Reform Strategy' (DFID, FCO, MoD, London, 2004-2005), pp. 4.

no consensus on the levels of force required for effective policing, and each country assumes that its own practices are appropriate".[42]

In sum, the LNP model contained a clear promise to extend policing to all of Sierra Leone. This reflected the dominance of the community policing, but it also corresponded to the view that decentralization was conducive to development. On the question of force, the LNP model suggested a scaling back of the SLP's coercive capacity. Like the discourse of SSR, however, it contained few clear answers on what kind of armament was appropriate. The chapter now examines how these strategies were implemented and revised in the later stages of the war. Starting with efforts in the field of territorial deployment, we will see that the operational environment exercised a powerful influence on which choices were made and on what kind of institution that emerged as reform died down at the end of 2004.

Adjusting to the rhythm of conflict

As the account of colonial policing in Chapter 2 suggested, the promise of an SLP present in local communities did not mean restoring the SLP to some watermark but rather creating such an institution for the first time. The promise was made in a very challenging context. Beyond the "totally decimated"[43] state of the SLP and the destruction of virtually all rural police stations, the success of this policy depended overcoming a second obstacle. This was the risk that a financially strapped Sierra Leonean government would not be able to cover the long-term cost required to maintain a police force covering the whole country. In fact, the British reform team calculated

[42] Alice Hills, "The Possibility of Transnational Policing", *Policing and Society*, **19**, 3 (2009), pp. 300-317, p. 301.
[43] *Assessment of the Sierra Leone Police, April 1999.* Adrian Horn private document.

that the spending on goods and services (excluding salaries) would have to increase by 14 times from 1998 to 1999. The Sierra Leone government, it noted, "are aware of the problem but have no money that will improve the situation".[44]

This mismatch between local finance and external plans was well known from earlier British-led police reforms. An evaluation of 8 years of British assistance to the Uganda Police Force (of which Keith Biddle was a co-author) found that "lack of local finance to maintain and improve the police workshops, and to procure spare parts, tools and materials have proved seriously damaging to operational effectiveness". The evaluation questioned whether vehicles should have been supplied on the scale they were and concluded that the UK Overseas Development Administration had "consistently over-estimated the Ugandan capacity to meet the project's local cost, interpreting the condition of long-term chronic underfunding as one of short-term cash flow".[45]

Adding a further challenge, the success of the LNP model depended on a rapid improvement of the security situation. Since the government's control was limited to Freetown when the LNP model was worked out in 1998, there was little scope for realizing the plan of rural deployment. As it turned out, the hope for peace proved unjustified. Instead of peaceful deployment to rural areas, the remnants of the SLP were soon mired in an attempt to fight off a rebel attack on Freetown in January 1999 leaving more than 5,000 dead and causing widespread destruction. With an estimated 250 officers killed, this fresh attack devastated the SLP even further.[46] It also meant that the reform team was forced to leave Freetown and cease all activities until they were able to return in the fall of the same year. When they returned, it was in the company of a

[44] CPDTF Report, November 1998 (untitled). Adrian Horn private document.
[45] Raleigh, Biddle, Male and Neema, 'Uganda Police Project Evaluation', p. 3.
[46] *Assessment of the Sierra Leone Police, April 1999*. Adrian Horn private document.

massive UN intervention which changed the spectrum of coercion once again. The mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)[47] was to relieve ECOMOG of responsibility for internal security. Deploying in October 1999 and remaining to the end of 2005, UNAMSIL counted over 18,000 peacekeepers at its peak, including a team of 87 UN CIVPOL police trainers.[48]

Despite the massive presence of foreign security forces, yet another dramatic setback occurred in May 2000 when RUF fighters captured around 500 UNAMSIL troops and marched against Freetown once again. This prompted the deployment of 800 British paratroopers to evacuate British citizens in the largest deployment since the Falklands War in 1983.[49] The paratroopers' quick assumption of "a wider role in restoring basic security in Freetown and the surrounding area"[50] shows that the SLP were not even in control of the capital. Though the RUF fighters never reached Freetown and the UNAMSIL peacekeepers were eventually set free, the West Side Boys, a Freetown militia, succeeded in capturing 11 British soldiers in August 2000. This exposed just how precarious the security situation remained despite a large international presence.

These events show that the integrity of the state, and the police with it, was under threat during a major part of the reform period. The most severe threat was posed by a rebel movement that mobilized and moved through the very communities from which the

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[47] UNAMSIL followed the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), which deployed in June 1998 and comprised 40 military advisers.
[48] http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unamsil/facts.html (accessed 13.12.2011). According to Meek there were as many as 170 UN CIVPOL advisers from 17 different countries at the peak of deployment. Meek, 'Policing Sierra Leone'. The advisers were involved in a broad range of reform efforts including training, introduction of new management procedures, and investigation and case procedures. However, the UN CIVPOL contingent played a subordinate role in SLP reform. Baker claims that many of them "lacked adequate experience or expertise", and their relationship with the British Commonwealth was described as "somewhat unclear" (Baker, "The African Post-Conflict Agenda in Sierra Leone"; Meek, 'Policing Sierra Leone'). The role of UN CIVPOL will in this study only be referred to when relevant for the activities of the Commonwealth team.
[49] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*.
[50] Horn, Olonisakin and Peake, "United Kingdom-led Security Sector Reform'.

reformed police were supposed to draw their strength. The situation in the capital – which sheltered not only the institutional remains of the state, and therefore the prize for coup plotters, but also the expatriates who had arrived to reconstruct the state – forced reformers to redefine their territorial ambitions. In response to the dynamics of the conflict, reformers found that the task had changed from implementing LNP to securing Freetown. As the war resumed in key areas such as Makeni in the north and Kono in the east, barring them off to everyone but combat units, early and momentous efforts inevitably concentrated on the capital. This was justified both in terms of expediency and as a move that would later benefit the provinces:

> Focussing operational effort on Freetown will mean that the largest concentration of people in Sierra Leone will have the benefit of improved and professional policing. As the security situation in the rest of the country improves the systems developed can be exported to other areas.[51]

In a sense, it was not just the demands of the conflict itself that forced reformers to focus on shoring up control over Freetown. The weak territorial expansion inherited from the colonial state in combination with steadily decaying communications and logistics meant that there were no other strongholds from which to expand police presence into rural areas. The police were known to be in these areas, but no one knew in what numbers and shape. For instance, a Sierra Leone government committee appointed in 1996 to review the SLP was unable to travel outside the Western province. It could only express its conviction that "conditions would be the same or even worse in the provinces".[52] This shows that the LNP approach had to be based on guesswork with regards to the rural basis it would build on, though everything suggested it would be extremely weak. The confident formulation of a national policing strategy promising

[51] *Assessment of the Sierra Leone Police, April 1999*. Adrian Horn private document.
[52] *Report of the Dr. Banya Committee, Freetown, August, 1996*. Adrian Horn private document.

improvement for Sierra Leone's local communities in spite of this weakness shows that community policing had attained the status of a default policy. However, it is also evidence of an even more basic tendency; the virtual impossibility of conceiving of a police force as anything else than national – as responsible for law and order everywhere within the state's territory. When conflict prevented action in rural areas, reformers fell back on the assumption that systems developed in Freetown could simply be "exported" to other areas. This seemed to violate the community policing imperative of tailoring specific policing styles to the needs of local communities.

In the spring of 2001, UN forces were able to deploy peacefully in rebel-held territory. Yet it was only after the war was declared over in January 2002, three and a half years after reforms began, that it was possible to make any headway in expanding the police to outlying areas. Keith Biddle recalled this as a moment which significantly changed the direction of the reform:

> The context changed dramatically right about 2002. From then on we were able to access Makeni, Kabala, Koidu, Kailahun etc. [...] The context changed from maintaining law and order in Freetown to having to do it throughout the country. That, in itself, presented a whole lot of new challenges in terms of communications, mobility and so forth.[53]

In Albrecht and Jackson's view, the efforts to establish police operations outside Freetown now moved from a "theoretical, strategic approach to a more practical one".[54] Similarly, a DFID advisor mentioned the establishment of police physical presence in the four districts of the country around 2002 as a watershed in the reform.[55] At this point, a major investment was made in expanding policing beyond Freetown. The most tangible result was the massive investment in the SLP's vehicle fleet and

[53] Quoted in Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation', p. 86.
[54] '*Ibid*.
[55] Mark White, personal interview, Freetown, 30.3.2010

communications systems provided in 2000. From virtually no working vehicles, the fleet increased to more than 700 by 2004.[56] Training was stepped up on the belief that the SLP needed to increase by more than a third to eventually reach 9,000 officers, a number later upgraded to 9,500 (see Table 1).[57] Makeshift barracks were built to house police officers and their families.

As mentioned above, the major investments in vehicles, communication technology and rural police stations were made amid concerns about the Sierra Leone government's ability to maintain them. Indeed, anyone who visited a police station outside of Freetown some years after reform would notice the graveyards of white Land Rovers left to rust because no money could be found to repair them. Why, then, were massive investments were made in enhancing the SLP's coverage of the country?

Visible authority

As we have seen, the doctrine of community policing provides one clue. A second clue is found in the perceived importance of restoring state authority as quickly as possible in post-conflict states. For this purpose, details like the physical appearance of police officers were accorded great emphasis by the reformers. An early report noted that the existing system whereby each officer was responsible for his own uniform had led to "varying shades of blue within the Force". Such unevenness, it was argued, "has ultimately reduced police morale and has dented its image and respect to the public […] Improvement in this area is therefore necessary so that we can [achieve] effective

[56] Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation'.
[57] *The Situation in Sierra Leone, a Security and Operational Perspective. 'A Mismatch of Policy and Reality'*. 8.8.2004. Ray England private document.

policing".[58] The view that new uniforms would send the right signal both to police officers and to the public was shared by the Sierra Leonean authorities. The Vice President greatly emphasized how the police were the first government functionaries to show up on war-torn areas, citing their representation of "government authority" as "the main reason for everything".[59]

Whereas the concern with ungoverned areas helped draw attention to the symbolic significance of police forces, it suggested little about how such areas should be policed. As the claim that the Freetown model could be "exported" to rural areas illustrated, what was considered most important about rural deployment was not the exact way the SLP operated, but that they were *present* to symbolically represent the state. The reform team reasoned in the following way:

> There is a need for visible targeted policing to be introduced on a twenty-four hour basis every day of the year. Such policing will be essential to the peace process by increasing public confidence on the rule of law and indirectly encouraging inward investment to the country.[60]

This indicates that the late colonial notion that only a national police was appropriate for an independent state had been overwritten by quasi-scientific arguments on the importance of a police force in weak states. Control of territory was not only an issue of law and order but also a precondition for economic growth. But whereas the emphasis on getting officers on the ground was fully comprehensible within a framework of territoriality, it obviously did not amount to establishing state control. A senior Sierra Leonean officer connected the attention to visibility to the poor state of the force's intelligence capacity years after: "Intelligence was neglected then, and you see the

[58] *Final Report on Strategy for Policing Freetown.* Adrian Horn private document, date unknown.
[59] Solomon Berewa, personal interview, Freetown, 12.6.2010.
[60] CPDTF internal document quoted in Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation', p. 35.

consequences now".[61] In this light, it seems appropriate to ask if the concern for ceremonial display of state authority in a post-conflict environment – although promoting territoriality in an immediate sense – may actually hamper the achievement of territorial control in the long run.

The problem of displacement

However, the promise to go for a locally based policing approach in Sierra Leone was also a response to the massive internal displacement caused by the state's failure to control rural areas. Towards the end of the war in early 2002, it was estimated that up to two thirds of the country's population had been driven from their homes.[62] Many took refuge in Freetown; others fled over the border to Guinea or to remote locations within Sierra Leone. Most of the country's chiefs were in exile in Freetown. In short, the main agents of social control that earlier police reforms relied upon were all but gone, as was much of the population they ruled over. Compared with the late colonial period, this placed the project of police reform in a rather different category. The challenge now was not just to bring existing forms of law enforcement within the ambit of the state; it was to create the conditions under which state governance could take place at all. Diagnoses of the situation differed; some policy analysts went so far as to describe Sierra Leonean society as in a "plastic state, like half melted wax out of which anything can be moulded".[63] A common conclusion in both policy literature and academic analysis was that the existence of a large number of young and unemployed men marginalized within the local chieftaincy system had been a major cause of the war. As

[61] Desmond Buck, personal interview, Makeni, 12.4.2010.
[62] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone.*
[63] Moore Karen, Chris Squire and Foday MacBailey, *Sierra Leone National Recovery Strategy Assessment, Final Report* [2003], quoted in Fanthorpe, "On the Limits of Liberal Peace", p. 33.

Paul Richards argued, "the fighting was mainly in rural areas, involved mainly rural youth, and adapted itself to rural concerns".[64] Adrian Horn, the reform team's second in command, recalled how a conversation with the anthropologist Richard Fanthorpe reassured him in his view that rural policing would be important:

> One of the problems, [Fanthorpe] said, was that this tension [between poor youth and the chiefs] was building again, they were not getting access to justice, and there's a simple leap forward to say that the police really are the gateway to justice. And that's one of the important reasons why you can't ignore the rural areas. Because that's where a lot of your problems originated [...] What we were told is that when [urban migrants] went back [to their villages] the respect for chiefs and elders diminished tremendously. So therefore you lost a lot of your normal method of control, method of … enforcement, I suppose. Because, if you think about it, society and communities norms are very, very powerful, but they still have to be enforced. Once you lose those and you lose respect for the systems that enforce them, you've lost a lot. So even more so, then, policing becomes important at the local level.[65]

The main point Horn took away from the conversation with Fanthorpe was that the war was caused by societal tensions in rural areas outside the police's reach. To the reformers, this seemed to compel a policy of deploying the police to these areas, even if it was acknowledged that the police had contributed to the grievances which led to conflict in the first place. To the reformers, the flexibility of the decentralized community policing model appeared suitable to the unpredictable situation in Sierra Leone's interior. In an early note on the concept of LNP, Adrian Horn considered that:

> It achieves a flexibility of style that is required for the peculiar circumstances of Sierra Leone. For example, in a post conflict situation, different styles of policing will be required in areas that are deemed safe, as opposed to areas still suffering upheaval, or where communities have been temporarily displaced.[66]

The logic was straightforward; the police needed to be where tensions were most acute and could erupt into violence. However, this argument contained its own logical tension. On the one hand, the system of chiefdom rule in which young men where

[64] Richards, "To Fight or to Farm?", p. 271; Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*..
[65] Adrian Horn, personal interview, Oxford 8.10.2010.
[66] *Local Needs Policing. Concept Note, August 1998.* Adrian Horn private document.

marginalized was viewed as a cause of the conflict. The normative order underpinning it was considered to be in crisis, and the stability of the country was hanging in the balance as a result. In the precarious context of (post-)conflict Sierra Leone, the large expenditures on the SLP were justified in terms of their role in creating stability. Re-inserting the police into the local communities so people could return was an essential means to this end. At the same time, the police were rather innocently conceptualized as "enforcers" of the same "society and community norms" which were now supposed to be in crisis and which had produced the violent tensions in the first place. Despite references to the police as "the gateway to justice", the implication was clear – justice would still have to be administered by "chiefs and elders". A DFID consultant visiting refugee camps Guinea in February 2000 found that

> the most important signal that will be comprehended by the refugees and encourage them to return to their chiefdoms will be the restoration of Paramount Chiefs and all aspects of local administration such as District Officers and the Police.[67]

The next chapter will pay closer attention to Sierra Leone's bifurcated system of law and order. The pertinent point here is that the violence said to be caused by the breakdown produced an unequivocal response: rural deployment of the police to help reconstruct the very same system. The following message was given in an SLP seminar on the meaning of police primacy: "What we need to do is get back to normality and fit ourselves back into the structures that evolved to ensure society is safe and secure, and communities can go about their daily lives in peace".[68] In other words, the police were to be the system's guardians, above all in the areas where it was coming apart. Beyond

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[67] Cited in Richard Fanthorpe, Alice Jay, Victor Kalie Kamara: *A Review of the Chiefdom Governance Reform Programme, Incorporating an Analysis of Chiefdom Administration in Sierra Leone (November 2002)*. Adrian Horn private document

[68] Slides for Police Primacy Seminar, Adrian Horn private document, date unknown.

the usual prescriptions of community policing, such as the promise to "take account of local concerns through community consultation",[69] the way in which they were to do so was not considered in any detail. Nor, for that matter, was the possibility that the police could yet again exacerbate the tensions within the system.

This reveals a tension between the transformative potential assigned to a reformed and democratic police in a post-conflict setting and the image of police as apolitical enforcers of a normative order ultimately settled and anchored at the political level. If, as many observers argued,[70] the biggest threat to Sierra Leone's viability as a polity lay in the breakdown of its normative order, what conclusions were to be drawn about the police's role in it? If Sierra Leonean society was indeed as malleable as "melted wax", in what way would the police form it? Crucially, both images of the police – as a transformative agent and as an apolitical enforcer of normative order – only made sense if the police could be made a truly *national* agent. Only a police force with full territorial reach could hope to provide the stable foundation upon which the post-war order would be built; and only a police force able to control the 'ungoverned' areas where challengers to the state had created strongholds, could safeguard the normative order. In other words, a strong notion of territoriality was built into the dominant images of the police. In contrast to the late colonial period, the logics feeding the territorial ideal had become rooted in wider, if still hazily defined, visions of social order. The discourse on policing had opened up and connected with social scientific arguments on social mobility, local government and post-conflict reconstruction. Beyond the

[69] *The Sierra Leone Policing Charter*, quoted in Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation', p. 30.
[70] See Fanthorpe, "On the Limits of Liberal Peace"; Jackson, "Reshuffling an Old Deck of Cards?"; Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*.

maintenance of law and order, the police were perceived as essential in reconstructing the fabric of Sierra Leonean *society*.

At this point, it is worth recalling the tendency to view war as total collapse that was described in the beginning of Chapter 3. According to David Keen, this view often goes together with a problematic belief that "in the aftermath of war, there should be a process of rebuilding all those things that collapsed – a process of reconstruction, resettlement, rehabilitation and all the other 're-s' that are habitually considered necessary to put society back together".[71] Yet war itself, Keen argues, may have "produced changes in attitudes, notably in people's awareness of their rights and the systems they live under; thus, even those elements of the old system that were considered acceptable might not be today".[72] Beatrice Pouligny makes the same point when she claims that "insufficient attention has been paid to the radical transformations in political cultures and codes of conduct of the individuals and communities who have experienced mass violence, and the way these basic values and beliefs affect how a state is conceived and governed".[73] That war can be a vector of new perceptions of government and authority helps us appreciate how substantial the demands placed on the police in post-conflict Sierra Leone actually were. A range of *holistic* arguments for why the police were needed in post-conflict situations had appeared; notably that security enabled development, and that justice enabled peace. These arguments allocated to the police not just the responsibility for the security of individuals and governments, but also for transforming society and helping remove the causes for

[71] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*, p. 296.
[72] Quoted in Poate, Balogun, Rothmann, Knight and Sesay, 'Evaluation of DFID Country Programmes', p. 58.
[73] Beatrice Pouligny, "Civil Society and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Ambiguities of International Programmes Aimed at Building 'New' Societies", *Security Dialogue*, **36**, 4 (2005), pp. 495-519, p. 496.

conflict. These arguments, however, contained little guidance on how to reshape policing in response to the war-time changes that Keen and Pouligny refer to. In other words, what appeared as a failure to reflect on the likely social implications as SLP officers were deployed to war-ravaged rural areas was not unique to Sierra Leone, but reflected a widespread and largely unquestioned belief that police reform was necessary for post-conflict justice and reconciliation.

The demands of an international intervention

A final and more short-term post-conflict dynamic promoted the police's territorial expansion. This time the imperative was generated by the international intervention itself rather than by considerations about what was needed or appropriate for Sierra Leonean statehood. Requests for police presence in rural areas were made by UNAMSIL, who found their operations in the strategically important area of Kono hampered by the absence of state security forces. As Keith Biddle recalled:

> The Pakistani army [UNAMSIL peacekeepers] wanted us in Kono. We had to get vehicles in there. Large MI-26 transport helicopters took vehicles and equipment there with 200 police officers. Links were established into HQ and radio communications for local operations.[74]

In what appeared as a replay of late colonial strategies, major policing resources were sent to the diamond fields in Kono. Given its strategic importance in the conflict, this province was even more important to protect for the fledgling Kabbah government than it was for the colonial government. At this point, however, the logistics of a complex international, multi-agency operation made its own demands. The rationale for territorial expansion had beome shaped by a transnational governance network operating within Sierra Leonean territory. This network was governed as much by

[74] Quoted in Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation', p. 87.

external forces, such as the mandates and timelines set by the UN Headquarter in New York, as by political developments in Sierra Leone's interior. As we have seen, such external logics were also at work in the colonial period in the form of guidelines from London that often clashed with demands as perceived by officers on the spot. Now these logics came from multiple sources and clashed because of differing understandings of how the state's territory should be operationally managed. Ray England produced a scathing report of UNAMSIL's "mismatches", pointing out how

> The UNAMSIL command organisation of 'Sectors' was not and never has been coterminous with the boundaries of the Regions (political and police, and latterly the RSLAF brigade boundaries). The result has been a confused command and liaison situation whenever there have been attempts at co-ordination and co-operation between UNAMSIL and the security forces of Sierra Leone. [...] This had been the situation for the past three years.[75]

In addition to disagreements about how to divide up Sierra Leone operationally, the looming withdrawal of the UNAMSIL peacekeepers created disagreements about the plan for transition of control to the SLP. The SLP formally took over responsibility for internal security in the country at the UNAMSIL drawdown in late 2004. In the mind of one British reformer, this was far too early. Making the SLP responsible for policing the provinces at this point, he argued, was like "pushing a non-swimmer into the deep end of the swimming pool, watching him sink to the bottom, struggle spluttering to the surface and begin furiously treading water".[76]

Despite the frustration captured in this statement, it is important to note that the disagreement was not about the SLP's ultimate role as the monopoly provider of law and order in Sierra Leone's territory. Instead, the disagreement concerned the timing of

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[75] *The Situation in Sierra Leone, a Security and Operational Perspective. 'A Mismatch of Policy and Reality. 8.8.2004.* Ray England private document.
[76] *The Situation in Sierra Leone, a Security and Operational Perspective. 'A Mismatch of Policy and Reality. 8.8.2004.* Ray England private document.

the deployment, as well as how to divide territory operationally in the service of that goal. While British reformers were ordinarily content to ignore the UN CIVPOL unit which they regarded as hodgepodge and unprofessional,[77] the timing and nature of the territorial expansion of the SLP was one area where the UN had a significant impact on British strategies.

In sum, rhythm of conflict meant that the British police consultants had spent the majority of their time and resources on Freetown and were not able to preside over the introduction of the LNP model to outlying areas on the scale they planned. As leadership passed from Keith Biddle to Brima Acha Kamara in June 2003, the territorial drive appeared to lose further steam. When asked in 2010 about what he did to increase the police's capacity outside urban areas, Kamara replied:

> Well if you look at the statistics, 75% of reported crime is from the western area, about 11% in the Northern province, about 9% in the South, about 10% in the East. So really, it is in Freetown that you have a lot of criminal activity […] Except from the urban areas like Kenema, Bo, Makeni, Kono – outside those places the opportunities to commit crime are much less. I mean, how do you steal from a poor person? The periphery areas are quiet, there's nothing to steal.[78]

Kamara's apparent satisfaction with police performance stood in stark contrast with the social transformation his British predecessors imagined that the new SLP would help bring about. Baker found in 2006 that "the government of Sierra Leone still does not exert effective control over, nor is it able to deliver state policing services to, significant parts of the territory"[79] The specific demands of (post-)conflict gone, and the external funding stream reduced to a trickle; the police appeared again to close in on their core urban areas.

[77] Adrian Horn, personal interview, Oxford 8.10.2010.
[78] Brima Acha Kamara, personal interview, Freetown 7.4.2010.
[79] Baker, "The African Post-Conflict Agenda in Sierra Leone", p. 25.

If the issue of the SLP's insertion into rural communities went to the heart of what kind of society the post-conflict reconstruction process was promoting, other operational questions had equally far-reaching implications. Returning to the volatile years of 1999 and 2000, the remainder of this chapter analyzes the controversy around what to do with the SSD. At stake here was not only the future of the most prominent symbol of the country's repressive past, but also the meaning donors attached to concepts like security and development.

The utility of paramilitary policing

What to do with paramilitary forces that have violent pasts and ill-defined roles constitutes a well known problem in international interventions taking place amid instability and conflict. "The great dilemma for policymakers", argue two prominent scholars, "is how to meet shifting conditions of security without handicapping the opportunity for deploying [unarmed] core police who can win hearts and minds".[80] To shed light on how this dilemma manifested itself in Sierra Leone, it is helpful to consider a couple of recent examples.

During authoritarian rule in Haiti, the police operated under close control of the military as a "mechanism to mete out violence and repression".[81] After the US military intervention in 1994 to restore the elected president to power, successive projects were set in motion to professionalize the Haiti National Police (HNP). These efforts were since stunted by political instability, violence and coups, forcing the international reformers to leave the country for extended periods of time. After the army was

[80] Bayley and Perito, *The Police in War*, p. 75.
[81] Sarah Meharg and Aleisha Arnusch, 'Haiti: Police and Law Enforcement', in Sarah Meharg, Aleisha Arnusch and Susan Merrill (eds), 'Security Sector Reform: A Case Study Approach to Transition' (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA, 2010).

abolished by the reinstated president in 1995, one controversial question was whether there was a need for a second force in addition to the police. In 2010, the HNP employed more than 800 prominent ex-soldiers. Public perceptions of the HNP were poor and got worse in 2004 when police officers, allied with armed gangs and former combatants, seized control of towns in the north and threatened to enter the capital. The police thus became part of the instability their reform was supposed to remove. In Haiti as in Bosnia, argued Donais, the persistence of conflict "reinforce[d] some of the very practices and structures that that post-conflict police missions attempt to transform".[82] When the disastrous earthquake of 2011 put reforms on hold once more, a climate of "tension between policing and militarism" still persisted in the country.[83]

The US-led police reform in Iraq represents an extreme example of how police reform can be derailed by the context it takes place in. This was illustrated by the *New York Times* in a 2006 story based on confidential field reports filed by police trainers.[84] Police reform started out as a low-priority project under civilian leadership. After the civilian team rebuilt a "skeletal force", the rapidly growing insurgency (targeting also the police) ushered in a new strategy. Under US military leadership, police officers originally equipped with pistols and baseball caps were given AK 47's and body armor. Civilian contractors were no longer engaged to do training. Under pressure to contain surging violence in Bagdad, and with American blessing, Iraq's Interior Minister started

> [b]uilding special units within the police, its men drawn largely from the Republican Guards and Special Forces of Mr. Hussein's army. The commandos, as they were called, were seasoned

[82] Timothy Donais, "Back to Square One: The Politics of Police Reform in Haiti", *Civil Wars* **7**, 4 (2005), pp. 270-287, p. 272.
[83] Meharg and Arnusch, 'Haiti: Police and Law Enforcement'.
[84] *New York Times*: "How Iraq Police Reform Became a Casualty of War." 22.5.2006.

and skilled military officers, and they were given the tools — heavy machines guns and armored vehicles — to confront the insurgents.[85]

A British brigadier general working for the US general in command of police reform explained the risk involved: “you could see that if we didn't get this right, it would quickly be something that the Minister of Interior, depending on who he was, could turn into his own little army”. His fears turned out to be justified. Under changing leadership, the special police known first as the Wolves and later as the Volcanoes became agents of sectarian violence. Meanwhile, the internal affairs unit set up to police the police acted as “a ring of extortionists, kidnappers, and killers”.[86]

Considering that Sierra Leone celebrated ten years of peace in 2012, it may seem unfair to preface the issue of SSD reform with these stories of derailed reforms failing to prevent or even escalating violence. Yet they illustrate dynamics that were familiar from police reform taking place in violent or stressful contexts elsewhere. Firstly, reformers had to contend with an institutional culture of repression. In the midst of violence, battle-hardened ex-officers offered themselves more readily to the task of pacification than recruits with clean records but no experience. Secondly, there was uncertainty about the respective functions of armed forces and the police. Thirdly, there was a marked tendency for initial assumptions about civilian policing to be replaced by emphasis on armed capacity as conflict lingered on or even intensified. The recent reform of the Afghan National Police is another prominent example of a pendulum swing towards coercion. Police reform started out as a civilian program led by Germany

[85] *Ibid*.
[86] *Ibid.*

and gradually turned into an effort led by the US Military to turn police officers into "little soldiers" in the frontline of counterinsurgency.[87]

The struggle over the meaning of 'security'

As will be recalled from the last chapter, fragmentation and further paramilitarization characterized the SLP in the decades after independence. Promising a reversal of this trend, reformers argued that "to attract investors and new employers to Sierra Leone there has to be a stable and relatively crime free environment supported by a professional civilian police service".[88] Strikingly, the goal of a professional and civilian service was framed by Keith Biddle as a return to the "excellent" policing Sierra Leone had in colonial times:

> [T]he Sierra Leone Police enjoyed a tremendous reputation in its colonial past […] [I]t was well equipped, professionally trained and received many glowing reports when inspected by the colonial authorities […] The Force went into terminal decline in the early seventies. There has been lack of adequate finance, a failure to update procedures and essential equipment was hardly ever acquired. Most disastrously, the Force became highly politicised with the inspector general of police becoming a politically active cabinet minister. This had the effect of transforming an excellent police force into a repressive arm of government rather than a friendly service for all Sierra Leoneans.[89]

If the description of repressive policing as a *deviation* from colonial practices was historically inaccurate, it connected with a widespread feeling in Sierra Leone that the colonial period was a time of order and progress; a topic explored further in Chapter 6. In Sierra Leone's post-conflict environment, however, the assumptions about a "civilian" and unarmed police service were soon overturned. Conflicts and their aftermath are inherently unpredictable, lending both urgency and a high level of

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[87] Perito, 'Afghanistan's Police'.

