GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY

CSDG Papers

Number 13 ■ June 2008

King's College London
University of London

State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: The Politics of Security Decision-Making

Review of Methodology and Lessons for Future Research

Sunil Bastian and Dylan Hendrickson

CONFLICT, SECURITY & DEVELOPMENT GROUP

About this study

Security sector reform (SSR) has moved rapidly up the international aid agenda during the past decade. There is growing recognition that SSR is fundamentally a political activity and that this requires a coherent response among UK development, diplomatic and defence actors.

This comparative study of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda had two aims: firstly, to examine who makes decisions about security, the factors which influence decision-making, and the consequences for the security of people; and secondly, to suggest ways to incorporate such knowledge more effectively into UK SSR programming.

The study was conducted by the Conflict, Security and Development Group at King's College London in partnership with the Centre for Democracy and Development in Nigeria, the Social Scientists' Association in Sri Lanka, and the Centre for Basic Research in Uganda.

Sunil Bastian is a Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo.

Dylan Hendrickson is a Senior Research Fellow in the Conflict, Security and Development Group, King's College London, and managed the Politics of Security Decision-Making research project.

The **Conflict, Security and Development Group** is a leading international resource for research, analysis, training and expert policy advice on issues at the intersection of security and development. CSDG was established at King's College London in 1999 with the aim of bridging the academic and policy communities. Its core mandate is to deepen understanding about the development challenges confronting societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and to help translate this knowledge into practical agendas for change at local, national, regional and international levels.

CSDG's **Governance and Security** programme is concerned with how international assistance in the security domain (notably the SSR agenda) can be better tailored to the political context and the needs of aid recipients.

Conflict, Security and Development Group
School of Social Science and Public Policy
King's College London
Strand, London
WC2R 2LS, UK

Tel: +44(0)20 7848 1984
Fax: +44(0)20 7848 2748
www.securityanddevelopment.org

CSDG Papers

Number 13 ■ June 2008

State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: The Politics of Security Decision-Making

Review of Methodology and Lessons for Future Research

Sunil Bastian and Dylan Hendrickson

Copyright

This paper was published by the Conflict, Security and Development Group, King's College London (www.securityanddevelopment.org).

An electronic copy of this report can be obtained from the Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GFN-SSR): http://www.ssrnetwork.net/publications/psdm.php

Copy-editing by Alex Potter (fproduct@intekom.co.za).

Design and typesetting by Richard Jones (rick@studioexile.com).

Printed in the UK by Russell Press Limited.

First published June 2008.

CSDG Papers seek to showcase policy-relevant research findings from the Conflict, Security and Development Group's different programme areas. All papers in the series can be downloaded in PDF format from our web-site: www.securityanddevelopment.org

Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACPP	Africa Conflict Prevention Pool
CSDG	Conflict, Security and Development Group
DFID	Department for International Development
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
MOD	Ministry of Defence
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom

Acknowledgements

This study was funded by the UK Government and benefitted from the support provided by a number of HMG staff, both in London and overseas, who contributed to its design and implementation.

In the field, the following conflict advisers participated in the project: James Fennel (Nigeria), Steve Ainsworth (Sri Lanka) and Graham Carrington (Uganda).

In London, inputs into the study during the initial conception stage were provided by an HMG Steering Committee that comprised Graham Thompson (DFID), Ciru Mwaura (DFID), Phil Jones (MOD) and David Ashley (FCO).

Mark White (DFID SSR adviser) and Patrick Merienne (Conflict adviser, Africa Conflict and Humanitarian Unit, DFID) actively followed the study during its implementation and provided valuable feedback on the various project outputs.

We are also grateful for comments provided on earlier versions of this paper by Nicole Ball, Sabiiti Mutengesa and Mark White.

The views expressed here are our own, and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the UK Government's Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, or Ministry of Defence.

Key messages and lessons for future research

Background

Security sector reform (SSR) has moved rapidly up the international aid agenda during the past decade. The UK has played a leading role in developing the SSR concept, policy agenda and modalities for delivering assistance in this area. HMG currently has SSR assistance programmes in a number of countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe.

This comparative study of the politics of security decision-making focused on three countries where the UK currently supports SSR: Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. The aim of the study was two-fold: firstly, to enhance understanding about who makes decisions about security, the factors which influence decision-making processes, and the consequences for the security of people; and secondly, to explore ways of incorporating this knowledge more effectively into UK SSR programming.

This was a collaborative study between the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College London and research institutions in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda.[1] The research teams also interacted closely with the HMG conflict adviser in each country as well as DFID's SSR adviser in the implementation of the study.

Key messages

Because SSR is a fundamentally political activity, politics needs to be systematically accounted for in UK SSR programming if such programming is to be effective. Development of a firm evidence base to under programming will make it easier to tailor UK assistance to the needs, priorities and circumstances facing partner countries, and to respond to changes in the political environment.

Drawing on the experiences of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda, this study suggests that UK programming in the security sector is based on a relatively weak empirical base, particularly with regard to the politics of reform processes. The problem is not fundamentally one of the poor capacity of advisers or a lack of appreciation of the importance of analysis. The importance of evidence-based programming is understood by those managing SSR engagements in all three countries.

1 The Centre for Democracy and Development (Nigeria), the Social Scientists' Association (Sri Lanka) and the Centre for Basic Research (Uganda).

Various factors make it difficult for SSR policy and programme managers to acquire the political analysis they need:

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

As a consequence, HMG, like other donors, relies heavily on outside sources of analysis to inform programming. In most cases, these are UK-based academic institutions or international consultants from outside the countries where SSR programmes are being established. This makes it difficult to acquire the inside political knowledge required or to involve local analysts in UK programming processes.

The methodology adopted for the present study sought to overcome some of these problems by partnering with local institutions in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. The aim of a 'partnership-based' approach was not simply to gain a richer analysis of security issues, but to get local researchers more involved in the UK SSR programming cycle, from the stage of agenda-setting through the development, implementation and evaluation stages.

The project proposed an iterative means of conducting research and developing SSR programming. CSDG's partner institutions took the lead in conducting the field research and collating the findings. Preliminary findings were presented to the HMG conflict adviser in each country at various stages over the course of the project, who was given the opportunity to provide feedback and shape the next stage of the research. CSDG in turn took the lead in comparing the country experiences, assessing the policy implications and presenting the final results to the UK government.

Lessons for future research

1. *Partnership-based research and donor SSR programmes*

Lesson 1: *Within the same research project, it may not be possible simultaneously to conduct longer-term empirical research on sensitive security issues, build capacity among local researchers and influence donor policy. This means that policy-relevant research on security issues must set realistic objectives, particularly in difficult situations of conflict or political instability. [p. 26]*

Lesson 2: *For a partnership-based approach to SSR research to work, donor programmes need to be flexible enough to accommodate research findings. In turn, organizations that are provided with the opportunity to influence donor policy and contractually commit themselves to delivering work need to accept that, in doing so, there is an accompanying level of accountability. [p. 20]*

2. *Developing research agendas and methodologies*

Lesson 3: *Policy-relevant research on SSR must, where possible, involve national researchers from the outset in designing the research project. This will enhance the sense of ownership of research projects and strengthen analytical capacity within partner countries. In the long run, both these aspects will contribute towards generating support for SSR. This is essential for the success of SSR programmes. [p. 20]*

Lesson 4: *The study adopted a methodology based on a set of 'micro'-case studies of critical decision-making events. This turned out to be a successful approach to studying the politics of security decision-making and unpacking its various dimensions. However, this approach could be further improved by the development of a more rigorous method for selecting case studies. [p. 17]*

Lesson 5: *There is currently limited knowledge to draw upon either at the empirical or conceptual level on the politics of security decision-making in developing countries. Some of the studies that have focused on the politics of state formation can be of help in this regard, but to a limited degree. If a conceptual framework were developed on this issue, it would better inform the interpretation of the case study material. [p. 18]*

Lesson 6: *There are likely to be trade-offs in terms of focus within a research project that will affect the nature of its conclusions. Close donor involvement in determining research questions can help to ensure that the findings of a research project are directly relevant to policy concerns and result in practical policy recommendations. However, this may limit the scope for a critical evaluation of the assumptions that underpin donor SSR programming. The development of a more independent research agenda will allow for this kind of critical analysis, but may, in turn, make it difficult to translate research findings into practical recommendations that can be used by donors. [p. 21]*

