Evaluating the 'Success' of The British Intervention in Sierra Leone 20 Years On: Implications for Sierra Leone, The UK, and Interventions Globally

EVALUATING THE ‘SUCCESS’ OF THE BRITISH INTERVENTION IN SIERRA LEONE 20 YEARS ON: IMPLICATIONS FOR SIERRA LEONE, THE UK, AND INTERVENTIONS GLOBALLY

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Abstract

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Over the last two decades the frequency of humanitarian interventions in Africa, delivered by a wide range of actors, has increased. The British military intervention in the Sierra Leonean civil war in the early 2000s is often cited as an example of successful intervention and solidified Security Sector Reform (SSR) as a key component of state-building and development. Yet in-depth analysis of the long-term legacies of this ‘successful’ intervention are sparse and there remains a notable dearth in research exploring the British involvement from the perspectives of those directly involved or affected. This qualitative research provides a novel outlook by exploring micro-level experiences, thus addressing this lacuna through examining the legacies within Sierra Leone and in British foreign policy from an experiential perspective. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is used as a framework in order to draw out implications for global intervention practice, as arguably R2P must also be accompanied by a responsibility to fully understand the legacy of this social phenomenon.

A themed analysis of original data explores the link between official narratives and the perspectives of those on the ground, often exposing a disconnect and identifying important nuances within the interpretation of the success of the British intervention. Through a critical analysis of these experiences significant questions are raised regarding the dynamics between intervening forces and the affected population; perceptions of legitimacy; accountability; and the implications for R2P more broadly.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
DfID	Department for International Development
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
ICISS	International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
IMATT	International Military Assistance Training Team
ISAT	International Security Advisory Team
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRP	Military Reintegration Programmes
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
PMC	Private Military Company
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STTT	Short-Term Training Teams
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

Contents

Chapter 1 - Background to the Study and Methodology

1.0 Introduction

Humanitarian interventions can encompass a wide range of measures, for example, sanctions and embargoes, with military means viewed as a last resort (Evans and Sahnoun 2001). Recent military interventions for humanitarian purposes are an expression of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), occurring when the host state is either unable or unwilling to end its domestic conflict or uses weapons against its citizens (ICISS 2001; UNGA 2005). This thesis focuses on military intervention for humanitarian purposes, as this is regarded as one of the most controversial and hotly debated forms of external involvement. Yet research converges on structural and theoretical level discussion (see Bellamy and Reike 2010; Chandler 2010; Acharya, 2013). Where cases are utilised in current literature the focus tends to be on the immediate impacts or shorter-term implications (see Albrecht 2010; Silander 2013; Hoeling 2015). As a result, there is limited in-depth research focusing the long-term effects of military intervention for humanitarian purposes on stability and peacebuilding, particularly in terms of real-world examples. This pre-occupation has also resulted in a lack of research which combines a longer-term analysis with an exploration of the micro-level impacts in terms of the perspectives of those with lived experience of such interventions (Regan and Aydin 2006). For example, theoretical discussion on the right to intervene, and the actions of interveners, is often discussed on a systemic level at the expense of an in-depth analysis of the rights and experiences of those within the affected nation. Crucially it is the voice of the conflict affected people, in this instance Sierra Leoneans, which is frequently neglected in research and there is a propensity to downplay narratives as a useful tool in understanding conflict (Donà 2020). As such, there is little research which explores the perspectives of an affected population on intervention practice and there exists a significant gap in knowledge.

Despite this significant gap, more people have died in intrastate than interstate conflicts in the 20th Century (Hehir 2013a) and it is estimated that by the end of this period civilian deaths in such conflicts outnumbered that of the military at a rate of nine in ten (Evans 2004). This evidences that whilst military intervention

for humanitarian purposes may be a contested topic, it remains salient and necessary to expand the understanding of the phenomena. In particular, increasing the understanding of the experience of such interventions and the legacies left behind is vital. This research seeks to make an original contribution to these current voids in research from the perspective of those within the affected state and the international persons involved in intervention, such as policy influencers and policy implementers. By critically examining the experiences and longer-term legacies of the British unilateral military intervention into the Sierra Leone civil war, using the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as the conceptual framework, the relationship between intellectual debate and lived experience is also explored.

This phenomenon is explored from the perspective of British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) employees, members of the British military and both Sierra Leonean civilians and military. (Whilst it is acknowledged that in 2020 the FCO became the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), for the purposes of this research it will continue to be referred to as the FCO, as this was the name of the department at the time of fieldwork.) By including the perspectives of these three groups a novel outlook is offered and an analysis of how these micro-level experiences fit together with macro-level structures and dominant narratives is enabled. Through use of this case study an original contribution is made in order to address gaps in research and enhance current understanding of R2P in practice.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed from the three key perspectives stated above:

1. What is the experience of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone?
2. What is the legacy of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone?
3. What is the legacy of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone on British foreign policy?
4. How do these groups perceive R2P in light of their experiences?

1.2 Genesis of the Research

1.2.1 Rationale for this Case Study

Sierra Leone's civil war raged from 1991 until 2002 and was notorious for its atrocities, in particular the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) amputation of limbs and use of child soldiers (Gberie 2005). Widespread violence was primarily motivated by a toxic mix of social, political and economic exclusion, bad governance and chronic poverty (Goodhand 2001) (see Chapter 3.3 Origins of War for an expanded discussion of the causes of the conflict). Sierra Leone provides an interesting example of a post-Cold War civil conflict, which experienced a variety of interventions: regional from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); multi-national from the United Nations (UN); and unilateral from the British. In addition, the situation was all the more complex given the regional instability from the conflict in neighbouring Liberia and the presence of mercenary group, *Executive Outcomes* (EO). Typically, military humanitarian intervention must be approved by the UN Security Council (UNSC), under Article 39, in order to be deemed both legal and legitimate (Doyle 2011). Thus, unilateral interventions may be argued to be illegal and illegitimate. However, developed countries are often reluctant to commit troops on scale to UN peacekeeping missions (Curran et al. 2018) and in the instance of Sierra Leone no developed countries contributed troops to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). When the British did intervene, they chose to remain independent of the UN mission and literature tends to portray a stark contrast between the efficiency of the British forces and UNAMSIL (Dorman 2009). It is this partisan, unilateral intervention of the British (in favouring the Government of Sierra Leone) which is often credited with ending the conflict (Porter 2003; Ginifer and Oliver 2004; Stewart 2008; Godwin and Haenlein 2013; Ucko 2016a).

The initial British involvement in the Sierra Leone civil war occurred during Blair's premiership; a period during which the United Kingdom's (UK) foreign policy is typified as having pursued "an activist philosophy of interventionism" (Lunn et al. 2008: 1). For example, Blair involved the military in five wars over a six-year period (Kampfner 2004). These actions were typically presented as being motivated by New Labour's ethical foreign policy and Sierra Leone represented the UK's first major military intervention in Africa since the Suez crisis in 1956

(Fanthorpe 2003). As a result, it was key that this effort be viewed as successful, which in turn is likely to have influenced the decision to undertake an unprecedented ten-year financial commitment to the country (Harris 2020). This case study has been chosen as the British intervention in Sierra Leone is frequently cited as an example where military coercion for humanitarian purposes was “a huge success” (Collier 2008: 127) and is referred to as “Blair’s successful war” (see Dorman 2009). This thesis does not seek to dispute that the end of the civil war came shortly after the British military presence and it is arguable that an intervention can be termed a success when it is felt that lives have been saved which would have otherwise been lost (Seybolt 2007). That peace has endured in Sierra Leone for almost two decades, including relatively peaceful transitions of power, is also often seen as further evidence of this ‘success’ (Ucko 2016a). Yet these binary portrayals, whereby success is measured by the presence or absence of civil war is myopic and cannot illustrate the full picture. This label of success also serves to potentially divert attention away from meaningful discussion on the current internal security in Sierra Leone as well as what such interventions leave behind. As such, how success is framed warrants further attention.

Since the ‘success’ of British intervention in Sierra Leone there has been a perceived shift toward developmental peace missions, which integrate state re-building whilst attempting to address the symptomatic problem of violence (Curran and Woodhouse 2007). While it is arguable that this shift was influenced by the perceived success of the intervention, it appears as though the term is applied within the literature somewhat uncritically. For example, many of the factors which contributed to the original outbreak of conflict persist and Sierra Leone continues to experience massive challenges to its development, continually appearing towards the bottom of the Human Development Index (HDI) ranking (UNDP 2020a). As such, it is important to explore just how successful the British military intervention in Sierra Leone has been and what has been set in motion based on the ‘success’ of the intervention. This thesis challenges the myths surrounding the ‘success’ of this intervention. In doing so, participants’ narratives are compared and integrated with how the case of Sierra Leone has been more broadly interpreted and related to intervention practice, serving to

strengthen the link between this research and the R2P framework. Furthermore, it calls into question how successful the longer-term impacts have been and the extent to which the British have been able to meet their own goals with regards to Sierra Leone. The time which has now lapsed since the cessation of violence allows for an analysis of the long-term legacy of this intervention and its implications, not only in Sierra Leone and on British politics, but also the impact on wider discourse and intervention globally. As such, this research project takes a holistic approach which enables a comparison of different experiences of intervention and intersects across domestic politics, foreign policy and global practice through the potential legacy on R2P globally.

1.2.2 The Significance of R2P

Military intervention for humanitarian purposes, a manifestation of R2P, is distinct from war due to its ethical and altruistic objectives (Gallagher 2014). R2P refers to the moral obligation for the international community to protect civilians in the instance of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity when their own state is either unable to do so or is the perpetrator of this violence (ICISS 2001; UNGA 2005). It is comprised of three Pillars, the latter of which refers to the use of coercive means to protect civilians (UNGA 2005) (see Chapter 2.1 R2P and the Three Pillars for further expansion). Such a notion is controversial, given its juxtaposition with concepts of state sovereignty, itself tantamount to non-intervention (Kim 2003). Similarly, there is debate on the extent to which motivations for intervention may be directed by self-motivated or political interests (Gallagher 2014). This research is novel as it applies an R2P lens to an analysis of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone: this has not been done in existing literature. It may be argued that this is because R2P was not ratified by the international community until the 2005 UN World Summit (UNGA 2005) and as such Sierra Leone cannot be viewed as having experienced a R2P intervention. However, given the atrocities which occurred during the civil war, including the targeting of civilians with extreme violence, it appears evident that it would retrospectively meet the criteria for R2P. Furthermore, both ECOWAS and the UN sent troops to help bring about peace, premised on humanitarian motivations (DPKO 2005) indicating that Sierra Leone's relationship

with the international community during this period was arguably underpinned by the essence of the pillars of R2P.

In many ways the 2005 ratification of R2P was not ground-breaking and instead was an acknowledgment of emerging humanitarian protection 'norms' and formalised an already existing recognition of an impetus to act in the instances of mass atrocities. For instance, Weiss (2004: 140) argues that the initial International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) report (2001), which coined the R2P term, was "neither forerunner nor pacesetter." In addition, Bulley (2010) claims this report simply reflected the agreement amongst Western states regarding the exceptions to non-intervention and sovereignty. This indicates that rather than being a new concept it instead reinforced existing ideas and an increasing consensus to act. Indeed, it can be argued that since 1992 there had been an increase in military humanitarian policy within the UN (Slim 1996), as witnessed in Boutos-Ghali's (1992) Agenda for Peace address. As such, whilst the R2P terminology is useful in putting pressure on states as a call to action, the concept was not imagined in a vacuum and R2P was simply the means by which these ideas were encapsulated (Hehir 2018). Similarly, resulting reports from the international involvement in Sierra Leone echo the value laden language which came to be used within the R2P discourse. For instance, the Brahimi Report, stated that peacekeepers are "morally compelled" to protect civilians (UNSC 2000a: 9). Chandler (2003) also cites Sierra Leone as an example of ethical action, motivated by the interests of others rather than national interests alone. This is further evidence that the concept of a moral imperative was active and, at times, acted upon prior to 2005.

This thesis does not argue that the UK in Sierra Leone represents an ideal example of a R2P intervention. For instance, R2P is envisaged as a neutral involvement by the UN (UNGA 2009), whereas Britain in Sierra Leone represented a partisan unilateral force (Richards 2015). However, it is argued that this intervention was underpinned by many of the same ideals as R2P and is accompanied by a projected narrative of ethical foreign policy and moral impetus premised on saving the lives of civilians and preventing further mass atrocities. In addition, there are other commonalities between this involvement

and how R2P came to be envisaged. For instance, military intervention is viewed as a last resort within R2P (UNGA 2009) and after ten years of violence and three failed peace agreements, the British military involvement was also felt to be a last resort option. Similarly, R2P recommends using proportional means with regards to the scale and intensity of the intervention, as well as a reasonable chance of success (Martin 2018). This can also be seen in the British intervention in Sierra Leone as although a relatively small team was deployed, they were well trained, well equipped and with high intelligence capabilities. As such, to some extent Sierra Leone has become part of the construction of the narrative and argument for R2P. These elements appear to indicate that the experiences of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone may well have implications for R2P in practice.

Presently R2P research tends to focus upon the conceptual debates such as the surrounding legal and ethical deliberations. This is often at the expense of detailed discussion on the challenges and practicalities involved in practice (Paris 2014) as well as at a cost to in-depth analysis of affected individuals experiences. There appears to be a sense of irony that a framework preceded by “embracing the victims’ points of view and interests” (Cunliffe 2010: 82) continually fails to return to these ‘points of view’, post-intervention, in order to establish experience and best practice from those directly involved. As such, affected populations are often inadvertently cast as passive recipients and research into atrocities has traditionally marginalised these voices (Donà 2020) which can then become lost in the surrounding discourse. It appears as though the shift in security thinking from state security to that of the individual has not been mirrored by a shift in the research landscape. For example, studies analysing the long-term impacts of military intervention for humanitarian purposes from a micro-level perspective are relatively scarce. Yet arguably R2P must also be accompanied by a responsibility to fully understand the legacy of this social phenomenon, particularly in the current global context where it appears unlikely that calls for the UN and other forces to intervene militarily in humanitarian situations will cease. Indeed, Cheeseman, (2005) foresees not only a continuation but also a growth in demand. Therefore, the debates encircling R2P, in particular within the context of Africa, will potentially increase in significance and relevance.

Where research does make use of a case study, it continually focuses on short-term impacts such as the counter-factual of whether potential mass atrocities have been prevented. This research project focuses not only on the experience of the initial intervention but extends beyond into the continued British commitment to Sierra Leone and post-conflict assistance. Arguably, it is this longer-term involvement which provides “meaning to initial military and political gains” (Ucko 2016a: 872), rendering it part and parcel of the intervention story. Similarly, whereas typically military humanitarian involvement is viewed as completed once the threat has been removed (Dembinski et al. 2019), this was not the case with regards to the British involvement in Sierra Leone, which continued to be intense and protracted beyond the declaration of peace. As such, the focus of this thesis extends beyond these initial missions and categorises the continued involvement in Sierra Leone as motivated by R2P, in particular a reflection of the responsibility to rebuild. Treating agendas such as protection of civilians, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and so on as separate issues arguably has a limiting effect on the ability to formulate a comprehensive response to mass atrocities and genocide (Bellamy 2015).

A similar critique could be levelled at the way in which research and discourse treat the immediate intervention as entirely disparate to subsequent state-building activities. By neglecting research into the latter, the capacity to understand the structures left behind by such interventions is diminished and therefore the ability to understand the full impacts of R2P interventions is significantly reduced. However, given former UN Secretary General (UNSG), Ban Ki-Moon’s claim in 2015 that the number of peacekeeping missions had dramatically increased over the previous 15 years (McGreal 2015) the need to understand the legacy that such missions leave behind appears imperative. It is hoped that this research will help address this void in literature and expand the field of understanding around the legacy of military interventions for humanitarian purposes and the implementation of R2P as a tool for peacebuilding.

1.3 Data Collection and Creation

1.3.1 Method

An emic approach was taken to the case study in order to enrich the understanding of this phenomenon and its longer-term effects from the perspective of the participants. This empirical research is rooted in a social constructivist ontology, whereby an individual's reality and the meanings they assign actions are subjective and shaped by their environment (Denzin and Lincoln 2012), whilst also having the ability to change it (Klotz and Lynch 2007). In this way the research is novel, as within security studies and international relations Realism typically dominates. Often the 'factual' statements such data may produce are value laden and used as a means through which to pursue ideological interests (Baylis et al. 2016). However, through social constructivism multiple realities are enabled, which allows for variation in actors' perceptions and actions. As this research aims to explore individuals experiences and perspectives, a qualitative methodology was deemed to be the most appropriate way to investigate military intervention for humanitarian purposes and elicit these subjective understandings.

Primary research was conducted throughout 2017 in both the UK and Freetown, Sierra Leone, using semi-structured interviews. Participants were categorised within three broad groups: British FCO employees (referred to throughout the analysis as British policy participants due to their role in influencing and implementing policy directives); British military troops; and Sierra Leoneans with experience of the British intervention. The composition of the latter group ranged from civilians to military personnel due to purposive sampling employed (see section 1.3.2 Sampling). All Sierra Leonean interlocuters were located in Freetown, though many had been posted throughout the country prior to, during and after the conflict. Whilst it would have been useful to explore the experiences and perspectives of those currently residing outside of the peninsular, travel across the country was hampered by poor infrastructure and potential safety concerns expressed to me by the British High Commission (BHC) as a single, white female moving through the country alone. Alternative means such as conducting interviews via video calling (see below) for those based outside of Freetown was also not viable as reliable internet access outside of the capital

remains sparse. Multiple members of the British groups were also located in Freetown at the time of fieldwork, which is indicated in Table 1 (page 14, situated where most appropriate in Chapter 1.3.2 Sampling).

Exploring the phenomenon through the perspectives of these three groups enabled a triangulation of data, thereby increasing the robustness of the research (Thomas 2017) and assisting in creating reliable new knowledge claim (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). The question prompts in the interview schedule (see Appendix 1) focused not only upon the initial British military intervention into the civil war in 2001 but also extended beyond this period, in order to gain a wider view of the legacy and the experiences of the current British involvement in Sierra Leone. It was evident from the data that participants defined the British military intervention in Sierra Leone as extending much beyond the initial operations and declaration of peace in 2002.

Each interview lasted a minimum of one hour, with many continuing longer at the participants discretion. All were conducted in English as although Sierra Leone is multilingual, with Krio spoken by 90% of the population as well as a high percentage speaking Temne and Mende (CIA 2022), the countrys' connection as a former British colony has resulted in English as the de facto official language. The opportunity to be interviewed was offered in a range of different formats: face-to-face; Skype video calling; or email. The majority chose to meet face-to-face, with only a few opting to use Skype synchronously and one selecting email. Although traditionally qualitative interviewing methodologies have typically been classified as in-person interactions (see Maccoby and Maccoby 1954) it is arguable that developments in technology have enabled virtual 'face-to-face' communications which should be incorporated into contemporary conceptions. This allows for the creation of rapport to a greater degree than voice only calls, though perhaps to a lesser extent than meeting in person. It also still enables the interviewer to observe non-verbal cues in terms of facial expressions and upper body language such as hand gestures used for emphasis (Iacono et al. 2016). All interviews were audio recorded, with the participants permission, in order to allow for subsequent transcription.

The semi-structured interviewing method provided a rich source of data, with the advantage of being able to add depth to the research process by allowing for multiple realities and enabling participants to express themselves in their own words (Marshall and Rossman 2016). In doing so they were unrestricted in their descriptions of how they experienced the British military intervention, subsequent British involvement, and perspectives around R2P and free to convey their individual 'truths' (Brinkmann 2014; Gifkins et al. 2019). The semi-structured nature of the interview schedule also allowed for further probing and to follow unexpected, yet relevant, lines of enquiry based on responses, as well as the ability to ask for further clarity if and when needed (Roulston 2010; Thomas 2011). Whilst this results in the research instrument not being fully standardised, it can be argued that the fluidity afforded in this approach generates an increase in appropriateness of the data and, therefore, has a clear advantage to alternative methods. For instance, its reflexivity allows the researcher to respond to the requirements of the interview in hand thereby further enhancing the relationship between "discourse and meaning" (Mishler 1991: 12). It is also arguable that by using a flexible research instrument such as this, rather than one which may be rigidly based on pre-conceived notions, the quality and rigour of the primary data is strengthened (Marshall and Rossman 2016).

In addition, the findings presented draw upon my own observations and informal, unplanned conversations which arose during fieldwork. Secondary desk-based research was also used in combination with primary data in order to enable an evidence-based discussion on the relationship between lived experience and intellectual debate. This analysis intentionally took place after fieldwork had been conducted, in order to reduce the potential influence of pre-conceived notions gained from the surrounding literature. The variety of secondary sources used, such as journal articles, textbooks and official reports, enabled a triangulation of data and helped to increase the robustness of my interpretations of the primary data (Klotz and Lynch 2007). Autobiographical materials also proved useful as key British protagonists from this period, in particular Blair, General Richards and Peter Penfold, have relatively recently produced books regarding their experiences and careers which include explicit references to the decisions made and actions taken in Sierra Leone. However, it was not possible to mirror this with

the key Sierra Leonean elites from this period to the same extent. Whilst former President Tejan Kabbah did produce a memoir, after years of trying I am yet to locate a copy and the only accessible published account from the Sierra Leonean perspective comes from former Vice-President and Chief Government Negotiator, Solomon Berewa. This can be seen as a reflection of the ongoing loss of voices from affected nations regarding their experiences. Inevitably this results in the dominance of voices from the global North, which then become the accepted narrative for events during this period.

1.3.2 Sampling

Sampling made use of a multifaceted recruitment strategy, including a purposive sampling technique to recruit interviewees (Bernard 2013). Adult participants were targeted based on their involvement in two areas (or a combination thereof): the British military intervention in the Sierra Leone conflict/recent presence in Sierra Leone, operating within the structures left behind from said involvement. This was limited to those working either within a FCO role, military forces or a civilian with direct experience of the intervention. As such, participants were selected on the basis of being meaningful to the phenomena being investigated and appropriateness was the main inclusion criteria (Flick 2018), rather than curating a sample based on representative factors. Further contextualising conversations occurred with individuals who were not official participants. These resulted primarily from fieldwork in Sierra Leone, during which I was able to somewhat immerse myself not only within the local population but also a wide range of individuals either working or socialising at the BHC and the International Security Advisory Team (ISAT) base. For instance, at the latter the on-site bar hosted a weekly quiz which was attended by a wide range of military personnel, NGO employees and UN personnel. Whilst these were informal conversations rather than interviews, they assisted in adding further context to the data and enabled me to bring broader narratives into the analysis where appropriate.

A number of suitable participants were identified through Research Supervisor contacts and contacts made during a UN internship in Geneva, undertaken at the beginning of this research degree. The BHC, where I was hosted in Freetown (see Chapter 1.3.3. Methodological Considerations), also offered access to a

number of potential interlocutors. For example, I was provided with a list of Sierra Leonean military veterans and their contact details. *LinkedIn* was also used as one of the means by which participants were identified. This platform allowed for searches based on employment in certain institutions, such as within the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and the British military, as well as by specific military operations which occurred as part of the intervention. This latter approach, although perhaps unconventional, enabled recruitment beyond those already known to mutual contacts. However, such a method did limit additional potential participants to those with profiles and with this information listed. Snowballing sampling techniques were also used to expand the pool (Robson 2011). This transpired to be one of the more effective ways by which recruitment occurred, with initial interviewees often acting as gatekeepers to other appropriate potential participants (Phillips 2014). This was particularly useful as in military circles and post-conflict societies there can be a distrust of strangers. As such, it served the dual purpose of easing access and contributing towards trust. Whilst snowballing did mean that only those put forward by the initial participants were provided a voice, the combination of this method with the other stated ways of identifying interviewees meant that a multipronged approach was taken to recruitment to enhance the breadth of the initial pool.

Demographic identifiers, such as age and religion, were not collected as they were not relevant to the inclusion criteria for participation and the resulting knowledge claims from this research are not linked to such criteria. As the unit of analysis in this research is qualitative experience, the collection of such personal information would have been redundant and there are potential ethical implications regarding the collection of this type of data without purpose. That said, if assumptions regarding gender self-identification are made based on physical appearance, then female representation across all groups was minimal, with only one female participant from the British military group, one from the Sierra Leonean group and none from the British policy group. A male-dominated sample was not intentional, however, it is demonstrative of what appears to be largely male-dominated professions. For example, prior to 2018 women had not been recruited to the Sierra Leone armed forces since 1979 (Sierra Network 2018) and, at the time of fieldwork in Freetown, there were no female FCO

employees based at the BHC. Similarly, the civilians interviewed were not selected on the basis of their gender and merely represented opportunity.

No minimum nor maximum number of participants were pre-set for each of the three groups (see Table 1 for break down of participants) and instead primary data collection ceased when a natural data saturation occurred, which allowed for connection and comparison of data from the groups (Fusch and Ness 2015). It is not felt that this, nor the lack of representativeness of the sample, has had a negative impact on the rigour of the research. These factors would have been problematic were this a positivist/quantitative study, with the associated conditions of external validity and replicability (Letherby et al. 2012). However, this thesis explores experience, and views based on these experiences, rather than seeking to establish cause and effect or generalise findings as applicable across all countries experiencing mass atrocity crimes/military interventions for humanitarian purposes. Indeed, it is both futile and parochial to subject social science, exploring 'objects' with consciousness and the ability to reflect on their interpretations of the world, to the same criteria as natural science in order to be considered as rigorous and valid (Burchill et al. 2013).

Table 1 shows the break down of participants based on nationality and appropriateness to the research. Each anonymised participant is attributed a number with the prefix of 'SL' used to indicate those of Sierra Leonean nationality, 'UKM' to indicate the British military contingent, or 'UKP' used to indicate British participants working in FCO and diplomatic roles.

Participant	
UKM01	Military personnel deployed to Sierra Leone during the initial intervention and years immediately following
UKM02	Military personnel deployed to Sierra Leone at time of fieldwork
UKM03	Military personnel deployed to Sierra Leone at time of fieldwork
UKM04	Military personnel deployed to Sierra Leone during initial intervention and years immediately following
UKM05	Military personnel deployed to Sierra Leone during initial intervention
UKM06	Military personnel deployed to Sierra Leone at time of fieldwork

UKM07	Military personnel deployed to Sierra Leone during initial intervention. Also served a second tour a decade later.
UKP01	Former FCO employee deployed to Sierra Leone during initial intervention and during transformation from IMAT to ISAT
UKP02	Current FCO employee. Present in Sierra Leone at time of fieldwork
UKP03	Current FCO employee. Present in Sierra Leone at time of fieldwork
UKP04	Current FCO employee. Present in Sierra Leone at time of fieldwork
UKP05	Current FCO employee
SL01	Retired Sierra Leone Police Officer
SL02	Retired RSLAF personnel
SL03	Civilian
SL04	Senior ranked RSLAF personnel
SL05	Civilian
SL06	Former rebel wife
SL07	Civilian
SL08	Senior ranked RSLAF personnel
SL09	Current Sierra Leone Police Officer
SL10	Retired RSLAF personnel
SL11	Retired RSLAF personnel
SL12	Retired RSLAF personnel
SL13	Former member of Sierra Leone government, during and post conflict

1.3.3 Methodological Considerations

Having discussed the 'what' of the data collection it is important to turn attention to the accompanying discursive elements and explore the potential issues within the chosen methodology. By focusing on a single case (that of Sierra Leone), it may be argued that the findings have limited applicability, as they are unable to be generalised to all equivalent situations. However, this critique is more commonly associated with quantitative research, seeking to establish causation/correlation (Robson 2011). The revelation of such a connection is not the aim of this research, which instead seeks to explore the relationship between lived experience and discourse, in order to increase the understanding of the

long-term effects of military intervention for humanitarian purposes. Within such qualitative research it is still possible for inferences to be drawn (Simons 2014) as insights gained from one case may have wider implications. As such, the inability to generalise findings to all cases is not synonymous with a lack of validity (Descombe 2021). In this research it is argued that the findings do have implications for wider R2P discourse more broadly and military intervention for humanitarian purposes (as discussed in Chapter 7). As such, the knowledge gained has the potential to provide a framework for discussion in other cases, however, it should not be applied uncritically nor decontextualised.

As semi-structured interviewing is subjective and lacking in standardisation, the reliability of the data this method produces may be called into question. However, this critique is underpinned by a positivist philosophy which favours observable relationships and a belief in objective knowledge (Crotty 1998). Often such assessments are based on a strict stimulus-response paradigm, which can itself be argued to supress discourse and neglect the importance of the individuals meaning and understanding of experiences (Mishler 1991). Whilst this vulnerability is acknowledged, it is not foreseen as a significant issue as the aim of this research is to probe personal experience. Therefore, it is accepted that by its very nature the data captured is from the participants' subjective viewpoint (Seidman 2019). There is no intention to present interview data as an objective source of information and the ontological premise of social constructivism rebuffs the concept of objective facts as independent from those that give them meaning (Klotz and Lynch 2007). By taking this into account, and engaging in reflective practice, the rigour of the research process is enhanced by adding a level of transparency and creating an audit of verification (Lynch 2000).

Aspects of this research rely on participants' long-term memory, for example, their ability to recall experiences of an intervention which occurred almost twenty years prior. As a consequence of this there may be concerns regarding validity of the findings and this critique is often levelled at forms of narrative enquiry (Clandinin and Connolly 2004). However, the social constructionist perspective taken in this research does not aim to establish an objective truth or a single factual reality (Hunter 2010) based on memory reconstructions. Rather the aim

is to deepen the understanding of the phenomena in question whilst acknowledging any bias or frameworks which may have been influential (Klotz and Lynch 2007; Lowndes et al. 2017) (see also section 1.5 Researcher Identity). It is accepted that the narratives of interlocutors experiences will be “partial, fragmented and contradictory” (Donà 2020). Similarly, historical thinking in terms of memory has been increasingly used in research, with Taithe and Borton (2016) flagging its salience in relation to research on humanitarian aid. Whilst this thesis focuses on humanitarian assistance in the form of military intervention, rather than aid, it offers similar opportunities to engage with subjective representations of personal experience based on historical events.

Furthermore, the time which has passed since the initial British military intervention in Sierra Leone was felt to be a strength of the research by some participants, as it had provided them with the distance to make sense of their experience. For example, UKM05 regarded it as positive aspect that he “had a lot of time to reflect on this since.” As such, it has allowed participants the space to interpret events and formulate opinions on the implications of actions in a way which would not have been possible either during or immediately after the declaration of peace. This also enabled participants to process and evaluate their experiences in the context of the current world dynamics, for instance post 9/11, and explore how this might fit in with their understanding and perspectives on modern day international responses to mass atrocities and genocide.

During fieldwork in Freetown I was provided with accommodation in the grounds of the BHC compound, which brought with it many advantages. For instance, this came with privileged access to insider knowledge and gatekeepers. However, there were also limitations to this as my movements were restricted to some extent, which had the potential to have a negative effect on my ability to immerse in the local culture. For instance, I was expected to adhere to rules which included a request to move only by vehicle to my destinations, rather than going on foot, not to travel by motorbike taxis (known locally as Okada) and ideally to only leave the grounds for ‘work’ purposes, in this case interviews, unless accompanied by a member of ISAT or BHC staff. I appreciated these security precautions and whilst ensuring I hired a driver so that I might move safely through the capital, I

felt that the latter element would not have been conducive to gaining good quality research and engaging in the culture. Therefore, calculated risks were taken, such as spending time in a bar owned by a friend of my Research Supervisor and walking alone only during day-light hours in known safe areas, for instance, the market. In addition, whenever leaving the compound I used a check-in procedure with a nominated individual as a precautionary measure. On reflection, I continue to feel that this was necessary in order to be able to appreciate the country, culture and contextualise the data.

It is arguable that the value of this research could be further enhanced through ethnographic observation in a country currently experiencing military intervention for humanitarian purposes. This would enable the study of micro-level experiences in real-time and an un-boundaried level of integration, beyond temporarily operating within a certain community. However, this would carry with it increased physical risk to both myself and potential participants, as well as being extremely demanding in terms of both the time involved and financing (Muggah and Berman 2001). Furthermore, such a method shares many of the benefits already existing in the use of semi-structured interviewing. For example, allowing for multiple realities based on the participants' interpretation of their worlds and based on their own self-expression.

1.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Committee for Ethics in Research at the University of Bradford in January 2017, prior to commencing fieldwork.

Where possible participants were first approached via email, containing a brief introduction to myself and the research. Those who responded positively and indicated an interest in being part of the research were then sent further, more detailed information in order to gain fully informed consent and enable them to make an informed autonomous decision regarding their participation (Traianou 2014) (see Appendix 2). Others were first approached via telephone, for example, in Sierra Leone there was an explicit preference to be contacted via this method. In such instances a brief verbal introduction was subsequently followed by an email containing the full research brief to ensure that participants were clear on

what they were being asked to contribute to and to allow them time to read and absorb the information provided. Fully informed consent and the participants right to withdraw were treated as an iterative process. As such, participants were made aware of the purpose of the research and how they may withdraw at multiple points, including prior to and following the interview (Pace and Emanuel 2005). Participants were offered confidentiality in order to protect their privacy and prevent risking harm or distress were their disclosures to be revealed (Bulmer 1982). Similarly, the data was anonymised when transcribed, with each transcript allocated a code (see Table 1), so that participants could not be identified by others (Traianou 2014; Seale 2017).

The sensitive nature of the project had the potential to form a barrier to data collection as participants may have been reluctant to discuss their role in designing or implementing policy and experiences of conflict (Cohen and Arieli 2011). Similarly, there were potential ethical issues as the questions asked related to experiences in a conflict and post-conflict setting and, therefore, could possibly cause emotional distress (Mackenzie et al. 2007). In contrast to this expectation, one participant stated that “the more I talk about my experiences, I feel relief…the more I speak about them, the more I get myself free” (SL05). Indeed, Rosenthal (2003) argues that for participants there can be a “healing effect” from recounting potentially traumatic experiences. However, it could not be assumed that this element of catharsis would be present for all participants and so a considered ethical approach was taken, designed around “minimising harm, respecting peoples autonomy and preserving their privacy” (Traianou 2014: 62).

In order to reduce the potential for distress, participants were made fully aware of the purpose of the research in advance and only questions which could not be answered by other means were asked. The risk of distress was also made clear to participants within the briefing information (see Appendix 2), as well as their right to abstain from answering any questions they may feel uncomfortable with and the right to withdraw from the research process (Oliver 2010). I also reserved the right to end participation on their behalf if it became evident that they were too distressed by their involvement or likely to experience longer-term harm to

their psychological wellbeing. In being aware of the potential for emotional harm I ensured fieldwork was conducted with sensitivity and reflexivity. For example, being aware of the possible need to exercise restraint in knowing, whereby certain questions are reworded or missed out altogether if it was in the best interest of the participant. The ability to incorporate this methodological flexibility was a strength of the research method.

1.5 Researcher Identity

As with all academic social enquiry the potential influence of the researcher on the knowledge constructed presents a challenge (Moon 1999). For instance, culture, philosophical assumptions, personal understandings and so on, all combine to form a framework through which interpretations of the world are mediated and meaning assigned (Greene 2007; Bevir et al. 2013). These combined factors impact not only on the data collected but also the resulting analysis. As such, different researchers may interpret the same data extracts in a different way (Smith 1998), and so the same data "permits multiple readings" (Brinkmann 2014: 288). Husserl (1931) discusses 'bracketing' whereby the researchers own identity, norms and interpretations of the world are able to be dissociated from the interpretation of the data. However, within the social constructivist paradigm this is not felt to be possible due to the inherent inability for researchers to separate their own humanity from observations and view the world devoid of these influences. Instead, rather than claiming neutrality, it is in acknowledging these biases that the researchers self-awareness increases and, rather than becoming value free, becomes "value relevant" (Hammersley 1992: 136).

During fieldwork and subsequent data analysis I remained aware of the impact of my gender, ethnicity, background and ideology and how this may influence not only my interpretation of the data but also how participants responded to me. For example, due to being a white female from England many Sierra Leoneans referred to me light heartedly as "Spice Girl", in reference to the 1990s British girl band. On a more serious note, I was aware of a possible perceived power gradient as there appeared to be an assumption of wealth based on my nationality. As such, this research may be vulnerable to criticisms based on a

potentially unequitable power dynamic and perceived ethnocentricity (Burr 1995). Similarly, as I am alien to the phenomena being explored it may be argued that there is not only a risk of misinterpretation but also a perpetuation of colonising discourse, whereby dominant concepts produced in the North are imposed on interpretations of the South (Baylis et al. 2016) feeding into the “western-centric bias in mainstream knowledge production around the world” (Rutazibwa 2014: 97). However, as I am unable to alter my identity this is unavoidable and I instead attempted to reflect on this positionality and aimed to avoid marginalising the experiences of any participants.

I acknowledge coming from a comparatively privileged position and remained aware and reflexive about the impact of such a positionality on my research (Weiner-Levy and RabiaQueder 2012). However, these notions are seemingly premised on the idea that the relationship between a researcher from a developed nation and participants from a developing country can only be exploitative, and that those from the global South and global North are both homogenous anthropological groups. It also assumes that a historic and social closeness to the case study location creates an automaticity of rigorous and inciteful research into that society. Yet this relativist perspective does not consider that this proximity may also prevent the researcher from being truly critical (Scheyvens and Storey 2014). Furthermore, if conceptualising interview data as co-constructed knowledge it can be argued that this research method shifts power back towards the interlocutors who “contribute significantly to the generation of knowledge” (Simons 2014: 458).

At times, some participants made what could be described as racist statements during interviews, which opposed my internal belief systems. For example, extracts such as “never trust a fat African” (UKM04). After these interviews I reflected on this experience, which I felt had created an internal conflict as outside of this setting I would have typically challenged such statements which go so harshly against my personal values. Yet, I simultaneously hold the belief that ethically a researcher should neither condone nor condemn the behaviour of the participants. Instead, they should be tolerant and probe interviewees experiences without judgment or confrontation. Similarly, Traianou (2014: 72) states that to

confront such behaviour would create “very serious obstacles in the way of pursuing social research.” As a result I decided that in similar future scenarios I would continue to be impassive to such statements but remain aware of this internal thought process when interpreting the data from these interviews to ensure my personal negative bias towards such values did not filter through to the analysis.

Following all interviews I engaged in reflective practice often scaffolding this process using the Gibbs (1988) cycle as a tool. Elements of this focused on evaluating the interview overall in order to help me improve my technique for further interactions, as well as how I perceived the participant had felt during the interview and my own emotional responses. Reflection was also an ongoing process during the data analysis in order to mitigate the influence of researcher identity and potential bias by acknowledging my own positionality and accountability, as well the influence this may have had on my research through critically analysing my underlying assumptions (Roulston 2010; Bueger 2012). Through this practice I was able to continually assess the relationship between knowledge and the ways in which it is produced (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018), thereby maintaining legitimacy and quality of understanding. Furthermore, through engaging with a wide range of sources, including academic research, media reports, political speeches and official reports multiple perspectives were taken into consideration when formulating this evidence-based analysis (Bryman 2015).

1.6 Analysis

Interviews were transcribed immediately after being held in order to enable me to add initial observations and memos, such as if a participant had emphasised certain points through body language or non-verbal cues which may be useful in subsequent analysis. Transcripts were also annotated with any notes I had made during the interview, subsequent reflections, initial impressions and connections. These later came to play an important role in the data analysis phase (Creswell 2012; Saldaña 2014). As this research focuses on the participants experiences, thematic analysis was used in order to report and analyse patterns within the data (Braun and Clarke 2006). This method is often used when conducting experiential

research throughout various disciplines (Elliot 2005). All analysis was done by hand, rather than using software for coding. Although this was time consuming, I believe it enabled a more thorough analysis and familiarity with the data set than if a programme such as NVivo had been used. All qualitative analysis is subjective and thematic analysis is no exception. For instance, there is subjectivity in what a researcher would determine to constitute to be a theme. This method of analysis is flexible and there are no strict guidelines regarding precisely how it should be approached. For some researchers this lack of constraint is felt to be beneficial, whereas for others it forms a core critique (Braun and Clarke 2006). As such, it is arguable that, for the sake of methodological rigour, research should disclose its analytical process.

In the case of this research, analysis drew on multiple practitioners methods, including elements of Attride-Stirling's (2001) analytical steps, Lieblich's (1998) five step of analysis and Braun and Clarke's (2006) method for thematic analysis. Saldaña's (2014) was also drawn upon, such as in step five (higher level visualisation), as although he does not propose a certain method, he does put forward principles of coding:

1. Transcription: The audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed and anonymised. At this step I ensured I engaged with the text several times in order to get an overall feel for the data (Braun and Clarke 2006; Creswell 2012).
2. Identifying themes: An inductive approach was taken, whereby the data itself determined the emerging themes rather than their being pre-established (Thomas 2006; Attride-Stirling 2001). The themes used varied from single words such as ‘timeliness’, to short phrases such as ‘the protection of memory’ in order to summarise the essence of pertinent extracts (Saldaña 2014). This was an ongoing process, beginning before the full data collection was complete, in order to provide a workable framework (Seale 2017) which was both cyclical and iterative. This approach also allowed the opportunity to identify any gaps in data collection and to adapt the research to address them as appropriate, thereby increasing the robustness of the findings. Organising the data into themes made these large sets more manageable.
3. Critical reading: The identified themes were then read separately, within the individual interview, and once the collection of the primary research data was

complete, I was able to identify common overarching themes between the data sets.

4. Categorisation: The raw data extracts from all of the interviews were subsequently collated into categories within the emerging thematic insights (Lieblich 1998). This grouping allowed me to see how the different participants perspectives on the same theme fitted together or contradicted each other and synthesised in order to generate further analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001).
5. Higher level visualisation: Following this, in order to assist with conceptualising and grasping the data, I then created a visual representation of the themes using MindGenuis software to create mind maps. This visual organisation was particularly useful in being able to take a step back from the vast amount of data collected. It enabled an 'at a glance' overview (Saldaña 2014) to better understand the connections between the themes and how they may fit with the overall research questions (see section 1.1 Research Questions).

1.7 Organisation of the Thesis

Following on from outlining the methodological framework used in this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 examines the literature by exploring the R2P framework and associated theoretical debates. It then continues by discussing conflict in Africa, providing a contextualising foundation for this research. A background to the conflict in Sierra Leone is provided in Chapter 3, including an overview of the military interventions by ECOWAS, the UN and the UK.

The subsequent four substantive chapters each approach one of the research questions in turn, using data extracts from primary research and literature to explore the relationship between experience and discourse. At times, these data extracts may appear short, however, this is for readability purposes and they have not been curtailed nor edited for meaning. Participants' use of expletives also remain unedited, in order to present data extracts precisely. It may also appear as though there is a lack of parity between chapters, as the focus within some wielded more data than others. For example, there were significant amounts of data focused upon the legacy of the British intervention (Chapter 5) whereas in comparison Chapter 7 may appear less dense. Nonetheless, this does not detract from the novel findings included in less extended chapters and the significant

contribution they make to the field. Data was not disregarded based on quantitative ideas which would have seen equal attention on each chapter. Within these chapters there is appropriate but limited use of first person in order to convey my experience and observations as a researcher during fieldwork, and, at times relevant experiences from working with the UN in Geneva.

Chapter 4 explores the experience of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone until 2004. Chapter 5 then goes on to analyse the long-term legacy and impacts of these actions as well as the current British presence and influence in modern day Sierra Leone. A British foreign policy perspective is taken in Chapter 6, which evaluates the impacts and longer-term legacy of these actions domestically within British foreign policy and on the UK's role within the international arena. Based on these experiences the participants perspectives on R2P and military intervention for humanitarian purposes is explored in Chapter 7. Following on from this analysis and discussion, Chapter 8 concludes the thesis, summarising the key findings and suggesting recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 - Military Intervention for Humanitarian Purposes

2.0 Introduction

As the nature of conflict has evolved from being predominantly interstate to intrastate front-line battlefields in the traditional sense have been abandoned (Weiss 2012), with bloodshed located near resources and civilians seen as 'legitimate' targets for violence. As such, external interventions may be necessary in order to alleviate human suffering. As discussed in Chapter 1, R2P permits intervention by the UN or regional organisations, within another sovereign state, in order to alleviate suffering and prevent further loss of life. This applies in four specific circumstances: genocide; war crimes; crimes against humanity; and ethnic cleansing (UNGA 2005). These are also commonly referred to throughout this thesis as mass atrocities. As such, the motivators for involvement are considered to be a panoply of ideals such as ethics and morality (Bulley 2010). In order to understand the experiences and legacies of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone, and how this situates within wider discourse, it is first pertinent to discuss the underpinning theoretical frameworks. This chapter explores the relevant literature and has been approached in two parts. Whilst these may seem disparate, both are necessary in order to provide adequate coverage of the topic. The first part examines the theoretical framework of R2P in order to ground later discussion on intervention practice within a conflict environment. The second part explores the causes of conflict in Africa so as to best contextualise the analysis of intervention legacy in subsequent chapters.

2.1 R2P and the Three Pillars

R2P was unanimously endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the 2005 World Summit (see paragraph 139 of the World Summit Outcome document), with precedent for peace enforcement measures set in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. It is comprised of three central pillars, the first of which acknowledges that the state has the primary responsibility to protect its own citizens from the four mass atrocity circumstances referred to above (UNGA 2005). This pillar merely encapsulates already widely established principles within international law thinking and, due to its relatively domestic focus, is not generally deemed controversial (Bellamy 2012; Gallagher 2012). The second

pillar allows that in instances where the state does not or cannot protect its citizens, the international community bears the responsibility to assist states. The final pillar, Pillar III, outlines the ways in which the international community may respond should Pillars I and II continue not to be met. This includes “diplomatic, humanitarian and other means to protect populations from these crimes” (UNGA 2005) using timely and decisive measures. These latter two pillars are somewhat provocative as they attempt to legitimise third party interference within a sovereign state, and although they acknowledge that military action should only be employed as a last resort, do challenge realist perceptions of sovereignty (see section 2.5 Legitimacy and Sovereignty). This research, and the R2P debates discussed throughout, are concerned primarily with Pillar III, as it is this which relates to third party responses which may include military action.

In keeping with the traditional humanitarian principles, R2P interventions are envisaged as ideally impartial, independent and neutral: designed to preserve life and prevent atrocities rather than fight conflict (Slim 2020). All three pillars are informed by the ICISS Report (2001), which outlines that military intervention must only be used: with proportional action; where there is a reasonable chance of success; with the right intentions; as a last resort; and where the wide-spread loss of life provides just cause. Several of these conditions overlap with the “just war” criteria (Ramsbotham et al. 2016) and as such the bar for intervening militarily is set high (Evans 2020). However, elements of this criteria are arguably subjective. For instance, it can be difficult to gain consensus within the UNSC regarding at precisely what point all non-military options have been considered and exhausted (UNA-UK 2016).

Since its ratification in 2005 many have argued that R2P has adopted an increasingly normative dimension, however, this ‘norm’ status is debatable. On the one hand many countries have established an R2P focal point, with responsibility to facilitate responses where atrocity risk has been identified (Evans 2020). Furthermore, since 2009 there have been annual R2P debates in the UNGA (Hofmann 2015). On the other hand, the inconsistency with which R2P is applied throws into question whether it may be considered a ‘norm’, defined as a shared expectation of behaviour. For example, the killing of 40,000 Tamil

civilians in Sri Lanka (2009) did not appear on the formal UNSC agenda despite clearly forming a protection crisis (Bellamy 2012). Similarly, there remains no codified documentation outlining precisely when, where, and how intervention should occur (Holzgrefe and Keohane 2003). While some argue that this lack of a blueprint is a significant weakness of R2P, others counter that to establish it as international law would consequently increase the frequency of interventions, perhaps overwhelmingly so, and increase the likelihood that the principle will be abused (Hehir 2013a).

Irrespective of ones position as to whether R2P is a 'norm', it is undeniable that R2P has become an accepted terminology within the last two decades. However, as contended in Chapter 1, it is arguable that the essence of the concept long pre-dates this branding. Historically military interventions for humanitarian purposes, using moral justifications, occurred long before the introduction of the R2P slogan. For example, some of the main military interventions taking place in the 1990s, such as Namibia and Mozambique, cited extreme humanitarian circumstances within the justifications for external involvement (Evans and Sahnoun 2001). Further evidence of this can be seen in UNSC resolutions pre-dating the conception of the R2P lexicon, such as Security Council Resolution 794, which enabled intervention in Somalia (1992) and utilised the term "humanitarian" eighteen times (Weiss 2012). Despite these long-established roots, R2P and its nuances remain a contested concept within the international community and between academics alike. Likewise, although the acceptance of the three pillars by all UN member states was seen as a victory for R2P proponents, and in some ways humanity itself, it may be argued that acceptance of a principle or theory is not the same as an agreement to enforce it or engage meaningfully with it in practice. This, coupled with debates on the extent to which it is truly an internationally accepted norm, impacts upon the perceptions of the legitimacy of the R2P paradigm. As such, the legitimacy of the rhetoric is underpinned by both subjective and intersubjective understandings (Hurrell 2005).

2.2 R2P and Philosophy

Perceptions and understandings of the R2P principle are inevitably influenced by philosophical ideology; realism being the dominate ontology in international relations. Although realist discourse does include a commitment to human respect (Doyle 2011) it also argues that national responsibilities, narrowly defined in terms of national interests, governs foreign policy rather than ethical considerations (Chandler 2003; Perkins and Neumayer 2010). As such, it is felt to be relatively sceptical of R2P when compared to liberal internationalist thinking (Bulley 2010). This is not to say that military intervention is dismissed in its entirety, rather it remains a policy option for instances where national interests are threatened (Gallagher 2012). Similarly, realists often reason that by diverting resources away from national concerns, the state limits its ability to act positively for its own population. Thereby it conceptualises an almost Machiavellian/Hobbesian system of international relations in which states are assumed to be in constant competition (Linklater 2005). As such, focus is placed on survival, security and power as opposed to life saving activities within external states (Gallagher 2012). This results in R2P remaining marginal to realism, in contrast to its centrality within liberalism, and placing little priority on the concept of a moral obligation to provide assistance to citizens suffering in other nations. As such, it is difficult for realists to reconcile national responsibilities with the international responsibilities comprising R2P.

The concerns raised by the realist school of thought cannot be dismissed outright and risking the lives of military personnel in order to save the lives of strangers may have many wider ramifications (Pickering 2009), including within domestic politics. Likewise, a state's resources are finite and it is true that resources allocated to humanitarian interventions are then, at least temporarily, unavailable for other purposes which may have a closer correlation to national security. The hesitance in invoking R2P may be argued as demonstrative of a disconnect between theory and practice underpinned by realism; with theory focussing on the idea of an international 'community' rather than individual states. However, realist thinking fails to acknowledge that the nature of conflict has changed over recent decades and therefore, by implication, the traditional role of the military has evolved. Whereas in previous centuries their conventional role was

predominantly self-defence and the promotion of national interests, this is no longer the case and militaries are increasingly involved in broader security missions. For example, establishing safe havens in conflict affected states (Cheeseman 2005). Therefore, a key weakness in the realist perspective of international security lies in its refusal to fully acknowledge the shift in the nature of military missions.

In contrast, liberalism tends to be perceived as more philosophically aligned with R2P as human rights themselves, and therefore human rights abuses, are viewed as a liberal concept (Bulley 2010). This connection risks R2P being potentially unfairly dismissed as little more than liberal constructionism, and certainly R2P literature frequently treats the two with a degree of synonymity (see Chandler 2004). However, although philosophically complementary it may be argued that the two should not be conflated indiscriminately and to do so implies a theoretical incompatibility not only with alternative philosophical ideals but also systems of governance other than liberal democracies. That R2P was endorsed unanimously by all UNGA member states is evidence that this is (at least theoretically) not the case, as nations which are not generally considered to embrace liberal principles expressed their support. As international relations research is often underpinned by a realist ontology and epistemology it is arguable that there is a focus on systems rather than people. Therefore, there is a limitation in the understanding of the legacy of military interventions for humanitarian purposes when using this lens. As this research is grounded in a social constructivist framework, focussing on the constructed realities of the individuals involved in intervention, rather than realism, the aim is to expand this understanding.

2.3 Motivation: Altruism vs Self-interest

The primary distinction between military intervention for humanitarian purposes and war centres upon the ethical rationale underpinning the former, and its claimed altruistic objectives. The validity of these motives is frequently questioned and a wide range of existing literature focuses on the debate surrounding the extent to which a state's actions can be truly deemed as humanitarian and altruistic. For example, Morgenthau argues that states are not

infinitely altruistic and therefore they should not be “dabbling in altruism” (Dobos 2016: 502). Others question whether decisions of when and where to intervene are largely directed by geo-political interests merely cloaked in moral language (Gallagher 2014). As such, sceptics express concerns regarding the potential for R2P to become “a license for external intervention” (Bellamy 2012: 165); a principle to be abused in the pursuit of national interests or ulterior motives. Yet, rather than behaving only as an enabler for military intervention and interference, R2P is currently able to act as both a legitimiser and limiter due to the caution exercised in its use. This was evidenced in drafts of Resolution 1769 referring to Sudan (2007) which originally included references to R2P. However, due to objections, explicit mentions of this term had to be removed prior to its approval (Bellamy 2012).

Discourse on motives is often presented as a dichotomy, appearing to imply that an intervention which may be tainted by national interests automatically undermines or delegitimises any moral rationales. From this perspective legitimate action is that which is deemed to be distinct from both self-interest and coercive rule, and therefore separate to both instrumental and imposed behaviours (Hurrell 2005). As such, disinterest is necessary in order for action to even be considered humanitarian (Verwey 1998 cited in Dobos 2016) and mixed motives are rarely presented as legitimate or desirable. However, others counter that the presence of non-altruistic motivations does not necessarily preclude the intervention from also being humanitarian (Dembinski et al. 2019). In practice it is arguably simplistic to suggest that the two can be entirely divorced from each other or that completely undiluted altruism is ever attainable. It would be rare for a government to risk the lives of its soldiers for “the sole purpose of saving strangers” (Dembinski et al. 2019: 618), with casualties difficult to justify to an electorate based solely on altruistic intent. Arguably anticipation of this shaped NATO's intervention in Kosovo and limited it to airstrike only, rather than including a ground presence which would have increased the risk of casualties for intervening forces (Dobos 2016). Typically, once such casualties are sustained by the intervener the likelihood of withdrawal is increased, as was seen in 1994 with Belgium’s withdrawal from Rwanda (Adediran 2017).

Paris (2014) provides a novel perspective on mixed motives, suggesting that an element of self-interest on behalf of the intervener is advantageous, as it is more likely to ensure both accountability and political will. The lack of these two elements has, at times, inhibited intervention or shaped the international response to crisis. For instance, the US withdrawal from Somalia in 1993 is often attributed to a lack of political will and subsequently the conflict continued for over a decade (Weiss 2004). Furthermore, Aning and Atuobi (2009) argue that it is the lack of will within the African Union (AU) that continues to undermine their peace architecture and presents the most significant challenge to the regional enforcement of R2P. Therefore, it could be claimed that the desire to end atrocities is in itself not enough to generate a commitment to intervention: an element of self-interest is needed to commit resources to resolving conflicts for a sustained period and to avoid reaching the point of ethical fatigue.

Although areas of research touch upon the idea of mixed motives as desirable to ‘stay the course’ (for example, see Binder's 2009 empirical analysis on selectivity), they often lack an in-depth exploration of the concept. Whilst acknowledging the role of political will and self-interest in committing resources, such research frequently stops short of explicitly calling these desirable qualities, implying a continued element of controversy around the concept. Arguably, there are significant merits to Paris' (2014) viewpoint and in acknowledging that ethical motivations and self-interest are not mutually exclusive, co-existing together, a more realistic than idealistic view of international relations is presented. However, he fails to fully analyse the delicate interplay between global ambitions and global responsibilities, such as the point at which national interests cease to be desirable and subsume humanitarian motives. Likewise, he does not explore the nuances between different self-interests and the impacts this may have. For example, both the desire to maintain regional security and the desire to influence regime change, whilst matters of national interest, carry very different connotations. The perception of the latter scenario has generated a backlash against military interventions for humanitarian purposes, weakening potential consensus around R2P. For instance, with countries such as Russia voicing concerns that intervening powers exceed their humanitarian mandates in order to collapse political regimes, as in Libya (Ralph 2013).

2.4 Ethical Foreign Policy and Consequentialist Ethics

Ethical foreign policy may also be used to justify military intervention for humanitarian purposes and share many of the ideals of R2P. This refers to the inclusion of moral principles within how a state conducts itself on the world stage and contributes to the shaping of its relationship with other nations. It represents an ethical and normative shift away from the traditionally realist approach of foreign policy (Chandler 2003) (see section 2.2 R2P and Philosophy). However, moulding foreign policy in this way implies a common universal definition of morality and an imagined geography in which all are governed by the same interpretation of rights and freedoms (Perkins and Neumayer 2010). Yet, there does not appear to be a consensus on what constitutes a moral imperative, nor what acting ethically would actually comprise of, such as the ways in which it may constrain or embolden foreign policy decisions. Furthermore, ethics are culturally situated which raises questions as to whose it refers (Gaskarth 2013). As such ethical foreign policy is a "conceptual and practical minefield" (Toje 2002 cited in Bulley 2010: 442) and a contested term.

Some remain sceptical regarding the ability of foreign policy to be truly ethical, for example, Bulley (2010: 442) states that due to self-interest and disorder within the international arena such an approach is "awkward, if not impossible." Whilst this critique is grounded in a realist view of international relations, it may be questioned whether in recent years there has been a reconceptualization of what constitutes national interests. Given the degree of globalisation and far-reaching ramifications of civil conflict, it may be argued that the protection of civilians outside of a state's territory now falls within this remit. As such, acting in a way which is moral or 'right' may not necessarily be easily separated from what may also be viewed as 'self-interest' (Perkins and Neumayer 2010).

However, in practice there appears to be multiple contradictions within the foreign policies of countries who have declared ethical dimensions to their approach. For instance, previous British governments have asserted that they "will not permit the sale of arms to regimes that might use of them for internal repression or aggression" (Cook 1997). A similar stance has been taken by France, who

declared it their policy to evaluate the human rights conditions of the nations they exported arms to. However, there has been little evidence of this progressing beyond rhetoric and research by Brown (2004) found that the majority of British arms sales were to regimes with poor human rights records. In addition, data gathered by Perkins and Neumayer (2010) indicated that autocratic countries received a greater percentage of British and French manufactured arms. As such, arms trading appears to be motivated by economic interests rather than ethical foreign policy. This indicates a gap between policy and rhetoric. It is paradoxes such as this which contribute to Perkins and Neumayer (2010: 247) labelling ethical foreign policy as “organised hypocrisy” and one may question the extent to which such a commitment from Western nations is largely symbolic.

In discussing the ethical motivations of R2P one must also consider the consequentialist ethics of military intervention. In a similar way to Anderson's (1999) discussion on the potential for aid to do more harm than good in humanitarian situations, the potential consequences of military intervention for humanitarian purposes must also be acknowledged; good intentions do not guarantee positive outcomes (Nathan 2000). NATO’s intervention in Kosovo (1999) further fuelled this debate as it faced claims that more carnage resulted as a consequence of action than if international communities had remained inert and allowed the conflict to continue without external involvement (Evans and Sahnoun 2001). As such, whilst bombing campaigns may save lives, they also do harm (Pattison 2021) and result in death and suffering. It is not possible to know with certainty that intervening is the ‘right’ action (Bulley 2010). Therefore, the moral virtue of intervention is not necessarily clear cut and situational ethics should consider what Kennedy (2004) has termed “the dark side of virtue”, underpinned by a consequentialist framework. This paradoxical nature of military interventions for humanitarian purposes is often reflected in the emotive titles of the literature exploring the theme. For example, Farrington's (2012) book “Killing for Peace”, and DeMeritt's (2015) research article on military intervention entitled “Delegating Death.”

Scharpf proposed a concept of “output legitimacy”, regarding effective solutions to shared problems, which Hurrell (2005) has adapted to a discussion around

rejections of UNSC reform based on effectiveness. It may be questioned whether such a notion could add value to the dialogue relating to consequentialist ethics and military intervention, whereby the desired output is imagined as the cessation of violence which, when achieved, then legitimises the action. It is also arguable that perceived success in military intervention may also legitimise future interventions (see Chapter 6.3 Ethical Foreign Policy for further discussion within the context of Britain). Similarly, legality and legitimacy are not always symbiotic. For example, NATO's intervention in Kosovo violated Chapter 2(7) of the UN Charter, thereby contravening international law and being deemed illegal. However, in retrospect many have conceded this action was legitimate (Weiss 2004; McCourt 2013; Newman 2021). The concept of "output legitimacy" would be able to account for this. However, it is not possible to know with certainty all possible outcomes and potential impacts of intervention, and it is notoriously hard to establish the number of deaths resulting from conflict. Likewise, counterfactual estimates of the numbers of lives saved as a result of military action can at best be termed well-informed speculation. Therefore, the cost-benefit analyses of involvement are highly subjective, as is the value allocated to saving lives (Weiss 2012).

2.5 Legitimacy and Sovereignty: State Security vs Human Security

The debate surrounding the legitimacy of military intervention and use of force to create peace is often situated within the context of evolving acuities of both the security of the state and the individual, and the management of perceived insecurity within global politics (Hurrell 2005). This contention is largely underpinned by diverging opinions on sovereignty, traditionally defined as a mutual recognition of the "legal equality of states" (Weiss 2012: 13), whereby each state is afforded "territorial integrity… [and] political independence" (Bellamy 2012: 2). This acknowledgment forms the basis of international law (Ralph 2013) and forces one to question the legitimacy of an international body holding an equally sovereign state accountable for domestic matters and actions within its own land (Holzgrefe and Keohane 2003). Thus, sovereignty has traditionally been seen through a realist lens and considered tantamount to non-intervention. Some reason that this should be retained at all times, including during exceptional circumstances such as humanitarian crises and the endemic abuse of civilians

(Williams 1999; Ralph 2013). Certainly, this is the routine norm of international relations and security within non-conflict situations. Those subscribing to this view claim that any violation of this risks creating instability, with the potential to increase the number of interstate conflicts (see Kim 2003).