[88] *Commonwealth Police Development Task Force Sierra Leone, Interim Report, September 1998*. Adrian Horn private document.

[89] *Speech to be delivered by the Inspector General of Police on Tuesday 28 March 2000 to the Commonwealth Institute.* Adrian Horn private document.

uncertainty to reforms. The opportunity is always present that short-term concerns imposed by the conflict, such as the need to defend a city, override long-term ones, such as the wish to root a civilian police force in local communities. It might be expected that the recent explosion of manuals, strategy papers and handbooks on issues relating to post-conflict reconstruction addressed that tension in a more sophisticated way than was the case in the colonial period. In fact, the opposite appears to be the case. Whereas the colonial discourse always balanced the goal of introducing a civilian order against relatively specific advice on how to organize and use force in emergencies, the security-development discourse was relatively silent on how to apply force in post-conflict situations. For instance, the take-away point on the regulation of paramilitary policing units in the OECD's comprehensive Handbook on SSR was to get "paramilitary units to engage in partnership: working and forging links with public accountability institutions, other security and justice providers and, in particular, local accountability structures".[90] Similarly, a synthetic study of police reforms in post-conflict societies argued that it is "absolutely imperative" that "police reforms be seen as supporting simultaneously more effective and respectful policing", but did not offer specific advice beyond the observation that "police reformers must convince the public that democratic policing is not weak policing".[91] Such general advice was of scant value to the reformers in the volatile years of 1999-2000. The issue of force, and specifically what to do with the SSD, had to be tackled as a matter of urgency after the RUF attack on Freetown in January 1999. Keith Biddle recalled how the Commonwealth team's early enthusiasm about community policing cooled considerably after this event:

[90] OECD, 'OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform', p. 171.
[91] O'Neill, 'Police Reform in Post-Conflict Societies", p. 3.

[P]re January 1999 we started a community policing project based on this Local Needs Policing theory, so we'd already decided that the basic policing had to be face to face with the communities, with the communities being able to have some say […] But that failed. Community policing will fail if the rest of the structure doesn't support it.[92]

“The rest of the structure” referred to the police’s coercive capacity. As the reform team was forced to leave Freetown for the second time in two years, a set of new pressing questions seemed to render the liberal, developmental assumptions dominant in the first phase irrelevant. Again, Biddle put the point starkly:

What happens if we have riots? [...] What are we going to do about arming the police? I mean, this is one of the things that is not understood by people who go there now and say ‘why did you do this, have this big armed unit?’ Well, in 1998 everybody except the police was carrying a bloody gun, so how do you get policemen to maintain law and order?[93]

Biddle’s exasperation was shared by his team. In a string of reports spanning more than a year, Ray England, the consultant hired to oversee the reform of the SSD, lamented the grave consequences of DFID’s unwillingness to arm the SSD, going so far as to call it “negligence of the highest order”.[94] Through personal networks, the stalemate between DFID and the Commonwealth team on the subject of arms supply came to the attention of top figures in the Conservative party. Eventually, a backroom solution was brokered between DFID Secretary Clare Short and top figures in the Public Accounts Committee and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) allowing funds for the supply of weapons and munitions to the SSD to be released from DFID to the MOD via the Treasury.[95] This relieved DFID of association with arms supplies. Notably, this happened before DFID and the MOD joined up as donors in the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool and the Global Conflict Prevention Pool; innovations described as

[92] Keith Biddle, personal interview, Crewe, 27.10.2009.
[93] *Ibid*.
[94] *A Report on the Situation in the Sierra Leone Police as of 17.12.1999,* Ray England private document.
[95] This information was obtained from a member of the Commonwealth reform team who wished to remain anonymous.

important in “align[ing] development work more closely with diplomatic and defence issues”.[96] In other words, it would appear that these pools *confirmed* rather than initiated DFID’s involvement in direct security assistance.

Even if funds for armament had been found, the decision to arm the SSD had to be accommodated within the developmental discourse framing SSR in Sierra Leone. It is tempting to argue that this drastic turnaround showed that the demands of conflict management had washed ‘development’ out of the security-development nexus. Again, this is evidence of how the instability framing reform of the state’s coercive apparatus swung the pendulum towards more coercion, even if the stated goal was civilianization. However, the particular controversy over arming the SSD can also be seen as a struggle over the meaning of the security-development nexus. This is borne out by the fact that the articulation of the nexus was strengthening at the global level just at this time, a process driven in important part by DFID itself. Just two months after the attack on Freetown, Clare Short singled out Sierra Leone as “show[ing] clearly the development rationale for security sector reform”.[97] The harnessing of the security-development logic to a governmental strategy relying on a much more substantial coercive component than originally conceived was achieved through two key reinterpretations: firstly of the nature and role of the SSD, and secondly of the concept ‘police primacy’.

Rebranding the SSD

The gap that had opened between the paramilitary SSD and the rank and file made it seem doubly advantageous to disband the unit. Firstly, it was above all the violent

[96] Denney, “Reducing Poverty”; Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*.
[97] Quoted in Denney, “Reducing Poverty”; see also Clare Short, *An Honourable Deception? New Labour, Iraq and the Misuse of Power* (Free Press, London, 2004).

tactics and renegade operations of the ISU/SSD, most infamously during the anti-government protests at Fourah Bay College in 1977, that alienated the SLP from the public. Secondly, the wedge it drove into the force prevented the unity the British reformers saw as essential for LNP to work. The SSD was viewed in both Sierra Leonean and British government circles as a "sinister organization" that the country would be better off without.[98] It is ironic, therefore, that the same unit would now lead the way in the SLP's public rehabilitation. This was made possible by a symbolically significant event – the SSD's success in averting the rebel incursion in the Western part of Freetown in January 1999. This made the division dramatically more popular with the public, as well as with British reformers, who started to recognize them as the only functional element of the state's security forces. As Ray England argued, "to the officers and people of Freetown the initials 'SSD' are now regarded as a battle honour. The rebels came to fear the SSD for their stubbornness and fighting ability".[99] However, the SSD's gradual attainment of legitimacy had started at the beginning of the war. Three years prior to the rebel attack on Freetown, a Sierra Leonean government commission gave the following account of the division's development:

> The [ISU] wore a distinct paramilitary uniform and became particularly [notorious] when, led by politicians, it ruthlessly quelled the student disturbances of 1977. The nomenclature of this Unit has now been changed from Internal Security Unit to Special Security Division (SSD). It is a more disciplined Unit […] headed by an Assistant Commissioner of Police, directly under the Inspector-General. The SSD has been very active in the present rebel war with many [officers] serving at the war front. It is well trained in security work […] The

[98] Ray England, personal interview, London 3.2.2011. England remembers that at the time of his arrival in Freetown in the early summer of 1999, there was a "general feeling in the government that they should be disbanded".

[99] *A Report on the Special Security Division of the Sierra Leone Police, 16.10.1999*. Ray England private document.

> SSD is a very reliable establishment capable of providing a [deterrent] to any threat to the security of the state.[100]

From a ruthless force led by politicians against the people of Sierra Leone, the SSD was now construed as a "very reliable" force in the service of the state. This redemption had been earned not by police work, but by combat operations against rebels in the early stages of the war. The SSD had thus transcended its image as a political militia and staked a claim to be the legitimate defenders of the state. They had done so by using the skills they had acquired to crack down on internal opposition in the service of a different governmental purpose; that of fighting a war. Those skills now became viewed as essential to secure the process of development.

At this point, it is worth dwelling on an interesting feature of the constellation drawing together a development agency and consultants with diverse backgrounds in the task of SLP reform. The rift that had appeared between DFID and its consultants on the issue of weapons was not rooted in a disagreement about the right policing model, but in deeper differences about what the target of reform was, and what counted as relevant knowledge in order to achieve it. On the one hand, DFID continued to view police reform in terms of a development effort targeting communities. To this end, the liberal-managerial assumptions accompanying the initial goal of LNP seemed appropriate. On the other hand, its consultants had come to perceive the goal as equipping the police to neutralize the state's armed contenders. This, they thought, required a different form of expertise than the one DFID had on offer:

> I have serious concerns that the Metropolitan Police have been selected to provide the instructional team. The philosophy, organisations and tactics of the Metropolitan Police (and

[100] *Report of the Dr. Banya Committee on the Republic of Sierra Leone Police Force, August, 1996*. Adrian Horn private document.

UK police forces) are not appropriate for the security situation in Sierra Leone. Any serious riot in Sierra Leone will involve violent attacks on the Police requiring baton rounds and CS [tear gas] to be used, and invariably the widespread use of firearms against the Police. The Metropolitan Police have no experience of this type of situation, and their tactics would result in the killing and wounding of many unarmed police officers. […] The philosophy, organisation and tactics should be similar to those employed by the Royal Hong Kong Police and Royal Ulster Constabulary/British Army in Northern Ireland.[101]

While terrorism was not of particular concern in Sierra Leone, using the police to deal with armed insurgency was not part of DFID's planning. In some ways, the struggle appeared as a striking replay of how colonial police officers criticized London for operating with unrealistic notions about the transferability of a 'British' system to colonial conditions.[102] At this point, reformers were able to draw on a different part of their professional experience. Looking back on his time in Sierra Leone, Keith Biddle emphasized the value of his training with the military:

[T]he best education I had that really helped me in Sierra Leone was the strategic studies at the Royal College of Defence Studies. [There] we learned a lot about freedom movements, terrorist movements and so on […] So that gave me a line of education that lots of police officers don't get that was of immense value, because I understood a lot more of the processes of irregular battle [in Africa].[103]

Using the police to fight 'irregular battles' was a lot more than DFID had bargained for. Ultimately, it was the priority the British government accorded to conflict prevention which provided the common ground on which the seemingly irreconcilable differences about goals and strategies could be resolved. As a DFID advisor later put it, there was a "remarkable consistency of view" between the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and DFID on the overarching goal of ending conflict.[104] Arguably, it was this preoccupation that eventually led DFID to give up its initial plan for an unarmed SLP.

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[101] *A Report on the Situation in the Sierra Leone Police as of 17.12.1999.* Ray England private document.
[102] Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.
[103] Keith Biddle, personal interview, Crewe, 27.10.2009.
[104] Mark White, personal interview, Freetown, 30.3.2010.

In the absence of conflict, Ray England reasoned, "there would not have been the finance coming in; there was a lot of money, one million pounds of weapons. And they were top quality weapons, the best pistols we could get, submachine guns, rifles with telescopic sights, gas guns".[105]

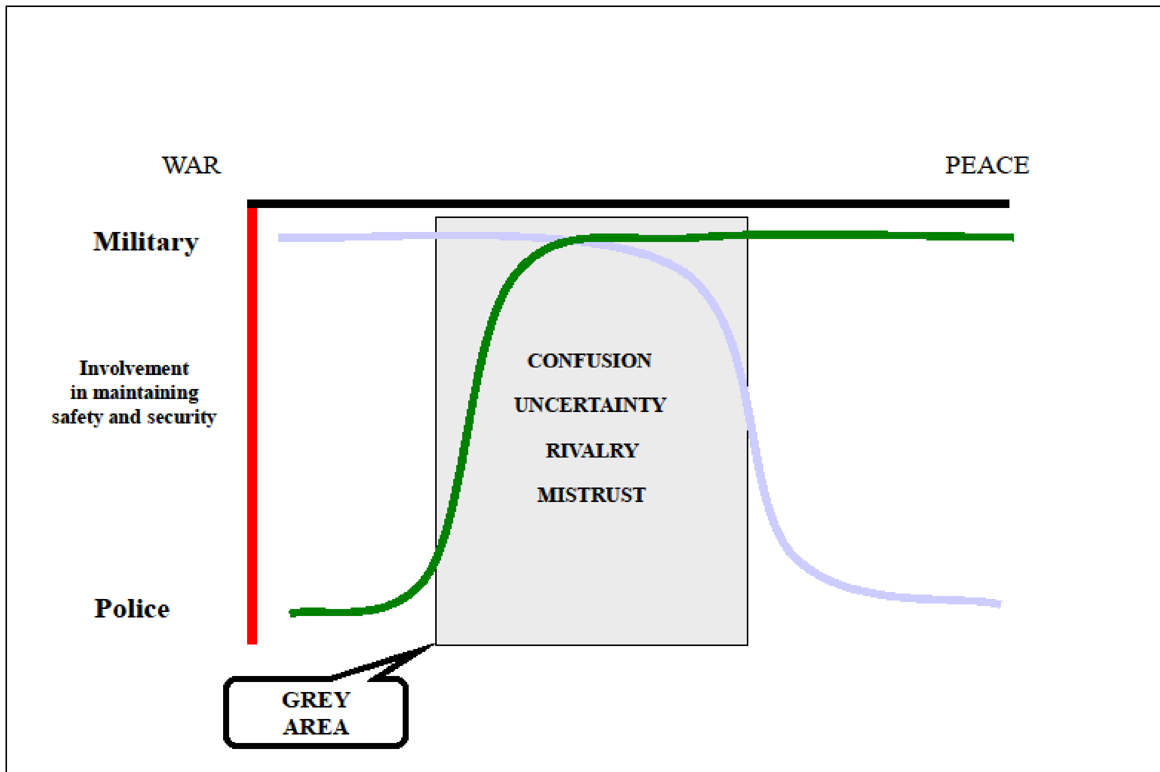
The decision to arm the SSD, however, still meant that a strong element of force had to be reconciled with the developmental rationale that had originally served to justify police reform. This was in important part done through a mobilization of the concept of 'police primacy'. Originally framed in terms of extending policing as a service to all Sierra Leoneans, especially the poor, the concept was increasingly interpreted as an imperative to neutralize the state's armed contenders. Without an armed SSD, reformers claimed, the SLP would be "vulnerable to attack, abuse and coercion" and material and equipment risked being "stolen or confiscated by ECOMOG, CDF or the rebels".[106] They described the country's politics as an anarchical struggle between various armed groups: "Both the SLA [Sierra Leone Army] and the CDF do not wish to see the SSD re-armed for the obvious reasons that the Police would then be [...] a counter-balance to their positions in any power struggle".[107] The reformers modeled the transition from war to peace as a process where the police would take increasing responsibility for internal security while the role of the military would decline correspondingly (see Figure 2). This process involved negotiating a "grey area" characterized by "confusion, uncertainty, rivalry, and mistrust". Unless the police were able to show the military that they were able to handle unrest, transition to civilian rule would be jeopardized and institutional rivalry would persist. This did not mean that 'police primacy' was reduced

[105] Ray England, personal interview, London 3.2.2011.
[106] *A Report on the Special Security Division of the Sierra Leone Police. 16.10.1999*. Ray England private document.
[107] *Ibid*.

to simple balance of power logic. Rather, reformers argued that DFID had misunderstood what the security-development logic actually meant. Citing the massive destruction of equipment supplied in the early phase of reform, they criticized DFID’s “mistake” of failing to back such supplies up with the guns to protect it. As England argued, “DFID […] had to appreciate that [you] couldn't have development until you had security”. [108] The argument that SSR in Sierra Leone needed to draw upon counterinsurgency experience in places like Northern Ireland did not disprove the security-development nexus or simply take development out of the equation – it gave specificity to a discourse which paradoxically had very little to say on the organization of force in a post-conflict situation.

[108] Ray England, personal interview, London 3.2.2011.

Figure 2: Police and military roles during transition from war to peace



Source: *What is Policing?* Power point presentation, Adrian Horn private document (date unknown)

The 'specified' security-development logic now at work in Sierra Leone ran something like the following: Unless they had guns, the police would not be able to establish themselves in the communities, and thereby foster the sense of security and entrepreneurial spirit that would help Sierra Leone out of poverty. As was stated in a report signed Commander of the OSD: "It will enable the unarmed majority of officers of the Sierra Leone Police to effectively serve the police without unnecessary resort to

guns, thus paving the foundation for peace and democracy to flourish".[109] A DFID report dating some two years after the rearming indicates that this reformulation had been successful: "The transition of the OSD from its original form of the Special Security Division (SSD) has been impressive and is cited by the IGP [Inspector General of Police] as the critical success factor in developing improved relations with the community".[110]

The idea of a paramilitary unit as the gateway to better relations with the community nicely captures the ambiguous place that force occupied within the security-development discourse. Even if Sierra Leone's post-independence history was often invoked to show how the SSD terrorized the population and impeded development, that same unit was viewed as essential to development and democratization. Initially, a neoliberal concern with breaking down the barrier between society and the state marketed the police as unarmed service providers and integral parts of the community. As the conflict reasserted itself, this was supplemented by a concern with salvaging the regime from its armed contenders. This second logic identified the SSD as a key agent and identified imperial knowledge on how to deal with armed insurgency – now represented as a way to achieve police primacy – as more appropriate than the 'civilian' expertise on offer from the Metropolitan model.

The finding that little concrete guidance could be found the security-development discourse about appropriate levels of force resonates with the observation that normative discussions of the concept of SSR have taken precedence over studies of its

[109] *History of the Operations Support Division.* Educational document, SLP Headquarters Freetown.
[110] *Sierra Leone Community Safety and Security Project 5th –11th July 2002, Output-to-Purpose Review*. Adrian Horn private document.

application in specific instances.[111] In Sierra Leone, the lack of clear advice allowed reformers to redefine the meaning of security, and to successfully convince DFID that a substantially stronger element of force was necessary to serve the long-term goal of development. The debate about the security-development nexus has often revolved around finding a formula for switching back and forth between distinct 'security' and 'development' initiatives.[112] The reform of the SLP's armed wing allows us to see how the security-development nexus drew upon diagnoses and prescriptions from the 'colonial' as well as the 'liberal' playbooks.[113] Reform was informed by different forms of knowledge in which policing was perceived as useful for pacifying a violent society, to foster individual security, and to build state capacity. Implicit in the nexus was a conflicted notion of statehood in which force was simultaneously the problem and the solution – what stifled development, but also what enabled it. The result of this ambiguity was perhaps best illustrated by the two units that were most frequently mentioned as the most professional by senior SLP officers: the newly created Family Support Units (FSU) and the OSD itself.[114]

Conclusion

This chapter began by asking two questions. The first regarded the confident selection of a strategy of permanently expanding the SLP to rural areas despite even higher

[111] Jane Chanaa, 'Security Sector Reform: Issues, Prospects and Challenges' (Adelphi paper series no. 344, Institute of International Strategic Studies, Oxford, 2002); Nicole Ball and Dylan Hendrickson, 'Trends in Security Sector Reform (SSR): Policy, Practice and Research' (Paper prepared for International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, 2006); Egnell and Halden, "Laudable, Ahistorical and Overambitious".
[112] I.e. Mark White, 'The Security Development Nexus'.
[113] See Tania Murray Li, *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, development, and the practice of politics* (Duke University Press, London, 2007).
[114] Morie Lengor, personal interview, Freetown, 1.12.2009; Kellie Conteh personal interview, Freetown, 2.6.2010; Francis Munu, personal interview, Freetown, 3.6.2010; Mark White, personal interview, Freetown 31.3.2010.

obstacles to success than in the late colonial period. The second concerned what explained the turnaround from the early assumptions of an unarmed SLP to the choice to strongly rearm them.

An important part of the explanation for the selection of a localized policing model was found in how the question of the SLP's territorial reach had become informed by social scientific arguments about displacement and conflict. These concerns were very different than those driving late colonial reforms, and illustrate how reform strategies were directly affected as policing became embraced as a solution to problematic state-society relations. The reformers found support for their view that the police were the "gateway to justice" by drawing on the argument, furthered by social scientists, that an unjust rural social order was a major cause of the conflict. Expanding the police to rural areas was therefore conceived of as necessary for a process of social healing to take place. Indeed, one study argued that the SLP, and the OSD in particular, had been instrumental in achieving this: "At the war front [the OSD] have maintained the police role of protecting life and property, and in recaptured areas returnees find them more reassuring for their safety than the military".[115] Yet not much thought was given to what role the SLP would play in the healing process in the long-term, nor to the risk that they might contribute to renewed grievances. In this respect, it is worth noting that the doctrine of community policing has been described as prone to the risk of supporting oppressive structures. As two observers found in the case of Kenya, the very flexibility

[115] Ahmed Bokarie Kamara, *The Future of Policing in Sierra Leone and the Key Features to Be Drawn From the British Policing Experience* (University of Leicester, unpublished MsC Dissertation, 1999), p. 19.

of the concept means that it can end up legitimating "repressive and authoritarian forms of policing".[116]

The question of how police reform would affect state-society relations was also highly relevant when it came to the question of the SLP's coercive capacity. The police's (desired) role as mediators between state and society – their claim to reach into communities while simultaneously possessing the capacity to discipline them with force if necessary – made them useful players in the volatile aftermath of war. It also gave them a claim to contribute to both security and development in a way that other armed forces could not. However, this flexibility created struggles between DFID and its own consultants about what kind of policing would serve these goals. The security-development logic that informed SSR appeared to be characterized by a lack of clarity about the relationship between force and development. It skated gingerly over a difficult problem familiar from the late colonial period: that of investing sufficient coercive capacity in the state for it to withstand threats without making it more effective at oppression.

Drawing on examples from Haiti, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the chapter argued that Sierra Leone fits a pattern where relapses of conflict helped derail police reforms from initial civilian assumptions to a policy of much stronger force. This provides substance to the typical claim that the "effectiveness of police aid cannot be assessed in isolation from the environments it seeks to shape".[117] However, there was nothing automatic about the switch from a civilian to a more coercive approach. Whereas security in the colonial

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[116] Mutuma Ruteere and Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle, "Democratizing Security or Decentralizing Repression? The Ambiguities of Community Policing in Kenya", *African Affairs*, **102**, 409 (2003), pp. 587-604.
[117] Alice Hills, "Trojan Horses? USAID, Counterterrorism and Africa's Police", *Third World Quarterly*, **27**, 4, pp. 629-643, p. 639.

period was understood as *regime* security and permitted escalating use of force to suit the circumstances, the arrival of a development-oriented human security agenda meant that a similar strategy was much more controversial in the recent period. Ultimately, rearming the SSD was possible because their paramilitary past could be cast in a new light that appealed to all donors: as necessary for conflict prevention. The Epilogue will discuss whether the OSD are likely to contribute to peaceful development in Sierra Leone in the future.

Finally, it is worth noting that the operational environment had very different effects on reforms in the areas of force and territoriality. While relapse of conflict derailed the goal of civilianization of the SLP and swung the pendulum towards more coercion, we observed an opposite dynamic when it came to plans for rural deployment. Relapses of conflict made it necessary to postpone planned deployment, but such setbacks had the effect of *strengthening* the territorial ambition rather than weakening it. Despite lingering financial, political and infrastructural barriers, territoriality provided reformers with a clear policy; to spread the SLP to rural areas. No matter how far into the future the ongoing war seemed to banish the prospect of rural deployment; the territorial ambition remained paramount in reform planning.

This persistence can be interpreted as consistent with the precepts of community policing, whose appeal lies in its claim to register and adapt to changes in society. As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, local policing boards were a pillar of the LNP model, and it was hoped that the popular input received through these channels would make the SLP more responsive and help make up for their limited capacity. However, the relations with communities that were initiated by the SLP and channeled through such boards were just one of the ways in which policing was shaped by external input.

There was a wide range of other policing agents in the country that the SLP had to relate to in some way or other. These relations are analyzed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Policing assemblages and nonstate security agencies

You have a small country with several things happening at the same time. The capacity to deal with them is limited. It's like a student going to take an exam in many things in a very short time. The SLP should not have been the only institution to be focused on. Other structures were also dilapidated. If you empower the police a lot, and leave [other groups] to one side, you're going to have effective police but a disgruntled population.[1]

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the final dimension of statehood identified at the beginning of this study: the degree to which nonstate or quasi-state policing groups were acknowledged as legitimate authorities, and how reformers attempted to position the state police in relation to them. Traditional and commercial policing groups have long been important in Sierra Leone, and continued to be so at the time of the second reform, confronting reformers with similar challenges. In an article on policing in post-conflict Sierra Leone, Bruce Baker summarized those challenges in a way that could be applied almost word-for-word to the late colonial situation:

The fragmentation of policing calls for a policing policy quite distinct from the European pattern, where diversification is much less pronounced and resources for policing are more considerable [...] [T]he government has to define clearly the desired relationship between various policing structures and set the parameters [...] There is clearly a need for a thorough audit of the traditional authorities' current capacity and a review of their future role. Given their

[1] Momo Turay, personal interview, Freetown 30.4.2010.

local knowledge and relative, if limited, skills, they constitute a resource that may be better to renew and assist rather than allow to become increasingly redundant.[2]

If the situation facing reformers in the two periods was distinctly similar, however, the strategies for dealing with it changed significantly. Whereas earlier chapters documented strong continuities in the field of force and territoriality, reformers arriving in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s evinced a strong skepticism towards engaging with either chiefdom police or with private security companies (PSCs). This state-centered approach stood in sharp contrast to colonial strategy, which was characterized by constant engineering of the relations between state and nonstate policing agencies. This chapter asks: What were the effects of efforts to enlist nonstate agencies in the policing of specific issues – or of the reverse strategy – to impose boundaries between state and nonstate policing?

Whereas Chapters 2 and 4 focused primarily on explaining strategies, this chapter places greater emphasis on the strategies' impact. This reveals differences with regards to what kind of nonstate policing groups reformers viewed as legitimate collaborators at various points, and what the effects of marginalizing them or cooperating with them were. As a core part of native policing was removed with the abolition of the CMF, a level of violence unknown since the late 19th century ensued. In contrast, in the field of late colonial diamond policing, the state was willing to do much more of what today is called public-private cooperation. During the recent period, the British reform team's unwillingness to acknowledge other legitimate security providers than the SLP clashed with their their Sierra Leonean colleagues' attitudes. Focusing on the case of security provision for private banks, I show that techniques introduced by the British reformers

[2] Baker, "Where Do People Turn to for Policing in Sierra Leone?", p. 385f.

to create a more self-sufficient SLP were appropriated by SLP officers to solidify links with private business. These links were actively discouraged by their British mentors. Exploring this disagreement allows us to draw more confident conclusions about what kind of security and statehood the latest police reform helped produce.

These disagreements, moreover, must be traced to long-standing policing practices in the country. To capture how the history of close integration between various forms of authority in Sierra Leone shaped reforms and their outcomes, it is helpful to draw on the concept of security assemblages. This concept, which will be introduced below, helps us map how the relationship between policing groups changed at critical junctures. In order to place the reforms in a wider context, this chapter starts by briefly introducing two tendencies that characterized Africa in the 1990s and 2000: the revival of traditional authority and the rapid growth of PSCs.

Traditional and private security

"Everywhere in Africa today, the architects of government are building new structures on political foundations that are traditional as well as modern", wrote Richard Sklar in 1999.[3] Two observers found that South African chiefs – far from being "phased out as relics of pre-modern times" – were actually reasserting their power in the post-Apartheid regime.[4] The South African example reflected a wider 'retraditionalization' that appeared to "have reversed the previous policy of containing traditional authority as

[3] Richard Sklar, 'The Significance of Mixed Government in Sothern African Studies', in Jonathan Hyslop (ed), *African Democracy in the Era of Globalisation* (Witwatersrand University Press, Witwatersrand, 1999).
[4] Ineke van Kessel and Barbara Oomen, "'One Chief, One Vote': The Revival of Traditional Authority in Post-Apartheid South Africa", *African Affairs*, **96**, 385 (1997), pp. 561-585, p. 561.

negative forces".[5] Whereas traditional authority structures differed widely across Africa, debates about their place in national politics often centred on the role traditional leaders ought to have in dispensing justice and providing policing.[6] Recent literature has charted a number of recent ways in which the state has authorized nonstate groups to deliver policing. Wolfgang Zeller found that the Namibian state trained people living on the borderland with Zambia to perform duties as 'police reservists' and control illegal immigration.[7] Helene Kyed described the Mozambican Ministry of Internal Affairs' efforts to enroll economic agents, religious associations, NGOs and other social actors in community policing.[8]

What this retraditionalization has signified for state power is debated. Some argue that traditional security structures stepped in to fill a "gap" left by failing states. Bruce Baker claimed that "where there is a weak, collapsing authority, those left without provision by that authority will, in 'opportunistic disengagement', take advantage of the lack of social control".[9] Others questioned such a logic, arguing that formal recognition of traditional leaders was most prevalent in *strong* states like South Africa and Uganda.[10]

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[5] Helene Kyed and Lars Buur, 'Introduction: Traditional Authority and Democratization in Africa', in Lars Buur and Helene Kyed (eds), *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?* (Palgrave MacMillan, New York, NY, 2007), p. 2; see also Pierre Englebert, "Patterns and Theories of Traditional Resurgence in Tropical Africa", *Mondes et D*éveloppement **2002/2**, 118 (2002), pp. 51-64.
[6] Baker, *Security in Post-Conflict Africa*; Baker, "Where Do People Turn to for Policing in Sierra Leone?"; Bruce Baker, "Living with Non-State Policing in South Africa: The Issues and Dilemmas", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, **40**, 1 (2002), pp. 29-53.
[7] Wolfgang Zeller, 'Chiefs, Policing, and Vigilantes: "Cleaning Up the Caprivi Borderland of Namibia"', in Buur and Kyed, *State Recognition and Democratization*.
[8] Kyed, 'The Contested Role of Community Policing'.
[9] Bruce Baker, *Escape From Domination in Africa: Political Disengagement and its Consequences* (James Currey, Oxford, 2001), p. 16; Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*; Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.
[10] Englebert, "Patterns and Theories"; see also Buur and Kyed, *State Recognition and Democratization*.