3. *Conducting policy-relevant research on sensitive issues*

Lesson 7: *The case study work benefitted from the prior experience of the authors on the subjects that were selected for examination. This contributed to the timely conclusion of the studies and a richer and more nuanced analysis. There were a number of cases where authors did not have substantial prior research experience on security issues. While this in some ways slowed the research process, the final outcome was that the pool of security analysts in each of the three countries was expanded, as was capacity to engage in policy debates on security issues (see Recommendation 11 in the Synthesis of Findings paper). [p. 22]*

Lesson 8: *It is not always necessary to study politically 'hot topics' in order to understand some of the structural features of the security decision-making process. By examining decision-making events from the past, it is possible to overcome some of the sensitivities of research of this nature and come up with policy-relevant findings. [p. 23]*

Lesson 9: *Careful thought must go into planning research on security issues, due both to its sensitivity and data limitations. Because primary, published sources of information on security*

decision-making are very difficult to get hold of – if they exist at all – researchers must rely much more on interviews and secondary sources of information. This can make it possible to piece together a picture of a decision-making event, but requires adequate time to carry out. Research projects on sensitive security issues may demand a greater focus on primary sources of data, given the lack of published material in this area. Working with primary sources demands more time for making contacts and confidence-building. [p. 24]

Lesson 10: *Formulating policy recommendations in a research study on security issues is a potentially difficult and sensitive undertaking. This is particularly the case in countries where analysis of security issues by academics is discouraged or where they have limited prior experience in this type of research. This factor should be borne in mind when donors request that the research they commission should be policy-relevant. [p. 28]*

Lesson 11: *Governments and security agencies are still very reluctant to share information on security issues, although the fact is that much of this information can now be found on the Web. However, this can make it more difficult to establish its accuracy or authenticity. It can therefore be in the interests of governments to provide more information on security issues to the public in order to prevent misunderstandings about security policy. [p. 25]*

4. *Feeding research findings into SSR programming*

Lesson 12: *Different kinds of research may be necessary to influence policy. While longer-term academic research can provide a stronger understanding of the context in which SSR is taking place, it may not provide actionable recommendations for programme managers. [p. 28]*

Lesson 13: *In order for country offices to draw maximum benefit from SSR research that has been commissioned from local analysts, SSR project advisers should be actively engaged in managing the research. Regular interaction between researchers and the policy end users provides the latter with a sense of the emerging research findings and an opportunity to clarify in which areas policy guidance can be of help. [p. 29]*

5. *Managing and incentivizing research partners*

Lesson 14: *In managing policy-relevant research, there is a difficult balance to strike between meeting the contractual obligations of the 'customer' and satisfying research partners that they are not simply instruments for carrying out donor policy. This requires that all three partners work closely together in defining the research model that will be adopted. [p. 30]*

Lesson 15: *Academic incentives, such as the possibility of publishing papers and opportunities for pursuing the subject on a long-term basis, can be important motivating factors for researchers. This is particularly the case where financial incentives are limited, making it important that provision for eventual publication of research outputs be made from the outset of projects. [p. 31]* ■

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the paper

This paper examines the methodology used for a comparative study of the politics of security decision-making that focused on Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. This study was carried out during 2006–07 with UK government funding and was co-ordinated by the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College London.[2] The overall aim of the project was to provide a stronger knowledge base for security sector reform (SSR) policy and assistance activities.

The study was conducted in close partnership with the Centre for Democracy and Development in Nigeria, the Social Scientists' Association in Sri Lanka and the Centre for Basic Research in Uganda. These research partnerships were integral to the study's aims and methodology. This paper describes how we conducted the research, assesses the strengths and weaknesses of our approach, and draws lessons that may inform future policy-relevant research that deals with politically sensitive security issues.

This assessment should be read in conjunction with the *Synthesis of Findings* paper, which discusses our research findings and their implications for UK SSR policy and programming.[3] The analysis and lessons contained in this paper is specifically targeted at the UK government, although they may also have relevance for other donors.

The views expressed here reflect our own assessment of which aspects of the project worked well and which did not. In writing this paper, we drew on the views of the research teams in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda, as well as the UK conflict and SSR advisers involved in the project. The researchers were encouraged to include in their papers an assessment of the challenges they faced in conducting the field work.[4] These issues were discussed at project meetings held in each country. We also draw upon the discussion that took place at an international policy conference held in Dubai in April 2007, at which the preliminary project findings were discussed.

1.2 Partnership-based research and SSR

The premise of this project was that UK SSR policy and programming processes would benefit from a stronger knowledge base on security issues. More research, however, will clearly

2 The study was funded through the Africa and Global Conflict Prevention Pools.

3 Hendrickson, 'State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs, Synthesis of Findings'.

4 For a list of the study outputs, see Annex A.

be of limited benefit for donors unless the findings are relevant to policy concerns, packaged in a manner that is accessible to those who formulate SSR policy and develop programmes, and provided in a timely manner. This suggests that there is a need to ensure that research, policy and programming processes are carefully linked.

For donor policymakers to have confidence that they are receiving the best information possible, it is important that research on security issues is carried out in a rigorous manner by researchers who have relevant local knowledge. Until recently, much of the research on security issues that the donor SSR community has drawn upon has been heavily influenced by the policy concerns of donor funding agencies.[5] While this policy-driven research has served the bureaucratic imperative within aid agencies to develop and administer programmes, it has not always favoured good empirical analysis of the complex political and institutional dynamics that affect SSR processes.

The problem has not been solely one of a lack of information. Insufficient effort has been made to draw upon other strands of relevant existing research on security issues of a more academic nature , including in developing countries. This reflects more fundamental problems with the way that the knowledge base for donor SSR policymakers has been constructed, as a result of which much of the knowledge generated comes from sources external to the country where an SSR programme is being developed.

The question was how to better link research, policy and programming processes so that research findings on security issues could be conveyed in an appropriate and timely manner to those responsible for SSR programming. By working with research partners in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda, we sought to incorporate locally generated knowledge directly into UK SSR programming processes. The aim was not simply to gain a local perspective on the security challenges facing these three countries, but to actually get local researchers more involved in the programming cycle, from the stage of agenda-setting through the development, implementation and evaluation stages.

The notion of 'policy-relevant' research as we use it here (as opposed to 'policy-driven' research) therefore implies a synergy between the production of research and its potential uses, to ensure that relevant and up-to-date knowledge on security issues is available at the time it is needed by those developing and managing donor SSR programmes. To have an impact, this approach requires a collective learning process in which researchers, those managing the research and the donor policy end users of the research work closely together.

As this project illustrates, achieving this goal is challenging, given the sensitivity of research on security issues, the capacity limitations of the parties concerned, resource and time constraints, and – not least of all – differences in views among researchers about where to strike the balance between responding to donor policy concerns and seeking to influence them. This raises an important question – which we examine – as to whether it is possible to conduct empirical research on sensitive security issues, build capacity among local researchers and influence donor policy at the same time, within the same research project.

5 For a detailed discussion of the evolution of SSR research and practice in recent years, see Ball and Hendrickson, *Trends in Security Sector Reform (SSR)*.

1.3 The structure of the paper

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 examines how we designed the project, including the organization of the field research and the interface with the UK government research end users. Section 3 examines the practical challenges we faced in developing the methodology, conducting the research and feeding our findings into the UK policy process. Section 4 discusses several key project management issues that impacted on its implementation. By way of conclusion, we sum up what we would do differently if we were to carry out research of this nature again.[6] ■

6 The Annexes contain a more detailed summary of the project's methodological framework, a matrix that summarizes the micro-case studies carried out in each country and a list of the key project outputs.

Chapter 2
Project design

2.1 Researching security issues

In developing the study, the nature of the subject that we were dealing with and the specific challenges faced by researchers working in the field all had an impact on the approach we adopted. Traditionally, research on security issues in developing countries has been extremely state-centred, as is still the case in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. The principal concern of this research has been the question of state security; more specifically, the defence of territorial integrity and the protection of governmental institutions and political elites. The term 'national security' has been commonly used, implying that the state is the same thing as the nation – an assumption that is highly questionable.

One consequence of this focus on the state has been the tendency to consider research into security institutions itself as a security issue. The understanding was that this kind of research should only be carried out by agencies authorized by the state. Confidentiality and secretiveness were hallmarks of such research. Any interference into this world from researchers outside the sanctioned circle was not only frowned upon, but also considered as a security threat. These ideas are still dominant in developing countries and become even more hardened when states are under threat by armed groups. This was the case in the three countries where we carried out our research.