However, this is a blinkered view as civil conflict does not only affect the state experiencing violence and the impacts are typically felt regionally. This is particularly true in the modern context of increasing multilateralism in global markets and permeability of borders (Hurrell 2005; Weiss 2012). For example, the war in Sierra Leone had strong regional undertones, partially extending from the conflict in neighbouring Liberia (Arrous and Feldman 2014) and the recent civil conflict in Syria has witnessed millions of refugees fleeing the country (OCHA 2021). This potentially impacts on the resources and social cohesion of the host nation. As such, one must question the traditional definitions of sovereignty within the present day socio-political and economic context. Indeed, it is arguable that it is inaction which has the potential to generate instability within the international community. In addition, Weiss (2012) posits that inaction in the face of such horrific crimes as outlined in Pillar I (see section 2.1 R2P and the Three Pillars) is tantamount to condoning suffering, violence and genocide. This echoes sentiments expressed by Kofi Annan (2000), who questioned how else the international community should respond to atrocities which “offend every precept of common humanity.”

Supporters of R2P perceive sovereignty differently to the critics, arguing that the state bears the responsibility to its civilians to protect them from mass atrocity crimes. In instances where the state is unable to protect them from such crimes, or is the perpetrator of these crimes, it is argued that the state forfeits their right to non-intervention (Atkins 2012). As such, sovereignty cannot be seen as synonymous with control and impunity, thereby becoming a conditional construct rather than an absolute. Therefore, sovereignty is not viewed as a barrier to “morally sanctioned actions” (Hurrell 2005: 17) and intervening to prevent atrocities, such as ethnic cleansing, should not be impeded by it. It is contended that in violating the rights of its citizens the state forfeits its legitimacy and right to sovereignty; thus enabling a legitimate right to intervene, including militarily

(Weiss 2012). This was witnessed in British politics with Tony Blair's stance of sovereignty as conditional and his construction of the international communities role as one based on elements of neo-communitarianism (Atkins 2012). For Blair (1999) "acts of genocide can never be a purely internal matter." Furthermore, Ayoob (2001) contends that in instances of failed states, the potential concern of violations to sovereignty become a non-issue as the state has disappeared in any effectual, functioning format, resulting in a political vacuum. Consequently, in situations of state collapse, coupled with extreme violence or humanitarian emergencies, the principles of non-intervention are redundant (Armstrong and Farrell 2006). However, such contexts render military intervention even more complex than in instances where there is a semblance of power, as there are few remaining or functioning structures for the interveners to coordinate with (Roberson 2014). In such discussions legitimacy is framed as relating to the power of the conflict affected state, contrasting to critics who frame legitimacy as applicable to the power of the intervener.

Other supporters of intervention engage in a reconceptualization of sovereignty as a responsibility. This responsibility and accountability refer both internally, to the protection of citizens' rights within its own borders, and externally, to intervene when another state is seen to be violating citizens' rights through violence or a failure to protect them from rebel group violence (ICISS 2001). As such, R2P refers to two distinct 'norms'; the internal responsibility and the external responsibility (Bellamy 2012). The result is two juxtaposing visions of sovereignty within international relations, whereby one prioritises the state and the other the individual. Within the latter framework of thinking, morality and the individual are given primacy over the sovereignty of the state (Gelb and Rosenthal 2003). This is demonstrative of a shift in international thinking on security, beyond the macro-level of the state and toward the micro-level of the individuals security and rights (Falk and Skinner 2016). This is also reflected in an increase of ethical elements to foreign policies, which position the rights of the individual at their core (see Chapter 2.4 Ethical Foreign Policy and Consequentialist Ethics for further discussion). Therefore, it is arguable that sovereignty is not a static concept, but one which is evolving over time. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, this diversity in thinking has not been accompanied by a shift in the focus of research

in practice, which continues to remain overwhelmingly at the state and structural level (Dembinski et al. 2019). For example, focusing heavily upon ethical issues and the legal debates surrounding R2P, at the expense of detailed and analytical discussions regarding the challenges and practicalities of such operations from the perspective of those for whom it is a reality.

2.6 Post-Colonial Power Dynamics

The debate surrounding perceived breaches in sovereignty is arguably further compounded by asymmetrical distributions of power within the international community, creating a potential tension between the perception of ethics and power in R2P implementation. When examining R2P theoretically, supporters may argue that in terms of power relationships a favourable shift toward the "weak", on the level of the individual, has been created. This is because states are no longer able to abuse their power without risk of consequence or a humanitarian lens scrutinising their actions. Therefore, the very conceptualisation of R2P is premised on a move away from a system of law generated by "the strong for the strong" (Hurrell 2005: 18) and towards one which is more pluralist. However, on a macro level it is debatable whether this is reflected in practice as the majority of interventions are financed by countries within the global North, yet there is a strong geographical concentration in terms of where military interventions for humanitarian purposes occur, with the majority centred in Africa (see also Chapter 2.10 R2P in Africa). As of 2021, there are twelve ongoing UN peacekeeping missions, half of which are operating in the region (UNPK 2021a). Similarly, between 1999 and 2016 of the largest ten UN peacekeeping operations eight were located in sub-Saharan Africa (Curran and Williams 2016). This heavy focussing of efforts may be seen as reminiscent of the historical colonial portrayal of African countries as violent, troubled and 'third world', whilst also deflecting from European countries experiencing bloody internal conflict (Hehir 2018).

By implication this diminishes the moral legitimacy of claimed humanitarian motivations. This also contributes to suspicions of R2P as a tool for colonialism by another name and an "instrument of depredation by the strong against the weak" (Ayoob 2001: 226) between states. This may also be identified as a manifestation of the inequitable power dynamics of the global system, including

of regional dynamics, due to the over-representation of Nigeria, South Africa and Ethiopia in these activities. It may be argued that even in instances where intervention occurs with the agreement of the host nation this dynamic is still at play; were the affected state militarily and economically strong it may not agree to an external military presence (Weiss and Collins 2019). Arguably, this is also a reflection of the unavoidable political nature of R2P, in terms of non-interventions just as much as sanctioned interventions. For instance, it is possible that were it not for use of the veto there may have been UN Peacekeeping interventions in countries such as Ukraine. Therefore, Hehir (2018) posits that rather than neo-colonialism, the attention paid to Africa reflects "fewer strategic rivalries" in the region, downgraded sovereignty and limited rebel military capabilities.

That the underpinnings of R2P rhetoric are rooted in morality and premised on the assumption that the judgment made is the best option for the common good, implies an automatic moral high ground favouring interveners (Ralph 2013). Therefore, R2P is value-laden (Gelb and Rosenthal 2003) and states which do not meet a standard of human rights as defined by the Western model become legitimate targets for military intervention. However, this is disputable as while there is some merit to the concept of post-colonial power plays and stratification, intervention occurs not when human rights are unguaranteed, but rather when they are abused to the extent that the result is a wide scale loss of life and acts which "shock consciousness" (Weiss 2012: 12). This subtle distinction between a lack of rights and a chronic violation of rights, resulting in potentially tens or hundreds of thousands of deaths, is often overlooked when situating the debate within a neo-colonial context. Currently, literature neglects to look at the power dynamics involved in R2P and military intervention from the perspective of the individuals involved. As a result there has been little to no in-depth exploration into whether those in the affected state felt hostile towards the intervention and "colonised", or whether it was positively received. Equally, the perspectives of the troops implementing intervention has not been explored in depth, such as whether they felt they were fighting a war of imperialism or fighting to save lives. Both of these voids are discussed at various junctures in this thesis.

Bellamy (2011) puts forth a coherent defence to the critique of military intervention for humanitarian purposes as a manifestation of imperialist power agendas. He contends that the basic principles encapsulated within R2P are themselves an African construct, highlighting the AU's constitutional acceptance of the precept of humanitarian intervention prior to the 2005 UN World Summit. This was entrenched in Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act (2000) which enabled the AU "to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" (African Union 2000: 7). The African Standby Force has the mandate to implement this (Aning and Atuobi 2009) and originated largely in response to the experiences of genocide within African nations, such as Rwanda. Therefore, Article 4(h) validated the principle of regional intervention for humanitarian purposes amongst AU member states years prior to the ratification of the principle at the UN. As such, it is perhaps elitist to view moral foreign policy as a "postmodern version of the 'white man's burden'" (Gelb and Rosenthal 2003: 2) and R2P cannot be labelled an entirely Western construct devoid of influence from other cultures. However, in practice the AU has appeared reluctant to intervene, militarily or otherwise, in conflict situations without the consent of the affected states government and without UN collaboration. This has led to criticisms for its failure to take the lead on African peace (Bellamy 2011), particularly as it is often seen as the better positioned body to resolve 'African problems' due to its close geographical proximity, familiarity with cultural dynamics, and the perception that it is best suited to understand the crises within the region (Nathan 2000; Aning and Atuobi 2009) (see Chapter 7.4 Regional Intervention for further discussion).

2.7 UN vs Unilateral Military Intervention

The UN is currently viewed as the best organisation to represent the international community as a whole (Ralph 2013) and is therefore seen as having the 'right authority' to authorise R2P interventions (Martin 2018). As such, military intervention for humanitarian purposes must first be sanctioned by the UNSC, under Article 39, in order to be deemed both legal and legitimate (Newman 2021). The capacity of the permanent five (P5) members to veto proposed humanitarian action provides a buffer against abuse of R2P for national interests. However, the

use of the veto in instances of mass atrocities undermines the practice of R2P, for example, previously having led to inaction in Chechnya (Ayoob 2001). This too renders the Council vulnerable to manipulation for national interests and power politics, which may feasibly motivate the vetoes invocation, rather than genuine concerns regarding the extent of humanitarian need (Axworthy 2001; Gelb and Rosenthal 2003). Such use, while unethical, remains technically legitimate and creates a barrier to the effective protection of vulnerable groups in conflict affected states. Therefore, just as military intervention has the potential to be exploited in order to further national/ideological interests, so too can non-intervention be abused for the same purposes (Gunatilleke 2016).

A recent example of this relates to the UNSC inability to respond effectively to the conflict in Syria, which Adediran (2017) cites as further evidence of the need to explore alternative mechanisms for R2P action. Although there have been talks of the introduction of an informal code of conduct relating to the use of vetoes in instances of atrocity prevention, P5 members such as Russia and China have displayed reluctance in agreeing to this (Bellamy 2012). Indeed, it is these two countries which are the most prolific invocators of the veto, having utilised it twenty-three times between 2001 and 2016 (Hehir 2018). An alternative may be to devolve this power to a Humanitarian Council, making decisions based on a majority. However, this idea has been met with a lack of enthusiasm (Ayoob 2001). Thus, it must be acknowledged that the current UN system, and therefore the system for legitimising the use of R2P, is inherently flawed.

Despite these mechanisms for authorising R2P interventions, there are instances where unilateral interventions occur and, at times, have displayed a stark contrast in efficiency and perceived success in comparison to UN sanctioned interventions. For example, the British unilateral intervention in Sierra Leone compared to UNAMSIL (Dorman 2009). Therefore, it could be argued that legitimacy is not always synonymous with efficiency, implying that unilateral interventions may sometimes be more responsive due to their circumnavigation of the procedural norms and bureaucracy associated with gaining approval from the UNSC. In doing so, significant delays are avoided. For instance, it must be remembered that the UN does not have a standby force which is able to rapidly

deploy in the same way as a national military and must be assembled from scratch in each instance (Dobos 2016). This may also have a negative impact on the cohesion of the intervening force as well as the effectiveness and swiftness of action (Curran and Woodhouse 2007). As such, it may be questioned whether in practice unilateral interventions could be more dynamic than those which are UN sanctioned. However, such action also serves to decrease the perceived authority of the UN (Holland 2012) and "erodes the normative consensus that undergirds international security" (Ayoob 2001: 228).

Due to this it can be questioned whether the use of force for humanitarian purposes which occurs without prior UNSC approval, be it unilateral or a 'coalition of the willing', should be condoned or condemned. Undeniably, despite the lack of validity and legality associated with non-UNSC approved intervention, such actions continue to occur, for example, the American intervention in Uganda (2011). However, for unilateral action to be condoned risks the creation of a situation whereby a single state would be able to deem whether another had forfeited their right to sovereignty, enabling intervention without any check or balance to this power. The subjective nature of legitimacy also indicates that what one state may deem to be legitimate, another may not. Armstrong and Farrell (2006) reinforce this using the example of Islamic terrorist groups, who see their actions as justifiable and equate jihads to the 'just war' framework. Yet, that instances of non-UNSC sanction interventions are rarely held to account for breaching protocol may lead one to question not only the relevance of the UN but also the relationship between illegality versus legitimacy and accountability within R2P practice (Pugh 2012).

The lack of culpability for non-UNSC sanctioned interventions means that accountability stems only from challenges to the narrative behind the ethical reasoning for intervention. In addition, the consequences of such acts appear to be limited to a 'Vietnam syndrome', whereby action is inhibited for a period (Armstrong and Farrell 2006). As such, the cost appears to be greater for the nations affected by mass atrocities, and to the principle of R2P, than to the intervener. This debate is further complicated by instances of military interventions which are deemed to be illegal at the time of occurrence, due to

their lack of UNSC authorisation, yet are retrospectively acknowledged as justifiable. Returning to the example of Kosovo, NATO's intervention was vetoed by both Russia and China in the UNSC (1999) however, was later deemed by some as justified (Weiss 2004; Newman 2021). This implies that legitimacy is a subjective condition, rather than objective, and carries with it spatial and temporal dimensions. Such paradoxes serve to further obfuscate the relationship between R2P theory and practice.

2.8 Non-intervention

When examining the merits of decisions to intervene militarily, the possible alternative courses of action must also be taken into account. External military intervention in violent conflict is generally accepted as an option only to be explored when all other peaceful alternatives have been exhausted (UNGA 2009). Arms embargos and economic sanctions are one such option and may be imposed on the affected state as a form of non-military intervention in order to provide a catalyst for peace negotiations (Atkins 2012; Hoeffler 2014; Pattison 2018). However, these alternatives also have weaknesses in their application and various analyses' highlight not only the ineffectiveness of sanctions but also their likely negative humanitarian impacts (see Allen and Lektzian 2013). For example, the economic sanctions imposed on Haiti resulted in an increase in child mortality and malnutrition, whilst simultaneously enabling elites to profit from smuggling. Similarly, approximately 150,000 child deaths were attributed to the sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1991 (Weiss 2012). Therefore, while some may argue that alternative forms of intervention are a preferable option to a military ground presence, one must question their effectiveness and the (albeit unintended) consequences. Arguably, the critiques found in topics discussed earlier in this chapter, such as legitimacy and sovereignty, also apply to the spectrum of non-military forms of intervention.

On the other side of the spectrum lies inaction. For some, this is motivated by the belief that organic change is, by its very nature, violent and third parties should not intervene in this phase of a state development (Young 2010). For others, non-intervention is underpinned by the ideal that eventually the conflict will burn itself out. This is premised by debate proposing that third party intervention distorts the

dynamics of conflict, and statistical analysis suggests that this may result in an increase in the duration of war (Ramsbotham et al. 2016). Research also implies that in order for peace to be sustainable there must be a clear victor (Crocker et al. 2011) as this creates a lower chance of conflict reoccurrence when compared to conflicts ended by negotiated peace treaties. Such data runs contradictory to the essence of R2P and additional analysis infers that a lack of intervention also increases the chances of genocide occurring (Ramsbotham et al. 2016). For example, following the UNSC's refusal to intervene in Rwanda the conflict escalated rapidly into a mass genocide and an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people were killed between April and June 1994 alone (Verpoorten 2005). This significant cost to human life indicates that at some stage the international community must make a choice between potentially extending the duration of conflict and potentially preventing genocide.

An alternative approach may be for military intervention to abandon the principle of impartiality and intervene decisively on one side with coercive action. Theoretically this may also allow for a clear victor, as favouring one-side would create a clear imbalance of power, ending the conflict swifter than if it were neutral (Ramsbotham et al. 2016). Therefore, it could potentially increase the effectiveness of the intervention and the sustainability of peace. A statistical hazard analysis by Regan (2002) supports this notion and concludes that whilst neutral interventions may extend conflict duration, the opposite is true of those which are biased. However, this data is based on a spectrum of interventions and not just military action, therefore, further research would be needed in order to explore this relationship more fully. Although literature from the beginning of the century engages in discussion on the merits of partisan interventions, over recent years there appears to have been a move away from this theme (see Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Regan 2002; Udombana 2005). As the case study focused upon in this thesis experienced both an impartial intervention, through UNAMSIL, and a partial unilateral intervention, in terms of British military forces, a novel and current perspective is provided on this debate (see Chapter 7.3 UN vs Unilateral Military Intervention)

2.9 From Theory to Practice

If it is agreed that military intervention for humanitarian purposes should occur in instances of mass atrocities, it is then logical to assume that this be applied equally to all instances. However, such interventions are presently decided on a discretionary, case-by-case basis which enables multiple structural inconsistencies within the application of R2P (Paris 2014). This inequitable ad-hoc approach can make the principle appear fickle and render it further vulnerable to criticisms of its use as a smokescreen to pursue political agendas (Gallagher 2014). Arguably, post 9/11 and following America's retrospective humanitarian justification of military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, R2P has been increasingly associated with the furthering of geo-political interests and an extension of Western homogeny. These interventions within themselves represent a marked shift towards offensive realism in American foreign policy (Kim 2003). Likewise, the military intervention in Libya but the absence of similar intervention in Syria may be viewed as evidence of guarding geo-political interests rather than decisions based on humanitarian conditionality or severity of conflict. As the ability to intervene rests on the integrity and credibility of R2P (Bulley 2010), such inconsistencies risk generating a distrust of the principle and negatively impact on the capacity to invoke it (Kurth 2007).

In contrast, the failure to act in instances of humanitarian crisis may also attract criticism and carry with it as many implications as action. For example, the lack of timely military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) led to it being labelled the "world's most enduring forgotten emergency" (Weiss 2012: 58). However, it is questionable whether it is possible, or reasonable, to expect external intervention in every instance of atrocity. For example, the ability to intervene may be constrained due to a lack of capacity resulting from commitments within other states in crisis (Ramsbotham et al. 2016). As Blair (1999) summarised "there are so many regimes that are…engaged in barbarous acts…to right every wrong…then we would do little else than intervene. We would not be able to cope." This statement encapsulates the inevitability of inconsistencies between theory and practice, as ethics and morality are reflections of what should be done and not necessarily what it is always possible to do (Bulley 2010). Therefore, it must be acknowledged that although ideally the

protection of human life would be applied equitably, in practice this is simply not realistic and decisions to intervene militarily are likely to be influenced by additional restrictions, including whether there is a reasonable prospect of resolving the conflict or whether action may further aggravate the situation and increase violence (Bellamy 2011). As such, there is an unavoidable element of pragmatism in R2P implementation (Nathan 2000).

Additional critiques of R2P in practice relate to the creation of a potentially false hope within the affected state regarding the expected actions of the international community. For example, that an external military intervention would occur and that, if it does, it would be able to provide the catalyst needed to end conflict and restore peace (Khong 2001). Yet it must be kept in mind that the primary responsibility to protect lies with the affected government (Bellamy 2011). However, history has shown that third party military presence does not always constitute a security guarantee for civilians within the host state. For instance, despite their presence in Srebrenica, Angola and Rwanda, UN forces were unable to prevent the occurrence of mass killings (Evans and Sahnoun 2001; Bellamy 2015). Furthermore, research has indicated that during the post-Cold War period there has been less than a fifty percent chance of atrocity committing perpetrators being stopped by the international community (Bellamy 2011). This may indicate that commitments to the sovereignty of human rights, when related to civilians of external states, remain largely theoretical and that in practice such concerns are subsumed by the sovereignty of the state. Instances such as Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Indonesia to name but a few, add credence to this inference and suggests that perhaps a significant portion of R2P rhetoric is “sound and fury signifying nothing” (Hehir 2010: 218). Therefore, the advantages of intervention beyond theoretical discourse should be questioned and the legacies of its practice examined.

Nathan (2000) suggests that the effectiveness and sustainability of military intervention for humanitarian purposes pivots on the extent to which the structural causes of violence are addressed. In his framework of thinking the cause of conflict may be envisaged as the sickness, and violence as a symptom. Therefore, by only treating the symptom the root cause remains unchanged and

the affected population continues to be vulnerable to further outbreaks of civil war. This is partially evidenced through empirical evidence which suggests that the risk of incidence of war is higher in countries which have previously experienced violent civil conflict than those which have not (Collier and Sambanis 2002). This has often been suggested in research over the past two decades, which sees violence as the manifestation of structural issues, and consistently warns that a return to the status quo may equate to a recreation of the conditions of conflict. Thus, it is claimed by some that intervention practice must move beyond merely establishing negative peace dimensions (see Keen 1997). For example, by considering longer-term peacebuilding goals and addressing structural violence, including poverty and marginalisation (Curran and Woodhouse 2007). To some degree this has been reflected in more recent practice, which has displayed a shift towards developmental peace missions. For instance, the military intervention in Sierra Leone took steps towards state-building, as did the intervention in Iraq (Paris 2010). However, little in-depth research has been conducted into the effects of humanitarian intervention on long-term peacebuilding for the individual and the extent to which a responsibility to rebuild should be intertwined with R2P (Knight and Egerton 2012). Similarly, the continuation of violence from insurgence in Iraq following the declaration of the end of conflict suggests that such attempts are not always successful and indicates that longer-term strategies may be needed.

2.10 R2P in Africa

As previously stated, there is a necessary change in focus at this point. Since the end of the Cold War the number of interstate conflicts has steadily decreased. However, the opposite trend has been displayed in intrastate conflict, which has seen a sharp rise in incidence. These are characterised by a high prevalence of non-combatant mortalities, with civilians intentionally targeted as a tool to further political agendas and to control the population through fear (de Villers 2015). In addition, civil war has a retrograde influence on the affected state due to the high costs of conflict and the negative impacts on social structure, infrastructure and economic development (Tshitereke 2003). As such, death may also occur as an indirect consequence of conflict, for example, through starvation or sickness resulting from a lack of access to essential goods and services. This has been

witnessed in multiple African states, which have not only displayed a significant increase in the frequency of intrastate wars over the last twenty years, but also experienced some of the most violent and intense conflicts when compared to other regions (Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000). As discussed in section 2.6 Post-Colonial Power Dynamics, there has been a concentration of military interventions for humanitarian purposes in Africa (Bulley 2010). However, even within the region, such interventions have historically been "selective, inconsistent, under-resourced [and] narrowly focused" (Williams 2004: 46).

Military interventions by the UN in Africa over recent decades have arguably done little to reinforce the positive impacts of R2P and may be claimed to have undermined the organisation's credibility within the region (Adebajo 2004). For example, in Central African Republic (CAR), Somalia and South Sudan the presence of peacekeeping troops proved insufficient to protect civilians from violence (de Villers 2015). In turn, this legacy has made some UN member states disillusioned and wary of intervening militarily in civil conflict, unless in an area of high strategic interest (Armstrong and Farrell 2006). Similar interventions by the AU have also done little to boost the reputation of R2P, instead often serving to highlight their lack of resources and weak ability to implement negotiated peace agreements, as witnessed by the Lusaka Accord in the DRC (Adebajo 2004). As such, it is questionable whether the failure of external military troops to fill security vacuums has undermined the core humanity of R2P and increased the opportunity cost of involvement for member states to such an extent that strategic interests are evermore dominant. Alternatively, it may be questioned whether closer coordination between the UN, the AU and other sub-regional organisations would strengthen its implementation and reinforce both the R2P 'norm' and regional security in Africa (Aning and Atuobi 2009).

As previously discussed, a clear formula of when, where and how R2P interventions should occur, remains elusive. A model for success remains equally as abstract. For example, the military intervention in Rwanda has been described as a "scar on the conscious of the international community" (Lenarz 2013). Somalia is also viewed as a failure, yet for very different reasons. That the Rwandan intervention was largely comprised of poorly equipped military from

developing countries, lacking in strong political will and funding (Hehir 2013a), may infer that these characteristics contributed in large part to its lack of effectiveness. In contrast, the Somalian mission was well funded and comprised of well-equipped military personnel, yet was also seen as a failure (Clarke and Herbst 2019). As such, even those accepting of the R2P framework must question whether it is currently executed in the most effective way (Adebajo 2004). Various research has attempted to engage with this, often through quantitative research and complex statistics, aimed at pinpointing the determinants and consequences of an intervention, which could theoretically be used to determine its possible success (see Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Gent 2008; Anderson 2019). However, there is a lack of qualitative research which engages with the three primary groups involved in military intervention: policy influencers, policy implementers, and civilians within the affected state. Yet gaining a deep understanding of the experiences of these groups could help to establish aspects which have been successful within interventions and those which were viewed to be less productive on the ground or stimulated resentment. This research contributes to this gap throughout the substantive chapters.

2.11 Causes of conflict in Africa

The post-Cold War period in many African nations has been characterised by high levels of poverty, conflict and political instability (Nathan 2000). Despite the availability of natural resources, it remains underdeveloped (Tshitereke 2003). Consequences of conflict include disruption to the nations development, both economically and socio-politically (Bräutigam and Knack 2004). Whilst the reasons for the outbreak of civil war may differ from the motivation to continue violence (Justino 2009), particularly where they continue for an extended number of years, it is arguable that a clear understanding of its dynamics are important and should inform intervention strategy. An outline of the most commonly referenced causes of intrastate war in Africa are discussed in the following sub-sections exploring governance, identity, economic factors and resources. This is not an exhaustive list of all potential causes of conflict, rather it is an overview in order to provide a grounding for analysis and discussion in subsequent analytical chapters; it is important to understand the drivers of conflict in order to understand intervention and its legacies. It is also necessary in order to position the causes

of the civil war in Sierra Leone (see Chapter 3.3 Origins of the War) against the causes of conflict in Africa more broadly.

Often literature forces the causes of conflict into a greed-grievance binary. Whilst both are referenced in the sub-sections below it should be kept in mind that the framing of dialogue in such a way creates an artificial divide which denies that the same causal factor may appear as either, or both, depending on the perspective of the individual. The way in which the themes identified below have been separated is intentional for the purpose of discussion, and it is understood that causes of conflict have elements of intersectionality and overlap. For example, de Villiers (2015) attributes the conflict in CAR to a toxic mixture of bad governance, ethnic marginalisation, and economic inequalities. Although political science often conceptualises conflict in relation to motive, the role of opportunity in both the conflict outbreak and its continuation must also be acknowledged (Collier et al. 2004). Whilst violence cannot be dismissed as merely an opportunistic act, it is the delicate interplay of multiple causal factors which combine to create a mixture of incentive and the opportunity to capitalise on underlying motivations.

2.11.1 Colonial Legacy and Governance

Africa was previously high on foreign policy agendas following the end of the Cold War, as imperial powers began to acknowledge the need to transform their colonial legacies “from liabilities into assets” (Williams 2004: 41). This negative legacy partially relates to the infrastructure entrenched under colonial rule; typically those states established as settlements have fared better than those exploited as extractive states. In the instance of the latter, infrastructure and systems were often designed to aid the extraction of natural resources rather than the goal of seeing the colonised nation prosper and local population flourish (Acemoglu and Robinson 2017). Following the end of colonialism these structural systems were retained and economies deregulated (Tshitereke 2003). As such, a legacy of distorted social interactions has been maintained whilst “virtually condemning [the economy] to underdevelopment” (Yanacopulos and Hanlon 2006: 133). Whilst not all previously colonised states have experienced civil war following independence, it seems undeniable that the colonial experience is far

from conducive to strong institutions and development. These artificial systems are usually devoid of anything uniquely ‘African’ and unsuitable for context, unable to cope with development, “economic crisis and unsustainable debt, civil wars and political instability” (Bräutigam and Knack 2004: 255). This legacy is cited in multiple sources as a potential cause of state collapse and conflict (Blanton et al. 2001; Alemazung 2010).

Following on from this, poor governance is often linked in literature to a legacy of colonialism due to the inherited systems of government. Poor governance is indicated by corruption, lack of accountability, and weak infrastructure such as health care and education (Bräutigam and Knack 2004; de Villers 2015). The stability of society is premised on a social contract between civilians and the state. When governments are perceived to be unable or unwilling to fulfil this, such as an inability to maintain law and order or provide adequate infrastructure, then violence may flourish (Nathan 2000). For example, decades of bad governance have been attributed as one of the causal factors of civil conflict in DRC (Adebajo 2004). The absence of accountability and allegations of corrupt leaders are also regularly cited as a major source of discontent. Where political elites and governing forces are seen to engage in predation and rent-seeking behaviours through corruption, rather than focusing on development, a potentially volatile environment is created (McGowan 2005; Ramsbotham et al. 2016). Conflict may then occur as an expression of grievance against an unresponsive government which is perceived as crooked and perpetuating an unequal distribution of wealth. In this way governance, economic motivators and colonial legacy are intrinsically linked.

Similarly, identity conflict (see section 2.11.2 Identity for further discussion) is frequently associated with the legacy of colonialism, whereby arbitrarily drawn borders failed to take into account demography. As such, territorial lines were drawn through ethnic groups, resulting in large numbers of civilians as diaspora, living as minorities outside the state with which they share their national identity (Lentz and Nugent 2000; Mamdani 2001; Tshitereke 2003). This disconnect between ethnicity and geography may result in tension and violence. When combined with a colonial legacy of ethnic discrimination, extreme nationalist

governments in particular present a very real threat to stability and may potentially result in acts of ethnic cleansing (Tshitereke 2003). Alternatively, those groups oppressed by such governments may attempt to violently rebel and as Nathan (2000: 190) states “the absence of justice is frequently the principle reason for the absence of peace”. In such conflicts peace may be hard to achieve as a return to the status quo will be highly undesirable for the oppressed group. On the other hand, weak successor governments may also be a factor in the outbreak of conflict due to a lack of acknowledgement as a legitimate authority by the population. This may result in difficulty in retaining a monopoly of violence (Byman and van Evera 1998). However, it is reductionist to suggest that all African intrastate conflicts are predominantly caused by a colonial legacy and to do so fails to consider the influence of current global dynamics, including unfair trading terms, and the impact this has on economic development (Tshitereke 2003).

2.11.2 Identity

Ethnic and religious hatreds are repeatedly cited as a major cause of conflict in African states, and Cheeseman (2005) argues that identity politics dominate modern conflict more than realpolitik. Certainly, there are clear instances where socio-psychological factors have been a significant element in some major atrocities. For example, the role of ethnic and religious divisions between Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda, and more recently within South Sudan between the Dinka and the Nuer. It is also arguable that since George Bush’s ‘War on Terror’ identity politics has become ever more salient and received more media attention in the West than in previous years. Islamist groups in Nigeria and Somalia, such as Boko Haram and al-Shabaab, explicitly focus violence along identity lines through their aim to eliminate Western influences from their respective states. Targets labelled as legitimate by these groups include not only state military and government infrastructure, but markets, schools and churches; the latter targets all likely to have a high cost to civilian life (de Villers 2015). Typically, such identity-based violence continues for a longer period than those motivated by political ideology, with deep rooted hatreds taking longer to resolve, and being more likely to result in genocide (Kaufmann 1996; Regan 2002).

However, other research suggests that to reduce African conflicts to tensions between ethnic cleavages and ancient tribal hatreds is to racially stereotype the continent (Keen 1997). In taking such a simplistic approach there is typically a failure to analyse the negative impact of alternative influential factors such as endemic poverty and economic failures. Contrary to popular belief, research suggests that religious and ethnic diversity does not necessarily equate to a high risk of conflict and instead it may be a stabilising factor as it "necessitates inter-group bargaining processes" (Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000: 247). In contrast, polarisation between the groups is likely to result in fractionalisation and stimulate violence. For instance, even in democratic systems minority groups may be easily excluded, particularly where ethnicity is a dominant influence on political allegiance (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). This may result in the minority group feeling aggrieved and rebelling in order to establish their right to self-determination. This underpinned violent attempts to establish Biafra as a separate entity to Nigeria (Tshitereke 2003). The likelihood of this occurring is said to be further enhanced in instances of previous violence, or where such groups are seen to be making progress on their rights in other states. Alternatively, Byman and van Evera (1998) posit that it may be the majority group who acknowledge their dominance and seek to maintain their communal hegemony by destroying alternative communal groups through genocide. Thus, there are subtle but distinct nuances within the relationship of ethnicity and religion to conflict whereby the polarisation of identities, rather than diversification, negatively impacts on stability. Such socio-political contexts are likely to be further magnified in states which are economically weak or have high levels of poverty; when polarisation is combined with competition for resources a highly volatile situation is potentially cultivated and resentments enhanced (Tshitereke 2003).

Ideological differences may also stimulate the outbreak of violence (Collier and Sambanis 2002) and have been traditionally entwined with literature exploring governance. However, more recently research has begun equating religious faith with politics, especially since the rise of fundamental Islamist movements (Love 2006). As such, religion becomes increasingly entangled with political ideology and identity. This helps to demonstrate the interconnectivity between causes,

however, conflict generated as a manifestation of ideology goes beyond categories such as religious fundamentalism. For example, ‘reform wars’ against governments which are either oppressive, rule underpinned by an alternative or unpopular political ideology, or are perceived to be failing to deliver on their mandate. This can be seen in Ethiopia under the Derg (Luckham et al. 2001). In addition, political instability premised on ideological differences may result in leadership struggles and increase the chances of conflict occurrence (Bujra 2002; Bräutigam and Knack 2004). For instance, albeit an older study, McGowan (2005) argues that the success rate of military coups, estimated to be around 50.6% in West Africa (based on data between 1955 and 2004), does little to discourage attempts to seize power and, when weighed against the potential material benefits and increase in status, provides a degree of rationale. This argument may also be linked back to the concept of a colonial legacy, which arguably established systems of governance based on rule without consent and taking control by duress, thereby setting a precedent (Weiss 2012).

Crisis of youth also features in identity discourse as a potential cause of instability and grievance which manifests as violence (Maconachie 2014). This group represents a significant demographic percentage in the majority of African societies and the relationship between youth and governance is key within identity politics. Typically, this group experiences disenfranchisement and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has expressed concerns regarding their decreasing political engagement. With youth excluded from influencing legitimate political outlets and decision-making processes, the fear is that an alternative, potentially violent, means will be sought out to air their grievances and seek inclusion (Hilker and Fraser 2009). Research into youth and civil conflict also tends to be rooted in socio-economic development and situates poverty as central to the debate. For example, focusing on the relationship between youth and violence within the context of increasing unemployment and poor education/low literacy levels (Tsuma 2012): research has established a link between low education levels and a willingness to join rebel groups (see Oyefusi’s 2008 research in Niger Delta, cited in Hilker and Fraser 2009). However, there are instances of conflict where educated youth may take up arms; in Rwanda a number of well-educated youths from a professional middle class also

participated in the genocide (Hilker and Fraser 2009). Correspondingly, there is no automaticity in the relationship between youth and joining violent rebel groups, as there are multiple developing countries with difficult socio-economic circumstances navigated by youths which have not resulted in civil war (Peters 2011). This indicates that these relationships are correlational rather than causal, despite popular narratives.

2.11.3 Economic Development

Economic inequality may motivate violence as rebel groups seek to force a redistribution of wealth, and various research emphasises economic factors, such as low income and slow growth, as the one of the most important factor in conflict outbreak (McGowan 2005; Collier 2008). For example, research sponsored by the World Bank suggests that economic factors play a more significant role in the onset of conflict than any other element (Ramsbotham et al. 2016). The abundance of literature focusing on economic influence in relation to the onset of conflict, in contrast to that exploring more socio-political themes, highlights the priority given to such arguments. However, alternative research implies the link between economic factors and inequalities are not as direct as some would suppose (Cranmer 2003). Even the same research by the World Bank goes on to acknowledge that ideological and political claims are the more significant factor in sustaining rebel movements (Ramsbotham et al 2016). This implies that conflict may be generated by greed but maintained by grievance as the dynamics of the war evolve. Therefore, the focus on the connection with economic factors should not be at the expense of exploring other influential components.

In contrast, research by Tshitereke (2003) implies the inverse relationship to be true, whereby as conflict progresses genuine grievance/political motivations transform into economic greed, as those involved capitalise on the lucrative parallel economies established during war. For example, during Sudan's civil war (1983-2005) Keen (1997) claims that rebels aimed not only to be victorious in the conflict but to use it as a means to generate personal income. This suggests a vested interest in prolonging the fighting. These contradictory findings imply that there is no conclusive answer as to whether economic motivations are more likely to be a principle determining factor for the outbreak of conflict or a sustaining

factor. However, both indicate a mutation in motivation as the conflict continues. Whilst it appears evidential that there is a strong link between the economy and violence, inconsistencies between econometric studies, for example, in the ways in which data is coded, makes cross comparisons difficult (Ross 2004). Furthermore, due to the cyclical nature of weak economies, poverty and conflict, it is difficult to establish the direction of the relationship. For instance, conflict may significantly weaken the economy and infrastructure, which in turn discourages foreign business investment due to instability (McGowan 2005). This implies that the former is the cause of conflict, and the latter is the consequence. However, a poor economy and weak infrastructure may stimulate conflict, implying the opposite directionality. In addition, both are likely to be subject to the influence of innumerable variables and the mutually reinforcing nature of the two can leave one feeling trapped in a chicken-and-egg style discourse.

A further critique is the heavy focus within civil conflict literature on the relationship between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and socio-economic status, and the impact that this has on the outbreak of violence (see Bank 2002; McGowan 2005). Continually this research establishes a link between a weak economy, low levels of employment, high levels of poverty and social inequality, and an increase in incidence of intrastate conflict. On a superficial level this is reinforced by the high prevalence of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes some of the poorest countries in the world based on economic and social indicators. While conflict may provide significant economic opportunity for a few individuals, such as warlords profiteering from the rents from natural resources (Tshitereke 2003), others may merely see their involvement as a short-term survival strategy. This logic is particularly viable when remunerated either financially or through other means, for example, by providing food, and may lead the individual to feel they have little choice but to join rebel movements (Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000). Where soldiers are paid, the opportunity costs of engaging are decreased as income is not forgone (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). In this way “war…may be a continuation of economics by other means” (Keen 1997: 69).

2.11.4 The Resource Curse

Discussion on the 'resource curse', either as a key cause or a sustaining factor, often stems from analysis on the role of the economy in African warfare. This theory explores the paradoxical relationship between the abundance of resources, poor economic growth, and conflict (Obi 2010). It posits that the presence of natural resources, for example, hardwood and diamonds makes states vulnerable to their exploitation and potential abuse (Ramsbotham et al. 2016). For instance, by parties to the conflict who may capture control of them as rent seeking behaviour. On the surface this appears to be reinforced by various African conflicts, including the insurgency in the oil-rich Niger Delta (Obi 2010). In addition, Tshitereke (2003) argues that the type of resource and their location also influences the extent to which they may render the state vulnerable to conflict. His research suggests violence is more likely to occur in states whose resources are geographically closely located and require little labour to extract, for example mineral resources, than in states where natural resources are geographically dispersed and require higher levels of labour to extract. This finding is also supported in later research by Klosek (2018). As such, nuances are important in determining risk of conflict within this nexus.

Often within this theory the motivations for violence are seen as financial (Obi 2010) thereby placing them in the binary of greed. However, that some countries possess rich natural resources and have avoided reoccurring conflict implies that it is not their presence in the first instance which generates violence. For example, Botswana manages their resources relatively well and redistributes their foreign exchange earnings widely among the population (Tshitereke 2003). This suggests that conflict is not an inevitability in resource rich countries, rather a susceptibility, indicating a link but not causation and that it is perhaps the management of said resources combined with the stability of the state which are the salient factors in determining conflict occurrence. As such, the 'resource curse' may also legitimately be placed within grievance theory (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). This is reinforced by the fact that such conflicts predominantly occur in nations which have a reputation for corrupt elites, who abuse their power and the resources present for personal gain (Herbst 2014). Therefore, when combined with an environment of endemic poverty, it is not illogical to assume

that such behaviours may create resentment and consequently grievance within the population.

Although the initial outbreak of violence may not necessarily be motivated by resources, it may later become an element which perpetuates the violence due to their potential for exploitation in order to further finance war. For example, in the Angolan civil war (1975-2002) the presence of oil enabled the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) to sustain the conflict (Amundsen 2014). Alternatively, their presence may be used for personal financial gain, thereby providing economic opportunities which would not be available during peace time. This creates a vested interest from those in control of resources not to relinquish power, thereby providing little incentive to engage in peace processes and creating a barrier to negotiations (Nathan 2000; Collier and Sambanis 2002; Basedau and Lay 2009). In acknowledging this, military interventions for humanitarian purposes may become more effective by utilising targeted operations. For example, UNAMSIL maintained a presence in the diamond district of Kono in an attempt to overcome this obstacle (Ramsbotham et al. 2016).

While there are relative strengths to the thinking underlying the 'resource curse' one may argue that to attribute it as a primary causal factor of conflict is simplistic. Obi (2010: 483) states that to do so is to fail to fully take into account the "complex histories, dimensions and transnational linkages" which he feels underpin most African conflicts. Likewise, it would be naïve to suggest that any conflict is the manifestation of only one cause, rather than an interplay of various endogenic and exogenic factors which may motivate and sustain violence. Unfortunately, the resource-conflict discourse is rarely presented in such a way and other factors tend to be excluded or not fully analysed. This is typified by the way in which various conflicts are often referred to by the natural resource present. For example, the conflict in Sierra Leone has come to be most commonly associated with the exploitation of blood diamonds (Keen 1997). Although it is undeniable that diamonds played a significant role in maintaining the civil war, their presence was not a primary cause nor one of the main reasons why various peace agreements failed (see Chapter 3.3 Origins of the War). In focusing primarily on

the role of resources, factors such as the countries chronic poverty, corruption, and political instability, to name but a few, are inevitably side-lined.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the literature encompassing R2P and the key debates surrounding it. It has intentionally avoided siding with either sceptics or supporters in order to be led by the primary research data and to avoid analysing the raw data with any bias. Although there is some debate regarding the 'norm' status often assigned to R2P (Weiss 2012, Ralph and Souter 2015), it may be countered that even the debating of intervention as an option demonstrates that intrastate violence and human rights abuses have become a "concern of the international community" (Ayoob 2001: 225) and part of an accepted dialogue (Axworthy 2001). Yet, there is no legal responsibility to act in instances of humanitarian atrocities (Weiss 2004), and R2P is premised merely on the concept of a moral obligation: when scorched earth tactics are employed during intrastate conflict the international community must choose between inaction and intervention.

By engaging with those on the ground and taking a 'bottom up' approach within my research, novel contributions to the understanding of R2P are made. For instance, the theoretical debates presented throughout this chapter are brought into a real-world situation and analysed using the views of those with direct experience of military intervention for humanitarian purposes. In doing so, comprehension of the operational aspects of R2P and peacebuilding is enhanced and significant theoretical, as well as empirical, contributions are made. In particular, the debates surrounding: motivations for involvement; partisanship; legitimacy and accountability; local ownership; the relationship between colonialism and R2P; and unilateral interventions in comparison to both regional and UN authorised; are furthered.

The brief overview of commonly cited causes of violence in Africa indicates that a single cause is highly unlikely, and various factors are both interlinked and mutually reinforcing. In addition, the motivations for outbreak may differ from the motivations to maintain conflict, the latter of which has the potential to mutate over time. Acknowledging these causes is salient to discussion within the

subsequent chapters, which examine the legacy of military intervention for humanitarian purposes both domestically and globally. This also enables an analysis of the socio-political and economic context once peace has been declared and troops have been withdrawn, in comparison to pre-conflict conditions. This includes an examination of the extent to which the causes of conflict are considered within intervention strategy, as currently R2P theory and the underpinning conflict motivators for conflict are generally treated as two distinct and separate discourses. The subsequent chapter provides a background to the conflict in Sierra Leone as well as an overview of the conflict itself and the subsequent interventions.

Chapter 3 - Background

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a historical background, providing detailed context for the findings offered in the subsequent chapters. In order to best situate an exploration of the research questions posed in Chapter 1, it is important to first introduce the case study in more depth. This is done through a discussion on the background of Sierra Leone post-independence, which politically was characterised by instability, corruption and military coups. The sources of the conflict are then explored. There is no final statement on what in particular caused the civil war and the different sides of the debate surrounding the key causes are considered in order to provide a critically consistent coverage. The RUF's tactics and the international response, through the three intervening forces, is outlined as well as the resulting Peace Agreements. All three of these Agreements subsequently failed and the conflict continued for over a decade prior to the British military intervention.

3.1 Historic Relationship: Sierra Leone as a British Colony

Sierra Leone, a small West African state, was formally colonised by the British in 1808 (Dorman 2009), and much of the relationship between the two countries has been characterised and shaped by colonialism. Traditional power structures were co-opted, with Chiefs used as a form of local government and a way to wield state control over civilians (Acemoglu et al. 2014; Harris 2020). On the surface, this period tends to be presented as stable: a well organised colony that descended into chaos in the absence of British Rule. The British narrative, as projected by the British military, was that culture and education were well integrated, gaining Sierra Leone a reputation for having some of the best Universities on the continent (British Army 2016).

However, a closer examination reveals an already chaotic and neglected colony, with British battalions called out multiple times to deal with civil unrest and violence (see Stewart 2008 for a fuller history). Unlike colonies such as Cameroon and Kenya, independence was not gained through bloody battle nor revolution. Although there was an undercurrent of anti-colonial tensions Chief

Minister, Milton Margai, was pro-British and argued that Sierra Leone was too poor to snub such powerful states. As such, he favoured a gradualist approach and independence came about relatively peacefully (Gberie 2005), leading Harris (2020: 35) to label it a "deceptively quiet decolonisation." Post-independence the UK and Sierra Leone continued to have a positive relationship. This is largely atypical given the negative sentiments towards colonialism in Africa, although there are some exceptions such as between France and Côte d'Ivoire.

3.2 Sierra Leone as a Post-Colonial State

Sierra Leone achieved independence in April 1961 (Stewart 2008) and both leading up to, and during the conflict, experienced frequent changes to government (summarised in Table 2 on page 63). The countries first election in 1962 was won by the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), before a transfer of power to the All People's Congress (APC) in 1967. This change in governing party was accompanied by an increase in violence in some chieftaincies which remained allied to the SLPP (Harris 2020). A succession of corrupt governments was interrupted by numerous military coups, with soldiers acting as "political entrepreneurs" (Nuamah and Zartman 2001: 2), seizing and exploiting power. For example, Siaka Stevens, affiliated with APC and elected in 1967, was displaced almost immediately by a military coup led by Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith. Stevens fled to Guinea until a countercoup was able to re-establish APC rule and he subsequently held the position of Prime Minister from 1968 until 1971, before serving as President from 1971 until 1985 (Army 2016). However, Steven's rule is said to have been epitomised by "slow motion self-destructive policies" (Chege 2002: 151). Gradually power and resources were centralised until the eventual introduction of a one-party political system in 1978 and the banning of political opposition parties (Gberie 2005). Although opponents of this system were dealt with harshly, there continued to be numerous attempted coups (twice in 1967, once in 1968 and once in 1971) (Chege 2002; Peters 2011) and rumours of plots to overthrow the government regularly circulated (Nuamah and Zartman 2001).

In 1985 Stevens relinquished power, appointing General Joseph Momoh as his successor (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). Left in charge of a barely functioning government, Momoh's leadership was also seen as inept (Chege 2002) as well

as renowned for the corruption which pervaded every branch of the state including politicians, the judiciary, military and the police (Hirsch 2001). Whilst he did seek parliamentary approval for the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in 1991, this coincided with the emergence of the RUF, who invaded from Liberia with the backing of Liberian rebel leader, Charles Taylor, and Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). A year after the conflict begun Momoh was overthrown by a military junta, with Captain Valentine Strasser and less than a hundred juniors officers, seizing power whilst promising an end to the conflict and the restoration of the economy (Hoffman 2011). Strasser then formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), comprising of four civilians and eighteen military officers. Initially this was supported by civilians, due to removing the unpopular Momoh and providing the hope of an end to the conflict (Harris 2020). However, the governing style soon came to resemble that of Momoh's government and was relatively ineffective: the promises of the NPRC, including peace, did not materialise. Despite an increase in the size of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) by over ten thousand personnel, as well as a military government in charge, the RUF continued to gain ground until they were just a few kilometres away from Freetown (Richards 2006). This expansion of the military is also seen as problematic by some, as recruits included criminals, the unemployed and drug addicts. This fragmented the military, whilst also further stretching the limited resources and contributed to the poor condition of the SLA (Ero 2003).

A further military coup in January 1996 placed Julius Maada Bio as Head of State. Although Maada Bio also ran in the presidential election as an SLPP candidate in 2012 and 2018, successfully elected in the latter, it was not clear at this point whether he was a Democrat (Harris 2020). In February of the same year elections were held, stimulated by both domestic and international pressure (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). However, they were surrounded by violence, with rebels launching attacks close to Makeni and Kenema. Rebels also attempted to dissuade civilians engagement with the elections by amputating hands of those who were found to have voted (Harris 2020). These elections resulted in the selecting of SLPP candidate and former UN diplomat Ahmed Tejan Kabbah as President (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). The Abidjan Peace Agreement was

later signed in November 1996 (UNSC 1996). However, the government was viewed as weak and had little control over the territory (Conteh 2017).

Kabbah was overthrown in 1997 by military junta headed by Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who at the time was serving a sentence in Pademba Road Prison and was freed by the mutineering soldiers (Peters 2011). Following a week of looting (so-called Operation Pay Yourself) (Harris 2020) the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was formed and subsequently attempted to bring about peace through power sharing, making founder of the RUF, Foday Sankoh, the Vice-President (Alao and Ero 2001). Kabbah and the elected SLPP government fled once more to Guinea (Hirsch 2001). Whilst the AFRC maintained control of Freetown and multiple major towns, they struggled to control rural areas due to resistance led by the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) (Peters 2011). Subsequent efforts from ECOMOG and the CDF then drove the AFRC from Freetown between February and March 1998. Following this Kabbah was restored until he left office in 2007 (Ucko 2016a).

Table 2 shows the key changes in power from independence until the end of the civil war (1962-2002) (Hoffman 2011; Peters 2011; Zack-Williams 2012; Ucko 2016a; Harris 2020).

Year took Office	**President**	**Political Affiliation**	**Route to Power**
May 1962	Milton Margai	SLPP	Election
April 1964	Albert Margai	SLPP	Handed following death of his brother
March 1967	Siaka Stevens	APC	Election
March 1967	Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith	NPC	Military coup
April 1968	Siaka Stevens	APC	Counter-coup
November 1985	General Joseph Momoh	APC	Selected by Siaka Stevens

April 1992	Captain Valentine Strasser	NPRC	Military coup
January 1996	Brigadier Julius Maada Bio	SLPP	Military coup
March 1996	Ahmad Tejan Kabbah	SLPP	Elected
May 1997	Major Johnny Paul Koroma	AFRC	Military coup
February 1998	Ahmad Tejan Kabbah	SLPP	Reinstated with international assistance

3.3 Origins of the War

As discussed through Chapter 2.11 Causes of Conflict in Africa, conflicts often arise due to a combination of factors and so it can be unhelpful to view them in isolated silos. That academics have been unable to reach a consensus on the primary cause of conflict in the Sierra Leone civil war, despite the passing of more than two decades, may be seen as a reflection of this. As such, there is no one individual prevailing rationalisation sufficient to explain the outbreak of the conflict and it appears to have been the result of a lethal mix of multiple social, economic and political factors (Goodhand 2001). Peters (2011: 5) instead refers to it as a "new war" which he defines as "conflicts that evolve beyond the established explanatory paradigms."

3.3.1 Colonial Legacy and Governance

As discussed above the political situation in Sierra Leone following independence was highly unstable and, at times, volatile. Although the conflict did not emerge until thirty years after decolonisation, poor governance is identifiable as one of the factors contributing to the outbreak of widespread violence. Prior to this, Sierra Leone had inherited an infrastructure based on an extractive economy, initially focusing on cash crops and iron ore and later on, following their discovering in 1931, diamonds (Gberie 2005). As such, governance structures

were based on commercial exploitation and established in a way to aid the profits from trade (Peters 2011). With no structural changes made post-independence the resulting distorted economic relations were maintained, thereby arguably dooming both the economy and development (Gberie 2005) (see section 3.3.4 Economic Development for further discussion on economic factors). This post-colonial period was characterised by a continued patrimonial system, with the government viewed as extremely dysfunctional and endemically corrupt (Chege 2002), serving only the interests of a small elite (Ucko 2016a).

Poor governance and clientelism resulted in political exclusion generating mass discontent (Gberie 2005; Peters 2011). This was particularly experienced in sectors such as health and education, with President Momoh labelling the latter as “a privilege, not a right” (Richards 1996: 36). Traditional power structures, such as Chieftaincies, have also been identified as a cause of tension, especially among the youth and peasantry (Cubitt 2012). Under colonial rule these structures were co-opted and used as an intermediary by the British to control rural areas (Enria 2015). Following independence, these representatives were often viewed as corrupt, yet dominated financial resources, committees (Peters 2011) and exerted control over local judicial processes (Harris 2020). They also swayed social mobility through their influence on property rights, employment opportunities and marriage (Fanthorpe and Maconachie 2010; Mitton 2013). During the conflict paramount chiefs, along with any representative of the government, were singled out as targets by the RUF (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a).

Furthermore, the multiple coups staged by the armed forces contributed towards an unpredictable environment (White 2010) and the military was significantly curtailed in an attempt to reduce future incidents (Roberson 2014). This political uncertainty worked in favour of the RUF, who were able to capitalise on the lack of coherent strategy and leadership. For instance, the repeated changes of government generated political instability whilst undermining the government’s ability to function effectively, for example, in terms of policymaking, thereby reducing the public’s confidence in their leaders (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). As such, the state was a weak and hollow apparatus, providing poor quality

institutions. Services and infrastructure outside of Freetown were increasingly neglected, creating rural alienation and a duality within the state (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). This extended to core state functions such as law, order and territorial control (Chege 2002), which were provided by a range of other agencies, undermining the states legitimacy in these regions. The minimal presence of state institutions outside of the capital meant that once the RUF had started to form in rural areas, there was no existing structure or readily available means for the state to regain control or respond effectively (Nuamah and Zartman 2001).

Initially the RUF claimed a political rhetoric, largely based on grievances against the governing elite (Goodhand 2001; Peters 2011). For instance, their professed aims included free education, improve health care (Hirsch 2001), replacing the one-party political system with democracy (Gberie 2005) and tackling the corrupt Momoh government (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). Some, such as Richards (2006: 55), also claim that the rebels wished to incite a “radical, pan-African revolution based upon the Libyan Gaddafi model.” The RUF did produce a manifesto, no longer widely available, “Footpaths to Democracy: Toward a New Sierra Leone”, in 1995 (Sierra Leone Web 2019). This addressed their motivation to continue fighting, their political agenda, the ongoing government corruption and gave credence to their movement as one seeking legitimate political reform. However, the insurgency continued even after Momoh had been overthrown by Strasser, and thus their claimed motivation to take up arms removed (Nuamah and Zartman 2001: Peters 2011). As such, their actions did not match their professed rhetoric and although the manifesto focused upon corrupt elites and businesses, in practice violence was usually directed towards rural peasantry and ordinary citizens (Hirsh 2001). These actions significantly undermined their ideological claim (Roberson 2014) and the RUF became “an offshoot of the violent and politically opportunistic structures that it opposed” (Maclure 2006: 130). As the conflict progressed it became evermore apparent that the RUF had little overall goal, ability to govern or interest in seeking popular support (Nuamah and Zartman 2001).

3.3.2 Regional Factors

The influence of regional instability on the war should not be underestimated and was a significant element in the eruption of violence, which was originally thought to be a spill-over of the conflict in neighbouring Liberia (Nuamah and Zartman 2001; Gberie 2005). It is rare for literature exploring the causes of conflict in Sierra Leone not to acknowledge the influence of the war in Liberia, headed by Charles Taylor. Hoffman (2011) even goes so far as to argue that both the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflict were a single war, which he refers to as the Mano River War, named after the river along the boundary between the two nations. Previously, Sankoh had been involved in a coup attempt against Stevens (in 1971), for which he was imprisoned, and subsequently fled to Libya following his release (Harris 2020). During his time in Libya, and later Burkina Faso, Sankoh and other leading RUF figures engaged in guerrilla warfare training and met Taylor (Richards 2006). In March 1991 Sankoh, backed by Taylor, returned to Sierra Leone accompanied by approximately a hundred Liberian fighters and Burkinabe mercenaries (Keen 2005a). Research, such as by Hirsch (2001), indicates that without this spill-over from Liberia, the conflict in Sierra Leone would not have escalated to the level that it did. However, as the conflict progressed it evolved into much more than just an off shoot of the violence in Liberia and took on a character of its own (Gberie 2005).

Entering Sierra Leone was a conscious push by Taylor, motivated by both strategy and revenge. Not only had Sierra Leone contributed 500 troops to ECOMOG in their efforts to bring peace to Liberia (Nuamah and Zartman 2001) but had also provided them with a strategic base for operations in Lungi Airport (Chege 2002). Furthermore, Sierra Leone provided a refuge for the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), enabling them to recoup and strategize in order to fight against Taylor. As such, the move into Sierra Leone was designed to force a change in its policy toward Liberia (Nuamah and Zartman 2001), destabilise the country and aimed to divert the attention and resource of ECOMOG (Roberson 2014) as well as capitalise on the country's natural resources, diamonds.

3.3.3 Identity

Within Sierra Leone there are complicated and diverse ethnic and religious groups; two ethnic groups (Temne and Mende) and five smaller ethnic tribes (Limba, Kono, Kriole, Mandingo, Loko). There are also multiple religious identities including Islam, the dominant faith, in combination with a significant number of Christians and various traditional religions (Gberie 2005; Dorman 2009). Many causes of social tensions and conflicts across the world can be traced back to identity politics, including religious and ethnic divides (see Chapter 2.11.2 Identity), and initially there was speculation as to whether the RUF represented a "Mende uprising against the Temne-dominated APC" (Peters 2011: 63). At times there have been tensions between the tribes, for example, following independence an ethnically balanced parliamentary system was to be instilled. However, in practice only Mende politicians were promoted to key government positions. The Mende also held a disproportionate number of senior military positions (Keen 2003). Yet, despite this there is little suggestion that tribal or regional identities were a contributory factor to the outbreak of violence or the maintaining of it (UN 2000 cited Harris 2020) and Berewa (2011: 111) reports that Foday Sankoh "would vehemently chastise any of his followers manifesting [tribal] leanings." As such, this paradigm does not appear to apply to the conflict and, despite the presence of ethnic militias, Sierra Leone was not afflicted by ethnic fratricide.

The crisis of youth has featured heavily in discussion regarding the outbreak and continuation of the war (see Chege 2002; Paintin 2008; Peters 2011; Ucko 2016a). Within the context of Sierra Leone there is a tendency for this to be bound to meta-narratives of poverty, including collapsing education, healthcare and economic development. Low levels of primary and secondary education were pervasive, particularly in rural regions, with youths either withdrawing from school or areas lacking the necessary infrastructure to provide education, including school buildings and teachers (Peters 2011). A disaffected youth was strongly impacted by economic instability and in the absence of gainful employment were presented with limited options. As a result some took to petty crime, illegal activity and diamond mining as a means of survival and livelihood (Chege 2002). Against

the backdrop of little enforcement of law and order, many also engaged with drugs (Nuamah and Zartman 2001).

Furthermore, as previously discussed, young people were excluded by the states neo-patrimonial systems, rendering them marginalised, disenfranchised and often exploited (Richards 1996; Cubitt 2012). This demographic of young, unemployed men provided a large base for RUF, SLA and ethnic militia recruitment (Ukco 2016a), turning their backs on a state which had failed to provide “education, vocational training and economic opportunity to a whole generation” (Hirsch 2001: 150). As such, youth involvement in the conflict may also be considered a physical manifestation of the structural violence many experienced in their daily lives (Maclure 2006). It should also be kept in mind that (political) violence was not unfamiliar to youths, as political parties had traditionally directed their youth wings to intimidate civilians and opposition, including through the use of force, in order to further their campaign (Cubitt 2012). For instance, following the 1977 Fourah Bay College protests against Stevens, the APC youth group was armed and used to hit back against protestors (Peters 2011).

Although Sankoh was able to capitalise on the frustration of youths, tapping into grievance theories, it should be kept in mind that not all recruitment was voluntary and for many youths and children this was forced coercion (Keen 2005b; Peters 2011) (see section 3.4 The RUF: Terror and Tactics). Indeed, the majority of Sierra Leonean youths did not take up arms (Cubitt 2012). Furthermore, Mitton (2013) questions the tendency to attribute the conflict to a crisis of youth. He argues that rather than the war presenting a spontaneous youth uprising, third-party actors such as Taylor, were key to the outbreak of violence. He also contends the depiction of youths as motivated by economic self-interest to be problematic, as loot and significant financial benefits were typically allocated to higher ranking commanders rather than this group. As such, he feels that a return to peace did not present as great an opportunity cost as some may claim.