Most agreed that more empirical analysis was necessary to chart how the state chose to relate to such structures; and what “amalgamated” forms of authority resulted.[11]

Another tendency prevalent in the 1990s and 2000s was the rapid growth of PSCs across Africa. Of course, the existence of private security operators in Africa was not new.[12] What *was* new was size of the industry, and the types of services PSCs offered. Rita Abrahamsen and Michael Williams’ recent study charted a sharp growth bringing the number of private security officers up to a level rivalling or exceeding the number of state police, thus aligning Africa with a global trend. In South Africa, more than 6,000 PSCs were reported to employ about 375,000 people. In 2011, Group4Securicor, a PSC, was the biggest employer on the London Stock Exchange, with a 106,000 strong payroll in Africa alone.[13] The recent proliferation of PSCs providing commercial, everyday services such as guarding businesses and infrastructure has received less academic attention than the more spectacular interventions of private military companies, such as Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone.[14] However, the prominence of PSCs in doing such things as protecting mines, banks, small businesses, and public installations raises similar questions as the resurgence of traditional authority.

As with the issue of traditional authority, opinions differed how the rapid growth of commercial security companies affected the state’s power. Mills and Stremlau argued that private security firms “exist because [African] states are weak and incapable of exercising control” and concluded that Africa is the continent at greatest risk of a loss in

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[11] Christian Lund, “Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa”, *Development and Change*, **37**, 4 (2006), pp. 685-705.
[12] Greg Mills and John Stremlau, ‘The Privatisation of Security in Africa: An Introduction’, in Greg Mills and John Stremlau (eds), ‘The Privatisation of Security in Africa’ (The South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 1999).
[13] Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security Beyond the State*, p. 21f.
[14] Singer, “Corporate Warriors”; for a critique, see Anna Leander, “The Power to Construct International Security: On the Significance of Private Military Companies”, *Millennium*, **33**, 3 (2005), pp. 803-825.

sovereign and collective authority.[15] Muthien and Taylor reached the same conclusion, claiming that the focus on fiscal discipline in Africa encouraged by international organizations like the IMF helped private security actors gain foothold while "emasculating the state's ability to regulate the social sphere".[16] Abrahamsen and Williams argued that the rise of private security ushered in "important changes in the relationship between security and the sovereign state, and structures of political power and authority", but did not take for granted that the state's authority was displaced.[17]

Whether they did in fact contribute to erosion of state authority, it is striking that PSCs were able to capitalize on the *impression* of a loss of state power. This created opportunities for such companies to present themselves as enhancers rather than as challengers of state authority. Argued Tim Spicer of Sandline International, a company hired by the Sierra Leone government in 1998: "It has to come down to whether you want security or not. If you don't have security, you don't attract foreign investment, your economy and infrastructure doesn't develop and therefore you can't progress".[18]

Indirect rule and security assemblages

This brief review suggests that retraditionalization and the growth of commercial security carried very similar implications for state rulers. However, these tendencies are rarely studied together. This is surprising since the same challenges were integral to indirect rule – which may be described as the attempt to enlist native and commercial

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[15] Mills and Stremlau, 'The Privatisation of Security in Africa'.
[16] Bernedette Muthien and Ian Taylor, 'The Return of the Dogs of War? The Privatization of Security in Africa', in Rodney Bruce Hall and Thomas J. Biersteker (eds), *The Emergence of Private Authority in Global Governance* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002).
[17] Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security Beyond the State*, p. 65f.
[18] Tim Spicer of Sandline International, quoted in Francis, "Mercenary Intervention in Sierra Leone". In the event, allegations that Sandline had been aided by Britain in supplying weapons to Sierra Leone in contravention of the UN arms embargo created considerable embarrassment for the Blair government.

forces in a stable governmental system. In one regard, indirect rule was based on a realization that the state did not have the capacity to transform African society. It signalled a reformulation of the colonial project; whereas before the official view had counselled gradual steps towards the British system of law and order, indirect rule recognized that the native, the local, and the parochial would have to be accommodated as integral elements in the exercise of law and order. The doctrine of indirect rule was characterized by its recognition that "existing conditions" – however distorted or reified from the British point of view – would have to form the template of state control. A similar recognition seemed to be present in the recent donor argument that nonstate security structures could make essential contributions to post-conflict reconstruction.[19]

The affinity between indirect rule and the donor attention to traditional authority structures has received some commentary. In Mark Duffield and Vernon Hewitt's view, the liberal interventionism of the 1990s and 2000s "remain[ed] embedded in the same assumptions and worked towards very much the same outcomes" as European imperial governance.[20] More specifically, Duffield argued that there was a fundamental affinity in the rationalities underpinning indirect rule and current practices of intervention:

> [F]ragile state discourse reproduces some of the key assumptions and relations of colonial bureaucracy, in particular, the liberal practice of indirect rule or Native Administration. Although Native Administration was concerned with the *tribe,* and the object of fragile state discourse is the *state*, both these entities are understood and acted upon in a similar way […] In both cases, the challenge for policy is to reduce, shape or somehow streamline administrative tasks and demands to match that limited capacity which does exist"[21]

[19] DFID, 'Non-State Justice and Security Systems'.
[20] Mark Duffield and Vernon Hewitt (eds), *Empire, Development and Colonialism: The Past in the Present* (James Curry, Woodbridge, 2009).
[21] Mark Duffield, 'Liberal Interventionism and the Fragile State: Linked by Design?', in Duffield and Hewitt, *Empire, Development and Colonialism*, p. 116.

Whereas Duffield's comparison of indirect rule and fragile state discourse is analytically fruitful, his claim that indirect rule and fragile state discourse shared a concern with matching demands to capacity seems to miss the target. Indeed, the frequent criticism that SSR wrongly assumed that the state could displace traditional authority suggests that the doctrine *lacked* the ability to tailor policy to existing conditions. Furthermore, Duffield's claim that the tribe was replaced by the state as the object of a similar kind of governance offers no way of understanding how the *relationship* between state and tribe were conceptualized over time. Yet the very struggles over boundaries between the 'native' and the 'public' represent one of the most important recurrent problems of statebuilding. Duffield's observation is too general to offer any purchase on the effects such interventions had on security provision.

In other words, theoretical tools are needed to identify how the boundaries of legitimate authority shifted over time, and what the practical effects were for security. One such tool is found in recent criminological literature. Building on the pioneering work of Clifford Shearing and Philip Stenning,[22] the concept of "nodal security" has been employed to describe a situation where "a multiplicity of governance authorities and providers that coexist in multiple ways to produce diverse security outcomes".[23] Shearing gives a fuller description:

> [N]ew nodes of policing have emerged and have clustered to form policing assemblages. These nodes have brought to policing new mentalities, new institutional arrangements, and new technologies. As these new nodes do not exist in isolation but can be and often are networked, this diversity has led to an interpenetration of policing styles and practices. This has all

[22] See Clifford Shearing and Philip Stenning, "Private Security: Its Growth and Implications", *Crime and Justice*, **3** (2001), pp. 193-24; Shearing and Stenning, "Private Security: Implications for Social Control", *Social Problems*, **30**, 5 (1983), pp. 493-506.
[23] Jennifer Wood and Clifford Shearing, *Imagining Security* (Willan, Cullompton, 2007), p. 13.

profoundly influenced where policing gets done, how it gets done, by whom it gets done, who authorizes what gets done, and to whom accounts are given.[24]

Abrahamsen and Williams have productively employed a similar framework to study what they call "global security assemblages" in Africa: "settings where a range of different global and local, public and private security agents and normativities interact, cooperate and compete to produce new institutions, practices, and forms of security governance".[25] They stress that the emergence of security assemblages did not imply a loss of state power to private actors, but rather a "reassembly" of state power. The state continued to enjoy a firm base of symbolic capital even as PSCs rivaled the state in terms of access to economic capital. The very idea that security should be a public good therefore continued to generate political support and material resources for the state police. As Abrahamsen and Williams eloquently put it, such distinctions are themselves constitutive of security practices:

> [We] do not have a 'state' pole that stands self-sufficiently in contrast to a 'private' pole. While it may be useful to use these two concepts as abstract parameters, in actuality the public-private relationship and its tensions are intrinsic to the place of the state in the security field".[26]

The two periods analyzed in this study were key moments in which reformers tried to redraw such distinctions in favor of state authority. However, this strategy could only succeed if reformers found effective ways to ensure operational primacy for the SLP in contexts where many actors vied for primacy. To capture this dynamic and thereby enhance our understanding of how historical continuities shaped international

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[24] Clifford Shearing, "Nodal Security", *Police Quarterly*, **8**, 1 (2005), pp. 57-63, p. 58.

[25] Rita Abrahamsen and Michael Williams, "Introduction: The Privatisation and Globalisation of Security in Africa", *International Relations*, **21**, 131 (2007), pp. 131-141; Abrahamsen and Williams, "Security Beyond the State: Global Security Assemblages in International Politics", *International Political Sociology*, **3**, 1 (2009), pp. 1-17; Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security Beyond the State*.

[26] Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security Beyond the State*, p. 116.

statebuilding, we must know more about how the various parts of the policing assemblage related to one another over time.

Disassembling indirect rule

Chapter 2 described the processes leading up to the nationalization of the SLP in 1954. The next section analyzes the effects of that choice, focusing on how policing changed as the CMF were removed to make way for the SLP. The CMF had been middlemen in a constellation where a state (SLP), a quasi-state (CMF) and a native force (Chiefdom Messengers) had partially overlapping authority and functions. While their removal was justified with reference to the need for "specialised knowledge" in "modern police duties",[27] it brought grave and unintended consequences. Summarized a government review from 1955:

> The clearest of all the year's lessons was that the arrangements made for carrying out of the non-police duties of the former Court Messenger Force […] were largely ineffective, and this *contributed in no small measure to the accumulation of the grievances which led to the demonstrations in November and December, 1955*. It also meant that information of political matters in the chiefdoms was unreliable and difficult to obtain. By virtue of their organisation, training and control the police are primarily an urban force, and the experience of the year showed the urgent need to build up an effective rural force for duties in the chiefdoms … [T]he abolition of the Court Messenger Force has undoubtedly resulted in a deterioration in the District Commissioner's ability to carry out his most important function, namely, the supervision of Native Courts and the settlement of chiefdom disputes.[28]

Instead of containing disorder and strengthening state territorial control before independence, the extension of the SLP to the Protectorate achieved the opposite. By substituting direct *formal* authority over rural areas for indirect control via the quasi-state CMF, policing became radically less effective in a matter of months. The government did in fact see the risk that the disappearance of the CMF could "create a

[27] *The Introduction of the Police Force in the Protectorate. Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1954.* Freetown Public Library.
[28] *Report on the Administration of the Provinces, 1955*. Freetown Public Library (my emphasis).

void" which would temporarily have to be filled by others.[29] However, it saw this mainly as an *administrative* problem of fulfilling the "non-police duties" the CMF had been responsible for. In their view, the solution was therefore to recruit "Prison Warders, Interpreters, Bailiffs, Rest-house Keepers and Office Messengers" as well as provide financial assistance to the Native Administrations so they could "improve the existing standard of chiefdom messengers".[30] As senior officers in the SLP noted in 1956, however, the main reason for the deterioration in rural policing was not the administrative void created by the abolishment of the CMF, but the fact that the state had cut itself off from intelligence: "[our] predecessors in the Provinces had an immense advantage, in that the Court Messenger Force was constantly going to and fro and picking up gossip as it went".[31] Whereas everyday policing in the Protectorate had been, in today's parlance, "intelligence-led", the policing of the widespread disturbances reverted to a reactive and highly coercive mode. In other words, even if indirect rule has been described as "decentralized despotism",[32] the attempt to replace it with direct rule brought more rather than less violence.

The repudiation of indirect rule involved a reassembly of the relations between state and nonstate policing agencies designed to give primacy to the former. This was conceived of as a straightforward process, and a British government commission expressed wonder that it did not go as smoothly as planned. "It is strange", it argued, "that [Chiefdom Messengers] should have persisted even after the abolition of the Court Messengers and at a time when the Central Government was busily engaged in arranging for the policing

[29] *The Introduction of the Police Force in the Protectorate. Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1954.* Freetown Public Library.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Minutes of Senior Officers' Conference, 1956.* Edward C. Eates private document.
[32] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

of the Protectorate by the peaceful 'constable'".[33] As part of this change, the only possible relationship between the SLP and nonstate agencies became seen as one of direct control. Indeed, a greater role for the Chiefdom Police was scrapped because of the demands it would place on the *state*. "An effective Chiefdom Messenger Force", it was found, would have to be "controlled by the SLP" and therefore required a "far more extensive deployment of the SLP than is at present contemplated".[34] Such control, moreover, was made all the more difficult now that the middle-man that had been the CMF was absent, and the 'distance' to the remaining policing structure became too great.

In other words, there is little doubt that the state, with its weakly developed infrastructural power, and now depriving itself of intelligence, oversaw a policing assemblage that became less, rather than more, effective once the CMF were removed. The collection of intelligence did not require a great deal of formal control or financial investment on the part of the state, but was circulated through an assemblage that drew its effectiveness from how it connected officials and quasi-officials inhabiting different social and governmental domains. This shows that the effectiveness of policing was actually *reduced* by an attempt to do statebuilding in a conventional sense; namely by promoting the state police as monopoly providers of internal security.

However, the connections between state and 'native' policing authorities were just one aspect of indirect rule. Turning now to diamond policing, we will see a field where the colonial state was much more willing to share authority and resources. Understanding the culture of shape-shifting which took hold in this period will be important in order to

[33] *Report of Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces*, p. 197.
[34] *Ibid.*

explain the difficulties British reformers experienced when they tried to separate legitimate from illegitimate policing tasks some four decades later.

Policing the diamond industry

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the first diamonds were discovered in Sierra Leone in the 1930s. Until the extension of the SLP's jurisdiction to the Protectorate in 1954 a particular problem persisted: traffickers in illegally mined diamonds could only be arrested at the end-point of their route, namely within the SLP's jurisdiction in Freetown.[35] The process whereby the number employed in diamond policing increased to well over half of the SLP's strength is an under-researched aspect of how Sierra Leone's booming private security sector developed. It clearly shows that distinctions between public/private and state/nonstate were porous long before the recent proliferation of foreign private security companies in the country. While this complex assemblage was initially designed to protect a commercial enterprise monopolized by the SLST, it soon defined policing in a much larger area. A key moment in this regard was the opening in 1955 of mining to licensed members of the public. This was done in an attempt to stem the explosion of illegal diamond mining (IDM) and illegal diamond buying (IDB). This legalization meant that a larger area had to be policed, giving rise to new forms of policing partnerships.

The example of Captain Wingrove, the first Commissioner of the Diamond Mines Police Force, nicely illustrates the porous boundary between state and private in the diamond policing assemblage. Wingrove was transferred from the Gold Coast, where diamond mining had begun in the early 1920s. He remained an awkward administrative

[35] L. van der Laan, *The Sierra Leone Diamonds: An Economic Study Covering the Years 1952-1961* (Oxford University Press, London, 1965).

case until he was hired by the SLST on a permanent basis in 1946. Firstly, there was the problem of how he should be paid. His salary had to be carefully calculated according to how many hours he had spent in the service of the SLST and the SLP, respectively. If he was called to police gold mining, a government-run activity that claimed 50 of his working days in 1935, those days had to be deducted from the sum SLST paid the government for his services.[36] International travel caused other problems. The SLST were eager to send Wingrove to Guinea to "show [the French] a few tips in connection with protection work or on the other hand receive some tips from them". The government, however, reasoned that "we cannot very well give Wingrove permission to visit French territory without our first informing the French authorities in the usual manner".[37] Eventually, permission was granted after Wingrove appealed to go "as a private person on the staff of SLST".

As this example shows, the jobs of the officers occupying the top positions in the diamond policing assemblage depended on juggling private and public capacities. Wingrove was not only employed by the SLST to police illegal digging and buying, he also served nationally as Assistant Commissioner of the CMF and as Assistant District Commissioner of the SLP for the areas of Bo, Kono, Kenema, and Kailahun. In other words, he simultaneously occupied positions in private, native and state institutions. Before the start of the diamond rush around 1950, the Commissioner was "engaged mostly on work throughout the whole of Sierra Leone with [his] Assistant concentrating more within the mining areas".[38]

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[36] Folder of unmarked correspondences between the Colonial Treasurer, the Governor, and the SLST between 1935-1948. National Archives, Freetown.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] *Sierra Leone Selection Trust: Notes on History. J.B. Morten, 1971*, LSE Archives, London.

The straddling of public and private domains was not limited to the top officers, but permeated the diamond policing assemblage as a whole. This is clearly visible in how diamond policing was funded and in the forms of specialization that developed over time. Until 1952, the Diamond Mines Police Force was described as "a Government body" that was "paid for by the SLST". In that same year, the force was considered "inadequate for the task in hand", and its Commissioner was placed in charge of forming the SLST's own Security Force. It counted at its establishment "93 security guards" and "24 temporary patrol men", personnel who had in all probability been taken over directly from the previous government force.[39]

The creation of a private security force gave the SLST more autonomy to organize security around the mines. However, one crucial capacity was retained in the hands of the state: the powers of arrest. The practical challenges this created were solved by extensive two-way transfers between the SLST force and the SLP to a degree where 'private' appeared as a misnomer. The most visible such transfer was of manpower. When the SLST force set up its own intelligence section in 1955, two of its officers were seconded to the SLP as Assistant Commissioners of the Special Constabulary. In return, "other special constables [from the SLP] were being paid for by SLST and formed a Force, members of which patrolled with the Security Force so conferring powers of arrest on the patrol".[40] This arrangement benefited both the SLP, who received free and qualified manpower to its newly created Special Constabulary, and the SLST, to whom joint patrols made it possible to effect arrests on the spot. Transfer of manpower, therefore, was in fact also a sharing of legal authority. This was necessary

[39] *Ibid.*
[40] Records show that the SLST paid for as many as 100 "Special Police" in 1957. *Sierra Leone Selection Trust: Notes on History. J.B. Morten, 1971*, LSE Archives, London.

because illicit mining and possessions of diamonds were classified as misdemeanors, a classification which left the SLST Security Force unauthorized to arrest diggers. If it patrolled alone it had to apprehend illicit miners and hand them over to the state police.

This was a cumbersome system that the SLST lobbied the state to change. In West Africa generally, the diamond companies "felt that the law, and often the police, were not strict enough to wipe out IDM".[41] However, in the final years of colonial rule the SLST noted a number of successes which served to further solidify the integration between state and private policing authority. When in 1956 IDM and possession of diamonds were reclassified as felonies, "the powers of search and arrest, legally held by the [governmental] Diamond Protection Force, were now transferred to the [SLST Security Force]".[42] The SLST also lobbied strongly for more severe penalties for IDM and IDB. The introduction in 1959 of a 12 month sentence upon conviction for IDM shows that it succeeded.[43] Even if the right to arrest was conferred upon the SLST Security Force, the company was eager to keep the state closely involved in security. From the SLST's perspective, another breakthrough came in 1958 when "after much effort", it eventually convinced the government acknowledged responsibility for protection of the mines and allocated a "greatly enlarged Police Force of 6 officers and 420 other ranks".[44] This meant yet another transfer of manpower since the "special police" previously financed by the SLST now returned as formal employees of the state.

This hybrid kind of policing, joining private and public agencies in fully integrated operations based on shared intelligence and resources, perfectly exemplifies the

[41] Peter Greenhalgh, *West African Diamonds, 1919-1983: An Economic History* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985), p. 193.
[42] *Sierra Leone Selection Trust: Notes on History. J.B. Morten, 1971*, LSE Archives, London.
[43] van der Laan, *The Sierra Leone Diamonds*.
[44] *Sierra Leone Selection Trust: Notes on History. J.B. Morten, 1971*, LSE Archives, London.

commodification and pluralization of policing that is often associated with neoliberalism. In the late colonial period, global influences on policing diversified from transfers of personnel and practices from other British colonies to partnerships with the police in places like "Antwerp, Amsterdam, Paris, Rome and Beirut".[45] Regular patrols were introduced on the Liberian border to detect smuggling.[46] A much higher level of technological sophistication was also added to policing, epitomized by regular aerial surveillance patrols. The operation of this policing assemblage in the late 1950s was described as follows:

> [The] SLST [has] constructed security posts on the important reserves. These posts are permanently manned by SLST Security Guards. When the Guards spot illicit diggers, they contact a central post by wireless, which in turn contacts the police. A police patrol and reinforcements of Security Guards then rush by car to the scene and disperse the illicit diggers. This new system based on wireless communication, Landrovers, and special security roads has made the Security Force of 700 Guards far more effective".[47]

There are striking continuities in this field today, as demonstrated by Abrahamsen and Williams' 2009 description of diamond policing in Sierra Leone:

> The assemblage represents a complex and multilayered arrangement in which global, transnational private security, state authorities, local police, and international police advisers are integrated in the planning and provision of security […] these are not clear-cut hierarchical or vertical relationships, where power and authority run only in one direction, or from one particular and clearly defined center. Instead, the authority and goals of the state are routinely exercised and negotiated with those of private security providers and their clients.[48]

For our purposes, the most interesting thing about late colonial diamond policing is that it showed an ambiguity in state strategies towards nonstate forms of policing. While the reliance upon a quasi-state force like the CMF in the provinces was judged inappropriate as independence approached, such scepticism was absent in the case of

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[45] *Reynolds News*: "The 50,000,000 Diamond Smugglers". 27.12. 1959. LSE Archives, London.
[46] *Annual Report of the Police Force, 1957*. Freetown Public Library.
[47] van der Laan, *The Sierra Leone Diamonds*, p. 57.
[48] Abrahamsen and Williams, "Security Beyond the State: Global Security Assemblages in International Politics", p. 8.

the SLST's private security force – even if that force was made up of the very same people who had previously filled the ranks of the CMF. The migration of personnel between 'public' and 'private' positions created occasional administrative headaches, but it was not perceived to threaten the integrity of state policing. On the contrary, the state was eager to reap the benefits such shape-shifting brought with it in the form of intelligence and access to technology, even if it meant taking on a supplementary role. Thus, while the state's overall goal was to create SLP primacy, it realized that it could let a private provider do most of the work.

Chiefdom police: Colonial hangovers?

The account of the sources of Sierra Leone's global security assemblage has made it clear that colonial reformers were unaware of the contribution the quasi-state CMF made to the effectiveness of policing overall. The account of diamond policing showed that a precedent was set early on for dense entanglement between public and private in the field of policing.

As the UK returned, it no longer had the stakes in securing commercial interests in Sierra Leone that it had held in colonial times. It seems that this position, coupled with the poor condition they found the SLP in at their arrival, placed the reformers in a somewhat freer position than their colonial predecessors to devise forms of policing partnerships that encompassed traditional and commercial policing actors. In what follows, I will consider these issues in order, starting with how the only surviving pillar of indirect rule – the chiefdom police – was dealt with.

The issue of how the reformers approached the chiefdom police must be understood in relation to the debate about traditional authority that took place in Sierra Leone's post-

conflict environment. This debate focused on how the chiefdom governance system ought to be regenerated, if at all. Some worried about the consequences of empowering chiefs anew. Drawing comparisons with Ghana, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire, Paul Richards argued that a shift in power away from chiefs to rural youth was necessary to prevent future conflicts.[49] Others argued that the chiefdom system retained a high level of popular legitimacy and that a reconstruction model which did not take it into account would be perceived as irrelevant by the majority of the population.[50] "On a day-to-day level", argued Edward Sawyer, "a host of grassroots institutions such as chiefs, police, village elders, secret societies and even ritual practitioners will be [as important as the state] in helping to resolve conflicts and maintain stability and peace".[51] Baker has argued repeatedly that the state police were but "one of many security actors and rarely provide[d] the everyday elements of that service".[52]

Despite the undisputed relevance of nonstate policing groups, the recent reform was, as indicated in the beginning, heavily focused on the SLP. The reluctance to include nonstate actors in reform seems puzzling given DFID's recognition that what they called "nonstate justice and security systems" dealt with "the vast majority of disputes" in developing countries, especially in rural and poor urban areas.[53] They also acknowledged that these systems had a number of advantages: they were cheap; settled matters faster; were more accessible; had "cultural relevance"; and were responsive to poor people's concerns. Given the emphasis on police reform as precisely a measure to

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[49] Richards, "To Fight or to Farm?".
[50] Fanthorpe, "On the Limits of Liberal Peace".
[51] Edward Sawyer, "Remove or Reform? A Case for (Restructuring) Chiefdom Governance in Sierra Leone", *African Affairs*, **107**, 428 (2008), pp. 387-403, p. 387.
[52] Baker, *Security in Post-Conflict Africa*, p. 13; Baker, "Where Do People Turn to for Policing in Sierra Leone?".
[53] DFID, 'Non-State Justice and Security Systems'.

reduce poverty and spur development, one would expect that reformers were eager to reconstruct these systems and capitalize on their benefits; either by formally incorporating them into the public policing system or by strengthening their autonomous capacity to deliver policing. However, only after the bulk of funding and training was given did plans emerge for an "initial research phase" where the roles of chiefs and the chiefdom police in delivering security and justice were to be charted.[54]

In the last chapter, we saw how the relapse of conflict convinced reformers that a strong coercive SLP capacity was necessary to make the LNP model work. Conflict powerfully shaped policy towards nonstate authority as well. What Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission referred to as "an astonishing '*factional fluidity*' among the different militias and armed groups prosecuting the war"[55] fuelled a view that collated all nonstate policing agencies as violent contenders to the state.[56] A CPDTF report from April 1999 gave a vivid image of the situation in Freetown shortly after the attack:

> Put at its simplest the SLP is not effective and policing has taken a back seat. The streets of Freetown are saturated with soldiers manning check points, ill disciplined aggressive armed Kamajors from the Civil Defence Force (CDF) and youths, not in any form of uniform and frequently without any means of identification, from the Civil Defence Unit (CDU) […] Notwithstanding the GoSL published position or the desire of the vast majority of Sierra Leonians [sic], the SLP does not have primacy for the maintenance of law and order and are unlikely to be able to achieve police primacy from the military and para-military forces in the near future.[57]

However, the fear of violence or disloyalty did not seem decisive when it came to the chiefdom police. Instead it was their helplessness that struck Adrian Horn: "we looked very closely at the chiefdom police. What you had was a very small number of very old, unpaid – I say very old, we met some of them and they *were* old – they were a hangover

[54] Justice Sector Development Programme, 'Project Memorandum 4 April 2004' (JSDP, Freetown, 2004).
[55] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 'Witness to Truth'.
[56] Baker, *Security in Post-Conflict Africa*.
[57] *Assessment of the Sierra Leone Police, April 1999.* Adrian Horn private document.

from colonial days".[58] Baker later corroborated this view, describing the chiefdom police as "a shadow of their former selves".[59] However, it was not just the hamstrung situation in the chiefdom police that made reformers sceptical, but also the form of authority they represented. Beyond the suggestion that the few remaining chiefdom police officers were quaint old-timers who had literally stayed in their jobs since the 1950s, Horn was suggesting that they belonged to an outdated system of "200 and something odd kingdoms".[60] If they were so important, he reasoned, "they should be part of the national police". On this view, the fact that they had not already been integrated into the SLP seemed to be a reason why they could safely remain marginal. This view reflected a common attitude among donors to see chiefdoms as "beyond redemption" and to assume that they would "eventually wither away" as the state was reconstructed.[61] Yet, some top Sierra Leonean officers lamented the lack of attention to the chiefdom police. One Assistant Inspector General (AIG) emphasized the effects on the rural poor: "I think it hurt reform, because not much emphasis was put in that area. What we observe now is that the formal way of settling disputes in courts is expensive, and people in rural areas don't really understand how this system works".[62] A Sierra Leonean consultant went even further, claiming that "it was a very big mistake" not to consider the chiefdom police seriously since "those guys have more respect than the police".[63]

Ultimately, an important reason why the chiefdom police remained neglected was that the reformers felt unsure who they were and where their loyalty lay: "there was a lot of

[58] Adrian Horn, personal interview, Oxford 8.10.2010.
[59] Baker, "Where Do People Turn to for Policing in Sierra Leone?".
[60] Adrian Horn, personal interview, Oxford 8.10.2010.
[61] Jackson, "Reshuffling an Old Deck of Cards", p. 97.
[62] Morie Lengor, personal interview, Freetown 1.12.2009.
[63] James Vincent, personal interview, Freetown 10.4.2010.

confusion between chiefdom police and sort of warlord staff, militia, Civil Defence Force, kamajors, all this sort of thing. So in my mind, it was much too difficult [to] handle at that time."[64] What united this very diverse "sort of thing" was in fact little else than that they were not the SLP. Nevertheless, the chiefdom police, beyond being in a fairly decrepit state, were made even more unlikely candidates for reform by the fact that they were tarred with the same brush as the CDF. The latter were strongly distrusted by the British consultants. According to Ray England, they "were always at loggerheads with the police. If they could kill a policeman, they would kill a policeman. [...] They were a government organization but they did not like the police".[65] Despite the patent difference between the CDF and the chiefdom police, the state/nonstate distinction took on particular force in the complex and shifting situation the reformers found themselves in. This reinforced the commitment to focus on the SLP. The state/nonstate framework was particularly powerful not just because 'nonstate' implied danger and deviousness, but also because it coincided with the modern/traditional distinction known from the late colonial period. An adviser working with reform of the chiefdom police noted that "there's always the tension between development and maintaining tradition. Most times our approach to [traditional matters] has been marked by that tension." The British, he said, "look at it as inferior, as something that doesn't belong".[66]

Consequently, very little was done with regards to the chiefdom police until a JSDP pilot training project was started in the district of Moyamba in early 2010. The project,

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[64] Adrian Horn, personal interview, Oxford 8.10.2010.
[65] Ray England, personal interview, London 3.2.2011. However, the animosity between the CDF and the SLP was primarily fuelled by political and regional tensions – the CDF was almost exclusively made up of Mendes loyal to the SLPP, and the armed wing of the SLP was known for its loyalty to the APC – which fit poorly into an image of state versus nonstate forces.
[66] Momo Turay, personal interview, Freetown 30.4.2010.

which involved provision of uniforms and training in powers of arrest and how to exercise them, appeared as a response to the evident shortcomings of the SLP at that time, particularly their poor territorial reach. The same adviser explained that "the state police are limited in number, they cannot be everywhere". The chiefdom police, he continued, were "sensitive to the movement of the people" and were "more likely" than the SLP to have "basic intelligence information".[67] The pilot project was indeed lauded by top officers in the SLP, who cited their "depend[ence] on chiefdom police in carrying out some important functions".[68]

In other words, it seems clear that the Sierra Leonean leadership were much more open to developing cooperation with the chiefdom police than were their British mentors. This willingness was shared by officers throughout the country. An officer in the Northern city of Kabala told me his station could "call on [the chiefdom police] when there are elections. They augment us."[69] While the salience of chiefdom police depended heavily on local politics and the financial strength of the chiefdom, the relations between the SLP and the chiefdom police were generally characterized by mutual respect for their respective jurisdictions. Serious crimes were routinely referred to the SLP if they were first reported to the chiefdom authorities, and the chiefdom police would occasionally assist in investigations. Interviews revealed that it was not uncommon for chiefdom police to be recruited into the SLP, further strengthening relations between the two domains. The cooperation also extended to Sierra Leone's secret societies. Recruiting initiated members of secret societies such as the Poro gave

[67] *Ibid*.
[68] Francis Munu, cited in *All Africa* 17.5.2010.
[69] L.K. Conteh, personal interview, Kabala 14.4.2010.

the SLP privileged access to crime scenes and persons who would otherwise be off limits. As the OSD commander of the Eastern Province, a Poro member, told me:

> As a police officer I have the right to apprehend people in the Poro society. If a non-initiate goes in, it would be *he* who was arrested. If they hold a hostage, as they did in Kailahun, I can go in and negotiate. Not as a police officer, but as a member. So you're acting in a dual capacity.[70]

The fact that even high-ranking officers in the SLP had little trouble thinking of themselves simultaneously as state officials and members of secret societies shows that partnership between chiefdom police and SLP did not confound either's sense of loyalty or jurisdiction. Such partnerships continued to be important regardless of the lack of attention to the chiefdom police during reform.