Because most of the existing research on security is dominated by the above concern with state security, the body of knowledge that examines security from other perspectives is smaller by comparison. In the case of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda, the research community working on security issues is relatively small. In addition, these researchers have limited secondary sources of information to draw on. In many instances, they have to start from scratch. Each of these factors creates difficulties in conducting research on security decision-making at an acceptable level of quality, and has particular implications for the time, effort and approach required.

To an extent, the introduction of broader international concepts such as 'human security' and 'security sector reform' have opened the way for and legitimized research on security issues by non-state actors, including academics and civil society groups. This is the case because these concepts promote a more holistic understanding of security that includes both military and non-military dimensions; that is, they treat security as a public good, as we have done in this study. There are thus a range of new entry points and perspectives for security analysis that do not necessarily require researchers to engage with the sensitive 'hard'

security issues that are more likely to arouse suspicion on the part of conservative governments. That said, any research that is carried out on issues of 'security' can still arouse suspicions.

The concepts of human security and SSR nonetheless have limitations when applied to empirical analysis. Both have emerged in response to a drive within the international aid community to address the twin imperatives of peace and development through integrated policies and programmes. Both are based on a normative agenda aimed at encouraging states to develop people-centred approaches to security that are consistent with democratic norms and human development goals. Both, therefore, have been developed as guides for states seeking to develop institutions that are more responsive to public security needs.[7]

However, both concepts are less useful when it comes to telling us how states *actually* make decisions about security, and the factors that influence this process. From our standpoint, understanding how the decision-making process works should be the starting point for better informed international SSR policy. Because there is a very sparse literature on security decision-making in countries that are experiencing violent conflict, the main aim of this project was to generate new insights into this question that can serve as a basis for comparison and the development of SSR assistance strategies that are better tailored to the specificities of the societies in question.

2.2 Research themes

The first aim of our research project was to get beyond the focus on formal security institutions that is often the starting point for SSR analysis, and to increase our understanding of how history, politics and power relations affect security decision-making processes within governments.[8] Security is an extremely contested category of political thinking, because each social group, government or donor agency has its own idea of what security entails. Competition, co-operation and conflict among these diverse players therefore characterizes this political contestation for security. This in turn defines what is possible in terms of achieving policy and institutional changes that will achieve the widest possible security benefits for society.

For the purposes of this study, our point of reference is an expansive understanding of security taken to mean the state of affairs in which individuals and social groups are able to exercise their legitimate rights and freedoms in a safe environment. We approach security through a public policy lens rather than as a concern of traditional security actors alone. This is because we are interested in what weight those who make decisions about security give to the different military and non-military dimensions of the security problems that affect citizens, and how they choose between the coercive and non-coercive policy options available to the state to address security problems. In particular, we are interested in how decision-makers balance the security interests of states and the security interests of citizens.

7 For a detailed discussion of the current state of the art of donor thinking on SSR, see OECD-DAC, *Handbook on Security System Reform*.

8 A copy of the methodological framework is attached in Annex B.

The notion of responsiveness as we use it in this paper is therefore a measure of how those with security decision-making authority respond when a country's population or sections thereof are confronted with security problems. Responsiveness is a function of the capacity of the citizenry to articulate their preferences, the capability of the state to process and respond in a timely manner, the form and quality of the response, and whether it reflects an attempt by government to meet the demands of the diverse groups in society equitably. The notion of responsiveness provides a means of assessing the complex interplay of factors that shape public policy processes and ultimately determine which groups in society benefit from these processes.

In developing the methodology, we initially considered various approaches. In response to a request from DFID, we explored the idea of conducting surveys at the local level to establish how people perceive security and define their needs, how they interact with state security establishments, and how they cope when faced with shortfalls in state provision of security. However, a preliminary review of the literature convinced us that there were already significant insights available on these issues; certainly enough to map out some of the key policy challenges states face in responding to public security needs. Where there appeared to be a much larger gap in knowledge was on the decision-making side.

Little information was available on the factors that determine how state decision-makers perceive (or fail to perceive) their obligation to render such a vital service as security, and, in particular, how these perceptions and broader political dynamics shape the way in which security decision-making occurs. Because it is difficult to examine these kinds of issues at a generic level, we anchored our studies in an analysis of a number of specific 'micro' decision-making events. This was intended to help bring out the complex decision-making dynamics that are often more clearly discernible in the context of an actual crisis or episode where key security decisions are made. To be most useful, these micro events should shed light on the nature of state–societal interaction in the decision-making process.

We identified three broad questions that we felt would help us to generate policy-relevant insights into the factors that shape decision-making and state responsiveness:

- Firstly, what are the main sources of decision-making authority in the societies we are examining? Real power in security decision-making rarely lies where it appears, i.e. as reflected by formal organizational charts or official government pronouncements on security matters. This is all the more so in societies where there has been a decay of state institutions, and non-state actors are heavily involved in justice and security provision.
- Secondly, what are the avenues of influence by which different groups in society exercise their 'demand' for security? SSR is a political agenda that generally requires significant alterations in power relations among different groups in society. Yet SSR assistance policy is often narrowly focused, targeting security agencies within the state without adequately accounting for who will drive the 'demand' for change, particularly if the proposed changes are resisted by the security establishment. Such an approach in effect assumes that political and security elites can reform themselves, in the process downplaying the crucial role that political pressure has to play in bringing about policy change.

- Thirdly, how do external actors impact upon security decision-making? There has been insufficient critical reflection on the ways in which donor interventions both in the security sector and the broader public domain may unwittingly make it more difficult for governments to meet the security needs of their populations. Aid dependency, economic and political conditionalities, and deficit reduction objectives (imposed as part of financial stabilization packages), among others, can all impact negatively on state sovereignty in the security domain and, in particular, governments' ability to respond when the security of their populations is threatened.

The choice of the final question reflected the fact that we wanted this project to focus on conflict-affected countries where there is generally heavy donor involvement.

Lesson: *The study adopted a methodology based on a set of 'micro'-case studies of critical decision-making events. This turned out to be a successful approach to studying the politics of security decision-making and unpacking its various dimensions. However, this approach could be further improved by the development of a more rigorous method for selecting case studies.*

2.3 Organization of the research

The second aim of our research project was to find ways of better linking SSR research, policy and practice so that our research findings would be conveyed in an appropriate and timely manner to those responsible for UK SSR programming. The selection of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda as subjects for this study was in part influenced by the fact that there was a UK-supported SSR initiative in each country and that the resident UK conflict adviser expressed an interest in our research agenda. We also identified a local institutional partner in each country to co-ordinate the micro-case study research and the country studies.

It was the role of the team leaders to put together a team of researchers and to determine which case studies would be appropriate to cover in Phase One of the project. Six case studies were selected in each country (see Annex C). The aim of these micro studies was to provide the empirical data that would feed into the country studies authored by the team leaders in Phase Two of the project. The three country studies in turn were to inform the Phase Three work on policy issues, which was kick-started by an international meeting in Dubai in April 2007 that brought together the research team leaders and a wider group of country experts, UK government policymakers and outside policy analysts.

It was envisaged that there would be both a policy and an academic audience for the research findings. On the policy side, the research model was intended to encourage regular interaction between the researchers and the UK conflict advisers based in each of the three countries. To that extent, the research was intended to feed into both ongoing policy formulation and programming, where relevant, and to inform future programming. The conflict advisers were therefore invited to attend periodic meetings of the country research teams, which were also attended by the London-based CSDG project co-ordinator. ■

Chapter 3
Implementation issues

3.1 Methodology development

3.1.1 Elaborating a robust conceptual framework

The development of a more robust conceptual or theoretical framework early on in the project could have provided better guidance in the choice of case studies and the case study research. We can learn from the example of a different study undertaken by the Social Scientists' Association – the Sri Lankan partner in the present project – several years ago. This was a study focusing on agrarian change in Sri Lanka. The field study was carried out in eight locations; but the choice of these locations was supported by a conceptual framework that captured the principal characteristics of the Sri Lankan agrarian system and hypothesized certain trajectories of agrarian change. The field locations were chosen to test different aspects of these trajectories.[9]

If we translate this experience into the focus of the present project, it is necessary to strengthen our conceptual and theoretical insights into the politics of security decision-making. This would likely mean dwelling much more on the politics of policy-making processes in general, before examining the security sector in particular. Even if the body of knowledge specifically related to the politics of decision-making in the security sector is thin, we can benefit from general literature on the politics of decision-making within states. Strengthening our understanding of this conceptual debate can be of benefit in informing the choice of case studies.