3.3.4 Economic Development

Post-independence Sierra Leone's economy began to decline, an issue which was further exacerbated by economic mismanagement (Cubitt 2012). For example, following the 1973 global oil crisis, in which iron ore prices also dipped, the Stevens government borrowed further from various sources such as the central bank and international commerce. The result was a 50% increase in inflation during the 1980s, compared to average economic growth of just 0.7% between 1980 and 1987. Multiple agreements with institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were reneged on by the government (Chege 2002), leading to a state of economic emergency in 1987 (Peters 2011). In turn, this discouraged foreign and domestic investment and trade (Bräutigam and Knack 2004), making economic growth increasingly difficult. Growth was not helped by elite accommodation, in particular of Lebanese businessmen (Enria 2015), nor the existence of a shadow economy. By the mid-1980s it is estimated that 70% of exports were not via formal channels (Peters 2011). This pattern of decline continued into the 1990s (Nuamah and Zartman 2001) and by 1997 growth was -15% (Cubitt 2012). Consequently, this had a negative impact on the resources available for the developmental of infrastructure and provision of public services (Keen 2005b)

As a result of the inflation and austerity under Momah's government, food subsidies were dramatically reduced (Keen 2005a), whilst the cost of staple food increased drastically due to devaluation (Peters 2011). By the 1990s a bag of rice cost a month's salary and as such, wages meant little (Chege 2002; Keen 2005b). For others, such as military personnel and teachers, the government ceased paying salaries (Hirsch 2001). This lack of remuneration during the conflict reportedly also led to soldiers collaborating with the RUF or moonlighting as rebels, termed 'Sobels' (Keen 2005a). As such, attempts to bring about peace were further undermined and a highly complex dynamic was created. These factors, especially when combined with the high levels of poverty and unemployment in Sierra Leone, present an almost textbook example of grievance as a cause of conflict.

3.3.5 The Resource Curse

The wealth of mineral resources in Sierra Leone should have theoretically ensured its prosperity following independence. However, gross economic mismanagement of these natural resources, with the rights to mineral prospecting manipulated and abused by corrupt governments (Chege 2002), contributed to the lack of prosperity. For instance, diamond exports fell from two million carats in 1970 to forty-eight thousand carats by 1988 despite there not being a decrease in production: instead, sales operated largely as part of the shadow state (Gberie 2005). Attempts by Momoh to use the military in order to gain control of the diamond economy failed, as soldiers sent to Kono to confront illicit diamond activity, instead established their own criminal diamond operations (Keen 2005b). As such, the mishandling of these resources is thought to have generated grievances. Others have associated the diamonds in Sierra Leone with greed and a cause of the conflict. For example, Smillie et al. (2000), cited in Peters (2011: 7) argues that the RUF represented a "criminal conspiracy seeking to control…diamond resources". During the war rebels did become involved in diamond exports and that Sankoh requested the position of Minister of Strategic Resources as part of the terms of the Lomé Peace Agreement may be viewed as evidence of this (UNSC 1999a). However, whilst mismanagement and corruption are likely to have fed into the economic decline and overall discontent with the government, to reduce the outbreak of the war to the desire to gain control of lucrative diamond mines is an over-simplification and "not the cause of the conflict in Sierra Leone" (TRC 2004: 12).

That said, as the conflict progressed and the dynamics changed, diamonds did come to play a key role in sustaining and prolonging the violence (TRC 2004). For example, the RUF looted and seized control of the diamond fields in order to fund the continuation of the war, enable access to weapons and for personal gain (Gberie 2005; Jackson and Albrecht 2010a; Cubitt 2012). As such, it appears that there was a vested interest in prolonging the conflict. Intelligence revealed the links between Sierra Leone and Liberia's diamond and arms trade, which allowed for informed decision making and a focus on negating this relationship. This included a successful push for UN sanctions and embargos which focused on both stopping arms going into Liberia and diamonds going out (UNSC 2000b).

This negatively affected the ability of the RUF to trade diamonds for arms and supplies through Liberia. As a result of the embargo, the RUF were left in control of multiple diamond fields but with a significantly reduced ability to capitalise on them, decreasing their value within the conflict. It may be argued that this contributed to the RUF's decision to later enter the UN's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme.

3.4 The RUF: Tactics and Terror

On 23rd March 1991 the RUF entered, and quickly captured, Kailahun in the Eastern region of Sierra Leone (Enria 2015). Rebels employed terror tactics and brutality to control the population, viewing civilians as legitimate targets for the perpetration of atrocities. Amputation and mutilation became their trademark (Nuamah and Zartman 2001; Gberie 2005). Sexual violence was widespread. Human Rights Watch reports from this period detail the horror of the abuses occurring. For instance, during the 1999 attack on Freetown "civilians were gunned down within their houses…massacred on the streets…burnt alive in cars and houses" (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a: 4). Such atrocity attacks were largely premeditated and different groups within the RUF named themselves after their trademark crimes, for instance, 'Burn House Unit' and 'Cut Hands Commando' (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). Hostage taking was also used as a bargaining tool. Any concessions made by the government in response were seen as weakness, whilst non-compliance resulted in the further escalation of violence or deadlock (Nuamah and Zartman 2001).

Rebel recruitment was reportedly aided by Sankoh's charismatic character. However, others saw little option or were coerced into joining by force. Brutal initiations, including killing family members or members of the community, were designed to ensure that they could not return home (Hirsch 2001; Happold 2005). The recruitment of child soldiers was relatively commonplace, with estimates placing around half of the RUF between the ages of eight and fourteen (Zack-Williams 2006). It should be noted that the SLA and CDF also made use of child soldiers (Hoffman 2011) and a combined total of 2,497 children registered for DDR programmes from these two groups (compared to a total of 3,710 from the RUF) (TRC 2004). Child soldiers recounted drug abuse, using 'brown-brown', a

mixture of gunpowder and cocaine, before engaging in violence (Zack-Williams 2001). Arguably these tactics cause long-term damage to the social fabric of a country long after conflict has ceased (Roberson 2014).

Guerrilla tactics were used against an army with little experience of this form of warfare and lacking in counter-insurgency training (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). The physical landscape of Sierra Leone meant that it was relatively easy for rebels to hide in the bush. This was covered enough to avoid ECOMOG's Alpha jets whilst also making it difficult for the SLA to reach them with cumbersome ground equipment. As such, the RUF was able to launch hit and run style attacks (Peters 2011) and tended to control areas within the jungle and close to the Liberian border (Roberson 2014).

3.5 Conflict Response

The Sierra Leone state was unable to protect its population from the horrific atrocities perpetrated by the RUF, failing to satisfy the principles in what has since come to be known as Pillar I of R2P. At the start of conflict the military was arguably little more than symbolic, consisting of roughly 3,000 troops and equipped with insufficient, dated weaponry. This was partially a deliberate move by the APC in an attempt to reduce the power held by the SLA and, theoretically, the potential for successful coups (Hoffman 2011). This was later expanded to between 15,000 and 20,000 personnel (Peters 2011). As the state faced further collapse, supply chains, including of equipment, were disrupted (Le Grys 2010). Post-1992 an additional paramilitary counter-insurgency movement, the CDF, was formed. The most renowned of these was the Kamajors. Whilst initially these groups focused on protecting their own locales, as the conflict continued they were formalised, armed by the government and deployed into other chiefdoms (Peters 2011). However, issues such as the politicisation of the security architecture continued as well as rivalry and clashes between the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), SLA and CDF (Harris 2020).

As a result, international actors were called upon to provide assistance and three key interventions occurred; ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and the British military. Additional external involvement came from EO, a South African mercenary firm,

in 1995 (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). Whilst the focus of this thesis is on the British intervention it is pertinent to provide an outline of the other intervening bodies, whose presence helped shape the dynamics in-country during this period. This sub-section focuses on these interventions, with the exception of the British military presence (which can be found in section 3.7 British Military Intervention). This structure enables a linear outline of the situation and for the discussion of the three failed peace agreements which occurred prior to the British military involvement.

3.5.1 Private Military Companies: Executive Outcomes (EO)

Private Military Companies (PMCs) were employed by the government against the RUF from 1995. Traditionally such groups have not been included in the conceptualisation or acceptance of R2P and have been typically seen as unethical mercenary organisations (see Chapter 6.5 Sandline and 7.6 R2P, Global Implications and Future Practice for further analysis). Although the first of these forces used was a group of ex-Gurkhas, who were quickly withdrawn due to high losses, it is the South African group EO, who are the most commonly associated with the conflict in Sierra Leone (Peters 2011). This small force, estimated to be between 150 men (Hoffman 2011) and 300 men (Peters 2011), was primarily comprised of Namibian and Angolan former soldiers from apartheid South Africa's old 32nd Battalion and had made a name for themselves in Angola (Gberie 2005; Hoffman 2011). With regards to the Sierra Leone conflict they acted on behalf of the government under a mandate to "search and destroy the terrorist enemies of the state" (Gberie 2005: 93).

As hired guns, EO was well experienced and better equipped than Sierra Leonean state forces, bringing with them helicopter gunships, heavy machine guns, communications equipment and armoured vehicles (Dorman 2009). They ran training for the SLA and Kamajors, in an attempt to cultivate a longer-term solution to addressing the insurgency, as well as coordinating attacks against the RUF alongside Guinean and Nigeran troops (Hoffman 2011). Rapid progress was made and there appears to be a general consensus surrounding their success in reducing RUF attacks (Gberie 2005) and enabling an environment in which the 1996 elections could be held (Peters 2011). The Kabbah government became

dependent on the presence of this mercenary group to bolster what remained of the state's security, something which the RUF were acutely aware of. Their removal was negotiated as part of the Abidjan Agreement (see section 3.6.1 Abidjan Peace Accord), however, once they had left Sankoh began to advance on Freetown (Connaughton 2002).

3.5.2 ECOMOG: The ECOWAS intervention

ECOMOG, the ECOWAS monitoring group, was already present in neighbouring Liberia when it deployed a large-scale force to Sierra Leone in 1997. Their mandate aimed to restore peace and stability, demonstrating partiality towards the democratically elected government through its objective of displacing the AFRC junta and restoring Kabbah (Arthur 2010). This is in contrast the UN mission (see Chapter 3.6.2 Conakry Peace Plan), which engaged based on the principle of neutrality. The force primarily consisted of Nigerian peacekeepers (comprising 80% of its number) and peaked in size in 1998 at around 10,000 troops (Osakwe and Audu 2017). Other contributing nations comprised of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (Hirsch 2001). Internationally, Nigeria's role in assisting democracy in Sierra Leone was considered somewhat contradictory due to Sani Abacha's regime (Osakwe and Audu 2017): at the time Nigeria itself was subject to international sanctions and condemnation due to its poor human rights record (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). This composition was thought to damage the missions ability to gain substantial and diverse financial support. As a result, Nigeria was left to contribute 70% of the missions costs in Sierra Leone, which estimates place at approximately $8 billion (Osakwe and Audu 2017).

ECOMOG faced numerous challenges, including a lack of resources and poorly equipped soldiers. For instance, they lacked both operational and logistical support as well as the ability to maintain their equipment (Arthur 2010). ECOMOG suffered significant loss of life due to these issues (Osakwe and Audu 2017) as well as, at times, being unable to pay soldiers for months at a time, leading them to seek remuneration through illicit means such as looting (Human Rights Watch 1999; Arthur 2010). Furthermore, after Kabbah was restored, there was reluctance among ECOWAS member states to continue to supply troops in order to support peace (Osakwe and Audu 2017). This lack of consensus on how the

regional group should respond to the civil war made it difficult to progress (Arthur 2010). In January 1999 Nigerian troops announced their withdrawal. By October of the same year the UN passed resolution 1270, establishing UNAMSIL, in order to monitor the Lomé Peace Agreement (see Chapter 3.6.3 Lomé Peace Agreement), disarmament (Connaughton 2002) and fill the vacuum which would be left by the withdrawal of ECOMOG in April 2000 (Le Grys 2010: 39).

3.5.3 UNAMSIL: The UN intervention

UNAMSIL was present as a peacekeeping force with its mandate justified by Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The mission aimed to: provide security at key locations, such as Freetown and Lungi Airport and all sites used in the DDR programmes; assist in the destruction of weaponry collected from ex-combatants; facilitate the flow of humanitarian assistance, goods and people; as well as assist and coordinate with domestic law enforcement authorities (UNSC 1999b). Like ECOMOG they too experienced fluxes in the number of peacekeepers present due to the withdrawal of troops, making it difficult for them to be relied upon to provide security (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). For example, in 1999 Jordan withdrew 1,831 troops and India 3,161 troops (Alao and Ero 2001), before the force size was later expanded multiple times in 2000 and 2001. Whilst initially the total force had numbered 6,000 UN peacekeepers (Dorman 2007), by the time peace was declared, 17,500 were present: the largest multinational peacekeeping force ever deployed at that time (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a).

No developed countries contributed troops to UNAMSIL, with the force comprised of troops from states such as Nigeria, India, Jordan and Zambia (Arthur 2010). The mission gained a reputation for factions and infighting between the contributing countries (Connaughton 2002). For example, in a leaked memo from September 2000 the Indian UN force commander, Major General Vijay Jetley, accused Nigerian troops of collusion with the RUF for personal gain from diamond mining (Hirsch 2001; Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). Rumours also circulated of a power struggle between Indian and Nigerian forces, with the latter seeking more control over the decisions being made (Alao and Ero 2001). This rivalry is likely to have hampered the cohesion of the peacekeeping effort. Politically, the mission also faced similar issues to ECOMOG in terms of financing, commitment, and the

appropriateness of the mandate. In terms of their limitations, there were a number of commonalities between the two missions. For instance, militarily both lacked control of their troops at times, as well as a failing to use appropriate strategy (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). Despite the regional influences on the Sierra Leone civil war, and the highly permeable borders, the UN compartmentalised its approach to peacekeeping rather than employing a coherent regional strategy (Hirsch 2001). Whilst some may view this as positive, rather than taking a one-size fits all approach to the region, it was a blinkered attempt as it failed to recognise the way in which the conflict moved across the Liberian and Guinean border.

Despite not contributing troops to the mission, developed countries such as the UK, had been influential in passing the missions mandate through the UNSC (Alao and Ero 2001). The result was a well mandated but poorly equipped mission, which lacked intelligence gathering capacities and the capabilities needed to successfully defend civilians. As a result it was unable to provide a suitable presence to ensure parties to the conflict honoured the Lomé peace agreement (Hirsh 2001; Connaughton 2002) and General Richards, the Commander of the British intervention, discusses the "UN's initial inability to stabilise the country" (Richards 2006: 55). Furthermore, they lacked the ability to defend themselves and the RUF systematically targeted UN peacekeepers as hostages (Connaughton 2002). The UN mission continued not to engage in peace enforcement, significantly undermining the credibility of the mission (Keen 2005b), and sending mixed signals about the willingness of the agreements guarantors (the UN, OAU, US and Britain) to support it. The credibility and operational capability of UNAMSIL was further decreased following the Indian contingents withdrawal in August 2000 (Nuamah and Zartman 2001), however, UNAMSIL maintained a small presence until 2005 (Le Grys 2010).

3.6 Peace Agreements

Despite the presence of multiple external actors, and three negotiated peace agreements over the course of the conflict, a sustainable resolution remained elusive. Peace negotiations were particularly complicated, partially due to several interweaving factors both causing and sustaining the conflict. As such, analysts

struggled to fit the rebel movement into any particular classification of insurgency, such as traditionalist or separatist (Roberson 2014). These factors rendered it difficult to motivate all parties to the conflict to engage fully in negotiations and commit to the terms of the various peace agreements. The changes in both government and RUF power structures also further complicated the conflict and attempts to resolve it: negotiations were difficult as it was not always clear which individuals represented the various organisations or how long they would continue to do so. For instance, it is estimated that between 1991 and 2001 there had been no less than ten groups taking part and influencing the dynamics of the war, comprising of "unemployed youths, child soldiers, mercenaries, Lebanese traders, diamond miners, various Civil Defence Forces, the RUF, dissidents and loyal members of the SLA, the SLP, ECOWAS and ECOMOG" (Alao and Ero 2001: 119). This wide range of actors, each with different interests and fluidity in alliances (Richards 2006), added an increased level of complexity to finding a resolution.

3.6.1 Abidjan Peace Accord (November 1996)

Prior to the transfer of power to Kabbah, Maada Bio had been in the process of negotiating a settlement with the RUF, which saw significant concessions made by the government. Kabbah continued with these talks, brokered by the President of Côte d'Ivoire, culminating in the Abidjan Agreement (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). This Agreement required a ceasefire and the demobilisation of the RUF and part of the SLA. The removal of all third-party interveners, including both states and PMCs such as EO, as well as a general amnesty was also stipulated. Although no specific ministerial positions were allocated to the RUF, a fund was to be established in order to aid their transformation into a political party (UNSC 1999a; Dorman 2009; Harris 2020).

Whilst initially violence dropped to a relatively low level and international donors agreed to $500 million for the reconstruction of infrastructure, there was continued scepticism regarding the RUF's commitment to the Agreement. For instance, there were concerns as to whether Sankoh was merely using it tactically to buy time, regroup and secure further funds (as Taylor had been known to do in Liberia). It was also felt that the removal of EO was exploited by the RUF and

clashes continued to occur between the CDF and SLA (Harris 2020). Both government forces and the RUF were reluctant to fully disarm or comply with the internal monitoring arrangements and several aspects of the Agreement were not implemented (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a), although EO did withdraw. The Agreement failed to include provisions for the Kamajors (Harris 2020). Whilst the UN had initially agreed to deploy 900 troops in order to assist in the DDR programme and monitor the ceasefire, this did not come to fruition due to a veto from the United States of America (USA). Other aspects, such as the transformation of the RUF into a political party, were considered to be destined to fail as the group did not have the popular support nor ideological clarity to form a serious political group (Gberie 2005). The conflict returned by early 1997 (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a) and in May a successful coup replaced the SLPP government with the AFRC (Dorman 2009) thereby derailing any remaining hope for the Abidjan Peace Accord.

3.6.2 Conakry Peace Plan (October 1997)

Following the collapse of the Abidjan Agreement, a new proposal for peace was negotiated by ECOWAS in an attempt to restore Kabbah to the Presidency, resulting in the Conakry Peace Plan (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). Under diplomatic and domestic pressure the AFRC committed to returning power to constitutional rule within six months of the signing of the agreement, instead of in 2001 as they had previously announced (Alao and Ero 2001). The terms also called for a cessation of violence, the DDR of all armed groups (to be monitored by ECOMOG), immunity for the AFRC and the release of Sankoh from Nigeria (UNSC 1997a; Gberie 2005).

That the agreement was mediated by ECOWAS, rather than a neutral third-party, is thought to have negatively impacted on the viability of the peace plan, as prior to this they had demonstrated clear partiality toward the Sierra Leonean government. Furthermore, they lacked the mechanisms required to ensure that the terms of the agreement were fulfilled and enforce compliance (Francis 2000). Although the AFRC had accepted the plan, they continued to accumulate weapons and indicated intent of non-compliance with the agreement (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). The junta became increasingly unpredictable and objected

to plans to disband the army whilst also calling for the removal of Nigerian troops, who they felt were “their main enemy” (Gberie 2005: 114). Further to this, there was mounting instability within the group, including a foiled coup plot stemming from those who opposed the Peace Plan. As a result, ECOMOG forced the junta out before the date which had been denoted in the agreement and reinstalled Kabbah (Alao and Ero 2001).

3.6.3 Lomé Peace Agreement (July 1999)

Following a bloody battle in Freetown in 1999, aptly termed Operation No Living Thing, international efforts refocused on negotiating a new peace deal and the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed in 1999 (Harris 2020). The withdrawal of Nigerian troops from ECOMOG at this time arguably increased the bargaining position of the RUF with regards to the peace talks as the decrease in strength and capacity of the regional force is not likely to have encouraged the RUF to make compromises. Instead it is more likely to have indicated that commitment to the intervention was waning and providing them with hope of a victory (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). More significant power sharing concessions were made to the RUF than the previous two failed accords. All armed parties agreed to a ceasefire, with the RUF committing to engage in DDR. In return they were granted impunity from prosecution, considered by many to be a significant flaw within the terms (Harris 2020). The RUF pledged to transform themselves into a political party, going on to receive four out of twenty-two seats in government. This included key positions such as naming Sankoh Vice-President and chairman of the newly created Commission for Mineral Resources, as well as an additional four Deputy Ministerial positions (Hoffman 2011). This effectively gave them control of the diamond mines in the East of the country (Dorman 2007).

Initially, the construction of this agreement was seen as a success internationally and disarmament began in October 1999 (Alao and Ero 2001). Whilst the UN had little involvement in the conflict prior to this point, the subsequent presence of UNAMSIL oversaw the repatriation of some refugees and added a level of credibility to the peace process. However, progress was slow and the governments support was divided. The terms of the agreement made Kabbah unpopular domestically as many had hoped to see leading members of the RUF,

such as Sankoh, punished for their roles in the perpetrating of atrocities (Nuamah and Zartman 2001). Instead, their transformation into a political party offered the RUF legitimisation. Yet, one of the explanations for the failure of the Peace Agreement is the RUF's likely realisation that their chance of retaining power through any legitimate means, for example, elections, was minimal as their previous powerbase had been underpinned by coercion and violence (Roberson 2014). UNAMSIL operated under the belief that the RUF would adhere to the Lomé Agreement in terms of disarming and demobilising (Hirsch 2001), however, this proved to be a flawed assumption.

Significant divisions began to emerge within the RUF, with prominent members such as Deputy Commander Sam Bockarie expressing a lack of support for Sankoh's signing of the peace deal. In November 1999 rumours emerged of an impending military offensive in the North and East of Sierra Leone, organised by Bockarie and assisted by Liberia. Outbursts of violence continued, despite the favourable terms, and as the Lomé Agreement collapsed UNAMSIL troops became targets for kidnapping (Alao and Ero 2001). Multiple sources indicate that during this period interveners were forced to spend much of their time and efforts protecting each other and negotiating for the release of their kidnapped personnel (for example, see Alao and Ero 2001; Nuamah and Zartman 2001). This distracted from engaging in peacebuilding activities, such as facilitating the resettlement of refugees or monitoring disarmament. Hostage-taking peaked in May 2000 when the RUF took approximately five hundred UN peacekeepers hostage, including the entirety of the Zambian contingent (Hirsch 2001). Uniforms, approximately a thousand UN-issue small arms as well as an estimated five thousand of the arms the RUF had surrendered as part of the peace agreement, plus thirteen armoured vehicles were stolen before then being used to attack other UNAMSIL units (Roberson 2014). July witnessed the abduction of another 233 troops (Keen 2005a) and confirmed the failure of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

3.7 British Military Intervention

In the late 1990s the UK had declared ethical dimensions to its foreign policy. The conflict in Sierra Leone provided an opportunity for New Labour to enact this

commitment and moral claims largely manifested as humanitarian interventions between 1999 until 2003 (Bulley 2010). During Blair's premiership he tended to speak with humanitarian tones, acknowledging the need for external interventions to end widespread violence. However, the government's actions did not always match this rhetoric. For example, Britain failed to abide by UNSC Resolution 1132 (1997), placing an embargo on the sale of all arms to Sierra Leone (UNSC 1997b) in a bid to cut off the RUF and ARFC's access to weapons and supplies. Despite this resolution, a British private security organisation, *Sandline International*, continued to supply arms to Nigerians (as part of ECOMOG) and the CDF, thereby violating the sanctions (Dorman 2009; Gallagher 2011). This move was associated with attempts to reinstate President Kabbah (Curran and Williams 2016). It came to be known as the Sandline Scandal, unfolding in 1998, and deepened following revelations that the High Commissioner at the time, Peter Penfold, had previously discussed this with the Chief of Sandline. This breach was particularly embarrassing as Britain had taken a lead role in both the drafting of the Resolutions text and its passing (Hirsch 2001), as well as dramatically undermining the New Labour governments claims to an ethical approach to foreign policy. Alao and Ero (2001) speculate that ultimately this embarrassment influenced the decision to subsequently intervene, in an attempt to regain some international respectability.

As a voting member of the UNSC and former coloniser of Sierra Leone, it may be perceived that Britain had a responsibility to involve itself in in resolving the conflict there. Roberson (2014: 20) states that the "UK had an international obligation to bolster the UNAMSIL mission and prevent its failure" and Alao and Ero (2001) highlight critiques that Britain should have been a part of UNAMSIL from the mission's inception. It is significant that despite Blair's (1999) statement that in order to create a "world ruled by law and international co-operation we have to support the UN," Britain chose to maintain a unilateral presence in Sierra Leone rather than becoming an integrated part of the UN mission, thereby creating a parallel security umbrella (Alao and Ero 2001). Furthermore, it was felt that operating separately to UNAMSIL implied a lack of faith in the ability of the mission, a condemning action by one of the P5 (Curran and Williams 2016).

Whilst the legitimacy of the British operation has not been questioned, typically intervention in another country's civil war requires the approval of the UNSC, with other states responding to a call for action and forming an interventionist coalition (Connaughton 2002). As such, they would typically be operating under a UN mandate. This was the case in Sierra Leone for UNAMSIL, however, rather than joining the official sanctioned intervention the UK chose to remain independent of it and did not embrace the principles of impartiality and neutrality, which are closely associated with humanitarian missions. Instead the British intervention was heavily partisan and demonstrated strong support for the government. It did not focus on negotiating peace settlements, but rather in ensuring the government was the clear victor. Yet, despite the presence of a large UN peacekeeping force, discourse often attributes the end of the conflict to the involvement of a relatively small British team (see Chege 2002; Stewart 2008). Within the broader British involvement in Sierra Leone multiple military operations occurred. A brief outline of the three key missions follows. These summaries are limited as the individual missions are not how participants captured their experiences, therefore only sparse background is provided. The exception to this was Operation Barras, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.2.4 Operation Barras.

3.7.1 Operation Palliser

The initial significant British military presence, Operation Palliser, focused only upon the repatriation of its civilians. Fearful of a repeat of the RUF operation 'No Living Thing', it perceived British nationals within the territory as at risk and in May 2000 dispatched a parachute regiment to assist with their withdrawal (Alao and Ero 2001). Operation Palliser was motivated by neither peacekeeping nor peace-enforcement. This initial presence enabled the repatriation of 299 British civilians within forty-eight hours (Connaughton 2002). However, it was during these evacuations that five hundred UNAMSIL troops were abducted. Subsequently, Britain's involvement quickly expanded once troops were on the ground into the biggest show of British military force since the Falklands conflict (Dorman 2007) and the first Joint Rapid Reaction Force (JRRF) mission (Roberson 2014). This transformation from evacuation to intervention occurred exceptionally quickly, with a force including marines, paratroopers and special

forces being operational within seven days (Dorman 2007). Within thirty-six hours of arrival the British troops had secured Lungi Airport, establishing it as a secure base: something which had eluded both ECOMOG and UNAMSIL. This speed of deployment has since led to the operation being cited as an excellent example of a rapid reaction operation (Connaughton 2002).

3.7.2 Operation Basilica

Following Operation Palliser, Operation Basilica was begun in July 2000 to expand the British commitment to peace and security in Sierra Leone. Despite backlash from New Labour's political opposition and calls to withdraw (Dorman 2009), the intervention moved beyond merely stopping the violence and into state-building objectives. These were designed to stimulate development and avoid reinstating the status quo which had generated the conflict. Its long-term goal aimed to create an environment whereby government forces could consolidate security and rebuild the states security architecture (Le Grys 2010). As such, Operation Basilica focused on the restructuring of the army, at all levels, and positioned a team of military advisers and trainers as well as an infantry battalion. The British strategy at this time also focused on attempting to separate the RUF from its support in physical, psychological and financial terms. In doing so the RUF was limited in their recruitment base and access to weaponry supplies (Roberson 2014).

3.7.3 Operation Barras

Although combat and engagement with the RUF was limited, in September 2000 direct, armed confrontation occurred as part of Operation Barras (see also Chapter 6.2.4 Operation Barras for analysis). This resulted from the West Side Boys (a splinter of the RUF) capture of eleven Royal Irish Regiment soldiers (Roberson 2014; Ucko 2016a). This rescue mission was the first offensive from interveners on a rebel base, sending the rebels strong signals that British troops were not afraid to enter their strongholds, were willing to use force and were not "casualty-averse" (Connaughton 2002: 84). The psychological impact of this was in stark contrast to the insurgents experiences with other interveners, who were either not mandated to use force or lacked the equipment and military hardware required to execute such an operation (instead engaging in lengthy negotiations

for the release of hostages). Similarly, intelligence gathering capabilities played a vital role in the successful retrieval of the captured hostages, contrasting with the limited capabilities of the ECOWAS and UN forces (Roberson 2014; Richards 2015). Barras was broadly viewed as a success, with only one British fatality (Cline 2016) and many of the West Side boys chose to disarm following the operation (Dorman 2009).

3.8 End of the civil war

Peace was declared on 18th January 2002. By this time it is estimated that 70,000 people had been killed (Hoffman 2011), nearly 2.6 million people (half the population) were either internally displaced or refugees (Chege 2002) and 20,000 had been victim to amputation (Campbell 2002). The already weak infrastructure had been further severely damaged during the conflict, for instance, very few functioning health facilities remained and an estimated 70% of school buildings had been destroyed (Gberie 2005).

Despite the presence of other third-party interveners, the British gained a reputation for their leadership in bringing peace to Sierra Leone (Jackson and Albrecht 2010b) and, as previously mentioned, literature exploring the Sierra Leone conflict often attributes its end to the British presence. The official narrative is that within months of the British arriving in Sierra Leone the situation was calmed and confidence in UNAMSIL had even increased due to the UK's efforts (Connaughton 2002). Sankoh was captured by the British not long after their arrival: a blow to the RUF which was also felt to have contributed to the cessation of widespread violence (Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). In addition, diplomatic efforts were made with neighbouring countries, including cooperation and information sharing. As a result, Guinean forces were able to combat the RUF more effectively when they invaded Guinea, leading to heavy losses on the side of the rebels (Ucko 2016a). This furthered the RUF becoming increasingly isolated within Sierra Leone, giving little option but to re-enter talks and the DDR process (more detailed discussion on the impacts of the British presence can be found throughout Chapter 4). Following the declaration of peace the RUF formed a political party, engaging with the democratic process (Hirsch 2001). May 2002

witnesses the first multiparty elections in the nation in eight years and resulted in the re-election of Kabbah as president (Le Grys 2010).

The approach of both ECOMOG and UNAMSIL had been weakened by a lack of long-term commitment to Sierra Leone. In contrast, the British mandate included an explicit state-building directive and in 2002 the Department for International Development (DfID) signed an unprecedented Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) committing to a ten-year programme of support (White 2010; Harris 2020). This set the British aid allocation to Sierra Leone at £40million per annum for the length of the MoU (British Army 2016). As such, the UK was perceived to have taken leadership of reforms and their remit extended into a responsibility to rebuild and attempts to reconstruct what had come to be a failed state (Jackson and Albrecht 2010b). These programmes extended beyond DDR and into domestic governance including market economy reform, the rebuilding of infrastructure (including health and education), and judicial reform (Fanthorpe 2003). For example, DfID-funded projects were used to improve information technology and rebuild some accommodation in villages which had been decimated during the conflict (Roberson 2014). It aimed to address the causes of the conflict as opposed to just the symptoms (White 2010). However, this also included the re-introduction of patrimonial power structures which, whilst traditional, had been identified as a contributing cause of conflict. For instance, the British strategy oversaw the reinstating of 149 Paramount Chiefs (Roberson 2014).

The instability of Sierra Leone's security architecture was also targeted by the British involvement through Security Sector Reform (SSR) and the UK-led, IMATT. This was charged with restructuring and rebuilding the SLA, which came to be known as RSLAF, whilst other international efforts focused on training the police force (Chege 2002) (see Chapter 4.3 SSR). The British contributed advisers and expressed a commitment to not only run IMATT until 2010, but also to provide an intervention force within seventy-two hours were the conflict to resume (Roberson 2014). Again, the long-term nature of this commitment showed the RUF that they were unable to simply bide their time until the British left and then resume hostilities, decreasing the likelihood of a re-emergence of

conflict short-term. This British presence, whilst substantially reduced, continues presently under ISAT in a primarily advisery and training role (see Chapter 5.2.3 IMATT to ISAT) thereby extending British support beyond the initial MoU.

3.9 Conclusion

Post-independence Sierra Leone experienced tumultuous politics, riddled with corruption and a military overstepping into the political arena through both successful and unsuccessful coup attempts. Whilst no single cause of conflict has been settled on by researchers, it is evident that multiple factors influenced the outbreak of violence and that both greed and grievance sustained the war for over a decade. The civil war in Sierra Leone became infamous for its brutality towards civilians and use of child soldiers (Cubitt 2012).

Sierra Leone is distinctive in that it experienced third party interventions from mercenaries (EO), a regional organisation (ECOWAS), a multi-national body (UN), and a unilateral force (the British). As such, it is uniquely situated to provide an insight into military intervention for humanitarian purposes. Following three failed Peace Agreements, and the British intervention in Sierra Leone being declared a 'success' there has been little in-depth scrutiny of the current structures in place or the legacy of the British intervention within the nation. This may be seen as a natural progression, due to the continued absence of widespread violence. For example, that the International Crisis Group (ICG) produced six reports in the three years following 2001 (Roberson 2014) and none since is an indication of progress: Sierra Leone is no longer viewed as a crisis. However, it is also indicative of a lack of interest in the long-term effects of military interventions and creates a significant void in knowledge.

Through the 'bottom up' approach of this research more depth is added to the discourse exploring the relationship between the origins of the Sierra Leone civil war and its current socio-political and economic circumstance (see Chapter 5.5 Perceptions of Future Stability). Furthermore, it enables an exploration of individuals' perspectives of the conflict response based on their experiences. For example, Chapter 4.1 Three Intervening Forces: A Comparison, builds upon the events presented throughout this chapter by adding new dimensions and

alternative perspectives that are not captured in many official and academic narratives, which often depict the intervention, in hindsight, as relatively straightforward and overwhelmingly successful. By soliciting the experiences of individuals present at the time, or currently operating within the newly reformed structures, it becomes evident that the intervention and subsequent reforms are not as clear cut as these accepted narratives depict. Through interviewing individuals the genuine human experience surrounding the intervention is captured, returning an authenticity and 'messiness' which is otherwise lost in the theoretical explorations of this period.

This contextualising chapter has provided an overview of the varied and complex background, which it is important to understand before encountering the original findings from analysis. The following substantive chapters build upon elements of this from the perspectives of those involved in the intervention. Chapter 4 explores the experiences of the British intervention in Sierra Leone, focusing particularly on those relating to the various intervening forces, the concept of timeliness and SSR.

Chapter 4 - Experiences of British Intervention in Sierra Leone

4.0 Introduction

This is the first of four substantive chapters presenting an analysis of the findings from the original data. It addresses the first of the research questions (see Chapter 1.1 Research Questions) and explores the emerging themes arising from the Sierra Leonean and British experience of the intervention in the civil war. It is rooted in primary data gathered by semi-structured interviews, focusing on events between 1997 and 2004. These dates were not pre-set prior to fieldwork and have arisen from the data itself. Whilst this does pre-date Operation Palliser, it is contended that the British intervention in the civil war began prior to this, with its active supporting of President Kabbah in exile and the diplomatic influencing of the international community to continue to support his government whilst rejecting that of Johnny Paul Koroma (Penfold 2012). Similarly, SSR, including the UK's involvement in it, began in the 1990s, prior to the cessation of the conflict (Albrecht 2010). 2004 also coincides with the (theoretical) handing of primary

security responsibility back to the Sierra Leone government (Ebo 2006). Post-2004 the British focus appears to shift towards a development phase, rather than security, and the medium to longer terms impacts of their involvement begin to arise (analysed in Chapter 5).

Data gathered from both Sierra Leonean and British participants is presented within each theme to enable discussion on the relationship between the differing, or similar, views rather than treating them in isolation. Where possible the themes make a knowledge claim by first introducing the literature as conceptual establishment, before then providing an original interpretation based on the primary data and voices of those on the ground. This enables further novel insight into the links between theory and practice, discourse and experience. In some instance this was not possible to the same degree, such as section 4.1 Three Intervening Forces: A Comparison, as the existing literature is scanter. The common theme linking the various sections contained within the chapter is that of personal experiences.

The chapter has been structured using two substantive themes, as well as a separate analysis on the concept of timeliness. The most significant of the analytic attention is given to SSR, as participants focused heavily on this theme as part of their experience. Having been led by the data this is the most logical grouping of ideas and marshaling of the findings. The first of these explores how the British intervention was experienced in comparison with that of ECOMOG and UNAMSIL; the second explores various aspects of the British-led SSR in Sierra Leone. Throughout these themes runs the central thread of sustainability. Elements of this chapter, and the following chapter, may appear as though centered upon ‘myth busting’. This was not the initial intention, however, it was found that so little of the experiences of participants isreflected in scholarly literature and at several junctures ran counter to the dominant narratives surrounding the British (military) intervention in Sierra Leone.

4.1 Three Intervening Forces: A Comparison

Whilst the interview schedule focused on the British intervention, often participants made sense of their experiences through subjective comparisons to

ECOMOG and UNAMSIL and as such, it is significant to the analysis. Nigeria committed troops to both ECOMOG, and then later UNAMSIL. During fieldwork it was found that the Sierra Leoneans I spoke with, either as part of the research group or in further contextualizing conversations, did not distinguish between the two. Both forces were simply referred to as 'Nigerian interventions' and as such the two are inevitably conflated throughout the research data and therefore analysis. This interchangeability is not limited to participants and does appear in some published accounts of the conflict. For example, General Richards' autobiography often singles out Nigerian forces rather than discussing them as part of multinational endeavors (Richards 2015).

4.1.1 Motivations for Involvement

The motivation for externally led involvement in the conflict was a discussion point raised by all participants, reinforcing the saliency of the debate between altruism and self-interest within R2P. Multiple participants, both British and Sierra Leonean, openly acknowledge the British intervention as a form of neo-colonialism (SL01, SL04, SL05, SL08, SL09, SL10, UKM01, UKM04, UKM07, UKP03). Others view it as distinct from this, though still not as an entirely selfless act as "only an idiot would think interventions aren't political" (UKP02). Multiple British participants place emphasis on the political nature of involvement alongside humanitarian factors rooted in ethical foreign policy. This is despite the lack of regime change or instituting of an alternative system of governance, both of which would have been likely to generate backlash within the country and internationally. Whilst technically Sierra Leone had moved away from a one-party state during the conflict, its democracy was weak and consistently jeopardized by military coups (Harris 2020). As such, these participants view the British intervention partially as a seized opportunity to strengthen existing democratic power structures, including through the reinstitution and supporting of the elected government (UKM01, UKM04, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02). This correlation between the intervention and ideology was reinforced by a senior British diplomat who feels that those who had lost their lives in the conflict had "died for democracy" (UKP02). Further evidence of this can be found in Penfold's (2012) published account, throughout which it becomes apparent that he interprets his

experience of the British involvement, both diplomatically and later militarily, as ideologically driven and a neo-liberal project.

However, neither neo-colonialism nor politics are seen as the overriding characteristics of the British intervention, nor as undermining its benevolent nature. These same participants affirm that “the intervention was humanitarian” (UKP02) and “what we did, we did for humanitarian reasons, and they were absolutely right” (UKM07). Whilst both neo-colonialism and humanitarianism are simultaneously held as ‘true’, it is this morality which is consistently the defining feature of the British involvement in the civil war for both the UK and Sierra Leonean participants, based on their experiences. Therefore, it can be suggested that certain self-interests or political drivers do not automatically exclude or weaken moral/altruistic intent and it is still perceived as a “genuine friend coming to a friend’s need” (SL07). Based on the data, the perception of dichotomous motivations can co-exist not only within the same intervention but also the same individual. That the British motivations are not viewed as singular by any participant adds further credence to the argument that they should not be considered in isolation. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 2.3 Motivation: Altruism vs Self-Interest, literature continues to treat drivers as mutually exclusive and casts those which are not entirely selfless so negatively as to taint or invalidate other, more moral, intentions. In doing so the gap between academic discussion and practice is widened.

In contrast to the positive perception of the British rationales for involvement, the Nigerian motivations are viewed as overwhelmingly negative by the majority of Sierra Leonean participants. For instance, it is felt that “the British came in with the intent to stop the war. The Nigerians were only in it for themselves” (SL03) viewing it as an “opportunity for the Nigerians to line their pockets” (SL07). In contrast, “Britain had no ulterior motives to go to the [diamond] mines” (SL01). Furthermore, both SL05 and SL09 make repeated reference to the Nigerian presence as an “occupation”, and SL08 refers to them multiple times as “just militias”. No Sierra Leonean participants make reference to the Nigerian involvement as humanitarian, nor premised on protecting civilians. This is surprising and almost the inverse of what may have been expected: rather than

the former coloniser being perceived to have less than altruistic motivations, their involvement is viewed from the outset as a primarily selfless act, centered on saving lives. Whereas the Nigerians (as part of ECOMOG and UNAMSIL) are viewed as self-seeking, using the conflict to abuse their power, engage in corruption and enhance their personal wealth (SL01, SL03, SL05, SL07, SL08, SL09, SL10, SL12). As such, the perceived motivations of interveners are salient to their acceptance by the affected community and operating as part of a regional or UN force does not guarantee that involvement will be seen as a moral act. This in turn has implications for the perceived legitimacy of the force within the affected nation (see also Chapter 7.3 UN vs Unilateral Military Intervention).

4.1.2 Force Composition

The composition of the intervening forces also appears to have an impact on how they are viewed by the affected population. Those who discuss the composition of ECOMOG and UNAMSIL, do so in negative or disparaging terms (SL01, SL02, SL05, SL07, SL09, SL12). For instance, SL09 states “the UN were there, but these guys were just other Africans” and SL07 declares “you have to think who made up the UN force. Only Africans, like me.” These extracts imply that it is only African nations who provided personnel to UNAMSIL, however, this is a misconception as multiple countries contributed troops. For example, India and Pakistan (Arthur 2010). Yet, these are not acknowledged by participants, who instead experienced them as an African presence, and in particular Nigerian. Rather than this being seen as a positive element, it appears instead that this led to their being dismissed due to a lack of credibility and not felt to be a real threat to rebels. Probing of Sierra Leonean participants indicates that this is likely to be related to expectations of resources and military capability, as they tend to draw comparisons between the lack of equipment, resource and intelligence capacities of ECOMOG/UNAMSIL and the UK (SL01, SL09, SL12).

For one British participant this is interpreted as an issue of race; claiming that regional solutions are based on the “need to put a black face on it” and in the case of Sierra Leone they “misjudged the importance of a white face” (UKM04). Significantly this racial interpretation is also explicitly echoed amongst Sierra Leonean participants who assert that the British presence added further

credibility to the demobilization process. For example, SL12 recalls telling people "see all these white people? They've come to upgrade our land and community" and SL05 is very dismissive that "ECOMOG was formed of ECOWAS countries. Black like us." As such, the British presence represented not only peace but also development, thereby providing a further incentive for the cessation of violence

Experiences such as these are highly relevant to military intervention for humanitarian purposes, as well as R2P more broadly, and a detailed analysis on the role of regional organisations as agents of R2P can be found in Chapter 7.4 Regional Intervention. Literature, such as Dobos (2016) indicates that a multilateral intervening force is advantageous as it can circumnavigate issues of nationalistic resistance from the affected community. However, the opposite appears to be reflected in Sierra Leone, where the British were welcomed, and the presence of a multi-national force does not appear to have been sufficient to prevent resistance to Nigerian forces. As such, the composition of coalition interveners appears crucial to circumnavigating opposition from the affected population and, in some instances, a unilateral presence may be preferable. Theoretically there appears to be an emerging preference in discourse for regional solutions where possible (see Falk and Skinner 2016; Adediran 2017), encapsulated by the often-cited phrase "African solutions to African problems" (Ayittey 2009: 24). However, this data indicates that regional solutions should not be assumed as the best option or even the preference of the affected nation. UK participants (UKM04, UKM06, UKM07) feel that based on their experience in the region that this just "doesn't work" (UKM04). Examples such as South Sudan and Darfur were offered by participants as evidence of this. This further reinforces that operating under the auspices of a regional or UN force is not a panacea to the issues of legitimacy levelled at unilateral forces. In this case, the data demonstrates that, from the perspective of the affected population, the nations which comprise the force may well be a more salient concern than the possession of a UN mandate.

4.1.3 Perception of Nigerian Forces

Whilst a focus on the perception of Nigerian forces may appear to be somewhat of a contradiction in a chapter focusing on the experiences of the British

intervention, the latter is also denoted by its juxtaposition with Nigerian forces in so much as the positive perception of the British sits in such stark contrast to it. This arguably serves to boost their 'hero' status within Sierra Leone. Whilst a range of literature provides a strategic overview of both the ECOWAS and UN intervention, the discussion tends to remain on a macro-level. However, by analysing the micro-level perspective, a significant dimension to how these forces were experienced is revealed and light shed on the complexity of the relationship between Sierra Leoneans and Nigerians on an individual level. For many Sierra Leonean civilians this experience focuses around resulting fear or hatred. Despite both forces risking injury and loss of life to combat the rebel threat, the same sentiments are also found amongst Sierra Leonean military interlocutors. SL08, a current senior ranking member of RSLAF, speaks openly of being afraid of the Nigerian component due to their "indiscriminate killing…if they see you before you could give an explanation, you are dead. They come and kill you indiscriminately" and SL12, a retired member of RSLAF, believes that "Nigeria was more on the side of the RUF." Significantly, one former RSLAF participant (SL02) tells of fleeing Sierra Leone with a group of colleagues, not due to fear of the RUF but fear of ECOMOG. This is important as it indicates that rather than the intervening force bolstering domestic efforts and supporting the SLA, they were instead further undermined and the dynamics of the conflict further complicated.

Extreme corrupt practice among Nigerian troops was consistently spoke of, ranging from accusations of "siphoning off money meant for fighting" (SL12), stealing and looting (SL08), and a heavy focus on attempting to profit from diamonds (SL10). This has been well documented in wider research (Harris 2020) and former ECOMOG leader, Major General Vijay Jetley, levelled allegations of corruption at the Nigerian contingent at the time, reflecting these suspicions (Ucko 2016a). There are also a multitude of accusations from Sierra Leonean participants which included: human rights abuses; torture; failure to abide by International Humanitarian Law; and the belief that the atrocities committed by the Nigerians were worse than the those of the RUF (SL03, SL05, SL07, SL08). Only one Sierra Leonean participant, SL13, a former member of Kabbah's government provides an alternative viewpoint as he dismisses their

negative reputation as “propaganda, false information.” Whilst this opinion is equally valid, it does go against several participants direct interactions with the forces and may be influenced by the participant’s former government role and its engagement with the Nigerian military. For instance, there was a period where they provided security and protection for Kabbah. Overall, the data overwhelmingly demonstrates a lack of domestic support, by both Sierra Leone civilians and the armed forces. In turn, this is likely to have influenced the casting of ECOMOG and UNAMSIL as weak and not a credible deterrent for the RUF. In contrast the positive perception of the UK presence, who civilians vocally support, created a united front, and thus acted as a better deterrent to the continuation of violence.

These less than favorable views are shared by numerous British participants, who echoed the sentiments that “they were as bad as the RUF…the Nigerians were all corrupt bastards” (UKM04) and that within the Nigerian military there is “corruption borne from the top” (UKM06). Only one British interlocuter speaks positively of the Nigerian forces, however, even this perception was conflicting as UKP01 states that the “the Nigerian forces were good, and a force for good”. Yet later in the interview he comments the “Nigerian troops had been nasty and committed human rights atrocities”. This demonstrates the complexity and contradictions within the relationship for some. Indeed, during the civil war the UK had a complex relationship with Nigeria in Sierra Leone. For instance, it is openly acknowledged that Peter Penfold and the Nigerian High Commissioner “were very close friends” (UKP01) despite the military sanctions imposed on Sani Abacha which “did not allow us to even talk to Nigerian military Officers” (UKP01). In the context of the ongoing conflict, this made effective communication difficult and was not practical.

UKP01 tells of the need to use Sandline as a conduit to communicate with the Nigerian military as a result, to keep abreast of developments in-country. Seemingly this relationship went beyond communication and UKM07 claims that the British “provided communications equipment and they provided transport [to the Nigerian forces]. It’s not well known actually that we did that.” UKP01 also discusses circumnavigating the sanctions as the British “couldn’t give them arms,

but they did provide ammunition" (UKP01), which were given directly to General Kobe. This is acknowledged locally, through the belief that Nigerian representatives would give their order for arms and ammunition directly to Peter Penfold, for him to arrange supply (SL02). It is unclear whether this is in addition to that which was provided through Sandline (as aspects of this scandal remain unclear (Harris 2020)). Yet, despite this link with the Nigerian forces, the associated negative perceptions have not been extended to the British.

4.1.4 Working Together: British Military and UNAMSIL

Discourse tends to either emphasise the positive collaboration between the British and the UN's efforts in Sierra Leone (for example, Le Grys 2010) or focus entirely on one force, failing to mention any additional presence and creating the impression of a sole actor. This indicates a conflicting dialogue of who led to the successful ending of the conflict (see UNDPI 2003; Toyberg-Frandzen 2014). An exception to this comes from former Head of DfID, White's (2008) analysis of the situation, in which he identifies a lack of strategic coordination with the UN at a cost to an alliance between the two. Such a relationship could have been mutually beneficial; the UN having a larger force but lacking funding and the UK force being smaller but better funded. This separation is also reported by British military participants, as UKM05 states that "there was no real contact with the UN" and UKM01 typifies any interactions as "difficult." Rather than this being seen as the result of poor planning, as rationalized by White (2008), it appears to be centred upon two very different interpretations of conflict response. For example, UKM04 summarises the relationship between the two as:

> "quite antagonistic…We looked down our noses at them…They distrusted us, 'why are you here because you're taking sides?' The UN being the UN viewed it as an impartial thing. Whereas the Blair government didn't…because Kabbah was a democratically elected government."

As such, the data indicates the relationship to be one tainted by an inherent incompatibility within the philosophical differences of how peace keeping/enforcement is envisaged and enacted: the UN acting with impartiality and the UK with partisanship. This created tensions which manifested in open arguments in more social settings, such as bars (UKM04) and SL07 recalls

witnessing “the British soldiers yelling into the face of some Nigerian Generals.” The little communication which did occur between the two forces is felt to be due to the UN mission’s reluctance to deal directly with the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence. UKM01 recalled that UNAMSIL instead tried continually to go through the British as “they weren’t particularly interested in dealing with Sierra Leone.” When confronted regarding this, further tensions arose. Thus, based on the data, the relationship between to the two missions is characterised by largely unreported rivalries.

4.2 Timeliness

Literature refers to the British military intervention as timely, perhaps based on the concern of an imminent attack on Freetown (Davies 2000; Nuamah and Zartman 2001). UKP04 asserts that “in terms of the civil war…the UK hasn’t hesitated in stepping into that breach” and British participants speak of their arrival being met with positivity and “streets lined with people waving Union Jack flags and shouting ‘British, British, British” (UKP05). Yet, these narratives mask the significant delay in British military support: the conflict had been raging for ten years prior to military assistance despite the government of Sierra Leone’s requests as early as 1996 (Albrecht 2010). Sierra Leonean participants express relief and even felt “euphoric and ecstatic” (SL01) following the arrival of the UK forces, but also significant frustration that it did not occur sooner (SL01, SL02, SL04, SL05, SL07, SL08, SL13). The sentiments underpinning statements such as “we needed help. Eventually they come in to help” (SL13) and indignation that “it was late…ten years before they came!” (SL02) are common. There is a general consensus that, rather than being timely, “they were late…we expect them to come around 1992, 93, 94” (SL09) and prior to this “we are blaming them saying they should have come to our rescue long time ago. Everybody was talking about it” (SL05). As SL07 shares:

> “I start to think, what sort of a friend is this?...It got to the point where people think they are just cowards. They don’t think they can take the fight to these guys.”

At times the expectation for intervention is linked to the historic colonial relationship, which contributes to the assumption that the British should and

would intervene militarily. For example, SL04 contends that “people thought of Britain as our coloniser, that if we have a problem, they come. We were expecting them to come earlier” and SL05 states “we expected the British more than the UN.” Based on such data extracts the critique of R2P as a tool for neo-colonialism displays a certain irony, as in this instance it is that very relationship which Sierra Leoneans feel should have assured British military intervention at an earlier stage. Therefore, the story of ‘timeliness’ is not one which is accepted within Sierra Leone and instead there appears to be residual frustration at it not occurring sooner, as well as the belief that more lives would have been saved were this to be the case. Yet, there is acceptance that whilst overdue, this type of assistance was “better late than never” (SL04). This also implies that the affected population feel that diplomatic efforts, and those closer aligned to Pillar I and II of R2P, should have been curtailed in favour of military intervention long before this occurred. This has implications for R2P and at what point ‘last resort’ military action should be taken.

4.3 SSR

SSR in Sierra Leone and presence of IMATT was significant as it represents a shift in thinking on the security-development nexus, with DfID enacting security as a key pillar of development (Ebo 2006). The concept of SSR is seen as an integral part of long-term state building and development; aiming to establish a stable and secure environment from which the state and economic growth-based development would then be able to flourish (Ball 2004; Castañeda 2009). This was further enshrined by security’s foregrounding in the first pillar of the country’s 2005 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (IMF 2005). Although the focus of this thesis is the legacy of the British intervention in Sierra Leone broadly, and therefore does not restrict participants to discussion through one lens, for instance socio-economic or political, the remainder of this chapter does concentrate heavily on SSR as this was a key consideration across all respondents. The findings are particularly important given the dearth of research exploring experiences of SSR, including analysis of its implementation and impacts, from the perspectives of those on the ground at the time. Despite this lack of scrutiny, SSR in Sierra Leone is often cited as “one of the more successful efforts at external intervention” (Ebo 2006: 482) and “the benchmark against

which the historical assessments might be interpreted" (Ford 2014a: 586). Despite the subsequent critiques SL01 refers to SSR as "one of the brightest things the British left behind." Furthermore, there appears to have been a broad acceptance by the international community that SSR should form the foundation of peacebuilding practice. This has resulted in its widespread implementation, such as in DRC, and additional evidence of the acceptance of its value to development is witnessed through its policy inclusion, for instance the AU Policy Framework on SSR (Jackson 2018).

During the civil war the functionality of the state and its security institutions in maintaining the rule of law was heavily compromised, highlighting the need for reform post-conflict. However, SSR itself remains an ambiguous term, with no single accepted definition regarding which security structures it encompasses or excludes. Yet, all explanations appear to be ideologically underpinned by democratic principles such as accountability, democratic and civilian control, and good governance (see Jackson 2018). This renders it a political and ideological process. For the purpose of this analysis the definition of SSR relating to the British actions in Sierra Leone will be used, as this is the most pertinent to this thesis. This was envisaged as focusing on reform within the military, police and justice sector (Ucko 2016a), with the aim of creating an environment conducive to meeting the British objectives of creating a sustainable peace in which development may flourish and poverty be reduced (Dorman 2009). Funding was almost entirely British-led, from a combination of MoD, FCO and DfID, through the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) (Ginifer and Oliver 2004). However, programmes often occurred in isolation from each other, or with little to no coordination. As such, this holistic definition was not mirrored in practice (Albrecht 2010; Baker 2010).

4.3.1 IMATT

IMATT's remit concentrated on advisory and training activities, combined with institution building (Godwin and Haenlein 2013) and employed a combination of military and civilian personnel (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013). Their presence was country wide (UKM03), an important stabilising feature given the state's overall lack of presence outside of the capital. With regards to the SLA, later RSLAF,

IMATT was mandated with creating a "self-sustaining, democratically accountable and affordable force…[that] can meet Sierra Leone's defense missions and tasks" (Ebo 2006: 487). Developing professionality, non-partisanship and de-politicalisation were key focuses across the security sector. Numerous academic research and policy documentation refers to SSR in Sierra Leone as a success, in particular the reformation of RSLAF and its more recent contributions to peacekeeping (see Chapter 5.4 The End State), and continually attributes this to the British efforts (see Thomson 2007; Godwin and Haenlein 2013). There is minimal acknowledgement in such sources of other contributors, including countries which provided personnel to IMATT. This is also reflected across the interview data, with participants using 'IMATT' (and later 'ISAT') and the 'UK/British' interchangeably. As this research is based on that data, it also contains inevitable elements of interchangeability. Similarly, the composition of IMATT implies the international element could be deemed little more than lip-service. For instance, during his tour UKM04 recalls that the international contingent consisted of "a few Australians, one Canadian and two Americans on a scoping mission, but it was still just the British running it." As such, the international element is presented a more a token gesture. However, the presence of these additional international actors is likely to have assisted in the legitimisation and credibility of an essentially unilateral intervention in the eyes of the global community.

British IMATT personnel occupied executive positions within the Sierra Leonean military (UKP02) and headed thirteen RSLAF units (SL04). Primary data from former-IMATT participants indicates that this was deemed as necessary due to RSLAF's "lack of understanding, so therefore [they] couldn't take ownership of changes" (UKM01). Others express a lack of confidence in the abilities of the SLA, and later RSLAF, as well as distrust of its personnel (UKM04). At times, this appears to stem from a sense of superiority from the British. One UK participant speaks of junior RSLAF members as "wasters" and refers to those in the senior ranks as "Shylocks" (an unfavorable reference to a Shakespearean character) (UKM04). Whilst other UK participants are not as overt with these negative characterisations, they still express similar sentiments of suspicion, both of individuals and the Sierra Leonean government as a whole. For instance, UKM07

discusses the need to “keep a close eye on even a very small amount of money.” Any failures are not attributed to the British model or approach itself, but blame placed firmly with Sierra Leonean actors. These experiences also suggest that the Sierra Leone security sector took back-seat within its own development due to a perceived ineptitude by the UK on the ground. This has negative implications for capacity building and local ownership, seen by theorists as a central pillar of SSR and salient to sustainability (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013) (see section 4.3.10 Local Ownership). Although the issue of sustainability does not appear to have been publicly acknowledged, an internal IMATT 2004 review document, provided by UKM01, identified that there were “critical weaknesses” in the sustainability of RSLAF’s progress. Despite this, there appears to have been little attempts to address the issue.

4.3.2 Military Reintegration Programmes

The need for reconstruction of the armed forces, and the related conditions, had previously been highlighted as early as 1997, having been made explicit in Article XVII of the Lomé Peace Agreement. This allocated responsibility for the process to the Government of Sierra Leone (UNSC 1999a). However, in practice the UK took the lead in the SSR process, seemingly at their behest. Lomé also stipulated that the SLA should be restructured to incorporate former RUF combatants, CDF, and the national army, on the condition that they were able to meet an established criteria. This criteria appears to have been largely controlled by the British, who “designed a series of tests and interviews to decide who could come back in” (UKM04) and be admitted into the new RSLAF. This process was reportedly focused around “picking the ones we thought we could trust” (UKM04), implying that the final decision of who would be included and excluded was subjective and rested to some degree on the UK’s personal preferences of individuals. It appears that a similar approach was also taken in the restructuring of the Police, with Albrecht (2010: 29) making mention of Keith Biddle’s replacement of senior police officers with ones he had hand-picked and deemed to be “more reform friendly.”

This raises questions regarding the transparency and accountability of the process in practice, something which seems pertinent given that the British levelled these same criticisms at the pre-war security sector (see Ebo 2006;

Albrecht 2010). Sierra Leonean participants are very much aware of this, with the UK completing their appraisal reports at the time and seen as the key decision makers in determining which officers would be promoted. As SL04 phrases it "they were responsible for your fate in army," underscoring the perception that the UK were the ones in charge and to whom RSLAF were now accountable. As such, the Military Reintegration Programme (MRP) seems to have been experienced as an external process, with Sierra Leoneans cast as the passive recipients. Again, the issue of local ownership arises and, one may also argue, echoes of the colonial period emerge.

Unlike other earlier cases of MRP's, for instance Mozambique in 1994, the reformed RSLAF did not specify a quota for each of the groups it was absorbing. It was argued at the time that this enabled the force to mirror the "geo-political structure" of Sierra Leone and further reconciliation. However, only 2,500 former RUF and CDF sought entry into RSLAF, roughly 1,667 of which were RUF (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013). Given estimates place RUF and other militias at 45,000 strong (Gberie 2005), and 72,000 ex combatants disarmed as part of the DDR process (Varisco 2014), this represents a small portion of their number. There is no current data to indicate how many of these presently remain in the armed forces. This decision to integrate the armed factions was initially met with skepticism regarding how past enemies would fare working closely together. However, both former and current senior ranking members of the armed forces speak positively about MRP (SL02, SL04, SL08), and it is felt that through this process "enemy became good friends" (SL02).

Whilst the apparent ease of integration may be partially attributed to the small number of non-SLA armed actors (approximately 17% of the RSLAF total) this is not the impression given by participants, who instead credited it to the holding camps (SL02, SL04, SL08). These were part of the screening process for RSLAF entry and singled out as having had considerable influence. In particular, the inclusive approach and treatment of all as equals, regardless of whether former SLA, CDF or RUF appears to have had a considerable psychological impact. SL02 states "we are all together, treated together. Meet as equals, be treated as equals, begin building bridges. All integrated. And it worked! We become as one."

This is echoed by SL08 who observes “the good thing was we were all trained together, the rebels, the army, integrated: no distinction or separation and that paid handsomely.” Following this, the successful recruits participated in a nine-week infantry training program (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013), which again allowed opportunities to build further positive relationships. As such, the structure of this initial reintegration training had a significant positive effect on the armed actors and their assimilation into a single military unit. These experiences appear to have meaningful implications for practice and indicate that the potential transferability of the lessons from the holding camps in Sierra Leone could at least be explored in other similar contexts. For instance, it is questionable whether a similar approach may have been beneficial in Liberia, where instead of integrating armed factors into the existing force, it was instead disbanded (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013).