The (non-)regulation of private security

If British donors slowly started arguing that the chiefdom police represented potential gains in justice, intelligence and territorial governance, the same thing could not be said for the field of private security. Senior officers of the SLP, while generally showering praise on the police reform, agreed on one thing: PSCs represented both a problem and untapped potential for the police. Notably, this potential was also recognized by the SSR doctrine:

> [T]he growth of the private security industry is a global trend that could produce beneficial results. If healthy, the sector can allow scarce public resources earmarked for security service provision to be usefully redirected for other purposes, including the public provision of security to those who cannot afford it by private means".[71]

Yet, reformers did not appear eager to capitalize on those potential gains. Relations between the police and PSCs, one senior officer told me, had not "developed they way I

[70] A.M. Kailie, personal interview, Kenema 20.4.2010.
[71] OECD, 'OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform', p. 211f.

would have liked. We hardly meet with them, we hardly talk to them, we don't get information from them. They all just do their own thing. If we could properly engage them we could get a lot of valuable information".[72] The Inspector General asked me to imagine the problems the SLP would have in protecting private property alone, and argued that PSCs "complement us". But he also admitted that there are problems:

> [W]e are worried about […] their method of recruitment. Because under the National Security Act they are not under the purview of the police but the ONS [Office of National Security], and they are not able to manage them. To me that's a big problem. Well, most of [the PSCs] are working with criminals. And at times, we do arrest them, these private security people. And at times, even when you ask their employers – they have fake addresses, they cannot account for them. If they were under me directly […] we could have been in front of criminal activity.[73]

The view that the SLP would have benefited both from closer co-operation and better regulation of the PSCs is interesting because it was aimed at the same benefit that came from the colonial nonstate partnerships reviewed above: intelligence. Ironically, the SLP's ability to draw upon privately collected intelligence seems to have been a casualty of efforts to enhance intelligence sharing between *state* agencies. In 2001, the new "security architecture" was crowned by two institutional innovations responsible for intelligence gathering and coordination; the Central Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU) and the Office of National Security (ONS). However, these agencies were created "before any formal strategy or supporting legislation was produced". In this hurried process, only a "late inclusion of paragraphs relating to the control and licensing of private security companies" was made in drafts of the National Intelligence and Security Act.[74] The final version of this Act set up a comprehensive licensing process where a prospective PSC should provide information about the company as well as on the financial and other resources. The ONS should then grant or decline license based

[72] Morie Lengor, personal interview, Freetown 1.12.2009.
[73] Brima Acha Kamara, personal interview, Freetown 7.4.2010.
[74] Albrecht and Jackson, 'Security System Transformation', p. 72.

on a number of considerations including “the public interest”.[75] Given the booming and highly visible private security market, the public interest was arguably significant. Even so, a British ONS employee conceded that ONS control of PSCs was still “embryonic”: they have a “statutory duty to register but we don’t do much else”.[76]

The persistence of conflict along with problems in the state security sector goes a long way in explaining the low priority initially given to the regulation of and possible cooperation with PSCs. However, the lack of initiative seemed to reflect a more general indifference, if not outright hostility, towards nonstate operators. When asked about relations between the SLP and PSCs, the same British ONS advisor told me: “I think that private security is given far too much weight. People like you and me give too much weight to them. I'd rather focus on politicization of state security. If we talk about coups and stuff like that, we're wasting our time. Let's talk about real threats”.[77] As we have seen, however, the colonial state ignored at its peril the contribution nonstate and decentralized policing agencies made towards stability. While the recent reform left an elaborate structure of regional and district security commissions that reported to the ONS in place, ways to tap into intelligence collected by private or other nonstate entities were not made part of this framework. SSR in Sierra Leone was therefore predicated upon *direct* rather than indirect rule.

[75] *The National Security and Central Intelligence Act, 2002*. http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2002-10.pdf. (accessed 24.5.2011).
[76] Gary Horlacker, personal interview, Freetown 27.5.2010.
[77] *Ibid*.

Tapping into the market

Obviously, the unwillingness to engage with PSCs did not mean that the SLP were wholly disconnected from the sphere of commercial security. Their *state-sanctioned* involvement, however, was restricted to the OSDs protection of the perimeter of the diamond mines in Kono.[78] In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on a more mundane aspect of the involvement of the SLP in private security provision that was subject to very similar negotiations of authority but that has received very little attention; namely the OSD's protection of banks and local businesses. Their role in this area was an early point of contestation between the British reformers and SLP officers. The former strongly felt that this was a task businesses should take care of themselves. The latter had supplemented their incomes by such work for years, and were reluctant to give it up. Interestingly, the reformers' view that protection of private businesses was an inappropriate way to use the state's resources was complicated by another position of theirs: that no other agent than the police should be armed. For instance, several applications by Koidu Holdings, the diamond mining concession holder in Kono, for permission to arm its own internal security force were rejected "in decisions that were strongly influenced by international donors and especially the government's police and security advisors".[79] The British policy of reserving armed policing for "static protection" of government buildings, public works and the like, on the one hand, and the unwillingness to allow armed PSCs, on the other, ultimately meant that the state washed its hands of how protection of private businesses was actually provided. This, as we will see, had the effect not of removing armed police from the private sphere, but

[78] For an excellent analysis of this arrangement, see Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security Beyond the State*.
[79] Abrahamsen and Williams, "Security Beyond the State: Global Security Assemblages in International Politics", p. 8.

rather of increasing private demand for their service.

Initially, the British reform team assessed that 245 OSD personnel out of the estimated total of 1200-1700 were employed in the protection of "traders, businessmen, shops, offices, garages, [and] factories".[80] This was described as problematic:

Some of the [SSD] roles are inappropriate, particularly the reinforcement of ECOMOG units and the protection of private individuals and property. In the latter case, private security companies should be employed by those concerned for their safety. The withdrawal of police guards will produce outcries and protests from those concerned, but security measures recommended later in this report should go some way to reassuring them on their safety.[81]

Presumably, the reassuring measures referred to in the report would be the creation of a Static Protection Group as part of the reformed OSD. However, the Utilities Section of this group was to protect "vital economic and communication facilities", not small or middle-sized businesses. Though not spelled out in the report, the problem reformers saw was that "the majority of the SSD in that role were looking after Lebanese businessmen and people who should not have protection at all".[82] However, wrestling officers back from Lebanese businessmen was difficult because the Lebanese made sure "they were all fed and got accommodation" in a time where, as England acknowledged, "the police didn't get paid".[83] Even so, England took decisive action to counter such activity:

We would go to location, having contacted the subject, the principal and say we were coming to remove the guards. And of course there would be arguments and so forth. And we would just take them away. And [the principal] would always try to entice them back again, so we made

[80] *A Report on the Special Security Division of the Sierra Leone Police. 16.10.1999.* Ray England private document.
[81] *Ibid*.
[82] Ray England, personal interview, London 3.2.2011
[83] *Ibid.*

sure that if the policeman went back again, we would post him up the country. So we made it difficult for them.[84]

These interventionist measures were justified with reference to the need to reserve manpower for "essential tasks" in a situation where the OSD were significantly short of their planned strength. Even so, they did not stop at making sure OSD personnel stuck to their official duties during working hours. They also took firm steps to counter moonlighting: "people doing their jobs as policemen and when they were off duty doing jobs for Lebanese".[85] For the sake of imposing a clear separation between "public" and "private", reformers were willing to risk significant discontent among officers who relied on commercial work for their salaries, and were in effect performing their official duties for free. In this light, it is unsurprising that moonlighting remained a problem that the reformers, by their own admission, could never solve.

If these sanctions failed to keep the police within what the British regarded as their appropriate domain, the Sierra Leonean leadership found a way to capitalize on the situation. While private work had long been regarded as a necessity, the SLP decided to formalize the practice around 2008. They did so by redirecting neoliberal management techniques designed to streamline the police organization to legitimize and stabilize connections that the British actively discouraged. The Assistant Inspector General in charge of the Eastern region explained how it works:

We used to [provide private protection] for free, but we came up with a revenue generating system. We started charging. […] We assess security needs and allocate security day and night according to assessments. Everybody from the general public can apply [but] some applications

[84] *Ibid.*
[85] *Ibid.*

we decline, those that are not under a security threat. […] Everybody would want an OSD anyway.[86]

In this way, the SLP were able to use the legal monopoly they enjoyed on the right to bear arms to enter the thriving private security market. In so doing, they also helped break down the barrier between private and public domains that the British considered essential to impose discipline and loyalty in the SLP. In this "revenue generating system", a flat fee of Le 500,000 (ca £85) was charged for one month's rent of an armed OSD officer. Out of this sum, the officer himself received Le 100,000. This not only provided a badly needed source of revenue for the SLP after British operational support had all but stopped, it also changed the incentives facing recruits. Firstly, banks were located in urban and populous areas, in other words in attractive places to serve. Combined with the status that came with bearing the maroon beret of the OSD, the new revenue management policy therefore boosted recruitment to the unit. It also opened the door for a regulated absorption of armed state personnel into the service of private enterprises. However, even if the SLP informed their clients that the OSD officer could be recalled in case of an emergency, this arrangement created some discontent. The Local Unit Commander of the OSD in Koidu lamented the consequences it had for his operations:

[I]f you train 50 men to secure the state, and the private companies absorb 40, do you think the remaining officers can take care of the job? Too many officers from the OSD are tending to private security at any point […] I would like to gather them further here [in the station]. I would also like to indoctrinate them to the fact that they are a state security service. They are more concerned with individual crises than with national crises.[87]

The commander's criticism perfectly reflected the British reformers' rationale for discouraging the use of police officers for private protection and therefore seemed to

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[86] Al-Sheikh Kamara, personal interview, Kenema 20.4.2011.
[87] Amos Kargbo, personal interview, Koidu 17.4.10

vindicate their policy of punishing officers caught hiring out their services. However, it can just as easily be seen as an innovative improvisation in the absence of a plan for how the entrenched relations between the SLP and private businesses could be regulated instead of severed. That such measures cropped up was unsurprising in a situation where there was an ongoing struggle to pay the SLP decently and regularly.

The example also illustrates what we noted in connection with the removal of the CMF; that promoting the state police as monopoly providers of internal security can make state policing *less* effective. At one level, the problem looks like one of poor translation; the Sierra Leonean leadership "misunderstood" what revenue management was supposed to do, and employed it to drain the police of manpower instead of consolidating state capacity. On the other hand, they did little more than what is already common in the West: standardize the terms under which police officers can be hired for private use.[88] Moreover, by charging a flat and publicly known rate the SLP could also been seen as taking action towards another statebuilding goal, namely reducing corruption. Generating official revenue from hiring out personnel would presumably help the SLP pay salaries on time and thereby remove the biggest incentive for corruption. An early British stock-taking report on the state of the SLP illustrated how insufficient pay was connected with corruption and a poor public image:

> Police Personnel often ask complainants for money in the various Police Stations. [We] view this act as the key factor responsible for tarnishing the image of the Sierra Leone Police. However, from personal observations, the Police lack the necessary logistics like stationery to carry out their duties effectively without demanding money from the public. It is an open secret that the salary paid to the Police is insufficient to even feed a family of three adequately for two weeks, let alone for the whole month. The Police investigator cannot subtract his meagre salary

[88] For instance, British police forces made a reported £17 million in 2009 hiring out police officers to supermarkets, shopping centres, motorway stations, schools and other clients. *The Mirror*: "Police Forces Make Fortunes Hiring Out Officers". 9.5.2010. http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2010/05/09/police-for-hire-115875-22245055/ (accessed 17.6.2010).

to buy pen and papers for the use of the public. So Police Officers resort to asking whosoever brings a case for investigation.[89]

In this light, the issue did not seem to be an unusual or misguided use of liberal governance techniques by the Sierra Leonean leadership. Rather, this unexpected appropriation appeared as an adjustment to two assumptions the British made about policing. The first was a vision of the state as a clearly delineated and self-sufficient entity capable of crowding out private actors in the provision of policing. This is a tall order. As Jonny Steinberg has convincingly argued in the case of post-Apartheid South Africa, such a role would "require breaking down a generations-old architecture of security and protection. It would require bringing a body of unprecedented authority into township life, a body elevated above existing security markets and thus able to break their logic". Failing that, the police were left to "negotiate [their] way into existing markets, becoming yet another player among many".[90] This was precisely what the SLP leadership aimed to do.

The second and more peculiar assumption was that neoliberal market-based governance techniques could be introduced to realize the same vision of the state. While such techniques were introduced in the West to force supposedly hierarchical, inefficient and self-centered bureaucracies to operate like firms, these techniques were here applied to make an organization that in significant ways *already* operated like a firm act more like a self-contained organization. In other words, market-based techniques were applied to disentangle the SLP from its involvement in the private security market. That the SLP, once free from direct supervision by British consultants, chose to use these techniques to consolidate links with private businesses meant they were working *with* the grain

[89] *Final Report on Strategy for Policing Freetown.* Adrian Horn private document, date unknown.
[90] Steinberg, *Thin Blue*, p. 98.

rather than against it. Entrepreneurially deploying these techniques to benefit from existing links with private businesses, SLP officers violated a particular notion of how a state like Sierra Leone should comport itself, while being perfectly in step with Western state practice.

Conclusion

The public-private boundary in Sierra Leone was never defined enough to offer reliable guidance to how security was provided in the country. This did not mean that the boundary was unimportant. This chapter started by asking what the effects were of two opposing strategies. The first was the attempt to clarify the boundary by imposing boundaries between the SLP and nonstate security agents. The second was to enlist the latter in the policing of specific issues, accepting a high degree of overlap of authority and resources. It has shown that colonial and recent reform responded to the complex intermingling of public, private, and native policing authority in different ways. As independence approached, colonial reformers felt that the CMF, although credited with "loyalty, courage [and] intimate local knowledge", had become an obstacle to modern and professional policing.[91] On the other hand, they were quite happy to integrate the SLP ever more closely with private actors to respond to unrest and smuggling in diamond areas.

This pragmatism in relation to nonstate policing was notably absent in the second period. As British reformers returned, they placed great emphasis on establishing a clear separation between private and public, strongly discouraging SLP officers to supplement their incomes by private security work in their spare time. The chiefdom

[91] *The Introduction of the Police Force in the Protectorate. Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1954*. Freetown Public Library.

police were long neglected, partly because of a general suspicion of the intentions of nonstate actors in the unstable post-conflict environment. In short, the integration of the SLP in private and native domains was perceived as a threat to the SLP's primacy rather than as an opportunity to make policing more effective. The problem as reformers perceived it was therefore not so much to overcome the colonial legacy of a "bifurcated state",[92] as to *discourage* the multiplicity of links between the SLP and nonstate policing agents. For its part, the Sierra Leonean SLP leadership seemed to live well enough with intermeshed domains and lamented in particular the unwillingness to control or cooperate with PSCs.

The historically decreasing willingness to engage with nonstate policing actors in Sierra Leone allows us to return to the impact of understandings of sovereignty, security and statehood on strategies of reform. Chapter 4 discussed the lack of clear advice in the SSR doctrine concerning appropriate levels of force. In the field of legitimate authority, on the other hand, the SSR doctrine appeared to carry much clearer policy implications. Thus, SSR has been criticized for prioritizing state security forces over commercial, traditional or voluntary security actors, even if the latter actually play a more important role than the former.[93] This bias has been attributed to the fact that "security as a concept and set of concrete practices lies at the very heart of how we conceive of state sovereignty", and that sovereignty is grounded in a Weberian understanding of the "state as a monopoly of the legitimate means of violence within a given territory". This

[92] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.
[93] Abrahamsen and Williams, "Security Sector Reform: Bringing the Private in"; Bruce Baker and Erik Scheye, "Multi-Layered Justice and Security Delivery in Post-Conflict and Fragile States", *Conflict, Security & Development*, **7**, 4 (2007), pp. 503-528; Egnell and Halden, "Laudable, Ahistorical and Overambitious".

is "not an academic construct", Albrech and Buur argue, "but permeates most discussions of SSR by policy-makers, and the approach of practitioners."[94]

In other words, understandings of sovereignty and statehood biased against commercial or traditional security actors appeared to be powerfully fused in the doctrine of SSR, with clear effects on reform. Albrecht and Buur suggest that one reason for this bias is that "there is still no clearly developed language for discussing nonstate actor inclusion in police reforms".[95] However, this chapter has shown that there has been a long history of experimentation with officially recognized forms of nonstate policing in Sierra Leone. The language in which these forms were discussed was that of indirect rule; fundamentally a discourse on how the state could be made to rule more effectively.[96] If reformers lacked a language in which to discuss what to do with nonstate authorities, in other words, it was not because such a language never existed.

While an exaggerated belief in the state's ability to provide security may partly explain why reforms paid disproportionate attention to the SLP, another part is found in the widespread belief that African states suffered from serious *shortcomings*. More specifically, the notion of statehood at work in the second reform was strongly shaped by the postcolonial diagnosis of problems caused by neopatrimonialism. As we saw in Chapter 3, neopatrimonialism was characterized by "insecurity about the role and behavior of state institutions (and agents)".[97] Such insecurity became seen by donors as "a functional threat to the peaceful political development of African states and the

[94] Peter Albrecht and Lars Buur, "An Uneasy Marriage: Non-State Actors and Police Reform", *Policing and Society*, **19**, 4 (2009), pp. 390-405, p. 392.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 399f.
[96] See Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*.
[97] Erdmann and Ulf Engel, "Neopatrimonialism Reconsidered", p. 97.

development of societies in general".[98] Constructing a police force with sharply delineated roles – in this case most clearly expressed in what they were *not* supposed to do – made sense as a strategy to increase the calculability of the state's actions and reduce the informality seen as the major flaw of the African state. The emergence of anti-corruption as a prominent goal of police reform is the clearest expression of how such revised notions of statehood influenced practical strategies.

As this chapter has argued, however, the logical antidote of strengthening the nominally legal-rational bureaucratic element was pursued at the price of neglecting the complex web of relations the SLP was situated in. The overarching goal of police primacy had the effect of rendering suspect not only traditional and commercial actors claiming to provide or require security, but also the connections between the SLP and these actors. Since these connections were deeply entrenched, and actually helped keep the state police afloat, the strategy of training and professionalizing the SLP to be monopoly providers of policing meant that a key dimension of policing was left outside the scope of reform. That such links persisted and were even encouraged by the SLP leadership is testimony to the limits of reform. But it also shows that reforms are likely to have significant effects that cannot easily be written down as either progress or setbacks towards a goal of producing 'Weberian' state.

[98] *Ibid.*

Chapter 6: The subtext of international intervention

> You can have a British person as the head of the army and he would be welcomed. You could have a British person as the headmaster and he would be welcomed. And it's all part of this feeling that in the colonial times things worked well and that successively so many Sierra Leonean governments and people had disappointed them.[1]

Introduction

So far, this study has analyzed how the historical legacy of colonialism shaped strategies of police reform in the fields of force, territoriality, and legitimate authority. In this chapter, focus is shifted from policing to how the colonial past shaped UK-Sierra Leone relations more generally. Sierra Leone is occasionally noted in academic literature for the exceptional "nostalgia with which much of the population regarded colonial rule".[2] However, the character and significance of this nostalgia is rarely elaborated on. This chapter asks: How did representations of the colonial past constrain or facilitate reforms as the former colonizer returned after 40 odd years?

Two main arguments will be made. The first is that representations of colonialism informed personal relationships and professional perceptions in a way that greatly buttressed the (re-)introduction of a British-style policing model. One interpretation of this seemingly successful transfer would be that the British reformers exploited their position as representatives of the largest donor to force through large-scale institutional

[1] Peter Penfold, personal interview, Oxford 19.10.2010.
[2] Clapham, 'Sierra Leone: The Global-Local Politics of State Collapse'.

change. However, the image of imposition fits the Sierra Leonean case poorly. There were many in and outside the SLP who were familiar with, and wished for, the same model. This wish was not coincidental, but stemmed from an identity as professionals belonging to an organization recognized to have British origins. To capture this tendency, I introduce the notion of the colonial past as a subtext. Rather more coincidentally, but no less importantly, President Kabbah had detailed personal experience with colonial policing, an experience he remembered fondly. This helped secure support for the proposed model from the highest political level.

The second and more theoretical argument advanced here concerns how the historical relationship between Britain and Sierra Leone shaped their bilateral relations during post-conflict reconstruction. It is argued that sovereignty was not primarily an attribute (of autonomy) the Sierra Leonean executive guarded against foreign influence, but a medium through which it sought to integrate its former colonizer into domestic politics. Contrary to what we would expect from the image of sovereignty as a shield the weak use to protect themselves from the strong,[3] the Sierra Leonean government seemed *less* anxious to comply with notions of sovereignty than its British counterpart. In other words, the colonial subtext could be mobilized by the Sierra Leonean executive for purposes quite different than the introduction of a particular policing model. Prolonging direct British involvement in the security sector for as long as possible was both a way for the Sierra Leonean government to ensure continued funding and an insurance policy against coups. The activation of the colonial past, both rhetorically and through the reproduction of a colonial authority structure, therefore offered opportunities to the weaker as well as to the stronger party. I use this dynamic to substantiate Bayart's claim

[3] Ayoob, "Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty".

that "sovereignty in Africa is exercised through the creation and management of dependence".[4] This allows us to return to the sovereignty debate from Chapter 1 with a fresh perspective, and leads up to the discussion in Chapter 7 about how the SLP were able to use the status as a success story of intervention to expand their international network.

These arguments challenge two currently dominating understandings of international intervention: the donor representation of international statebuilding as an equal partnership, and the academic and political critique of international statebuilding as a form of neocolonial imposition of policies that its recipients would be better off without.[5] Against this dichotomy, I aim to illustrate how colonialism can be a historically constituted subtext shaping how current interventions play out.

The chapter begins by showing what can be gained by conceptualizing the imperial as a social subtext rather than a deep rationality inherent in Western-led projects of social engineering. Next, I discuss whether the seemingly positive memories of colonialism in Sierra Leone were unique to that country. Comparison is difficult because little attention has been paid to how the colonial past figured in relations between hosts and partners of international interventions. To substantiate what the colonial subtext looked like in Sierra Leone and thereby make comparison easier for similarly oriented studies, I go on to describe the narrative on independence as manifested in newspaper debates on the yearly celebration of independence. This gives a valuable, but unavoidably partial, insight into how people outside the government and bureaucracy thought about their

[4] Bayart, "Africa in the World", p. 228.
[5] Bickerton, 'State-Building: Exporting State Failure'; Cunliffe, 'Reconstructing Sovereignty'; Nehal Bhuta, "Against State-Building", *Constellations*, **15**, 4 (2008), pp. 517-542.

country's colonial history. To prepare the theoretical ground for my analysis of how the colonial past could be mobilized to facilitate police reform, I proceed by briefly discussing Bayart's concept of 'extraversion'. This concept describes a dynamic where a government compensates for a position of weakness by deriving resources from the external environment. Finally, the chapter discusses how the colonial past informed the relations between senior British reformers and SLP officers. This shows that the subtext empowered British reformers to do things their Sierra Leonean colleagues could not get away with. I close by suggesting what my arguments imply for our understanding of sovereignty and local ownership in international interventions.

The imperial as subtext

As was mentioned above, scattered comments in academic work have pointed to the Sierra Leonean nostalgic attitudes towards colonial rule. What did these attitudes look like and how were they important? A recent BBC news report pondered the welcoming of direct British influence in the country, and the widespread talk about its "family ties" with the former colonial master. "There is something unsettling, something counterintuitive, about this enthusiasm for foreign interference", thought the reporter, remembering how in his own lifetime "Africa freed itself from the shackles of colonial domination".[6] Directly or indirectly, the significance of the colonial relationship was recognized by British and Sierra Leonean respondents alike. "I never thought in my life that I would end up in Africa doing a colonial police chief's job", admitted Keith Biddle.[7] "We handed over sovereignty to them and it went to shambles", another British adviser told me. "People remember the British fondly, with rose-tinted glasses […] As a

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[6] *BBC Newsnight*: "Can Britain Lift Sierra Leone Out of Poverty?" 23.6.2010. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/8754659.stm (accessed 14.9.11).
[7] Keith Biddle, personal interview, Crewe, 27.10.09.

white British male, when I worked for the High Commission, we were regarded as the father of the nation".[8] Prompted about the period of British predominance in his organization, a senior SLP officer put the matter in perspective: "I would say: If this is colonialism, you have to judge it against the period before".[9] The former Vice President, who chaired the Police Council, explained the nature of police reform in no uncertain terms: "The only model we knew was the British model [...] So everything was British, and the aim was to come back to that".[10]

Little guidance can be found in the substantial scholarship on post-conflict reconstruction about the significance of such views. While it is understandable that the grey literature is light on colonial history, this line of inquiry has rarely been pursued in scholarship on intervention either. This is in large part due to the strong politicization of terms like empire and imperialism.[11] As Chesterman argued, the mere attempt at comparing current interventions with colonial practices is often taken as a charge of neo-colonialism or imperialism.[12] This does not mean that everyone has shunned such comparisons. However, the most sophisticated attempts have focused on the *philosophical* affinities between current intervention and imperialism, and not on actor-level understandings of such connections.[13] On this view, statebuilding, peacebuilding or post-conflict reconstruction were united with imperialism by a civilizing spirit deeply ingrained in the enterprise of Western-led social engineering.