Lesson: *There is currently limited knowledge to draw upon either at the empirical or conceptual level on the politics of security decision-making in developing countries. Some of the studies that have focused on the politics of state formation can be of help in this regard, but to a limited degree. If a conceptual framework were developed on this issue, it would better inform the interpretation of the case study material.*

3.1.2 Ensuring partner ownership of the research

The initial and crucial stages of the design of the project were carried out by CSDG, in consultation with the UK government. A final decision on DFID funding was not made until

9 See Gunasinghe, 'Peasant Agrarian Systems and Structural Transformation in Sri Lanka'.

the basic methodology had been developed and approved. Only then could a final decision be made on project partners. This meant that the country teams, especially the case study authors, only entered into the picture after the central ideas of the research had been formulated. They were all invited to comment on the methodological framework that informed the overall project design, including the case study method, but there was limited opportunity for discussions with the country team members.

This model of project design, which involved a three-country comparative study coordinated from the UK, influenced the sense of ownership of the project within the country teams. For some of the case study authors, completion of the work took the form of finishing a commissioned piece of work rather than implementing a study in which they had a deeper interest. As one of the Sri Lankan authors put it, 'We completed what was asked from us, but did not have an idea of the rest of the process.' In the case of Uganda and Nigeria, the various project meetings and briefings by the country study authors helped to fill this gap. But it was difficult to break through the structural flaws that were built into the research design.

Although there were a number of discussions in each country explaining the entire project, the engagement of the case study authors with the wider objectives of the projects remained weak. More could have been done to rectify this situation through a greater number of consultations between senior researchers and the case study authors, but the issue was about much more than a mere transfer of knowledge concerning the larger project. The fact that basic work around developing the methodology did not involve all of the project participants (24 people, across three countries) meant that it was more difficult to ensure from the outset a sense of ownership among everyone involved.

The alternative is to explore ways and means by which country teams could be involved in the research design process right from the beginning. This could take several forms. For example, the country team or representatives of country teams could be more involved from the initial point of formulating research ideas onwards. It should also be possible to locate some parts of the initial design process within the countries concerned. This would certainly demand a much longer period for project formulation and more resources. However, in order to provide a greater degree of legitimacy in the global South for this type of research, this might be essential. It also can help research to escape the accusation of Northern domination.

Such an approach is also essential for capacity-building in the global South on security sector research. This in turn is an essential element in achieving the ultimate goal of this research, which is sustainable reforms within the security sector. The greater the capacity in the global South for this type of research, the greater is the chance of this region owning the knowledge generated by the research and accepting these ideas. This is essential for the success of a highly politically sensitive reform agenda such as SSR.

The basis for an effective collaboration between donors and the research community must be some form of research compact. Donor SSR programming must be flexible enough to respond to the changes that research findings entail; while researchers who seek to produce policy-relevant research must, for their part, be willing to accept some direction from donors about what issues are relevant, to present research in a form that is accessible to policymakers, and to do so in a timely manner. SSR research will not achieve policy relevance

merely through the greater involvement of local analysts, but through a better synergy between its production and its potential uses.

Lesson: *Policy-relevant research on SSR must, where possible, involve national researchers from the outset in designing the research project. This will enhance the sense of ownership of research projects and strengthen analytical capacity within partner countries. In the long run, both these aspects will contribute towards generating support for SSR. This is essential for the success of SSR programmes.*

Lesson: *For a partnership-based approach to SSR research to work, donor programmes need to be flexible enough to accommodate research findings. In turn, organizations that are provided with the opportunity to influence donor policy and contractually commit themselves to delivering work need to accept that, in doing so, there is an accompanying level of accountability.*

3.1.3 Incorporating policy concerns into the research

From the outset of this project, the aim, was to develop a programme of research on security decision-making that would be policy-*relevant* but not policy-*driven*. There are different perspectives on the question of how policy change can best be promoted within the donor SSR community.

One view is that this can best be achieved through focused policy studies that present specific sets of recommendations to donors about how to provide SSR assistance more effectively. In line with this, one would start out with a specific set of policy questions determined either independently or in consultation with donor partners. By enabling researchers to take into account the needs of policymakers right at the beginning of the research design, this can help to ensure that a study's conclusions and recommendations are more relevant and richer. The risk, however, is that this may reduce the space for critically evaluating some of the basic assumptions of SSR policymakers.

Another approach, which we favoured in this study, reflects a view that policy change is actually driven by broader processes of debate and reflection within the donor community. Influencing mindsets, therefore, requires changes in the policy discourse in the area of SSR that are more likely to come about as the knowledge base on SSR issues is broadened and deepened. This may increase the likelihood that specific policy recommendations on SSR, which remains a very new and sensitive area of engagement for most donors, will be taken on board at a later stage. It may be more difficult, however, to come up with conclusions and policy recommendations that can be presented to donors in easily digestible packets.

The premise of this study was therefore that there is a need for a much more fundamental understanding of the political drivers of security decision-making by external actors. We sought the independence to define our research questions in a way that was not directly influenced by the UK policy concerns of the day. The aim was to liberate ourselves from thinking about security decision-making from the point of view of how we felt it *ought* to work, but rather to seek to understand how decision-making *actually* works in practice, and then ask what this means for donor policy. This task, we felt, would be more effectively achieved if we delayed the serious policy discussions until the latter stages of the project.

The usefulness of research for policymakers can be varied. Research can often add value simply by providing more information and a nuanced understanding of society, rather than specific answers to specific policy questions. This has value in itself, especially in a world where there is a tendency to generalize about historically and culturally varied societies. In this case, comparative research can help to underscore the dangers of formulaic approaches to policy-making that assume that security sectors share similar features and that universal solutions can be applied in different countries or regions.

Comparative analysis can also help policymakers to break out of the dominant Western, normative framework of thinking about how countries should tackle their security challenges. One shortcoming of policy-driven SSR research is that it concentrates too much on Western approaches to security and is subjective in its emphasis on democratic models. Donors need to engage with security institutions as they are, rather than how they believe they ought to be. In the rush to find solutions to problems, the need for basic analysis is often overlooked.

The approach we adopted also reflects the fact that most of our researchers in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda are themselves part of the processes of political change and, to that extent, involved in defining or redefining the terms of the political debates with regard to security in their own countries. This suggests that there is a strong case for donors to invest in a longer-term agenda of fostering national, research-led debates on SSR that are not directly linked to immediate programming concerns.

There are therefore trade-offs in terms of focus within a research project such as this. None of the country research focused directly on UK SSR programming. If it had, this would have involved much closer scrutiny of the programme aims and modalities for delivering UK assistance, as well as the specific institutional actors with which the UK is engaging. Such a focus would have made it easier to come up with specific policy recommendations about how the UK can strengthen its programming, but it would likely have made it more difficult to address more fundamental questions about the political factors that affect decision-making.

Lesson: *There are likely to be trade-offs in terms of focus within a research project that will affect the nature of its conclusions. Close donor involvement in determining research questions can help to ensure that the findings of a research project are directly relevant to policy concerns and result in practical policy recommendations. However, this may limit the scope for a critical evaluation of the assumptions that underpin donor SSR programming. The development of a more independent research agenda will allow for this kind of critical analysis, but may, in turn, make it difficult to translate research findings into practical recommendations that can be used by donors.*

3.2 Conducting the research

3.2.1 Micro-case studies

Human capacity issues

Given that this project was dealing with a relatively new area of research, and one that was particularly sensitive, we anticipated that there would be difficulties in finding researchers with the right background to participate. With only a few exceptions, none of the researchers

that were involved in the project from any of three countries had direct expertise on security decision-making per se. Each was chosen, rather, because their knowledge matched the micro-case studies that were selected for each country study.

In the Sri Lankan case, it was possible to find researchers to complete the case studies without difficulty. This was contrary to the usual belief that the security sector is an area where it is a difficult to find researchers due to its political sensitivity. The Sri Lankan team was a mixture of academics, independent researchers from civil society organizations and a retired civil servant. The ability to successfully mobilize this team reflected the varied links of the Social Scientists' Association with academia, the Sri Lankan bureaucracy and other civil society organizations.