4.3.3 RSLAF Downsizing

The Navy and Air Force were both absorbed into the newly formed military which, combined with ex-combatants, saw a subsequent swell in the size of RSLAF to approximately 14,500 personnel (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013). This number was unsustainable and led to later downsizing from 2003, targeted at retaining a force of 8,100 (Godwin and Haenlein 2013). As the increase in size had also resulted in a majority of older soldiers, most of who were at high ranks, this also involved a ‘reshaping’ of the force. For instance, the military is said to have been 30% over established, yet with 30% less officers than it needed (UKM01). However, when discussing this downsizing most British participants focus primarily on its links to addressing corruption, rather than creating a more manageable force size. For example, using it as an opportunity to address the issue of so-called ‘ghost soldiers’: a form of corruption whereby Commanders would claim to have “500 soldiers in their units, but they didn’t. They probably had 300 and 200 had died or were missing, but they were still claiming their pay” (UKM04). This enabled them to receive additional wages and rice allowances (UKM04, UKM07, UKP01). To mitigate this IMATT would demand to see soldiers’ identification cards prior to receiving their pay and refuse to provide any additional wage to ‘soldiers’ that command leaders claimed to simply be absent on that occasion (UKM04).

Through this IMATT was able to better identify a more accurate number of soldiers in each battalion and led to a natural decrease in number.

Other British participants (UKM01, UKM04, UKM05) speak of using downsizing as justification to remove some of the top echelons of RSLAF, who they feel had become corrupt and therefore “blockers to development” (UKM01). The use of a review of all armed forces in 2004 is discussed in particular as the tool through which this was enacted. This serves as a reminder of the immense power the British continued to wield, as four years after the initial military intervention they continued to make key personnel decisions surrounding the armed forces. The data extract is also problematic due to its subjectivity, as it is based on solely on British perceptions. Corruption can be deemed a post-colonial construct (see Apata 2019) and that the UK had the power to dismiss personnel whom they felt did not match western interpretations, within another sovereign state, displays a very clear and continually unequitable power dynamic (for further discussion on corruption see section 4.3.9 Corruption).

Although the relationship between the reduction in size of RSLAF and corruption is not mentioned by Sierra Leonean participants, several discuss RSLAF’s downsizing through redundancy/retirement (SL02, SL04, SL10, SL11, SL12). This is a somewhat contentious issue and viewed as a British owned process. From the Sierra Leonean perspective, it is felt that downsizing was conducted through less than transparent means, with senior RSLAF personnel using it as an opportunity to settle personal vendettas against lower ranking staff by providing their names to the British for redundancy (SL02). One participant also sees it as an excuse to dispose of former RUF and CDF elements from the military, perceiving that it is mainly these groups who were “weeded out” (SL04) as part of the process. Multiple people within the local population also back up this theory anecdotally, indicating it to be a more widely accepted narrative. Whilst there is no official data available to support this proposition, it is not beyond the realms of possibility, as it was acknowledged from the outset that such a large force would not be sustainable in the long-term for Sierra Leone. However, this pragmatic approach and the short-term security situation was such that MRP was considered the best option to prevent peace spoilers. It is feasible that these

potential spoilers were perceived to be less of a risk to security as time progressed and peace became further embedded.

Sierra Leonean participants also speak of the lack of control their own institutions had regarding the downsizing process (SL02, SL04, SL09, SL10). For instance, following notice that he was being retired SL02 recalls a conversation with the Chief of Defense Staff at the time, in which he questioned the reasoning behind this. He states the response was “it’s not us. It is the British people. It’s not my fault.” Furthermore, SL10 exclaims that he will “never forgive” the British for his retirement and SL04 recalls his colleagues stating “‘the British are responsible for me leaving the army early’. They did not look on it in a kind way, it is a difficult lesson to take.” Although it is possible that the British were used as scapegoats for the blame around contentious issues, the result is a dual relationship between those who were retired during this process and the British presence; on the one hand there is a gratitude for their involvement in ending the conflict, and on the other a bitter resentment at their resulting loss of livelihood. As such, there is a strong sense of ambivalence, not only between individual respondents but within the individual themselves, who often held two contradictory ideas as ‘true’ simultaneously. This ambivalence appears to echo throughout the Sierra Leonean experience of the British intervention, creating a multilayered reality which is often not reflected in current research or within the label of success.

4.3.4 Working Together: IMATT and RSLAF

Taking a broad perspective, the British have a strong, positive, reputation in Sierra Leone and surface level conversations with both participants and RSLAF members who did not form part of the research group appeared to collaborate this overarching perception. Participants from RSLAF (current and former) express their excitement at getting to work together. One claims that prior to this he “had never spoken with the white” (SL08) and another speaks with immense pride at having been “trained and equipped by the British…to a very high standard” (SL02). As such, there was almost a novelty involved for some in working together. However, just below this exterior there is an alternative insight, often within the same individual, which became apparent with only minor probing questions.

A primary grievance relates to militaries being extremely hierarchical institutions and tensions were caused by inconsistencies in the ranking structures of British Advisers and the RSLAF they were training, which “did not go down very well with the troops” (SL08). For instance, SL02 bemoans that his Adviser “was just an Officer. I was a Lieutenant Colonel! Senior to him, but I had to listen to him!” This created difficult working relationships. In turn, this influences the perception of a partnership as it displays a clear power discrepancy and was internalised by the participant as an assumption by the British of their superiority due to their position as a developed, rather than developing, nation. Others with a similar experience express bitterness finding “it was difficult to accept. But you have no other option” (SL04), and see it as an insulting but necessary evil. Despite this, there still appears to be an intense desire from these same participants to impress the British and stories of receiving praise from members of IMATT are told with intense pride. As such, the concept of ambivalence returns in the form of incongruity, as their behavior does not correlate with what they are verbalising.

From the research data it appears that the issue of hierarchy is also something which causes discomfort and hindrance to the British Officers charged with training those of a higher rank, and a preference is expressed for working with those of equal or lower rank (UKM01, UKM07). UKM07 speaks specifically of the significant positive change in dynamics when later positioned with a RSLAF Officer of equivalent rank. He states “it was the best thing that happened…it meant that we could operate a lot freer and lead from the front. They were happy to follow.” These narratives provide a contrasting view to the usual portrayal of the relationship between IMATT and RSLAF, which fails to acknowledge such criticisms or observations. This indicates a complexity to the relationship and the lack of parity in the ranking structure is viewed as a barrier by those with direct experience of its implementation. By ignoring experiences such as this, it may be argued that opportunities to strengthen and enhance future practice are lost. For instance, if this was to be replicated in other contexts, it could become a destabilising factor, with the potential to jeopardize a fragile peace.

IMATT were situated in executive roles and key positions within RSLAF, justified theoretically by the belief that these individuals should be external from existing power structures and influences whilst making "politically sensitive decisions" (Albrecht 2010: 8). However, the data suggests that this again created friction and anger that RSLAF were now answerable to the British (SL02, SL04, SL08, UKM01, UKM07). SL04 recalls:

> "there were times I saw open confrontation between the British soldiers and particular Sierra Leonean soldiers…but thank God the friction did not get to the point of in face with weapons."

IMATT also undertook a strategy of mentoring and knowledge transfer, underpinned by the idea that those in these positions would be training a Sierra Leonean counterpart to take over once SSR was complete. For example, matching a RSLAF engineer with an IMATT engineer (UKM04). Whilst this may appear to be a strength of the British approach, participants illustrate a different assessment of this in practice. For instance, by their own admission this shadowing did not always occur and as "British Officers rarely had someone there understudying them, so how could there be a transfer?" (UKM01). This is also corroborated in other IMATT Officers experiences, such as UKM07. However, this is not reflected in either current research or related mission evaluations. This significant flaw in mentoring activities is a note-worthy disconnect between theory and practice, as participants give the impression that collegiality was often little more than lip-service.

Counter to the consultative image presented, whereby IMATT's presence was focused on guiding RSLAF and enabling them to make informed decisions, in practice this does not appear to be the case. With the British having "executive authority so we could make decisions autonomously" (UKM02), multiple participants saw little need for consultation. Rather than viewing their role as advisory, those who had been part of IMATT instead view it as having been to make key decisions and give orders to RSLAF (UKM04) and acknowledge that on reflection they "bulldozed their way through" (UKM01). UKM04 intermittently referred to his counterpart, a senior RSLAF Commander, as "a Sierra Leonean guy working for me" and UKM01 reported that "IMATT definitely ran the show on behalf of RSLAF, and not just 'when required'." This provides further evidence of

a disconnect between the image projected by the British, through their stated approach, and what was occurring in practice. Only UKM07 concedes that this may not have been the most suitable approach and states that:

> "we really did need to step back to be honest. The lesson learned is perhaps to start off with the mindset that this is capacity building, so get them to do it. Not do it for them."

It also raises significant questions regarding the success of capacity building. When probed further, UKM01 lays the blame for this approach with RSLAF as "they had a lack of drive." This echoes the sentiments discussed earlier in section 4.3.1 IMATT, whereby British participants acknowledge the UK took charge, however, attribute this to RSLAF's ineptitude rather than their own desire to take on these responsibilities.

Much of the credit for the transformation of RSLAF is attributed to the British and there is an overwhelming focus on the ways in which the British had a positive effect on post-conflict Sierra Leone (see Ginifer and Oliver 2004; Malan et al. 2004). However, when interviewing individuals associated with RSLAF there is a keenness from them to reinforce their contribution. For example, SL04 refers to his time delivering training and is proud to have been "part of the British instruction team." Yet, literature and reports either omit or minimise this involvement and instead refers only to training delivered by the British, giving the impression of the latter as the sole instructor. In addition, SL08 feels that RSLAF "helped to improve the image of the British forces in Sierra Leone." This extract is significant as there is an accepted discourse that the British improved the image of RSLAF, but no discussion on the ways in which RSLAF assisted the British image in country. Broadly speaking, the British are held in high esteem in Sierra Leone and so this statement does raise questions as to why this would need improving. However, it should be kept in mind that the Sierra Leone public were initially positive about both the ECOMOG and UNAMSIL presence, though this quickly deteriorated. This also indicates that, for some, there is a degree of mutuality with regards to certain aspects of the relationship, despite these RSLAF contributions appearing to be lost from the intervention narrative.

4.3.5 Operation Pebu

Whilst there is a heavy focus on Operation Barras in UK official documentation and, at the time, in the media, some participants singled out Operation Pebu as significant (SL02, SL04, SL08, UKM01). This Operation is rarely discussed in any depth and is either neglected or merely acknowledged in the bulk of academic research into this period (a notable exception being Gaeta 2008 and Gaeta 2010). This was not an operation specifically asked about nor a component of the research schedule, instead it was one raised by the participants themselves. As part of SSR, IMATT launched Operation Pebu which was designed to address the lack of military accommodation through the construction of seven barracks and improvement of two existing barracks (SL04, UKM01). This was seen as much needed due to their lack of maintenance during pre-war governments and targeting by the RUF during the conflict. It was felt that having useable and functional barracks would enable RSLAF to deploy across Sierra Leone into Brigades and Battalion forces, extending their presence beyond the capital and further stabilising peace (Gaeta 2008). The operation aimed to provide a better standard of accommodation, which was thought would help to increase morale (Gaeta 2010). It was also central to the UK's idea of capacity building, yet all participants who discuss it do so in negative terms and it is widely regarded as an abject failure within Sierra Leone.

Rather than refurbish all remaining old barracks, typically constructed using concrete, and build any additional using a similar template, the decision was taken to build the majority new and using mud bricks. Sierra Leonean military participants largely see this as a significant backward step and become incensed whilst discussing the operation. SL02 describes the previous barracks as "modern. Modern toilets. Flush, everything! Well furnished." Whereas those constructed as part of Pebu were counterproductive to advancement, both in terms of the materials used for construction and the choice to create pit toilets. This is viewed as personally insulting and related to self-worth that they are no longer seen as good enough for modern facilities and anger that "we are more than pit toilet" (SL02). These negative perceptions are reinforced by the British experience, as one British solider involved in the operation reflects that what was constructed was little more than "squalid slums" (UKM01). This is in stark contrast

to the successful image portrayed by the UK of their involvement in Sierra Leone and shows a significant separation between those mandating such operations and those executing them.

The construction of these barracks was left to RSLAF themselves, which one may speculate as being a nod toward developing local ownership. However, UK military on the ground at the time feel it was “bonkers…It relied on soldiers to build their own homes, but they were fighters. So, why would they have expertise in building?” (UKM01). This same participant reports that RSLAF were irritated by this expectation and that it served to create additional tension between the SLP and the military, due to the common belief that the need for the barracks to be self-constructed was as “all the money went to the police and building them new stations. There was no money left for the army” (UKM01). Indeed, the SLP had their barracks built commercially, funded by DfID, and were not involved in the physical laboring of the construction process (Gaeta 2008), leading RSLAF to feel that the SLP were being pointedly favored (SL02, SL04, SL08). This is important as it came at a time when the relationship between RSLAF and SLP needed to improve to increase stability and strengthen the security sector as a whole.

As such, Operation Pebu arguably undermined other IMATT efforts to improve this relationship, evidencing silo-thinking between operations. Furthermore, the approach to the operation was misconceived, with the UK initially running it as a military programme rather than a major infrastructure programme. When this was realised and addressed, it was then hampered by funding and technical problems. For instance, the machines the UK had sourced to create the bricks did not work with the soil type in Sierra Leone and as a result the bricks crumbled easily. However, a pilot was not conducted before the operation, due to the pressure to meet targets, and so it proceeded at this low quality regardless (UKM01). These experiences indicate that pilot operations are salient to the efficacy of this type of operation. Generally, these negative experiences are absent from official reports relating to Operation Pebu, which is not publicly acknowledged as anything other than a success despite its ill-conceived nature

which, for one participant, “exposed UK military lack of understanding of RSLAF” (UKM01).

4.3.6 Sierra Leone Police

Participants’ discussion on SLP reform is limited in comparison to that of RSLAF, as even Sierra Leonean participants previously or currently employed by the police chose to focus instead on the military. In contrast, discussion on the legacy of police reforms is more extensive (see Chapter 5.2.5 Sierra Leone Police). As such, this sub-theme examining the SLP is also narrower as a reflection of the data’s focus. Despite the initial SSR primarily focusing on the SLP (Varisco 2014), both UK and Sierra Leonean participants tend to treat it as synonymous with reforming RSLAF. Only cursory mentions of the early reforms in the other security sectors are given, even from those participants who are current SLP Officers. Arguably, this is also a reflection of the focus from donor funding and attention who, although claim to have taken a holistic approach to reform, do not appear to have done so in practice. In addition, the UN involvement with the SLP, through United Nations Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) is not mentioned by any participant. This provides further evidence that regardless of the presence of other actors, SSR is credited by locals as being a British project. Indeed, the remodeling of the SLP followed the British template (Godwin and Haenlein 2013), with the new Sierra Leone Policing Charter (1998) largely written by two British individuals: Keith Biddle and Adrian Horn. This influence is evident throughout the Charter, for instance, the SLP remain the only unarmed African police force, instead having a separate armed wing (Albrecht 2010) in likeness to the UK police structure. Consequently, the new Charter is heavily influenced by individuals based on experience, systems and a culture entirely different to Sierra Leone.

Early SSR, beginning in the late 1990s foregrounded the police, repositioning them as the primary mechanism for internal security (Gbla 2007; Baker 2010). In the context of military coups and dynamics of the conflict, which blurred the lines between military and governance, the SLA had subsumed this role (White 2010). SSR refocused RSLAF’s role regarding territorial integrity. However, the SLP feel as though they were treated as inferior by the military, who saw “the police as a weaker vessel…they were referring to the police as their wives” (SL09) (also a

reflection of the societies gender dynamics). As such, there was tension between the two security branches. Attempts were made to address this by IMATT, who organised meetings and issued joint statements between Garrison Commanders and senior ranking police, to create the impression of a united front working together (UKM04). Police Military Cooperation courses were also organized by the British (SL09).

There is no indication as to how effective these measures were at the time and RSLAF and the SLP still tends to be self-cast in anecdotes as the two children of IMATT, each vying for attention. For instance, numerous RSLAF interlocuters report an annoyance at the attention the SLP received in the early stages of intervention. Likewise, multiple police participants express their irritation at the continued focus on RSLAF, which they feel to be at the expense of SLP development (SL01, SL09). This is not to say that either sentiment can be dismissed as in-fighting or lacking in validity. For example, despite the UK's approach focusing on police supremacy for internal security, this is not reflected in their medium to long-term actions and efforts. UKM01 argues that it was "hard to match this focus with the [UK] personnel effort", even in the relatively short-term. He attributes this to a lack of willingness from Chief Constables in the UK to deploy Constables, particularly for long-term projects, as they are not funded by the MoD. This indicates that how security projects are funded within the SSR umbrella impacts on the extent to which external security actors are able or willing to commit resources.

UK participants (UKM05, UKM07) state that they voiced qualms regarding the sustainability of the police and other branches of the security sector, aside from RSLAF, since the early 2000s, having quickly identified that these other areas "were being left behind" (UKM07). Yet it appears as though no meaningful action was taken to address this. UKM02 argues that police primacy is a lesson the UK continues to "re-learn thousands of times, in lots of different countries" as despite an apparent awareness and theoretical support, in practice there has been a much more sustained focus on the development of militaries. In the case of Sierra Leone, the additional attention and development of the RSLAF may be attributed to their being perceived as the greater potential threat to sustainable peace,

particularly given the history of military coups. However, an unintended consequence is the undermining of SLP primacy and the continued reinforcement of their inferiority in the eyes of RSLAF (SL01, SL09). As such, once again, the cohesion between the two and projects designed to strengthen their relationship is undermined.

Despite the issue of rivalry with the armed forces and sustainability, SL09 reports that he felt valued and listened to by the British during the reforms. This contrasts with the experiences of the RSLAF interlocutors. He states that the British seemingly appreciated that:

> "I have the institutional memory. They cannot know about the SLP more than I do. Even if they read all the books, I am within. There are things I know that they might not, so they value my opinion."

This implies self-awareness from the British regarding the limits to their own knowledge within the police and resulted in a more positive experience of working together. It is not clear why the SLP experience differed from that of RSLAF, however, this could be partially due to the individuals involved. For instance, although referring to justice sector reform, Albrecht (2010: 8) acknowledges the impact of the 'human factor' (personality, behavior, cultural attitudes) on "how external advice is received, absorbed and acted upon." It is not a leap to assume this human factor may also have influence within the other areas of SSR.

Divergent from the finding above, yet illustrative of the British influence on the SLP, are anecdotal references gathered during contextualizing conversations whilst in the field. The placement of retired British Police Officer, Keith Biddle, as the Commissioner of Police in Sierra Leone from 1999 to 2003 is referred to locally as 'the golden age of policing'. Whilst this was at the request of President Kabbah, it is also acknowledged as a period when "the SLP was effectively run by the UK" (Albrecht 2010: 30), with this position retaining responsibility for the police force in its entirety, as well as acting as the head of operations. Rather than this raising accusations of neo-colonialism, as was expected, locals instead speak very positively of this period. SL01, a former senior ranking Police Officer recalls feeling "ecstatic that someone is coming from the colonial power." Others echo this sentiment, expressing a distrust of their own people and an inherent

trust in the incorruptibility of the British. This is further reinforced by UKP01 who claims that during this period “the police force here was the best it’s ever been…he [Keith Biddle] got rid of all corruption.” Just how realistic this assertion may be is debatable as it is highly unlikely that all forms of corruption within the SLP were eradicated during this period, yet it does appear that this is a commonly held belief on the ground. Such narratives continue to place the British firmly within the role of ‘saviour’ of the peace and insusceptible to corruption. However, they simultaneously also appear to negatively reinforce perceptions within Sierra Leone which cast locals as inept and corrupt.

Similarly, existing research refers to the period under Keith Biddle as the “heyday” of Sierra Leone policing and reform (Albrecht 2010: 12). These positive experiences may not all be the result of a decrease in corruption, as it must be acknowledged that the placement of a British citizen in such a key executive position also bring with them increased access to donor gatekeepers. This is supported by Albrecht and Jackson's (2009) assertion that the amount spent on the SLP began to dwindle as the first Sierra Leonean Inspector General of Police (IGP), Brima Kamara, was introduced in 2003. The difference in funding allocation which accompanied this carries with it the potential to add credence to the interpretation of a ‘British golden age’ in terms of policing, as both transformation and change are easier to achieve with increased access to funding and donors. In turn this sets standards which local successors, without the same level of resources, would be simply unable to match. However, there remains a tendency to compare the performance and progress of the Keith Biddle with subsequent IGP’s. As such, it can be speculated whether placing British personnel in executive positions sets unfair or unachievable standards for the Sierra Leonean counterparts who follow in these positions.

4.3.7 Training

Training of both the military and police had been neglected during the ten-year conflict, as forces were preoccupied with fighting the insurgency. As a result, even senior military officers had become undisciplined and lacked current training. Addressing this was a key focus for the British within Sierra Leone’s SSR from the outset, with its links to sustainability heavily emphasised. Early SLP training

focused on the senior echelons, premised on the idea of a 'trickledown effect' serving to increase the capacity of lower ranks. In practice this was shown to be an incorrect assumption (Albrecht 2010). This acknowledgment may have influenced the change in approach when it came to RSLAF training, which instead targeted toward lower ranked personnel, before later shifting focus to all ranks. This was also partially designed to help reinforce reconciliation (Godwin and Haenlein 2013). Short-Term Training Teams (STTT's) also came from the UK to supplement the IMATT numbers and provide assistance (UKM01). This training largely mirrored UK systems, structures and practice (UKM07), which could be argued as displaying an inherent presumption of superiority and 'knowing best'. However, what was provided was not always appropriate. For example, forensic training which relied on the use of expensive equipment and was unaffordable to the government of Sierra Leone beyond the short-term (Albrecht 2010). This demonstrates a lack of suitability, as well as unsustainability, with regards to some of the British efforts. Speculatively, an alternative programme of both training and dialogue may have been more effective, not only in creating a sense of local ownership, but also in creating nuanced approaches suitable for the context, needs and budgetary limitations of Sierra Leone.

Training had the objective of creating a minimal capability, however, UKM01 argues that even this was a "struggle" and as a result the aim had to be adjusted to "an even lower capability than had previously been planned". Original estimates indicate that it would take approximately three years to upskill RSLAF and hand over, however, this took much longer (UKM01). Multiple British military participants (UKM01, UKM04, UKM05) expressed their frustration with the slow pace of progress at the time, particularly within RSLAF, and UKM04 remembers that "if you achieve one thing a week you're doing well." In particular, it is felt that it was difficult to get changes and training to "stick" (UKM04). For instance, this same participant remembers they would teach one thing for three to four weeks and then lead their troops into believing he would be absent the following week, at which point he:

> "would turn up to see if they were [completing set tasks] and they would just be sat around under a tree. And you'd say 'why aren't you doing what we said?' and they'd just say 'oh well, you weren't here'."

Not only does this indicate potential apathy and a struggle to instill lasting change, but more concerningly implies that such changes were only properly maintained under immediate, tangible, British presence. This may reflect the lack of local ownership of changes, whereby as they were not instigated from within RSLAF, their implementation ceases once the instigators (in this case the UK) are not physically present. This also adds credence to the perception of a patrimonial relationship between the UK and Sierra Leone, with this anecdote reflecting how a parent may check up on a child.

Whilst academic research focuses on the operational side of the programme of reforms (what was provided and when) (for example, see Ashington-Pickett 2010; Varisco 2014) participants add a new dimension: training as a tool for mentality change. UKM04 states “IMATT tried to change the mentality of the leadership of the Sierra Leone army to one of impartiality and depolitical.” As such, as well as upskilling, British participants and non-military Sierra Leonean participants see the training provided as a means by which to shift the mindset of RSLAF from self-serving, to a force which sees itself as answerable to civilians (SL07, SL09, SL13, UKM01, UKM04). For SL07 this was needed to “get these guys to think they are employed by civilians, not the other way round, because they have this mentality that they are superior.” This facet is not acknowledged by any RSLAF participants, which may imply a lack of awareness of this need to change or potentially an implicit denial of faults in their previous approach. The military as answerable to civilians is itself a democratic principle, indicating that training was used to further develop and embed this ideology within the security sector. This is reinforced by UKM01 who speaks of democratic principles as those which “push and underpinned training, educating officers all about their role in a democratic society.” Thus, what was delivered was not simply upskilling and ideology-free training. This raises questions as to the role of political dogmas within SSR and whether it can or should be value-free.

An additional impact of the training delivered by the UK was an increase in the Sierra Leone general public’s regard of both the military and police. Prior to, and during, the conflict this was overwhelmingly negative, seen as weak due to their inability to defeat the rebels and corrupt due to their role as Sobels and violence

towards civilians (Keen 2005a; Harris 2020). For example, the TRC (2004) estimates that 23% of the atrocities committed during the conflict were perpetrated by the military and CDF combined. SL07, a civilian, expresses his distrust of the former military as “the SLA guys work with the rebels. Give them weapons in exchange for things. They were a Sobel army.” For SL13 the existence of Sobels was partially in reaction to the government’s distrust of the military as he states:

> “The Deputy Minister of Defense at the time had more faith in the CDF, but equipping the CDF over the army I think was a mistake. That caused a lot of resentment among those who were loyal and eventually led to the military joining forces with the rebels.”

In contrast, RSLAF participants strongly deny the existence of Sobels, calling it “propaganda” (SL08) and “lies” (SL02). SL08 rationalises the wider belief in Sobels as mistaken identities and claims that the RUF would capture military logistics and uniforms before attacking villages. This was designed to undermine the SLA and give the impression of government soldiers defecting, thereby further damaging their reputation among civilians. Whilst SSR programming included measures to target the public’s perception of the security infrastructure, to improve the relationship between civilians and the sector by building trust (Godwin and Haenlein 2013), the data indicates that simply the prestige of working closely with the British and engaging with their training created a boost in the public perception (SL04, SL05, SL07, SL13, UKP01). For example, SL05 states “because those soldiers were trained by the UK, they now become good soldiers, proper soldiers” (SL05). This is indicative of the significant value of the UK’s reputation among Sierra Leonean civilians.

4.3.8 Equipment

One of the reasons, as identified by participants, for the SLA failure in quashing the RUF insurgency was due to a severe lack of weapons and supplies such as ammunition (SL01, SL04, SL05, SL07). For instance, SL04 expresses frustration that “sometimes we left operational areas, not because we weren’t brave enough to fight but because we run short of ammunition.” Weaponry that the SLA did have access to was often rusty and antiquated, or “so old you can’t actually fire

them” (SL05) and with guns getting “so hot they would have to urinate on [sic] to cool down” (SL07). The lack of an operational maritime wing also meant that the RUF were able to move supplies and weaponry unimpeded via rivers (UKM07). This is not unexpected, given Nelson-Williams assertion (cited in Harris 2020: 83) that the armed forces were “largely ceremonial” by the time the conflict emerged, but had a negative impact on SLA’s physical ability to fight as well as morale.

Weaponry was provided by the UK as part of SSR, along with equipment such as uniforms designed to increase visibility and therefore positively influence the stability of the nation. However, once more the theme of sustainability emerges, with the British approach to the provision of equipment and logistics as problematic (see Chapter 5.2.7 Equipment for further discussion). This was identified as an issue relatively quickly by those within the Sierra Leone security sectors, who feel that there was “no continuity…in the police, when they were restructuring, they gave us everything. We were able to buy everything. Then they stopped and we started struggling again” (SL09). Where equipment was provided, at times, it very quickly became a burden due to the lack of financial means to maintain it and a UNSC (2004) report found that within two years the vehicles donated by the British were no longer able to be used due to a lack of spare parts. This is also echoed by UKM01 who perceives the vehicles provided to have been old and in need of maintenance. RSLAF also struggled to afford to fuel them. Likewise, the maritime wing was provided with five outboard engines. Whilst on the surface this appears to be an improvement on their resources, which prior to this had consisted of “no ships or boats other than three wooden framed hulls” (UKM07), in practice they had no means of maintaining them. Once more this demonstrates a disconnect between those making decisions at higher levels and the situation on the ground. It also appears that short-term thinking often prevailed over long-term capacity building, failing to consider the suitability of such apparatus beyond the immediate period.

In contrast to the equipment provided, which became a burden in the medium to long-term, the removal of other equipment too soon also had a detrimental effect. Beginning in 2003 the UK initiated the process of drawing back from key positions within RSLAF. The transfer of some responsibilities from IMATT to RSLAF

created significant challenges due to a lack of means to maintain progress. For instance, as part of this transfer and withdrawal, the British military also removed all office equipment, logistics and relatively essential resources such as power generators “almost overnight and left African officers in a bombed-out shell of a HQ” (UKM05). Key communication apparatus was also removed, including Morse code signalers, forcing operators to speak the codes instead (UKM05). Yet, the expectation of a continuation of standards and pace remained (UKM03). This led to fear within RSLAF of being perceived as unproductive by comparison, as without access to basic resources “the amount of work I do will not be as what the British did. People will say I’m ineffective” (SL08). This did appear to be the case amongst some former IMATT participants. For example, UKM01 admits that it was tough for RSLAF to complete basic tasks as they did not have access to resources such as printers. However, despite this he primarily attributes the decrease in pace to a lack of ability as “RSLAF couldn’t keep up with the processes” (UKM01). Yet logically, it can be speculated that they may have been more likely to keep up with such processes, had the means to achieve them more readily not been removed.

This withdrawal of basic equipment is perceived by Sierra Leonean military participants as churlish behavior (SL04, SL08). A UK participant (UKM05) cites this as an example of where intervention practice may be improved, by ensuring that it does not go “from everything to nothing overnight”, leaving behind the basic equipment for those left to do their jobs. This detrimental effect also extends to the remaining IMATT personnel seconded to RSLAF and their ability to operate effectively. For example, UKM05 recalls “when I came home on R&R I had to go buy pens and acetate for maps out of my own pocket because we no longer had them and there were no means of getting it in country…it was regrettable and unnecessary.” As IMATT aimed to create long-lasting positive development in RSLAF, with a focus on sustainability and building capability, it does appear counterproductive to remove the materials needed to maintain this progress. These experiences have implications for best practice, indicating that a more considered approach may be needed when deciding what equipment and resources should remain after the initial thrust of intervention and reform, and what may become a burden if left without any strategy or ability for maintenance.

4.3.9 Corruption

By the time the SSR programme began in earnest, without the disruption of the ongoing conflict, Freetown was largely chaotic. The police and military continued to feed into this disorder through the use of illegitimate roadblocks as a means of extorting money from the population, a practice which had begun prior to the conflict (UKM04). Such corrupt practice was viewed as widespread throughout the capital and as a destabilising factor. Whilst an anti-corruption agenda was integrated into training, the issue was primarily tackled through the redeployment of military units across the country. This removed the concentration of RSLAF soldiers in the capital "with little to do" (UKM04). This was reportedly well received by the population, due to the subsequent decrease in illicit activity, yet it is questionable whether this approach truly addressed the issue of corruption beyond the short-term. For instance, the maneuvering of these personnel away from the peninsular appears to simply displace the problem and move it from an area of high population concentration, rather than getting to the crux of the issue. As such, participants' experience indicates that at times surface level 'solutions' were used to provide quick wins and meet targets at the cost of meaningfully addressing the issue. This approach is fundamentally at odds with the focus on sustainable peace professed by the UK's approach in Sierra Leone. The long-term implications of this within the context of security sector are discussed in Chapter 5.2.8 Corruption.

Although the destabilising effect of corruption is often taken for granted within discourse (see Hope 2000; Lawal 2007; Transparency International 2015), the research data from British military participants displays alternative perspectives regarding this impact. Whilst differences between the Sierra Leonean and British groups is expected, based on cultural assumptions, these differences within the groups were unanticipated. For instance, the practice of Battalion leaders to 'skim' a portion of the money and rice allowance from their soldiers is viewed by UKM01 to have been a major issue. He recalls an instance in which this had led to a Battalion leader being shot by his troops and expresses concern that such occurrences could easily escalate into a major security risk. In addition, UKP01 attributes the 1997 coup to the abuse of this practice, claiming "the senior officers

took massive amounts of rice and gave only the rank-and-file half a bag a month…that prompted the soldiers to rise up."

Yet, UKM05 discusses this same practice without viewing it in such negative terms or with the same potential to disrupt a fragile peace. Instead, this participant acknowledges the custom as corrupt but feels such behavior was self-limiting:

> "if he [the Commander] skims off too much, his unit will rebel and they will mutiny on him. But if he skims off just a little, it gives him effectively a pot of money like a pension. It's their culture and the way their culture has evolved."

He argues that it did not form a threat to the progress of RSLAF and the practice appears to have been expected by officers, with most ensuring only a small amount was taken. As it was seen as a form of futureproofing, it was felt to have helped motivated officers to develop professionally and progress through the military ranks themselves, in order to take advantage of this practice. This counter narrative appears to run contradictory to expected conventions and does not appear in literature nor reports based on the involvement. This exclusion is likely to reflect its clash with neo-liberal perspectives on both peacebuilding and corruption. However, by eliminating such experiences the nuances of debate are stifled and it appears that any alternatives to the Western perspective simply cannot be entertained, even theoretically.

British participants did not appear ignorant of the cultural differences within the standards being pushed on reforming sectors, particularly regarding corruption. However, as "the programmes were being funded by the British taxpayer they are accountable" (UKM01) to the British electorate and not the affected nation. This is spoken of in terms of an awareness of the need to justify their actions domestically and conform to the standards which would be acceptable to the public. Nevertheless, at times it creates tension within an individual. For example, UKM05 expresses intense regret that local actors were "punished" for acting within their perceived cultural norms, rather than those imposed by the British. He tells of one SLA Battalion Commander who was one of the few to have successfully defended their post against the RUF. Rather than being rewarded for his loyalty, the Commander was dismissed for 'skimming' rice rations. The

participant observes that such instances create ethical dilemmas amongst IMATT personnel. The team reportedly openly discussed being:

> "left deeply uneasy…I have deep misgivings about a British system that sacks loyal and successful Brigadiers for failing to live up to the British standards of ethics. We had a choice; integrate into African culture and ways of working even when unpalatable (and you might have to pinch your nose occasionally because it smells a bit, but it works) or you go in and impose your highest moral and ethical standards. But the last time they did that it resulted in a mutiny" (UKM05).

As such, they are mindful of the need to remain accountable to Britain and so instill the highest ethical and moral standards within RSLAF yet are acutely aware of the very differing environments and potential to punish 'loyal' military members. This dichotomy is a useful reminder that such situations are rarely clear cut and raises questions as to the ethics of an external power imposing standards which contradict the way the local culture has evolved, and whether there is an acceptable level of corruption.

4.3.10 Local Ownership

Theory reinforces local ownership as salient in the design and implementation of the SSR process, required for both legitimacy and long-term sustainability (Le Grys 2010; Nilsson and Kovacs 2013; Gordon 2014). Regarding Sierra Leone, existing research often frames this very positively, with Ebo (2006: 496) stating the SSR "reform process…displays exemplary local ownership" and Le Grys (2010: 51) claiming that "the real success of the SSR was the level of consultation with the population." However, this view is not reflected in the opinions of participants and appears to be an overarching issue across the dataset. As discussed in section 4.3.2 Military Reintegration Programmes, the retirement and promotion processes, as well as day-to-day running of RSLAF, is viewed as having the UK as the sole decision maker by both Sierra Leonean and UK participants. The result among RSLAF participants is feelings of exclusion and the perception of being side-lined whilst "they [the British] had control of all of us" (SL04). In addition, SL08 expresses frustration at not being informed of a timeline for key command positions to be passed back to the Sierra Leone military, demonstrating a lack of communication. The combination of these approaches

leads SL04 to speculate that “doing those things themselves is a recipe for conflict.” This highlights that rather than this being an example of best practice, it instead had the potential to become a significant source of contention and generated resentment on the ground. This juxtaposes the representation of local ownership in discourse (for example, see Wonnawon 2021). It does not appear to be something that IMATT were ignorant of, acknowledging that “we were making ourselves very unpopular” (UKM04) and a confidential briefing report from 2003 states that “there is little real ownership by Sierra Leone staff.” However, this does not appear to have been successfully addressed and to some degree is an ongoing issue (see Chapter 5.2.9 Local Ownership and Sustainability).

Although often excluded from the official British narrative, British military participants who were present during SSR discuss individuals’ resistance to the control exerted by the UK (UKM01, UKM04, UKM07). However, these participants dismiss the expressions of discontent from RSLAF as being premised on “getting in the way of their cushy corrupt existence” (UKM04), thereby delegitimising the voices of grievance. This attribution is not unique and, although very limited in number, where official reports do acknowledge any dissatisfaction on the part of Sierra Leoneans within the security sector it is often coupled with explanations of vested interests in maintaining corrupt practice (see Albrecht 2010). Similarly, Neads (2017: 441) cites an IMATT commander claiming that Operation Pebu failed as RSLAF were “lazy and corrupt.” In a further example of ambivalence, UKM04 acknowledges the tensions, but denies the existence of a RSLAF opposition. He states “there was no resistance because they knew we were in charge” (UKM04). The framing of this response indicates a master and a subordinate, rather than a situation premised on strong cooperation and local ownership. It also implies that rather than a lack of confrontation due to contentment with the situation, it was instead partially rooted in a form of power domination of one group over another.

Within these accounts there does not appear to be any allowance for genuine complaint based on an external force making key decisions within a sovereign territory, which on a micro-level may cost an individual their livelihood in a context

of abject poverty and extremely limited alternative employment opportunities. That there was no mass protest in response to this level of involvement can be at least partially attributed to this fear of unemployment and SL04 explains that it served to “keep people in check.” A former IMATT adviser attributes it to a:

> “reluctance to be seen as doing anything controversial or putting heads up over the parapet - so many had previously committed atrocities as part of the army or coup attempts or rebellion” (UKM01).

Therefore, the Sierra Leone military compliance could be attributed as much to fear of reprisal or of consequences, as gratitude for the UK’s presence.

Local ownership with regards to structuring is also questionable as the reforms followed a UK model. In practice UK participants acknowledge that this is far too complex to be effective for the Sierra Leonean military, who had very different levels of experience by comparison (UKM01, UKM07). Largely drawn on the observations of UKM01, it is felt that RSLAF appeared to find the “complicated command structures hard to understand” (UKM01) which suggests that some of the changes instigated were not appropriate for the domestic level of expertise which suggests a lack of local ownership. Additional components of SSR were taken from the Ghanaian model, seen at the time as the “gold standard for Africa” (UKM01). However, these elements, such as the MoD Management Plan, were instigated without examining the Ghanaian experience. It was only once they had already been implemented that this was explored and found to be “crazy and overcomplicated …It was written by the British but even the British couldn’t follow it” (UKM01), which in turn hampered progress. Though not part of the official narrative, a confidential briefing from 2003 provided by UKM01, highlights that these structures did “not appear sustainable…[and has] been an utter waste of time – detailed Management Plans with endless objectives.” This also exposed that the Ghanaians themselves were not able to follow their model, despite the labeling of ‘success’. Consequently, the architype was implemented without a full understanding of its practicalities. This highlights the need to explore experiences of those on the ground to gain a deeper understanding whilst laying bare the issues with the uncritical labelling of success. In this instance, it led to a model being transposed without a nuanced understanding of its strengths, shortfalls or practicalities.

Some Sierra Leone armed forces participants (SL02, SL08, SL10) express discomfort at elements of the British practices instituted, which at times ignored cultural differences. For instance, within the UK military soldiers eat before their commander. This is a reflection of cultural understandings of the nature of leadership and a belief that “you look after your soldiers first. You come after them” (UKM04). This was imposed on RSLAF during SSR. However, within the Sierra Leone military culture this practice is viewed as insulting and counter to tradition whereby the commander eats first, as a mark of respect to their seniority (SL08). As such, the British imposed their own systems and ways of working on the culture. Whilst this is partially understandable given the vast amounts of funding they had allocated to Sierra Leone, adding pressure for it to be viewed as a success, it does raise questions as to whether more appropriate and locally owned systems can and should be instituted in future practice. Arguably, where there is a perception within the affected nation that culture and customs are not being respected, creating ownership may become problematic.

Despite these concerns, a lack of local ownership is not always felt to be a negative aspect, as Sierra Leonean civilians appear to have shown a greater trust of Britons in key positions, than locals. For instance, Keith Biddle as AIG. This seems to be premised on the notion that a British individual would not be influenced by the social and political ‘baggage’ which a Sierra Leonean counterpart may carry (Albrecht 2010; Berewa 2011). However, it is important to note that this desire does not extend to any international outsider, rather only the British. Likely this reflects the historic relationship between the two and perceptions such as this fuel the often-verbalised desire by some to return to colonial rule. For instance, UKM04 states that “never a day went by when someone wouldn’t say to me ‘well can you not just come and run the whole country, because our politicians are rubbish’.” This is at odds with reports that label local ownership as “strong” (Albrecht 2010: 26), as the essence of this idea appears to run contradictory to the desires to almost devolve ownership to an external sovereign (see Chapter 5.7 An Unquestioned ‘Success’ for further analysis).

4.4 Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter challenge significant elements of the current literature and discourse around the British military intervention in Sierra Leone. This chapter has explored the experience of the British intervention through a comparison with ECOMOG and UNAMSIL, focusing on the motivations for involvement, composition of the multilateral forces and how they were perceived on the ground. Both ECOMOG and UNAMSIL were seen as self-serving, due to their association with Nigerian forces, and viewed negatively. However, the British motivations were deemed to be altruistic overall despite the connotations of neo-colonialism. These findings add another layer of complexity to the debates surrounding self-interest in military interventions for humanitarian purposes. Seemingly certain elements appear acceptable to the affected population, and so 'self-interest' cannot be treated as a homogenous category. For instance, the perception of the UK's neo-liberal aim to enhance the democratic system in Sierra Leone is not treated with contempt, whereas the Nigerian aim of enhancing personal wealth is. Yet, both may be categorised as self-interest. It also appears that for certain additional interests to be accepted, or at least tolerable, there must be an overriding view of humanitarianism. It is this combination which participants felt the Nigerian involvement was lacking.

SSR has also been discussed and forms a large part of the experience of British military intervention for all participants. As such, it is clear that for those involved the perception of 'military intervention' extends beyond the initial Operations, such as Palliser and Barras, and encompasses the subsequent reform activities. Despite a projected discourse of cooperation and local ownership the data throws this into question; at times situating cooperation as premised on the desire for peace and an unequitable power dynamic as opposed to collaboration. Local ownership does not appear to have been experienced within the reforms to RSLAF, although there seems to have been more consultation within the SLP. There is a certain irony that despite SSR's design as a tool to reinstitute the states monopoly of violence, identified as a key marker of sovereignty (Albrecht 2017), the process was so heavily British controlled that one may speculate just how sovereign Sierra Leone was able to be during this period.

The data also demonstrates that there was a disconnect between how projects were presented and conceived, and how they were executed. For instance, rather than advising, IMATT personnel often saw their role as directing and shadowing was described as rare. Similarly, there was a lack of coordination between different aspects of SSR. For example, some projects were specifically centered around creating cooperation between RSLAF and the SLP, whilst others inadvertently increased this resentment, such as Operation Pebu, and thereby undermined this. This demonstrates a need to step away from siloed thinking and maintaining an awareness of the implications or unintended impacts that one initiative may have on another.

Much of the emphasis within SSR was on building the institutional capacity, yet sustainability did not appear to be considered, with equipment such as vehicles becoming a burden within a very short space of time. Furthermore, increasing expectations through the provision of equipment which then appears unused or broken has the potential to undermine confidence in the Sierra Leone political elites. Despite this, based on the experiences discussed throughout this chapter, the implication is that progress has been made within the security sector. Just how sustainable this progress is perceived to have been is analysed in the next chapter, which explores the legacies of the British military intervention.

Chapter 5 - The Legacy of the British Intervention in Sierra Leone

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter found that often the accepted narratives surrounding the British intervention are, at times, superficial or contrast individuals' experiences of the intervention. It is evident that there were tensions between RSLAF and IMATT when working together, as well as issues of local ownership with regards to many of the related restructuring activities. This chapter will explore the legacy of these actions; that twenty-one years have passed since the initial British 'boots on the ground' intervention enables an analysis of the longer-term impacts through the experiences of those involved. Currently, this perspective is lacking in literature, which often has a preoccupation with the UN's action in Sierra Leone, rather than unilateral action or more specifically that of the British (for example, see Graben and Fitz-Gerald 2013; Lucey and Kumalo 2018). Furthermore, it appears as though the labelling of the intervention as a success has discouraged further critiquing.

The term 'legacy' is utilised throughout this qualitative research and may be seen as contentious due to its subjectivity. However, this lack of rigid definition is argued to be a strength; participants were not limited to a particular pre-set time period or genre such as economics or development. Instead, all participants understood the term as a reflection of the manifested long-term impacts and outcomes, interpreting this within experiences they found meaningful and thought to be relevant. By not pre-defining the term, a more holistic data set was gathered based on the voices of interviewees.

This chapter focuses on experiences from 2010 until 2017, the latter date being when the primary data was collected. Whilst this does leave a gap in time, with the previous chapter addressing the period up until 2004, these parameters were not pre-defined and instead are dictated by the data set. Although using these date parameters is somewhat arbitrary, when participants spoke of 'legacy' they largely referred to their experiences post-2010. Whilst one of the themes, SSR, largely correlates to that found in Chapter 4 by building upon the data presented from a longer-term perspective, other new themes also emerge. This includes the

shift in focus from security to development, the role of memory in sustaining peace, and how participants interpreted indicators of 'success'. The thread of funding, more specifically the lack of, and sustainability runs through several of the themes. In contrast to the previous chapter, fewer analyses can be contextualised using current research in the field. This is due to the new terrain that this research explores. For instance, although IMATT features heavily in much academic research (in particular that which concentrates on SSR), the same cannot be said of ISAT, which is not focused upon to the same extent. Wherever findings are consistent with literature, it has been considered.

5.1 Lasting Perceptions of Nigerian Forces

As in the previous chapter, ECOMOG and UNAMSIL are often referred to as a Nigerian intervention by participants. The ongoing negative perceptions of these soldiers are expressed in numerous interviews by Sierra Leonean participants (SL02, SL03, SL05, SL07, SL08, SL12), as well as during informal conversations with civilians. The data demonstrates evidence of residual hostility generated by the Nigerian presence during the conflict, which continues even now and seems to be rooted in a sense of betrayal. For instance, SL03 speaks of being able to forgive the rebels for their actions as:

> "they are uneducated, didn't know better. They stole microwaves thinking it was the TV, saying 'look at me, I have a TV now'…they would turn it on and accidentally explode it. Nigerians, they came here, kill innocent people, terrorise. But they knew better. People find that difficult to accept."

SL02 expresses continuing anger that these forces were sent to provide assistance, however, took advantage of the carnage in order to abuse the situation for their own benefit. That a "Nigerian was also made CDF. The worst!" (SL09), is also felt to be insulting, given the actions of ECOMOG troops, and is still a source of bitterness. However, this appointment of General Khobe as Commander of Defence Forces in 1998 is likely to reflect the potentially positive view of Nigeria by political elites, due to their support of the Kabbah government and the SLPP. The existence of a street in central Freetown named after Sani Abacha may also indicate a differing experience of the Nigerian troops by certain political elites.

SL05, a civilian who did not take up arms during the conflict, spoke of a Nigerian ECOMOG leader, referred to locally as 'evil spirit'. He recalls an incident whereby he was having afternoon coffee with friends when evil spirit arrived:

> "he broke the door. I laid on the roof and hid. My friends, he tied them up, burned them up. Aberdeen Bridge – he shoved them down there, threw them in the water. Six of them."

Such experiences do not appear to be uncommon, with one Human Rights Watch (1999) report stating it had gathered witness testimonies to over 180 executions (primarily on Aberdeen Bridge), including of women and children, mostly committed by ECOMOG forces. These harrowing events evidence the experiences and widespread accounts of significant abuses, which have led to the creation of residual hatred. This appears to be further augmented by the failure to hold Nigerian forces to account for their behaviour: Nigerian peacekeepers were not included as part of the prosecution of various armed actors by the Special Court of Sierra Leone (RSCSL n.d.). To date, these crimes have not been redressed, which led one participant to comment that he feels "a blind eye has been turned. It is injustice. Still we wait for this to be addressed" (SL10), demonstrating that the desire for justice for these atrocities remains current. That peacekeepers intervening militarily for humanitarian purposes appear to act with impunity carries with it significant considerations for R2P and those best positioned to enact it (see Chapter 7 for further analysis).

For multiple Sierra Leonean participants (SL02, SL03, SL05, SL07, SL12) these negative experiences are subsequently attributed to the Nigerian population, with undesirable characteristics ascribed to the nationality as a whole. For example, speaking of Nigerians more broadly SL03 states "there are some Nigerians living here now. They know we hate them." This sentiment was also openly expressed by the local population during fieldwork, as well as stories of Nigerians being attacked in Freetown relatively recently. Therefore, it is apparent that the forgiveness extended to former-RUF combatants does not extend to Nigerian interveners. This is likely to reflect the government and international community's refusal to formally address the latter, and the assistance of Truth and Reconciliation programmes in addressing the former. As such, as a direct result

of the peacekeeping effort, enduring prejudices have been created within Sierra Leonean society.

5.2 SSR

Participants closely associate the legacy of the British intervention with SSR (SL01, SL07, SL08, SL09, SL13, UKM01, UKM02, UKM04, UKM07, UKP04) and SL07 singles the security sector out as "the biggest legacy." However, further probing reveals that this positivity is limited to RSLAF only and does not extend to other branches of the security sector. For instance, the Office of National Security (ONS) has previously been described in research as a success, such as with regard to election planning, and apolitical with exemplary performance (see Ebo 2006; Le Grys 2010). Yet participants label it as "weak" (UKM03), with "no cooperation, no collaboration, no coordination" (SL09) and its employees little more than the "puppets of the government, letting them exercise whatever authority they want" (UKM02). This indicates that in some areas there is not the separation between the Executive and security that had been aimed for. As such, it is important to explore in more depth the legacy of SSR within Sierra Leone: a case often cited as evidence of what can be achieved and used to encourage SSR programming in other environments (Jackson 2018), despite the lack of understanding of what has been left behind. Good practice within SSR is premised on the objectives of:

> "effective governance, oversight and accountability in the security system; improved delivery of security and justice services; development of local leadership and ownership of the process; sustainability of justice and security sector delivery" (Jackson 2018: 3).

It is apparent through discussion within the following themes that the extent to which these objectives have been achieved in Sierra Leone is debatable.

5.2.1 RSLAF

Externally RSLAF is now widely viewed as capable and its reform treated as highly successful by the government of Sierra Leone. Literature also largely deems it to be a "democratically accountable, effective and sustainable force" (Godwin and Haenlein 2013: 31) (see also Army 2016 and Parliament UK 2014). British participants echo the idea of success within RSLAF reform, supporting this

dominant narrative (UKM01, UKM02, UKM03, UKM05, UKM07, UKP02, UKP04), and believe there to have been “huge progress” (UKM02). SL04, a current senior ranking member of RSLAF, feels that the military “had been transformed completely…gone are the days where you think ‘if you don’t have these requirements we should just go on and take weapons and start chasing people around’.” Therefore, the force is seen to be more disciplined and professional, moving away from past mindsets which may have viewed military coups as legitimate courses of action. This increase in professionalism is also evidenced by their participation in peace-keeping missions in Somalia and Sudan, their participation in Horton training academy and their relative efficiency during the Ebola response. However, one British participant did express concern regarding the increasing influence of the military and states:

> “having created this beast we now have to modify and moderate their ambition to ensure it doesn’t go too far and someone say ‘bollocks to this, we’ll sort this countries problems out’ and seize power again” (UKP02).

This suggests that from the British perspective there are still concerns about the potential for military coups. Whilst some Sierra Leonean participants feel that future coups are unlikely (SL01, SL04, SL06), this appears to be premised on the military being trained by the British, and therefore instilled with British values and professionalism. Such rationalisations fail to take into account that some members of the former SLA had also been British trained. This includes Foday Sankoh, who had been previously trained at Sandhurst (SL04, SL07).

A contradictory view to RSLAF as an accountable force is also presented, which portrays the military as believing itself to be above the law (SL03, SL09). For instance, SL09 recalls that a RSLAF Major had recently been arrested for entering the Central Business District on a motorcycle; an act which is illegal. Shortly after the arrest the police station was “descended on. These guys from the Barracks, they came. Just took that guy. Went away.” The participant sees this as evidence of the militaries ongoing reluctance to view themselves as bound by domestic law and answerable to civilians. This implies that whilst there have been significant improvements, there is still potentially further development needed to ensure the military does not come to undermine the states security.

As discussed in Chapter 4.3.3 RSLAF Downsizing, the years following MRP focused on reducing the size of the military. This was decreased to 8,500, yet still felt to be too large and it has been argued that it should be further reduced as peacetime progressed (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013). This is likely to reflect budgetary constraints, as UKP02 feels that “the 8,500 people in the military now is unaffordable.” This assertion is supported by existing research as Nilsson and Kovacs (2013) estimate that without external financing RSLAF would be limited to between 2,000 and 3,000 personnel. Thus, funding remains an issue with regards to the military. Yet despite this, at the time of fieldwork (2017) UKM02 estimates that RSLAF was undermanned by approximately 1,087 personnel and recruitment had recently begun. This indicates a lack of consensus with regards to how large the military should be, as well as a tension between the size needed to maintain security and affordability.

Endeavors have been made by the British to push the ideal that “the military should be a meritocracy” (UKM01), and that future recruitment should be a competitive and open process (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013). This is an attempt to avoid the overt politicalisation of the military, which prevailed prior to the conflict (Berewa 2011). However, it appears that recruitment continues to lack transparency, and former-government minister SL13, feels that under Koroma recruitment was based on:

> “lists being sent by ministers of who should be employed. So, people have gotten into military and police who should not be there. People get employed who do not have qualifications and those who have qualifications are left out.”

As the participant has previously been part of the opposition government, such statements may be partially politically motivated. Yet, when the question was posed as to whether he feels the same would be true if the 2018 election resulted in his affiliated political party being elected, he responds “my experience means that one cannot expect much from politicians” (SL13). As such, the implication is that he feels such practices are likely to continue regardless of which party holds power, and that they are ingrained across the political spectrum.

Accommodation is also singled out as problematic (SL02, SL04, SL08), underpinned by concerns regarding the funding of the security sector, making it a technically separate but interrelated issue. The lack of suitable accommodation is referred to as “the greatest challenge” currently facing RSLAF (SL04), which may be viewed as further evidence of the ineffectiveness of Operation Pebu (see Chapter 4.3.5 Operation Pebu). Research from 2006 estimates that 42% of soldiers were living in self-made shelters (Le Grys 2010) and the UN declared there to be a “critical shortage of housing” (Thomson 2007: 12). Based on the data it can be speculated that little improvement has been witnessed. For instance, SL02 states that “many of the soldiers in the army do not have accommodation.” It may also be assumed that recruitment efforts will create further pressure on this situation. This does not appear to be a current priority issue, and is not mentioned by any British participants, despite accommodation having been identified as a security issue shortly after the initial military intervention. As the psychological safety of accommodation forms one of the basic military needs and this is still not being met, implies that there are significant gaps in the success of the British effort. Given the past propensity toward military coups, both before and during conflict, over time this may have the potential to present a future risk to stability.

5.2.2 Military Reintegration Programmes

Chapter 4.3.2 Military Reintegration Programmes presented overall positive experiences of MRP, in particular with regard to the training camps. However, in the longer-term British military participants observe that factions exist “under the surface” (UKM01) and a two-tiered army has been created: one tier being those who were previously SLA and the other being those who were non-state combatants (UKM02). Former SLA elements are seen as “professional soldiers and the more senior echelons. Lower echelons, Corporals and Sergeants and so on, are the ex-combatants” (UKM02). There is a belief that this latter group is less disciplined and encumbered by ongoing literacy issues, despite training designed to address this. Therefore, they are less likely to be promoted and rise through the ranks of the military (UKM01, UKM02). As such, promotions are hindered by the past and a conflict legacy remains as “no matter how far we think we’ve moved away from this post-conflict reconstruction, institution building, the legacy

remains there" (UKM02). Integration is thought to be superficial to an extent, with the continued separation of former armed groups. This is not commented on by Sierra Leonean participants, however, those within the military who formed part of the research group tended to be of senior rank and not subject to the same barriers to promotion as those who were former non-state armed combatants. Had lower ranked personnel been interviewed, some commentary on this from the Sierra Leonean perspective may have been provided.

A further legacy of the way in which MRP was structured relates to frustrations that the SLA were largely not held to account for their role in abuses during the conflict (SL05, SL07, SL09). Collaboration between the SLA and RUF has been well documented be that through acting as Sobels or more informal ways, including the plundering of villages after rebels had departed, in order to loot any remaining items of value (Gberie 2005). Whilst surveys indicate that the public no longer view RSLAF as a security threat (Smith-Hoehn 2007), for non-military actors there is a perception that in prioritising short-term security needs (for example, only non-state armed actors were subject to vetting prior to joining RSLAF (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013), human rights violations by the SLA were overlooked. Resentment toward this lack of accountability seems to simmer below the surface. Importantly, this resentment is directed only toward former SLA, and does not appear to include ex-rebels or CDF. SL09 states:

> "it is difficult for me to forgive them, even now. I can't forgive those guys who were supposed to defend their motherland, supposed to defend the people. And they turned their guns against the people."

SL07 also expresses continued anger as "these were the guys who were supposed to protect us!" This demonstrates a parallel between the ability to excuse the RUF for their role in abuses but not Nigerian peacekeepers (see section 5.1 Lasting Perceptions of Nigerian Forces).

Therefore, analysis of the data suggests that there is an ongoing struggle to forgive those who had a role in the protection of civilians during the conflict and abused this position. No longer being perceived as a security threat should not be taken for granted as synonymous with the public's ability to absolve these past wrongs. In terms of best practice, this data indicates that post-conflict there

should be explicit and direct attention given to reconciliation, not just between rebel groups and civilians (in Sierra Leone there were multiple programmes designed to address this), but also between civilians and branches of the state. Currently, this is neglected and does not form a standard part of peacebuilding practice.

5.2.3 IMATT to ISAT

Initially IMATT's commitment to Sierra Leone was planned to finish in 2012, yet the mission was not formally ended until 31st March 2013 (Stewart 2008). The following day ISAT's presence officially began, charged with providing support and advice to the whole security sector (UK Parliament 2014). Prior to the introduction of ISAT, IMATT had gradually reduced its numbers. Although official reports claim that by 2010 it had been able to draw down to forty-five personnel, a British military participant disputes that and states that, despite the aim, in practice "it hadn't drawn down by much" (UKM01). Existing research analysing ISAT and their influence within Sierra Leone is limited, assumedly due to the small size of their presence and the ongoing peace in the country.

The transition from IMATT to ISAT, and the associated smaller physical presence in-country, is often presented as a sign of the success of British involvement, meaning that neither a large number of Advisers nor executive authority were required. For example, Twort (2013) refers to the shift as symbolic of "the growing feeling of success in its post-conflict state." In contrast, others argued that the smaller size of the mission was concerning, in terms of the ability to sustain progress (see Godwin and Haenlein 2013). Regardless of the reduced footprint participants feel that they are still able to have a significant impact due to the "immense brand value [of IMATT] we can do more with less and get a lot of bang for our buck" (UKP03). As such, the positive perceptions of IMATT and the good will it had generated were transferred to the new mission and ISAT appears keen to continue capitalising on this by reinforcing the association. For instance, during fieldwork in Freetown, it was noticed that the IMATT branding had not been replaced on resources and continued to be used. This includes equipment such as vehicles, which retain the IMATT acronym on their number plates as well as side panel stickers. Whilst the continuation of this old branding could be due to

budgetary constraints, it serves to remind the local population of the link between the two missions.

Some participants see ISAT as a form of expansion, with its broader remit justifying the involvement and positioning of its advisers in a wider range of departments than IMATT (UKM02, UKM07, UKP02). For instance, it is seen as a way in which to rationalise “increasing the number of advisers in other areas and making it more applicable to the wider sectors” (UKP02). Similarly, UKM07 views the change as a tool to refocus the British attentions into other spaces, including “wider security issues like the police and justice.” It is suggested that rather than this reflecting their success, it is an acknowledgment of the areas of neglect within the security sector by the British. Indeed, ISAT does now provide support and advice to the SLP, the ONS, the Prisons Department, and the Immigration Office to name but a few (ISAT 2017). By transforming into a new mission, the British also avoid the potential criticism which may have resulted, considering the declared success, had the IMATT presence continued with a broader scope.

Despite their reduced footprint, ISAT cannot be assumed to be synonymous with reduced British influence in Sierra Leone. Whilst ISAT is only a tenth of the size of IMATT, those remaining are in key strategic positions. British participants speak of ISAT’s continued privileged elite access and ability to yield great influence in the country (UKM02, UKM03, UKP03), with the mission refocusing on providing advice at the highest levels. This is typified by the continued presence of an ISAT Adviser on the Joint Intelligence Committee: a situation which one participant acknowledges to be “extremely rare and unprecedented” (UKM02). UKP03 also emphasises that:

> “people from ISAT can turn up to any meeting in this town. The sort of meetings that in the UK are held in bunkers with twenty-seven locked doors and twelve passes to get in. People in ISAT can walk into those meetings here.”