[8] Dave Thomas, personal interview, Freetown 28.5.2010.
[9] F.O. Sesay, personal interview, Freetown, 7.4.2010.
[10] Solomon Berewa, personal interview, Freetown 12.6.2010.
[11] See Daniel Nexon and Thomas Wright, "What's at Stake in the American Empire Debate", *American Political Science Review*, **101**, 2 (2007), pp. 253-271.
[12] Chesterman, *You, The People*.
[13] I.e. Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'"; Paris, *At War's End*; Bain, *Between Anarchy and Society*; Bhuta, "Against State-Building".

This understanding has lent itself to images of essential continuity. According to Rita Abrahamsen, it has been common to interpret post-Cold War interventions as yet more evidence that the situation of contemporary Africa, and most other ex-colonies "is one of neo-colonialism, imperialism, and continued subservience in the international system".[14] Oliver Richmond has described the "liberal peace" as "a model through which Western-led agency, epistemology, and institutions, have attempted to unite the world under a hegemonic system".[15] My purpose here is not to disprove Richmond's diagnosis that many supposed beneficiaries of the liberal peace find it "ethically bankrupt, subject to double standards, coercive and conditional, acultural […] and insensitive towards its subjects".[16] However, these grievances do not sum up how interventions were perceived by those at the receiving end, and more positive receptions have received little analytical (but perhaps more political) attention.

It is sometimes noted, but rarely appreciated analytically, that 'hosts' and 'partners' in international interventions were often embedded in an international social structure which itself has roots in the history of colonialism. Wendt and Friedheim have argued that "Great Powers are widely acknowledged to have special prerogatives in their "spheres of influence" to help "manage" the international system [that are] recognized as legitimate by international society as a whole". A strong exercise of such influence would amount to what they call informal empires; "transnational structures of de facto political authority in which members are juridically sovereign states".[17] A recent article

[14] Rita Abrahamsen, "African Studies and the Postcolonial Challenge", *African Affairs*, **102**, 407 (2003), pp. 189-210, p. 192.
[15] Oliver Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace* (Routledge, New York, NY, 2011), p. 1.
[16] *Ibid*., p. 4.
[17] Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, 'Hierarchy under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State', in Thomas Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds), *State Sovereignty as a Social Construct* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996), p. 245.

comparing Spain, France and Britain found that "relationships between European powers and their former colonies are more important and enduring than explanations based on conventional, objective national interests would predict", and that "historically conditioned notions of collective, familial relations motivate the European powers to maintain distinctive types of relations with their former colonies".[18] The British military intervention in Sierra Leone, the authors argued, would have been "unimaginable without the historical relationship of Empire and Commonwealth".[19]

Such findings suggest that of the category of 'Western' dominance is too coarse, and that what I have termed subtext may be crucial to understand how they play out. I understand 'subtext' to be a tacit structure of identities and authority resulting from a history of previous interaction. The analytical purchase of this loose definition, I believe, is to call attention to the historically constituted sympathy, skepticism, indifference or animosity that characterized the relations among local 'hosts' and foreign 'partners' during an international intervention. An advisor to the Sierra Leone army indicated that this factor accounted for the UK's achievements in the country: "This is a great success story, the greatest in the Blair era. You don't need troops here anymore, what you need is advice and influence – soft power. And soft power is generated here quite well".[20]

Although in our case the relevant previous interaction was a colonial relationship, interaction could also include a wide variety of other relations such as war, aid, alliances and so forth. A subtext may consequently be positively or negatively charged. The 'special relationship' between the USA and Britain was greatly strengthened by the

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[18] Brysk, Parsons and Sandholtz, "After Empire", p. 268.
[19] *Ibid*., p. 296.
[20] Dave Thomas, personal interview, Freetown 28.5.2010.

close alliance between the two countries during World War II, and is an example of a positively charged subtext that underpinned diplomatic relations.[21] Even in countries that are culturally very close to one another, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, different historical trajectories deeply impacted relations between foreigners and locals. An adviser in the ONS illustrated this:

> Many people here see a special relationship because of a shared history. Not because of domination, but… they see a cultural affinity. I think it is one of the positives, when you compare with Liberia and others, it is a British focus, and we can't help translating our British approach into practical advice. Maybe that's a strength. In Liberia the military would complain that different international advisors told them to salute in different ways. Sierra Leone hasn't had that confusion.[22]

Afghanistan presents a different example where the subtext was characterized by the *absence* of a colonial relationship: “Afghans have a significant amount of pride because Afghanistan has never been colonized”.[23] Historical relations nevertheless shaped the allocation of responsibilities in the early phase of the ongoing intervention. Thus, Germany, who provided police assistance to the country as early as the 1930s, was given responsibility to reform the Afghan National Police at the start of the 2001 intervention.[24]

In our case, the concept of subtext calls attention to the character and significance of the representations of colonialism as they appeared in the relations between Britons and Sierra Leoneans. Among many Sierra Leoneans, these representations were strikingly positive, if not unambiguous. Such positive memories are hard to square with standard

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[21] John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After* (Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 2001).
[22] Gary Horlacker, personal interview, Freetown, 27.5.2010
[23] Belal Kaifi, Wajma Aslami, Seleiman Noori and Danielle Korhummel, “A Decade After the 9/11 Attacks: The Demand for Leaders With Emotional Intelligence and Counselling Skills”, *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, **2**, 2 (2011), pp. 54-67, p. 59.
[24] Perito, ‘Afghanistan’s Police’.

narratives on colonialism. As I employ it here, the concept of subtext comes close to what John Duffield calls the expressive or affective component of political culture, namely "emotional attachments, patterns of identity and loyalty, and feelings of affinity, aversion or indifference".[25] However, it specifically addresses the international and historical constitution of such cultural 'components'. This focus resonates with recent attempts to employ the concept of the imperial to provide a thicker social description of international politics. Criticizing the restricted understanding of imperialism in the study of IR as "a policy of foreign conquest and rule", Barkawi and Laffey argued that "the imperial points the way to a more adequate theorisation of the 'international' as […] a space within which processes of mutual constitution are productive of the entities which populate the international system" Such a theorization, they hold, ought to pay more attention to "social and cultural flows" between centre and periphery.[26] Paying attention to how imperialism *itself* figures as a set of social representations in these relations, I argue, is one way to do so.

Unique nostalgia?

Little is known about the character and function of these representations in postcolonial countries. Ann Stoler and Karen Strassler argue that "an explicit engagement with the nature of colonial memories" has been surprisingly absent both from ethnographic and elite histories.[27] Duncan Bell notes that the vast amount of scholarship on memory produced over the last two decades has been strongly focused on Europe and the United

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[25] John Duffield, Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neoralism", *International Organization*, **53**, 4 (1999), pp. 765-803, p. 744.
[26] Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, "Retrieving the Imperial: Empire and International Relations", *Millennium*, **31**, 1 (2002), pp. 109-127, p. 111.
[27] Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler, "Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in 'New Order' Java", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, **42**, 1 (2000), pp. 4-48, p. 4.

States.[28] Consistent with this trend, existing studies dealing with positive memories of colonialism have dealt with attitudes of the imperial power towards its former colonies.[29] One scholar compared it to “mourning for what one has destroyed”.[30] Similarly, Brysk et. al. confine their study to how postcolonial relationships have shaped the identities of the former colonial powers, and can do no more than “suspect […] that these identities strongly shape *both* sides of the relationship”.[31]

What is more, we know even less about how the backdrop of colonialism affected the political relationship between donors and recipients of various forms of international assistance. This reflects the fact that there have been almost “no studies of the nexus between memory and political power”.[32] Again, the postcolonial countries have received little attention. In a recent book on aid, Whitfield and Fraser argued that “the sources of leverage for African governments, their perspectives, and the negotiating strategies they chose have been largely neglected”.[33] An exception in this regard was a recent study arguing that Uganda has “carved out a subtle but substantial degree of agency in relation with donors” by constructing, managing and bolstering donor images of the country.[34] To the degree that the colonial past is discussed, however, its impact on the relations between donors and recipients of aid has usually been cast in negative terms. “In most cases”, claimed former President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano:

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[28] Duncan Bell (ed), *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present* (Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 2006).
[29] I.e. Anne Deighton, ‘The Past in the Present: British Imperial Memories and the European Question’, in Jan-Werner Müller (ed): *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe. Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002); for an exception, see Richard Werbner (ed), *Memory and the Postcolony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power* (Zed Books, London, 1998).
[30] Renato Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia”, *Representations* 26 (1988), pp. 107-122.
[31] Brysk, Parsons and Sandholtz, “After Empire”, p. 272.
[32] Jan-Werner Müller, ‘Introduction: The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory’, in Jan-Werner Müller (ed): *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe*.
[33] Lindsay Whitfield and Alastair Fraser, “Negotiating Aid”, in Lindsay Whitfield *The Politics of Aid: African Strategies for Dealing with Donors* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009), p. 27.
[34] Jonathan Fisher, *International Perceptions and African Agency: Uganda and its Donors, 1986-2010*, (University of Oxford, unpublished DPhil thesis, 2011).

"foreign aid to Africa did not start in a healthy atmosphere […] Therefore, even today many Africans see the relationship with donors as still influenced by the colonial past, where donors 'know' what, how much and when recipients need".[35]

These scattered examples are insufficient to generalize about how the colonial subtext shaped links between ex-colonies and ex-colonizers after independence. Yet there evidence to suggest that colonial histories influenced patterns of aid. Between 1970 and 1997, British aid to the Commonwealth ranged between 69 and 84 per cent of its total official development assistance, whereas the OECD average to the Commonwealth in the same period ranged between 24 and 26 per cent.[36] A similar pattern was found in the case of Spain and France and their respective ex-colonies.[37]

In order to specify more clearly the limits of our case, the next section considers the narrative about colonialism in Sierra Leone as it appeared in debates about the celebration of independence. This will also provide necessary context for our analysis of the elite strategic mobilization of colonial nostalgia that makes up the bulk of this chapter.

The disappointment of independence

On 27 April 2011, Sierra Leone celebrated 50 years as an independent nation. As on previous occasions, this jubilant moment was also a time for sobering reflections on what independence had meant for the country. As the *Sierra Leone Telegraph* noted before the 49th celebration, "the question of whether Sierra Leoneans should celebrate

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[35] Quoted in Lindsay Whitfield and Alastair Fraser, 'Introduction: Aid and Sovereignty', in Whitfield, *The Politics of Aid*, p. 15.
[36] Brysk, Parsons and Sandholtz, "After Empire", p. 277.
[37] *Ibid*.

the country's independence from colonial rule, is one that has become a hot topic of debate at each anniversary, with emotions running high".[38] An editorial in *Awareness Times* titled "Celebrating 50 years of what?" suggested why: the country was "still under colonialism, politically and economically".[39] It was ironical, some argued, that no one seemed devoted to earn *actual* independence in a time where the country relied on foreigners for its most basic services: "We have come a long way but we sadly have nothing to show after fifty years".[40] The lavish budget allocated to the 50th celebration was a particular point of contention, leading many commentators to ask what expensive fireworks would do for hungry people. The sacking of the Independence Celebration Committee's leader over financial mismanagement further fueled the argument that the day should be spent pondering what could be done to root out the country's ills. Others were more upbeat, arguing that the country had cause to celebrate the end of the war, two successive peaceful elections and religious tolerance.[41]

One thing was remarkable about this debate; colonialism was never invoked to explain Sierra Leone's problems. Instead, both those who spoke in favor and against celebrating independence tended to identify the *end of* colonialism as the origin of the country's problems: "It seems our problems as a nation begun with the declaration of independence, for since then our experiences have been negative [and] retrogressive, with government officials of various denominations taking the law into their hands and doing everything with impunity".[42] Another commentator asked rhetorically: "We became independent in 1961. Kindly research the history of Sierra Leone - has that

[38] *The Sierra Leone Telegraph*: "49 Years of Independence and Freedom – What Is There to Celebrate?" 30.4.2010.
[39] *Awareness Times*: "Celebrating 50 Years of What?" 15.4.11.
[40] *Awareness Times*: "What a 50th Independence Anniversary!" 8.3.2011.
[41] *The Sierra Leone Telegraph*: 50 years of Independence: What Is There to Celebrate? 26.2.2011
[42] *The Exclusive Press Newspaper*: "50 Years of Backward Progression." 12.8.2010

country progressed, stayed the same, or has it deteriorated?”[43] The impression of a fall from grace was reinforced in a letter from one Billy Bridges who witnessed Independence Day in 1961: “the Duke of Kent took out a white handkerchief from his jacket pocket and wiped his eyes. He wept. Not because another colony had shred [sic] its yoke of colonialism but, I presume, he had foreseen the untold sufferings that were ahead of us”.[44]

These opinions testified to a strong narrative, also expressed by SLP officers, where independence had become associated with violence and decay. Colonialism, although rarely described in any detail, represented what had been *lost* with independence; whether a decent standard of living, impartial authorities, or functioning schools, roads, and hospitals. This loss was symbolized in a lyric by the Mende folksinger Salia Koroma in which he asked the British to “please come back, watch over me and free me from my woes” because “this thing called 'independence' has become like an albatross around the neck of my people".[45] This narrative thus centered on dishonesty and ineptitude of the country’s leaders and could in fact accommodate diverse attitudes to foreign influence. While some romantically portrayed the colonial power as benign and far-sighted custodians, others appealed to reclaim the country’s economic and political independence.

However, after the British military intervention in May 2000, their popularity soared. A Sierra Leonean analyst writing at the height of British influence placed this popularity

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[43] *The Sierra Leone Telegraph*: “49 Years of Independence and Freedom – What Is There to Celebrate?” 30.4.2010.
[44] *Salone Times*, 26.4.2011.
[45] Quoted in *Focus on Sierra Leone:* “A Desire to Be Re-Colonised or Simply a Case of Nostalgia and Popular Desperation?” 27.5.2000. http://www.focus-on sierraleone.co.uk/Colonialist_Moral_Crusader1.html (accessed 24.10.2011).

in the context of colonial nostalgia, which now took on significance for a new generation:

> There has always been a soft spot for the British among Sierra Leoneans. That feeling has now come into full play, with public demands for the Brits to stay for as long as necessary, because of the helpless condition of the country […] [T]his welcoming feeling for the British has extended to the youth who never experienced the era for which their parents nourish such nostalgic yearnings.[46]

Apparently, however, the colonial past was also in the minds of British envoys, and Independence Day was again the occasion that brought it to the surface. In a highly unusual move, British troops stationed in Freetown marched through the city to celebrate the 40th independence anniversary of its former colony. The next day, a British newspaper reported that Whitehall had actually "politely rejected" a Sierra Leonean request for an even more impressive show of British forces. Major Debbie Noble explained why:

> They wanted several British battalions, fighter jets and parachutists to take part, including a fly-over by the Red Arrows plane formation, but we thought it would be better to take the back seat in this. More troops in the parade would have sent the wrong message and *given people the hope that Britain will take them on again as a colony*.[47]

The British view that ritual display of sovereign power in a former colony had to be curtailed, not because it would offend Sierra Leoneans but because it would give them *hope* that they were being recolonized broke cleanly with standard narratives on decolonization and independence. However, the eagerness to see British troops in Freetown is just as likely explained by the fact that they were perceived in the country as a neutral party in the ongoing conflict. Whereas Sierra Leonean pundits later conceded that there were "many in Sierra Leone including senior government ministers

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[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *The Telegraph* (UK): "British Troops Lead Independence Parade" 28.4.2001, (my emphasis).

who welcome the return of British government control", they also argued that "most Sierra Leoneans would find rather unsettling […] the idea of a partnership not led by the elected government of Sierra Leone, but by the former colonial power".[48] The analyst observing the flourishing of colonial nostalgia in 2000, for example, took pains to argue that these sentiments did not mean that Sierra Leoneans were ready to surrender their independence. The "feelings of nostalgia for British colonial rule", the author held, were "not really borne out of conviction. Far from that! Rather, they are the product of the accumulation of so many years of frustration and the total lack of confidence in the politicians and the political system that has been in operation ever since the mid 1960s".[49] In other words, the "soft spot" Sierra Leoneans felt for the British and which manifested itself in public demand that they stay for as long as possible was not evidence of a wish to be re-colonized, but a wish for respite from its own politicians.

The picture emerging from this brief survey is that colonial nostalgia was recognized as a powerful and politically significant factor both by Sierra Leonean and British observers in the aftermath of the British military intervention, and that it continues to be part of the country's political debate. However, it also shows that the bittersweet talk of "the good old days" cannot be reduced to a longing for renewed colonialism. This ambiguity is supported by ethnographic work on Sierra Leone, which sees memories of colonialism embedded in diverse rituals invoking not one past but many.[50] Osagie sees the "anxieties of nationhood" reflected in a national memory with an "ambivalent and

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[48] *The Sierra Leone Telegraph*: "Rebuilding Lives and Regenerating War Torn Communities: Sierra Leone's Finance Minister Welcomes the Return of Direct British Intervention in Governance." 14.6.2010.
[49] *Focus on Sierra Leone:* "A Desire to Be Re-Colonised or Simply a Case of Nostalgia and Popular Desperation?" 27.5.2000.
[50] Rosalind Shaw, *Memories of the Slave Trade. Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone.* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2002).

unstable character".[51] In her ethnographic analysis of a Mende community, Ferme questions the basis upon which we may speak of a collective memory in the country at all: "There is no such thing as a Sierra Leonean community, no matter how isolated, in which ethnic homogeneity is not disturbed by the presence of strangers who do not subscribe to the hegemonic cultural order".[52]

Having outlined the complexities of colonial nostalgia in Sierra Leone, the remainder of this chapter is concerned with how it could be mobilized by Sierra Leonean and British elites to reap opportunities offered in the context of Sierra Leone's lingering conflict. In order to do this I will draw on the concept of extraversion.

Extraversion and sovereignty as dependence management

The chief idea behind extraversion is that leaders of African states have succeeded in mobilizing a position of international weakness to achieve (primarily financial) benefits. In Bayart's words,

> the leading actors in sub-Saharan societies have tended to compensate for their difficulties in the autonomization of their power and in intensifying the exploitation of their dependants by deliberate recourse to strategies of extraversion, mobilizing resources derived from their (possibly unequal) relationship with the external environment".[53]

In this elite-centered perspective, self-regarding African leaders sit at the helm of states which are grafted onto society rather than rooted in it, something which forces them to look abroad for resources that can secure their rule.[54] This view has been criticized by Christopher Clapham for reducing politics in Africa to a static game of rent-seeking and

[51] Iyunolu Osagie, "Historical Memory and a New National Consciousness: The Amistad Revolt Revisited in Sierra Leone", *The Massachusetts Review*, **38**, 1 (1997), pp. 63-83.
[52] Ferme, *The Underneath of Things*, p. 219.
[53] Bayart, "Africa in the World", p. 218; Bayart, *The State in Africa*.
[54] Cf. Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.

for glossing over the vast differences between states and politics across the continent.[55] However, Clapham also praised the concept of extraversion for transcending an image of Africa's leaders as "neocolonial puppets" and for capturing their skillful manipulation of foreign states and aid agencies. African elites, argues Ian Taylor, "have generally proven themselves excellent arch-manipulators of the international system".[56] For the purposes of this chapter I borrow from Bayart not a theory of the state or the idea of an essentially African form of politics, but the notion that "subjection can constitute a form of action". The colonial subtext, I argue, offered itself as an idiom in which this could be achieved.

Firstly, Sierra Leone's political leadership could use the subtext to invoke a sense of responsibility. To see how, let us consider another excerpt from the BBC news report cited in the beginning of this chapter. The British reporter asked a number of blunt questions as to whether Britain was on a neocolonial adventure in Sierra Leone. The answers he received suggested that there were no simple explanation of the relationship between Britain and its former colony. Unwittingly, perhaps, this ambiguity was hinted at by Tony Blair when he refuted the notion that Sierra Leoneans would like to see the return of colonialism: "They're not keen to have an old colonial master back […] What they are prepared to do, though, is to acknowledge that in order to make the country what they want it to be, they are at a point in their history when they need help. And they are smart enough to realize that and to get that help".[57] This answer differed sharply from that of Sierra Leone's Finance Minister Samura Kamara. When asked

[55] Christopher Clapham, "Review Article: The *Longue Durée* of the African State", *African Affairs*, **93**, 372 (1994), pp. 433-439.
[56] Ian Taylor, *The International Relations of Sub-Saharan Africa* (Continuum, New York, NY, 2011), p. 6.
[57] *BBC Newsnight*: "Can Britain Lift Sierra Leone Out of Poverty?" 23.6.2010.

whether he did not think it was odd that Sierra Leoneans were so eager to have the old colonial master back, he smiled: "I want them to play a much bigger role. They should take leadership. You can see in the Francophone countries, whether overtly or discretely, the French are very strong". This contrasted starkly with Blair's answer to the same question; a confident assertion that he "would be run out of the country pretty quickly" if he tried to return in the capacity of colonial master.[58] *Pace* Blair, Kamara presented the former colonial power's interventionist role as similar to that exercised by the French; thus suggesting that the relationship between Britain and Sierra Leone was a normal exercise of Great Power responsibility.[59] "Is this a form of neocolonialism?" the reporter wondered. "I would not put it that way", Kamara replied. "It's a kind of partnership. The global architecture for development has changed. You need a partnership. I know, we need them, but I'm sure somehow they will also need us. So it's different from the old boss and servant type of relationship".[60]

By portraying Britain's interventionist role in the country as part of a *global* architecture for development, and by reframing 'dependence' as 'interdependence', Kamara eschewed the suggestion that they were being put under colonial administration again. Specifying just how Britain would need Sierra Leone in the future was not necessary; but the suggestion that Sierra Leone could one day come to Britain's rescue served a purpose. When the reporter used the word "neocolonialism" to suggest that there was something suspect about his warm invitation to the colonial master to play a much

[58] This appears somewhat conceited given that he was made Paramount Chief and was, by his own admission, "wildly popular" in the country. In fact, Paramount Chiefs interviewed by the BBC were not slow to express their wishes to see Blair treated with the pomp and circumstance normally reserved for state leaders: "We would like that the next time he visited, he would ride in a motorcade along the street". *BBC Newsnight*: "Can Britain lift Sierra Leone out of poverty?" 23.6.2010.
[59] E.g. Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, 'Hierarchy under Anarchy'.
[60] *BBC Newsnight*: "Can Britain Lift Sierra Leone Out of Poverty?" 23.6.2010.

stronger role, Kamara in fact seemed more eager to allay British discomfort with playing Empire in Sierra Leone than to pay homage to his country's sovereignty.

Recruiting foreigners into the security sector

This seemingly backwards dynamic where the weaker party was urging on a reluctant patron to compromise its sovereignty was clearly illustrated by the negotiations about the extent of British involvement during the early stages of the intervention. From the outset, President Kabbah clearly wished to see foreigners take leadership of the country's main security institutions: "[I]t is striking how welcoming the Sierra Leonean executive was of its former colonial masters, appointing Keith Biddle as police chief, and suggesting that David Richards should become the Chief of Defence Staff".[61] In fact, there is evidence that Kabbah wanted a much deeper involvement in the SLP than he actually got. Keith Biddle remembered how he had to convince Kabbah that a *less* interventionist model was the way to go: "I thought the original idea, which Kabbah wanted, which was that we virtually took it [the SLP] over – we didn't fancy it. Once we got on the ground and we realized what the dynamics were, it wasn't the thing to do. And we convinced everybody, including Kabbah, that it wasn't.[62] In other words, Kabbah did not resist the reproduction of colonial relations of authority, he actively promoted them.

Such "proxy governance" where foreigners "are temporary stand-ins for local authorities who are unable or unwilling to perform the needed administrative tasks

[61] Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*, p. 16.
[62] Keith Biddle, personal interview, Crewe, 27.10.09. Peter Penfold, who was also firmly of the opinion that Britain needed "executive authority to push advice through", recalled that Kabbah "had meetings with Clare Short, [where] he made the point that he wanted a British person to head the police force". Penfold, personal interview, Oxford 19.10.2010

themselves" is well known from other international interventions in places such as Namibia, Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor.[63] In line with the image of imperial imposition, however, proxy governance is assumed to be a "mechanism that peacebuilders have used to promote liberal norms".[64] This forecloses the possibility that host governments may draw their own benefits from initiating such arrangements. Indeed, our case bears this out. Firstly, it was reasonable for the Sierra Leonean executive to expect that senior British consultants appealing directly to their employer would be able to raise more funds than domestic candidates with little experience in fundraising and liaising with foreigners. This concern is likely to have reinforced Kabbah's personal opinion that there were few domestic candidates suitable for the position as Inspector General of the SLP.[65] However, a second and even more important reason for initiating such proxy governance stemmed from Sierra Leone's politics, and was exacerbated by the volatile situation at the time. In his 1999 Independence Day address, Kabbah lamented how the country's development had been hampered by "four major military coups, two counter coups, at least five attempted coups, and four 'palace coups'" in just three decades.[66] Outsourcing control of institutions with a history of staging coups, a history only too familiar to a president who had been ousted from power just months earlier, was therefore a way of shoring up the government's fragile hold on the country. If this was a powerful renouncement of sovereignty, it could therefore be interpreted – at least from the government's point of view – as a way of safeguarding it. By actively initiating proxy governance of the country's security

[63] Fen Osler Hampson, "Can Peacebuilding Work?" *Cornell International Law Journal*, 30, 3 (1997), pp. 701-716, p. 708.
[64] Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'", p. 645.
[65] This position of Kabbah's was referred to by Peter Penfold. Penfold, personal interview, Oxford 19.10.2010.
[66] *Address by President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to the Nation*, 27.4.1999. http://www.sierra-leone.org/Speeches/kabbah-042799.html (accessed 1.11.2011).

institutions, Kabbah deftly helped secure British support in an extremely volatile context. Reminiscent of how individual colonial governments relied on imperial forces in times of emergency, this in effect expanded the coercive apparatus available to him.

As we saw in Chapter 1, a key contention in the debate about sovereignty was that post-Cold War reinterpretations meant that weak states lost their protection from the meddling of stronger states. The tug-of-war about the extent of direct involvement described above flies in the face of the common criticism that international statebuilding stifled the sovereignty of the states which became subject to it.[67] At first glance, the governance structure that crystallized in Sierra Leone seems close to Krasner's proposal for "shared sovereignty"; an institutional arrangement that involves precisely proxy governance: "[T]he engagement of external actors in some of the domestic authority structures of the target state for an indefinite period of time".[68] In such arrangements, "one core element of sovereignty – voluntary agreements – would be preserved, while another core element – the principle of autonomy – would be violated".[69] However, Krasner's idea of "sharing" contains very little scope for understanding how weaker parties could use the same institutional arrangements to further their own autonomy. Our case reveals that the Sierra Leonean government was not a passive recipient of British military and police aid, but exercised a political will extending far beyond cooperation and consent on the terms offered to it. In fact, its accommodating attitude

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[67] See Ayoob, "Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty"; Chandler, *Empire in Denial*; Bickerton, Cunliffe and Gourevich, *Politics without Sovereignty*. Those who think it is necessary to suspend the sovereignty of 'weak' or 'rogue' states in order to solve global problems emanating from them also pay little attention to the agency of such states as they become the subject of neo-imperial statebuilding. See for example Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (Penguin, London, 2004).
[68] Stephen Krasner, "Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States", *International Security*, **29**, 2 (2004), pp. 85-120.
[69] *Ibid*. p. 108; see also Robert Keohane, 'Political Authority after Intervention: Gradations in Sovereignty', in J.L Holzgrefe and Robert Keohane (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention. Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003).

included a veritable recruitment policy of British advisers-cum-commanders. Since this agency was aimed at increasing direct foreign influence in the country's security sector, it challenged internationally recognized notions of sovereignty and thereby placed the British government in an awkward position. In fact, the British delegation seemed much more anxious to comply with notions of sovereignty than its Sierra Leonean host. Curiously, the image of sovereignty as a shield protecting the weak from the interference of the strong seemed reversed; it was the British who had to invoke sovereignty in order to establish limits on what they could and could not do. Fearing a "dependency culture", the British government therefore limited its initial plans for military assistance to three years.[70]

The above account suggests a difference with regards to how sovereignty structured reform in different domains. Against the Sierra Leonean government's request of a British Chief of Defence Staff, it was considered "important in terms of presentation" that the British commander in charge of restructuring the armed forces was to be designated 'Military Adviser to the Government of Sierra Leone'".[71] Sovereignty was therefore perceived (by the British) to be more constraining in the military sphere than in the field of policing, where the appointment of Keith Biddle as IGP did not cause problems. This indicates that donors are more flexible in their dealings with state institutions outside the domain of 'high' international politics.

We can make sense of these negotiations about sovereignty by recalling the concept of extraversion. If strategies of extraversion work precisely by turning the government's survival into something which internationals have a shared stake in, it is clear that

[70] Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*., p. 66.
[71] *Ibid.*

leaders may see the infringement of the *principle* of autonomy as an acceptable way of enhancing *de facto* autonomy. Wendt and Friedheim argued that international security assistance helped clients reap benefits by embracing the identity as "weak" or "subordinate":

> Weak states are not naturally given [but] created and sustained by providing an external base to certain actors that enables them to seize power and avoid difficult policies necessary to create domestic legitimacy. By enabling regimes to survive that otherwise might not, in other words, security assistance creates identities that have an 'investment in subordination'.[72]

Similarly, Wendt and Barnett theorized that "dependency on security assistance in geopolitical structures of informal empire tends to create elites whose definitions of security are those of external patrons rather than the masses".[73] However, like Krasner's focus on how strong states must rethink their approaches to essentially passive "collapsed and failing states", this conception endows the leaders of those states with little real agency. Anticipating instead the local reactions that violations of domestic autonomy would provoke, Krasner gave an exceptionally blunt piece of advice to internationals: "For policy purposes, it would be best to refer to shared sovereignty as 'partnerships'. This would more easily let policymakers engage in organized hypocrisy, that is, saying one thing and doing another".[74] In Sierra Leone, exactly who engaged in organized hypocrisy is not so straightforward. As we have seen, "partnership" was a disarming trope the Finance Minister could use when confronted with the word "neocolonialism". Moreover, "saying one thing and doing another" was not only the domain of internationals worried about their reputation, but a key characteristic of extraversion.