The actual researching of the Sri Lankan case studies did not meet any special difficulties, primarily because the authors had prior experience of the subjects chosen. Two of the members were directly involved in the subjects that they dealt with in another capacity. The former civil servant, who had been secretary to the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence, was directly responsible for the implementation of the security arrangements during the peace process. Another researcher, who analysed the workings of the various commissions that were appointed to inquire into disappearances, was a member of one of these commissions. The researchers' respective backgrounds, which fitted with the topics they worked on, were critical for the timely completion of the Sri Lankan case studies. The participation of a former civil servant that had held a sensitive position in the government reflects the availability of a certain space for this type of work, even in difficult circumstances.

In the cases of Uganda and Nigeria, we did not achieve as close a fit between the expertise of the researchers and the topics they were researching and writing on. This reflected a number of factors, including the general lack of prior research experience on security issues among the case study authors. While each was selected to work on general issues where he/she had a relevant background, the relative lack of experience on researching security issues (with several notable exceptions) meant that it was difficult for the researchers to move beyond a general treatment of the topic and engage with the specific research themes we were examining.

This research challenge was to a certain extent mitigated by support provided to the researchers by their team leaders, but was in other ways exacerbated by the practical challenges of researching sensitive security issues.

Lesson: *The case study work benefitted from the prior experience of the authors on the subjects that were selected for examination. This contributed to the timely conclusion of the studies and a richer and more nuanced analysis. There were a number of cases where authors did not have substantial prior research experience on security issues. While this in some ways slowed the research process, the final outcome was that the pool of security analysts in each of the three countries was expanded, as was capacity to engage in policy debates on security issues. [See Recommendation 11 in Part I on building national research capacity.]*

Security sensitivities

Many of the decision-making issues explored were sensitive because of the prevailing situations in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda at the time that the project was conducted. All three

of these countries were faced by major internal armed conflicts. In this context, any discussion on issues such as human security or human rights is likely to be viewed with suspicion and possibly as an activity against the current regime. This suspicion and opposition can be accentuated if the studies are externally funded.

The case study authors in all three countries found it difficult to find people to be interviewed when conducting their field research. In the case of Uganda, a letter of introduction written by CSDG served to open some doors to the researchers, primarily in Kampala and with government agencies. But in the field, where security concerns are heightened, it was less straightforward to approach security personnel for interviews unless the case study authors had direct contacts that they could draw on.

In some cases, there were also concerns about physical security that influenced how the research was approached. Thus the researcher working on irregular forces in Nigeria's Delta region felt the need to drastically limit his travel and time spent in the field. This was also the case to an extent in northern Uganda and the Karamoja region, where the sheer inhospitableness of the region in terms of travel was also a significant barrier to research.

The sensitivities of the research were perhaps most heightened in Sri Lanka, where there was already suspicion among certain political quarters and within the academic community about externally funded initiatives in the security domain. Over the past few years, there have been regular attacks in the press on the peace lobby and a number of NGOs involved in SSR work due to their links with international actors. As a consequence of this, research on security issues has tended to focus on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or anti-terrorism rather than state security institutions or practice. Minority (non-Sinhalese) researchers in particular would not be able to look at these subjects.

The Sri Lanka research team got around these difficulties, to an extent, by not focusing on contemporary security issues. The case studies selected therefore spanned a period from the late 1970s through 2002–03, when the country's ceasefire agreement was signed. The Sri Lanka experience shows that it is not always necessary to study politically 'hot topics' in order to understand some of the structural features of the security decision-making process. In fact, there may be certain advantages in avoiding hot topics altogether, because field work on these issues is likely to confront serious difficulties, and the information collected might be highly skewed due to ongoing political debates. It might simply be more fruitful to study the underlying structural features of these political and security events from the past.

Lesson: *It is not always necessary to study politically 'hot topics' in order to understand some of the structural features of the security decision-making process. By examining decision-making events from the past, it is possible to overcome some of the sensitivities of research of this nature and come up with policy-relevant findings.*

Data limitations

In researching the case studies, the biggest difficulty faced by all of the researchers was finding published primary data on security decision-making to draw on. This meant that the researchers were more dependent on secondary literature, interviews or focus group discussions in order to generate insights on their topics.

Interviews posed a problem in many cases due to either the sensitivity of the topic – which made people reluctant to talk – or because of the unavailability of key informants. For example, the author of the case study on the passage of the 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act in Sri Lanka found that many of the Tamil informants, including lawyers, who had direct knowledge of the event were reluctant to talk. The author of the study on the government's handling of the July 1983 Sinhalese riots found it difficult to locate some of the people involved, because the event took place more than two decades ago.

In the case of Uganda, the authors of the case studies on the government response to the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency and the militarization of public security in Kampala both required interviews with senior military officials, which were hard to get due to their busy schedules. In the case of the study on the donor influence on security decision-making at the time of the Uganda Defence Review, many of the key donor actors who had insights into this topic were no longer based in the country.

The Nigerian authors faced similar experiences. The study on the government decision to invite the American private security company Military Professional Resources Incorporated to help professionalize the army was seriously hampered by the difficulties faced in getting interviews with key defence officials with knowledge of this event.

A general observation relevant to all three countries is that there is often a discrepancy between information that governments or security agencies categorize as 'secret' or 'confidential' and what is available in the public domain. There is an increasing amount of information available on the World-Wide Web, for instance, which has formerly been restricted to official agencies.

These experiences have implications for planning research on sensitive security topics. For a start, it should be recognized that if the objective is to interview informants with first-hand knowledge of the issues being examined, it may take a significant amount of time to make the appropriate contacts and win their confidence. When subjects from the past are being investigated in order to avoid political sensitivities, the challenge is of a different nature, because it is harder to find people who were associated with the events in question.

In these circumstances, many of the authors relied on secondary material for much of their information. While this helped to overcome the issue of sensitivity, it was difficult to get the detailed and nuanced information that was ideally required for a study of this nature. Another issue that arose when using secondary data was the reliability of using newspaper material. Since newspapers can easily sensationalize some of the issues, this raises a particular problem for research on security studies.

Lesson: *Careful thought must go into planning research on security issues, due both to its sensitivity and data limitations. Because primary, published sources of information on security decision-making are very difficult to get hold of – if they exist at all – researchers must rely much more on interviews and secondary sources of information. This can make it possible to piece together a picture of a decision-making event, but requires adequate time to carry out. Research projects on sensitive security issues may demand a greater focus on primary sources of data, given the lack of published material in this area. Working with primary sources demands more time for making contacts and confidence-building.*

Lesson: *Governments and security agencies are still very reluctant to share information on security issues, although the fact is that much of this information can now be found on the Web. However, this can make it more difficult to establish its accuracy or authenticity. It can therefore be in the interests of governments to provide more information on security issues to the public in order to prevent misunderstandings about security policy.*

Resource and time constraints

The time allocated for the case study work made it something between a consultancy and an academic research project. This made it difficult to explore primary sources and question key informants in sufficient depth. If the case studies could have been concluded purely on the basis of secondary sources, the allocated time would have been sufficient. But as already noted, there was little available documentation of the kinds of issues that were being examined.

The case study methodology adopted also meant that the project ended up having a considerable number of outputs. In the end there were 16 case studies, three country studies and two policy papers. The researching and writing of all of these papers were scheduled to be carried out within a time period of less than one year, although the time line for the project ended up being extended by nine months due to extensive delays in completion of the country studies.

The time constraint was also problematic from another point of view. The project was intended to come up with policy-relevant insights and recommendations that were intended to inform UK policy in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. It was difficult enough, given the information constraints for the researchers, to produce with a detailed picture of how decision-making works in their respective societies. To then develop policy recommendations on the basis of the limited information that they were able to gather was always going to be difficult, all the more so since there was a time constraint.

This meant that the researchers were under pressure vis-à-vis the UK government, which was the end user of this research, while also needing time to carefully consider their findings in view of the need to formulate some clear, policy-relevant conclusions that they would feel comfortable defending.

In the event, very few of the case studies were able to generate the level of detail and nuance about security decision-making that had originally been envisaged (Section 3 in the Methodological Framework (see Annex A) gives a sense of the kinds of questions we wanted the researchers to ask). This project finding is of itself policy-relevant, for it suggests that if it is this difficult for local researchers to explain how decision-making works, then external actors are likely to be much more disadvantaged when it comes to understanding this area. This underscores the need not simply for more and better research, but – perhaps more importantly – for caution when it comes to planning interventions in the security sector.

There is a potential tension, therefore, between the objective of supporting long-term academic research (and building capacity in this domain), on the one hand, and generating policy-relevant research findings, on the other, due to the fact that donors usually work within narrow time frames. Donors need to be aware of this and recognize that the two objectives are not always compatible. Building local research capacity is key to reducing the

reliance on external researchers, but this requires support for long-term research that may not directly benefit donor programming.