Furthermore, ISAT Advisers remain both within the Sierra Leone MoD, advising on policy and strategy, as well as within RSLAF, working with Brigadiers and on deployable military. As such, there is a link between the two and the British provide advice to a range of senior Sierra Leone personnel, such as the Chief of

Defense Staff and the Minister of Defense, as well as being cascaded to the lower ranks (UKM02). Through this strategic positioning, ISAT "can track the direction [of advice] from its origin to destination and find out what's happened with it" (UKM03). The implication of this is that there remains very little room for RSLAF to deviate from British 'advice' and that part of this role involves checking that it is being followed (see also section 5.2.4 Working Together: ISAT and RSLAF for further analysis of ISAT's advisery role).

Whilst the standard ISAT presence is relatively small, STTT's are regularly deployed to update RSLAF training (UKM06). These teams are usually comprised of "about 400 Brits, so the population know you're there" (UKM04). This enables a boost in the UK presence, and therefore visibility, without increasing the ISAT footprint based in-country. As such, externally the impression of a small contingent continues, yet within Sierra Leone there is the perception of a much larger presence. This is also achieved through the periodic presence of the British Navy. For instance, during fieldwork HMS Portland was present for a short time and SL04 speaks of a different British Navy visit which had occurred in the weeks prior, indicating a level of frequency. In the case of HMS Portland their attendance was both R&R and outreach. In a capital with very limited racial diversity their presence is highly visible. In addition, the ship was equipped with a helicopter and agreed to conduct reconnaissance into the suspected illicit tapping of the primary waterpipe into Freetown. This is significant given that RSLAF's only two helicopters were inoperable, with little indication of being fixed. Again, this level of visibility increases the perception amongst civilians of a large well-equipped British presence on the ground and arguably has a positive impact on security.

However, these activities are primarily focused in Freetown, which one participant, UKM03, views as a weakness of the ISAT presence. That IMATT personnel had previously been spread throughout Sierra Leone "enabled persistent engagement all over the country. Civilian and police experts could use that to plug into as well" (UKM03). In contrast, the Freetown-centric nature of ISAT is viewed as a concern, particularly given that "state authority is light outside the capital" (UKM03). It may be argued this further reinforces Sierra Leone as a

dual-state and could have negative implications for the future stability of the country were there to be civil unrest.

5.2.4 Working Together: ISAT and RSLAF

ISAT and RSLAF continue to work closely together, in addition to the presence of STTT's from the UK. Whilst originally the timeline aimed for was "three years to train and upskill them, then hand over" (UKM01), in practice "British Officers were commanding Sierra Leone army units here until recently" (UKM03). Presently, all executive positions have been returned to the Sierra Leonean military and ISAT's presence continues in an advisery capacity (Albrecht and Jackson 2014). However, as seen in previous IMATT advisers an inference can be drawn that it is questionable as to whether, in practice, a more instructional than advisery approach is taken (UKM02, UKM03 and UKM07) (see Chapter 4.3.4 Working Together: IMATT and RSLAF). For instance, one ISAT adviser, UKM03, describes their duties to "identify and address key issues." UKM02 states that one aspect of his position is to:

> "see where we want to go in the future, what it is that they need to be doing now, so that in five years' time they can be in a better place."

Although taking a medium to longer-term approach reflects good practice, the language used indicates that the UK exerts significant sway in deciding the future direction of RSLAF, and the measures needed to enable this vision to be realised. The participant continues that his remit is also "to offer some solutions and ideas, and they can pick and choose" (UKM02). Whilst this is presented as a positive approach, illustrating a collegiate relationship in which RSLAF are free to make key decisions, one may question the true autonomy associated with a process whereby the 'choice' of solution comes from a set of options stemming from the British.

This level of involvement is unexpected given the amount of time now lapsed since the reform of RSLAF. With British personnel continuing to be responsible for identifying potential problems and their solutions, the transferability of the 'advice' being given, and sustainability of progress, is dubious. Also, the persistence of such an approach does not appear conducive to local ownership. One ISAT participant did appear to make a more conscious effort to avoid being

overly directive. He states there is a need to “check yourself to make sure you don’t step in unsubtly…or you would very quickly put their backs up” (UKM03). It is not clear whether this indicates that he ensures he only offers advice or whether he too is instructional, but ensures this is done subtly and in more nuanced ways, so as to avoid recreating some of the tensions found between IMATT and RSLAF. UKM07 attributes the tendency for Advisers to be overly directive partially to concerns regarding corruption (see section 5.2.8 Corruption) but primarily, to the short-term nature of some the ISAT deployments. He states:

> “people only do a year or so with ISAT. Within that year you get sucked in and unwittingly end up doing things for them, rather than make them do it. I understand why because it’s easy to get sucked in. It’s far harder to stand back and build that capacity.”

A similar critique has been previously levelled at IMATT by Varisco (2014), demonstrating a continuation of this issue from IMATT to ISAT. A significant application of this finding could be the introduction of longer-term deployments, which may be more beneficial to the building of local capacity.

As well as ISAT and RSLAF continuing to work together, the British military are also seeking to increase engagement, for instance, through pairing local battle schools with the British school of infantry. This would include “the Brits coming out here with updated training materials, refreshing instructions and endorsing the relationship with the indigenous forces” (UKM03). Such a project would also meet the low cost, high impact criteria presently prized by ISAT (UKM02, UKM03). However, in practice these ‘high impact’ activities (for instance, sending members of RSLAF to Britain for training), are also referred to as:

> “a very very slow burn way of doing business…The reality is we only send twelve to fourteen people a year to the UK, fully funded, for training courses…but hitting larger audiences, the effect is that much greater” (UKP02).

That such a limited number are able to attend relies on knowledge and training filtering down through the ranks.

5.2.5 Sierra Leone Police

In a recent media interview Keith Biddle expressed the belief that since his tenure as IGP the SLP had "very much improved [in] professionalism, understanding and problem-solving skills" (Biddlle 2019). In contrast, the International Development Committee acknowledged that the force struggles to be effective, with issues such as corruption and political interference augmented by poor pay (UK Parliament 2014).

It is these latter sentiments that are found amongst participants, who flag the SLP as an aspect of SSR which has not been successful (SL04, SL09, SL13, UKM01, UKM05, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02). For instance, UKP02 observes:

> "the average policeman gets paid 5-600,000 LE. That's after a pay rise in January 2015. My driver gets paid 2,500,000LE and my housekeeper gets 750,000LE. And the average soldier gets paid more than a policeman. There's just a huge imbalance in salaries."

It is likely that this contributes to the view that "the police have reverted to their old ways" (SL13) and even a serving Police Officer voices concerns that they are "sliding back to where we came from" (SL09). This key finding indicates that not only are the SLP unable to progress but are deteriorating from the standards and practice instituted as part of SSR. This is particularly significant given that they are responsible for the internal, day-to-day security of Sierra Leone and demonstrates that the perceived success of the reforms pertaining to the military are not mirrored within the police. The difference in progress between the SLP and RSLAF does appear to be something which the British are aware of, due to the inclusion of the aim for ISAT to address "the structural imbalances across the security sector" (DfID 2016). Based on the research data it seems that this has yet to be achieved.

For SL09, this lack of success is heavily intertwined with the poor availability of equipment and logistics (see also section 5.2.7 Equipment), and by association funding, which means that officers are unable to enact their training and execute their role fully. In contrast, UKM01 attributes the blame for this failure to both the British and the UN, as although "UNAMSIL were responsible for the nation's security and IMATT were responsible for the MoD" the UK were also at fault as

they “didn’t put effort into maintaining the police.” As such, it is felt by a member of the British military that the UK had an obligation to support the progress of the police, particularly after the departure of UNAMSIL, which it has not met sufficiently.

Despite acknowledging this backsliding, participants who have a connection to the SLP, either as former or current officers, feel there has been a significant positive change in the public perception of the police: viewing them as more accountable and professional (SL01, SL09). This shift is attributed to the civilians’ awareness of the training they received from the UK (SL01) (see Chapter 4.3.7 Training). Yet, UKM01 states that whereas previously the military had been deemed to be the most corrupt arm of security “this has changed, and it is the police that are viewed as more corrupt than the MoD.” This extract demonstrates an important shift in how the two are viewed by the public (see section 5.2.8 Corruption for further analysis). Furthermore, the most recent Global Corruption Barometer found that 56% of those surveyed thought that most or all of those in the Police were corrupt (Transparency International 2019), demonstrating that there are still issues with how the SLP is perceived. In addition, a RSLAF participant shares that more recently “civilians are complaining about the attitude of the police” (SL04), providing a further counter perspective. Whilst there are undoubtedly mixed public opinions regarding SLP and their conduct, this view may also reflect the ongoing terse relationship between RSLAF and the SLP.

Despite claims in literature that improvements in the relationship between the SLP and RSLAF has resulted in “overcoming traditional rivalry” (Le Grys 2015: 81) UKP02 reports ongoing tensions between the two as:

> “the police are always complaining about the military being invited to intervene in internal security matters. RSLAF complain when they have to do joint border patrols: the police never turn up. They complain about police performance.”

He also observes that RSLAF continue to treat the SLP as inferior, with the imbalance in salaries (police officers earning less than military officers) further validating the belief in their superiority. In informal conversations during fieldwork both the military and police often seek to undermine each other, and it is clear

that the perception of each other as rivals persists. This may have been further augmented by the British involvement; with the police in particular viewing themselves as in competition with RSLAF for British training, funding and development (SL01, SL09). The British military's preference for RSLAF as a partner during the Ebola period is also notable and potentially contributes to this perception of inferiority.

Whilst Fakondo (2010) praises rapid training exercises, as well as national and international training, for improving the capacity of the police, participants perceive there to be a lack of consistency. Where progress has been made within the SLP, it has struggled to maintain momentum as "training has been very epileptic…because sometimes funds are just not available" (SL01). The same participant feels that these fluctuating attentions reflects a lack of commitment from the British and SL09 also perceives this to be an issue. For instance, at the time of fieldwork (2017), British police (through ISAT) had been present for six months providing training, such as in non-lethal combat, in the run up to the 2018 elections. However, they had no plans to provide additional staffing during the election and as a result it was decided that Chiefs would be responsible for maintaining peace in more remote areas during this period (SL09). Although this does engage with local power structures and culture, whilst simultaneously navigating the lack of available funding, it also reinforces the concept of security as a function external to the state. Given the previous tensions arising from the arbitrary nature of local justice pre-conflict and the Chiefs past association with political exclusion (Cubitt 2012; Harris and Conteh 2020), relying on such structures for security in the future has the potential to be problematic.

The SLP, and RSLAF, continue to rely on external funding (primarily British) and it is felt that the SLP in particular "suffers hugely from underfunding…they don't have the money to do things that they should rightly be entitled to do" (UKM02). This demonstrates that little sustainability has been built into the SLP reforms, hampering the security sector's ability to move forwards independently and remain responsive. However, Sierra Leonean participants do not attribute this weakness to a failing by their own government, rather that of the UK (SL05, SL09). This demonstrates that the funding of the security sector is no longer seen

as the remit of the domestic government exclusively and is instead felt to be, at least partially, the responsibility of the British. This finding signifies that an additional legacy of the British intervention is a shift in how Sierra Leoneans view the ongoing responsibility for the maintenance and development of the security sector. This is also reflected in other areas of the state, for instance, development, which is seen as “the collective responsibility of the UK and the government” (SL05). As such, the line has been blurred as to what is seen as the obligation of the national government and the UK. Arguably, elements of this pre-existed due to the previous colonial relationship between the two, however, this seems to have been further solidified by the intervention.

Continuing the theme of the SLP, but with different insight to be offered, the responsiveness of the police continues to need vast improvement. For instance, a non-Sierra Leonean Security Adviser (who did not form part of the research group) telephones the police emergency number every few days to assess their responsiveness and accessibility. At the time of fieldwork, he confirms that his calls had never yet been answered. With a police force unable to be contacted in urgent circumstance their functionality is heavily compromised. Furthermore, despite their focus on community policing (see Baker 2008; Krogstad 2012), from conversations with local civilians there is a common belief that the police must first be paid a bribe before they were willing to take reports of a crime. This is contradictory to discourse which views local policing partnerships as having successfully “bridged the gap between the police and the people” (Fakondo 2010). The need to pay bribes to access public services is not limited to the SLP. For example, the Global Corruption Barometer (Transparency International 2019) found that 50% of their participants have paid a bribe to access public clinics and health centers in the last twelve months. This arguably discourages the population from engaging with the SLP and potentially turns them toward community justice. Whilst Baker (2010) argues that informal structures may be more accountable, effective and sustainable than state policing, this does also serve to reinforce structures parallel to the state, creating a security architecture hybrid with the potential to undermine those of the state.

Police progress is also thought to have been undermined by the lack of successful reform in the judiciary. Despite the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) commencing in 2005 (White 2010), there continues to be a disconnect between both entities (UK Parliament 2014; Lucey and Kumalo 2018). UKP02 states that as a result the police have:

> "become a self-licking lollipop. There is no point arresting people or producing a proper chain of evidence, for someone to then give the public prosecution a bribe and them say 'forget it'. There's not a justice system that can prosecute the case they bring. It's demoralizing."

These issues with the judicial system are also highlighted by some Sierra Leonean participants (SL06, SL11, SL13), and there is a belief that "justice is not served at all…The judiciary is still as corrupt and as unfair as in the past" (SL13). Therefore, there appears to be little incentive for Police Officers to act professionally and enforce the law. This also reinforces the perception of a lack of parity in the success of reforms within the different areas of the security sector, with the siloed and linear approach of the British once more challenging progress.

5.2.6 Training

Former Head of the IMATT training mission, Brigadier Iain Cholerton, previously referred to RSLAF as "the best trained army in Africa" (Flynn 2007). The British-established Horton Academy in Freetown, opened in 2003, acts as the primary military training facility and military staff collage in Sierra Leone (Godwin and Haenlein 2013). Although this is initially described as a "partnership" (UKM03), with some staff, including trainers, being Sierra Leonean nationals, further probing reveals that the British "still look after it, fund it, and [X] is the Director there" (UKM02). As such, the UK continues to hold the key positions within the facility and manage not only what is taught but also how it is taught (UKM02, UKM03). Those facilitators who are from Sierra Leone are selected by the British and important decisions and curriculum design is made by an external force. Taken together, these three imply not only an inequitable power dynamic but also little local ownership of the primary military training facility within the country. Although British participants claim that the UK are keen to hand over control of the academy, this is prevented due to the Sierra Leone government's inability to

finance it (for instance, UKM02 estimates that the facility costs the British £200,000 per annum to maintain) (UKM02, UKM03).

This is something which RSLAF participants appear to be aware of and are grateful for the UK's continued involvement (SL02, SL04, SL08). For example, SL02 states that it is "necessary, we cannot do without them." As such, the belief is that without the British, progress will forestall and the future of Horton Academy would be in jeopardy. However, it does seem to be a mutually beneficial situation as Horton academy is also "a regional asset rather than just something we do here locally" (UKM02) and therefore it "enables a regional influence" (UKM03). Indeed, the facility was established with the aim of being recognised as delivering the best practice security sector training in the region (DfID 2016)(DfID 2016). This is thought to be a source of prestige within Sierra Leone, as one British participant believes "they are very proud of it. They want it to be a regional centre for excellence" (UKM03), as this would assist in increasing Sierra Leone's standing within the region. Therefore, by retaining control of, and providing funding for, Horton Academy, the UK is able to boost its reputation within the country and simultaneously extend its power and influence, through the shaping of militaries, into wider West Africa in a way which it would otherwise be unable.

This notion of gratitude bears further brief scrutiny. Through Horton Academy, RSLAF recruits and personnel attend training based on British military doctrine, grounded in British values, standards and policies. This does not appear to be experienced negatively from the perspective of Sierra Leonean participants (SL02, SL04, SL08), one of whom expresses their happiness at being "trained by the British, organised by the British and given support and logistics from the British" (SL08). Arguably there are implicit associations with neo-colonialism, and UKM02 proudly refers to RSLAF as "Anglicised." Yet, with the British taking the lead in RSLAF training for such an extended period (sixteen plus years) it is questionable whether the British take on board more responsibility for security in Sierra Leone than the Sierra Leone government.

Although Horton Academy does offer some police training (DfID 2016) both participants linked to the police feel this to be minimal in practice (SL01, SL09).

The focus on the military seemingly reinforces tensions between the SLP and RSLAF due to the belief in the UK's preferential treatment of the latter. SL09 bitterly states:

> "for the military they are still there. They have Horton Academy and conduct lots and lots of training. But that is not the case for the police. For the police it is all reduced."

This also demonstrates the desire for training to continue as "we need it" (SL09) and the clear preference was for this to be provided by the British. As such, the data demonstrates that rather than those in the security sector being keen for training facilities to be handed over to Sierra Leonean control, they are instead not only comfortable for this to be retained by the British but also desire for the training to be further increased. It could be postulated that this may be partially attributed to an awareness of Sierra Leone's lack of capacity to fund such facilities (as discussed above) or a reflection of not only a financial but a psychological dependency which has been created.

5.2.7 Equipment

Often literature equates sustainability with training (see Gbla 2006; Horn et al. 2006), but it is apparent that for those on the ground it is also intertwined with the availability of resources and equipment: that RSLAF is almost totally reliant on external support for both is seen as one of the primary barriers to progress (SL04, UKM02, UKM03). Although it was identified early on that the equipment provided was not always appropriate (see Chapter 4.3.8 Equipment), it appears that this has not been officially acknowledged and continues to date. SL04 argues that there is a need to adjust the type of small arms weaponry supplied. Prior to the intervention the SLA favoured the AK47 Rifle, however, the British supplied FN Rifles. He discloses that these do not work well in the terrain, are prone to stoppages, and are not best suited to the climate. Consequently, there is a strong preference within RSLAF to return to AK47's as they are "effective and can operate in all kinds of conditions effectively" (SL04). However, RSLAF have little choice in the types of weaponry supplied to them and feel their preferences are not considered.

The lack of resource and funding is highlighted as a major continuing issue for RSLAF, affecting both morale and capability (SL04, SL08, SL11, UKM02, UKM03). Despite some equipment and logistics being provided by the British in the early SSR process, the issue of the absence of relatively basic communications equipment is still yet to be addressed. For instance, there continues to be no access to satellite telephones nor internet for military units based off the peninsular (SL08). As such:

> "if you want to get an order to the Brigade Commander in Bo or Makeni it's done on paper and dispatch rider. It can take three days. In this day and age, even in Africa you should be able to send detailed classified documents over email or sat phones" (UKM03).

The result is significant delays in relaying potentially key confidential and time sensitive information, hampering the efficiency of the force. This appears more salient given that the civil war began in a small border town. Furthermore, there is a severe shortage of basic supplies. For example, during a tour of the military training grounds based in Makeni I was informed that there is a scarcity of bullets and ammunition. One of the consequences of this is that live fire training exercises could no longer be held and so potentially officers may not encounter live-rounds until they are outside of the safety of training scenarios, and in real life situations.

Furthermore, it does not appear that previous lessons regarding the transformation of equipment from asset to burden have been learnt by the international community, including the British. For instance, there is a 'graveyard' of vehicles in the RSLAF base in Freetown. These were donated in response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak, and I was informed had been mainly used to transport corpses. However, with the countries inability to fuel and repair the vehicles they had been left to decay. As such, it appears that Britain and international donors need to better coordinate and take a longer-term perspective as to the utility of the resources supplied.

5.2.8 Corruption

There are indicators of decreasing corruption in Sierra Leone, for instance, Transparency International's (2019) Global Corruption ranks the country at thirty-

three points: an improvement from its previous score of thirty and above the average for sub-Saharan Africa. However, no participant speaks of progress in addressing issues of corruption, which appear to continue to be both endemic and problematic.

As discussed in Chapter 4.3.9 Corruption, the skimming of rice and wages by RSLAF commanders as a form of future-proofing was not tolerated by the British and instead a pension system was established. Whilst the Sierra Leone government is responsible for ensuring pensions are paid, this system is seen locally as a British-owned measure. This is due to the UK's implementation of a British model to replace the historical practice, deemed to be corrupt (UKM05). However, it is apparent that the UK have not taken the responsibility to ensure that these pensions are paid on time and at a fair rate. One British participant feels that the British guarantee of a pension upon retirement is "not worth the paper it was written on. If you asked the UK MoD 'what steps have you taken to honour the pension plan we claimed we were putting in place?' I think they'd be shifting uncomfortably looking at their boots" (UKM05).

Those SLA/RSLAF participants who had retired speak negatively of the pension scheme and with disappointment (SL10, SL11, SL12). SL12 refers to the amount given as "really pathetic. Shameful to tell somebody." SL10 states that:

> "pensions do not even buy a bag of rice, after thirty years' service! Since the war many of the soldiers who fought are disabled. The government doesn't care. They have to go out and beg."

The result is feelings of abandonment by a state who they served loyally during a brutal and protracted conflict, and irritation toward the British for setting a standard which cannot be fulfilled. This is an emotive subject for participants and there is a clear sense of betrayal and resentment. This finding indicates there to be little incentive or prevention of a return to skimming practices for current RSLAF soldiers, who witness how retired Veterans are treated.

Despite attempts to address it, corruption is thought to be an ongoing issue within the military (SL02, SL09, UKM02, UKM03, UKP03, UKP04). It is said that "some of those senior officers, they are so corrupt" (SL02) and corruption is "not absent

from RSLAF by any means" (UKP04). Often, within stories, British ISAT participants cast themselves as a form of monitor, taking the responsibility to scrutinise those they felt to be corrupt (UKM02, UKM03). At times, these participants admit to a lack of evidence but speak of their distrust of the associated personnel and the need to "keep an eye on [them]" (UKM02). Somewhat contradictorily UKM02 also acknowledges that RSLAF colleagues "feel almost patronised by having somebody there" yet, Brigadiers who express the opinion that they no longer need the current level of British Adviser involvement are treated with suspicion.

In other words, this is not seen as their being assertive or based on confidence in their own ability to conduct their role without external input. Instead, it is often felt to be rooted in a desire to be rid of the UK presence in order to engage in corrupt practice and act based on personal interests. For instance, this same participant continues "they don't want me there because they're probably trying to do something they shouldn't do" and cites an example whereby a Brigadier had asked him not to observe a presentation being delivered by a Chinese national. Whilst it is possible that this was motivated by corrupt purposes, it is also indicative of the extent of the ongoing British involvement: that it was seen as unusual for a member of RSLAF to represent his country during the meeting without the scrutiny or input of any British personnel. As such, there is a continued distrust of Sierra Leoneans in these positions of authority, which prevents those on the ground from passing responsibility back and trusting the processes surrounding decision making. Ginifer and Oliver (2004) found similar in IMATT, arguing that a lack of sufficient trust in Sierra Leoneans had prevented it from empowering them to take full control and it seems as though this continues to be the case for the remaining British Advisers. For example, in the instance of uncovering corrupt practice UKM03 shares that he:

> "would report it to the High Commissioner and Head of ISAT and say 'this isn't right'. But then what do you do about it? It's one thing knowing but the other thing is having a strategy that allows you to manage it."

This suggests that this may be due, at least in part, to a lack of sufficient mechanisms to address such issues.

Corrupt practice is also said to continue within the police, in both subversive ways such as bribery and more obvious ways such as violence towards civilians (see also section 5.2.5 Sierra Leone Police for an analysis of progress within the Police). For example, “there are so many roadblocks, rent seeking by the side of the road” (UKP04) and UKP02 comments that “at Mango Bottom you see policemen hitting motorcycle riders with wood sticks. That just reinforces the idea that police are brutal.” With regards to the former extract, roadblocks as a means to extort money from civilians was observed frequently and daily during fieldwork. Whilst some of these may have been for legitimate purposes, the frequency implies that not all were. This behavior is at times replicated in smaller communities, in which civilians, including children and youths, attempted to establish unofficial roadblocks to charge a fee for the use of public roads. Thus, this behavior is simultaneously viewed as corrupt and as a legitimiser for replication. The continuation of illegitimate roadblocks also indicates that the previous attempts to address this practice (of temporarily relocating perpetrators to less densely populated areas) unsurprisingly did not work and is yet to be addressed sufficiently. Arguably, both these forms of corruption are manifest in the day-to-day lives of civilians, damaging their trust in those designated to provide internal security and undermining the relationship between state and citizen.

Despite an ongoing constitutional reform involving decentralisation (Lucey and Kumalo 2018) and the work of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), a 2006 survey by the MoD indicates that government was perceived to be one of the elements exerting a detrimental influence on development (Le Grys 2010). The primary data gathered during fieldwork shows little indication that, more than a decade later, this perception has changed. Bad governance, seen by both British and local participants as synonymous with corrupt governance, is also identified as a key risk factor for potential instability (SL01, SL02, SL07, SL11, UKM02, UKP03, UKP04). For instance, it is thought that corrupt governance is “the biggest problem here” (UKP03) and that:

> “corruption is on the increase. Every politician is trying to fill his pockets. They have to realise they are the servants of the people, not the other way around…These are immature politicians in an immature democracy who

use it to feather their nests. At some point people will rise up against that" (SL02).

This causes anger as it is thought that "politicians are really pushing their luck" (SL01) as "Sierra Leoneans want peace and harmony, but the government is corrupt" (SL11), which creates a barrier towards development. This anger is directed particularly towards the mismanagement of resources and a belief that governments cannot be trusted to act in citizens best interests, even in a time of crisis (SL07, SL11, UKP01). For example, UKP01 recalls that during Ebola "MPs were given £15,000 to deal with it their constituencies but most pocketed it and half didn't even visit the constituencies."

It is also felt that corrupt governance has the potential to create a violent push back, as SL07 believes "if they don't work on corruption and this affects them [the people] the danger is, whenever it is something people have sweat and blood [sic], they go ballistic, they go crazy." As such, there is a very serious potential for the continuation of corrupt governance to undermine the stability and security of the state. In particular, three participants single out the Ministry of Land as problematic (SL07, UKM02, UKP03) and refer to it as example of "absolute corruption. It's a terrible place. They will give people land rights, even if it doesn't belong to them, for the right price" (UKM02). This mis-selling of rights to land is particularly significant given one Sierra Leonean participant's belief that land issues are a crucially destabilising factor which "needs to be looked into quite seriously or it could lead to some serious fight" (SL07). A similar situation has already resulted in sporadic tensions across the border in Liberia, for example, the violent clashes in Margibi (IRIN 2010).

Although politicians level accusations of corruption against each other and a change in governing party tends to be accompanied by prosecution of individuals deemed to be corrupt from the preceding government (Conteh 2020), it appears that this is motivated more by point scoring with the electorate rather than taking meaningful action to address the issue across the political spectrum. UKP03 states that as a result:

> "we have to set up parallel structures. And that's a bad way of doing it, that goes against every development handbook, but not as bad as being stung on the corruption front."

These ongoing issues with corrupt governance (and the resulting distrust of the Sierra Leone government and its ministries) prevent building institutional capacity within Sierra Leone, as rather than investing in these existing structures, additional parallel spaces are created despite the awareness that this is not best practice.

5.2.9 Local Ownership and Sustainability

Whilst SSR has become a standard component of peacebuilding, there is little known about its long-term sustainability (interpreted as the state's ability to maintain its own security architecture without external support (Jackson and Albrecht 2010b)). Even within this case study it is arguable that this is not yet clear as there continues to be heavy donor involvement and financial support, primarily from the UK, which may obscure just how sustainable SSR and its related measures are. For instance, UKM03 believes that "leaving could unravel all SSR work we've done up to this point." Given how successful SSR in Sierra Leone is proclaimed to be, this is a bold statement, not only relating to the future stability of the country but also its reliance on the continued involvement of the UK to maintain progress. Similarly, Le Grys (2010) found that there is a lack of confidence, amongst Sierra Leonean Battalion commanders, that change could be sustained without the IMATT presence.

UKP02 observes that:

> "we haven't built in institutional capacity. They aren't thinking about concept papers, or policy papers. Not looking to the future and anticipating problems. After fifteen years some of that should be happening and it's not."

As such, it appears as though there is a tendency for focus to remain on immediate and short-term aims, at a cost to coherent and coordinated longer-term planning. Another participant, UKM04, expresses concern regarding the sustainability of SSR and claims that the British presence is needed as a "safety blanket" and to give the public "confidence." From contextualising conversations

during fieldwork, it does seem as though citizens' perception of the security sector as stable continues to rest heavily on the ongoing British presence: without them the trust in their own security infrastructure would be undermined. Yet paradoxically UKM03 also acknowledges that "until the UK leave and completely disengage, there can be no ownership." This finding demonstrates that local ownership and sustainability are inextricably linked and there is a trade-off between the two. Whilst theories of good practice demand both, it appears that they cannot fully manifest simultaneously in Sierra Leone.

This trade-off is also evident within the context of funding. That control of security apparatus such as Horton Academy cannot be passed over to Sierra Leone, due to their inability to finance it, prevents local ownership of the training facility. This too presents a paradox, as attempts to ingrain sustainability lead ISAT advisers to encourage RSLAF to "think how they would do things using their own resources, not the resources of other people. But that then makes things extremely limited" (UKM07). As such, there is a choice between attempting to rely on the country's own resources and having restricted options or continuing the reliance on external sources and being able to develop further.

In other areas where the UK has stepped back participants claim that there has been a reversion to old habits. SL13 argues that initially government projects were accompanied by independent commissions, with clear guidelines on appointments. Since this responsibility was passed back to Sierra Leone "they just appointment whoever they want to appoint, committees are just made up of friends." This return to a lack of transparency within the process demonstrates that not all of the changes instituted by the UK are fully engrained or embedded and therefore lack sustainability. It is arguable that this could relate to the lack of local ownership, whereby changes such as these did not originate from within or evolve from the local culture. Indeed, some forms of nepotism have not been traditionally viewed as a corrupt in Sierra Leone, and instead may be regarded as loyalty to kin. For instance, although decrying government corruption SL02 also comments that "you take care of your small area, you take care of your family."

Further evidence of a continuation of questionable local ownership surrounds conversations on governance, which is a recurring thread through several of the themes within this chapter. Governance is not viewed positively and blame for this is frequently attributed to the British, as well as Sierra Leonean elites (SL01, SL02, SL04, UKM07, UKP04). For instance, SL01 asserts that "the UK took their eyes off the ball in terms of holding accountable the political elites in terms of good governance." It is thought that "periodically they [the UK] should send an eye on Sierra Leone. Don't leave the people too long" (SL04). Surprisingly, this sentiment is also found within the British group, who also feel that the "UK should maintain oversight" (UKP04) and "it's our responsibility to keep an overview of just what's going on so they don't slide and go backwards" (UKM07). As such, it is evident that there is a perception of the British almost as the gatekeepers of Sierra Leone, with it being their responsibility to monitor situations and hold national actors to account. Once more, this reinforces the concept of a patrimonial relationship between the two and has implications for local ownership, with the responsibility for ensuring good governance and the sustainability of peace not viewed as entirely domestic matters.

5.3 Development

As previously discussed SSR was seen as the precursor to social, political and economic development (see Chapter 4.3 SSR) (Le Grys 2010; Jackson 2018). However, despite Sierra Leone being used as the go-to example to support the link between security and development (Krogstad 2012), it is questionable as to whether the increase in security and liberal peacebuilding has assisted development and poverty reduction in the way envisaged (see Ebo 2006; Castañeda 2009). By treating them as conceptually linked-yet-separate issues a linear approach was taken, prioritising SSR over development for an extended period. This resulted in too narrow a focus for too long and it appears as though security is now undermined by the lack of development. SL02 states:

> "we need to understand the interplay between the various sectors more effectively…we've got to avoid spending all our time producing militaries and look at other sectors a little more as well. If one accelerates too quickly, it creates an imbalance and we've got to figure that out."

Although development became a focus in 2004, UKP04 comments that in practice "up until 2010 it remained an afterthought." White (2008) argued that the Government of Sierra Leone became complacent in the stability carved out by SSR, rather than meaningfully merging security and development. With hindsight participants reflect that the "intervention should have been broader" (UKM02), indicating that aspects of development should be incorporated from the beginning, running parallel to security. Theoretically at least, there has been an increased conception of the relationship between the two (for example, see Graben and Fitz-Gerald 2013). In practice, this link remains weak and progress in development is "poor" (UKP03), continuing to lag significantly behind security (UKM02, UKM03, UKP02, UKP03, UKP04).

Amongst British policy participants there is exasperation at a lack of direction from the UK government with regard to development (UKP02, UKP04), questioning "what does development here mean? What does it look like? They need to define our roles in it" (UKP02). That both of these participants' roles feed into the implementation of development strategies, yet are unclear quite what the British expectations of development are implies that there is a lack of communication which forms a barrier in allowing them to meaningfully contribute. Informal conversations with other FCO and MoD staff in country, also demonstrate that there is not a consistent idea of development nor how best to realise it. This lack of clarity is surprising given the vast amount of funding recently concentrated on development and shift in attention from security. For example, UKP03 discloses "to put it into brutal comparison in 2016 we spent £2.4 million on our security programme here. We spent £204 million on our development programme." UKM02 feels that "the post-conflict stuff now is coming to an end…what we're seeing is far more focus on development…our military programmes are about £2 million compared to developments £300 million." Regardless of the discrepancies in these figures, both illustrate a vast difference in budgetary allocation, with significantly more currently being spent on development. One participant believes this to be the UK's largest allocation per capita for development programmes globally (UKP03).

However, UKP04 sees a direct link between the number of Advisers present within the security sector and the progress made. He argues that development in other areas will continue to lag behind as the “huge number of advisers for SSR can’t be replicated across every sector.” This is echoed by UKM02 who believes “putting twenty different Advisers in at different levels would allow real development to take place.” Whilst some areas, such as the Ministry of Health, now have a British Adviser working with the Chief Medical Officer (UKM02), this level of involvement is not on par with what was witnessed within SSR.

During informal conversations with employees at the BHC, the phrase “200 hundred years in 200 yards” is often used to summarise the ongoing development issues and inequalities in Sierra Leone. This phrase refers to the stark difference in access to infrastructure and living conditions found closely together: where houses with access to electricity and sanitation are found close to what may be described as akin to slums, with little access to infrastructure. The UK’s involvement in development is not commented on positively by Sierra Leonean participants (SL01, SL11, SL13) who perceive that they have:

> “not had as much impact as should have with the resources that have been put into this country. The level of development should be much better than it is now” (SL13).

One British participant explains that development has not seen as much progress as security simply because “SSR is easier…it is easier to rebuild armed forces than rebuild the whole country. That’s a different scale of challenge.” This is reiterated by another participant who states “military reform is straight forward. Its dead easy to do. It’s relatively low cost and can happen quickly” (UKP03).

The diffuse nature of other sectors also presents an issue (UKP02, UKP04). For example, “with health and education, you rely on every head teacher, every teacher, every doctor playing the game as well” (UKP04). Furthermore, the majority of security sector funding is focused on the MoD, whereas that allocated to development covers a much broader spectrum of ministries and areas. This lack of substantial progress appears to have created a level of pessimism, and UKP02 questions “why bother spending £245 million on development? What difference is it going to make? Nothing really. Absolutely nothing.” This may

appear overly cynical, but it should be kept in mind that despite the massive amounts of investment in Sierra Leone, by both Britain and other international actors including states and organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund, Sierra Leone continues to languish towards to bottom of various development indicators. For example, it is currently positioned at 182 out of 189 countries and territories on the Human Development Index (HDI), placing them in the category of low human development (UNDP 2020b) and the majority of its civilians live below the poverty line (Lucey and Kumalo 2018).

According to participants in recent years, particularly since the outbreak of Ebola, there is more of a concerted attempt to better coordinate the efforts of DfID, FCO and ISAT (UKM01, UKM03, UKM07). This includes attempting to be more aware of any potential duplication in provision (UKM07) as:

> "some of the work we do in the military line, water and electricity, are also fields DfID works and vice versa. But this should be a source for cooperation not tension" (UKM03).

Although DfID and the FCO have now essentially been merged into the FCDO (see Chapter 6.3 Ethical Foreign Policy), the previous relationship between these departments is characterised by competition for funding rather than collaboration, at a cost to a more unified whole-government approach (UKM01, UKM03). Attempts have been made to address this, such as through a "heads-of-sheds meeting – the High Commissioner, Head of DfID, [and] X all meeting to discuss strategic issues. It really made a huge difference in getting good coordination" (UK07). Whether such meetings continue presently is unknown and, with all three located on different campuses, other participants feel coordination continues to be an issue (UKM03). It remains to be seen whether the creation of the FCDO will improve this relationship and help to streamline their coordination with the MoD, or whether difficulties within the relationship will continue. For instance, despite an awareness of the need for security and development to be better interlinked, informal conversations with MoD personnel in-country reveal their frustration at working with DfID, whose approach they felt is too idealistic and has aspirations which do not reflect what is actually achievable.

5.4 The End State

In Blair's (1999) speech the 'Doctrine of the International Community' he stated that previously there had been too much focus on exit strategies at a cost to a longer-term commitment and that "we cannot simply walk away once the fight is over." Whilst this thinking was also encapsulated in the Responsibility to Rebuild (ICISS 2001), through various informal conversations as well as interviews, it is apparent that there is confusion regarding the expected end state for the British involvement in Sierra Leone. For instance, British military participants are not able to clearly articulate what this end state will be nor when (UKM01, UKM02, UKM06). This is a source of frustration for some in-country, who feel that as a result their tasks are focused upon short-term aims, rather than a larger overarching goal. For example, UKM02 states:

> "it's appropriate for us to stay and see it through depending on what the end state looks like. But what do we think is good enough to allow us to walk away and say 'you're on your own now, you're doing a good job'?"

This finding is significant, given that it is apparent those working as part of ISAT remain unclear as to the legitimate end point of the current British involvement.

In contrast, both UKM01 and UKM03 believe that RSLAF's involvement in multinational peacekeeping missions, through either the UN or a regional body such as ECOWAS, will signal the end state for the British (the original target year for which was 2007 according to UKM01). The ability to contribute to such missions is theoretically seen as evidence that support is no longer needed (Godwin and Haenlein 2013) and statements released from the BHC cite the mission in Somalia as evidence of the increased capability of RSLAF (Thomas 2013). In addition to providing a full battalion in support of the AU mission in Somalia in 2013, RSLAF personnel have already been part of the UN-AU Mission in Darfur from 2009 to 2013 (Albrecht and Haenlein 2021). Where Sierra Leonean participants speak of their militaries involvement in international peacekeeping missions it is done with intense pride at being able to "participate in the UN" (SL09), and it is widely accepted that "in Somalia they excelled" (SL02). Whilst the transformation from requiring external assistance for peace to being able to play an active role in peacekeeping and security in Africa is significant, this is not entirely new for Sierra Leone. Prior to the civil war the SLA had been part of

regional missions, such as ECOMOG in Liberia. However, these recent contributions are seen as a positive legacy of the British intervention (UK Parliament 2014); training and equipping the military to enable them to function in an international peacekeeping environment and play a positive role in such missions thereby also boosting their international reputation.

Yet for two British policy participants, the deployment as part of such missions is seen as premature (UKP02, UKP04) as “they’re not really in a position to do that.” It is unclear whether this refers to perceptions of the ability and discipline of Sierra Leonean soldiers, or the financial position of the military as their international security contribution continues to rely on funding and equipment from external sources (Godwin and Haenlein 2013). (As of 2019 there were fifty-two RSLAF personnel deployed between fifteen peacekeeping missions globally (MoD Sierra Leone 2019). Furthermore, whilst the ability to deploy as part of a wider peacekeeping mission was used as justification for judging IMATT’s mandate complete (UK Parliament 2014), the continuation of the UK presence through ISAT and STTT’s suggests evidence of mission creep. Therefore, it is questionable what the British now perceive to be the end state of their continued involvement in matters such as Sierra Leone’s internal security and development. UKM02 speculates that this may be when there is “good governance and institutional resilience.” Whilst these appear as lofty ideals, they can be argued as sufficiently vague as to allow the British an element of flexibility regarding the point at which resources are withdrawn. It is also notable that these elements do not relate solely to the security sector and also incorporate aspects of development, which seriously lags behind in progress.

IMATT’s Campaign Plan (a copy of which was supplied by UKM01), provides an analysis of the perceived end state for IMATT which includes meeting the objectives of: democratic accountability; capability; affordability; and self-sustainment. Whilst IMATT did transform into ISAT it is arguable that these criteria were not met and continue to be worked towards. For instance, as discussed, the military remains unable to self-sustain in terms of the funding needed for equipment and training, and the size of RSLAF is not affordable without the continuation of external assistance (Nilsson and Kovacs 2013). This

also has connotations for how successful the British intervention is perceived to be, having been declared a success despite not yet meeting their own longer-term objectives (see also section 5.7 An Unquestioned 'Success' for further analysis on measures of success). UKM01 intimates that "the UK MoD thought it would take twenty to twenty-five years for RSLAF to change... We're only about halfway through it." Consequently, it can be speculated on as to whether Britain intends to keep some level of involvement, be that through training or funding, for this duration.

5.5 Perceptions of Future Stability

Multiple participants reflect on the legacy of the British intervention in terms of its impact on the future stability of Sierra Leone. Despite peace having held for twenty years, which is no minor feat, a number of participants express significant concerns or predictions of future conflict and widespread violence. The general sentiment is one of pessimism (SL01, SL02, SL08, SL11, SL13, UKM02, UKM03, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02, UKP04). This caution may be expected from a society which experienced such a protracted and bloody conflict. However, these concerns are rooted in an awareness of the current environment and do not seem to be motivated by excessive caution or anxiety. This trepidation is not limited to the Sierra Leone group and is also consistently found amongst British participants who had not been present during the violence. For example UKP04 speaks of "fraying social fabric" and, based on his field experience and expertise, observes that "from a conflict prevention perspective you would say that there are many of the conditions that classically precede civil war." UKP01 expresses the view that the "potential for conflict in future generations is very real." Perhaps most starkly UKP02 states:

> "I don't think the real bloodletting has happened here yet…It might not happen for ten years or more but it's going to happen and it will be bloody and nasty."

In an informal conversation during fieldwork with a British Security Adviser, who is not part of the research participant group, the security situation is described as akin to a frog in slowly boiling water. Within this metaphor, the frog does not realise the incremental increase in temperature until it is too late. The Adviser

explains that issues, such as corruption, poverty and lack of employment, continue to simmer, heating up the tensions in Sierra Leone at a slow pace, which will continue to go unnoticed until a point of crisis/conflict. Thus, there is perceived to be serious cause for concern regarding the future stability of the country, despite the British efforts in state-building and security reform. However, this sense of edging closer towards potential conflict in future generations is not publicly acknowledged or captured in strategy papers. For instance, despite recognising issues with the addressing of root causes as a concern (Lucey and Kumalo 2018: 9) state that the country is "unlikely to slip back into civil war in the foreseeable future." Such blandishments lack the sense of urgency found amongst participants.

Only one British participant, UKP03, speaks positively of Sierra Leone's future stability, however, this appears to be rooted in a limited understanding of the causes of African conflicts rather than due to the legacy of successful intervention. This participant understood conflict through a narrow framework of ethnic fault lines or tribal disputes and perceives Sierra Leone as stable and peace likely to endure because there "are no religious or tribal issues. Not like in Rwanda or Burundi." These simplistic statements give to a false sense of security based on a misunderstanding of the context. Despite his senior position in-country, he demonstrates little awareness of the causes of the civil war, which whilst an amalgamation of multiple catalysts, was not based on ethnic divides (see Chapter 3.3 Origins of the War for discussion on the causes of conflict in Sierra Leone). When speaking to various British staff based in Sierra Leone, it is clear that there is scant understanding of the civil war, the British intervention, or the operating environment outside of their specific roles. However, there are few opportunities to further educate or immerse themselves in the situation. For instance, the IT systems at BHC and ISAT are very strict in terms of sites they allow access to. Based on experience of using these systems during my time in the field, access is denied to national and local newspapers, as well as open-access academic research papers. As such, it may be questionable how informed UK staff are able to be, given this significant barrier to information. This is partially circumnavigated through a small number of unofficial laptops, which are able to

access any site, but it is clear that security restrictions have become a hindrance in the staff's ability to enhance their understanding of the local environment.

From a Sierra Leonean perspective many of the causal factors of the conflict are identified by participants as ongoing issues (SL01, SL02, SL08, SL11, SL13). For instance, SL02 summarises the current environment as "poor governance, weak economic planning and management, joblessness among the young people [and] debilitating poverty" (SL02). The continued presence of these issues calls into question the success of the holistic programme of support provided by the British. Arguably the objective of any peacebuilding mission, including the British in Sierra Leone, should not be a return to the status quo (Bush 1997; Le Grys 2010; Graben and Fitz-Gerald 2013). Furthermore, the ICISS (2001) urged that interventions address the root causes of conflict and the International Crisis Group noted in 2001 that "peace cannot be sustained without addressing these factors" (Ginifer and Oliver 2004: 6). Yet, progress in these areas appears slow and the sustainability of peace should not be taken for granted whilst these remain unaddressed. Participants are vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction (SL08, SL10, SL11, SL13). For instance, it is felt that "until you address those issues, conflict will never be far away from you" (SL08). Similarly, SL10 contends "we don't want to repeat, but what brought the war will have to be addressed properly" and SL13 observes that "over the last 10 years or so they have not been addressed. Nothing much has happened on that score." Whereas some see conflict as inevitable in light of the continued circumstances and that "history will repeat itself" (SL01), others feel that it may still be averted if issues such as the rule of law, education and housing are addressed (SL08). Strong emphasis is placed on integrating the addressing of root causes into future intervention practice and the extent to which the British involvement in Sierra Leone can be meaningfully termed a success whilst these underlying causes have not been addressed is debatable.

5.6 The Protection of Memory

The significant role of memory in sustaining peace is a recurring key theme throughout the research data (SL01, SL02, SL04, SL05, SL06, SL08, SL09, SL11, SL12, UKM02, UKM03, UKM04, UKP02, UKP04) and in informal

conversations with civilians. Presently, the idea of renewed widespread violence is repugnant to older generations (SL01, SL02, SL04, SL05, SL06, SL08, SL09, SL11, SL12), many of whom have direct experience of the conflict and "share a collective memory of horror" (UKM04). SL02 states:

> "for us older generations who have been there and seen the atrocities, we don't want war. We suffered and you are so afraid to lose your life anytime. We wouldn't want a repeat of it."

SL06 declares "I don't want no more war in my life" and SL09 believes "we have not relapsed into war because of memories of the past. That war was very, very brutal."

This finding goes against theories which indicate that exposure to violence creates the propensity for further violence due to desensitisation (International Crisis Group 2003; Carey and González 2020). It adds credence to research by Mitton (2013: 325) who argues that in Sierra Leone, despite levels of poverty and hardship, it "would take nothing less than an order at gun-point for them to return to conflict." This also reflects British military participants' experience. UKM04 recalls the collective panic that ensued following a riot at Pademba Road Prison in 2001:

> "I've never seen anything like the panic…The panic was like a horror movie, everyone running and screaming. Picking up their children and running with them because they thought it [war] was happening again. It was frightening to watch the panic when the shooting started, a real shock to me to see panic at that level."

Although this incident occurred not long after the end of the conflict, it demonstrates the strong desire to avoid further conflict. However, the data analysed below envisages the threat to peace as coming not from former combatants re-arming but from younger generations, without the experience of conflict, and there is a palpable fear for the future of Sierra Leone once this generational memory is lost.

Sierra Leonean participants are particularly worried regarding younger generations, whom several believe do not conceal or subvert their desire to take up arms (SL02, SL04, SL06, SL09). It is said that the younger generation "are

the people we are afraid of" (SL02) and "it makes me nervous when people are saying 'we have to fight'. So many youths, they say they want to fight" (SL06). Some see parallels between these attitudes and their own prior to the outbreak of the conflict, which they find deeply concerning. Before the civil war SL04 comments that he "would pray 'let there be conflict' and 'we can fight and set a distinction'." SL09 remembers:

> "everybody was saying 'go fight'. That if we don't spill blood this country will not be better. People were calling for war. We thought rebels would target who they should target. But they targeted everybody. People then said we should not have asked for war."

Neither of these two participants were part of the RUF, yet the implication of these statements is that the population were not necessarily against a movement rising up against government. Rather, it was how this rebellion was executed which was not supported (SL04, SL06, SL09). SL06, who had been abducted by the RUF as a 'wife', goes so far as to say "Foday Sankoh was nice, he was a good leader. He even sent milk for us mothers. But the rebels [working beneath the leader] they don't listen." This analytical point links with the need to address the causes of conflict within peacebuilding (see section 5.5 Perceptions of Future Stability). This has been acknowledged in existing research (see Ginifer and Oliver 2004; Graben and Fitz-Gerald 2013; The World Bank 2019b) but tends to be treated in a removed way, yet the data suggests there is an emotional immediacy to it. These extracts add a level of urgency, bringing it from detached abstract acknowledgement into notable statements of grievance and talk of a return to violence.

Although both younger and older generations share the same environment of poverty, increasing inflation, unemployment, lack of infrastructure and so on, there seems to be a stark contrast in views on future violence (in terms of its favourability). SL10 encapsulates this:

> "it is shameful to say I cannot afford even a bag of rice, but no matter what we don't want war back in the country…we know what we lost. You could lose your life at any time."

As such, the shared grievances relating to their current environment are tempered by the memory of real devastating war for older generations. It is this collective societal awareness and preference for the current circumstances over those of the bloodletting of the civil war which does not seem to be shared by all of the younger generations. This was also thought to be further augmented by the latter group having unrealistic expectations, for instance that “development should happen overnight” (SL01). From conversations held during fieldwork it is evident that there is a strong desire for rapid development, which many feel should have been possible due to the British presence. Whilst this is not realistic it did not prevent civilians from being disgruntled and many view government corruption as the primary barrier to this occurring.

As the older generation dies, the loss of historical narrative is concerning and it could be posited that a lack of emotional connection to the past has the potential to endanger the future. This is echoed by Sierra Leonean participants, who are anxious and fretful for the future of their country (SL01, SL02, SL08, SL13) when “those with the situational memory will die” (SL08). SL13 states:

> “my fear is that as the older generations, who experienced the war, age and transition, the younger people (who haven’t experienced the war) will see the same kinds of injustice and things that have been happening. Only they don’t have the experience of the war to serve as a check. And they will decide the way to resolve these issues is to fight.”

This reinforces the idea that memory is a primary crutch which ongoing peace relies upon, as opposed to the legacy of the British intervention, and its contribution to peace should not be underestimated. Given that the average life expectancy within Sierra Leone is one of the lowest in the world and estimated to be around fifty-five years of age (The World Bank 2019a), this finding is particularly significant with regards to the future stability of the country in the not-too-distant future. Yet, the seemingly vital role of memory in maintaining peace in Sierra Leone appears to be absent in wider research.

Whilst the dying out of these memories is inevitable, educating the remaining generations is one of the ways to ensure that memories of the conflict endure. On the surface this appears to have been realised by the government, who claim

that it forms part of the curriculum for school children (MBSSE 2020). However, it does not appear as though this is delivered on in practice and is thought to "rarely" (SL11) take place as there is "no real strategy to educate about conflict" (SL01). SL02 states "when I talk to children I say 'who is Foday Sankoh?' 'What is a rebel?' and they don't know!" During fieldwork I was struck by the lack of education provided to younger generations regarding the conflict and just how little they knew of it. However, the importance of such education goes beyond my own observations and data and is enshrined in international standards: part of the UN's standards include a 'duty to remember', for instance through memorials and museums (King 2010). Although there is a Peace Museum in Freetown, dedicated to the conflict, peace processes and the TRC, I was unable to locate a single participant or anyone from the local population who was aware of its existence.

Both British policy participants (UKP01, UKP02, UKP04) and the Sierra Leone group (SL01, SL02, SL11) also express concerns regarding the lack of education on the conflict. Although this education could occur through less formal structures than schooling, several participants admit that they find their own memories too painful to share with their children and grand-children and so "nobody ever talks about the rebels" (SL08). SL06 shares "we don't talk about it" and SL09 contends "if you talk about the war, someone will tell you 'woah, don't talk about'." This lack of open dialogue is understandable, however, its active discouragement also contributes to the lack of awareness in younger generations. In addition, SL09 feels there is a need to focus education on democracy and "we have to educate youth who weren't around then on the dangers of not following the democratic processes." Theoretically this will encourage grievances to be addressed through the ballot box rather than violence. Yet, in practice, democracy does not guarantee peace and there was an increase in violence and political interference in the run-up to the 2018 elections, in comparison to those held in 2012 (Lucey and Kumalo 2018; Harris 2020).

5.7 An Unquestioned 'Success'

Whilst discussion surrounding the success of the British in Sierra Leone is woven throughout this thesis, and in particular in Chapter 6, the concept of 'success'

based on participants' perceptions of the legacy of the British intervention emerges as an explicit element in analysis. Beyond the triumph of ending the civil war it was apparent that there is not a clear definition of success, with participants interpreting it in different ways and often with ambivalence. For example, declaring the intervention to be successful, then subsequently defining success in ways not evidenced by the case of Sierra Leone. This theme reflects these ambiguities and ambivalences. That success is conceptualised inconsistently is not unexpected, given that such criteria are typically kept vague in order to maximise flexibility. For instance, the British presence in Sierra Leone:

> "does not have these national security strategies, which are key documents that have the right measures. In effect, inviting us to look at what success looks like, holding us to time periods and things like that. Which would be entirely appropriate" (UKP02).

This also links into the unspecified end state of British involvement (see section 5.4 The End State). As a consequence of this, there is a lack of clearly defined points or set of objectives following which ISAT would depart and the UK would reduce down to a typical in-country presence. This is not limited to Sierra Leone and more generally speaking it is thought that the British "don't clearly articulate what success looks like or if we define it, then we don't stick to it. It's always creep, creep and continually shifting goal posts" (UKP02). This issue is acknowledged in the recommendations of ISAT's 2016 Annual Review, which includes the need to be "articulating what success looks like" (DfID 2016) moving forwards. It also appears to be an issue more broadly within policy, with different departments having stark differences and inconsistencies in how they measure impact (Watson and Karlshoej-Pedersen 2020).

The most simplistic measure of successful intervention is whether widespread violence has continued or re-emerged following the intervention. That it has not is no small achievement given that more than half of the modern wars in Africa have once again resurfaced within a decade of the declaration of peace (Furley and May 2013). Research which subscribes to this measure declares the British involvement to have been a success (for example, see Jackson and Albrecht 2010a) and UKM02 states the intervention is "a success in the sense that there

hasn't been a return to conflict." For civilians the impact of being able to live daily life without the threat of horrific violence or atrocities should not be underestimated, and it is logical to assume that had the conflict continued there would have been further atrocities perpetrated against civilians. As such, measures of success may be based on such counter-factuals. However, this same participant also acknowledges that:

> "there is a degree of arrogance in developed nations deciding what success does and doesn't look like. People were quite happy to declare what we did in Iraq a success, but it's a complete fucking mess…arguably it's about us supporting them and providing an environment where they think they can grow and flourish. If we've done that, then it's a success" (UKM02).

This concept of arrogance is returned to throughout Chapters 6 and 7, suffice it to say. Yet, there is unavoidable superiority in the British deeming themselves best situated to judge their actions a success, rather than those in the affected nation. The extract also demonstrates success to be a subjective immeasurable element. Furthermore, the British intervention and areas it targeted for state-building or reform extend beyond this initial instituting of peace and so, arguably, the measure of success should reflect that.

All British participants view the intervention as a success overall, and one declares "this is a relatively uncomplicated success story" (UKP04). However, as evidenced through the findings in this Chapter and Chapter 4 there are significant limitations as to what can be labelled a success within Sierra Leone and the term should not be used uncritically. For instance, the police reforms are not considered to be successful by multiple participants (see section 5.2.5 Sierra Leone Police). Therefore, even within SSR the success claims relate specifically to the military and not to the security sector as a whole. Discussion regarding success, both in existing research and on the ground, tends to focus primarily around SSR, despite the disproportionate amount currently spent on development programmes (see section 5.3 Development). This is likely due to the perception that the MoD is "the ministry that is best placed and benefitted from fifteen years of UK support" (UKM02). There are also elements of self-congratulation at having reformed RSLAF as "we rebuilt an effective military and

that in itself is a success story" (UKP02). Yet, one of the primary goals of SSR was to "generate an effective force that can stand on its own without any support from overseas" (UKM03). As previously stated, despite the label of success, that goal has yet to be achieved as RSLAF continue to rely on external funding and lacks independence from the British, in terms of training and equipping, as well as the continued input from Advisers.

Beyond success within the context of SSR, participants are less quick to label the British intervention successful as "the UK have been involved in a variety of sectors that have not made as much progress as they should have" (SL13). UKM01 states:

> "from a military perspective Sierra Leone was a success, but it was not successful in terms of post-conflict reconstruction. The UK did not live up to what it has tried to pretend to achieve...building health care centres is not the same as building a functioning health care system."

It is felt that to a certain extent Britain focuses on 'quick wins' rather than meaningful sustainable reform, at times prioritising the building of physical infrastructure representing the state, in place of developing the systems underpinning it. For instance, DfID funded the rebuilding of court houses and the Special Court, yet failed to adequately address judicial reform, leaving in place "underlying problems of an underpaid, understaffed and poorly motivated judiciary that was easily corrupted" (Thomson 2007: 26). A similar critique has been levelled at the UN's peacebuilding efforts internationally, which also tends to focus on 'hardware' such as buildings and vehicles, over software including skills and knowledge (see Graben and Fitz-Gerald 2013). This suggests that this is a fundamental issue within practice more broadly, rather than specific to the British alone.

An alternative measure of success relates to the development aims within the British intervention. A British Army (2016) report exploring the British contribution categorises their presence as Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN). By this standard, priority is placed on countering the cause of violence as opposed to simply battling the insurgency. Jackson and Albrecht (2010b) argue that whilst poverty pervades in Sierra Leone, a majority of people have experienced an

increase in their prosperity in the decade immediately following the end of the civil war (between late 1990s and 2008). However, just over twenty years since the cessation of widespread violence some participants feel they were “better off during the conflict” (SL02) or are poorer now than prior to its outbreak (SL06, SL10, SL11, SL12). SL06 reports “everything is not high up like it was in the day. Now we only have enough money for cook one [sic] meal in the evening.” SL07 discloses that “one of my friends, he actually made the comment that he was happier then [during conflict] than the normal times. Because he was getting rice.” SL02 also reinforces this and emphasises that the current minimum wage is often not adhered to, nor does it come close to the cost of living. Again, this data throws into question the assumption that increased security would stimulate a decrease in poverty. In contrast, SL03 feels there has been an improvement, as he estimates that country-wide there is access to “electricity 90% of the time…80% of the population have clean water.” This isolated view is not supported by available statistics, for example The World Bank (2019b) estimate that only 23% of the population have access to electricity.

These data extracts are significant in light of the vast amounts of funding the British have pumped into both security and development projects in Sierra Leone. They also indicate a continuation of what Ebo (2006) termed a ‘poor peace-dividend’ for civilians, who continue to live in poverty with poor access to basic amenities and services. As such, it is highly questionable whether the British intervention in terms of its development and state-building aims can be termed ‘successful’ when a portion of the population feel that they were better off during a period of widespread instability and bloodshed than presently. These views also imply that despite investment, elements of poverty/individual wealth (and most importantly how these are experienced) has worsened since the end of the civil war. Given the brutality of the war, and the continued threat to life experienced during this period, this finding is relatively unexpected.

The colonial past in Sierra Leone is viewed positively and, based on conversations during fieldwork, forms a large part of how the people of Sierra Leone identify. However, the depth of this was unanticipated as one of the legacies of the UK’s intervention appears to be to reinforce the desire for a return

to British colonial rule, which carries with it implications for how successful the British intervention can be deemed to be. Despite issues during the colonial period, this is seen through rose-tinted lenses and there is pride at having once been a British colony, extending to nostalgia for British colonial rule (SL03, SL04, SL07, SL09, SL10). For instance, there were expressions of gratitude as "if we hadn't been colonised where would we be? We would be eating each other and worshipping cotton tree. Colonialism brought us civilisation" (SL03). Thus, there is a negative perception of their own history prior to the British rule.

There is also a belief that "if we had stayed under colonial rule, they would not allow us to go down to certain levels. If we are under colonial rule this [conflict] would not happen" (SL04). SL07 states:

> "there were trains when the British were here. There was a working system. The civil service was working. Then we had our own people and they mess it up. During the war most people were saying 'when are the British coming back?' Not about the war (to come to rescue [sics]) but coming back in terms of colonising again."

This latter sentiment is also evidenced in wider discourse, for example, in 2010 the Finance and Economic Development Minister stated on the BBC that a return to colonial rule under the British would be welcomed (Thomas 2010). Similar sentiments have also been expressed to British participants by the local population (UKM03, UKM04, UKP01, UKP02, UKP03, UKP04). UKM04 reports civilians telling him "everything worked until you left" and UKP01 recalls a senior member of the government:

> "coming to me in all seriousness saying 'was there any chance we could take back the independence and make them part of the British empire?' Because they felt that the downfall of this country started at independence."

This positive perception of colonialism seems, at times, to extend to some British participants, who claim "on one hand there should be a bit of guilt about our colonial past in Africa, but on the other hand it did a lot of good" (UKM03) and "things were better during colonial times" (UKP01). In contrast, one participant states that "when the local population don't want you there, you've succeeded"

(UKM04). Given that the opposite is apparent, and that there are calls for more involvement from the British (rather than less) the success of the intervention, particularly in terms of local ownership, is called into question. The positive perception of colonialism could be attributed to the power dynamics at play within the relationship between the two countries. For instance, it may be speculated that were Sierra Leone economically and militarily stronger it may not have welcomed the presence of a former colonial ruler in quite the same way. However, such a simplistic attribution trivialises these voices. This data reinforces that the power dynamics involved in R2P and military interventions for humanitarian purposes need to be explored, not just from a structural level but from the perspectives of the individuals involved. There is also a lack of R2P research exploring neo-colonialism. Yet, this data indicates a need to problematise neo-colonialism as part of intervention and R2P, even if this challenges R2P thinking.