[72] Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, "Hierarchy under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State", *International Organization*, **49**, 4 (1995), pp. 689-721, p. 702f.
[73] Alexander Wendt and Michael Barnett, "Dependent State Formation and Third World Militarization", *Review of International Studies*, **19**, 4 (1993), pp. 321-347, p. 322.
[74] Krasner, "Sharing Sovereignty", p. 108.

Secondly, this activism illustrates a weakness in the donor conceptualization of 'local ownership'. Local ownership is held by practitioners and academics alike as a critical precondition for the sustainability of international statebuilding, and refers to "the extent to which domestic actors control both the design and implementation of political processes".[75] However, as Simon Chesterman argues, the "rhetoric of ownership [presupposes that] a political vacuum exists prior to the arrival of international staff".[76] Donors therefore concede that local ownership in the early phase may be limited to securing "buy-in" or endorsement of initiatives that international staff design and set in motion. Even such limited ownership is taken to be "a critical component of sustainability", meaning that it will lead to a situation where the "host nation takes on responsibility for [security] forces and reform programs".[77] Kabbah's activism may be seen as an example of such 'buy-in' and participation early in the reform process. In this case, however, Kabbah's exercise of ownership was not directed at a rapid take-over, but at keeping the international presence for as long as possible. This form of local ownership fundamentally challenges the linear assumption that reforms will move from heavy international involvement in the early phase to increasing local responsibility in the later stages. What obstructs this sequence from playing out might not be the common problems identified by donors, such as the predominance of donor priorities and timelines over local involvement, but that 'locals' cognizant of the benefits of keeping internationals in charge work actively to keep it that way. This may explain why a 2004 evaluation of UK-led post-conflict reconstruction attributed the difficulties in fostering local ownership partly "to a lack of energy, expertise, will, and resources on

[75] Timothy Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes", *Peace & Change*, **34**, 1 (2009), pp. 3-26, p. 3.
[76] Chesterman, *You, The People*, p. 5.
[77] United States Institute of Peace, 'Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform' (USIP, Washington DC, 2010).

the part of the Sierra Leone government".[78] To claim that "local ownership is abundant in policy but absent in practice"[79] is therefore to neglect forms of ownership which does not fit the stylized image of the donor discourse.

Activating colonial knowledge

If what has been said so far creates an image of Sierra Leonean extraversion as indiscriminate groping for foreign involvement of any kind in their ailing security sector, it would be an inaccurate image. Conflict attracted a multiplicity of foreign actors offering different forms of assistance, but not all of them were met with equal enthusiasm by their Sierra Leonean hosts. The multinational police advisers from the UN CIVPOL found themselves at a disadvantage not just because they struggled to coordinate and mediate between the widely different policing cultures composing the mission. They were also at a disadvantage because SLP officers recognized that the Commonwealth team represented a historical legacy that was the source of institutions and professional standards still very much alive in the country. Sierra Leonean leaders were highly aware and proud of the imperial imprint on the police. This historical backdrop is important in order to appreciate the political will to receive and comply with British help in the police sector, but also in order to understand why British reformers described SLP officers as having an 'intuitive' understanding of community policing and as being 'highly receptive' to change. It meant that, from the outset, there was a degree of mutual understanding about policing, and about law and order generally. Asked about which models of policing he looked to for inspiration, an Assistant Inspector General (AIG) responded: "We always look up to Britain, you

[78] Ginifer, 'Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools', p. 2.
[79] United States Institute of Peace, 'Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform'.

know, we were British colonized".[80]Another AIG indicated how this was important in implementing reforms: "It was much easier, in fact, for Keith Biddle to be able to play and do policing in Sierra Leone, because what he was practicing here was similar [to the UK] in terms of the Policing Act, arrests, procedures, and practical policing. We were already aware of how policing worked in the colonial era".[81]

In the case of President Kabbah, these shared understandings actually derived from direct personal experience. Kabbah served as an Assistant District Commissioner during the late colonial period, and in this capacity he was in close contact with the police during late colonial reforms. According to Biddle, Kabbah remembered the period as an "age of stability and calm" where the police had properly functioning vehicles and regularly provided him with intelligence. The significance of this memory was elaborated on by Biddle:

> "Well Kabbah's history, he's an interesting guy, he is a well educated guy and he was a District Commissioner [DC] in the Colonial Service [...] So when you say to him 'we need to integrate the security system', and you talked to him in a lot of modern terms, he, eh, asked us lots of questions. If we said 'what we want to do is set up a district and provincial [Security Committee] – he'd say, 'I remember those from colonial times' [...] A lot of Kabbah's thinking was conditioned by the past, like everybody else. And he could relate to what went on in the late fifties when he was a DC. So yeah, we could capitalize on that."[82]

The ability to activate the President's colonial experience to rally support for reform was a factor which was of course unlikely to offer itself to international statebuilders very often. It was also an open question whether a different President with a different personality would have gotten along as well with the British reformers as did Kabbah. However Kabbah's personal history was not unlike that of many local partners to statebuilding elsewhere, and is worth recounting. Joining the UNDP a few years after

[80] Richard Moigbe, personal interview, Freetown, 8.4.2010
[81] Morie Lengor, personal interview, Freetown 1.12.2009.
[82] Keith Biddle, personal interview, Crewe, 27.10.09.

independence, he spent most of his professional career as an international civil servant, assuming a number of senior administrative positions at the UNDP headquarters in New York in the late 1980s. That left Kabbah with little experience from Sierra Leone in the decades after independence; and it was precisely his *absence* that set him up as a conciliatory figure upon his return to a country embroiled in civil war in the early 1990s. With regards to policing, this meant that his frame of reference was more strongly colored by the colonial experience than it would have been had he remained part of the country's politics after independence. To the British, Kabbah's long-time absence made him appear as a sensible man that understood what his country needed, as from a neutral point of view.

In practical terms, his late arrival on the political scene, and his image as an uncharismatic technocrat, offered some valuable opportunities. Firstly, he did not have strong personal ties with anyone in the SLP senior leadership, especially as several of them had been selected as stalwarts of the opposition party. This meant that the British were free to reshuffle the senior management as they saw fit. But his disaffection from politics had a more basic implication – it allowed for the activation, or perhaps the manipulation, of a kind of knowledge with clear affinities to the reformers' expertise. When asked just what part of Kabbah's background Biddle could capitalize on, he singled out his "knowledge on how he believed the colonial police was a very effective community-based police force".[83] While Biddle let on that he deemed this "knowledge" rather dubious, he clearly did not hesitate to allude to it in order to get Kabbah to back his initiatives. When "talking to him in a lot of modern terms" did not work, framing things in a way familiar from colonial times proved a better strategy.

[83] Keith Biddle, personal interview, Crewe, 27.10.09.

This shows that the colonial past could be mobilized by the British as well the Sierra Leoneans, although at a different level. Appealing to Kabbah's memories of colonial practices was a way to create 'local ownership' of the reformers' favored ideas about community policing and decentralization; ideas which could easily be squared with principles of colonial administration. In other words, while British respondents were noticeably less comfortable than Sierra Leonean respondents talking about the 'special relationship' between the two countries as an extension of colonialism, they found it useful to invoke this past in a professional capacity.

Mobilizing the subtext in the SLP

Having so far concentrated on how the colonial subtext was mobilized in the relationship between the executive and the leading British reformers, we need to consider more closely how the subtext was at work within the police organization itself. Even a cursory glance at the literature on police reform suggests that seeing eye to eye with political elites is not going to be sufficient to effect large-scale institutional change. "Even more than most institutions", argue Peake and Marenin, "the police are characterized as distrustful of outsiders and prone to traditions and conventionality"[84] Reformers therefore need to find "champion[s] within the institution whose practice/policy platform one is trying to alter" and establish reform as part of the "routine managerial practices of police administrators". The administrators, in turn, need to be connected with "'translators' within the organization who make meaningful what is general advice, who translate the jargon of advisors into police lingo, and who have the capacity and the will to insist that reforms be executed and sustained".[85]

[84] Peake and Marenin, "Their Reports Are Not Read", p. 64.
[85] *Ibid*., p. 65.

However, in the SLP the problem seemed to be the opposite of distrust. Instead, British reformers reported being revered as representatives of the colonial masters and met with submissive attitudes. This was something they found it awkward to talk about. In the words of an adviser to Sierra Leone's Military Police: "People will say to you, you were the colonial master so we have to listen to you. In Europe people would be mortified at someone saying something like that".[86] This is not to say that British reformers eased into the role of 'colonial' officials without reservations. Biddle was in fact quick to distance himself from colonialism: "I said to them, 'I'm not your master'. I don't believe in colonialism, it's something in the history of Britain – I'm not your colonial master, and I don't want to be.[87] Rather, it is to say that the narrative associating British rule with order and progress had a concrete implication; it allowed the British reformers a freedom of action which Sierra Leoneans could only wish for. Biddle candidly described how his image as the "white Inspector General" was useful for getting things done:

Well just basically everybody thought I was right. If I said, 'look this is the way to do it' people would say 'ah, he must be right, he's the white IG'. […] And so I got away with things I don't think an indigenous IG would get away with. My successor, Acha, he said to me, I'm gonna have to do things differently now. He said, 'you could say things and do things that I can't. Because I have to live here when I retire and you don't'. So to a degree, yeah he said it right; Acha has to spend a lot more time consulting, listening and trying to persuade people, whereas I'd do some of that, and then say 'right, well this is how it's going to be done, let's get it done' […] So yeah, did we capitalize on it? – well you'd be a fool not to. Didn't overdo it but, yeah, I'd work on it when I had to.[88]

[86] Dave Thomas, personal interview, Freetown 28.5.2010.
[87] Keith Biddle, personal interview, Crewe, 27.10.09.
[88] *Ibid.*

Biddle's Sierra Leonean successor, who took office in 2003, stressed that his mentor had taught him to value "humility" and to appreciate people "individually rather than [for their] status", and seemed proud that they had "similar approaches" to leadership. He confirmed, however, that the Briton had a confrontational style which meant that he "at times would come at people very strongly". Echoing the praise of Biddle that one heard from almost everyone in the SLP, he connected his effectiveness with an image of a man you did not want to get on the wrong side of: "He had a lot of people... he made sure he pushed them out of the organization before he left. A lot of them".[89]

This testimony suggests that the subtext was not just a mutually beneficial factor; a set of representations that could be mobilized by both parties to facilitate reforms in various ways. It was also the texture of an irrevocably unequal relationship, which had implications for how the reform played out. "There was this mentality upon their arrival of a new colonial approach", recounted one senior SLP officer, arguing that they played a game of "divide and rule" within his organization.[90] Another high-ranking civil servant observing the reform up close recalled that the most promising young officers were in fact those who voiced criticism against the British approach. These officers, he claimed, were brushed aside "just like in colonial times".[91] An officer with 25 years of experience who formerly headed the Special Branch, described the working relationship between Sierra Leoneans and the British in the following way:

> I'm being very personal in my answer here. There was this mentality upon their arrival of a new colonial approach. Blacks in general have always had a mentality of slaves, it's in the psyche. The history of the colonial era didn't help. They came again with their divide and rule policy. Some were sensitive to it, others were not. For the rank and file, they [the British] were seen as

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[89] Brima Acha Kamara, personal interview, Freetown 7.4.2010.
[90] Desmond Buck, personal interview, Makeni, 12.4.2010.
[91] Kellie Conteh, personal interview, Freetown, 2.6.2010.

semi-gods who could not fail. Some of us realized they were humans, and it is human to err.[92]

The reference to 'slave mentality' was uncommon and broke starkly with the more familiar tropes which portrayed the return of the British as the advent of a new 'partnership' or simply as 'help'. The AIG recognized the importance of the colonial era, but rather than as a source of mutual understanding he viewed it as something which increased his colleagues' susceptibility to the "divide and rule policy" that characterized a "new colonial approach". A key figure in the Office of National Security indicated that a similar dynamic was at work in the armed forces:

> The people who voiced opposition were looked on as the troublemakers, but they were not! I would look at them as the best. But the young British officers thought otherwise […] [T]he sly officers ingratiated themselves with the white men to look good, and profited from it. On the other hand, a small number of people who protested and told the truth were marginalized. I'm sorry to say it; it's the same that happened in colonial times. Critics were brushed aside.[93]

While it is not possible to generalize about the British effort as a whole, these accounts suggest that criticism and truth-telling could be at odds with the concern for building momentum around certain models and policies, and achieving results quickly. This suggests that even in contexts where there is widespread mutual understanding and sympathy between external interveners and local hosts there is little to prevent 'partnerships' almost indistinguishable from colonial relations of authority from stifling critics. While this is certainly an important feature of international interventions generally, it should not serve to cover up other and perhaps less politically correct aspects of the same relations. There is no reason to doubt that the enthusiasm, and even open admiration many lower-ranking SLP who drew no direct personal benefit from the reform extended to the British reformers, was genuine.

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[92] Desmond Buck, personal interview, Makeni, 12.4.2010.
[93] Kellie Conteh, personal interview, Freetown, 2.6.2010.

Conclusion

This chapter asked how social representations of the colonial past influenced how the intervention played out, and how it affected the (re)introduction of a British policing model. It challenged the tendency to use terms like 'imperialism' and 'colonialism' to make normative judgments, arguing instead that their significance may be productively analyzed in the interactions of local 'hosts' and their foreign 'partners' in concrete instances. From this vantage point, colonialism appeared as a complex subtext which offered a repertoire of actions to the supposedly weaker part as well as to the stronger one. The Sierra Leonean government drew on popular feelings of filial affection between the two countries in order to pull their former colonizers into the ailing security sector, and to restore their police service. The British capitalized on the 'intuitive' understanding of policing that could be recovered from this history, and on the submissive attitudes they were met with to implement the policing model they championed. Thus, the suggestion that the absence of anti-colonial sentiments may be a sign that "Sierra Leoneans don't have sufficient pride in themselves and their country"[94] obscures how the active mobilization of the colonial past could serve purposes quite different than a return to colonialism. Against the image of Western-led interventions suspending local sovereignty, this chapter argued that sovereignty and local ownership were exercised to *prolong* and *deepen* the intervention.

Whereas the focus of Chapter 1 was on how imperial perceptions of sovereignty shaped statebuilding strategies, the material available for the recent period allowed us to return with a fresh perspective to how the weaker part could mobilize its position as a sovereign state to shape the mode and duration of statebuilding. This could be done up

[94] Peter Penfold, personal interview, Oxford 19.10.2010.

to a point; the UK was concerned not to convey an image to an international audience of a neo-colonial venture. Whereas supplying a British Inspector General of Police was considered acceptable, a line in the sand was drawn before the supply of a British Chief of Defence. Issues of sovereignty created problems only to the extent that the British were internationally perceived to be running Sierra Leone's security forces; it did not concern the technicalities of policing such as their geographical deployment, their mode of operation, or even their armament. This suggested a less spectacular side to "neocolonialism" – not overweening domination, but the activation of knowledge stored in every postcolonial state in some form of other. That elites adept at strategies of extraversion were the carriers of this kind of knowledge further eroded the unidirectional images of "export" or "imposition". Instead, it strengthened the impression that international statebuilding helped donors tick boxes and domestic elites strengthen their position while the supposed beneficiaries saw little change.

The harnessing of relations of dependence for domestic political purposes was not unique to Africa. In a quite different context, Geir Lundestad has shown how Britain itself "attempted to influence the Americans in the direction of taking greater, not lesser, the interest in their affairs" during the Cold War.[95] During the first decades of the Cold War, Western Europe recognized direct American influence as a way to reconstruct its war-torn economies and defence establishments. The US was therefore allowed privileged access to areas that had previously been jealously protected in the name of national sovereignty; it became an "empire by invitation".[96] In fact, the backdrop of war and the worry over the fate of democracy that characterized US-European relations in

[95] Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952", *Journal of Peace Research*, **23**, 3 (1985), pp. 263-277, p. 268.
[96] *Ibid.*

this period allow us to see that there were striking parallels between Europe's "extraversion" towards the US and Sierra Leonean strategies for obtaining essentially the same kind of assistance from Britain.

On this background, the representation of colonialism in Sierra Leone as a time of order and welfare, on the one hand, and the slightly embarrassed willingness of British reformers to play the role as "masters", on the other, may not be so exceptional after all. Yet this subject has received little attention because it challenges the cherished donor goals of equal partnership and local ownership, and probably also because international statebuilders are reluctant to talk about it. This is unfortunate, because whatever the well-meaning intentions behind this neglect, it hides forms of agency that challenges dominant understanding of sovereignty and local ownership in international interventions.

Chapter 7: Policing and sovereignty after reform

This study opened by making the case for analyzing today's international statebuilding against the background of late colonial reforms. The case rested on the ability of a then-now perspective to serve two analytical purposes. The first was to appreciate how recent reforms of the SLP were shaped by choices made in the past by reformers grappling with similar problems. The second was to explore how revised understandings of three fundamental concepts – sovereignty, security and statehood – affected strategies of statebuilding and police reform.

The time has come to draw together findings about what has changed and what has stayed the same, and to discuss what the implication of those findings are for statebuilding and police reform beyond Sierra Leone. While these conclusions could be presented as 'lessons learned' within the parameters of the debate on statebuilding and intervention, I want to go one step further. According to Ole Jacob Sending, "much of the literature on peacebuilding/statebuilding is characterized by a certain narcissism, in that it tends to exaggerate the power of external actors to do good (and bad)".[1] This insight is particularly interesting in a historically oriented study like this one because it echoes criticism against an understanding of empire as a totalizing force. Colonial rule was in fact dependent on the collaboration of local elites with significant autonomy,[2] and full of cracks which could be exploited for various purposes at odds with the plans

[1] Sending, 'Learning to Build a Sustainable Peace', p. 1.
[2] Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in Roger Owen and Robert B. Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (Longman, London, 1972).

of colonial governments.[3] As Frederick Cooper warns, we must be careful not to reify and flatten concepts like ‘modernity’ or ‘Europe’ lest we give “excessive weight to the determining power of agentless abstractions and offer little insight into how people acted when facing the possibilities and constraints of a particular situation”.[4]

Recalling the claim, set out in Chapter 1, that the scholarship on statebuilding has been better at analyzing the eroded barriers against intervention than at uncovering the type of statehood supported once the barrier has been broken; I have taken Cooper’s advice as an encouragement to unpack the category of ‘statebuilding’ and explore how statebuilders cope with the constraints and possibilities of particular situations. This has revealed that what is often described as a project of reproducing ‘Weberian’ states outside the West conceals a variety of problems, ambiguities and internal contradictions with very significant implications. Central among these is the overlooked possibility that efforts to strengthen one aspect of ‘Weberian’ statehood may have adverse effects on other areas. Such ‘Weberian contradictions’ are discussed below.

The initial claim was also made that the implications of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ sovereignty were not as clear cut as is often presented. This claim was backed up in Chapter 1 through a historical analysis of the relationship between sovereignty regimes and statebuilding. It showed that ‘positive’ notions of sovereignty continued to guide reforms well after imperialism was discredited and a ‘negative’ regime supposedly appeared. Besides summarizing findings, this concluding chapter shifts attention to a different but equally important aspect of sovereignty; namely how the recent intervention was mobilized in Sierra Leone to interact with international society in new

[3] I.e. Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*; Bayart, “Africa in the World”.
[4] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2005), p. 25.

ways. Taking a closer look at the global influences on policing in Sierra Leone after most foreigners left, it analyzes the perspectives on threat and security of some of those who continued to work in the SLP. Measuring progress (or lack thereof) towards donor goals is not the only way to measure the effects of an intervention. Just as important are the unexpected appropriations of models and discourses transmitted to the country during the massive international presence. In Chapter 5 we saw how revenue management techniques that were introduced to make the SLP more efficient and self-sufficient were appropriated by its current leadership to formalize connections with the private security market. The result has been a different relationship between the SLP and the private sphere than the one the British reformers promoted. In conclusion, I argue that the intervention *itself* has become an asset in the country's politics. Through careful maintenance of the brand Sierra Leone has earned as a success story of post-conflict recovery, the SLP were able to create and sustain a number of new connections with the outside world. This raises questions about what kind of security provision SSR has contributed to, but it also forces us to revise the understanding of African sovereignty as a manipulation of public power for private purposes.[5]

Continuity and change

The study's primary research question concerned how reinterpretations of sovereignty, security and statehood influenced police reform in Sierra Leone over time. Three sub-questions were chosen to shed light on the impact of these concepts: what type and level of force they were perceived to need; where they needed to be and why; and what their relations with nonstate policing groups should be. In accordance with the inductive

[5] Bayart, Ellis and Hibou, *The Criminalization of the State in* Africa; Reno, 'How Sovereignty Matters'; Reno, 'The Changing Nature of Warfare'; Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.

approach the study has built on, conclusions are best presented through a reflection on continuities and change.

This thesis has shown that there were striking continuities between statebuilding during decolonization and after the Cold War. Most striking, perhaps, were the similarities in how reformers perceived the deficiencies of the police; their inadequate territorial reach, their excessive use of force, and the threat to their primacy posed by nonstate policing agents. With regards to all the three dimensions of statehood I have analyzed – force, territoriality, legitimate authority – reformers in both periods would have been able to sit down together and talk about what for them appeared as intractable problems. During the same imaginary conversation, they could also have arrived at a broad agreement about what a professional police force should look like. It would have to exist in a constitutional framework that kept it "strictly immune from political influences".[6] Yet in both periods there was a gap between the immunity that was recommended and the political control considered necessary for the purposes for reform. Thus, immunity was limited by the executive leadership of British reformers with close links to the colonial government, and to DFID, respectively. In both periods, reformers struggled to reconcile the goals set by principals in London with their own understandings of what needed to be done.

A second point of agreement was that the police would have to become rooted in the population. Although expressed in different terminology, the idea that policing would fail unless it was supported by the people was prominent. During decolonization this process was conceived of as nation-building: "One of the characteristics that mark a

[6] *Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces, July 1954*. National Archives (UK), CO 885/124.

nation is, clearly, the possession of a national police system. The police force in each Colonial territory must inevitably become more closely integrated with the nation”.[7] Fifty years later, ‘communities’ were the building blocks of the LNP model. The three priorities listed in the Policing Charter of August 1998 was to “respond to local needs”, “value our own people”, and “involve all in developing our policing priorities”. Although nothing as ambitious and inclusive as that doctrine existed in the colonial era, the idea that popular input was needed to improve policing was acted on. In 1952, an Information Room was opened in Freetown yielding 265 crime calls and 91 arrests in 5 months. In the same year, measures were taken to “reduce to a minimum the number of men employed on inside duties”.[8] The novelty of community policing should therefore not be exaggerated.

Finally, there were clear similarities in terms of how instability changed the priorities of reform. In both periods reforms were predicated on the assumption that a paramilitary force would have to be transformed into a (largely) unarmed constabulary. In both periods this goal was reversed or severely modified. During decolonization, public protests so violent that they were described by a British Commission of Enquiry as akin to “civil war” were the catalyst for increasing the SLP’s coercive capacity.[9] (Compared to the unrest in other colonies, they were unremarkable.) In the recent period the catalyst was continued rebel violence. Reformers in both periods found that coercion was an essential tool for ‘holding the line’ and creating space for development or modernization.

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[7] Jeffries, *The Colonial Police*, p. 213.
[8] *Annual Report of the Police Force, 1952.* Freetown Public Library.
[9] *Commission of Enquiry. Miscellaneous Background Material* CE M/2. National Archives, Freetown.

Yet coercion was not a neutral ingredient which could be added at will without changing the nature of the project. Its use created experiences among the would-be guardians of a liberal, democratic order. This is why Bayley and Perito warn against using local police in offensive counterinsurgency campaigns: it can lead to a situation where "like military units, they develop an esprit de corps that prizes operational independence.[10] They often become a force within a force". As the examples of Haiti, Iraq, and Afghanistan discussed in Chapter 4 illustrated, this dynamic is well-known. Whether Sierra Leone is likely to move in the same direction will be discussed in the Epilogue. Whatever is in store, it is remarkable that we observed the same switch towards coercion as during decolonization, and in a location considered relatively easy to manage in both periods.

In and of themselves these similarities are not very surprising. A respondent to an early iteration of this study questioned whether an in-depth empirical study was really necessary to show that today's statebuilding has a colonial legacy. Apart from the most ardent believers in liberal intervention, he asked, who was going to be surprised? Another reader suggested that my finding that reformers in both periods appeared strongly committed to increase the police's territorial control was unsurprising. Isn't that what policing is about – controlling a territory? Keith Krause and Oliver Jutersonke seem to make a similar argument when they emphasize the continuities in statebuilding:

> [I]ntervention for *state*-building – understood as external actors participating actively in, or attempting to reshape, the polities of another country – has a long pedigree […] Although there may have been, in recent years, a change in the *nature* of these operations (a focus on elections, for example) and whose interests are supported by such interventions (unilateral versus multilateral), their fundamental *logic* has not changed. External actors – from the colonial era

[10] Bayley and Perito, *The Police in War*, p. 76.

forward – have intervened in the internal affairs of states in the interests of promoting state-building.[11]

This statement rightly emphasizes that interventions have a history extending further back than the end of the Cold War; a fact which is very rarely considered in current scholarship. However, the point that the *logic* of such interventions – to promote statebuilding – has remained the same is not convincing. What exactly are the "interests of promoting state-building"? If all we needed to observe to determine the persistence of an unchanging statebuilding logic was that interventions kept happening, then the definition of logic is so wide as to be meaningless. Statebuilding cannot be explained as a knee-jerk reaction to state 'failure'. Its logic must be sought in framings of what was wrong, of what or who was causing the problem, of what sort of action was likely to improve the situation, and of what the benefits of such action were expected to be. It was in the answers that governments, planners, academics, and an ever-expanding array of consultants and experts gave to such questions that understandings of sovereignty, security and statehood were forged and became effective.

The answers documented in this study have complicated the image of continuity. The overarching problem motivating colonial reforms was not war-induced collapse with regional or global repercussions, but to gradually disengage while leaving Sierra Leone with a set of institutions appropriate for independence. The first and most important implication of this difference was that the post-conflict reform was judged to merit a much higher level of resources than that available to Sierra Leone's colonial reformers. The second implication was that police reform became part of a transformational project comprised of a battery of initiatives such as humanitarian relief, demobilization,

[11] Krause and Jutersonke, "Peace, Security and Development", p. 450.

resettlement, anti-corruption, and development. If colonialism was “at its most intrusively ambitious” in the 1950s,[12] the scale of externally-led activities in Sierra Leone in the early 2000s easily dwarfed what was going on half a decade earlier.

The involvement of police reform in complex, international, multi-agency operations designed to achieve stabilization, democratization, and development is the clue to understand the most important differences between the two periods. Indeed, the most important changes did not stem from the development of new policing models. Instead, they resulted from the way other governmental concerns tugged at the margins of the field of policing. Put simply, policing in the second period *was about a lot more* than in the first. It was in demand by development donors to provide individual safety and security; and by the military for the purposes of pacification and counterinsurgency. A broad agreement emerged that reformed police forces can play a crucial role in winning legitimacy for other state institutions during transitions from war to peace.[13] The increased spending on police forces was therefore taken as belated recognition of the role they can play in processes of democratic transition.[14]

This priority is explained by reinterpretations of the fundamental concepts undergirding statebuilding. An understanding of security increasingly in terms of the individual’s freedom from everyday threats drew attention to law enforcement. The belief that statehood is a condition that depends on healthy state-society relations drew attention to the institutions that mediate between citizens and the state. The police were identified as a crucial gatekeeper at this intersection. Finally, the idea that ungoverned territories or zones of lawlessness were breeding grounds for terror has strengthened the demand for

[12] Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, p. 4.
[13] Brogden and Nijhar, *Community Policing*.
[14] I.e. Bayley, *Changing the Guard*.

policing in states with weak territorial control. The first conclusion we may draw is therefore that reinterpretations of the fundamental concepts of statebuilding converged to elevate the police to the forefront of international interventions.

Increasing priority, muddled strategy?

The historical perspective allowed us to go beyond this conclusion and clarify what the implications of increased priority were. It revealed that more resources and priority did not necessarily allow reformers to be more successful in achieving the goals they set for themselves. Seized upon by a development community committed to civilian constabularies, on the one hand, and by military forces engaged in counterinsurgency, on the other, reformers were presented with a raft of contradictory goals unknown to their colonial predecessors. Descriptions of the police as a means of fostering entrepreneurial spirit and attract foreign investment indicate how policing had become associated with much wider concerns than in colonial times. The frequent references to 'ungoverned territories', 'vacuums of authority' and 'breeding grounds' for organized crime and terrorism invoked the need for a strong police force with the capacity to "manage small-scale violence" inside the state's territory.[15] This kind of police appeared to bear little resemblance to the kind of responsive, community-oriented police service that development donors imagined. As a result, conflicting agendas of intervention such as democratization and counterinsurgency vied for primacy in the field of policing. On the question of arms, this led to struggles between reformers and their principals at DFID.