Lesson: *Research projects on sensitive security issues may demand a greater focus on primary sources of data, given the lack of published material in this area. Working with primary sources demands more time for making contacts and confidence-building. Where researchers are required to come up with policy-relevant recommendations based on limited evidence, this also places additional pressure on them.*

Lesson: *Within the same research project, it may not be possible simultaneously to conduct longer-term empirical research on sensitive security issues, build capacity among local researchers and influence donor policy. This means that policy-relevant research on security issues must set realistic objectives, particularly in difficult situations of conflict or political instability.*

3.2.2 Country studies

The main aim of the country studies was to provide a comprehensive picture of the factors that affect security decision-making and state responsiveness to public security needs. This involved both background contextual analysis and interpretive work, drawing on the case study findings, which were intended to provide empirical evidence about security decision-making processes. The country study authors were asked to address five broad questions:

- What are the historical and structural factors that have shaped state responsiveness to security needs?
- What are the nature and structure of the formal state security decision-making architecture?
- What do the micro-case studies tell us about how security decision-making works in practice?
- What can one learn from the country's experience with regard to our three propositions?
- What are the key features of security decision-making that external actors need to be aware of before intervening in the security domain?

Interpreting the case study findings

The writing of the country studies posed a number of challenges, not least – in the cases of Nigeria and Uganda – because of the variable quality of the case studies. In each case, only five of the six case studies that were commissioned were completed; while several others were only completed in draft form. There was wide variation in the degree to which authors aligned their case studies with the key propositions being explored in the study. The empirical evidence about decision-making provided by the authors was also, in certain cases, quite limited.

These factors complicated the task of the country study authors. Where empirical information from the case studies was insufficient, this required that the country study authors either conducted additional research or placed greater emphasis on the contextual sections of the report. This in turn made it more difficult to come up with firm evidence-based policy messages directed at the UK government.

This final interpretive task was intended to involve the case study researchers, the relevant UK conflict adviser and the CSDG project manager, who were to be brought together in a workshop format to discuss the study findings. In the event, it was only in Sri Lanka and Uganda that it was possible to present a draft of the country study to the research team. In neither case did this attract extensive feedback from the case study authors. In the case of Nigeria, the country study was delayed by six months, by which time it was too late to solicit the views of case study authors on the interpretations it contained. These experiences suggest that it is important to rethink the format of these workshops in order to facilitate a more in-depth discussion on the interpretation of the case study findings.

Aligning the country studies with one another

Another challenge arose with regard to the comparative dimension of the project. It was proposed in the methodological framework that the three studies explore a common set of propositions and adopt a common structure. The aim was to ensure that several key themes of policy interest identified by CSDG were examined, to facilitate comparison among the findings of the three country studies and to help in generating clear policy messages for the UK government. But in practice, there was a strong view among the lead authors of the country studies that squeezing the different historical and political experiences of the three countries into a common framework would end up masking the nuances and diversity of each country experience. This resulted in the three country studies approaching the key project themes in different ways, highlighting issues that the team leaders felt best reflected national circumstances.

Coming up with robust policy messages

The aim of the project was not to generate specific policy recommendations for the UK government, but rather to identify some key features of the security decision-making environment in the three countries that could inform external policy and programming processes. However, since formulating policy messages is essentially a political act, the burden of responsibility placed on the researchers was even greater. This becomes more acute if researchers who are engaging in this exercise live and work in the specific locations where research is carried out. If the quality of research is questionable, the policy recommendations can be questioned. This can lead to a serious backlash in a politically sensitive subject like the security sector.

There is often a delay in translating research findings into policy recommendations. This study sought to bridge this gap through regular meetings between the researchers and the policy end users in the UK government missions in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. The success of this knowledge transfer exercise was variable, working best in Sri Lanka and not at all in the case of Nigeria, due to the delays around completion of the country study. In Uganda, the DFID office drew upon findings from the country study when it drafted its 2007–10 SSR programme strategy.

But our experiences also illustrated that as useful as it was to bring together the researchers and the research end users, this was not sufficient in and of itself to influence policy. The reason was that pure knowledge does not easily translate into a bureaucratic form that can

feed into country programming for HMG. On the one hand, the material generated by the country studies was rich, adding a new layer to our understanding of security decision-making in all three countries. On the other hand, the knowledge and policy insights that were generated by the study did not appear that significant compared to the efforts that went into the study. This is not to stay that nothing has been added, but rather that the process of influencing UK SSR policy and programming in the three countries, at the very least, takes much longer than we allowed for.

Lesson: *Formulating policy recommendations in a research study on security issues is a potentially difficult and sensitive undertaking. This is particularly the case in countries where analysis of security issues by academics is discouraged or where they have limited prior experience in this type of research. This factor should be borne in mind when donors request that the research they commission should be policy-relevant.*

Lesson: *Different kinds of research may be necessary to influence policy. While longer-term academic research can provide a stronger understanding of the context in which SSR is taking place, it may not provide direct answers to programming challenges.*

3.3 Informing UK country strategies

3.3.1 Liaison with HMG conflict advisers in-country

The main point of contact for the project in HMG's missions overseas was the conflict adviser. In Sri Lanka, the conflict adviser was closely involved from the beginning in discussions around the project methodology and the development of the Sri Lanka research agenda. This close involvement reflected in part the fact that funding for the Sri Lanka portion of the project came directly from the country office and that it had a greater stake in the outcome of the research. The SSR programme in the country was under way and stable.

In the cases of both Uganda and Nigeria, funding came from the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) budget in London. Both country offices agreed to support the research initiative, but it was not derived directly from their SSR programme. In the case of Uganda, the UK's SSR engagement was in flux at the time, which was reflected in the fact that the conflict adviser responsible for SSR was devoting most of his time to other tasks. In Nigeria, there was no SSR programme per se, though it was anticipated that the Security, Justice and Growth programme that was coming to a close would be eventually expanded into an SSR programme.

Both of the conflict advisers were transferred to other countries part way through the project. This, combined with the fact that they had other pressing demands on their time, limited their participation in the research meetings. In the case of Nigeria, there was a long delay in appointing the new regional conflict adviser; in the case of Uganda, the adviser who took over responsibility for the project came in at the tail end of the field research. These factors made it difficult to transfer knowledge in an effective manner and underscore the importance of continuity in advisory staffing, particularly when it comes to research projects such as this.

Lesson: *In order for country offices to draw maximum benefit from SSR research that has been commissioned from local analysts, SSR project advisers should be actively engaged in managing the research. Regular interaction between researchers and the policy end users provides the latter with a sense of the emerging research findings and an opportunity to clarify in which areas policy guidance can be of help.*

3.3.2 The Dubai policy conference

The workshop held in Dubai over a three-day period in April 2007 was useful from various standpoints, despite the fact that the Nigeria team leaders were not present. The Sri Lanka and Uganda draft country studies were presented, and structured feedback was provided to their authors by a discussant, which was useful in assisting them to complete the studies. Several of the case study authors were also invited from all three countries, which gave them a better sense of the purpose of the project and also allowed them to share some of their empirical findings with the broader group.

We also discussed the comparative aspects of the research, reviewed the methodology, and considered the broader implications of our research for UK and donor policy in the three countries. This discussion was facilitated by the participation of the conflict advisers, the DFID SSR adviser from London and several members of the Security Sector Development Advisory Team, which is engaged in all three countries. In addition, a number of outside policy analysts and academics with a background in SSR were invited, who also enriched the debate.

The absence of the Nigeria team leaders from the meeting and the lack of a country study, however, limited the discussion on the comparative and policy issues. This also significantly set back completion of Phase Three of the project. The momentum for finalizing all three of the country studies slowed after the Dubai workshop, reflecting in part the fact that all of the team leaders had other demands on their time.

3.3.3 Securing engagement of policy end users in London

Efforts to generate interest in our research from within DFID, FCO and MOD were not as successful as we hoped. From the outset of the project, representatives of all three departments were members of the Steering Committee that oversaw the early stages of the project, primarily relating to the development of the methodology. Once the field research began, however, the frequency of meetings was reduced and a number of committee members were transferred to new jobs. Efforts were made to invite representatives from the departments to the Dubai meeting, but only the DFID SSR adviser,the ACPP conflict adviser, and two members of the SSDAT were able to attend. As a result of subsequent delays in completing the project, this made it more difficult to convene a meeting in London to which interested HMG parties could be invited to receive an update. ■

Chapter 4
Project management issues

4.1 Assessment of CSDG's role

The impetus for this project came from CSDG, which developed the initial research ideas and secured funding from the UK government. With the project designed in such a way that the institutional partners in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda would carry out the field research, CSDG was placed in the position of essentially managing a research project. This position had several advantages and disadvantages.