5.8 Conclusion

This analysis demonstrates that when critically examined the success of SSR in Sierra Leone refers only to one aspect of the security architecture (the military), rather than being a holistic or comprehensive labelling. Even within this it is arguable that success does not apply to RSLAF as a whole, as the different branches of the armed forces (land, air and navy) were combined within the single RSLAF force and the progress of these contingents has been uneven. For instance, the air force remains largely unfunctional and lacks access to any working helicopters. Furthermore, it is apparent that RSLAF cannot progress and develop without the financial support of international backers, nor will it be able to maintain current standards without the continuation of this support. This is despite sustainability being a major objective of the UK's involvement and the original analysis of the data presented here indicates that the label of 'success' in SSR bears scrutiny and cannot be accepted unquestioningly.

Many of the issues identified in the early 2000s, such as 'backsliding' within the Police, a judiciary which remains vulnerable to corruption, and inadequate accommodation for RSLAF are still yet to be addressed by the country. This is, despite the significant amount of time which has now passed. The continuation

of shortcomings such as this has the potential to create instability in the future. Whilst participants could easily attribute the delays in progress to the aftermath of Ebola, for instance causing significant economic and social disruption, this did not arise. Instead, ongoing problems and delays are attributed primarily to corruption and poor governance: areas which the British have been less successful in reforming.

Development remains an issue, as does the continued presence of characteristics which contributed to the outbreak of the civil war. In many ways, despite the vast resources and finance allocated to Sierra Leone by the UK, there is a mirroring of pre-conflict conditions and social structures. This appears significant when exploring the extent to which the British have been successful in their endeavours, as many of these recreated conditions have been identified as factors contributing to the initial outbreak of widespread violence. As Le Grys (2010) highlights, the perception of security is key to stability however, both Sierra Leonean and British participants feel insecure to an extent and uncertain regarding the future stability of the country. Without these root causes of violence being adequately addressed, the true sustainability of peace within Sierra Leone should not be taken for granted. This is particularly the case given the extent to which the memory of the civil war has created a buffer against a return to violence, yet this is temporally bound. It is unclear the extent to which the enduring peace may be attributed to the legacy of the British intervention and their ongoing involvement, and how much of it is this memory of the conflict.

Having explored the experience of the British intervention and its legacy within Sierra Leone, the following substantive chapters will address the legacy within British foreign policy and explore the broader issues of global practice and the implications for R2P.

Chapter 6 - The Legacy of the British Intervention in Sierra Leone on British Foreign Policy

6.1 Introduction

Having explored the legacy of the British intervention within Sierra Leone, this chapter turns its attention towards domestic politics within the UK, the impact this perceived success has had on British foreign policy, if any, and the role the UK views for itself in the international arena. That "much of the UK focus on post-conflict security and the reconstruction of states stems from its experience in Sierra Leone" (Jackson 2018: 2) indicates that the endeavours in Sierra Leone have shaped the UK's subsequent peace-building practice. However, in-depth explorations of the legacy of Sierra Leone on British politics tends to be scant. For instance, the majority of research relating to the UK and military intervention for humanitarian purposes/liberal peacebuilding is inclined to focus on the interventions in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq with typically only cursory mentions of Sierra Leone (see Chandler 2003; Atkins 2012 for example).

The participants' perceived reasons for the success of the British intervention in Sierra Leone is first explored in order to foreground the discussion of the impact within foreign policy. Their perceptions of ethical foreign policy, heroism and British exceptionalism, is then analysed before shifting focus to the future bilateral relationship between the two countries and the UK's role in Peacekeeping based on their experiences. These themes may appear disparate initially yet are united by the umbrella of how the UK positions itself globally and in relation to Africa, as well as what action may be feasible in the future, based on the perspectives of the participants. Findings from analysis are contextualised using secondary research to a greater extent than the previous chapter.

As discussed in Chapter 1.3.2 Sampling, the research group is comprised of those with direct experience of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone, either at the time of the intervention or presently working in the newly reformed security architecture. As such, the Sierra Leone group is primarily comprised of SLA, RSLAF and SLP interlocutors. The British groups are limited to British military participants and British FCO staff present in Freetown at the time of

fieldwork. A key strength of this approach is that all interviewees have experience on the ground in Sierra Leone and thus are able to offer informed opinions on the British intervention. Whereas the previous two chapters are based on participants drawing upon their own direct experiences of the intervention, providing a wealth of data, the following two chapters widen out the scope of the discussion. For instance, within this chapter, participants provide their views on the legacy of the intervention on British foreign policy based on their experiences. However, this is not necessarily representative of all who may be able to make valid contributions to these debates. For example, past or present members of the British government are not included.

Throughout this and the subsequent chapter, multiple findings expose a disconnect between those making decisions at a higher level (for example, in Whitehall) and how the situation is experienced on the ground. Although British political elites are not included within the research group, extracts from various key political figures such as Blair, Cook and Short, are included within the analysis (through a mixture of their autobiographies, public speeches and press interviews) as well as published material from the British government. However, by not including political elites as interlocuters there are limitations to the findings, primarily the inability to analyse the decision-making process and explore how and why such disconnects arise and to give a wider perspective concerning the impact of legacies on British foreign policy and R2P generally. As the aim of this research is to examine how military interventions for humanitarian purposes are experienced on the ground, it is not felt that the absence of this group is detrimental in achieving this and to do so would be beyond the scope and intention of the thesis. As such, the remaining substantive chapters serve as a representation of the opinions of those on the ground regarding these legacies, without seeking to provide a comprehensive collection of views.

6.2 Perceptions of the Reasons for British Success in Sierra Leone

Whilst the longer-term measures of success remain open to interpretation and important to analyse (Chapter 5.7 An Unquestioned ‘Success’), participants across all three groups undeniably attribute the end of the conflict to the UK’s military involvement (as discussed throughout Chapter 4 and 5, participants are

overwhelmingly negative of the contribution of ECOWAS and forces). Although the 'why' and 'what' behind the success of the UK in Sierra Leone remains only partially understood (Ucko 2016a), from literature and the primary data it can be established that this success added credence to future interventions (explored throughout the themes within this chapter). As such, it is important to examine participants' considered perceptions about this idea of success and how it may have influenced and shaped British foreign policy, and the UK's subsequent intervention practice.

Whilst this is a gap in the current narrative, there is a commitment to a focused but more brief analysis in order to allow for more attention to be given to the subsequent themes, which are judged to be of greater significance. Several participants speculate at various junctures as to the reasons for the British success, providing a unique micro-level perspective based on their individual experiences. Each gives multiple explanations, indicating that no one cause alone is responsible, rather it is a combination of multiple factors. These can artificially be broken down into: timing; credibility and conduct; resources; Operation Barras; the hearts and minds campaign; and luck. This does not present an exhaustive list but is representative of the aspects focused upon in the data set. These are primarily based on the views of Sierra Leonean participants, as it was this group who chose to speculate, unprompted, on the factors which influenced the outcome of the UK intervention. This may be argued to be largely symptomatic of the relatively uncritical interpretations of several of the British interlocutors, who were more focused upon the discussion of success than pulling apart why this was the case.

6.2.1 Timing

The perception of timeliness, with regards to the British intervention, has been analysed in Chapter 4.2 Timeliness, and the main finding of this is that the UK are felt to have intervened late in the conflict. However, paradoxically this is also felt to be a factor in their success as "everybody was just fed up of the war" (SL10) and "fatigued" (SL04). It is thought that just prior to the arrival of the British "rebels had largely retreated back into their strongholds…most of them were exhausted and wanted peace" (SL08). SL06, a former rebel wife, reports that shortly prior to

the British intervention herself and the group of rebels she was with had crossed the border into Liberia and surrendered. As she describes “they don’t want to fight no more. There was no support by then. Ammunition finish, you have a gun but nothing inside. So rebel decide to become refugee.” This is also underpinned by a distrust of the Nigerian forces within Sierra Leone and the belief they would have been killed upon surrender. A similar experience is shared by SL12, at that time a member of the SLA, who recalls:

> “I summoned a meeting with the rebels at the border. I told the rebels how long are they going to continue this fighting? After addressing the fighters, within one week 400 surrendered to my battalion. They said that they are tired of war…we are all tired of the fighting.”

These extracts indicate that at the point of the British intervention the rebel movement was already weakened, lacking supplies, and with large groups looking for the safest way to yield and demobilise (SL04, SL06, SL08, SL09, SL10, SL12). This is in stark contrast with the narrative which places an attack on Freetown as imminent and estimates the RUF as controlling vast swathes of the territory. It may also be countered that the RUF did have capacity enough to invade Guinea in September 2000, however, this was with little success. Ucko (2016a) refers to conflict fatigue as a factor contributing to the end of the conflict, arguing that Sierra Leone was primed for peace at the point of the British military intervention. This said, the narrative of a war-weary country, which the UK was able to capitalise on and enable a transition to peace, is often more widely neglected within the portrayal of the successful intervention. Emphasis is instead placed on the skills and strategies of the British military. As such, the intervention is contradictorily seen as both late and timely.

6.2.2 Credibility and Conduct

The experiences of the ECOMOG and UNAMSIL forces, in particular the Nigerians has been analysed in Chapters 4.1.3 Perception of Nigerian Forces and 5.1 Lasting Perceptions of Nigerian Forces, and contrasts starkly with how the British are viewed by the affected population. The exemplary conduct of the British forces is singled out as a reason for their success by Sierra Leonean participants (SL01, SL04, SL06, SL07, SL08, SL09, SL13), with its personnel

being viewed as “well disciplined” (SL13), “professional and robust” (SL01) as well as having “better skills and approaches” (SL04). Whilst this professionalism is not always found in the anecdotes from British personnel, for instance UKM04 laughingly recounts that “Strasser was in Freetown when I was there. We used to take the piss out of him and throw rocks at him. It was quite funny,” they were experienced locally as an “organised force…with lots of fire power” (SL08). As a result, “there was confidence building and trust with the British” (SL07). Through this it appears as though their presence, and their clear partisanship, shifted the power dynamic of the conflict significantly. For example, SL13 feels that “just their walking around Freetown brought confidence back to the population” (SL13) and sent a message to the RUF that “there is now something that is strong behind the government” (SL04). These participants believe this to have precipitated the end of the conflict. This goes against research which suggests that an impasse or mutually hurting stalemate is a necessary condition for the timing of peace initiatives (Zartman 2001). As such, it appears as though their physical presence created a ‘ripeness’ for peace by tipping the balance of power.

6.2.3 Resources

Both equipment and intelligence gathering means are referenced by participants as reasons for the British success (SL01, SL04, SL05, SL09). For example, there is “the expectation that the [British] military have this stronger might. They have logistics, they have the required training and can take on these guys and easily defeat them” (SL09). At the time SL01 was impressed by the “aerial supremacy…[and] military hospitals on board a ship just out of Freetown” and SL04 states “they [the UK] were more battle tested and equipped. They had helicopters; they can go areas they want to go. They had warships. So, their impact was stronger.” This contrasts with ECOMOG’s “few alpha jets, no sea carriers [and] small weapons” (SL01) and the perception that they are “not trained [and] didn’t have logistics” (SL09). As such, the equipment limitations of ECOMOG and UNAMSIL (amongst other factors) significantly limited their capabilities in being able to defeat the RUF.

General Richards (2015: 174) interpreted the intervention as a:

> "psychological game…we did not have expansive ground-fighting capability…[and] relied on convincing the RUF that they would lose in any confrontation with us…that I walked on water with a whole panoply of weapons at my disposal."

As a result the British tactically engaged in shows of force centred on creating the impression that the British presence was much larger than it was. For instance:

> "we did a whole big power play demonstration of landing on the beaches with helicopters. It was funny at the time seeing these marines running around like they were about to be attacked. But it sent a message. It's like scaring off a lion by making yourself look bigger. In reality there was only just over a hundred [personnel] there" (UKM07).

UKM05 recalls doing "parachute drops which were for no military purpose whatsoever…but the impact those sort of things had on undermining the rebels confidence and boosting the populations confidence was extraordinary." As such, the limited resources available to the British at that time were strategically used to create a larger impact and intimidate the RUF. The effect of these resources is also acknowledged by SL01, who states "when we see British warships in our harbour here, everybody knew that this was no child's play" and SL04 highlights that the presence of "Chinooks and Hercules at Lungi airport had a great impact." The visibility of this equipment coupled with the demonstrations of power sent a clear message regarding the British presence and had a psychological effect on the rebels (UKM05, UKM07).

6.2.4 Operation Barras

Ucko (2016a) argues that conversation regarding the British success has been significantly narrowed due to a convergence of discussion on Operations Palliser and Barras, at a cost to explorations of the impact of the other UK missions in Sierra Leone. Whilst this critique highlights a gap in research, it was Operation Barras which several participants single out as a turning point in the conflict (SL01, SL02, SL04, SL05, SL07, SL09, SL13, UKM05, UKM07, UKP01). This is seen as having sent "shock waves" (SL01) which are credited with "bringing the conflict to a conclusion" (SL05) as there "was no big resistance after that Operation" (SL04). The success of Barras also boosted the UK's reputation in-

country, with Sierra Leonean participants' anecdotes of the mission describing scenes akin to an action film.

The success of Operation Barras is also linked to the intelligence gathering capabilities and equipment available to the British. UKM05, who has previously conducted interviews with rebels as part of the DDR process, states that prior to this mission:

> "they had never seen accurate sustained fire…the sort of battles they had been in were sort of spray and pray. They hadn't been in contact with well trained professional troops before and they found it utterly terrifying."

Significant military air capabilities are felt to have been significantly beneficial (SL01, SL02, SL07), as without this the mission would have been extremely difficult and carried with it increased risk. For example, SL02 believes "without the helicopter it would have taken too long to clear the West Side Boys…It really helped them to swiftly clear and put a total end to them." As such, the rebels' experience of engaging directly with the British forces through Operation Barras is thought to be "influential in showing the rebels that they can't win the war" (SL13) and "broke their back completely" (SL07).

6.2.4 Hearts and Minds

The British focus on winning the hearts and minds of civilians is seen as contributing to their success by ensuring support from the local population. For example, comments such as "if you went up country the British were building bridges, helping them, restoring" (SL07) are not uncommon. These activities demonstrate not only a physical presence but also tangible signs of progress, such as the rebuilding of infrastructure. British soldiers present at the time are remembered as "happy to talk, right across whether it was a soldier or a cleaner, find out how the family are doing. You could really see them endear quickly" (SL07). This was coupled with an information campaign and providing wind-up radios to villages (Roberson 2014). Not only is this seen as an act of generosity but it also enabled the British to exert influence in remote areas of the country and broadcast information regarding the strength of their presence (Richards 2015). Much like the shows of force, UKM05 feels this was intentionally exaggerated in order to give the impression of a significantly larger British

footprint, so that “the rebels thought there was an SAS solider behind every tree. It was out of proportion to the reality of our presence there.” Such perceptions contrast with how both ECOMOG and UNAMSIL are perceived, although given the pre-existing popularity of the British this campaign could be argued as focusing on ‘maintaining’ hearts and minds, as opposed to ‘winning’ them.

6.2.5 Accidental Success

Some British participants argue that Sierra Leone is an “accidental success…there was no grand strategy that led to that outcome” (UKM05) and as such there was a risk that “it really could have all gone horribly wrong and all kicked off” (UKM04). For example, the paratroopers initially deployed were not front-line ready, having only training stocks of ammunition, equipment unsuitable for the tropics and not having received the necessary vaccinations or anti-malarials (UKM05). UKM05 discloses that:

> “within a week they were falling apart…at that point the marines arrived properly configured. It was a beautiful accident because if we had just gone with the Royal Marines, we would have arrived sustainable but too late – there would have had to be a battle to retake Freetown. But by sending the paras we were able to go very, very quickly, preserve the capital. And at the point they really needed a sustainable force the Royal Marines arrived to swap out.”

Elements of this are echoed by other British military participants, for instance UKM07, who states that “some of it was well planned, some of it wasn’t but still worked extremely well. Without a doubt there is an element of luck.”

In particular, the subsequent provision of anti-malaria medication, Lariam, is thought to have potentially risked the success of the British intervention as due to its side effects:

> “we were operating at 50% effectiveness. We weren’t sharp, focused or effective. People would be standing on stage in the Op’s room giving a really important briefing and then say ‘sorry I’ve no idea what I’m on about. I’m having a Lariam moment’ and everyone would laugh. I did twenty years in the military, in any other arena if someone had stood up and said that they would have been kicked out. But we were all so spaced out by the

> drugs none of us were capable of operating at a good level or knew how bloody useless we were. In rare moments when I was lucid, I'd look around and think the level of professionalism here is so low compared to anything I've encountered before or since" (UKM05).

This indicates that the British forces were unable to operate at their full capacity and to their usual standards, with luck also having to play a significant factor. That no Sierra Leonean participant views luck as a contributor to the British success is not surprising given their perceptions of the British military, as evidenced by the analysis throughout this thesis. This suggests that the success of the British intervention was, at least partially, perceived to be accidental and dependent upon luck. As the official narrative is one of unquestioned success, this has implications for the execution of ethical foreign policy.

6.3 Ethical Foreign Policy

Ethical foreign policy is rather an unwieldy theme but is a credible way to bring all these ideas together. However, this does make for a theme that contains some quite disparate analytical points within it. Traditionally, internationalism has been a foundation of Labour's foreign policy. Atkins (2012) argues that a moral imperative can be found in Labour's values throughout previous decades, citing Neil Kinnock's discussing of the responsibility to assist developing countries in 1985 as an example of this. Yet, it is undeniable that ethical foreign policy gained increased traction in British rhetoric through New Labour and it is this which underpinned Blair's interventionist policies. This is supported by participants' perceptions of foreign policy. UKM04 argues that prior to this change in government Britain had shown little interest in Africa:

> "look at John Major's autobiography. Look up Sierra Leone. It's not in there. Rwanda happened then too. It doesn't even get a mention. How's that? Because the Conservative party didn't give a shit about Africa."

Whilst this chimes with the Realist ontology of international relations, whereby national interests underpin foreign policy (Wivel 2017), Bevir et al. (2013) argues that the reinvention of the UK as a global power with a role beyond Europe, began under Major. However, it was then Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's (1997) mission statement which solidified the intention to provide "ethical content to foreign policy and recognises that national interests cannot be defined only by

narrow realpolitik." Furthermore, Blair's Chicago speech is often cited as having marked a significant shift in approach to interventionist discourse and moral responsibilities (see Chandler 2003; Daddow 2009).

All participants who commented on ethical foreign policy explicitly (UKM01, UKM04, UKM05, UKP01, UKP03, UKP04) view it as synonymous with New Labour and UKP04 even credits Blair with influencing liberal interventionism on a global level, in particular amongst allies. For example, he feels "he [Blair] was instrumental in persuading the Americans to intervene in Kosovo." This data extract presents the UK as the primary driver of ethical foreign policy, a representation which can often be found throughout the related literature. However, McCourt (2013) argues that this exaggerates the importance of New Labour and points to shifts in the wider international context, primarily Washington, as having made their ethical foreign policy possible.

Motivation as a thematic concept returns at this point, however, this time from a foreign policy perspective. For Sierra Leonean participants the British motivation for military intervention is a manifestation of this ethical dimension to foreign policy and primarily rooted in altruism (see Chapter 4.1.1 Motivations for Involvement). UKP02 also echoes an ethical tone with regard to his perception of the motivations for involvement and states "you can't sit and watch people suffer unnecessarily. And that was the point we took. It was a moral position." These perspectives are in keeping with the official narratives surrounding the intervention, for instance, within a military report on the British response in Sierra Leone it is referred to as a "humanitarian intervention" (see British Army 2016). The concept of morality-based action is also projected by Blair (2000) (cited in Gallagher 2011: 10), who defended the British efforts by stating that inaction would "be to turn our backs in effect on those poor defenceless people." As such, the British military involvement is framed as a principled decision, in line with the panoply of ethical ideals underpinning what has come to be known as R2P.

As found in the analysis in Chapter 4.1.1 Motivations for Involvement, this is not to say that the British intervention was totally devoid of political motivations. Although not acting in defence of, nor based upon, a vital interest in the conflict,

Blair was also keen to ensure his personal legacy and create a reputation for Britain as a key actor in the world arena (British Army 2016), attempting to position the UK as a “mini-superpower” (Hughes 2013: 567). These more varied perspectives are also found amongst British participants (UKM01, UKM02, UKM04, UKP01, UKP02), including the belief that the involvement in Sierra Leone was based on opportunism (UKM01, UKM02, UKP01) and “this was all about him [Blair] testing liberal interventionism” (UKM01). Indeed, Sierra Leone is referred to as a test case for ethical foreign policy and liberal interventionism by multiple participants (UKM02, UKM07, UKP04). This can also be found in wider discourse (see Fanthorpe 2003). In addition, it is seen as partially self-serving due to being “a quick win…[which] would boost Tony Blair’s ratings in the polls” (UKM02). However, it can be argued as a risky strategy to increase popularity, as too many British casualties or errors on the battlefield would have seen his ratings plummet. Others acknowledge a strategic interest in Sierra Leone as a “jump off point” (UKM04) to the region and its use as a “staging post” (UKP02). Furthermore, UKP02 feels the intervention was partially motivated by “maintaining our own security, it’s about protecting our international and global lines of communication and strengthening that relationship to ensure we maintain host nation access.” From these perspectives it appears as though Realism is working alongside the concepts of global citizenship and global security.

Whilst the analytical insight of interventions as political returns within this theme, this is through the lens of ethical foreign policy. During the course of the conflict UKP01 perceives the British to have re-focused their foreign policy on “nurturing democracy,” which he feels was encapsulated in their support for the 2002 elections. This ideological facet to ethical realism can be found in New Labour speeches, with Cook (1997) stating that “our foreign policy must have an ethical dimension and must support the demands of other peoples for the democratic rights we insist on for ourselves.” Similarly, Blair (2011: 247) believed that through the British intervention “the country’s democracy was saved.” Therefore, ethical foreign policy goes beyond morality only and cannot easily be separated from ideology. Penfold's (2012) autobiography also portrays the British involvement as ideologically motivated and SL07 credits with “creating so much awareness of the democracy that Sierra Leone was getting to.” Thus, rather than purely altruistic

motivations, British participants perceive there to be the additional combination of strategic, political and self-serving drivers behind the decision to intervene militarily. However, the cynicism typically associated with these additional motivations does not lessen from the favourable viewpoints regarding the outcome and it does not appear to detract from military participants embracing of R2P principles (see Chapter 7).

The UK's ten-year MoU with Sierra Leone saw the introduction of state building aspects and its perceived success appears to have validated such an approach, with state building and development being integrated into subsequent intervention practice, for example, in Iraq and Afghanistan (Jackson 2018). Participants agree that in order to instil changes of substance long periods of commitment are required and that "if you're going to have a successful intervention, you need to be there for as long as it takes" (UKM04). One suggests that even ten years is still not sufficient and that a commitment extending beyond this would have been more beneficial as "we can do something in thirty years" (UKM07). This returns to R2P's vulnerability to accusations of neo-colonialism. Even if there is a need to commit to a long enough period to ensure stability, remaining involved for too long is likely to increase criticisms of humanitarian intervention as a tool for neo-colonialism, thereby undermining the R2P principle.

One of the positive impacts of the British involvement in Sierra Leone is thought to be the opportunity it afforded in reasserting itself on the global stage. For example:

> "it served to demonstrate that the UK was very much still in the game and say 'wow, aren't our boys and girls good here? …Aren't they great? Look at what they've achieved" (UKP02).

As such, there is the belief that their actions in Sierra Leone boosted the UK's reputation domestically (with the electorate), within the affected population, and internationally. This reinforces the UK's role as an important and impactful power and in this way, the intervention matched Cook's (1997) broader stated objective of using foreign policy to "secure the respect of other nations for Britain's contribution to keeping the peace of the world and promoting democracy." Furthermore, that the official narrative surrounding Sierra Leone portrays a

success story offers some legitimacy for further interventions as “it gave politicians a taste that you could intervene with a military to create stability and peace in every circumstance” (UKP02).

It does appear as though the success of Sierra Leone served to make the UK more interventionist and increased Blair’s arrogance. British participants feel that Blair was “seduced and encouraged by the success” (UKM04) in Sierra Leone, increasing his willingness for involvement in other locations (UKM03, UKM04, UKM05, UKP01, UKP03). UKP03, a relatively senior FCO employee, argues that “the biggest foreign policy consequence of it, was it was the thing that emboldened Blair to do other, less successful, foreign adventures, such as Iraq.” Thus, the success of Sierra Leone became a tool to legitimise and normalise further interventions. This adds credence to the Constructivist argument that although norms are created inter-subjectively, they may subsequently act as a determinant of political behaviour (Bevir et al. 2013). In this instance, the implication is that the generation of military intervention for humanitarian purposes as a ‘norm’ of ethical foreign policy was absorbed into the identity of New Labour, reinforced by the apparent success of Sierra Leone, and in turn influenced future similar actions.

UKP01 argues that a negative impact of this success on UK foreign policy is the shrinking of the diplomatic space, as he feels that:

> “because they were so successful here it became the norm that the first thing they would be doing was sending the British forces. It removed time and space for diplomats to do our bit. Even now diplomats are rarely given the opportunity to do their thing first.”

Therefore, in terms of R2P, the implication is that British government favours Pillar III action before all other options are first exhausted, despite the UNGA’s (2009) designation of the pillars for use as a last resort only. However, that the UK did not intervene militarily within the first ten years of the conflict in Sierra Leone indicates that space was provided for diplomatic solutions prior to this and, in particular, during the three years in which Blair gave political backing to Kabbah. Subsequent involvement in crises, such as Libya and Syria, also do not

appear to have been conducted prematurely or before other non-military options had first been exhausted.

One participant (UKP01) claims that a positive legacy of Sierra Leone within the British system was the creation of DfID (UKP01). Given that DfID was established in 1997 (DfID n.d.) such an assertion is ahistorical. However, it can be argued that once elected Blair became swiftly involved in Sierra Leone through his efforts to maintain the legitimacy of the Kabbah government in the face of the military junta. That DfID came into being alongside this indicates that whilst it cannot be viewed as a legacy, the ideas appear to have been working in tandem and concurrently, thereby presenting a link. Prior to Sierra Leone DfID had not yet played a significant role in post-conflict reconstruction nor been involved in SSR (UK Parliament 2014).

Furthermore, prior to its creation, UKP01 states that:

> "aid policy for Africa and foreign policy for Africa was under one hat. You couldn't distinguish between the two. Therefore, you needed to use the aid policy to promote foreign policy."

Previously the Official Development Assistance (ODA) had been part of the FCO, however, in the instance of Sierra Leone DfID was credited with funding the intervention through the Conflict Prevention Fund (Ginifer and Oliver 2004). As such, although UKP01 is overstating their point, there is still relevance in what is articulated. During the fieldwork, there was a strong impression that the separation of the aid policy and foreign policy is seen a positive aspect, which had enabled more efficient and effective working. The recent re-merging with the FCO in 2020 ceases to permit the simultaneous existence of these departments and has been met with reproach and a lack of cross-party consensus. For instance, media reporting has Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer arguing that "abolishing DfID diminishes Britain's place in the world", Blair labelling it as "regressive", Liberal Democrats acting leader Sir Ed Davey viewing it as "a massive step backwards" (Landale 2020) and former Prime Minister Cameron believing it will damage the international standing of the UK (Stewart and Wintour 2020). When coupled with the recent decrease in overseas aid budget (Brooke-Holland et al. 2021) such a move could be seen as symptomatic of a reduction in

Boris Johnson's Governments interest in development spending, though this is at odds with some elements of their projected foreign policy rhetoric.

Interestingly, despite accepting and supporting the principles underpinning R2P (see chapter 7.3 UN vs Unilateral Military Interventions for further analysis) some British policy participants express cynicism regarding the allocation of UK's aid budget internationally (UKP02, UKP03). For example, although aid is used as a tool to influence in-country and shape global security there is frustration with the British aid expenditure, in particular to India who:

> "spend 22% of their GDP on defence and they're also planning to launch a rocket in space. Should we not being saying 'we're not going to give you this aid, because you don't really need it because you can afford to waste on defence?'" (UKP02)

Whilst the Indian government no longer receives direct aid from the UK, it continues to benefit from indirect aid such as technical assistance and development capital investment (UK Government 2016). Similar points may also be levelled at the UK aid contributions to China. These instances appear to detract from data which demonstrates that more than half of bilateral ODA is allocated to Africa (DfID 2019), which one may assume participants would view as a more legitimate recipient given the vast number of countries which are classified as developing within the region (UNDP 2020b). Yet, UKP03 is almost irritated by the continued security and development spending of the UK in Sierra Leone as, whilst he acknowledges a return to conflict would be viewed as a failing of UK foreign policy, he is often dismissive of the country's significance. For example, through the course of the interview sentiments such as "let's not over-estimate the importance of Sierra Leone globally" and "I can't fathom why you want to research here" are expressed. These statements are surprising given the participant's key role in Sierra Leone at the time and, that the country is still viewed as one of the UK's biggest modern success stories in terms of international (military) intervention, continues to demonstrate its importance.

Arguably parts of ethical foreign policy are not only intertwined with New Labour but are specifically linked to Blair's leadership. The renaming of the Africa Governance Institute (AGI) to the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change in 2017

serves to reinforce this link. Yet, during fieldwork, informal conversations with those working closely with, or as part of, this foundation are openly hostile to this rebranding as they do not wish to be so obviously associated with Blair. It is felt that this name change is self-serving due to Blair's desire to minimise the association of his personal legacy with failure in Iraq, by more strongly linking his name to positive development in Africa. This rationale seems logical given participants perceive "Blair's done good work in Africa, in Sierra Leone. There's a lot of good work. But it gets overshadowed by trundling into Iraq alongside Bush" (UKP02). Whilst this overshadowing does seem to be self-evident, there have been instances where the subsequent Conservative government has also been keen to remind the general public of the success of Sierra Leone, despite their being an opposition party. For example, during the Prime Ministers speech in response to the Chilcot Report David Cameron (2016) stated "there are unquestionably times when it is right to intervene - as this country did successfully in Sierra Leone." Such statements are highly unlikely to be motivated by wishing to defend Blair's legacy. Instead they serve to remind the public of past successes in the event of present or successive Conservative governments being compelled to take military action for humanitarian purposes themselves.

The intervention in Sierra Leone is unassailably linked with ethical foreign policy, and widely associated with Blair in particular. For British participants UKP02 and UKP03 this intertwining of the intervention in Sierra Leone with New Labour and Blair means that they interpret the legacy of the intervention within British foreign policy as extremely limited. For example, UKP03 contends that "Sierra Leone had a short-term effect on that government and no-one else. Once Blair left it ceased to have an effect." As such, for some the legacy may be tied up with a particular period and particular leaders, rather than with foreign policy/military intervention more broadly. Whilst it may be said that the main thrust of British liberal interventionism has diminished post-Blair, it can be claimed that the intervention in Sierra Leone influenced and shaped not only how future intervention occurred but also if it occurred at all.

It can be argued that Sierra Leone's success has had a lasting impact on the political landscape within the UK and that ethical foreign policy has transcended

a change in governing party (Daddow 2013). Many of its characteristics were integrated into the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), including the aim to prioritise fragile states through an international development programme and the ability to deploy stabilisation capacities to countries experiencing conflict or crisis (Taylor et al. 2011) (see section 6.9 Thinking Forwards: British Foreign Policy for further discussion). Similarly, the language of the Blair government's ethical foreign policy can be found, two decades later, echoing in aspects of the current government's literature. For example, one of the newly formed FCDO's stated aims is to "integrate development and diplomatic expertise to maximise the UK impact as a force for good" (HoC 2021: 18) and a recent statement by Dominic Raab (2020) envisages "the UK as an even stronger force for good in the world." Being a "force for good" on the international stage is the same vernacular used by Blair (2002).

However, despite this rhetoric appearing to continue under Conservative governments, UKP04 asserts that:

> "it is inconceivable that you would now be seeing the scale and amount of interventions that the UK was engaged in during the 1990s and 2000s. That was a time of huge intellectual belief in liberal interventionism, which we don't have now."

This is partially evidenced by the UK having re-established its arms sales to Saudi Arabia despite concerns of their use in Yemen to commit war crimes (Hunt et al. 2020). This is completely at odds with the ideals of ethical foreign policy and the moralistic image British military participants project. This demonstrates some unethical behaviours continue, but it has changed the surrounding conversations by framing them in terms of ethics. That despite the continuation of some unethical behaviours, it has changed the conversations being had by framing these conversations in terms of ethics.

Whilst there has been a continuance of some elements of ethical foreign policy, it is evident that foreign policy itself is not static. For example, during the Sierra Leone conflict the UK foreign policy evolved and shifted focus. At the beginning of the conflict UKP01 argues that the British approach provided aid for the creation of schools, roads and infrastructure but failed to tackle the issues of

instability, corruption and good governance. As a result, he feels that the "money was totally wasted." This demonstrates that policy, within any country, is temporally bound and changes in line with geo-political interests. UKP02 reinforces this analytical point and states that "Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein and Bin Laden have all been our allies at one stage or another and we've funded them in order to achieve what we've needed to." Furthermore, SL07 claims:

> "there's no way the Gaddafi's of the world could have been sponsoring Charles Taylor, and by extension Foday Sankoh destabilising us, without the British superpower knowing about it. Whatever agenda they had at the time, we don't know. But they had some knowledge."

This perception was not reiterated by other participants but is quite an indictment of the UK's foreign policy, particularly given its ethical stance.

Thus far this analysis has presented evidence indicating some of the core tenets of ethical foreign policy continue in discourse today and that the perceived success of Sierra Leone affirmed forms of ethical foreign policy more widely within British politics. For instance, it was Cameron's Conservative government who committed personnel to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (UNA-UK 2015) and declared an intention to increase contributions to UN peace operations (Curran and Williams 2016) (see also Chapter 6.7 Britain and Peacekeeping). Such declarations would have been almost unimaginable from previous Conservative governments. Furthermore, it can be speculated that the military intervention in Sierra Leone informed the discourse and shaping of R2P; this being Blair's interpretation of the liberal interventionism, which is its foundation. Blair (2011: 400) claims that in his 1999 Chicago Speech he "enunciated the new doctrine of a responsibility to protect…I put it into effect in Kosovo and Sierra Leone." As such, it is not a stretch to posit that R2P was not conceptualised in a vacuum, and its thinking was informed not only by the absence of intervention, for example in Rwanda, but also where intervention had occurred. This is not to ignore the key differences between the British intervention in Sierra Leone and R2P in practice, including divergence in the principles of neutrality and partisanship. Rather, that it is possible that this demonstration of military intervention for humanitarian purposes added impetus to R2P thinking.

6.4 Depictions of Heroism and the Influence of the Individual

Linked with ethical foreign policy are the depictions of heroism relating to the British actions in Sierra Leone, with seemingly endless examples of media articles projecting this narrative (see Assinder 2002; Blair 2005; Renton 2010). This is also found within the primary data set and multiple participants referred to British action as heroic (SL01, SL05, SL07, SL13, UKM01, UKM05, UKP04). For instance, UKM05 states "it was all beautifully heroic and gung-ho." These same Sierra Leonean participants single out Blair as a particular hero in the context of the intervention and indeed in 2007 he was honoured by being made a Paramount Chief. Much of the language focused around this period appears almost evangelical, underpinned by the idea of good versus evil. For example, Blair often refers to the RUF as "gangsters" and "sadists", avoiding using the rebel group's name (for example, see Blair cited in BBC News 2002a; Blair 2011; Blair cited in ITV News 2012) and General Richards (2015: 131) discusses the conflict in terms of "the democratic forces for good of Kabbah against the anarchistic evil of the RUF." Not only does this serve to undermine the RUF's legitimacy, but it reinforces the concept of there being a virtuous party and an evil party to the conflict. Although such representations are inconsistent with the corrupt governance and reported atrocities perpetrated by government forces these depictions arguably helped to garner public support for the intervention whilst also validating its partisan nature.

In addition, Daddow (2009: 551) refers to Blair's "messianic style" within speeches and reporter Little (2007) refers to Blair's casting as "the world's leading apostle of humanitarian intervention." This language littered with religious imagery is not uncommon nor limited to the experience of Sierra Leone. Instead the narrative of a moral crusade and heroism is reflected throughout the ethical foreign policy more widely pushed during Blair's premiership, including how he attempted to present the intervention in Iraq (see Seldon 2005). Headlines such as "can Blair save Africa?" (BBC News 2004) not only feed into the narrative of Blair as a saviour for the region, but also arguably give impetus to his desire to address development in Africa; the "scar on the conscience of the world" (Blair 2001).

At times, this heroic narrative is underscored by a David-and-Goliath-type story (SL01, SL02, SL13, UKM07). For example, UKM07 expresses pride that a "relatively small force (bearing in mind it was thirty-four of us to start with and when I left in 2002 we were at a hundred and sixty) were pitted against tens of thousands of rebels" and yet able to "help a country regain its peace, law and order, and basically put the foundations in place for that country to grow." This was a feat which 17,500 UNAMSIL troops had not been able to achieve. Furthermore, at times it is perceived that this small UK force was the saviour of the larger multinational UN mission (SL02, SL07, SL13). For instance, SL13 states "the British came to rescue the UN so the mission didn't collapse like it had in other countries." Whilst portrayals such as this give thrust to interventionist ideals, they neglect to take into account just how heavily armed 'David' was in this instance, as well as any gains made previously by ECOMOG and UNAMSIL.

This heroism often also permeates academic research on this intervention, even where articles appear to primarily offer a critique. For example, Connaughton (2002: 84) emphasises the achievements of the small British presence "which a UN military force ten times their size had not come close to matching." Ucko (2016a) also offers a critique of the intervention, arguing that many of the factors influencing success were not British owned. For instance, regional dimensions such as Guinea's push back against RUF incursions into their territory weakened the rebels. However, the same imagery of British heroism is employed in his discussion. It is questionable as to whether this is due to a perceived undeniable heroism or whether such language and the related anecdotes are so deeply ingrained in the accepted narrative that surrounds the British involvement in Sierra Leone as to render them unavoidable.

The evangelical language often used with reference to Sierra Leone dovetails with the 'gung-ho' attitudes found amongst British military participants (UKM04, UK05, UKM06, UKM07) and whilst the bloodletting in Sierra Leone was horrific these participants seem to view their experiences with a detached sense of reality. For instance, UKM07 conveys the graphic scenarios he witnessed, including "people wounded, left dying on the roadside…[and] the old system of marking things by putting skulls on poles." Yet he later remarks that his

experience there was “a great time, it was an adventure. I thoroughly enjoyed it.” Similarly, a surreal cinematic lens is applied to the British military intervention particularly in informal conversations with Sierra Leoneans, who describe scenes which would not be out of place in an action film (SL07, SL09, UKM06, UKM07). This is explicitly acknowledged by some, such as SL07, who shares “people here watch a lot of Hollywood movies, they got this conception about British forces” and SL09 describes the UK military involvement in the conflict as “Mission Impossible made possible” (SL09).

Whilst this could be viewed as a fragile, ephemeral legacy it instead appears as though such larger-than-life illustrations of the British in Sierra Leone have a lasting effect, due to the vindication it offers ethical foreign policy and military intervention for humanitarian purposes. These extraordinary illustrations assist in solidifying the narrative of the intervention as an unquestionable success and reinforce the concept of British exceptionalism, and linked with this arrogance (a reoccurring element in many of the themes). For Holsti (2010: 384) the characteristics of exceptionalism in foreign policy include, but are not limited to, the perceived responsibility to aid societies experiencing suffering “subordinating self-interest to a larger, assumed good” and being unrestrained by the norms which govern international society. Both of these qualities can be found in how Britain conducts itself in intervention practice. For example, risking the lives of British military personnel in order to alleviate suffering due to civil conflict in another sovereign state, and continued action in the face of UN vetoes.

Wider research on the construct of exceptionalism, specifically in foreign policy, primarily focuses on America (see Holsti 2010; Walt 2011). Yet, there are clear parallels in the British rhetoric surrounding its military and in particular intervention practice. Whilst Levine (2007) argues that for Britain such tropes can be traced back to colonialism, narratives of exceptionalism appear to peak around points of conflict or adversity. For example, it is evident in the discourse around World War II and ‘Dunkirk spirit’. Similar attitudes are prevalent in the British participants’ interview data and the Sierra Leonean narrative (presented throughout this analysis), as well as the surrounding media reports. In the case of Sierra Leone this exceptionalism rests on the notion that the British were able

to intervene with more success than ECOMOG and UNAMSIL, with reporter Tran (2002) claiming that they required “a bit of British steel.” The implication of this is a belief that the UK are therefore best suited to intervene militarily in similar instances in the future. More broadly exceptionalism is not limited to the Blair government alone and is increasingly associated with Johnson’s Government and Brexit (see Tilford 2017; Mölder 2018).

The liberal interventionism associated with ethical foreign policy is arguably intrinsically linked with the egos involved at the time, in particular Tony Blair, Robin Cook, Claire Short, and General Richards (the latter was presented in the media as “the Brigadier who saved Sierra Leone (Little 2010)). Whilst the initial evacuation mission is thought of as the UK sending the message “everybody for themselves” (SL07), multiple participants indicate that the expansion of the remit beyond this is purely down to decisions made on the ground by General Richards (SL04, SL07, SL13, UKM01, UKM04, UKP01, UKP02). For instance, UKP02 asserts that the intervention was based on Richards’ belief that “he could intervene positively to create a secure environment and he had the will to do so” and SL04 states that Richards perceived that “with some small push they might be able to stabilise the situation.” This implies that had Operation Palliser been under alternative command, the UK may not have intervened militarily in the conflict at that stage. This is further reinforced by Richards’ autobiography, in which he largely presents himself as making the crucial decisions which led to the transformation of the mission, asking for retrospective permission from Whitehall rather than this being a strategic foreign policy decision instigated by Number 10. For instance, he writes that Blair “had little or no knowledge of what we were really up to for many days” (Richards 2015: 4) and at times he was acting against orders from London. Elements of this can be found in wider research, for instance Ucko (2016a: 850) lays the expansion of the mandate on the “personal initiative of the on-the-ground commander.” Watson and Karlshøj-Pedersen (2019) contend that there was poor strategic direction from London during this period and thereby attribute much of the success in Sierra Leone to the individuals on the ground and their autonomy.

Whilst some praised this approach (going beyond orders from the British government), for others such actions are seen as self-motivated as UKM04 states "a lot of it was about personality. He was the head of the army but the intervention was about him. He was a self-publicist…personalities matter as much as anything." This theme of ego as crucial is reiterated by other participants (UKM01, UKP01, UKP02, UKP04), who feel that military intervention is "very dependant on the personality of the Prime Minister" (UKP04). Similarly, UKP01 even goes so far as to claim Penfold's leaving Sierra Leone was a causal reason for the failure of the Lomé Peace Agreement and cites the reoccurrence of violence five days after his departure as evidence of this. This reinforces the role of personality and ego in foreign policy decisions.

This intertwining of foreign policy and individual egos or psychologies is significant, echoing constructivist arguments that identity, in this case that of the decision-making individuals, moulds the implementation of policy (Bevir et al. 2013). Simpson (2015: 106) argues that the UK's ten-year MoU was "personality driven rather than the product of institutionalised strategy or standard operating procedure" rather, it was the product of the key personalities of the time. Claire Short, for instance was particularly known for her humanitarian instincts (Richards 2015) and focus on international development (Gallagher 2011). However, whilst there was a small flurry of research in the 1990s which sought to explore the relationship between schemas/belief systems and foreign policy (see Larson 1994; Chafetz et al. 1998), it has received little attention in current research. Yet, the empirical evidence analysed is this thesis suggests that this under-researched relationship is focal in the determining and understanding of foreign policy. For example, in Sierra Leone the counter-factual can be proposed that different political and military leaders would have engaged differently or followed a different route of action. In other words, how the individual constructs the situation influences their subsequent actions, and in turn the resulting policy.

6.5 Sandline

Sandline is a significant example of using PMCs as third-party interveners in civil conflict (Chapter 3.5.1 Private Military Companies: Executive Outcomes for background within the context of the Sierra Leone conflict). For multiple British

policy participants a key legacy of the British intervention within foreign policy relates to Sandline (UKP01, UKP02, UKP03), as UKP03 states:

> "it's very clear to me if you were sitting in the Foreign Office in London and you said to them 'intervention in Sierra Leone' they would say one word back to you: 'Sandline'."

Rather than focus on the success of the UK in Sierra Leone, UKP03 primarily relates the majority of his experience back to the scandal and speaks negatively of the surrounding actions. He argues:

> "that the intervention was seen as a success by the people here and by Tony Blair himself, was not reflected within the perception in Whitehall, where it was just seen as a problem."

From the data it is evident that Sandline has a continuing legacy as it is heavily interweaved with the perceptions of the British involvement in Sierra Leone, causing continued embarrassment and tainting the Foreign Office perspective of the success in the country. The hangover of shame related to PMCs within British foreign policy resulted in an increased resistance to their use, meaning they could not easily be engaged for an extended period afterwards "without referring to the most incredibly high levels" (UKP02). As such, they were more difficult to utilise and less palatable to the electorate.

Yet, these same British policy participants speak favourably of the role for PMCs in future R2P implementation (see Chapter 7.6 R2P, Global Implications and Future Practice for detailed analysis) based on their current incarnations. This applies to the Olive Group in particular, who are recognised as being "professional" (UKP03). That the USA makes extensive use of such companies (Singh 2017), such as in Afghanistan and Iraq, is also likely to increase their acceptability. This indicates that the impact of Sandline may be lessening or that these negative perceptions are not synonymous with the use of PMCs *per se,* and that it was the breaking of the UN sanctions which is the problematic element. After all, the British had been at the forefront of bringing in these sanctions (Hirsch 2001), the principle of which was then significantly undermined. Furthermore, in 1992 Cook had "made his name in opposition over the Matrix Churchill scandal" (UKP01), which related to the illegal export of munition-building machinery to Iraq (Sourcewatch 2010), thereby adding to the embarrassment. As such, the

backdrop of ethical foreign policy served to make Sandline all the more controversial as it represented “Cook’s ethical foreign policy hitting the buffers for the first time” (UKP03).

Yet these negative associations appear to be confined within Whitehall, whilst publicly espousing triumph. That several British participants perceive the success to be overshadowed at worst, tainted at best, due to Sandline raises questions as to whether Sierra Leone is so frequently pushed as an example of successful intervention in order to attempt to negate some of this reputational damage. Despite these adverse views of Sandline from the British policy participants’ perspective, Penfold (2012) continues to defend his involvement, claiming the scandal was due to a mistake in translating the UN arms embargo into British legislation: that the embargo was not against President Kabbah. It is felt that, rightly or wrongly, “Penfold sees himself as something of a victim” (UKP03) and this victimhood is evident throughout Penfold’s (2012) published account of his experiences in Sierra Leone. Media interviews indicate that he feels vilified by the British government and scapegoated (see BBC News 2002b).

In contrast to the generally negative British perception of Penfold, Sierra Leoneans tend to view him, as well as EO, favourably (SL01, SL02, SL07, SL13) as it “reversed the rebels’ upper hand…and helped a great deal” (SL13). SL01 feels that the use of Sandline was acceptable as they and the British had been invited by the Sierra Leonean government. Multiple participants also credit EO with saving lives and fighting the RUF at a time when others were unwilling to do so or failing to (UKM04, UKP03). Furthermore, there is sympathy towards Penfold and his role in the scandal as “the whole thing just went out of hand” (SL02) and he became the “fall guy but he genuinely wanted to help and stood by us” (SL07). From informal conversations during fieldwork there appears to be an overall sentiment that he had been treated unfairly. As such, from this perspective it is the UK’s response which is seen as the overreaction and not the act itself being problematic. Therefore, the British perception of a disgraced diplomat is in stark contrast to the resounding image of him as a “trusted, loyal old friend to Sierra Leone” (SL07). That Penfold continues to enjoy a status akin to celebrity within Sierra Leone, maintaining close ties and in 1998 was crowned a Paramount

Chief, yet struggled to obtain another FCO posting after Sierra Leone (Penfold 2012) provides further evidence of the vastly differing outlooks on the legacy of this event.

6.6 Speculations on Iraq

Although interviews did not specifically set out to ask for comparative opinions regarding Iraq specifically, participants were asked about intervention practice post-Sierra Leone. Opinions coalesced broadly around Iraq in comparison to their own situations or experiences. Whilst there is an overall positive regard for British actions within Sierra Leone, views on the intervention in Iraq are overwhelmingly negative (SL01, SL03, SL07, UKM01, UKM02, UKM03, UKM04, UKM05, UKP01, UKP02) and it is seen as a "mistake" (UKM04) that "frankly didn't go well" (UKM05). Despite the UK and US' attempts to ethically justify the Iraq intervention (Chandler 2003; Blair 2011; Falk and Skinner 2016) participants interpret the premise of these two interventions very differently. Sierra Leone is felt to have primarily humanitarian underpinnings whereas, Iraq is thought of as "removing a despotic leader, fundamentally meddling in someone else's internal politics…[because] you just don't like that leader" (UKP02), and even Sierra Leonean participants view "the smoking gun excuse for intervention [as a] debacle" (SL01).

Whilst arguably Britain has had extensive influence in shaping the state in Sierra Leone, thereby influencing their internal systems, a key difference appears to be with regard to the removal of the state leader. Furthermore, a primary critique of the British intervention in Iraq is that the British "didn't think it through" (UKP01). However, this displays similarities to some of the perceptions with regards to Sierra Leone, which had initially been conceptualised as an evacuation mission, and very quickly morphed beyond this remit (SL04, SL07, SL13, UKM01, UKM04, UKP01, UKP02). As UKM01 summarises "there was no policy [in Sierra Leone], it was just seized opportunity," implying that at the initial point where the mission became a humanitarian intervention there was no fully formed and coherent strategy and the decision was not debated in parliament in advance. Therefore, it seems that the key difference is perhaps resistance from the affected nation (discussed below) combined with the associated regime change and outcome.

UKM02 attributes the failure of the intervention in Iraq to “doing the opposite” of what had made the intervention in Sierra Leone successful. For example, “they alienated the population [and] demobilised the army without understanding how they were going to provide a safe and secure environment.” In contrast, the MRP and the integration of different factions in the conflict in Sierra Leone was praised by participants (see Chapter 4.3.2 Military Reintegration Programmes). As such, it appears as though whilst some of the perceived positive ‘lessons’ were transposed from Sierra Leone, such as the explicit state building mandate, others were lost. It is asserted that this approach in Iraq generated further regional instability through the creation of a rogue force of mercenaries who went on to fight in neighbouring conflicts as “when the army was disbanded, thousands of them, they went to other countries shooting everywhere” (SL02).

Other key differences that appear to play a role include: in Sierra Leone there is a positive historic relationship, whereas in the Middle East the relationship has previously been fraught (SL07); in Sierra Leone the intervention was welcomed by civilians, whereas in Iraq this was not entirely the case; and three participants (S02, SL07, UKM04) also highlight the size of the countries and their location as a key difference in the dynamic, with emphasis on the small population of Sierra Leone (roughly five million at the point of intervention (Worldometer 2021a)) over a relatively small territory. In contrast, Iraq has a large population (roughly 25 million at the point of intervention (Worldometer 2021b)) spread over a large area. UKM04 also argues that the neighbouring countries had a negative impact as “you’ve got the Syrians on one side who don’t like you, the Iranians on the other side, who don’t like you,” rather than there being multiple allies in close proximity. Furthermore, the complexity of the dynamics within Iraq such as the interplay between different religions, ethnicity and tribalism leads UKM04 to question “why would you intervene in a country like that thinking it’s all going to be good?” This serves to highlight that whilst some lessons may be transferable, military interventions cannot take a one-size fits all approach.

The data presented so far has argued that the experience of Sierra Leone helped to solidify the UK as interventionist. However, the opposite is evident for the

legacy of Iraq which, when coupled with the intervention in Afghanistan, has had a limiting effect akin to that of the Vietnam war for America. For instance, UKP04 sees the Iraq intervention as “damaging confidence intellectually and in terms of material power.” This is seen domestically in the backlash and disillusionment generated by the involvement, including trends of increasing disapproval from the British electorate over the handling of Iraq (Ipsos MORI 2007) and the 2013 parliamentary vote against airstrikes in Syria led by the US (Ford 2014b). This is also evident internationally in changes to the international landscape. For example, the rise of powers such as China and Russia who “increasingly self-define in an anti-western sense” (UKP04). This limiting effect is also attributed to the subsequent impact on resource availability as:

> “if you look at the sheer scale of what we were doing in Iraq and Afghanistan then you realise there simply wasn’t the capacity left to do anything else of that scale” (UKM05).

This reflects the tension between ambition and capability in UK foreign policy.

UKM04 expresses concern that “Sierra Leone is almost forgotten. It’s totally overshadowed. Everything is now viewed through the lens of Afghanistan and Iraq…Blair’s legacy is so tainted” (UKM04). As such, it can be questioned as to whether the legacy of Sierra Leone as an influence for further intervention has been short-lived and is now largely obscured by the combined legacy of the forays into the Middle East. For example, despite Sierra Leone being declared “a highlight in Tony Blair’s foreign policy” (Ucko 2016a: 851) it appears as though increasingly this case is either minimised or missing from a range of literature discussing UK’s foreign policy and intervention practice. For example, multiple research articles instead choose to focus primarily on Kosovo and Iraq, with little more than a cursory mention of Sierra Leone, if at all (see Chandler 2003; Atkins 2012 for example). Although this indicates that Iraq has eclipsed the legacy of Sierra Leone, it may be countered that the legacy of the British intervention in Sierra Leone is seen in the construction and execution of R2P (see Chapter 6.3 Ethical Foreign Policy).

6.7 Britain and Peacekeeping

Further opportunity for Britain to assert itself as a 'force for good' on the global stage may be presented by participation in UN peacekeeping missions. However, traditionally this relationship has been pragmatic. Within the context of this research, British participants express little support or desire to engage as part of UN operations despite their personal beliefs in the validity of military endeavours for humanitarian purposes (UKM01, UKM04, UKM06, UKP01, UKP02). UKM04 insists that "after Bosnia [the UK] will never put troops in blue berets again on any real scale. I did a tour in Bosnia with the UN. It was a nightmare." Similar sentiments can be found in wider research relating to the UK's experience as part of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Yugoslavia which was said to have:

> "left UK policy makers and many senior military personnel with an abiding image that UN peacekeeping was deeply problematic and generally to be avoided where there was no peace to keep" (Curran and Williams 2016: 634).

As such, it appears as though past experiences as part of UN peacekeeping missions has discouraged subsequent UK involvement and it continues to be seen as undesirable by UK military and policy participants. These interlocutors do not see this as exclusive to Britain, rather a trait assigned to Western countries more broadly, reflecting a wider political economy of peacekeeping. For example, America's unwillingness to contribute troops is made explicit (UKM04). There is the perception that "developed countries won't contribute troops" (UKM01) and as a result UN peacekeeping missions are "often just comprised of developing nations" (UKM06). For some, this is due to a lack of political will (UKM01). For others it reflects the reluctance to be commanded by another as "the MoD don't like the idea of putting British troops under the command of anybody, other than the British or possibly American" (UKP01), or the associated limitations of operating under the auspices of the UN (UKM04). Where the UK has committed to troop contributions participants see it as minimal token gestures. For example, the British "unusually provided people to South Sudan as part of the UN mission but this was just engineers and logisticians i.e. people who build bridges and leave" (UKM01). Although this was the largest deployment of UK personnel to a UN peacekeeping mission in two decades (UK Government 2020) it did consist

mainly of engineers, tasked with building and upgrading infrastructure, rather than engaging in potential combat activity.

Placing this fresh understanding in the context of what is known from the literature, there has not been a major contribution of British troops on the ground to peacekeeping missions and in terms these material contributions the UK "fails to meet normative expectations" (Ralph et al. 2019a: 165). For example, as of February 2019 the UK had 603 personnel committed to UN peacekeeping missions. This presents a stark imbalance to the contributions of Least Developed Countries (LDC) such as Ethiopia and Bangladesh, who had committed 7,554 and 6,550 personnel respectively. It may be argued that Britain attempts to counterbalance this by using their 'diplomatic capital' (Ralph et al. 2019a), being an influential 'pen holder' in the UNSC and the sixth biggest financial contributor to the annual peacekeeping budget (Curran and Williams 2016). Others, such as Morris (2011), argue that the shifts the UK can facilitate through its drafting of resolutions meet its responsibilities in a way which goes beyond material contributions. Yet, by deploying uniformed personnel the UK's credibility, and therefore influence, would be further augmented. These approaches also lack the visibility of troop contributions and has led to a wider perception of "you lead, we bleed" (Curran et al. 2018: 8) amongst those countries in the global South who continually contribute troops to UN missions. Therefore, it is questionable whether a diplomatic capital approach is sufficient or whether it risks creating an uncomfortable North-South divide in terms of peacekeeping missions.

Participants feel that British political elites simply lack interest in UN peacekeeping missions (UKM01, UKM06, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02). This echoes ideas presented by Curran et al. (2018), who argues that politicians lack familiarity with how modern UN missions are assembled and conducted. He also identified opportunities for the UK to make niche contributions to peacekeeping, such as marines used as riverine units. Yet, this is unlikely to navigate reluctance for involvement based on the perception of overly restrictive UN mandates, which is found amongst participants (UKM03, UKM04, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02). This includes the belief that the UN "are not prepared to take the action needed to stop

what's going on" (UKP02) (see Chapter 7.2 Intervention Mandate: Peacekeeping vs Peace Enforcement for more detailed analysis).

However, the lack of willingness or desire to commit troops to the UN is not reflected in the attitudes towards NATO (UKM04, UKM07), who it is felt are 'better' as they are more robust and comprised of "professional military forces, western forces with latest kit, professional training and everything else. It can actually do something militarily" (UKM04). This mirrors views found amongst UK political elites, for example, Robin Cook has previously acknowledged NATO as "the cornerstone of Britain's security" (Atkins 2012: 180). In addition, Blair (with regard to Bosnia) expressed the opinion that the UN "could only deal with the symptoms of the problem" whereas NATO was "the desperately needed muscle to end the war" (Blair quoted in Curran and Williams 2016: 640). This is evidenced in the actions of the British government who: have previously committed 1,000 troops to the NATO Resolute Support Operation in Afghanistan (Curtis and Brooke-Holland 2020); are the second largest military spender in NATO (HoC Foreign Affairs Committee 2018a); and are NATO's strongest military partner in Europe (Curran et al. 2018). As such, it appears as though this preference for NATO or unilateral action over UN when it comes to peacekeeping continues to pervade.

6. 8 Future Relationships: UK and Sierra Leone

In light of the discussion of the legacy of the British intervention in Sierra Leone and its impact within British foreign policy there is speculation on the future relationship between the two countries. The distinctiveness of the relationship between Sierra Leone and Britain is underpinned and continued to be shaped by the positive perception of the colonial past by the former. For example, SL07 states "the British are part of our way of life" and SL02 feels "the relationship is very special…there has always been that friendship", which arguably makes for a unique operating environment. UKP03 observes:

> "all sorts of things make it difficult to operate here, but the fact of being British does not…We are starting from a good place. In that sense, it's easy to operate here."

This contrasts to the relationship not only with other former colonies, such as Kenya, but other countries where the British have intervened militarily, such as Iraq. Although the theme of colonialism and neo-colonialism has already been analysed in Chapters 4 and 5 it is evident that the spectre of British imperialism has influenced how current foreign policy is perceived and warrants further discussion within this context. For example, UKP02 claims "our continued intervention here [Sierra Leone] is kind of re-establishing a colonial link." UKM01 feels the intervention was "colonialism with a short-term view…it set up structures how the UK wanted and with UK people in top positions until they wanted to hand over." Furthermore, the primary data set suggests that prior to the military presence the British were already attempting to influence the situation in Sierra Leone as:

> "we were responsible for restoring Kabbah. We used ODA funds to rent this disused Indian restaurant in Conakry…and we ran the government of Sierra Leone from those offices. We spent money on helping refugees, public relations and travel for foreign ministers to attend international meetings on behalf of the Sierra Leone government. We refused to recognise the military junta and through all our international efforts not one country in the world recognised them. That was a phenomenal diplomatic success" (UKP01).

This pressure internationally, to continue to recognise the exiled Kabbah government as legitimate, enabled hope within Sierra Leone as "we knew this government [AFRC] is not going to last. It is not like the one of Strasser, it is not recognised at home or abroad" (SL02) and it is felt that Peter Penfold specifically is responsible for the "restoration of the legitimate president" (SL07). As such, prior to military success the UK had already exerted clear sway in influencing international perceptions of legitimacy with regards to the ruling party in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, SL02 indicates that the AFRC government were well aware of the need to cooperate with the British in order to ensure their domestic and international legitimacy: immediately after the coup Jonny-Paul Koroma prioritised visiting Penfold with the aim of garnering his support. UKP01 gives the impression that during the period there was a heavy intertwining of Britain and Sierra Leone, including that upon his return Kabbah "ran the Cabinet out of the

British High Commissioners dining room" and the British High Commissioner "was acting more like a colonial governor."

It is this close relationship between the UK and Sierra Leone which is attributed as the reason why the BHC remained the only Commission and residence not to be looted during the AFRC junta (SL07, UKP01). Furthermore, during the period of AFRC governance the British remained one of the few embassies to continue to pay its local staff. This appears to have assured loyalty as SL07 believes that:

> "95% of most places that were destroyed had people from inside running information…these guards had to be loyal because they saw where their bread was buttered. I told them if you protect the office, your home will be protected because you will always have eat."