[15] Giustozzi, *The Art of Coercion*.

In fact, territoriality was the only one of the areas of reform where an unequivocal policy – expand the reach of the police – remained fixed over time. This did not mean that the policy was understood in the same way by the actors concerned. In the late colonial period, an emerging understanding of Sierra Leone as a state created tensions between the planners at the Colonial Office and administrators and SLP officers in Sierra Leone. Rural SLP deployment was slowed down because the latter continued to take the socio-legal separation of indirect rule as the frame of policing. Furthermore, the territorial policy was motivated by different concerns in the two periods. While policing was conceptualized as a national service by colonial and recent reformers alike, an unprecedented concern with securing the return of a massive diaspora greatly strengthened the territorial policy in the latest period. This was tied up with a new understanding of security focused on the vulnerability of individuals in armed conflicts. Another unprecedented demand was related to the division of labor in an international operation, namely the imminent drawdown of the UN forces from rural areas. This is another example that the logic of statebuilding did not remain the same – even when it promoted the same policies.

As the field of policing widened and more actors got involved, strategy was also complicated by competition between national policing cultures and models. Some observers think these differences can be overcome, and that a basic agreement exists already. According to Marenin there has today emerged a general, international consensus on "the basic principles for democratic policing".[16] Sheptycki thinks the basis

[16] Otwin Marenin, 'Implementing Police Reforms: The Role of the International Policy Community', in Andrew Goldsmith and J.W.E. Sheptycki (eds), *Crafting Transnational Policing: Police Capacity-Building and Global Policing Reform* (Hart, Oxford, 2007).

exists for a “transnational constabulary ethic”.[17] Yet the liberal consensus fostered in forums like the UN, argues Hills, has in practice

> often [been] outweighed by disagreement about what constitutes good policing. It could not be otherwise when British, Iranian, South African and North Korean police trained the Uganda Police, Chinese riot police joined a Brazilian-led UN force in Haiti’s capital, Port au Prince, and when Indonesian police were committed to Darfur.[18]

In this regard, the British predominance in the field of police reform in Sierra Leone was an exception. One prominent scholar on police reform suggested to me that the success story in Sierra Leone was in important part a result of how British reformers had been allowed to operate ‘under the radar’ of the international community.[19] But even here, the reform team realized the need to present their LNP model early on lest there be confusion:

> Given that advice and support will be given from a number of individuals and countries, care must be taken to avoid a term that means different things to different people – community policing is such a phrase – and terms which convey concepts and thinking peculiar to the experience and knowledge of an individual.[20]

Disagreement about policing models was the main reason why the UN CIVPOL mission and the Commonwealth team co-operated little. The multilateral nature of international operations has presented today’s reformers with a challenge unknown during decolonization. Added to the much-discussed challenge of understanding the politics of policing in a foreign country is the challenge of reconciling the policing cultures of different donor nations.

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[17] J.W.E. Sheptycki, ‘The Constabulary Ethic and the Transnational Condition’, in Goldsmith and Sheptycki, *Crafting Transnational Policing*.
[18] Hills, “The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria”, p. 315
[19] Annika Hansen, personal communication, February 2009.
[20] *Original concept note, Local Needs Policing, August 1998*. Adrian Horn private document.

Finally, the increasing priority accorded to police forces in international interventions is credited with having changed the character and orientation of reforms. This is often described in approving terms as a move from “excessive” focus on “technical and structural” issues such as “the size, organisation and equipment of a local police force”,[21] to a focus on “building the public’s confidence in the police as a force for public safety and security that is independent of political agendas”.[22] Here we see a clear imprint of the development discourse with its stress on the benefits of responsive policing and the concern not to be associated with traditional security and politics. The eagerness to eschew allegations of political intervention even led to advice about appropriate language for statebuilders: “The word ‘reform’ may be alienating to many local partners and can itself be a source of resistance. In order to foster a supportive political environment, talk of ‘development’ or ‘professionalisation’ may be better received”.[23]

Whereas the OECD recommended catch-all words like development and professionalization for purposes of presentation, the use of highly general concepts arguably concealed a deeper lack of clarity about ends and means. Chapter 4 argued that the discourse on SSR contained very little practical advice for reformers facing difficult choices about the SLP’s armament. This led reformers to redefine the meaning of security and police primacy, successfully bringing about a complete reversal of policy. This reversal was an example that technical and structural issues such as size and equipment were intimately connected with the police’s role in society. By promoting the armament of the SLP, reformers were not giving up the idea of a police service attuned

[21] Hansen, ‘From Congo to Kosovo’, p. 13.
[22] Greener, *The New International Policing*, p. 25.
[23] OECD, ‘OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform’, p. 33.

to local concerns, but argued that it required a stronger coercive component to back it up. Similarly, technical' estimates about the appropriate size of the SLP were made according to the demands of the LNP model, which treated police-public relations as paramount. One notable upshot of the tendency to separate "technical and structural" elements from the goal of building public confidence seems to have been an obfuscation of highly political choices connected precisely to the size of the police, their functions and equipment. This conclusion is supported by study on police reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina which found that the focus on "socially-engineering the police according to democratic policing precepts" had the effect of "undermining the basic functions of the police to the point that the institution is now in a parlous state".[24]

In sum, from the colonial to the post-Cold War period, more resources were spent on policing by more actors who had different ideas about what the police were useful for. This means that the sources of policy advice for reformers expanded vastly since the late colonial period. In a perceptive sociological analysis of the "global police policy community", Peake and Marenin noted that the "mountain of paper" produced by experts seemed to have little effect on policy. They suggested this was because few policymakers had the time or much wish to read reports.[25] This study suggests the absence of learning may be as much because there has been a *diversification of audiences*, where each audience is prone to look for different lessons. Despite rhetorical commitments to 'comprehensive' and 'holistic' approaches, the donor community appeared as a motley collection of professions, whose integration was obstructed by strong institutional cultures.

[24] Emma Celador, "Police Reform: Peacebuilding through 'Democratic Policing'?" *International Peacekeeping*, **12**, 3 (2005), pp. 364-376, p. 373.
[25] Peake and Marenin, "Their Reports Are Not Read".

'Weberian' contradictions

Despite the differences between various stakeholders and between countries with different policing cultures, one thing was commonly thought to unite the practices of SSR and police reform wherever they were implemented. This was the commitment to a 'Weberian' state. Many critics describe this as a doomed project. As was discussed at the end of Chapter 5, the doctrine of SSR has been described as premised on a particularly strong "state-centric bias" resulting in "confusion of analysis and failure of practice":

> By prioritising state and capacity building ahead of the provision of safety, security and justice, SSR policy and practice not only answers the wrong question, but exposes its erroneous assumptions, namely that the post-conflict and fragile state is capable of delivering justice and security to a majority of its population and is the main actor in security and justice provision.[26]

The analysis presented in previous chapters does provide further support for the argument that SSR in Sierra Leone was strongly focused on state institutions in a context where many important nonstate agents operated.[27] However, little suggested that SSR was responsible for imbuing reformers with a state-centric bias. As Jackson and Albrecht argue, the concept of SSR developed piecemeal, and only took hold between 2002 and 2005.[28] In Sierra Leone at this point, all the key choices in the field of force, territoriality, and legitimate authority were already made.

Instead, this study has shown that the supposed goal of constructing 'Weberian' states did not furnish statebuilders with nearly as clear advice as many observers imply. Once we zoomed below the level of manuals and policy documents – where evidence of the

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[26] Baker and Scheye, "Multi-Layered Justice", p. 524.
[27] See Abrahamsen and Williams, "Security Sector Reform: Bringing the Private in"; Baker, "Where Do People Turn to for Policing in Sierra Leone?"; Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*.
[28] Jackson and Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict*.

state-centric bias was readily available – reformers faced with thorny choices appeared. As suggested above, this was because the entangling of policing with different governmental agendas presented them with contradictory imperatives. However, which choices were made had huge implications for *what kind* of state was constructed. Choices in one area of reform impacted on choices in others, creating trade-offs between equally 'Weberian' dimensions of statehood. The clearest example of this was the potential damage a choice to rearm the SSD could do to the overarching policy of winning popular trust for the SLP. In other words, one Weberian dimension – control over the means of force – seemed to threaten another – legitimate authority. As we have seen, the choice to go ahead with a policy of arming the police required a rebranding and renaming of the SSD as loyal state protectors and a key pawn in post-conflict development. While it appeared quite successful at the time, one observer suggested that the cost in terms of popular perceptions had started to become visible: "[The unit] has a problem of public perception and legitimacy – it is seen as the most corrupt of the security architecture. It has also been proved that OSD officers were complicit in armed robberies".[29]

With hindsight, trade-offs between different dimensions of statehood can also be seen in areas where none appeared to exist. For instance, with regards to the policy of deploying SLP officers in new uniforms to rural areas, reformers predicted a mutually reinforcing dynamic between territorial control and legitimate authority. New uniforms and vehicles, it was assumed, would restore the institution's pride and lead to more professional conduct. Sensing this change, the population would approach the police more often, thus boosting the SLP's authority and effectiveness. In other words,

[29] Dominick Stanton, personal interview, Freetown, 31.3.2010.

legitimate authority would follow from presence and visibility – key aspects of territoriality. As a result, careful assessment of existing nonstate policing capacity and possible partnerships was not considered important. This was an assumption police reformers shared with programmers working in other sectors. As a whole, post-conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone was long predicated on the assumption that decentralization was the answer to a chieftaincy system in terminal decline.[30] Only after the ongoing conflict delayed decentralization and planned SLP deployment to rural areas, did talk start to appear about the potential of "nonstate justice systems".[31] At this point, the reform programme was about to end. Many observers have suggested that the late inclusion of nonstate actors in security and justice planning made policing overall less effective than it could have been.[32]

Another trade-off which did not appear to strike reformers was related to the firm steps taken against moonlighting and hiring out SLP officers to private businesses. The long-standing straddling of public and private was deemed inappropriate because it drained the SLP of capacity to perform public duties, and because it created popular uncertainty about their role. At the same time, applications for PSC licenses to bear arms were turned down because reserving the means of force to the SLP was considered essential to achieve "police primacy". These two policies designed to increase control of coercion and legitimate authority could be viewed as parallel and mutually reinforcing efforts serving to differentiate the state from society, and thereby to realize a 'Weberian' state. But they had unintended effects. Since private demand for OSD services only increased

[30] Fanthorpe, "On the Limits of Liberal Peace".
[31] DFID, 'Non-State Justice and Security Systems'.
[32] Baker, "Where Do People Turn to for Policing in Sierra Leone?"; Baker, "The African Post-Conflict Agenda in Sierra Leone"; Albrecht and Buur, "An Uneasy Marriage".

as reformers tried to shut moonlighting down, the SLP leadership decided introduce an official outsourcing policy that cemented these public-private links further.

Finally, we see possible 'Weberian' contradictions reaching from one period to the other. Would reformers in the 1990s have had an easier job if things had been done differently half a century earlier? This is a counterfactual way of framing the concern with historical continuity which has been central to this study. On the view that what ultimately matters are organic developments over long periods of time, some would be sceptical about whether this would have made a difference. Citing Charles Tilly's work on state formation, David Francis argued that "state building is a drawn-out process, not a quick-fix project with set timelines. The quick-fix approach […] is what has been at the heart of the problems of state building in post-colonial Africa".[33] However, even if the choices of late colonial reformers acting within short time limits were "quick fixes" that failed to achieve what a slow, organic process of state-making might have, it does not mean that those choices did not have significant effects. While 50 years of history in between forecloses strong conclusions, it is not entirely far-fetched to think of today's international statebuilding as an attempt to correct the mistakes and shortcomings of colonial statebuilding. After all, state failure is thought of as directly related to how a negative sovereignty regime 'froze' the inadequate political structures of ex-colonies.[34] Clapham cautions against repeating colonial, "overambitious attempts to impose on societies a level of state control that they were ultimately unable to bear".[35] Moreover, the scholarship on politics in Sierra Leone has described postcolonial politics as amplification and modification of elements put in place duing colonialism. Reno

[33] David Francis, *Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006), p. 46; see also Ayoob, "The Security Problematic of Third World States".
[34] Jeffrey Herbst, 'Let Them Fail: State Failure in Theory and Practice', in Rotberg, *When States Fail.*
[35] Clapham, 'The Global Local Politics of Decay', p. 83.

describes the difference between colonial and postcolonial rule in Sierra Leone as one of "intensity and comprehensiveness of domination" rather than of type.[36]

On this view, reformers after the Cold War were most obviously constrained by the tardiness and ineffectiveness of colonial attempts to standardize colonial forces along British lines.[37] As a consequence, they had to grapple with deep structural obstacles to statehood such as the absence of police from rural areas. So what if different policies had been chosen with regards to the SLP's territorial deployment or relations to nonstate actors? In the 1950s the CMF was disbanded in an effort to extend the SLP's control over territory and thereby prepare Sierra Leone for independent statehood. If late colonial statebuilders – in line with today's reappraisals of the contributions of nonstate security providers – had opted instead for professionalization and tighter control of the CMF, this middle-man in the three-tiered policing structure may have stopped the bifurcation of Sierra Leone's socio-political system from widening. In that case, reformers may have calculated that they had more to gain from nonstate partnerships than they did. Similarly, if colonial officials had followed through on the stated policy of transforming the SLP from a paramilitary force to a British-style constabulary, they would most likely have dealt with a different policing culture as they returned to the country.

These are big ifs. Scholars attribute conflict and decline in Sierra Leone to its political economy, and there is only so much a different model of policing could have done to alter those dynamics. This is thought-provoking given that high hopes were expressed for the impact a reformed SLP can make on Sierra Leone's recovery from conflict and

[36] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*, p. 88.
[37] Anderson and Killingray, *Policing and Decolonisation*; Sinclair, *At the End of the Line*.

poverty. Shifting focus now from strategies to their effects, the remainder of this chapter will analyze what the appropriation of reforms implies for our understanding of sovereignty in Africa.

Policing and sovereignty in Africa

In various ways, this study has challenged the idea that negative or juridical sovereignty had a number of specific effects on weak states. Chapter 1 scrutinized the origins of the negative sovereignty regime and found that concrete visions of appropriate statehood continued to inform colonial statebuilding well after this regime allegedly came into place. Drawing on Bayart's concept of extraversion, Chapter 6 focused on the manifestations of sovereignty in the personal relations between British and Sierra Leonean reformers during the recent reform. Here it was argued that the understanding of sovereignty as a shield the weak used to persist in the face of the strong blinded us to how the weak may exercise their sovereignty precisely to encourage intervention.

A central contention throughout has therefore been that the logics driving police reform in Sierra Leone were international in character. This was traced back to the SLP's inception as a defence force against French attacks in the late 19th century. Throughout the SLP's colonial history, impulses from other colonies deeply shaped its functions and organization, driving it in a paramilitary direction despite little domestic unrest. As independence approached, worries about Soviet-sponsored subversive groups led to a strengthening of the SLP's intelligence capacity. The reform as a whole was shaped by the perception that Sierra Leone needed to be prepared to enter international society. Throughout the postcolonial period, training and equipment was obtained from a variety of third countries at opposite sides of the Cold War divide. Finally, post-conflict police

reform was part of an international reconstruction effort motivated by the belief that local conflict had international repercussions. After the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, this already strong rationale was further bolstered by the fear that ungoverned territories in weak states could be used as staging grounds for global terrorism.

Besides exploring how international concerns affected *strategies* of police reform, the study has drawn attention to policing as a field that connected Sierra Leone with the world. In the colonial era, efforts to regulate the booming illegal trade in diamonds led to the construction of a global policing assemblage. Increasing priority was given to controlling cross-border traffic with Liberia, and traffickers were pursued in various locations in Europe and the Middle East. The trade in diamonds therefore added a global dynamic to policing where an imperial dynamic had long been at work. More recently, the SLP became the target of assistance from a large multinational UN CIVPOL contingent, as well as from the Commonwealth. In 2004 a Peacekeeping Operations Department at SLP headquarters was created with partnerships in the US, Canada, Ghana, Germany and China. The rationale behind the department was to ensure the participation of SLP personnel in UN, African Union (AU) and ECOWAS operations. Since then SLP officers have participated in international police missions in Somalia, Darfur, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with as many as 189 officers deployed in Darfur in January 2010.[38] In the next section, I will describe how the SLP were able to use its status as a success story of intervention to sustain their international activities. Before I do so, it is worth considering how such new links square with dominant understandings of African sovereignty.

[38] SLP Peacekeeping Operations Department http://www.police.gov.sl/content.php?p=21&pn=Peace%20Keeping%20Operations (accessed 26.1.2012).

Policing has never captured much attention among scholars of IR, doubtlessly because of the persistence of a strong inside/outside distinction predicated upon the idea that each state is 'sovereign'.[39] In this perspective, states resist extending police power beyond national borders because it erodes their sovereign monopoly on force. Thus, one recent book found that terrorism and organized crime were severe enough threats for European states to overcome "the constraining effect of the national interest in sovereignty" and engage in unprecedented international police cooperation.[40] However, such cooperation has a long history, traced by Deflem back to the 19th century.[41] According to Sheptycki, "not only has the military historically been drawn into action in the domestic sphere, 'domestic' police have also long exhibited a variety of transnational practices".[42] Interestingly, policing has recently become a field through which the brittleness of the inside/outside distinction has been explored. A growing body of work has charted the "policing at a distance" whereby states respond to "extra-territorial" threats through cooperation and information sharing between highly specialized policing agencies.[43] This tentative expansion of sovereign power through policing shows that sovereignty cannot simply be conceived as a constraint reserving policing to the domestic realm. Instead, the wish to protect what Krasner calls 'interdependence sovereignty' – a state's ability to control movements and flows across its borders – has been the very reason for the increasing extension of policing beyond

[39] R.B.J Walker, *Inside/Outside*.
[40] Jörg Friedrichs, *Fighting Terrorism and Drugs: Europe and International Police Cooperation* (Routledge, London, 2008).
[41] Deflem, *Policing World Society*.
[42] Sheptycki, 'The Constabulary Ethic and the Transnational Condition', p. 35.
[43] See Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease", *Alternatives*, **27**, 1 (2007); Didier Bigo and Anastassia Tsoukala, *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty: Illiberal Practices of Liberal Regimes after 9/11* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2008); Peter Andreas and Ethan Avram Nadelmann, *Policing the Globe: Criminalization and Crime Control in International Relations* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006); Mathieu Deflem, *The Policing of Terrorism: Organizational and Global Perspectives* (Routledge, New York, NY, 2010).

national borders.[44]

While the growing attention to the extension of sovereign power through policing is welcome, this process has largely been analyzed as a bulwark the West has raised against threats emanating from places with weak law enforcement. As a consequence, little is known about how the governments of weak states capitalized on the interventions and capacity-building they hosted to expand their own policing networks. A further obstacle to appreciating the significance of such links is found in how the debate on African sovereignty is framed. Indeed, a ready explanation of the new SLP ventures abroad exists; as yet more evidence of how "instrumentalization of sovereignty by people in positions of state authority undermines the quality of governance".[45] On this view, senior SLP officers eligible for participation in foreign missions happily leave the people of Sierra Leone with a poorer service in order to chase financial opportunities abroad.

On a macro level, the same phenomenon can easily be integrated into the story about sovereignty as life support of artificial entities. Lucrative participation in foreign missions would have been impossible if Sierra Leone did not enjoy the status as a sovereign state. Thirty years after Jackson and Rosberg's article on why Africa's weak states persisted, international recognition of their sovereignty was still offered as the answer.[46] Very often, the implication was that sovereignty stood in the way of more just

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[44] Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*.
[45] Pierre Englebert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty & Sorrow* (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 2009), p. 219.
[46] Jackson and Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist".

and effective polities.[47] A particularly strong "policy fantasy" was presented by Englebert:

> Considering [African postcolonial states] to be the contemporary manifestation of colonialism, one could simply refuse to recognize them. This is not to imply that one could not trade with their producers, arrange air links with them, or develop other forms of economic interactions, but there would be no diplomatic recognition. Other countries would not recognize their governments, their sovereignty, their membership in the international system of states. For anyone who cares about the emancipation of Africans from the remaining shackles of colonialism, this policy would spell freedom at last. The Berlin Conference would be undone; the business of decolonization would be finished once and for all.[48]

Sierra Leone has often been used as an illustration of the malign consequences of the sovereignty regime in Africa. Most accounts of its foreign relations have stressed how external actors took advantage of weak institutions to exploit its natural resources, or conversely, the opportunities accruing to domestic elites by tapping into global criminal networks.[49] Sierra Leone's insertion into the international system has thus been described as a manipulation of sovereign power for private purposes. Argued William Reno:

> Weak states exist within the state system because they and their private firm partners continue to benefit from and manipulate their juridical equality with other states, even though these states lack centralized systems of government and do not provide much in the way of collective goods to citizens […] [T]he marginality of very weak states constitutes the primary tool that rulers can use to extend non-bureaucratic control within commercially viable parts of their realms through a lucrative private diplomacy.[50]

The lucrative diplomacy exercised by strongmen in the precious mineral trade still existed in Sierra Leone after the post-conflict reconstruction period. Yet the new international exchanges in the field of policing represented a significant departure from

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[47] Jackson, *Quasi-States*; Herbst, 'Responding to state failure in Africa'; Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002).
[48] Englebert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty & Sorrow*, p. 246.
[49] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*; Francis, "Mercenary Intervention in Sierra Leone"; see also Bayart, Ellis and Hibou, *The Criminalization of the State in* Africa.
[50] Reno, 'How Sovereignty Matters', p. 214.

the “dichotomy between internal and external sovereignty” that Reno describes. These links showed that institutions at the heart of statehood were vehicles of new forms of *legitimate* interaction with the world. There are surely questions to be asked about what the SLP as an institution gained from sending its officers abroad, and what the implications for national security were. Whatever the gain or loss, the deployment of SLP officers as part of multinational post-conflict missions abroad allows us to appreciate that sovereignty had broader effects than sustaining neopatrimonial rule and illicit global business networks.

Uses of a success story

In the Epilogue, it will be considered whether there is still cause for thinking about the SLP as an engine in the country’s post-conflict recovery. But as noted in the beginning, the effects of an intervention can be measured in several ways, not all of which are directly related to progress towards professed goals. A few years after reform, one notable effect was a kind of meta-effect: the appropriation of the intervention itself. As indicated above, the widespread perception that Sierra Leone had succeeded in recovering from conflict and rejoining the ranks of legitimate, sovereign states were seized upon by the SLP to create new connections with the outside world. This was possible because police reform earned the status of a flagship effort of SSR and became widely regarded as an example to follow. According to Lisa Denney:

> The police are widely recognized as being more effective and reliable than during or prior to the civil war. They are now viewed by many as ‘partners in development’. Corruption remains, but the majority of the population no longer lives in fear of police brutality.[51]

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[51] Denney, “Reducing Poverty”, p. 287.

An International Crisis Group report published after the 2007 national election supported this view, claiming that

> It is widely acknowledged in Sierra Leone and abroad that the successful elections were a testament to the efficiency of the police, headed by Inspector General Brima Acha Kamara, who deployed well-trained forces, anticipated outbreaks and used non-lethal crowd control methods.[52]

DFID joined in the praise of the SLP's election effort and argued that other countries should learn from it: "as senior figures from the police and army take up invitations from neighbouring countries to share their experiences from the summer, other polls in the region could also benefit from Sierra Leone's safe and secure elections".[53]

These positive reviews seems to vindicate the attention the British reformers paid to professionalism in the police institution. 'Human resources' and 'capacity' were viewed as essential qualities for a renewed policing model to work. To foster these qualities the reformers did something a financially strapped colonial government could only do on a small scale: send promising officers for extensive training in the UK. After they left, virtually the entire senior cadre of the SLP had attended long training courses at Bramshill Police Staff College, and many had earned Master's degrees at British and American universities. The expertise imparted to senior officers during their courses in the UK, however, was intended to aid the country's post-conflict recovery. Today it has created a platform from which to engage with actors abroad. These engagements reach well beyond the Commonwealth. Many of the senior officers I spoke to had been on long visits in China and Egypt; countries with very different policing philosophies than

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[52] International Crisis Group. 'Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?' (ICG, Africa Report No. 143, Dakar/Brussels, 31 July 2008), p. 2.

[53] DFID, "Kushe police dem" – Well done police!" http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/Case-Studies/2008/Kushe-police-dem---Well-done-police/ (accessed 28.1.2012).

the one espoused by the British mentors. One officer with experience from China recounted the benefits of learning about prevention of coups from foreigners: "[We] had contact with Afghanis, Ukrainians, Pakistanis and people from a lot of African countries. We spoke about coups in Africa, of causes, failures and supporters. A lot about coups".[54]

In addition to the foreign training, the most striking feature of the new internationalism was the SLP participation in international missions in other post-conflict states. Continued participation in such missions depended on careful management of the brand as a success story. Describing the SLP's performance in Haiti, the Peacekeeping Operation Department stressed how the "officers demonstrated professionalism during their tour of duty, thereby winning the trust of both local and international communities; thus serving as a case study".[55] As 100 SLP officers were about to deploy to Darfur, the Deputy Minister of Interior admonished that they honor the country's reputation: "I want to advise you not to do anything negative that will bring the name of the country into disrepute. In the past, we received certificatory performance report[s] from your predecessors and we hope that you will do the same".[56]

Hills has argued that police participation in foreign missions was valued by governments because of the public relations opportunities they offer, and by individual officers for the allowances. Participation in such missions, she concluded, was ultimately "an inherently artificial exercise divorced from the realities of everyday

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[54] Amos Kargbo, personal interview, Koidu, 17.4.2010.
[55] 'Historical Background of the Sierra Leone Peacekeeping Operations Department'. http://www.police.gov.sl/content.php?p=21&pn=Peace Keeping Operations (accessed 15.4.2012).
[56] *Awareness Times*: "100 Police Officers Leave for Darfur." 31.8.2010.

domestic policing".[57] There is no doubt that the pecuniary aspect was present in Sierra Leone as well. Just as the rank and file of the international mission to Sierra Leone predominantly came from low-income countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon and Kyrgyzstan, SLP officers capitalized on the opportunity to multiply their salaries by joining UN missions abroad. When I asked what the SLP stood to gain from sending so many of their most qualified officers abroad, a senior officer told me:

> There is the financial aspect of it, for the individual, they enhance their earning and improve their lives. This is very attractive. It will also help us to learn some other practices from other countries, and we will share our knowledge with them. The SLP officers that have served in the Sudan and Haiti have been very successful. Botswana is the most important country we learn from. We have had roughly 50-60 officers there through the Commonwealth program.[58]

Another senior officer confirmed that this opportunity was lucrative, but argued that there was more to it than personal profit. One advantage was the chance to repay the debts Sierra Leone had garnered during its own "tried moment" by helping others going through difficult times; another was the gains in expertise. The officers serving abroad, he added, "are also learning, because they are going to be networking and interacting with people with experience. That is going to add to our knowledge and experience base".[59]

The significance of such exchanges cannot be wholly reduced to profit-seeking with no domestic impact. It goes without saying that the training required to prepare hundreds of SLP officers for service abroad had an impact on domestic security, if only because it removed capacity from domestic duties. However, this should not be seen just as a distraction. During a field visit to the training school outside Freetown I made in the summer of 2010, candidates for international deployment were taught how to drive.

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[57] Hills, "The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria", p. 310.
[58] Morie Lengor, personal interview, Freetown, 1.12.2009.
[59] Richard Moigbe, personal interview, Freetown, 8.4.2010.

This was a skill many of the recruits lacked. Besides picking up such skills, some officers pointed out how these German-funded training sessions were a welcome opportunity to exchange experiences with officers from other units and other parts of the country.

To have officers "fulfill their duties according to international standards", as the German Development Cooperation claim to have helped the country achieve, was of little concern during Siaka Stevens' reign. As recruits for multinational missions became selected according to international experience and behavioral records, international standards gained a great deal of purchase. The expertise gained from foreign police missions was a resource that allowed the SLP to sustain its international links beyond the role as recipient of foreign assistance. Thus, the prominent display of credentials from foreign institutions in the offices of senior SLP officers – from the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Canada, or the Kofi Annan Centre in Ghana – were more than just marks of personal prestige.