On the one hand, it allowed CSDG to play a more strategic role in terms of shaping the research agenda, bringing out the comparative findings and ultimately translating these findings into a format that would be useful for the UK government. From the UK government's perspective, this was also a useful role for CSDG to play, because it was administratively much simpler to subcontract to a UK-based institution rather than dealing with multiple organizations in Africa and Asia. From the standpoint of generating policy-relevant findings, it was also a real advantage to have a UK-based institution located in London in close proximity to DFID, FCO and MOD.

The downside, however, was that CSDG was placed in the position of having to manage the research activities of Southern-based institutions, a situation that may have undermined their ownership of the research activities and findings. To the extent that this was a true research partnership, all parties should have felt that they had a stake in the research design, including determining the division of labour among the different parties. But there was a strong perception among partner institutions that the research was UK-driven, even if in practice they had latitude to determine the approach to take.

Lesson: *In managing policy-relevant research, there is a difficult balance to strike between meeting contractual obligations of the 'customer' and satisfying research partners that they are not simply instruments for carrying out donor policy. This requires that all three partners work closely together in defining the research model that will be adopted.*

4.2 Balancing donor and research partner interests

Our research model had a number of practical limitations. Firstly, a substantial portion of the overall project budget went to cover the salaries of the CSDG staff members, whose daily costs were significantly higher than those of their counterparts in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and

Uganda. Budget constraints did have an impact on the field research, which had implications for the quality of the research, as well as for the time and resources available for the country teams to process and 'package' their findings.

Secondly, the research was largely geared towards influencing UK government policy rather than the policies of the Nigerian, Sri Lankan and Ugandan governments. This may have increased the sensitivity of the research, given that it may have been interpreted in official circles within these countries as external interference in the security domain. It is possible that this reduced the incentive for the researchers to engage in the analysis, since the ultimate end users were to be external actors.

4.3 Motivating research partners

One of the biggest incentives for all of the country teams was the possibility of the separate publication of case studies. Members of all the team also expressed interest in follow-up work. In the case of Sri Lanka, the team members expressed the hope that this study would be the beginning of joint work in the area of security. Both these issues were raised in the course of discussions during the study. No doubt the monetary incentive was also important, but it alone would not have been able to bring the group together and finalize the work in time. Much wider academic interests were important.

Nonetheless, this created a dilemma for CSDG, since the ultimate decision on how the research outputs could be used is to be determined by the UK government, which funded the research. Not surprisingly, it reserved the right to make a final decision on publication only when it had seen the final product. This meant, however, that CSDG was not able to confirm with its project partners until late in the day that the research outputs would be published. The lack of a specific budget for publication meant that once the go-ahead was given by the UK government, CSDG and project partners needed to draw upon their own resources to publish their work.

Lesson: *Academic incentives, such as the possibility of publishing papers and opportunities for pursuing the subject on a long-term basis, can be important motivating factors for researchers. This is particularly the case where financial incentives are limited, making it important that provision for eventual publication of research outputs be made from the outset of projects.* ■

Chapter 5
Conclusions

If we were to do research of this nature again, how would we do things differently? In light of the project findings, the aim of increasing knowledge about how security decision-making works in conflict-affected countries remains in our view a worthwhile objective, and one that should be a priority for donors engaged in SSR. The question, therefore, is how this kind of research can be done in a way that results in policy-relevant findings and guidance. The key here is policy 'relevance', which suggests that research is not driven solely by the search for a quick SSR policy fix, but seeks to provide a framework for a more informed scrutiny of SSR policy, with the aim of strengthening its foundations and relevance to the societies where it is being promoted.

As we have argued in this paper, there is a potential tension between the goal of generating detailed empirical knowledge of security decision-making, which is a long-term academic project, and the donor requirement for information that responds directly to specific policy concerns and is produced within a 'consultancy' time frame. If we add to this the fact that the pool of researchers with expertise on security issues tends to be quite small in most developing countries, then it is evident that strengthening national capacity to conduct research on security issues may be a precondition for obtaining the quality locally generated research that we have argued donors require for effective SSR programming.

The question is whether there are sufficient incentives for donors to invest in building indigenous research capacity, as opposed to simply turning to international consultants to meet their information requirements, which often occurs. The richness of the analysis produced by this project – even though it is variable in quality – does provide a platform for testing the foundations of donor SSR policy and contributing to programming that is better tailored to the specificities of different societies. Exactly how this information can be translated into the practical kinds of analysis and guidance that donors desire requires a collective learning process in which researchers and donors work closely together.

As this project illustrates, there are various ways in which such 'collective learning' can be enhanced. The starting point must be acceptance by both researchers and the donor customers of this research that the explicit aim of the research project is to inform policy and programming, as opposed to simply increasing the bank of knowledge about how security decision-making works. This will provide a basis for constructive partnerships between researchers and their donor customers in defining how policy-relevant research projects are designed, implemented and managed. ■

References

Ball, N. and D. Hendrickson, 2006. *Trends in Security Sector Reform (SSR): Policy, Practice and Research*. Study prepared for the International Development Research Center, Ottawa.

Conflict, Security and Development Group, 2008. 'State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: The Politics of Security Decision-Making – A Comparative Study of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda: HMG SSR Policy Briefing'. Conflict, Security and Development Group; King's College London.

Gunasinghe, N., 1985. 'Peasant Agrarian Systems and Structural Transformation in Sri Lanka'. In *Capital and Peasant Production: Studies in Continuity and Discontinuity of Agrarian Change in Sri Lanka*, ed. Charles Abeysekera. Social Scientists' Association, Colombo.

Hendrickson, Dylan, 2008. 'State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: The Politics of Security Decision-Making: Synthesis of Findings and Implications for UK SSR Policy'. Conflict, Security and Development Group; King's College London.

OECD-DAC (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee), 2007. *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*. Available from http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/if-ssr.

Sutton, R., 1999. 'The Policy Process: An Overview'. Overseas Development Institute Working Paper, London.

Annex A Research outputs

Micro-case studies

Nigeria

- Irregular forces and security in the Niger Delta (Fidelis Allen, University of Port Harcourt)
- O'odua Peoples Congress and vigilante activities in Lagos State (Abubakar Momoh, Lagos State University)
- The political economy of public security decision-making: the case of the Bakassi Boys of Abia State (Nwaorgu Omenihu C., University of Port Harcourt)
- The politics of security decision-making: MPRI case study (Julie G. Sanda, National War College, Abuja)
- The politics of security decision-making: the case of the Hisbah in Kano State (Y. Z. Ya'u, Centre for Information Technology and Development, Kano)

Sri Lanka

- Responsiveness for defence: security decision-making for peace-making (Austin Fernando, Independent researcher)
- Security concerns of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka (Farzana Haniffa, Law and Society Trust, Colombo)
- Sri Lanka Defence Forces: a case study of decision-making processes and the defence reform initiative of 2002 (Sundari Jayasuriya, Aus-Aid)
- The role of disappearance commissions as a mechanism to provide redress for human rights abuses (Amal Jayawardane, University of Colombo)
- The Prevention of Terrorism Act of Sri Lanka: security decisions as a cause of insecurity (S.I. Keethaponcalan, University of Colombo)
- Security policy-making in Sri Lanka: a case study of government actions and non-actions, May–August 1983 (Jagath P. Senaratne, Independent researcher)

Uganda

- Carrot and stick: the oscillating security policy positions on the Northern Conflict in Uganda (Kasaija Phillip Apuuli, Makerere University, and John Ssenkumba, Centre for Basic Research)
- Donor influence on security decision-making in Uganda: insights from the defence budgeting process, 2002-05 (Dylan Hendrickson, CSDG, King's College London)

- The politics of security decision-making in Uganda: an analysis of the dynamics of forceful disarmament in Karamoja (Frank Muhereza, Centre for Basic Research)
- The politics of security decision-making in Uganda: the case of the Arrow Boys militia in Teso Region, eastern Uganda (Abbas Wetaaka Wadala, Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute, Islamic University, Mbale)
- Decision-making in the provision of public security in an urban setting: the case of Operation Wembley and the Violent Crime Crack Unit (VCCU) in Kampala, Uganda (John Ssenkumba, Centre for Basic Research)