Further probing also reveals that the BHC guards would "give RUF and AFRC guys their rice leftovers because these guys couldn't get anything to eat. So that established some kind of relationship…creates some rapport" (SL07). These experiences suggest an elevated position of the UK locally. Yet, they are a reminder of the complex dynamics involved in foreign policy and interventions, as through this it could be argued that the UK were also inadvertently sustaining the rebels.

In terms of the relationship moving forwards, there is a sharp contrast between the perceptions and opinions of British military participants and British policy participants. From the perspective of the former, there are significant advantages to the continuation of the current level of involvement, and they acknowledge the benefits these bring to the British military (UKM03, UKM04, UKM07). For instance, the opportunity it presents for the British military to "experience training in hot weather…build up your own competence" (UKM04). Training in tropical climates is also argued as useful in wider research, due to concerns with a loss of corporate memory based on the UK's focus on Europe post 1957, as well as such activities enabling a greater understanding of local culture (Dorman 2007). Furthermore, UKM03 comments that a maintained presence has the benefit of "reinforcing confidence in Sierra Leone and flying it as a good news story at home" (UKM03). As such, it is seen as a mutually beneficial situation and there is enthusiasm for maintaining a similar level of involvement.

UKM04 and UKM07 also envisage the current level of UK involvement as almost semi-permanent: that the UK would "only leave when Sierra Leone asks" (UKM04). Given Sierra Leoneans positive image of the British and distrust of local politicians to act in the best interest of the country, it appears unlikely that this request to leave will occur any time soon. If anything, it appears as though a more permanent presence is desired by Sierra Leoneans (see also Chapter 5.7 An Unquestioned 'Success') (SL03, SL04, SL07, SL09, SL10). However, UKM03 feels that maintaining the same level of involvement, whilst desirable, would be unsustainable. This is not attributed to a belief that this level of involvement in another sovereign nation is or may become inappropriate, nor an imagining of Sierra Leone as no longer 'needing' the British presence. Instead any potential reduction in numbers in Sierra Leone is thought would be the result of struggles to recruit and retain British military personnel, meaning current staffing levels in Sierra Leone could not be sustained indefinitely.

In contrast, British policy participants consider the UK's interest in Sierra Leone to be significantly waning (UKP01, UKP03, UKP04). UKP01 argues that this is evidenced by then Prime Minister David Cameron:

> "visiting West Africa a couple of years ago and he went to Monrovia but he didn't bother to come here. Even Boris Johnson [then Foreign Secretary] didn't come here on his tour last month…Nowadays there isn't a special commitment to Sierra Leone."

This perceived diminishing interest is attributed partially to an "increasing sense of vulnerability, economically and so on, and threats to us at home" (UKP04) resulting in a refocusing of priorities. In addition, UKP01 voices that the success of post-conflict measures in Sierra Leone has created an "inability to play on the sympathy factor [therefore] funding goes elsewhere." It can be argued that to some extent the labelling of Sierra Leone as a success is unhelpful in securing future assistance, as finite resources may be directed to alternative countries and crises. However, despite these perceptions of waning interest these same participants feel that the UK will still continue to advise. As such, both groups do share the view that the UK presence will continue in the immediate future, although for policy participants this is somewhat reluctantly.

Were Sierra Leone to experience a further crisis, British policy participants speculate that the UK would be unlikely to commit forces to Sierra Leone beyond current levels (UKP01, UKP02, UKP03) and there would be “no automaticity” (UKP03) for British involvement. Yet, in informal conversation with Sierra Leonean civilians there remains a strong expectation that the UK would come to their aid. This is also acknowledged by UKP04, who reports that numerous Sierra Leoneans “from taxi drivers to cabinet ministers, in a completely unironic way, say ‘we expect you to come help us, we expect you to rescue us’.” Whilst this local assumption may not be likely to occur, it can be argued that this faith helps to contribute to stability presently. For example, potential rebels may feel they have the ability to over-run their own government however, if the expectation would then be for British military involvement, they may perceive victory as unlikely and thereby be deterred. Indeed, UKP04 comments that there is a belief that “we’ve always got a fleet just over the horizon that will come in to rescue people” and as such it seems that the perception of the UK as the country’s “historical guarantor of security” (Stewart 2008: 351) has been maintained.

This expectation for British involvement in any future crises is again highly evident during fieldwork, for example, SL02 shares “the UN will come and go but Britain will ever remain here. Britain is always ready to come and help us. We can never go without Britain.” Parallels to a patriarchal relationship can also be drawn, for example, with sentiments such as “somebody’s taking advantage of your child, you have to come and rescue and do something” (SL05) are not uncommon. In such a metaphor it is clear that the UK enacts the role of the parent, and Sierra Leone that of the child. It also appears to create a prism of dependency through which the bi-lateral relationship is viewed, placing the UK in a position of power. UKP04 feels that the British military intervention in the civil war “strengthened that sense of dependency…it hugely bolstered that.” That much of the intervention was designed around the principles of sustainability does not appear to be integrated into local perceptions of the UK’s involvement and instead it seems as though the continued British presence has reinforced this reliance. Arguably this is likely to have been further enhanced through the British assistance during the Ebola crisis. For instance, SL07 refers to the Ebola response as the UK “saying

‘we are here for you’.” Similar narratives can also be found in wider research such as Harris and Conteh (2020: 54), which makes reference to the phrase “papa don cam fo save pikin”, in other words “father has returned to save his children.”

Whilst this unequitable power dynamic brings many advantages to the UK, such as access and influence, for some British participants it simultaneously creates a burden of expectation (UKP01, UKP02, UKP03). For example, UKP03 expresses the weight of:

> “a lot of people beating their way to your door thinking you’re going to solve their problems…the downside of it is the expectation, which is huge and unrivalled by any sense of reality about the amount of money our country has.”

Furthermore, it is reminded that “the reason we’re so involved now is to try and stop from ever having to intervene on that scale again. The whole security strategy is to avoid that” (UKP03). In contrast to this viewpoint UKP04 feels that Sierra Leone continues to be the UK’s responsibility and he took pride that they would likely be turned to in a future crisis:

> “there’s a quote ‘when something goes wrong no one calls Sweden’. There’s a limited number of people with the ability to project power who are willing to intervene if the UN aren’t.”

As such, there is satisfaction that the UK has not only the ability but also the will, where other states may not, allowing it a powerful role to play on the world stage.

It is evident from conversations with British policy participants that they view Sierra Leone’s primary bi-lateral relationship as being with the UK (UKP01, UKP03, UKP05). For instance, UKP03 states that “there aren’t many other bilateral donors. There’s the Americans, the Germans, the Japanese a very small amount.” Although the relationship between the UK and Sierra Leone is held in high esteem and Britain continues to be their largest bi-lateral donor (Lucey and Kumalo 2018; Harris and Conteh 2020), such statements neglect to mention the increasingly significant relationship between China and Sierra Leone. China is the biggest donor to sub-Saharan Africa (Amusa et al. 2016), which may see the relationship between the two countries become increasingly influential in the future. Whilst UKP01 does mention the relationship with China, this was only to

emphasise that “we are the most important in the country. Not the Chinese. We are the number one key player.” Yet, there is evidence within the local population of an increasingly positive regard for the relationship between China and Sierra Leone and an acknowledgment that “the Chinese are assisting with a lot of causes for us, they are helping us a lot with equipment etc.” (SL04). Such endeavours are well publicised. For example, during fieldwork I observed that ambulances contributed by the Chinese state display large text on them asserting “donated by Chinese government”, providing a constant visual reminder.

This is not to say that the relationship is on par with that of the UK and in some areas there has been a backlash to the Chinese presence. For example, 2018 witnessed strike action on tolls due to protests against the working conditions provided by Chinese employers (Rusillo 2018). In discussion with local civilians during fieldwork it is evident that the Chinese do not always endear themselves to the local population. For example, some speak of resentment regarding a large water feature in the courtyard of what they believe to be the Chinese embassy, merely metres from homes without access to clean, running water. Furthermore, these bi-lateral relationships are thought to be influenced by which government is in power as “anecdotally, the APC government is far more China friendly and the SLPP government is far more UK friendly” (UKM02). However, this data extract fails to consider the SLPP’s frustration with the British ceasing funding in 2007 and accusations of the UK pushing for regime change following the subsequent election loss (Harris 2020).

6.9 Thinking Forwards: British Foreign Policy

Further to speculation on the future bi-lateral relationship between the UK and Sierra Leone, and the British relationship with UN peacekeeping, participants discuss the UK’s future foreign policy more broadly. Participants’ responses include musings on the future role of the British military, given the context of decreasing interstate conflict. Multiple British participants, as well as those in informal conversations during fieldwork, imagine a strong training role for the UK, particularly within Africa (UKM01, UKM03, UKM04, UKM06, UKP02). For example, UKM04 envisages an increased responsibility in training African militaries, to create a sense of unity bound by “having a common set of

standards…to professionalise their approach." The British involvement in training the Kenyan military is cited as further evidence of this. UKM06 compares the quality of training delivered by the British to that of African training and argues that in Nigeria locally owned "training is low quality…There are about one to two thousand people in each course but when we deliver there's thirty to forty people." As such, British training is seen as superior. Whilst the UK is not the only developed nation delivering support in the region, it is thought other countries instead make financial contributions to training or provide equipment. In contrast, the UK insists on delivering this training itself, due to ongoing issues with corruption (UKM06).

The topic of training within this theme bears further scrutiny. It is perceived that the UK has a reputation internationally for delivering high quality training in Africa (UKM01, UKM06, UKM07, UKP02). In the specific context of Sierra Leone UKP02 states that "other EU nations are happy for us to deliver the programmes that they fund, because we have a particularly strong relationship with the government." As such, their connection is widely recognised internationally. However, Brexit has the potential to change the relationship of the UK delivering EU-funded training in West Africa. A strong training role for Britain is undoubtedly motivated by a desire to exert influence in the region, however, it is also argued that there is a focus on training African militaries partially as:

> "there's nothing for anyone to do. We just get sent on exercises to train or be trained. There isn't the financial capacity to do anything other than keep training other countries" (UKM06).

UKP01 echoes a similar sentiment, stating "with all the defence cuts it is beyond us to get too involved in any conflicts." This reinforces the notion that British ambitions are significantly limited by budgetary constraints and that future interventions akin to that experienced in Sierra Leone are unlikely.

Based on the data gathered, British military participants feel any future UK interventions will be Africa-centric. This is at odds with literature which indicates that one of the explanations for the UK's reluctance to engage in UN peacekeeping activity is due to the heavy focus of such missions on sub-Saharan Africa, an area which is of little strategic interest to the UK (Curran and Williams

2016). However, participants base their rationale on the belief that issues in Europe are attended to by the EU and NATO. Further afield it is felt that interests are still dictated by the colonial past (UKM04, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02). For example, UKP02 feels that the British intervention in Sierra Leone clearly signalled "we were prepared to act in support of former colonies." UKM04 states:

> "we're not going to get involved in the far East because we've got no real colonial interests there anymore…the only area we would be getting involved in is the Caribbean and former colonial territories in Africa."

This is believed to be the same for other countries, as there is seemingly an understanding that colonisers maintain the responsibility to intervene in their former territories should there be crises. For example, UKM07 expresses the opinion that "we should retain an interest in the countries that were part of the empire. Even if it's just somebody there…just to be aware that it's starting to go wrong." Similarly, multiple participants refer to Mali, Chad and Guinea as a French responsibility due to their previous colonial relationship (SL08, UKM04, UKP01, UKP04). This is based on an understanding that it would be "extremely difficult for the French to intervene in Anglophone countries on humanitarian grounds…and the British won't intervene in Francophone countries on humanitarian grounds" (SL08).

As such, it appears as though current and future foreign policy interests, or obligations, are still heavily influenced by these past relationships. It can be posited that an inherited legacy of colonialism is the continued responsibility or expectation to assist in instances of mass atrocity and natural disasters in former colonies. As such, colonialism impacts on R2P decisions, in particular where intervention is unilateral. Arguably, this adds a layer of complexity to the debates surrounding R2P as a tool of neo-colonialism: on one hand, it could be seen as validation for this perception as retaining an interest may be rooted in the belief that solutions offered by the former coloniser would be superior. On the other hand, it may be argued that there is a moral responsibility to former colonies, operating within the bounds of an inherited exploitative political system.

With regards to defence policy, UKM02 discusses the British global outlook stating:

> “the defence engagement policy breaks up all these regions of the world: West Africa; North Africa; Middle East and assigns them to army organisations. Those organisations develop those relationships over time to generate that degree of persistency.”

Thus, the British strategy carves responsibility into regions. UKM03 feels that future foreign policy will see the country-based team in Sierra Leone transform into “a regionally-based team, not just for Sierra Leone but also for Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria etc. Stepping back from a country force to a regional force.” Horton Academy could be seen as evidence of this, as it enables the UK to train militaries from across West Africa in British military doctrine and practice (see Chapter 5.2.6 Training). Whilst this means less concentrated influence in Sierra Leone, the aim then becomes to expand influence to the region as a whole.

Whilst the British intervention in Sierra Leone utilised the JRCC, UKM05’s contributions regarding tensions within the defence forces are significant. These he refers to as “an unhealthy tribal battle between the army, and navy, and airpower.” As such, rather than a fully cohesive security architecture it appears as though there is significant internal competition. The participant traces this back to the success of the strategic air campaigns in the Gulf War (1991) and Kosovo (1999) which caused “concern and panic” within the army regarding the potential dominance of airpower in future missions. It appears as though this was also identified by the Navy, who are thought to have attempted to ensure their relevance by focusing on the procurement of aircraft carriers (UKM05). It can be hypothesised that such competition and micro-politics is underpinned by competition for budget allocation, with limitations forcing defence spending into an either/or situation. Defence spending has been reduced from 4% of GDP at the end of the Cold War to 2.3% by 2020 (UK Public Spending n.d.), implying more competition for less resources.

Any future British defence and intervention is thought to likely focus on airpower with the ability to deploy from a maritime base. UKM05 argues that in future practice the UK should:

> “deploy them [army and RAF] syno-logistically. Deploy the army to force the enemy to concentrate where they are vulnerable to airpower. Deploy

> airpower to force them to disperse where they become vulnerable to land forces."

This is seen as the best approach in light of the perceived failure of 'boots on the ground' in Afghanistan. However, key military figures such as General Richards (Watt 2014) and former head of the army Sir Richard Dannatt (Halliday 2015) criticised the response to Syria due to the focus on airstrikes rather than ground troops.

A long-term impact of Sierra Leone on British defence strategy has been encapsulated in the 2002 SDSR Report, which sees "a shift towards light and medium weight rapid intervention" (UKM05) and the creation of the Future Rapid Effect System (FRES) programme. This is attributed directly to the experience of intervention in Sierra Leone by the same participant, who contributed to the Reports creation, based on the realisation that:

> "large scale war fighting…would take months to deploy. So we can go big and ugly and slow. Or at the other end we can do a Sierra Leone – send in the paras or marines very, very quickly but you have to get out fast because they're not sustainable."

As such, the aim had been to build a force with medium wave capability and thus create the capacity for a full spectrum of responses. However, this was unable to be fully enacted as the £3.8 billion budget, partially intended for the purchase of equipment such as air deployable medium-weight vehicles, was subsequently diverted to purchase the heavy mine-protected vehicles needed for desert operations in Iraq (UKM05). Although the government has since claimed the process of defence review will be led by policy and strategic priorities rather than budget (Taylor et al. 2011), the financial implications from commitments in the Middle East has decreased the likelihood in practice of further ground troop-based interventions. Furthermore, it appears that the UK has instead shifted to forms of remote warfare in terms of "countering threats from a distance, without the deployment of large military forces" (Watson and Karlshøj-Pedersen 2019: 3) with a focus on stabilisation such as through SSR.

6.10 Conclusion

Whilst Sierra Leonean participants chose to explore the factors which they felt influenced the success of the British military intervention, this was not found to the same degree from British participants. This lack of reflection may be argued as a further example of both arrogance and exceptionalism. That is to say that as a by-product of the success of the intervention, introspection on the factors which contributed to this outcome has been inadvertently discouraged. Several of the Sierra Leonean participants appeared to put the UK on a pedestal, with the expected extent of continued British involvement seemingly unrealistic and out of kilter with those found amongst British policy interlocutors. For instance, within the Sierra Leonean group there was evidence of a desire for the British involvement to increase, whereas within the British policy group there was an acknowledgment of a waning interest in the country. That said, it is likely that a British presence will continue for the foreseeable future.

The 1990s is often seen as the peak in support for military interventions for humanitarian purposes, with foreign policy and international relations heavily shaped by this practice (Bulley 2010). It is evident that Sierra Leone boosted the UK's reputation domestically, within Sierra Leone and globally. However, what appears debatable is the extent to which this impact has been lasting and the degree to which it has been obscured by the subsequent involvement in the Middle East. Some elements of the legacy of Sierra Leone do appear to have been short lived, for instance, the thirst for further interventions, and it is fair to say that support for military interventions has heavily waned amongst both the British public and governing elites. This is largely attributed to the impact of subsequent interventions, namely Iraq, and budgetary restrictions as opposed to perceived issues with how the intervention was conducted in Sierra Leone.

Alongside certain elements that could be considered short-term outcomes are some that represent an enduring impact. Ethical foreign policy is seldom labelled as such in current political discourse, yet elements of it still pervade British politics. Two examples being: the continuation of some linguistic components found in foreign policy rhetoric and the broader acceptance of military action for humanitarian purposes as a moral and justifiable action. Thus, it appears as

though the experience of Sierra Leone has had a lasting impact on the shaping of British foreign policy. However, that is not say that the extent to which the current Johnson Conservative government subscribes to ethical foreign policy is not questionable, as it appears to be moving back towards the ‘poverty of realism’, which Daddow and Schnapper (2013) state characterised Conservative governments prior to the late 1990s. It is also evident from the data that (ethical) foreign policy is influenced not only by the governing parties’ ideologies, but in particular by key individuals such as the Prime Minister and military leaders. That multiple participants attributed the credit for the transformation of the mission in Sierra Leone from evacuation to assistance to General Richards, rather than the Prime Minister, evidences that foreign policy is as much down to the individuals with power at the time as grand strategic direction. Yet the relationship exploring the influence of individuals on foreign policy, particularly through constructivist lens, is understudied.

The final substantive chapter shifts the focus from domestic legacies and into global intervention practice, exploring R2P as a concept from the perspective of those with experience of military intervention for humanitarian purposes.

Chapter 7 - Perceptions of R2P

7.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a broader focus to explore the global practice of military intervention for humanitarian purposes and the implications of this qualitative case study for R2P, linking it with relevant discourse and practice. As it has previously been acknowledged in this thesis, the British intervention in Sierra Leone occurred prior to the ratification of R2P at the World Summit. As such, the involvement cannot be termed R2P *per se*. However, as analysed in Chapter 4.1.1 Motivations for Involvement and Chapter 6.3 Ethical Foreign Policy, the projected narrative of the intervention centres upon the moral impetus of saving lives and the protection of civilians in a context of widespread extreme violence. As such, participants are uniquely positioned to offer their views on R2P, with their understandings based on experience rather than a theoretical knowledge of the construct. For example, Sierra Leonean participants endured a number of approaches: the partisan regional ECOWAS, the neutral multinational UN and the partisan unilateral British. This enables insightful commentary based on direct experience.

There is a closer focus in this thematic analysis, which is necessary due to it being led by the data. The analysis makes a significant contribution to the field and adds novel findings to the key debates surrounding R2P from a micro-level perspective. The central themes of legitimacy, mandate and modes of intervention are explored and sub-themes are elucidated and evidenced, with accompanying discussion. It is important to note that what is presented as individual themes in the analysis actually present as heavily interwoven, mutually reinforcing, and complex insights. Within these sub-themes the concept of arrogance and performance is interconnected. This chapter also builds upon some of the findings from the preceding analysis in the other chapters. For instance, the experience of the ECOWAS and UN intervention, this time exploring their implications for R2P discourse. As such, there are references to previous themes, which contain relevant data extracts.

As previously discussed in Chapter 6.1 Introduction, political elites were not actively sought out as participants and therefore the same caveats and limitations apply within Chapter 7. This chapter continues to demonstrate a juxtaposition between how policy is envisaged and how it is enacted, with interlocutors highlighting the UN and political leaders continued misinterpretation of what is needed or wanted on the ground in mass atrocity circumstances. This further reinforces the benefits of a 'bottom up' approach to research, enabling the representation of views on wider issues from the perspective of those with experience of military interventions on the ground, often in multiple conflict arenas in addition to Sierra Leone. It is these views and experiences which are typically neglected by much of the existing literature. Once more it is acknowledged that to include further primary research from key figures within R2P (such as those based within the UN or the multitude of governments who actively participate in R2P interventions) could potentially widen the range of perspectives offered on the legacy of the British intervention in Sierra Leone on R2P. However, this is beyond the scope and intention of the thesis.

7.1 Neutral and Partisan Interventions

As explored throughout Chapter 2, a plethora of literature stresses the importance of neutrality and impartiality when acting upon the Pillars of R2P and idealises these principles as the bedrock of peacekeeping and intervention (UNGA 2000; UNPK n.d.). However, in contradiction with discourse, participants heavily emphasise the partisan nature of the British intervention in Sierra Leone as a strength of their action and a contributory reason for the cessation of violence. It is this pro-government bias within their actions which is seen as having "convinced the RUF they couldn't win" (SL01). SL04 is dismissive of the concept of impartiality and feels that "when you intervene, that initial stage, you need to not be neutral, to create a turning point so everything starts to fall in line with peace" and SL09 states "honestly there was no room to be neutral. Not if they wanted to restore civil authority, restore the state." A similar sentiment is found amongst British participants, for instance, UKP02 believes that "neutrality could not stabilise the situation. Force was needed to make it safe for people," indicating a belief that the cultivating of a stable environment needs a partisan approach. As such, not only is partiality not seen as problematic, but it is viewed

as something to be desired and a merit of the British involvement (SL01, SL02, SL04, SL07, SL09, SL10, SL11, SL13, UKM04, UKM05, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02). Therefore, it is important to explore the abstract views, ethics, performance and counter arguments with regards to non-neutral interventions within this theme.

Based on their experiences these same participants argue that a partisan approach "should be standard practice with R2P, because it brings conflicts to logical conclusions quickly" (SL04). There is a vehement decrying of neutrality in such situations as "bollocks" (UKM04) and frustration directed towards the attitude and methods of the UN. This appears to be underpinned by the belief that "if you are neutral, you will not solve the problem…You cannot be neutral and successful. If you are neutral, why are you here? You just create problems" (SL02). Those with military experience of multiple humanitarian arenas reiterate these sentiments and UKM05 states:

> "based on everything I've seen through my career, I would say there is no evidence that a neutral force can actually create the conditions to stop genocide. These are highly charged, extreme situations. It's hard to control the level of hatred that's involved to want to wipe out an entire group of people. It seems obvious that the presence of someone who cannot fight to defend them or attack you just isn't going to dissuade that."

Likewise, UKM07 asserts "the UN struggle because it will go in wanting to be peaceful and neutral with everybody. And I would like to think it works. But I've never seen it work." History would tend to support this scepticism, for example, peacekeeping was witnessed to have failed in Bosnia and Rwanda (James 2018). As such, it appears that whilst the principle of neutrality in R2P itself is not rejected by participants, its merits are limited to the theoretical rather than the practical.

Impartiality in R2P is grounded in ethical aspirations. However, for some participants the favouring of a partisan approach is underpinned by an alternative interpretation of morality and, to some extent, a sense of justice. For instance, UKM07 feels that bias action is more ethical than neutral, questioning "where there is the systematic chopping off of civilians limbs, how can you stand back, go in, and think you can be friendly with all groups?" Similar sentiments are found

amongst Sierra Leonean participants, for instance SL07 feels aggrieved that the UN were “being Mr Nice Guy to those terrible guys [the RUF].” This is coupled with a sense of betrayal, that after having endured such atrocities at the hands of the RUF, the UN were not prepared to take action against them in defence of civilians. It is this brutality which contributed to a discernible lack of popular backing for the rebel movement and, in turn, the favourable perception of bias within the British military response. For example, SL09 refers to the British approach as “right” and “good” as “Sierra Leoneans will tell you they wanted it that way. For them to come in and take sides with the government not the rebels.” It can be speculated that the same acceptance may not have been found for the British support of the government, were the RUF to have been seen as a legitimate ideological cause or experienced wide support from civilians. Furthermore, it appears as though the support of the local population towards the British military is central in navigating any potential consent and legitimacy issues (SL09, SL12, UKM03, UKM04, UKP01) (see Chapter 7.5 A Model for R2P Intervention).

UKP01 and UKP02, also display a preference for partisan intervention rationalised by its perceived ability to “bring a quicker end to conflict” (UKP02). This is coupled with the belief that a more sustainable peace is created as a result of there being a clear victor as “the only successful resolutions have to involve there being a winner and loser…Burying the hatchet and shaking hands just puts off future conflict that will come along” (UKP01). This resonates with research by Regan (2002) and Ramsbotham et al. (2016), which reaches a similar conclusion (see Chapter 2.8 Non-Intervention). However, interestingly the partisan approach of ECOMOG is not acknowledged by participants in similar favourable terms and is not praised as the British were. This is perhaps as their mission did not stop the widespread violence and their actions in support of the government were so significantly undermined by their perceived corruption. For instance, SL12 feels that although theoretically on the side of the government, in practice:

> “ECOMOG gave the RUF a supply of logistics. They preferred to sell weapons and ammunition to the RUF, so they prolonged war because they are making money out of that.”

(See also Chapter 4.1.3 Perceptions of Nigerian Forces). An inference can be drawn that the integrity and performance of the intervening force is given greater primacy by participants than the ability to either remain neutral or act in support of the state. This concept of performance-as-paramount is discussed in further detail in section 7.2 Intervention Mandate: Peacekeeping vs Peace Enforcing.

Somewhat linked to integrity, SL01 and SL08 emphasise the importance of transparency. This is viewed as more imperative to legitimacy than acting with neutrality with regards to R2P. This is at odds with current academic debate, which views bias or national interests as delegitimising (Adediran 2017) and values multilateralism as helping to ensure there is no hidden agenda (Dobos 2015). Yet, SL08 argues that partisan action should be widely accepted, provided that there are no hidden ulterior motives. It is this distinction of transparency which, for many Sierra Leonean participants, renders the ECOMOG intervention illegitimate (due to their perceived self-serving and materialistic agenda) (SL01, SL03, SL08, SL09, SL10, SL12). In contrast, the UK's strategy of supporting the government, partially motivated by an attempt to solidify democracy, is deemed acceptable as there is the belief that there had been no attempt to conceal this. For example, SL08 contends that the British were "unapologetic in their support for the government of the day." SL01 feels that this should be applicable to R2P practice globally and "if it's done transparently…then it is a good thing to do in order to forestall the carnage and killing of people in these situations." Participants are simultaneously supportive of Sierra Leone but damning of Iraq (SL01, SL03, SL07, UKM01, UKM02, UKM03, UKM04, UKM05, UKP01, UKP02) (see Chapter 6.6. Speculations on Iraq). The concept of transparency is able to account for this as in the instance of the latter, it is felt that the ulterior motivations were hidden and that "the only reason they went in was the oil" (SL07) coupled with "an axe to grind with Saddam Hussein" (SL01).

Certain participants display a clear internal struggle between the ideals of neutral intervention and practice. For example, UKM03 argues that "humanitarian [intervention] needs neutrality and parity across all parties" whilst simultaneously supporting the UK's bias action in Sierra Leone due to its humanitarian nature. This indicates that these questions and the opposing ideals remain complex and

contradictory, even for those with first-hand experience of interventions premised on ending mass atrocities. It could also be argued that the inconsistencies within British policy during this period reflect similar paradoxes. For instance, UKM04 questions what the British policy in Sierra Leone truly was as they "provided the political backing in New York for the UN neutral mission…at the same time as taking sides, retraining the army, being advisers to Kabbah. It was schizophrenic." These incongruities may be attributed to the desire to prevent the full collapse of the UN mission, as although remaining independent of it, they had strongly backed it in the UNSC. Therefore, their credibility was intertwined and "if it [UNAMSIL] had gone down the tubes, our credibility would have gone down the tubes with it" (UKM03). It can also be speculated that the British had already identified the merits of UN involvement in long-term post-conflict state building, such as the perceived increase in legitimacy by the international community, and thus had a further interest in preventing the collapse of UNAMSIL.

The continued neutral response of the UN in instances of genocide and mass atrocities is interpreted by British military participants as a failure to adapt to modern landscapes and the changing nature of conflict (UKM05, UKM07). This is premised on the view that when the UN was established, interstate conflict was more prevalent than intrastate. In these circumstances it is felt that a neutral responding force is appropriate and tactics such as "patrolling the borders to segregate the problem" (UKM07) are effective. In contrast, the UN is deemed to "be not effective with internal problems, because they're not really built for that" (UKM07). This returns to the concept of performance as central to the lens through which participants view R2P debates. The UN security architecture was constructed post-Cold War, in a background of comparatively very different international landscapes. This perceived refusal to acknowledge the changing environment is thought to have led to the transposition of 'outdated' ideals into relatively recent constructs such as R2P (UKM05, UKM07). However, recent research suggests the UN may be beginning to move away from value-free intervention, supporting governments despite their questionable legitimacy (Karlsrud 2018). For example, the partisan mandate of the UN mission to Côte d'Ivoire in response to the post-election crisis, which enabled the mission to provide political support to the Ivorian authorities (UNSC 2014). Nevertheless,

this has not replaced neutrality as the norm and so although impartiality has been tentatively called into question, it is yet to be fully inserted into the discourse.

Yet, to encourage non-neutral intervention is likewise fraught with dilemmas. One significant drawback of the partisan approach is the underlying ethical quagmire of deciding which party to the conflict to act on behalf of. SL02 argues that "you have to look [to] the side that is more legitimate" and SL08 contends that interveners should "side with the faction that is helping stop the carnage rather than those who have a brutality." Similar sentiments are endorsed by SL13 who states "it was very right for the British to have come in on the side of the government, the part that had been abiding by human rights." However, using these measures is highly subjective. In the 'ideal' type of conflict, it would be possible to categorise the parties involved into 'good' and 'bad'. In practice this is simplistic as bloodshed is not clear cut and often all armed factions perpetrate some form of violence against civilians. For example, recent research estimates that since 2007 state forces have been responsible for approximately 23% of the occurrences of violence targeted at civilians (Watson and Karlshøj-Pedersen 2019). In the case of Sierra Leone, despite SL13's protestations, there is strong evidence of abuses by government forces (Kandeh 1999; Mazurana et al. 2004). Indeed, a British policy participant perceives "the government was just as bad as the rebel forces…They were all as bad as each other" (UKP02). The British state appears to be complicit in failing to officially acknowledge this, as the narrative works to their advantage: had they decried the state of Sierra Leone for their human rights abuses, their own actions in support of the government could have been interpreted as advocating this and their intervention undermined.

With neutral UN intervention being seen to fail repeatedly in a myriad of cases, the UK's involvement in Sierra Leone remains one of a limited number of examples of 'successful' military intervention for humanitarian purposes. Thus, one must question the implications of this for R2P. It problematises whether there is room within the social phenomena for partisan action, primarily premised on the saving of lives, or whether such bias renders the intervention too political and thereby erodes its humanitarian credentials. From the perspective of participants this does not appear to be the case. Although limited wider research discusses

the advantage of national interests in creating the political will to act (see Binder 2009; Paris 2014), it continually fails to explore such a debate through the lens of those affected/with experience of such an intervention. That so many of those within the data set disagree with neutral approaches in such missions is significant, despite evidence of some inconsistencies and caveats in this thinking. However, this continues to be neglected in literature and policy and one must question why these voices are not being acknowledged and what the implications of such sentiments are for an R2P model which demands neutrality. Former Head of Policy at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Hugo Slim (2020), contends that neutrality is "just one version of humanitarianism – not the only version." Whilst this is not specifically in reference to military intervention its applicability is still arguable and encourages the questioning of assumptions. The data in this thesis clearly indicates that it should not be taken for granted that neutrality within military interventions for humanitarian purposes is the ideal from the perspective of those directly involved.

7.2 Intervention Mandate: Peacekeeping vs Peace Enforcing

The debate between peacekeeping and enforcement is heavily intertwined with the debate on partisan and neutral intervention. As discussed above it is difficult to enforce peace and remain neutral, as the connotation is to cast parties of the conflict as either legitimate or illegitimate and act accordingly. Similarly, the type of mandate and how it is interpreted is interwoven with the debates surrounding unilateral, regional and UN interventions. As participants primarily discussed military interventions for humanitarian purposes as either unilateral, regional, or UN missions, this theme maintains that focus, rather than engaging in the debate around non-UN approved coalitions of the willing. The exception to this was the recurring theme of the British intervention in Iraq (see Chapter 6.6 Speculations on Iraq).

R2P theory positions the UN as the highest moral authority, with military interventions to prevent mass atrocities requiring permission from all UNSC P5 members as a prerequisite to being deemed both legitimate and legal. Utilising the UN Charter mandates may encompass: "Chapter VI (peaceful measures), VII (enforcement measures) and VIII (regional arrangements)" (Bellamy 2015: 169).

UNAMSIL were present in Sierra Leone under Chapter VII, however, Resolution 1270 cast them as a peacekeeping force which British Army (2016) believe led to uncertainty regarding what was permitted. Ultimately, UNAMSIL did not use calculated and strategic force against rebels (beyond ad hoc violence towards individuals who may or may not have been members of the RUF). Participants across all research groups attribute this to a restrictive mandate, which is heavily criticised (SL01, SL04, SL05, SL07, SL09, SL13, UKM03, UKM04, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02) as rendering them "powerless" (SL09), "inept" (SL13) and "preventing them from getting to grips with the situation" (UKM01). UKM07 likened UN peacekeeping mandates to:

> "saying to a matador, get in there, tame that bull, but you're not going to have a cloak, you're not going to have anything... Those mandates don't give somebody a chance."

Furthermore, it is felt that with such a mandate the UN "could never have succeeded in Sierra Leone" (UKM07), contributing to their failure to bring peace. This is in stark contrast to research which refers to Sierra Leone as a "successfully completed" mission (for example, see Howard 2019a). Participants speak very passionately regarding their frustration with the UN mandate, and recall that "when the rebels attempted to enter Freetown, UN troops would pack their bag and they no fight. The British will fight" (SL04). It is felt that the UN 'fleeing' created further panic, leaving civilians feeling like they were "being abandoned, no hope" (SL05) and colouring UNAMSIL as "cowards" (SL05). This infuriation, and at times mystification, towards their inability to engage is expressed by multiple interlocuters (SL01, SL04, SL05, SL07, SL12, UKM01 UKM04), and a British military participant questions:

> "the UN had 15,000 troops and a load of arseholes up country, the RUF, come in on pickup trucks and just walk straight into Freetown capturing whole brigades of soldiers. How is that even possible?!" (UKM04).

This incredulity operates alongside an awareness that their presence did not constitute a deterrent for the RUF due to the lack of immediate consequences to actions. In contrast:

> "the UK had no international mandate, whereas the UN did but it was failing (as it so often does)…but the UK military force were prepared to do

> something…The UN had the international mandate but were not successful. The UK had no international mandate but were successful" (UKM01).

This reinforces that an international mandate is not a guarantee of success. That the British forces at their peak were comparatively much smaller compared to UNAMSIL (4,500 British personnel (Dorman 2007) to UNAMSILs 17,500 in 2001 (DPKO 2005)), yet are generally seen as more successful, may indicate the significant impact of how different mandates are perceived by rebel groups within affected nations.

Although it is acknowledged that peacekeeping could be appropriate in some circumstances, it is felt that the UN is trapped in "1990s thinking" (UKM05) and there is an underlying consensus that peacekeeping is not suitable for every situation and had not been appropriate for the circumstances in Sierra Leone (SL05, SL13, UKM03, UKM04, UKM05, UKM07, UKP02). It can be argued that the existence of the Lomé Peace Agreement should have meant UNAMSIL were only required as a stabilising presence and to assist in its implementation, which would render a Chapter VI mandate fitting. However, SL13 feels that the RUF were very much aware of the limitations of UNAMSIL's mandate and accompanying resolutions, providing "little incentive for them to stick to it [the Lomé Peace Agreement] because they couldn't try enforce it." Those on the ground also feel that this did not reflect the reality of the situation. For example, the UNAMSIL force was "useless for combat situations" (UKM05), "could never win with the restrictions" (SL05) and present under "the wrong mandate" (UKM07). These extracts echo the sentiments and frustration also found in General Richards' (2015) autobiography. It also indicates that Sierra Leone continued to feel very much a combat setting and a good example of "trying to do peacekeeping when what was plainly needed was peace enforcement" (UKM05). Therefore, the UN's analysis of the situation and what was required was fundamentally flawed. This reinforces the recurring theme of a disconnect between what was happening on the ground and in policy. This does not appear to be a new critique with regards to peacekeeping as Slim (1996: 89) has previously denoted it a contradictory term as "UN forces are frequently being asked to operate in situations where there is no peace to keep." That he argued

this almost three decades ago yet is congruent with the participants' current perceptions implies that little progress has been made. Where there already exists a level of peace to keep, such as Mozambique, missions have had more success (Khalfan 2020).

The misinterpretation of the operating environment in Sierra Leone as peacekeeping is denounced by British military participants as a means for "rebels to kill with impunity" (UKM05) and "a waste of time [as] you can't do anything" (UKM04). Sierra Leonean participants were also sceptical of the purpose of the UN mission, and SL05 states "the UN said they were here for peace, but they don't fire weapons! They don't shoot against anybody!" SL03 questions "what's the point of even having those guys if they simply pack up, take off and leave if we are being attacked? They not worth it [sic]" (SL03). A similar critique may be applied to peacekeeping missions in other contexts. For instance, in Rwanda the UNSC was accused not only of ignoring warning signs of an impending genocide, but of pulling peacekeepers out in response to mass killings (McGreal 2015). In the case of Sierra Leone this also appears to have created a lasting bitterness towards peacekeeping and SL07 explains:

> "these are well paid guys supported by the worlds United Nations for crying out loud. You put your chest up and say 'thank god, there is people to protect me'. Then something happen and they tell you 'we are not here to fight. We are here for peacekeeping' and in fact they can't even defend themselves. It's so discouraging."

As such, rather than being praised for their neutral peacekeeping, what is perceived to have been translated into practice is an inept organisation unwilling to save the lives they were tasked with protecting.

This incredulity reflects the academic debates between peacekeeping and peace-enforcing as well as the implications this has for the efficacy of R2P. If interveners are unable to respond in order to protect civilians it may be questioned how effective such a 'norm' is in the face of continued evidence that mere presence is not sufficient to enforce peace agreements nor prevent continued violence. Examples of failures to protect civilians and prevent mass killings can be seen in both Angola and Rwanda, where UN peacekeepers lacked

both an adequate mandate and equipment (Bellamy 2015). An additional case in point is the Srebrenica massacres in Bosnia which occurred in a zone which the UN had declared to be safe and “free from any armed attack or any other hostile act” (UNSC 1993). However, as evidenced in instances of genocide or civil war, rebel groups may choose to ignore parameters outlined by the UN. For example, SL08 states the RUF “don’t fight according to the law of armed conflict” and SL05 argues that the RUF “don’t care. They just know they can capture [them] and something good will come out of it.” Based on my personal experience working with the United Nations Civil-Military Coordination Section (UN CMCS) there appears to be an ingrained naivety in practice. For instance, within UN CMCS it is assumed that any attacks on peacekeepers are the result of the aggressors’ lack of education regarding their neutrality and International Human Rights Law. The possibility of peacekeepers being intentionally singled out due to their value as a hostage is not entertained and as such the proposed solution to these attacks is to educate rebels.

This naivety is also found in academia, with Hunt (2016) claiming that a shift to robust peacekeeping may cause UN personnel to be targeted by hostile forces. This does appear to be the case in Mali, where some groups have ‘officially’ declared UN peacekeepers to be legitimate targets due to the UN missions support of the Malian government. It also implies that the intentional targeting of blue hats would not occur (or at least be reduced) under traditional neutral first-generation peacekeeping. However, as seen in Sierra Leone, peacekeepers are already identified as kidnap targets regardless of their neutrality and wider research from 2015 found that “hostile acts targeting Peacekeepers, including small arms fire…and ambushes, has more than doubled each year over the last three years” (Ladsous 2015 cited in Curran and Williams 2016: 642). This indicates that peacekeepers are targeted regardless of their mandate.

As previously analysed, numerous participants identify Operation Barras as the turning point in the conflict (SL01, SL02, SL04, SL05, SL07, SL09, SL13, UKM05, UKM07, UKP01) (see Chapter 6.2.4 Operation Barras), however, such an operation would not have been possible under the UNAMSIL mandate. This is not considered to be specific to the case of Sierra Leone, and participants draw

parallels with multiple instances of failed UN interventions. For example, Bosnia and the Balkans are once more both cited as instances where ineffective and limiting UN mandates "led to the massacre of the people they're supposed to be protecting" (UKM03. This is also voiced by UKM04, UKM05, UKM07). Whilst the much-cited example of the Srebrenica massacre occurred in 1995 (Ryngaert and Schrijver 2015), and therefore prior to the ratification of R2P, it appears that the limits to peacekeeping mandates have, for the most part, continued. In contrast, it is argued that the "paras and marines stopped Sierra Leone because of their war fighting ethos" (UKM05) in a similar way to which the "strategic air campaign stopped Kosovo" (UKM07). Based on such experiences participants contend that decisive action, with the ability to mount offensive operations and engage with rebels, is central to ending conflict and atrocity prevention (UKM03). Without such a mandate R2P may be rendered impotent. Once more, the theme of performance is also alluded to, with the mandate either enabling or limiting performance in atrocity prevention.

Despite not being bound under a UN international mandate, British military participants are keen to emphasise that this does not mean they are unbound nor taking decisions to intervene lightly. For example, in terms of unilateral interventions UKP04 states that the UK:

> "is not sat round looking at a map and thinking 'where can I assert myself'. It's more 'this is happening' so you have to choose what are you going to do? Intervene? Persuade someone else to intervene? Or leave it, let a series of atrocities occur, let a country burn, and try pick up the pieces?"

Furthermore, the UK did not "enter Sierra Leone all guns blazing" (UKM01) and view themselves as "peace makers" (UKM05). UKM07 states that "no British serviceman goes in to automatically kill or injure anybody. 99.9% of the time it will always be done in self-defence or to defend somebody else." He feels that this is evidenced by the limited frequency in which the UK actually engaged in armed combat with the RUF. As such, it appears as though shows of strength coupled with the threat of violence from a well-trained and well-equipped force were enough to constitute a deterrent to the RUF. As an additional complexity, ECOMOG were also a partisan presence with the mandate to engage in combat. However, based on participants' perceptions this was done on an ad hoc basis

and violence perpetrated against individuals. For instance, singling people out and demanding proof that they were not aligned with the rebel movement, thus earning them a reputation locally for the indiscriminate killing of civilians and human rights abuses (SL02, SL03, SL05, SL08, SL09, SL10, SL12). In contrast, UK combat operations were primarily focused on self-defence and the rescuing of hostages. This indicates that how peace enforcing mandates are executed is equally as important as their existence.

Juxtaposed with the hands-on approach of the UK intervention, participants express further exasperation that UNAMSIL were reluctant to undertake the mandate they did have, even with its limitations (SL07, SL08, UKM04, UKM05, UKP01). For instance, UKM05 criticises them for not being proactive and feels that this experience "totally undermined my faith in UN operations and the UN Security Council at every level." Likewise, UKM04 feels that the British soldiers were forced to exert pressure on the UN peacekeeping troops to act. He states:

> "they wouldn't get off their arse and do what they were actually mandated to do. So we were putting the pressure on saying 'well if you're not going to, we will'. We built up the Sierra Leone Armed forces with a view to put pressure on the UN to say come on, if you want to achieve your mission you need to get off your arse and do it!"

It is believed that the "UN Commanders hid behind their mandate as an excuse why they couldn't do anything, but they just didn't want to do it" (UKM01). Similar sentiments can be found in General Richards' (2014: 147) account of the intervention, as he recalls meeting with General Jetley to strongly encourage the UN forces to "commit themselves to the fight…[and] actively defend their positions." This reluctance is also viewed as idleness by participants, and in addition UNAMSIL personnel are perceived to have been "partying a lot and going to the beach" (SL08), that they were more interested in "spending money like a drunken sailor and going with prostitutes."

It could be speculated whether this reluctance stems from UNAMSIL's experiences with the RUF prior to the UK's arrival, including hostage taking. Alternatively, it may reflect the disharmony and in-fighting within UNAMSIL causing a form of mission paralysis. Although wider commentary can be found in

publications on both the mission's strengths and ineffectiveness, there appears to be little discussion on a perceived lack of willingness to enact their mandate once in country. As such, despite the significance of this theme within the data set and the potential connotations for how R2P is enacted on the ground by UN troops, there appears to be little precedent for it found in existing research.

This analysis suggests a trade-off between the associated morality of UN authorisation and the ability to actively protect civilians. In other words, humanitarian intervention may either have the moral credentials of being UN sanctioned yet encumbered with a limiting mandate, or lack these credentials, however, have the ability to defend civilians using force. This is heavily interwoven with the theme of neutrality and suggests that perhaps neutrality as the default approach of UN military interventions for humanitarian purposes should be reconsidered. Rather than having a blanket approach, each situation should be judged on its own merits as to what is needed and the mandate based on this evaluation. To remain neutral in inappropriate circumstances may potentially cause further harm. For example, in Sierra Leone the RUF were able to capture UN equipment and vehicles which were then used against civilians, as well as taking UN soldiers hostage in attempts to leverage their position. Furthermore, such occurrences significantly undermine the UN's credibility internationally as effective peacekeepers.

It can be said that weak/restrictive mandates are a lesson the UN appears to be acting upon, with literature highlighting a shift since 2011 towards peace enforcement in UN action (for example, see Karlsrud 2015; Hunt 2016). For example, the UN mission to the DRC (MONUSCO) is permitted to use force in support of their mandate, in addition to the introduction of a Force Intervention Brigade (Karlsrud 2018). However, the efficacy of how UN mandates are implemented is still questionable, as despite this purported increase in robustness, the media continues to cast MONUSCO as "bystanders to mass killing, rape and terror" (McGreal 2015). Despite a limited number of mandates now permitting the use of force in order to protect civilians, missions are not actually equipped to do so (Howard 2019b). For example, in July 2016 UN forces did not react to atrocities in South Sudan, less than a mile from their location, in

which government soldiers “went on a four-hour rampage, raping, beating and killing” (Ucko 2016b).

7.3 UN vs Unilateral Military Intervention

The World Summit outcome document (UNGA 2005) and ICISS (2001) Report are explicit that the responsibility to act in instances of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity should be authorised and implemented by the international community through the UNSC. Unilateral intervention is frequently dismissed out of hand by R2P purists as it goes against the collective standards of the international community and the ICISS (2001) sees states as obliged to abstain from unilateral intervention by virtue of their UN membership. In addition to its possible abuse, unilateral action carries with it the potential to cause a destabilising effect on international order and to undermine the UN Charter (see chapter 2.7 UN vs Unilateral Military Intervention for discussion of the key literature). Often such interventions are felt to erode the legitimacy of R2P and Cunliffe (2010:80) discusses the possibility of their setting a precedent for moral imperialism through “granting powerful states a license to interfere in the affairs of weaker states.”

However, this discourse runs contradictory to several participants’ experiences. For example, UKP04 argues that rather than unilateral action undermining the UN Charter, it is instances where the UNSC “don’t take action and refuse to authorise action that is the clear breach of the Charter.” It is felt that in the circumstances of mass atrocities ethically-motivated unilateral intervention is justifiable (SL02, SL04, UKM01, UKM03, UKM07, UKP04, UKP05). This finding reflects the problematic position of UK governments, who view intervention without the authorisation of the UNSC as “permissible in exceptional circumstances,” despite their position as a P5 member in the UNSC (Newman 2021: 632). This is taken one step further by some participants, who view unilateral action not only as permissible but preferable to that of the UN. This challenges some of the key assumptions underpinning the potential misuse of R2P as an imperialist notion. For instance, multiple participants from the Sierra Leone group reject the legitimacy of the UN sanctioned mission in favour of that of their former coloniser (SL03, SL04, SL05, SL07, SL08, SL09) (see Chapter 4.1

Three Intervening Forces: A Comparison where data was originally analysed and discussed). Based on the data analysed in Chapter 4.1.3 Perception of Nigerian Forces, there are very clear implications for legitimacy. Whilst working under the auspices of the UN may increase legitimacy in the eyes of the international community, it is not synonymous with legitimacy or even credibility in the eyes of the affected nation. This underlines the importance of exploring the dynamics involved in R2P not just from a structural level but also from the perspective of the affected population.

British participants express frustration with the UN's inaction of R2P, and more specifically with the invocation of the veto (UKM01, UKM02, UKP04, UKP05). It is observed that the "veto stops the UN being effective in exercising its responsibility to protect" (UKP05) and it is "too often abused…too easily manipulated…a breach of the charter…[and] a threat to peace more broadly" (UKP04). In particular, Russia and China are criticised for their "unethical denial of authorisation" (UKM01) in situations which are believed to have warranted R2P action. UKM02 states:

> "it's like in Darfur, you have the Janjaweed going around killing people and nobody intervened. Why? Because the Chinese and Russians were selling arms to the Sudanese, so they weren't going to authorise anything."

As such, the perception is that national economic interests are prioritised ahead of saving lives and both China and Russia are portrayed as obstructionist and a barrier to peace implementation. Such critiques are also evident in literature, for example, Bellamy (2015: 180) refers to the veto as "the principle barrier to protection" and Evans (2020) also identifies China and Russia as spoilers. Certainly if UNSC-sanctioned R2P is viewed as the means by which to legitimise humanitarian intervention, it can be posited that the veto then absolves them of that responsibility and grants permission for the international community to stand by in the face "crimes against our common humanity" (Annan 1999). Therefore, abuse of the veto may be argued as the biggest factor weakening R2P, eroding its "normative legitimacy" (Gunatilleke 2016): if it is agreed that there is a responsibility to protect civilians from the crimes of mass atrocity and genocide, then such a responsibility must exist in all situations regardless of individual nations' geopolitical interests.

A responsibility not to veto is supported by multiple participants, who express dismay that despite the horrors of Bosnia and Rwanda it remains difficult to gain consensus from the UNSC (UKM02, UKP04, UKP05). Similar discussion is abundant in academia, with Gunatilleke (2016) suggesting that the Uniting for Peace Resolution 377 (although not utilised since 1997) sets a precedent to hold P5 members accountable for their decisions and could be applicable to failures to authorise R2P. In addition, there is a French proposal for the UNSC P5 to enter into a voluntary agreement not to exercise the veto in instances of war crimes and crimes against humanity (Hollande 2013) and an initiative by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group for a Code of Conduct has been signed by a combined total of 120 states (Evans 2020). The UK supports both the French proposal and is signatory on the ACT initiative (Ralph et al. 2019a). The existence of such initiatives evidences a wider expression of vexation at a lack of global commitment to prevent mass atrocities, and UKP04 sees these initiatives as "an expression of frustration and concern that post-Rwanda, post-Bosnia, and now post-Syria, we still don't have that kind of consensus and commitment in the Security Council." The veto continues to be invoked in instances of atrocity and war crimes. For example, in 2014 a proposal to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) was rejected by both China and Russia (Gunatilleke 2016) and as of 2019 Russia has vetoed proposed resolutions relating to action in Syria thirteen times (Nichols 2019). (In contrast, neither the UK nor France have utilised their veto power since 1989, which related to the US in Panama (Ralph et al. 2019a)).

The debate between unilateral, regional and UN action may increase in saliency moving forwards, as some participants feel that Russia in particular will continue to inhibit UN-authorised R2P for the foreseeable future (UKM02, UKM04, UKP04). It is thought that past interventions such as Kosovo were only able to occur as Russia was comparatively weak at that time, as UKM04 states "you wouldn't be able to do another Kosovo now, with Russia how it is. We got away with Kosovo because Russia was weak." It is arguable that global power balances are no longer skewed in favour of the West to the same extent as previous decades (Curtis and Brooke-Holland 2020), enabling Russia to behave as an

inhibitor of R2P. For example, UKP04 observes that “there has been less [R2P interventions] and that’s to do with Russian assertion.” As a result, where the UN does not act, additional pressure may be placed on regional organisations (Jarvis 2020) or alternatively, unilateral state actors could potentially feel more of a moral impetus to respond. This creates the dilemma of choosing between inaction and the continuation of the mass killing of civilians or circumnavigating the UN (HoC Foreign Affairs Committee 2018b). Inaction in such instances can be argued as compliance in the face of atrocities and with regards to Sierra Leone, Mack (2015: 55) raises questions as to whether non-intervention or neutrality on the part of the British “could have been construed as being an accomplice in crime.”

As discussed above, British participants appear to have a strong moral impetus and favour unilateral military action for humanitarian purposes even in the absence of a UN mandate. The overriding sentiment is that in the face of a humanitarian crisis caused by conflict “no UN mandate doesn’t mean you can stand by” (UKM04), and that the moral imperative to act is not nullified by the UNs inaction (UKM02, UKM03, UKM04, UKM07, UKP04, UKP05). More explicitly UKP05 summarises “there are circumstances where, in the absence of action by the United Nations, the right thing to do is for countries to intervene unilaterally” and UKM02 expresses the belief that:

> “if people are dying there is a moral responsibility for us to do something about it…giving that assistance is the marker of any civilised society…to turn around and say you shouldn’t intervene unless you have a UN mandate I think is wrong.”

Therefore, moral validation is not specifically linked to the UN and they seem to see a role for the UK to “fill the void left by the UN rarely doing Chapter VII peace enforcement” (UKP04). This perceived responsibility is underpinned by the belief that Britain is:

> “one of only a few viable unilateralists with the capability and capacity, [as] others spend a vast fortune on their defence budget but it’s largely to bolster their own internal security and fight proxy wars” (UKM02).

Rather than expressing resistance to potentially risking their lives to protect those who are not civilians of the state they serve, instead military participants strongly embrace the morality underpinning R2P (UKM02, UKM03, UKM04, UKM07). As

such, the participants do not appear to see British unilateral interventions as rooted in the Realist school of international relations theory.

However, with further probing it is apparent that the British participants' favourable perception of unilateralism is very limited as it refers specifically to UK unilateral action. Participants are cautious regarding other governments operating the same standards (UM03, UKM04, UKM07). For example, UKM04 discusses unilateralism in R2P as risking "smoke and mirrors for regime change" yet provides only examples from foreign powers, such as Russia's incursion in Georgia (2005) and Ukraine (2014), whilst neglecting the applicability of this critique to British actions in Iraq. UKM03 expresses support for unilateral missions perpetrated by the UK but caution over American interventions which he feels has "cost them a reputation internationally." This shows an inherent trust in the morality of their domestic government (not to abuse the principles underpinning R2P) in contrast to a distrust of international powers, including those which are traditionally seen as UK allies. Here the recurring thread of arrogance within the themes also begins to emerge and juxtaposes with their self-perception as a moral crusader. For instance, placing emphasis on the ethical nature of their actions and ignoring the applicability of British unilateral action as a tool for an imperialist agenda. For these participants, support for unilateral action is limited to a belief that this is appropriate in their own actions whilst remaining guarded regarding this behaviour from other powers.

However, if states continue to intervene despite a UN veto this would significantly erode the authority of the UNSC and its architecture. As such, the premise of needing approval from the UNSC creates a genuine tension between the moral duty to save lives and the international authority to act. This is not to say that all see Britain acting in isolation as the preferred response or view it as without complication. For example, UKM07 prefers to ultimately be part of a NATO or UN mission where possible in order to be "recognised internationally" (UKM07). Contradictorily, he also expresses the desire to remain independent of these organisations, working in parallel with rather than as part of the unit in order to "be able to get on with it" (UKM07). This demonstrates the complexity of these ideas when moving from theoretical understanding into practice.

Despite emphasising the strengths of unilateral intervention, participants do acknowledge that in contexts outside of Sierra Leone it tends to “create bad feeling and invites problems” (UKM03). Furthermore, there are instances where military participants feel intervention is doomed to fail because of its lack of UNSC backing (UKM04, UKM07). For example, UKM04 perceives one of the reasons for the failure of the coalition in Iraq to be the absence of UN authorisation and UN support as a follow-on force. This reinforces the uniqueness, not only in the case of Sierra Leone, but in each instance of military intervention. This provides further evidence that it cannot be assumed which form of intervention (unilateral or UN sanctioned) would be perceived as more appropriate or legitimate by the affected nation. This also demonstrates that even those with a strong preference for the UK acting unilaterally in atrocity prevention are still very aware of the critiques of such action.

Others who do not appear to be against UN action *per se* yet, feel that unilateral military response remains the preferable option unless the UN becomes “far more robust in the way it intervenes and take on much more of the Chapter VII peace-making type role” (UKP02). Issues of the affected nations’ consent are not discussed in great depth and when advocating for unilateral intervention for humanitarian purposes it is important to keep in mind that in Sierra Leone the British intervention was invited by the government of the day and welcomed by civilians. In other conflicts the state may potentially be the main perpetrator of violence against civilians, as in Uganda, and unlikely to welcome such a presence. Therefore, championing unilateral military intervention in instances of R2P may, in some cases, legitimise non-consensual intervention. It remains unclear as to whether participants would advocate for this, however, having been damning on interventions such as Russia in Georgia it can be speculated that would not be the case.

Although unilateralists do not intervene in every instance of atrocity prevention, for a multitude of reasons, participants focus on the influence of resources in decision making. UKM01 argues that unilateral involvement is “cheaper for individual states than UN” action. Furthermore, UKM06 feels that the UK and

other developed nations contributing troops to UN missions is “not good financially. It’s a huge commitment and even though they’re paid it doesn’t cover the cost of the troops and equipment etc.” In contrast, it is thought that Sierra Leone contributing troops to UN missions is not only prestigious but desirable as it creates an additional revenue source (SL02, SL09, UKM03, UKP02). This is because “if they deploy for the UN or ECOWAS, they get money both as individual soldiers and as a government” (UKM03) and “from peace support operations the average soldier comes back with the equivalent of ten years’ salary. Life changing sums of money” (UKP02). It is acknowledged in wider research that UN subsistence rates provide a key incentive for some soldiers (Le Grys 2010). This finding implies that there must be a tipping point in a country’s economic development at which it ceases to be income generating to contribute troops and becomes more costly. When coupled with the lack of control it appears as though there is little incentive for developed nations to contribute troops to UN missions. As such, with unilateral interventions are felt to be cheaper, more efficient and more responsive, questions are raised as to whether there can be a role for individual states to play in R2P which may encourage more action in instances of genocide and mass atrocity prevention.

Interventions which have been UN-sanctioned are criticised for being unresponsive as “they have a lot of protocols and political haggling here and there, so they can’t be expeditious” (SL01). This is thought to result in “missed opportunities whilst waiting for agreement” (UKP01). In contrast, unilateral interventions are seen as able to act more swiftly. SL01 emphasises the UK intervention in Sierra Leone as a prime example of this, whereby the UK acted quickly and decisively, in contrast to the UN force. This speed is attributed to the shortened decision-making chain, as by remaining separate to the UN presence “they could retain control of their decisions” (UKM01). For British participants this is thought of as a significant strength of their presence (UKM01, UKM06, UKP01, UKP02). Wider studies also observe that the UN continues to lack any ready assembled military force, which would be required to enable a rapid response and also contributes to delays (Martin 2018). Given that the primary purpose of R2P is to prevent atrocities and save civilian lives, the delays associated with multilateral action may cost lives. For example, in the instance of the Rwandan

genocide it has been estimated that over a period of a hundred days, one million moderate Hutus and Tutsis were murdered (Dobos 2016). This demonstrates that swift action is imperative and the impact of responding quickly on the preservation of life cannot be underestimated. Yet, it is these very protocols which theoretically increase the legitimacy and accountability of an intervention. As such, there is an implicit trade-off between these central principles and responsive action. This too raises questions as to whether there is a place for unilateral action in R2P or if there are lessons which can be transposed in practice. For instance, a way in which multinational involvement could be made more responsive, such as through the shortening of decision-making and command structures.

7.4 Regional Intervention

The 2001 ICISS report explicitly discusses regional responses to halting mass atrocities, recommending "increased resources be made available…aimed at improving the effectiveness of regional and sub-regional organisations in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and intervention operations" (ICISS 2001: 22). The more recent International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) Report (2011) delves deeper into the relationship between the UN and regional bodies, regarding them as creating a reciprocal legitimacy which in turn enables regional and sub-regional bodies to respond via peacekeeping. This support for regional action has also been reiterated by both past and present UNSGs. For example, Ban Ki-Moon previously spoke favourably of their good positioning to respond (UNGA 2009). Current UNSG, António Guterres, recently emphasised the importance of regional actors and proposed the further development of regional and sub-regional arrangements in R2P mass atrocity prevention strategies (UNGA 2017). These sentiments are repeatedly reflected in academia, which often envisages an increasing role for regional organisations in providing an effective response to atrocities (see Angelov 2010; Adediran 2017) with Falk and Skinner (2016: 500) claiming that "a regional security culture is emerging in Africa." For many academics and practitioners this includes a preference for regional action over UN, due to the belief that the former is better suited to address crises, such as genocide, in the region and able to respond rapidly. For instance, the AU was able to deploy peacekeepers to Darfur in 2004, whereas the UN was unable to deploy until 2007 (Adediran 2017).