Most importantly, the participation in foreign missions can be seen as an element in a general international reorientation of policing that affected perceptions of *domestic* security, and consequently policing priorities. Indeed, there was a striking contrast between the decrepit state of offices, equipment, and vehicles in the country and the fluency with which officers described the global security context in which Sierra Leone found itself. Explained one AIG:

> The world is a global village, and because of that Sierra Leone should also prepare to face transnational organized crime challenges […] You have a terrorist coming from country X to Africa, looking at Sierra Leone with porous borders, maybe looking at the laws – in certain areas they are weak. So now we are experiencing [problems] in the area of trafficking of hard drugs, cocaine, heroin […] We are faced with a transnational crime challenge, even in human

trafficking. And [when] you come to internet financial fraud, money laundering is a very growing trend…[60]

Another senior officer, who was made Inspector General in 2010, emphasized how the crime picture in the country had changed fundamentally in recent times:

International crime which was previously unknown is now very prevalent. Or maybe it wasn't raised before. Crimes like terrorism are new crimes in our country. Drug trafficking also came after the war. Human trafficking existed before but did not come to the limelight. Now we also have cyber crimes. All of those were not previously known.[61]

Interestingly, these descriptions of Sierra Leone as a vulnerable point in the traffic of terrorists, drug dealers and money launderers stood in marked contrast to the perspectives of observers elsewhere the security sector. A National Security Coordinator at the ONS denied that there was much to worry about from the outside world: "Threats are very, very internal. [We face] nothing outside, nothing much. Our neighbors cannot afford making any trouble. Corruption, bad governance, access to justice – our problems are all internal".[62] He was supported by one of his British colleagues: "Endemic corruption is Africa-wide. The specific threat in Sierra Leone is politicization […] what it really comes down to is politicization of youth".[63]

These strikingly divergent perceptions reflected different elements in the discourse on global security. While the ONS officials appeared to back the perception among development donors that security was mainly threatened by domestic underdevelopment and bad governance, the view in the SLP emphasized forces and processes threatening the country from without. The disagreement about threats could of course just represent a predictable professional bias: The police highlight new threats which would require

[60] *Ibid*.
[61] Francis Munu, personal interview, Freetown, 3.6.2010.
[62] Kellie Conteh, personal interview, Freetown, 2.6 2010.
[63] Gary Horlacker, personal interview, Freetown, 27.5.2010.

more resources and technology (transnational crime) instead of familiar domestic problems that are even found within their own organization (bad governance). Whatever the most pressing threats facing the country, the intervention furnished the police with a new way to frame security which resonated abroad. As the country lost its status as a collapsed state in need of intervention, SLP officers drew attention to the weakness afflicting even the strongest states, namely the vulnerability to terrorism and organized crime. The fluidity of these threats served as justification for foreign funding to strengthen border and airport security in vulnerable Sierra Leone. Whether this will succeed is an open question, but the arguments are heard.[64] Similar opportunities did not exist prior to the war.

Concluding remarks

In a stimulating essay, Latham, Kassimir and Callaghy argued that politics in Africa could be understood as processes through which global, regional and local forces intersect to form 'transboundary formations'.[65] Such formations can appear when a discourse (such as 'global security') is mobilized to link a variety of actors in new ways. Some of these formations, they argued, "are seen as instances of 'intervention' while others are perceived to be the natural outgrowth of regular socio-economic and political interaction".[66] The SLP's new international links nicely illustrate how an intervention could solidify into a regular pattern. It was a British-led intervention that endowed the SLP with the opportunity to establish partnerships in an expanding number of countries.

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[64] Here they were supported by an Advisor at the British High Commission who regretted that border control had not been in British policy-makers' minds. Dominick Stanton, personal interview, Freetown, 31.3.2010.
[65] Robert Latham, Ronald Kassimir and Thomas M. Callaghy, 'Introduction: Transboundary Formations, Intervention, Order, and Authority', in Thomas Callaghy, Ronald Kassimir and Robert Latham (eds), *Intervention & Transnationalism in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001).
[66] *Ibid*., p. 7.

This intervention had clear targets and timelines and was never meant to be permanent. However, whereas Latham describes interventions as “narrow, circumscribed, and temporary”,[67] with hindsight we can see that intervention in Sierra Leone produced a new register of foreign policy. Indeed, SLP officers were able to transform the country’s experience as the *host* of an intervention into a form of expertise – how to recover from conflict – that was in demand in international interventions elsewhere. The analytical cost of the understanding of sovereignty as a structure with malign consequences for Africa is therefore to miss the ways in which weak states draw on the life support they received to integrate themselves into international society in new ways.

[67] Robert Latham, ‘Identifying the Contours of Transboundary Political Life, in Callaghy, Kassimir and Latham, *Intervention & Transnationalism in Africa*, p. 91.

Epilogue: A success story at risk?

After two relatively peaceful elections held under heavy international supervision in 2002 and 2007, the national election scheduled for November 2012 has been described as a fork in the road for Sierra Leone's post-conflict recovery.[1] The remainder of this study discusses the likelihood that the country will retain its status as a success story in the future. From a donor perspective, a tentative stock of the results of the post-conflict reconstruction process quickly reveals that progress towards some key targets has been very limited. Evident failures in rooting out corruption cast considerable doubt on whether the belief that a virtuous circle of development and security would take hold in the country was justified.[2] Recent political violence and regional instability has created worry that Sierra Leone might relapse into conflict.

Predictions about the future must necessarily be speculative, but given that similar dynamics were observed in the late colonial and recent period, we may ask whether there is reason to fear that the SLP revert to their former repressive ways. Given Bratton and van de Walle's finding that regime types in Africa "can be traced to the dynamics of the immediate postindependence years", this question seems particularly appropriate to ask in the wake of another transition from heavy foreign influence.[3]

In the field of policing, Bayley has succinctly summarized what is at stake: "The foreign policy of developing and reforming police abroad sows dragon's teeth in a double

[1] Dominick Stanton, personal interview, Freetown, 31.3.2010.
[2] Denney, "Reducing Poverty".
[3] Bratton and van de Walle, "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa".

sense: by improving the capability of a major institution of potential repression and by bringing into disrepute the activities of donors both at home and abroad".[4] Despite these problems, Bayley and Perito contend that the prospects for introducing "effective and humane" security institutions in conflict-ridden states are good if reformers successfully gauge the environment they operate in, and develop the right capacity to deal with the right problems.[5] Others have questioned any possibility of introducing civilian policing in the context of large-scale violence. Analyzing police reform in Iraq, Deflem and Suthpin argued that it is only in "societies that have a democratic polity and that have reached a modicum of peace that the police institution can develop into a professional civilian force of law enforcement".[6] In a quite different context, Max Weber portrayed a long march from "modifications of the blood feud […] to the present position of the policeman as the representative of God on earth".[7]

In other words, the jury is out on whether is possible to emerge out of war with civilian and accountable policing. An instructive place to begin the discussion of future scenarios in Sierra Leone is with the speculations two prominent observers ventured about the country about 15 years ago. If the 'Shadow State' should collapse, Reno considered in 1995, one should not expect "the flowering of a vibrant civil society". A more likely result, he argued, would be

> fragments of elite networks, strongmen striking out on their own. One can imagine that the likely successors to Charles Taylor and Valentine Strasser will be one or several of their current collaborators. The more entrepreneurial of them will not lack for supporters since decades of repression and exploitation have led significant numbers to view justice in terms of retribution against their latest oppressors. Entrepreneurs and their supporters will exploit anarchy and anger as an opportunity to rob the countryside on their own behalf. Amid the collapse of the shadow

[4] Bayley, *Changing the Guard*, p. 13.
[5] Bayley and Perito, *The Police in War*.
[6] Mathieu Deflem and Suzanne Suthpin, "Policing Post-War Iraq: Counterinsurgency, Civilian Police, and the Reconstruction of Society", *Sociological Focus*, **29**, 4 (2006), pp. 265-283, p. 5.
[7] Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, p. 213.

state's monopoly on violence, most people will encounter authority in the form of cheap and effective weapons such as the AK-47 and the youths who are adept at using them, rather than the resurgence of a romanticized civil society that will dissolve the immense social damage of patrimonial politics.[8]

Paul Richards, though fearing a chronic, low-intensity war, was slightly more upbeat in his predictions published in 1996:

If there is a negotiated end to the conflict in Sierra Leone, then a formal process of reconstruction can begin. State and civil society can be repaired 'from above'. It seems clear, however, that even with clever and honest management, any regime coming to power after a negotiated end to the war would be hard pressed to command the levels of internal resources fully to rebuild a war-damaged economy, and improve on the low pre-war standards of social services that rendered the country vulnerable to war in the first place.[9]

These scenarios, portraying war and patrimonial politics as part of a vicious circle, remind us that a negotiated settlement of conflict and a decade of peace in its wake have exceeded most people's expectations. Yet if we are to take the vicious/virtuous circle images of the donor discourse seriously, absence of armed conflict is not enough to constitute success. Donors now view the performance of security forces as a reflection of socioeconomic conditions and the quality of the broader system of "governance":

The recognition that security and development are inextricably linked is enabling security in partner countries to be viewed as a public policy and governance issue inviting greater public scrutiny of security policy […] If states are to escape from a downward spiral wherein insecurity, crime, and underdevelopment are mutually reinforcing, socioeconomic, justice, and security dimensions must be tackled simultaneously.[10]

Interestingly, this policy view is not dissimilar to Reno's and Richards' statement of the problem, which linked continued violence to poor social services and grievances created by state repression. The donor faith in 'civil society' as an alternative to a corrupted state that Reno railed against was superseded by a focus on state institutions,

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[8] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*, p. 188.
[9] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, p. 154.
[10] OECD, 'OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform', p. 13f.

particularly those of an ever-more widely defined security sector.[11] Emphasis was given to financial oversight and anti-corruption. According to DFID, "the security sector should be subject to the same governance norms as other parts of the public sector".[12] They even warned against embarking on SSR programmes in countries where the military or the police are "entrenched in the economic, social and political fabric of the state".[13] Most definitions of SSR therefore defined success in terms of a security sector that was subject to civilian oversight, did not interfere in politics, and was not involved in any form of corruption.

The results of this priority can readily be seen in Sierra Leone, whose public sphere became saturated with anti-corruption rhetoric. In 2000, the Anti-Corruption Commission was established with DFID funding. It stayed in the headlines since, on account of investigations leading to high-profile arrests of two Ministers and the Vice President's Chief of Staff; but also for the sacking of the Commission's own leader in 2005 on suspicions of corruption.[14] Apart from the establishment of a Complaint Discipline Internal Investigation Department (CDIID), the antidote to corruption in the SLP supplied by the British came in the form of management reform and various forms of sensitization. This followed from the diagnosis that "lack of leadership and commitment" as well as "ongoing corruption" was the "rock upon which SLP change [could] perish":

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[11] For instance, the UK Government Security Sector Development Advisory Team's (SSDAT) definition of the security sector included wildlife protection, water and environment, and cartography. 'SSR and Defence Reform', SSDAT presentation, December 2008. http://www.ssrnetwork.net/documents/PractionersCourse/Dec08/Stephen%20Logan%20-%20%20SSR%20and%20Defence%20Reform.pdf (accessed 22.1.2012).
[12] DFID, 'Security Sector Reform and the Management of Defence Expenditure: A Conceptual Framework' (Discussion Paper No. 1, DFID, London 15-17 February, 2000).
[13] DFID, 'Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform' (DFID, London, 2002).
[14] U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 'Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Sierra Leone' (Chr. Michelsen Institute and Transparency International, Bergen, 2010).

> For many years the SLP did not have a performance culture; indeed it is questionable if it had in recent years a supervisory culture. Accountability is a recent phemonemen [sic]. These difficulties are experienced daily in introducing even the most basic infrastructure and procedural changes.[15]

On this view, the challenge was primarily one of changing individual attitudes and conveying a favorable image of the SLP. Winning the trust of people (and the press) was considered so important that the British reformers set up a Police Media and Public Relations Unit.

The focus on attitudes was taken to heart by the current Sierra Leonean government. Shortly after taking office, President Ernest Koroma set up an Attitudinal and Behavioural Change Secretariat. Along the country's roads, passers-by were greeted with large banners with messages like "Invest in Your Future by Changing Your Attitude and Behaviour for the Good of All Sierra Leoneans". However, the focus on attitudes and values is unlikely to be very effective unless adequate salaries are paid. David Keen emphasized the importance of decent salaries to the country's recovery overall:

> If any sustainable recovery and development is to be possible (and if the security sector is to be adequately funded in the long term), then the Sierra Leone government has to be able to control and tax its own economy. This means that adequate salaries for civil servants are essential. The erosion of civil servants' real pay, in the 1980s in particular, tended to put corruption somewhere between a necessity and an irresistible temptation.[16]

Given how important rooting out corruption is considered to be for the performance of security institutions and long-term stability, it is remarkable that SSR in Sierra Leone was still rendered as a success story in the donor community. In fact, a DFID-commissioned review found that "there has been no real improvement in tackling

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[15] *Managing Change in the Sierra Leone Police: An Update. 5 February 2003*. Adrian Horn private document.

[16] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*, p. 310.

corruption since the end of the conflict. This lack of action is rightly seen as a risk to stability, given that corruption was a major cause of the civil war".[17] Furthermore, corruption was not just an outside problem threatening to upset a professionalized security sector, but was described as especially problematic in that sector because it hampered the fight against corruption elsewhere:

> Corruption continues to permeate almost every sectors [sic] of Sierra Leone's public life, compromising citizens' access to basic public services and institutions such as health, education and the police […] Drug trafficking and money laundering are also on the increase, with the country being used as a transshipment point from South America to Europe. Against this backdrop, corruption in the judiciary and law enforcement is of particular concern as [it compromises] the state's ability to contain these emerging threats.[18]

Adding fresh evidence to the pile, a leaked US diplomatic cable recently described "deep corruption within the Defence Ministry" and suggested that it had squandered substantial parts of a British aid grant on plasma TVs and hunting rifles. A President consistently saying what donors wanted to hear but "lacking spine", the cable concluded, was "lessening the international community's hope that [he] can stand up to the negative forces around him, especially as eyes turn toward the 2012 election".[19] Elsewhere it has been argued that Sierra Leone's favorable image in the international donor community offered a new source of private enrichment. The status as a model for post-conflict recovery, suggested *The Economist,* "has had an insidious effect on its bureaucrats, many of whom waste a lot of time inveigling themselves into delegations to conferences and seminars abroad, where they receive handsome allowances".[20]

These trends ought to worry those that associate corruption and insecurity because, as two economists argue, the scope for corruption in the police is higher than in other

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[17] Poate, Balogun, Rothmann, Knight and Sesay, 'Evaluation of DFID Country Programmes', p. xi.
[18] U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 'Overview of Corruption', p. 1.
[19] http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09FREETOWN325.html# (accessed 20.1.2012).
[20] *The Economist*: "Rich Pickings: Bad Apples are still in the Barrel." 17.5. 2010

public services. Since the police have access to the instrument of force, they have larger opportunities to extort money or other services. Their frequent interactions with the general public and with criminals possessing valuable goods yield opportunities for corruption in a number of forms.[21] These incentives for corruption are compounded by the fact that illegal businesses often actively try to corrupt the police in order to secure immunity from prosecution and monopoly of illegal markets.[22] When we factor in the very low and irregular salaries of SLP officers, it may not come as a surprise that Sierra Leoneans perceived the SLP as the most corrupt of the country's institution in 2011.[23]

However, to assess the impact of corruption on security, it is important to distinguish petty street-level corruption from collusion with elites in business and politics.[24] Considering the donor axiom that economic development and security are linked, even everyday, street-level extortion by rank and file ought to pose a long-term concern for donors.[25] Such corruption was rife in Sierra Leone after reform; but so it was in many other countries which were not considered at risk of conflict.

A more immediate threat to security was constituted by the unit most capable of inflicting harm; the OSD. If the success of SSR is measured in terms of democratization and development, investing a strong element of force in a state uniformly denounced as 'corrupt' invariably involves a leap of faith. According to Hills,

[21] Jens Chr. Andvig and Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, 'Crime, Poverty and Police Corruption in Developing Countries' (CMI Working Paper, WP 2008: 7. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute).
[22] Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes Consequences and Reform* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999).
[23] *Africa News*: "Sierra Leone: Police top Corruption Perception Index". 6.4.2011.
[24] The SLP's own definition of corruption includes "the commission or omission of an act in the performance or in connection with one's duties, in response to gifts, promises or incentives demanded or accepted, or the wrongful receipt of these once the act has been committed or omitted". *Sierra Leone Police Core Values and Operational Principles.* Document obtained from the SLP Headquarters in Freetown.
[25] Andvig and Fjeldstad argue that corrupt police forces can adversely impact economic development because they "may increase the uncertainty around the property rights of the very poor". Andvig and Fjeldstad, 'Crime, Poverty and Police Corruption', p. 2.

Improving the functional capacity of Africa's police may, of course, be appropriate; developing their ability to conduct intelligence operations and threat assessments is potentially useful for many forms of crime detection and prevention. Unfortunately, however, most of the continent's police are ineffective, corrupt, repressive and politicised. Further, this situation exists because governments prefer it that way. When effective policing does result, it is usually employed against a government's opponents.[26]

Just as sensitization is a fragile barrier against corruption, it provides little comfort for those who fear the prospect that the guns Britain supplied to the SLP may be turned against its people yet again. In this respect, the integration of a group of well-known ex-combatants, most famously 'Leather Boot', into the Close Protection Unit of the OSD following the 2007 election was a sign that the police were still thoroughly entangled in the country's politics.[27] There was also evidence that Leather Boot was directly involved in attacks on the largest opposition party's offices in Freetown in March 2009.[28] A report published by the *Sierra Herald* on clashes between SLPP and APC supporters in Bo in September 2011 claimed that the SLP failed to prepare for the encounter and left a junior officer in charge. OSD gunfire was reported to have killed one person and wounded nine others.[29] According to a 2011 Amnesty International report, fears rose that "if this practice continued, the opposition might similarly recruit from among the thousands of resettled former fighters, posing a grave threat to the country's medium and long-term security". [30] While recruitment of prominent war veterans into the SLP raised concerns in Sierra Leone as well as internationally, an even more important question regarded whether the training provided successfully changed

[26] Hills, "Trojan Horses?", p. 642.
[27] Maya Christensen and Mats Utas, "Mercenaries of Democracy: The 'Politricks' of Remobilized Combatants in the 2007 General Elections, Sierra Leone", *African Affairs*, **107**, 429 (2008), pp. 515-539.
[28] Waldock, *Di War Don Don?*
[29] *The Sierra Herald :* "Key findings." Vol. 9, No. 1 http://www.sierraherald.com/bo-report-keyfindings.htm (accessed 1.2.2012)
[30] Amnesty International, 'Annual Report 2011: Sierra Leone'. http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/sierra-leone/report-2011 (accessed 16.2.2012)

attitudes towards the use of force throughout the SLP. Concluded the same Amnesty report:

> Police brutality, corruption, excessive use of force, poor conditions in police detention cells, and unlawfully prolonged detention without charge were commonplace. Police were also often ineffective in maintaining law and order. There were no effective police investigations into ritual murders and few investigations into sexual and gender-based violence.

To place this description in its proper context, it must be noted that the level of police violence was low in Sierra Leone as compared other West African countries.[31] Police and other security forces in Guinea – trained and/or armed by China, France, Germany, Mali, Morocco, South Africa, and the United States – reportedly killed 150 people and wounded more than 1500 amid political protest in September 2007.[32] In Nigeria, official statistics indicated that the Mobile Police known as Kill-and-Go killed 8,000 people (typically described in police records as "armed robbers") between 2002 and 2007. Independent observers estimated the number to be over 10,000.[33]

Several years after the United Kingdom transferred operational control to a Sierra Leonean IGP, nothing remotely as severe seemed to be on the cards. Yet British reformers harbored fears that similar things could happen. Ray England worried about the consequences of a slip in discipline: "my fear is that [the OSD] will slip back into old habits. The standards will drop, weapons will be lost, weapons will become rusty, they will start using their weapons when they shouldn't do".[34] In this respect, evidence that prominent OSD officers were involved in electoral violence ought to worry those

[31] As far as I am aware, there are no publicly available statistics on this issue in Sierra Leone.
[32] *Amnesty International*: "Guinea security forces used excessive force in election protest". http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/guinea-security-forces-used-excessive-force-election-protests-2010-10-25 (accessed 1.2.2012)
[33] Hills, "The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria".
[34] Ray England, personal interview, London 3.2.2011

who embrace Sierra Leone as a successful model of post-conflict recovery.[35] Yet there was also evidence that the OSD used very different crime-fighting methods than those promoted under British leadership. In December 2011, reports appeared that OSD officers in Freetown's Lumley Division shot and killed a fleeing person suspected of stealing bananas from a garden. The Local Unit Commander seemed less concerned with justifying the killing than with issuing a warning. In the future, he said, the police "would stop at nothing to gun down anyone caught in robbery operations".[36]

Many of those I spoke to described a very uneven impact of the reform on the institution as a whole. Said the current IGP: "There is so much knowledge in the higher stratum and the medium, but down at the [bottom] we have some problems. When you talk to me, and when you see performance on the ground – [we] are poles apart. Knowledge does not cascade down".[37] Outside observers questioned what would happen if the senior officers moved on or disappeared: "If these guys fell away, what would be left? There is a big gap between the top people and the lower rungs".[38]

Another factor which may affect SLP attitudes towards to use of force is the increasing use of joint police-military checkpoints known as '"MACP" (Military Assistance to Civil Power). In late 2009 and early 2010, these seemed to be almost permanent outside Freetown and Koidu. This was often explained as a measure to counter armed robberies. In the operational guidelines on MACP, however, such checkpoints did not appear to count as a standing task. Instead, the guidelines stressed the importance of a clear division of labor in the early years after reconstruction:

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[35] Waldock, *Di War Don Don?*
[36] *Awareness Times*: "In Sierra Leone, Police Gun Down Notorious Armed Robber at Juba-Lumley". 14.12.2011
[37] Francis Munu, personal interview, Freetown, 3.6.2010
[38] James Vincent, personal interview, Freetown 10.4.2011

The key aspect here is that Sierra Leone is moving forward as a liberal democracy, and in so doing the SLP is being restructured along modern lines to be the only force responsible for the maintenance of the rule of law within the state. It is the police that interface with the population to maintain law and order, up to and including on the border. […] As both the police and the military come to terms with the complexities of their respective roles and restructure, equip and train for them, both forces need clearly defined responsibilities. A blurring of roles only serves to confuse the SLP, the RSLAF and the population and impedes progress, practically and intellectually. It leads to misunderstanding and role conflict”.[39]

Ensuring such a division of labor is a key priority in police reforms in post-conflict settings. Yet scholars question whether this target is realistic. According to Hills, donors must ask themselves whether “police service commissions, workshops on human rights training and community-police partnerships” are sufficient to achieve accountable policing.[40]

Police reform in Sierra Leone went well beyond such initiatives to provide major operational support and long-term training. This study has strongly suggested that even extensive retraining did not eliminate decades of cumulated experience. Whereas all the senior officers I spoke to in the OSD praised the training and equipment they received from Britain, they agreed that their Cuban training and pre-war experience continued to be useful for their present work. When asked to compare the ISU with the OSD, the OSD commander of the Northern Region replied with an analogy: “My name is the same whether I'm baptized or not. We are not much different, we are the same. We are doing the same job, we are the same people”.[41] Despite the sophisticated arguments that since appeared for why policing was necessary to achieve peaceful transition from conflict, development and democratization, today’s donors seemed as powerless as their

[39] The guidelines list five standing MACP tasks: “Support to SLP border control patrols”, “Maritime Control and Surveillance Operations”, “Improvised Explosive Device Removal”, “Point Security” (guarding of the President’s and Vice President’s lodges), and “FISU and H Troop” (advanced intelligence collection relating to national security). *Military Aid to the Civil Power in Sierra Leone.* Document obtained from SLP Headquarters in Freetown.
[40] Hills, “The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria”, p. 216.
[41] L.T. Sesay, personal interview, Makeni, 13.4.2010.

colonial predecessors to ensure that police powers were exercised in a 'responsible' manner after they pulled out. This presupposed deep changes in policing culture and the efficacy of democratic control of armed forces, which in turn relied on political development. If the OSD continue to perceive themselves as doing essentially the same job as they were doing during single party rule, only with modern weapons supplied from Britain, the status of police reform in Sierra Leone as a success story is at risk.

Appendix A: Interviews

Focus

All interviews were personal and semi-structured. Elite respondents were asked questions tailored to their role and position, or to their specific role in the reform process. In addition to questions about past training and experience, the currently serving SLP officers of all ranks were typically put some or all of the following questions:

- Compared to how things were before the war, which SLP unit has improved
- the most?
- Knowing what you know now, would you change anything about reforms?
- What is in your own view the biggest problem facing the SLP today?
- What do you regard as the key threats to security in Sierra Leone?
- Do the SLP cooperate with other groups in fighting crime and disorder?
- How could the SLP become more effective?
- Do you think the British police consultants had an easy or difficult time working here? Why?
- Do you know of any issue where foreigners and Sierra Leoneans disagreed about what to be done?

Location

The interviews were conducted in six main locations: Freetown, Hastings, Makeni, Kabala, Koidu, and Bo. Apart from Hastings, which houses the Police Training School and is located about 45 minutes north of Freetown, these are major cities or urban centers in Sierra Leone. To get a better idea of the SLP's role in rural areas, field visits were made to several villages en route. No formal interviews were conducted in these locations, but conversations overwhelmingly supported the impression that the SLP only show up in exceptional circumstances, or if officers happen to have family in the village.

List of interviewees

SLP officers

Brima Acha Kamara, Inspector General, Freetown 7.4.2010

Francis Munu, Assistant Inspector General (Inspector General as of July 2010), Freetown 3.6.2010

Morie Lengor, Assistant Inspector General, Freetown 1.12.2009

Richard Moigbe, Assistant Inspector General, Freetown 8.4.2010

Thomas Kamara, Assistant Inspector General, Freetown 29.4. 2010

Desmond Buck, Assistant Inspector General, Makeni 12.4.2010

David Sesay, Assistant Inspector General, Bo 21.4.2010

Al-Sheik Kamara, Assistant Inspector General, Kenema, 20.4.2010

F.O. Sesay, Staff Officer and Personal Assistant to the Inspector General, Freetown 8.4.2010

Joseph Kabia, Local Unit Commander, Bo 22.4.2010

L. K. Conteh, Assistant Superintendent, Kabala 14.4.2010

A.M. Kailie, Chief Superintendent, OSD commander Eastern Province, Kenema 20.4.2010

Amos F. Kargbo, Local Unit Commander, Tankoro Police station, Kono 17.4.2010

Dumbuya, former commander of the SSD, Freetown 4.6 2010

ONS staff

Gary Horlacker, SSR coordinator (seconded by DFID), Freetown 27.5.2010

Kellie Conteh, National Security Coordinator, Freetown 2.6.2010

Chiefdoms

Paramount chief, P.L. Boina III, Bo 21.4.2010

Foday O Kamara, chiefdom clerk/administrative clerk, Wara Wara chiefdom, Kabala 14.4.2010

Michael S. Mansaray, Chiefdom elder, Wara Wara Chiefdom, Kabala 14.4.2010

Mohammed Jumu, Chiefdom police, Norgowa chiefdom, Kenema 19.4.2010

Paramount Chief, Al-Haji Amara Vangahun, Norgowa chiefdom, Kenema 19.4.2010

Fengia Mboma, Chiefdom police sergeant, Tankoro chiefdom, Koidu 16.4.2010

Sahr Kamachende, Paramount Chief, Gbense chiefdom, Koidu 17.11.2010

Edward T. Nyandebo, Speaker of the Tankoro Chiefdom, Koidu 16.4

CPDTF/CCSSP staff

Keith Biddle, Leader of the CPDTF 1998-1999, Inspector General of the SLP 1999-2003, Crewe 27.10.2010

Adrian Horn, senior consultant CPDTF/CCSCP 1998-2004, Oxford 8.10.2010

Ray England, Responsible for SSD/OSD reform on behalf of CCSSP 1999-2004, London 3.2. 2011.

JSDP

Momo Turay, Research and Information Adviser, Freetown 30.4.2010

Henry Wagg, Adviser, Freetown 1.4.2010

Retired Colonial Police Officers

Edward C. Eates, Senior Superintendent SLP, 1954-1957, Exeter 1.10.2009

Christopher Lyons, Inspector Northern Rhodesia Police, 1956-1963, Oxford 4.11.2010

P.B. Green, Various ranks in police forces in Nyasaland 1948-1954, Cyprus 1955-1956, Zanzibar and Kenya 1959-1965.

Ian Buist, Secretary to the Colonial Office Commission on the Kenya Police, 1953, London 3.3.2010

Local Policing Partnership Boards

Dipo Mansaray, Chairman of the Kabala LPPB, Kabala 14.4.2010

Al-Haji Hassan, Vice Chairman of the Kenema LPPB, Kenema 19.4.2010

Sheky Sesay, Chairman of the Makeni LPPB, Makeni 13.4.2010

Other

Solomon Berewa, Attorney General and Minister of Justice 1998-2002, Vice President and Chairman of the Police Council 2002-2007, Freetown 12.6.2010

Peter Penfold, former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Oxford 19.10.2010.

Mark White, former SILSEP program officer, Freetown 31.3.2010

Mohammed Bah, Journalist Kiss FM, Radio Bo, 23.4

Dominick Stanton, Advisor with the British High Commission in Sierra Leone, Freetown 31.3.2010

Dave Thomas, Major with the International Military Army Training Team, Freetown 28.5.2010

Esther Kandeh, Project Officer, Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organization, Kono 16.4.2010

Julius Aruna, Adminstrative Assistant, Koidu Holding, Kono 17.4.2010

Appendix B: Archival Sources cited

Note: At the time research was conducted in the Sierra Leone National Archives at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, the archive's holdings were being digitized. Only some of the documents were marked with call numbers, which explains why I have only been able to cite the title and date of the document.

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