However, the primary research within this thesis finds that support for regional organisations as the executors of R2P is limited to two UK policy respondents (UKP01, UKP03). UKP01 states “if you can deal with conflicts on a regional basis, that’s better. I think that’s preferable.” This form of action circumnavigates the critique that Western governments act arrogantly, as if they know best what solutions to provide non-Western states (Chandler 2003). In contrast, both UK military and Sierra Leonean participants are fairly strongly opposed to the concept (SL03, SL08, SL09, SL10, SL12, UKM04, UKM06, UKM07), although UKM04 does appreciate the ability of regional organisations to render R2P interventions more “palatable to the international community.” Those who advocate for regional action in place of UN peacekeepers often do so based on the advantage of their physical immediacy and, at times, an assumed familiarity with cultural dynamics or local knowledge (UKP01, UKP03).

The ICISS report (2001) expressed similar logic viewing regional actors as better positioned to comprehend local dynamics. It is also pertinent to suppose that proximity may increase the will to address the crisis (Adediran 2017), rather than risk regional instability including the spread of conflict and economic disruption. As such, culture and geography are increasingly seen as important to the effective and legitimate execution of R2P. However, Sierra Leonean participants do not emphasise the importance of a shared culture or proximity. On the contrary, the ECOMOG force was felt to lack credibility in part due to its composition (SL01, SL02, SL05, SL07, SL09, SL12, see Chapter 4.1.2 Force Composition). For these participants, legitimacy is bound up with being “respectful of that culture, customs and traditions and practices” (SL04) rather than these elements needing to be shared. It was partially on this basis that the British were accepted in Sierra Leone, whilst a contingent comprised of other African nations was not. However, in this instance it could be argued that due to their previous colonial relationship there did exist elements of a shared society and history, although this is offset by many differences.

The British policy participants who feel that African multinational organisations are ideally suited to enacting Pillar III of R2P in the region (UKP01, UKP03) do

express caution in terms of the financing of such operations. For example, UKP03 envisages that any AU action will still “involve the UK in terms of picking up a disproportionate amount of the bill” and will require large amounts of funding by the UK. AU reports acknowledge their peace support operations continue to require significant financing from international non-member states (African Union 2020)Therefore, regional interventions in Africa are not necessarily as devoid of Western influence as it may appear on the surface. For example, the G5 Sahel Joint Force and Sahel Alliance is heavily funded by Western donors, and in 2018 France committed €90 million to its emergency stabilisation programme (France Diplomacy 2020). This implies a continued responsibility to respond for developed countries, even if that response is limited to meeting the financial needs of regional interveners.

This potential inability to effectively fund a military intervention is also a factor for participants who do not advocate for regional action. Many of the participants that oppose regional solutions do not position their arguments as a preference for UN action, but rather a suspicion of African regional organisations. This is largely premised on the belief that inadequate funds increase such mission’s vulnerability to corruption (SL02, SL03, SL11, UKM04, UKM07). For example, concern is expressed over the continuation of ECOWAS’s involvement in such interventions despite their lack of sufficient financial backing. This includes the questionable ability to pay its troops, who may then seek remuneration through illegal means. This is evidenced in Sierra Leone, where “they [ECOMOG] would go in and anything of value they would take, they would nick. Because the soldiers weren’t getting paid” (UKM04) (see also Chapter 4.1.3 Perception of Nigerian Forces and 5.1 Lasting Perceptions of Nigerian Forces). It is argued that in current practice the little funds which are procured “are going in the pockets of so many of their commanders” (SL11) and “their chain of command is weak, they’re ill equipped, they haven’t got resources. They themselves are probably not getting paid what they should be” (UKM07). As such, the lack of resources of regional organisations and the potential impact this may have on corruption should not be ignored. The implication of this finding is that in instances where regional forces lack funding they may negatively contribute to the crisis,

undermining the very security situation they are attempting to stabilise, and should not necessarily be seen as a viable alternative to UN action.

In addition to the relationship between funding, corruption and (in)effective regional action, concerns are expressed about specific countries who were likely to contribute troops within African organisations (SL01, SL02, SL05, SL07, SL09, SL10, SL12, UKM04, UKM05, UKM06). In part this is an extension of the experience of Nigerian troops in Sierra Leone and builds upon the analysis in Chapter 4.1.2 Force Composition. Nigeria in particular is once more singled out as SL03 is vehement in his belief that they should "never [be] trusted with peacekeeping" and UKM05 denouncing them as "too corrupt. I would not trust them in another country" (UKM05). Although the British military provide training programmes to the Nigerian army, UKM06, who has experience in delivering these, claims that in practice, despite best efforts, this:

> "training is ignored…there has been a recent push of a massive human rights campaign there but there's just a disregard for human rights. They either don't get human rights or they don't care. Those at the top know and don't care and those in lower ranks may not know."

This starkly contrasts with British participants' perceptions of Western interventions broadly and UK interventions specifically. For example, UKM04 states "peace needs western soldiers." This appears to be underpinned by distrust of others/elevated ideals of the morality of UK soldiers, who he argues are "incorruptible." This is reinforced by UKM07, who supports the British as a unilateralist intervener based on the belief that "we are the best at doing these things quite frankly. And I really do believe that." It is felt that African forces "don't act in a way that Western troops would act and behave" (UKM03), with the latter being "held to a higher level of account…[as] they are funded by the taxpayer" (SL10). As such, corruption and a lack of accountability are seen as barriers to welcoming regional intervention over Western unilateral intervention.

The data extracts above provide further evidence of the recurring theme of arrogance, prevalent in numerous British participants' interviews, which are often underscored by a presumptuous superiority. This quality is also found in research by Harris and Conteh (2020: 60) with regards to the DfID post-Ebola response,

being referred to during the initial period as “arrogant…[and] bullying’’, and is also evident in wider publications. For example, in a media interview General Richards states “UN ops is what second and third-world nations do but proper armies, we pick and choose” (McGreal 2015). This further reveals the apparent imperiousness found within the British military and foreign policy, linking also to the concept of performance: ECOMOG is felt to have failed, as is the UN, and as such these are not seen as good templates for R2P practice by those interviewed. In comparison, many of the characteristics of the British intervention, such as partisanship, unilaterality and a mandate to use force, are transposed by participants into their envisioning of how R2P should be executed due in large part to the UK’s perceived successful performance (SL02, SL03, SL04, SL05, SL08, SL09, SL13, UKM01, UKM02, UKM03, UKM04, UKM05, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02). For the British group this results in an over-inflated belief in their abilities as a unilateral intervener and global trail blazer in atrocity prevention. However, this is incongruous with subsequent endeavours such as Iraq, where, in the face of resistance, the intervention fell apart (Fawcett 2013). As such, the pre-eminence found in this data appears to be based on precarious ground.

Potentially connected to this finding is a contradiction between an assumed desire for the UK government to support regional solutions and its inability to relinquish control (UKM06, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02). For instance, UKP02 perceives that despite the British State appearing to be in favour of regional responses, in practice they often “put hurdles in the way that prevent Africans from dealing with it.” This may be due to attempts to hold institutions accountable for the funding they have received. Alternatively, this may be simply due to a belief in their own superiority and decision-making abilities. UKP01 recalls the British frustration with ECOMOG’s pace in Sierra Leone observing:

> “they were not prepared to accept the African timeline. Things in Africa always take much longer. ECOMOG were trying to deal with it but then there’s the British government saying ‘what the hell’s going on? Why are the Nigerians doing that? What is the President doing?’”

This creates an impression that, whilst wishing to appear as though supportive of African regional organisations, the UK is also trapped in a paradox, whereby they are attempting to impose external timelines and struggle to accept the seemingly

slow pace of action. This finding is also indicative of the potential tensions which may occur between Western countries and regional organisations, who do not always see eye-to-eye. Similar parallels can also be seen between the UN and AU in Sudan (Mabera 2020).

Interestingly, multiple participants who do not favour regional intervention as a viable alternative to that of the UN nor unilateral actors, feel that the use of regional organisations in this capacity is an excuse to "pass the buck" (UKM07, this is also evidenced by UKM04 and UKM06). Whilst this is not explicitly referenced by British policy participants, dismissive statements such as "we should get Africans to do it" (UKP03) and sentiments such as "if the conflict came from an African country, then the other African countries should have to deal with it" (UKP01) appear to validate this idea of shifting the responsibility. Both of these data extracts gave the impression that rather than championing regional actors within R2P practice due to the desire to empower more localised solutions, or a genuine belief that this represented the best way to address crisis, it is instead premised on convenience and reluctance for self-involvement. This aspect appears to be neglected in literature, which does not seem to account for the supporting of regional solutions premised on the avoiding of one's own responsibility to protect.

Others argue that regional solutions, like UN responses, are encumbered by slow pace and bilateral feuds (SL13, UKM04, UKP04). Often participants group the UN and regional organisations, primarily the AU, together in terms of their flaws and UKM04 refers to both as:

> "pointless… they can't achieve things on the ground militarily because there just aren't the resources. Just look at the AU in Chad. They're never going to stabilise it because they are useless."

However, in contrast SL13 feels that a strength of regional intervention, specifically ECOWAS, is that they are "bound by less rules and operational procedure compared to the UN." Yet, this participant still does not see African regional bodies as viable conduits to progress R2P due to their resource limitations (see analysis of funding earlier in this theme). As such, it appears that these participants feel neither UN nor regional organisations are well positioned

to conduct R2P interventions; the former having greater access to resources but too limited a mandate to be effective, and the latter not bound by such a restrictive mandate but limited by its access to resources and equipment. This goes some way to explain the preference for unilateral intervention found amongst many participants as, in this instance, it appears as though the UK came to represent a solution to both of these limitations, being a well-equipped presence mandated to use force in the protection of civilians.

7.5 A Model for R2P Intervention

Participants were asked for their views on the legacy of the British intervention on global intervention practice. Many interpreted this as its applicability (or not) in terms of a model for humanitarian military interventions (SL01, SL04, SL08, SL11, SL12, UKM02, UKM03, UKM04, UKM05, UKM07, UKP01, UKP02) and inferences can be drawn from this data for R2P. In all cases there is an underlying assumption that these interventions are best conducted by unilateral forces, thus the surrounding debate is underpinned by this belief and not faith in the UN's ability to successfully utilise R2P. For instance, it is seen as "a good example of the UK's rapid intervention capability" (UKM05), "demonstrating what a small-scale intervention can achieve" (UKM04). This indicates a difference in how R2P is conceptualised within discourse and what it means to participants. In other words, within discourse there is a strict imagining of R2P as enacted by the UN or regional organisations, but for participants it is understood more broadly.

Those extolling the virtues of Sierra Leone as a model are not confined to one research group, as British policy and military participants as well as Sierra Leoneans argue for its merits as a template for humanitarian intervention (SL01, SL08, SL11, SL12, UKM02, UKM03, UKM04, UKM05, UKM07, UKP01, UKP03). For instance, one participant states that "this place [Sierra Leone] has been a really good model for liberal intervention" (UKM03), and there is enthusiasm that the "whole intervention should be used as a blueprint for British military involvement" (UKP01). Another participant feels it "would work well in failed states like Somalia" (SL01). British military participants in particular draw parallels between their experiences in Sierra Leone and subsequent experiences of interventions. For example, UKM07 states that "the Iraqi marines was based

exactly on what we did in Sierra Leone…Yemen was another place we very much used the Sierra Leone model." As such, he perceives that key elements have been transferred into standard practice for the UK. Others are more cautious, such as UKP02, who states that the intervention in Sierra Leone "made huge steps in how we deal with post-conflict reform and development…it gave us a template for best practice and also worst practice" or focus on one particular aspect which could be transposed, such as the reintegration process (SL08).

Several of these same participants (SL09, SL12, UKM03, UKM04, UKP01) recognise that Britain had two significant advantages when intervening in Sierra Leone: the support of the affected government; and a positive pre-existing relationship with the country. It is thought that:

> "the amount of good will behind the intervention just can't compare to other countries…we were just pushing at an open door. It was less of an intervention than an invitation" (UKM04).

UKP01 acknowledges that "the involvement here was done at the behest, and with the support of, the government of the country and the vast majority of the population" and UKM03 states "because we're really well respected and liked here, people listen to us Brits." This latter advantage is also identified by Sierra Leonean participants as a factor in the success of the intervention, believing that:

> "it's to do with the people on the ground. We accepted change. We wanted it, peace at all costs. In Sudan they don't want that. If there is no acceptance then there is no way, no matter what you do" (SL09).

This is also echoed by SL04 who feels that "underneath this success was our willingness to accept the situation and say 'we are better than this'." Speaking of intervention practice more broadly SL12 states that "no outside country should do something without the support of the citizens of the country." This suggests that the relationship between the interveners and the local population is significant to the success of an intervention and that both of these advantages served to cultivate a legitimacy surrounding the British intervention. It is perceived that "it is a good model, as long as we don't forget those big advantages" (UKM03). Therefore, despite arguing that the British intervention in Sierra Leone constitutes a good model for R2P practice, the uniqueness of the situation is also

acknowledged as simultaneously limiting its perceived applicability. For example, it is thought that this same approach would not work in Iraq (SL02, SL04, SL09), Libya (SL02, SL09), Syria (SL02, SL04) or Northern Ireland (UKM03).

For some participants it is this uniqueness which renders the intervention unable to be separated from its context and therefore not an appropriate model for practice (SL04, SL09, SL13, UKM01, UKP03). For instance, it is argued that:

> "the British should not say 'we've done it in Sierra Leone, we should be going everywhere doing the same thing'. It should not be a yard stick…it will not work in all circumstances" (SL04).

Similarly, UKM01 perceives that:

> "Sierra Leone shouldn't be used as an example to justify other interventions. The circumstances were too unique and…it was a relatively simply conflict so the military didn't learn a lot that could be used in other places like Afghanistan."

UKP03 highlights the difficulty in exploring 'lessons learnt' in real time, as it is rare that there are neat periods between conflicts. Therefore "it is often the case that people are fighting the last war when they fight the next one…I certainly don't buy into learning the lessons." This overlap provides limited opportunity to reflect on that which has worked well or not and the reasons why. Yet, it is the failure to explore the lessons and experiences of intervention which other military participants highlight as a weakness in the British approach (UKM07) and which (Connaughton 2002:94) states results in a "doctrinal vacuum." The same critique may be levelled at the UN.

7.6 R2P, Global Implications and Future Practice

At this juncture it is important to discuss the implications of the data presented thus far on R2P as a global practice and the implications for future implementation. This theme is informed by the data already presented throughout the thesis and so includes limited new extracts, instead bringing together implications for the future based on what has already been discussed. As evidenced so far, R2P and military intervention for humanitarian purposes are ethically powerful, yet fraught with problems in practicality. For some participants these issues are partially rooted in the UN's "very narrow view of what constitutes

R2P. It's too narrow to be functional and is very much focused on UN agreement" (UKM01). This focused and restrictive defining is in turn viewed as a limit on its implementation and ability to be effective in dealing with mass atrocity situations (SL01, SL04, SL07, SL09, SL13, UKM01, UKM02, UKM04, UKP01).

Despite the UN's verbal commitment to R2P, it arguably remains woefully underutilised and its execution weak. For example, although R2P has been referenced in eighty-four UNSC statements and resolutions between its ratification and June 2020, inconsistency is pervasive and there has been limited effective action in cases such as Yemen and Syria (Hunt et al. 2020). As Hehir (2018) surmises "over the last decade the UN has talked more and more about preventing violence, but global levels of bloodshed have risen markedly." Evans (2020) concedes R2P rhetoric has become more prevalent than action and that the power of R2P may not lie in compelling action, lying instead in the power to shame. Although this can be criticised as framing conversations on R2P as quantity rather than quality, the lack of success in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Myanmar, Yemen and Syria indicates that quality too remains an issue. However, despite failures to act, advocating unilateral action remains almost taboo. The perspectives of participants (presented throughout this chapter) suggest that future R2P should be accepting of partisan and unilateral action in order to be effective, maximising the saving of civilian lives and ending conflicts with greater expediency. As such, the data analysed highlights the need to question both the theory and embodiments of R2P, which are often taken for granted as the 'best answer' to prevention and response to mass atrocities, and expand discussion to include potential alternatives.

Reform of the mechanisms of action may be one avenue through which to make R2P more effective. For instance, Adediran (2017) explores Ayoob's suggestion of a Humanitarian Council to authorise action independently and Hehir (2012) presents the option of a Judicial Council. However, participants do not discuss a need for reform in how R2P is sanctioned and instead propose an alternative to how it is executed. Based on his experience SL08 argues that the best approach for future intervention practice is a "strong peace enforcer, with the UN coming after." The context of this being that the "enforcer" is a unilateral power. Similar

suggestions are made by various participants (UKM04, UKM07, UKP02). UKM04 argues:

> "the perfect solution is a professional army who've got the capability to deliver the force element. But then a UN follow-on force to come behind it with all the UN agencies involved. At that point they can add your impartiality, neutrality, legitimacy side of it."

UKP02 envisages a comparable role for the UN, based on their acknowledging the "UN's strength in developing the normal organs of a functioning government" (UKP02). Such an approach would enable UN missions to remain neutral, circumnavigating the associated critiques, whilst also potentially ending conflict more swiftly and in turn saving more civilian lives.

Participants perceive the UN to be better equipped for post-conflict state building activities, designed to solidify peace, than being the institution best positioned to instigate that peace through a peacekeeping intervention. This is echoed by a British military participant who feels that "you can reduce to the peacekeeping mandate but you cannot go in like that" (UKM07). As such, the value of a UN presence is seen as being a follow-on force. It is speculated that the legacy of the intervention of the coalition of the willing in Iraq would have been very different if "after we had won the war, the UN agencies had been involved in all the nation building things in a multinational effort" (UKM04). This is an interesting thought experiment. There is some value to the concept that if UN forces are resigned to traditional peacekeeping, having an alternative force able to intervene and create a semblance of peace through enforcement, may be useful. This would be a redefining of the UN's role but could have the potential to create more effective mass atrocity prevention.

Although supporting the principle of R2P and the concept of military intervention for humanitarian purposes, multiple participants are sceptical about the future of R2P and military intervention as a tool to stop genocide (UKM01, UKM02, UKP01, UKP04). Whilst this is primarily linked with the rise of Russian power and invocation of the veto, it is partially attributed to the increased threat of domestic terrorism and thought that states have become too pre-occupied by their own security issues to commit to 'saving strangers'. However, liberal interventionism

was at its peak in the 1990s, as was activity by terrorist groups such as the IRA (Reuters Staff 2011). As such, this cannot fully explain the concerns of a perceived move away from military intervention in humanitarian crises. UKP04 also states that the end of the Cold-War "was seen as the time to fix the world. There was a huge belief in that whereas that's not at all where we are now" (UKP04). Therefore, a mental shift in how the world is perceived may also affect how R2P is embraced in the future.

Controversially, some participants who chose to discuss PMCs speculate as to whether they may have a positive role within future atrocity prevention (SL13, UKM04, UKP01, UKP02, UKP03). UKP02 contends that:

> "these companies have evolved a hell of a lot since Sandline to get government business. They came up with a whole set of codes…[it's] evolved from essentially being a mercenary business."

UKP03 speaks of PMCs as "professional military expertise which we can use in a civilian context, protecting people or defending oil instillations etc." and SL13 states "based on my experiences PMCs can help a great deal." The logic for future use of such groups is primarily rooted in the apparent reluctance of governments to contribute to military interventions and a lack of viable alternatives as "the EU isn't a serious military power [and] the AU doesn't work, so what you should do is sub-contract it" (UKM04). This raises numerous issues such as transparency, accountability and legitimacy. The use of PMCs in other contexts has resulted in unethical, disproportionate and sometimes unlawful activity. For example, the 2007 Blackwater Scandal in Iraq, whereby employees of the PMC Blackwater Worldwide killed twenty unarmed civilians, including children, causing widespread condemnation (ten Dam 2013).

Yet despite this, those who chose to discuss PMCs in relation to protection of civilians in humanitarian crisis feel they should be considered as a viable alternative as "they are filling a void, because no one else is going to do it" (UKM04). This is not always perceived as due to a lack of willingness, rather it is attributed to resourcing issues. For example, UKP03 justifies the use of PMCs in Afghanistan as they had "reached the point where we didn't have enough soldiers to look after the people." As such, PMCs filled the security vacuum based on

‘can’t’, rather than ‘won’t’. They are also thought to be a more cost-effective means in the longer term as “a soldier is for life: you’ve got his pension, his family, you have to house him to feed him” (UKM04). Using PMCs on short-term contracts does not have these associated financial obligations. This support can also be found in British military discourse. For example, British Army (2016) discusses the tactical success of EO against the RUF, arguing PMCs to be cost effective and able to generate mass and expertise. However, with unilateral R2P interventions often heavily condemned, it is difficult to see how significant global support would be generated for a legitimate PMC role in R2P.

7.7 Conclusion

The construct of legitimacy underpins many of the theoretical debates surrounding R2P. For example, discussion on who may intervene and how that intervention is sanctioned is often framed in terms of legitimate action. As previously stated, the UN is viewed as the legitimate authority however, the research data provides interesting insight into the relationship between the force composition and how legitimacy is perceived (see Chapter 4.1.2 Force Composition for more detailed analysis). Arguably, this has implications for the future use of R2P as it should not be assumed that the UN or a regional organisation, is the affected nation’s preferred intervener.

Whilst this chapter does not argue strongly for unilateral partisan action as the future of R2P, it does juxtapose the data with scholarly literature. These findings often challenge such discourse, demonstrating a gap in the relationship between intellectual debate and experience. For example, research into R2P seldom fully explores the potential strengths of bias in unilateral humanitarian intervention, particularly from the perspectives of those with experience of this. This is not to say that unilateral bias interventions are the solution to the problems which blights UN action, with the former also being problematic. In many ways neither represent a solution. However, these findings do provide further evidence that when it comes to R2P, the voices of those who are being protected are disregarded, yet these voices challenge R2P thinking.

Within discourse it is argued that the principle of R2P is undermined by inaction, misuse of the veto and unilateral action. It appears as though the only option not felt to undermine this phenomenon is UN action. However, from the data it can be seen that participants questioned the appropriateness of UN peacekeeping mandates. For some such a mandate frequently renders the intervention unfit for purpose, thereby undermining the credibility of both the principle and the UN, whilst also failing to protect civilians. As such, R2P appears to be a highly complex and contradictory concept. R2P has sought to solidify existing sentiments into collective action by the UN and increased in visibility on the UNSC agenda. However, it is debatable whether in practice it remains too ad hoc, too focused in one geographical region, too inhibited by the veto and too weakly implemented to be considered a global 'norm'. Indeed Hehir (2018) questions whether R2P truly is progressing in a meaningful way, singling out Cambodia as an example: they are a signatory of Friends of R2P but are often cited by activists as deteriorating in human rights. As such, despite states ratifying R2P in 2005 and engaging with rhetoric in UNGA they do not appear to be assimilating this into their 'norms'.

R2P embodies compelling ethical arguments and within discourse is viewed as morally superior in comparison to unilateral intervention, yet participants' critiques raise questions as to whether it is fit for purpose. Not only are there significant obstacles in gaining consensus around the viability of a Pillar III intervention, but once this has been sanctioned there are then significant issues in how it is implemented. It can be questioned what good this morality is if its mandates and missions are ineffective. If the UNSC is seen as the only authority with the ability to legitimise action, then all action which is not UN sanctioned is therefore illegitimate even in instances where it achieves the purposes set out by R2P. That action deemed as illegal may also later be excused as legitimate, as was the case in Kosovo, adds yet another layer of complexity. Therefore, it is questionable whether UN failure to intervene, due to national interests within the P5, really is morally superior to unilateral intervention similarly motivated by political interest: both are troubled. Although the findings from this research relate to a specific case study, and therefore cannot be generalised, these indicate that R2P components such as multilateralism and disinterest should not be generalised

uncritically. It is arguable that each instance should consider the country's history and international relationships when designing an appropriate intervention in response to genocide and mass atrocities.

The final Chapter provides a conclusion, summarising the key and novel findings, as well as exploring the limitations of this primary research.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion and Research Implications

8.1 Introduction

This research has analysed primary data to explore the experiences stemming from the British military intervention into the Sierra Leonean civil war. It has focused upon the short-term impacts, its legacy both within Sierra Leone and British foreign policy, as well as the implications for R2P and intervention practice globally. By comparing findings from the primary research with existing discourse, it is evident that at various points there is a mismatch between the narrative of success and the experiences of those on the ground. When scrutinised, it is found that to some extent Sierra Leone has become a mythical success story, used to justify further interventions and the large cost of British involvement in Sierra Leone.

This final chapter draws together the key findings from the thematic analysis, as well as highlighting interesting themes that could not be included within the substantive chapters. Findings that were anticipated to emerge from the data, but were noticeably absent, are also discussed. The limitations of the research are reflected upon, before considering the implications of these findings for R2P and recommendations for future research.

8.2 Key Findings

This research has sought to address four questions in the associated substantive chapters, each containing a number of novel findings. These research questions are repeated below, followed by a summary statement capturing each finding (presented in italics) and a synopsis with a brief reiteration of relevant evidence from the analytical chapters.

Question one: What is the experience of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone?

> *The unilateral British intervention is felt to have been humanitarian and legitimate. In contrast, multi-national forces (ECOMOG and UNAMSIL) were experienced as akin to an occupation.*

ECOWAS and UN involvement in the civil war is conflated and, despite being multinational organisations, are referred to primarily as Nigerian interventions by participants. These Nigerian forces are felt to have been illegitimate and even referred to as an 'occupation'. This is primarily due to their being seen as self-serving and corrupt, engaging in rent-seeking behaviour and human rights abuses. These experiences are such that residual tensions towards Nigerians are reported by participants and found within the community. In contrast, the British intervention, though identified as neo-colonial, is thought of as humanitarian. Despite being a unilateral force, the presence was welcomed as legitimate. The acceptance of the intervening force by the affected population is also linked to the force composition. ECOMOG and UNAMSIL are not thought to have been seen as a credible threat to rebels, partially as they were primarily comprised of developing nations. In contrast, the British were accepted and assumed to have had superior intelligence capabilities and expertise due to their status as a developed country. It is this force composition which is seen as more salient to the legitimacy of an intervention, than whether approval has been granted from the UN or a regional organisation. This demonstrates that merely having UN authorisation is not enough to ensure legitimacy from the perspective of the affected nation and in some circumstances, such as Sierra Leone, there may be a preference for intervention to be unilateral. This contrasts with the dominant view amongst the international community and the thinking behind R2P.

Local ownership, particularly within SSR, is lacking.

The official narratives surrounding SSR single out local ownership as a strength of the approach. However, the findings from this research show that this is not the dominant perception amongst participants. Instead, to a large extent, Sierra Leoneans are perceived to have taken a back seat within the reform process and the changes implemented. This narrative is notably absent from discourse. Whilst overall there is gratitude towards the British for their role in stopping the conflict, contradictorily there are also elements of resentment surrounding the reform process which followed. For example, towards UK personnel occupying executive positions and hierarchical structures being overridden. British participants report that shadowing was rare and appears to have viewed their role

at the time as more directive and instructional than advisory. This links to the concept of Western superiority, which is seemingly woven throughout the British involvement. Whilst this resentment did not progress into an organised resistance, British military on the ground are aware that there existed a tension between themselves and RSLAF. However, this is often dismissed as being premised on the desire to maintain corrupt practices rather than legitimate complaint. Evidence of ambiguities is also found, as Sierra Leonean participants simultaneously hold the British in an elevated position of trust. This finding calls into question the extent to which Sierra Leone can be lauded as an example of good local ownership in the SSR process.

Question two: What is the legacy of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone?

> *The success of British-led SSR relates specifically to the reform of the military, rather than the security sector as a whole.*

The legacy of the British military intervention is primarily associated with SSR, which was central to the peacebuilding strategy. There was, and continues to be, an assumed superiority surrounding the British models of SSR. This is underpinned by Western constructions of statehood and democracy, with much of what was instituted following the intervention being entirely based on British templates. It is undeniable that significant strides have been made in reforming the security sector in Sierra Leone, however, there are considerable caveats and nuances underlying the label of success which are lost in the official narrative. For example, the SLP reforms are not seen as successful in comparison to those relating to RSLAF and there are reports of backsliding from within the SLP. This is a cause of concern, particularly given the primacy of their role in internal security. Deteriorating standards are attributed to a lack of training, a lack of equipment, poor logistics and poor pay. At times this has led police to engage in illegal activities, such as accepting bribes. Participants report some ongoing rivalries between the police and military, and both continue to be dependent on external funding to function effectively. This finding demonstrates the significant issues with the sustainability of the reforms within the security architecture. That participants view this as a failing of the British, as well as the Sierra Leonean

government, indicates that the country's internal security sector development and maintenance is no longer seen as the sole responsibility of the Sierra Leone state and is instead felt to be a collective responsibility with the UK.

Development and security should be better integrated in the peacebuilding process.

Security is often envisaged as a precursor to development. However, in taking a linear approach within Sierra Leone and prioritising security for such an extended period, development now lags behind significantly. Presently, British spending is far higher on development than security, but little progress has been made in terms of social and economic development. Participants feel that this poses a potential threat to the future stability of Sierra Leone, suggesting that security and development should be better integrated within peacebuilding practice and, in the case of Sierra Leone, development should have been focused upon sooner. For some the lack of progress in development is also attributed to a difference in the complexity of addressing the two, with the dispersed nature of development rendering it much more difficult to address than security. For others, this is hindered by a lack of direction from the British government and FCDO, with participants unclear how development is envisaged in the country and thus unclear what meaningful steps are needed in order to achieve it. This finding indicates that participants feel development within the peacebuilding process should be focused upon much earlier than occurred in Sierra Leone, or better yet, work in tandem with the measures taken to address security.

Memory plays a key role in sustaining peace in Sierra Leone.

The significance of memory as a device for stability is a key finding and one which is largely unexplored in wider research despite its seeming centrality to the ongoing peace in Sierra Leone. Since the end of the conflict little has changed within the country in terms of economic, social and political development. Several of the causes of the conflict continue presently and some participants report feeling 'better off' prior to or during the conflict than they do now. Mitton (2013: 326) argues that it is misleading to claim Sierra Leone has returned to its pre-war condition as the memory of conflict makes for a crucial difference and serves to evidence that "violence is not a viable tool for lasting change." The contribution

of memory to maintaining peace is supported by the findings within this thesis. Despite the conditions within Sierra Leone, the memory of the widespread brutality and horror of the civil war prevents the older generations from wishing to see a return to conflict. However, participants express urgent and serious concerns as to the future stability of the country once the generations which have experience of the conflict have passed. Similarities are highlighted between their own attitudes prior to the conflict and those which they observe in younger generations presently, including voicing discontent and speaking of violence. That multiple participants view a return to widespread violence in the future as inevitable, should the current environment not change, is particularly concerning and heavily contrasts with the portrayals of sustainable peace which often surround discussion of Sierra Leone and the British success. As such, this research has significant implications for the future stability of the country.

Question three: What is the legacy of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone on British foreign policy?

Legacy is fragile, temporal and changing.

Whilst no Prime Minister has engaged in interventions as frequently as Blair, the British intervention in Sierra Leone helped to cement ethical dimensions to foreign policy within British politics and has transcended changes in political parties. In the case of British politics this morality appears to be intrinsically linked with ideology, namely that of liberal democracy. Within British foreign policy it is felt that the success in Sierra Leone encouraged the UK to further assert itself on the global stage and led to it intervening in additional conflicts where mass atrocities were being committed. As such, it served to make the UK more interventionist and the success in Sierra Leone effectively legitimised further interventions. For some participants this legacy continues, whereas for others it has been negated by the more recent failures in the Middle East. For the latter group, the legacy of the intervention in Sierra Leone within British foreign policy is short-lived, with the lack of success in subsequent interventions acting as an inhibitor on unilateral intervention practice and thereby significantly undermining the legacy from Sierra Leone. As such, legacy was not thought of as permanent and is instead fragile and changing with time. One of the key findings underscoring this fragility is the

example of the influence of individuals in both creating and maintaining legacy, with the direction of both foreign policy and on-the-ground missions heavily dependent on the decisions of those in key positions.

British foreign policy is influenced by past colonial interests. The UK is likely to continue its presence in Sierra Leone for the foreseeable future.

Colonial ties are thought to influence present day foreign policy decision making, with an inherited responsibility to assist former territories in times of crisis. As a result colonialism impacts on R2P in terms shaping where former imperial powers may feel an increased responsibility to intervene in mass atrocities. This also partially explains the UK's continued involvement in Sierra Leone's internal security and development. For Sierra Leoneans this involvement is welcome and some wish to see it further increased. British military participants see the merit in its continuance, viewing it as a way to exert influence more broadly across West Africa and an opportunity for the British military to train in hot climates. Thus, it is seen as a mutually beneficial relationship. For British policy participants this continuation is viewed with reluctance and they perceive that the UK's interest in the country is dwindling. As such, there are significant differences in how the UK's role in Sierra Leone is experienced, yet there is consensus that the British involvement is likely to continue at its current levels for the foreseeable future.

A greater role for the British training African militaries is envisaged by some, which could potentially make greater use of Horton Academy as a regional training facility. This is partially attributed to defence cuts, limiting the operational capacity of the British military largely to training. Although Africa is primarily of little strategic interest to the UK, it is thought that future interventions by the British military would likely be focused in the region. This is due to a perceived responsibility to support former colonies in crisis, as well as the region providing the space for the UK to assert itself on the world stage and demonstrate its power.

Question four: How do these groups perceive R2P in light of their experiences?

R2P should make better use of peace enforcing.

Peace-enforcing is generally found to be preferable to peacekeeping as such UN mandates are viewed as too restrictive, rendering peacekeeping an ineffective tool. This finding has significant implications given that peacekeeping has become the most expensive UN department by far (at the end of the Cold War costs were approximately $500 million versus $9 billion in 2015 (McGreal 2015)). At present, there are twelve operational UN peacekeeping missions globally, involving over 87,000 personnel (UNPK 2021b). With the vast amounts of funding behind it, it is significant that the way in which humanitarian military intervention is currently enacted (through peacekeeping) is seen as inept by those who implement it on the ground or experience it as a member of the affected population. Whilst it must be acknowledged that to enforce peace may also require a move away from neutrality, a core tenant of R2P, participants perceive that the limits of Chapter VI mandates do not enable intervening troops to effectively ensure peace nor provide a deterrent to continuing violence from rebels. Indeed, some feel that a core flaw lies in the continued misinterpretation of the environments troops are deployed into, often finding themselves expected to keep peace where there is no peace to maintain.

British unilateral intervention is felt to be justified when the UN refuses to take action.

Where intervention is not authorised by the UN, there remains some support for unilateral action, particularly by the British. This demonstrates that whilst embracing the principle of R2P, in practice the UK is willing to intervene unilaterally, engaging in action which is not authorised by the UNSC: for instance, their response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria in 2018. For multiple participants this is underpinned by a strong belief in the moral responsibility to assist those in mass atrocity situations, with no participants expressing the belief that such a responsibility, nor R2P, should not be supported. However, simultaneously, this is rooted in a belief in Western superiority and exceptionalism. Specifically, support for unilateral action amongst participants tends to extend only to that being conducted by the British. In addition, the refusal to accept UNSC decisions appears to be premised on the belief that the UK's analysis of the situation in question is correct (therefore their action legitimate) with inaction seen to be a failure of the UN. In doing so the principle of R2P is

undermined as it is this “unregulated and selective practices of humanitarian intervention” (Newman 2021: 655) which the creation of R2P aims to avoid. For some, not only is unilateral action by the British acceptable, it is preferable as it does not leave affected populations vulnerable to P5 States vetoing intervention based on national interests. Furthermore, participants associate unilateral action from developed countries with providing better trained and better equipped forces than UN missions and, in having shorter decision-making chains, able to respond with greater swiftness.

There is limited support for regional interventions into crises.

Whilst British policy participants express support for regional organisations enacting R2P Pillar III interventions, locals with experience of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone were left cynical regarding the role of regional organisations (in particular African) in peacekeeping. This lack of support for localised solutions contrasts starkly with discourse, which tends to emphasise the assumed advantages of closer proximity, familiarity with cultural dynamics and local knowledge. This finding demonstrates a significant disconnect between the progression of R2P thinking and those who have been directly impacted by the lived experience of military intervention for humanitarian purposes. This alternative perspective appears to be an unexplored theme in much existing research and is often unaccounted for in discourse focusing on a regional architecture for R2P. Particular concern is expressed relating to the ability of regional organisations to provide the resources and finance required for such operations. The often-limited ability to do so is believed by participants to lead to corrupt, rent-seeking behaviour from intervening troops (as occurred in Sierra Leone).

The concept of force composition is also relevant to this finding, with troops from developing countries felt to be poorly trained and equipped in comparison to those who may be deployed as part of a unilateral intervention from a developed nation. Respondents generally limited their discussion of regional organisations to Africa, in particular the AU and ECOWAS, which is logical given that the case study being explored and that the majority of the interviews were held in Sierra Leone. Whilst Sierra Leone is unique and the findings from this research cannot be applied to all instances indiscriminately, it does serve as a reminder that

discourse should not take the acceptance of regional organisations as enactors of R2P for granted. As such, the tacit assumption that regional interventions are looked upon favourably or even preferred to UN peacekeeping missions/unilateral involvement, by those affected on the ground is called into question.

8.3 Unpresented Insights

In addition to the key findings above, noteworthy elements emerge from the research that there is not the scope to devote more scholarly attention to within the core analysis. These are not included in the thematic findings as, ultimately, they detracted from more cogent and complete analyses. Despite this, they are of interest and outlined here.

An interesting observation from fieldwork is the way in which the British currently conduct themselves in Sierra Leone. Whilst there is a heavy UK influence at an elite level, on a day-to-day basis there appears to be a great deal of separation between the British based in-country and Sierra Leonean civilians or 'grass roots'. Aside from specific outreach projects, personnel are isolated from their environment. For instance, both FCO and MoD staff are advised not to walk anywhere (taking vehicles 'door to door') and to limit driving only to known corridors, avoiding certain areas such as Kroo Bay. Similarly, although local and British staff work in the same office within the BHC there seems to be much segregation between the two: local staff sit on one side of the room and British staff on the other. The result is little meaningful interaction or socialising between the two. This is a shift away from the early approach taken by IMATT and is significant given that multiple British participants criticise the UN presence immediately after the conflict for failing to interact with the local population. For instance, UKM05 bemoans:

> "the UN would stay in their bases but when they did go out, they climbed into their airconditioned Toyota's and they would just drive. They wouldn't stop, they wouldn't get out, they wouldn't engage with people…the UN flew in airconditioned portacabins, created a first world comfort level that they don't want to leave and then becomes a barrier between them and the community."

It can be speculated as to whether this same critique could be levelled at the current British presence and whether this distancing from the local population may have a negative impact on the understanding of their operating environment.

A further insight relates to the relationship between witchcraft, otherwise referred to as Juju, and politics. Sierra Leonean participants do not explicitly discuss how neo-liberalism is experienced day-to-day within the country, however, both the interview data and informal conversations during fieldwork demonstrate a clear link between Juju and democracy within Sierra Leone. Although wider research acknowledges democracy to be conceptualised in different terms to Western understandings and to operate as a hybrid system (see Harris 2020), there is scant research exploring the intertwining of Juju and politics in Sierra Leone. Whilst Juju practices are often hypogenous, it is apparent that for many witchcraft pervades politics and locals feel “democracy is a fight; physically and spiritually.” For instance, during informal conversation, multiple Sierra Leoneans claim that if something good happens to a politician it is because of Juju. Likewise, if something negative happens it is because someone has used Juju against them. For these people, this relationship is absolute but it is under-researched and poorly understood more broadly. It may be argued that this finding has a transient connection with the British legacy, as the current political system is largely rooted in the British model. For this insight to be better understood and provide a greater depth of understanding in how transposed models of democracy are adapted and integrated with a local culture, further fieldwork would need to be undertaken.

8.4 Absent Findings

Research regarding Sierra Leone specifically (such as Harris 2020) and human security broadly (such as Duffield 2007) often delves into neo-liberalism. One of the primary critiques of R2P is the erosion of sovereignty, coupled with the introduction of neo-liberalism within the affected state (see Chapter 2.5 Legitimacy and Sovereignty: State Security vs Human Security). As such, it had been anticipated prior to fieldwork that Sierra Leonean participants would choose to provide commentary on this. However, it is not an aspect which any explicitly engage with. One explanation for this from the Sierra Leonean perspective may be that, following ten years of brutal conflict, the introduction of neo-liberalism is

simply not a primary concern. Whilst strong preference for the British presence is expressed, this appears to be premised on the belief they had the intelligence capabilities, equipment and mandate necessary to end the conflict. Having held elections during the civil war in 1996 (Conteh and Harris 2014) Sierra Leone had already moved towards a democratic system and so its reintroduction following the end of the conflict was not entirely alien. There is no evidence from the primary data that, at that time, there was a strong desire for the introduction of economic liberalism in Sierra Leone nor that they were as eager on all aspects of the neo-liberal package. In other words, from the perspective of Sierra Leoneans the ending of the violence was the priority at the time, rather than a preoccupation with any accompanying ideology. As such, an instrumentalist stance was adopted. Another possibility as to the inattention this receives may be the lack of viable ideological alternatives, with neo-liberalism becoming the accepted global narrative since the end of the Cold War.

With fieldwork being conducted in 2017, some participants chose to speculate on the upcoming 2018 elections in terms of the potential outcome. With these elections since being held, the decision was taken not to include this data. However, it had been thought that discussion on past elections would take place and be framed in terms of an indicator for the success of the intervention or measure of stability. This expectation is premised on the tendency within discourse to cite the transfer of power via elections as evidence of the triumph of the UK's state-building activities in the country and robust SSR (for example, see Jackson and Albrecht 2010a). Yet, no participant explicitly makes a link between elections and stability, nor a connection to it as an indicator of the lasting impacts of successful intervention. There have been six post-conflict elections in Sierra Leone, including the transfer of power to opposing political parties. In other post-conflict societies this may be a trigger for conflict, but in Sierra Leone the elections have been relatively free from widespread violence. This demonstrates positive progress, lending itself as an example of the sustainability of peace in Sierra Leone.

Nevertheless, other factors beyond the reform of the security architecture are also likely to be influential in maintaining relatively peaceful elections. For

example, the very real fear of a return to the bloodletting of the civil war (see Chapter 5.6 The Protection of Memory). As such, it can be questioned whether the peaceful transfer of power is itself an accurate measure of success or whether this is too narrow in focus, ignoring the other dynamics at play and avoiding a closer examination of the success in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, elections do continue to elicit localised disturbance and lower-level violence. For example, the SLPP offices were destroyed in 2009 by a mob of APC supporters and local newspapers refer to the beating and raping of female employees during the attack (Thomas 2012). Actions such as this, and the use of sexual violence as a weapon, echo some of the tactics used against enemies during the conflict and whilst arguable that rape occurs in all societies globally, it is rarely used as a means of political suppression in democracies. These incidents do not reflect the projected narrative of stable peaceful elections.

Detailed discussion on the reinstitution of Chiefs is noticeably absent from data. Within academia the merits of the reintroduction of the Chieftaincy system are debated. Some argue it to be a culturally appropriate traditional power structure, stressing the need for DfID to engage more meaningfully with such actors (Denny 2013). Others express concern about its potential to exclude groups or fragment security institutions, as civilians may turn to them for justice rather than the police, and view it as a return to the pre-conflict patrimonial system (Hanlon 2005). However, participants do not engage in such discussion and Chiefs feature as little more than a cursory mention. This may be seen as evidence that they do not view this as particularly controversial, or that in the intervening period Chiefs have been reaccepted as a norm of Sierra Leonean society.

The West African Ebola epidemic (2014) witnessed further British intervention in Sierra Leone, with the UK's response headed up by DfID and including a British military presence (British Army 2016: 37). Although the focus of the research is upon the intervention in the civil war, discussion does also extend to the relationship between the two countries presently and in recent years. As such, it was anticipated that data on the UK's response to this health crisis would naturally emerge. However, discussion on Ebola is noticeably absent from the findings, and receives only passing commentary at best. Where it is mentioned,

scant detail is given. It appears that there continues to be much mistrust surrounding the Ebola outbreak, which perhaps contributes to participants avoiding raising this topic. For example, there is mention locally of conspiracies, such as the crisis being silenced rather than resolved, and Ebola survivors are reported to be treated with suspicion.

8.5 Limitations of the Research and Reflections

This research has framed much of the discussion in terms of analysing the legacy of the intervention. Legacy as an impact may be seen as implying cause and effect, however, rather than seeking to prove objective fact, as would be defined in quantitative terminology, the social constructivist nature of this research explores how it is viewed by participants based on their experiences. As such, there is an inherent subjectivity ingrained within the data itself and in its interpretation. At times, this is further complicated by incongruity within what is shared by participants, who at various points make contradictory statements. Where such ambiguities occur is raised within the relevant themes. Whilst this may be viewed as a limitation, to some degree this is to be expected. Brinkmann (2014: 288) discusses the internal conflicts participants may experience and inconsistencies within data from individuals as demonstrating "shifting allegiances of power as they play across the body and mind." It is also arguable that this reflects the complexity of the research, the themes being analysed and the human experience. Fieldwork generated a wealth of data, with many inferences to be drawn. As such, it is difficult to place artificial separations between the themes in order to group them into chapters, and I grappled with their positioning. This linear format cannot do full justice to the ways in which many of the findings are interwoven. These complex ideas and themes are neither truly separate nor neatly delineated. However, these have been presented in an appropriate way to further the reader's understanding.

All fieldwork in Sierra Leone was conducted in Freetown and all face-to-face interviews took place in the capital. This may be seen as a limitation, as it is likely to have impacted upon who partook in the research, the data collected and its subsequent analysis. Had data been gathered outside of this location, it can be speculated that it would have yielded different findings. It may be supposed that

as a result the data gathered is perhaps more positive in its outlook. This conjecture is premised on the appearance of a dual state in Sierra Leone, with security architecture, development and infrastructure concentrated primarily on the peninsula. For instance, upon visiting Sierra Leone a decade after the cessation of the war reporter Alan Little stated that despite being in a northern province only a few hours outside of Freetown there was “no discernible economic development” (Thomas 2010). Based on participants’ views, and a number of contextualising conversations in which locals report having moved from provinces to the capital with the stark contrast in infrastructure (such as accessible roads and access to electricity) it can be surmised that there has been little progress since. As such, it may be assumed that the legacy of the British intervention may be interpreted differently in the provinces.

As discussed in Chapter 1.5 Researcher Identity, reflection is a valuable tool in order to help manage subjective bias when analysing data. At times this challenged my pre-conceived understandings, in particular within the context of findings regarding colonialism. This theme is challenging to analyse without injecting bias or including commentary on the reprehensibility of colonialism. Through reflective practice I found that I took for granted my understanding of the experience of colonialism in Sierra Leone. Whilst favorable views of colonialism feel very uncomfortable, they raise questions which should not be ignored due to feelings of unease. Ultimately, as qualitative research, such themes and participants experiences must be given attention, rather than being disregarded due to not fitting within my way of thinking. This is especially important given that there is very little wider academic research acknowledging the desire from some for an increase in the British presence or a return to British rule.

Yet, despite this lack of broader acknowledgement, when discussing this finding with other researchers who have spent time in Sierra Leone, it appears to be broadly accepted as part of the fabric of their society. As such, in some ways it has become an elephant-in-the-room and reinforces the advantages of qualitative research and analysing data without pre-set themes, as this allows air to such views. In the instance of Sierra Leone, it does appear as though their historic, colonial relationship with the UK, adds to the legitimacy of the military intervention

rather than diminishes it, as may have been expected. Whilst this finding relates only to one country and so cannot be assumed to be transferable, it does indicate a need for further research into the relationship between neo-colonialism and R2P, in particular from the perspective of the affected nation. This would enable a greater understanding of what the implications (if any) of this may be for R2P implementation and legitimacy.

8.6 Implications of this Research for R2P

This topical, experiential research provides an original evaluation of the success of the British intervention in Sierra Leone. Using a qualitative methodology to foreground micro-level perspectives, it analyses data based on a single case. As such the findings are contextualised, based on a particular country with a particular relationship to its former coloniser. Whilst the choice to examine one country's experience in-depth is deliberate, it may be perceived as being narrow. However, despite this not being action research (and therefore not designed to influence changes in policy), the findings serve to strengthen the relationship between experience and discourse as well as having wider implications for the ways in which R2P interventions are conceived. Significant gaps are exposed in the R2P literature when compared to experiences, as well as divergences in the accepted official narrative of the British success in Sierra Leone compared to the perceptions of those affected.

Co-Chair of the ICISS Evans (2020) discusses R2P as a widely accepted norm and academics such as Bellamy (2015: 161) claim it to be "utilized almost habitually." Based on this thesis' analysis of the primary data, it is arguable that such beliefs are overly optimistic. Furthermore, despite more than twenty years having passed since its ratification, R2P does not appear to be invoked consistently, even where there is a clear loss of life and atrocities perpetrated. As such, it may be more appropriate to summarise R2P in practice as contentious and controversial. Indeed, one of the structural inconsistencies of R2P is its assessment for involvement on a case-by-case basis, rather than being a consistently applied normative action (Hehir 2013b). Yet, the UN itself is premised on a system that "likes to be seen to cover every country in the world" (UKM07). Thus, there is a discrepancy between the ideal it would like to achieve and its

ability, rendering R2P flawed from its outset. The discussion throughout this thesis demonstrates disconnect and contradictions between R2P thinking and those with experience of its implementation. That inconsistencies and ambiguities are found not only between individual respondents but within the same respondent further demonstrates the complexity of R2P.

R2P, therefore, appears to be a work in progress. However, the receptivity to voices of those with experience of military interventions for humanitarian purposes does not appear to be good. Literature suggests disinterest and multilateralism should be central within R2P interventions Dobos (2016), yet the UK presence in Sierra Leone lacked both of these conditions and still had a positive humanitarian outcome. Whilst the UK intervention can be argued as being rooted in ethical motivations and primarily underpinned by the saving of lives, casting such an intervention as R2P is not unproblematic. For example, R2P discourse states that any interventions should be neutral and UN sanctioned (UNGA 2009). The UK intervention was both partisan and unilateral, theoretically casting shadow on its legitimacy. However, when considering the views of those with direct experience of the civil war and subsequent interventions in Sierra Leone, it is these same characteristics which appear key in its success in creating stability and ending mass bloodshed. Explicit discussion with Sierra Leonean participants surrounding legitimacy consistently casts the UN as illegitimate in contrast to the UK's legitimacy. As such, there is a disconnect between how R2P conceptualises legitimacy and how it may be experienced.

Within the data there is little support for peacekeeping mandates (see section 8.2 Key Findings), with more robust mandates being preferable. This has implications for how R2P may be envisaged and experienced. Steps towards more robust mandates risk creating a backlash against intervention, rendering consensus increasingly hard to achieve. This has been witnessed where it is felt that mission objectives have strayed into regime change. For instance, with regards to Libya where the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1973, authorising "all necessary measures…to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack" (UNSC 2011), led to sustained bombing. This was subsequently criticised as being politically motivated and designed to remove Gaddafi from power

(Anderson 2013). It has been argued that such overstepping has caused a loss in the impetus that had been pushing R2P forward, particularly amongst the BRICS states (Evans 2020). Although robust mandates have not been formally integrated into R2P discourse, remaining the exception rather than the 'norm' (Hunt 2016), it serves to raise questions as to what this move may mean for the future of R2P: undermine the foundations of the principle or increase its efficacy.

This thesis demonstrates that there is a rich source of data to be gleaned from those directly involved in interventions, including the militaries utilised and the affected population. While such voices are minimised in the official narrative, there is arguably a lack of accountability stemming from the international community regarding the legacy of interventions. For instance, it is the intervening party who deem an intervention to be successful and not the affected community. This leaves little motivation for genuine accountability for what is left behind. Decisions to end an international presence are often also based on policy priorities rather than the stability of the country, as seen in East Timor and Macedonia (Chandler 2003). In order to increase accountability, the voices of those living with the consequences of interveners' actions and foreign policy decisions must be heard. This would also provide a fuller picture of the implications of certain courses of action and deepen the understanding of Pillar III of R2P.

8.7 Recommendations for Future Research

This research has engaged with Sierra Leoneans to explore their experiences of the British intervention. Whilst a relatively large number of participants were interviewed for qualitative research, a vast number of stories, experiences and views are absent from the broader narratives surrounding the intervention. As SL08 states:

> "it is a shame on our part that we've not documented our experiences…it is good when people come listen to us, it helps to let people know what happened here."

This extract serves to reinforce that a significant amount of discourse on the intervention in Sierra Leone is not from Sierra Leoneans themselves, and multiple participants express regret that their experiences of the civil war are not fully

documented. Future research may focus on gathering more of these stories and potentially engaging in a hermeneutic study or applying narrative analysis in order to provide a greater voice to this generation and further extend the understanding of R2P beyond the structural level.

The actions of soldiers comprising both the ECOWAS and UN missions did much reputational damage within Sierra Leone, within the context of peacekeeping. However, this appears to be little acknowledged by these organisations themselves. For instance, when exploring relevant publications, documents produced by the UN typically present the end of the civil war as their success alone, the result of solitary activity and failing to even acknowledge the presence of the British. For example, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect 2008 Occasional paper on Preventing Mass Atrocities in West Africa engages in significant discussion on Sierra Leone and the success of R2P without once explicitly mentioning the involvement of UK forces. In addition, the UN (2005) Peacekeeping Operations Year in Review states the UN achievements in Sierra Leone are a prototype and model for successful peacekeeping. This demonstrates the subjectivity ingrained in definitions of success, which is often heavily intertwined with ideas of legitimacy, as such reports are in stark contrast with both the UK's portrayal of the UN mission and local experiences. Future research could seek to include the voices of former ECOMOG and UNAMSIL personnel, exploring military interventions for humanitarian purposes from their perspectives, centred around Sierra Leone. This could provide a more rounded view of the military interventions and subsequent peacebuilding. It would also reveal where there is disconnect between discourse/official narratives surrounding their involvement and individual experiences from their perspective.

This research relies on primary data from one country and, as such, a thorough comparative analysis is not possible. A useful analytical furtherance would be a small set of case studies, exploring the experience and perspectives of those involved in unilateral military interventions for humanitarian purposes in other instances to provide a more comprehensive picture. For example, similar research could be conducted in Burundi in order to explore the experience of the South African intervention, or in Mali to analyse the French intervention. This

could also include research into a case of ‘traditional’ R2P, in other words, a neutral UN peacekeeping intervention. This would facilitate an exploration of the similarities and divergences to create a clearer comprehension of how such interventions are experienced. In allowing for comparisons between cases the understanding of R2P interventions and the surrounding processes would be further enhanced. By exploring the legacies from such interventions a better understanding of the impacts of interveners’ actions, beyond short-term impacts, would also be enabled. This research would be valuable, as it is arguable that R2P is not necessarily centred only upon increasing the frequency of interventions in crisis’, but conducting them in the most effective way possible. Therefore, the legacies in other contexts warrant serious further research and analysis.

Foreign policy is not static, being both pro-active and reactive to adapt to new international environments. Since primary data gathering was conducted the UK has left the EU, which may result in shifts depending on how the government wishes to situate itself internationally. For example, the islander mentality which led to Brexit may see it become more insular. Alternatively, positioning itself under the ‘Global Britain’ slogan may see it attempt to play a more significant role on the world stage. Brexit has resulted in the UK’s influence decreasing in other multinational forums, such as the UN (Gifkins et al. 2019), which may lead it to demonstrate its power in other ways. For instance, becoming more involved in unilateral style interventions or seeking to refocus its attention on Africa and increase its influence in the region. That the FCO (prior to becoming FCDO) stated that one of the UK’s ambitions was “building and maintaining strong partnerships with regional powers such as Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa” (HoC Foreign Affairs Committee 2018a: 11) indicates that there are plans to retain a focus on Africa. In addition, the recent Covid-19 pandemic may have similar implications for foreign policy, potentially shoring up defensive nationalism or increasing cooperation (Evans 2020). Moving forward, research may refocus on British foreign policy and explore what these recent changes may mean from the perspective of the individuals involved and affected. Such research would benefit from engaging with the political elites involved in the decision-making processes.

8.8 Conclusion

It is undeniable that the British have a significant positive legacy within post-colonial Sierra Leone. However, it is evident from the findings presented throughout this analysis that the label of 'success' does not present the whole picture and instead applies primarily to two areas of UK involvement: the cessation of widespread violence/ending of the civil war; and the transformation of RSLAF. Yet even these are not without caveats, for instance, participants perceive that RSLAF would be unable to sustain its progress and operate as effectively without continued British involvement financially and in terms of training and equipment. In many ways the true legacy within Sierra Leone is yet to become apparent as the continued British involvement, both physical and financial, obscures just how sustainable the country's peace is and the extent to which local capacity has been built and embedded.

Within each chapter the themes contain multiple novel findings, which often present stark differences between theory and practice, particularly within the context of R2P and the narrative of success surrounding the British military intervention in Sierra Leone. These findings provide new perspectives and have implications for current practice and future research. It is apparent that what is known of R2P in practice, from the perspective of those involved in its execution and individuals who experience it as part of the affected nation, is limited. That several of R2P's principles are taken for granted as being the most suitable means for third parties to implement the responsibility demonstrates that further research is needed on micro-level perspectives. From the data there are significant implications on how R2P is experienced and how it should be implemented. The findings from this research led to questions as to whether there may be room for partisan interventions within R2P, as whilst theory states that inventions should be unbiased, their primary purpose is to save lives. This supported by existing research which indicates that by 'picking a side' conflicts are not only likely to end quicker, but also less likely to re-emerge when compared to conflicts ended by negotiated peace treaties, therefore resulting in a more sustainable peace. However, biased action may undermine the UN's authority and risks eroding international security.

The British military declared Sierra Leone to be “a textbook example of a successful stabilisation and state-building intervention” (British Army 2016: 43). This research has sought to present a micro-level perspective on this intervention, exploring the longer-term legacies and moving beyond “boisterous rhetoric.” As with any qualitative study, it is not possible to make sweeping generalisations, applying the findings to all contexts. Indeed, the dynamics between Sierra Leone and the UK do not appear to be a standard representation of the relationship between past colonisers and their ex-territories and what was discovered is a nation which is verbose about its preferences for colonial rule and welcoming of Western, British intervention. However, this research uncovers that in many ways Sierra Leone defies the shared assumptions about the best ways to conduct R2P. This raises significant questions for how military interventions for humanitarian purposes are enacted. Yet, due to a lack of in-depth research focusing on the micro-level perspectives of those ‘on the front line’ R2P continues to be shaped by powers that are removed from the daily realities of the individual.

This type of qualitative exploratory research should form part of an ongoing conversation, centred around understanding R2P in different contexts. There is a need for more research to examine these micro-level perspectives and take them into account in analysis and space should be made for these voices in the narratives. It is by questioning and challenging the assumptions of R2P that the principle continues to evolve.

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Appendix 1- Interview Schedule

1. Could you tell me about your experiences of the British military intervention in the civil war?

2. What do you feel the legacy of the British intervention in Sierra Leone has been?

3. What do you think the legacy has been within British foreign policy?

4. Based on your various experiences, what do you feel makes for a meaningful military intervention for humanitarian purposes, such as in a civil war?

5. What do you think the legacy of the British intervention has been globally on intervention practice?

6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 2 - Information for Participants

You are being invited to participate in research forming part of a PhD project. This sheet is designed to inform you of any information you may need to know before you decide to take part. Please read it carefully and do not hesitate to ask for any further clarification if needed.

Working Title of the research project:

Evaluating the 'success' of the British intervention in Sierra Leone: Implications for Sierra Leone, the UK, and Interventions Globally

Who will conduct the research?

Lucy Scott, PhD Candidate
Peace Studies Department
University of Bradford
Richmond Road
Bradford
BD7 1DP
United Kingdom

Please direct all enquiries to Lucy Scott via email to l.scott4@student.bradford.ac.uk or telephone +447792916824.

What is the purpose of the research?

This research aims to explore the long-term effects of the British military intervention in the Sierra Leone civil war. It will examine participant's personal experiences of the intervention in order to increase our understanding from the perspective of those involved.

Who can take part?

Anyone can take part that has experience of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone, including those currently working with RSLAF or the UK military. Ideally, you will not have taken part in similar research previously.

What would I be asked to do?

I would like to interview you in person or using video calling to find out more about your experiences and opinions. This would take between approximately 45 minutes and an hour, at a time convenient to you.

Whilst you would largely direct the content of the interview, you may be recalling difficult experiences relating to civil war and should be aware of the risk of emotional and/or psychological distress to yourself. You may choose to end the interview at any time. You may also refuse to answer any question which may make you feel uncomfortable.

Will I be provided confidentiality and/or anonymity?

All information you provide will be confidential. Although I will audio record our conversation, this is to facilitate my transcription of the interview only. This will then be anonymised and all efforts will be made to remove any identifying information from published materials. You may also speak 'off the record' at your request. If you would like to partake in the research but would not like your interview to be recorded, then this is possible at your request. You may also pause the recording at any time during the interview.

The information will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and saved on encrypted hard drives. All interview transcripts will be disposed of, in a secure manner, two years after completing my PhD.

The overall outcomes of the research project will be submitted to the University of Bradford for the purpose of PhD degree assessment. I may also potentially publish related articles based on my findings. However, at no point would individual interviews be released or any information which could lead to the identification of any participant. You may also request a copy of the final thesis should you wish.

Can I withdraw from the research later?

You may withdraw from the research at any point up to 1 July 2019. If you wish to withdraw simply contact me using the information above. You do not need to provide a reason and there will be no adverse consequences for withdrawing.

What happens next?

Should you be willing to participate please inform Lucy Scott. You may also wish to keep a copy of this information sheet for future reference

Thank you.

Ethics approval granted by the Chair of the Social and Health Sciences Research Ethics Panel and the University of Bradford on 17 November 2016.