Country studies

- Nigeria country study (Okechukwu Ibeanu, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Abubakar Momoh, Lagos State University)
- Sri Lanka country study (Jayadeva Uyangoda, Social Scientists' Association, and Sunil Bastian, International Center for Ethnic Studies)
- Uganda country study (Sabiiti Mutengesa and Dylan Hendrickson, both CSDG, King's College London)

Policy papers

- State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: the Politics of Security Decision-making: *Synthesis of Findings and Implications for UK SSR Policy* (Dylan Hendrickson)
- State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: the Politics of Security Decision-making: *Review of Methodology and Lessons for Future Research* (Sunil Bastian and Dylan Hendrickson)
- State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: the Politics of Security Decision-making – A Comparative Study of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda: *HMG SSR Policy Briefing* (edited by Dylan Hendrickson)

Electronic copies of the country studies and the policy papers can be down-loaded from http://www.ssrnetwork.net/publications/psdm.php

Annex B Methodological framework

1. Introduction

1.1 *Background*

The Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College London has received funding from the UK government to carry out a study on security decision-making processes, focusing on case studies of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. The project will comprise three phases:

1) development of a methodology
2) fieldwork, and
3) policy analysis

The research will be coordinated by CSDG and carried out in partnership with researcher partners in each country, drawing on inputs from other policy experts as required.

1.2 *Project aim*

The overall aim of this project is to gain a better understanding of how states make security decisions, and the factors that determine whether this process is *responsive* to the needs of different groups in society. The specific objectives are:

- To generate new insights into how decision-making works in different political contexts through detailed case studies of Nigeria, Uganda and Sri Lanka.
- To provide a framework for external actors to better understand the specific decision-making dynamics of different countries.
- To contribute to the development of SSR strategies that are more politically informed and sensitive to how public policy processes impact upon security.

1.3 *Expected outputs*

The key outputs of this project will be:

- A methodology to assess security decision-making dynamics.
- A series of micro-case studies of security decision-making events.
- Detailed country studies of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda.
- Brief policy notes to inform the UK assistance programmes in each country.

- A summary report examining the policy implications of the research.
- Concise policy briefings summarizing the project findings.

1.3 *Structure of this report*

This framework paper discusses:

1) our approach to the study of security decision-making processes;
2) the key questions we want to answer;
3) the methods we will use; and
4) our field research plans, including who we will partner with.

2. Concept and approach

A key policy question informs this study: how can the international community support the development of state institutions for security provision that are more responsive to the needs of populations?

This question is of relevance in a broad range of developing countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America, including countries that are currently engaged in armed conflicts, that are seeking to rebuild following wars, or that enjoy relative stability and security. Amidst great diversity, these countries share a number of broad characteristics: a weak state monopoly of violence, low levels of institutionalization, and minimal political community, the outcome of which is tensions within the political system that frequently erupt violently.

State-building processes in these societies have not as a rule resulted in security institutions that conform with the idealized Western model of a public service provider, in terms of the way they either operate or perform. Insecurity remains a defining feature of life for large numbers of people. For many, particularly in rural areas, the state has never been a regular presence in their day-to-day lives or, where it has been, has itself often been a source of insecurity. This has led many people – in some cases the majority – to rely on either their own means or informal security institutions for protection.

In addition, there has been a growing trend in recent years for international actors to play a greater role in the delivery of security in these societies. This has included short-term crisis management initiatives to either 'enforce' or 'keep' the peace, and longer-term assistance activities designed to strengthen the implementation and management of security policy. This has resulted in external actors having a greater say over how countries (particularly those which are aid-dependent) make and implement security policy, in the process intervening in what has traditionally been the most sovereign of policy domains.

For the most part, international assistance programmes in the security domain have been weak in responding to the specifics of these diverse societies. The conventional approach to understanding shortfalls in security provision is to explain this in terms of how the state security apparatus diverges from Western models of security provision. Accordingly, the 'reform' challenge becomes one of finding a way to fill the identified gaps in resources, human capacities and 'political will' which plague the dysfunctional system, in order to bring it closer in line with the external model.

In the process, however, adequate attention is rarely paid to how the trajectory of institutional development within state security institutions in developing countries has been shaped by the prevailing context, and how this context will shape and condition subsequent reform efforts. In particular, where the state security apparatus is organized to serve narrow, elite institutional or political interests rather than to protect the wider public, as is often the case, then a narrow emphasis on re-centering the state in the security game along Western lines may be ineffectual, at best, or exacerbate insecurity, at worst.

In this context, efforts to support the development of more responsive security institutions need to be based on a stronger empirical understanding of three core issues: the sources of decision-making authority in the security domain, the channels by which different social groups and special interests influence decision-making processes, and the ways in which external interventions impact upon them.

This project will seek to yield new, detailed insights into these questions in differing political contexts, through case studies of security decision-making processes in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. Our primary focus is on security decision-making processes and the factors which affect the implementation of security policy, rather than operational issues.

For the purposes of this project, the term *security* is used in a very broad sense to mean the state of affairs in which individuals and social groups are able to exercise their legitimate rights and freedoms in a safe environment. We approach security through a public policy lens rather than as concern of the traditional security agencies and actors alone.

We take this approach because we are interested in what weight those who make decisions about security give to the different military and non-military threats facing citizens, how they choose between coercive and non-coercive policy options available to the state to address these threats, and the extent to which these strategies reflect the reality of non-state security provision. In particular, we are interested in how decisions are influenced by different understandings of security, how different groups in society assert their 'demand' for security, and whose interests are secured in the policy process.

Policy *responsiveness* is shaped by three interrelated factors:

1) the *inclination* of decision-makers to adopt policies that address the needs of specific groups faced with insecurity;
2) the *capability* or institutional capacity to assess these needs effectively, devise appropriate policy responses, and implement this policy; and
3) *accountability*: the factors which determine whether decision-makers are held answerable if security decisions do not meet people's needs.

The notion of responsiveness implies a relationship between those who make security policy, those who are tasked with implementing it (the 'providers' of security), and those who are, or should be, a beneficiary of this service. The nature of the relationship between these actors is key in determining how much leverage different social and political groups have to demand security services and whether policy-makers or security providers can be held accountable for failing to provide them. Analysis of how policy-makers, security pro-

viders (in both the state and non-state domain) and different groups in society interact is therefore central to understanding state policy responsiveness.

Where the relationship between these actors is weak or conflictive, or indeed the state is, by acts of commission or omission, the *cause* of its population's insecurity, then it is also essential to understand how people cope with the security shortfall. While many studies highlight the existence of parallel formal and informal security structures, what is less clear is how these two levels are connected, and what happens to people who fall into the gap between the two. We therefore need to know more about why certain social groups are able to secure protection from the state while others are excluded or prefer to rely on either informal sources of security or their own personal strategies to protect themselves.

In our countries of focus, standard analytical tools based on models of 'good government' will be of limited utility in examining these kinds of issues. In the Western model, the capacity of a political system to respond effectively to the security preferences of its citizens depends on a number of conditions:

1) the centralization of authority and power in those who govern;
2) national consensus around the idea of security and safety as a public good;
3) the ability of citizens to assert their 'demand' for security through the political process;
4) adequate administrative capacity and resources to deliver security services; and
5) a security apparatus which is protected from social and political pressures.

Where the state has a weak monopoly of violence and coercion, low levels of institutionalization, and minimal political community, these conditions rarely hold. The political context and policy environment in which security policy-making occurs may therefore differ significantly from the West and be heavily influenced by indigenous practices. This can include practices that may in some sense be considered 'traditional' and stem from these countries' different trajectories of state-building, or that have emerged in response to the inadequacies of more formal institutional frameworks, often transferred from outside.

We need to reappraise how we think about state policy responsiveness to security needs in light of the different circumstances which prevail in developing countries. There are a number of key characteristics of these states which manifest themselves in a variety of forms which will shape how we examine security decision-making:

The decentralization and dispersion of security provision. There is a tendency to focus analysis of security decision-making processes at the national level, even though the policy chain encompasses a broad range of security actors involved in the formulation, management and implementation of policy at different levels of the state structure. This suggests that security decision-making should be examined on *multiple, interacting levels* which take into account the regional, international, and sub-state actors involved in the production of security. Hitherto, the emphasis has been exclusively on weak or 'fragile' states, leaving out the important factor of how the policies and practices of external actors contribute to the deficiencies in these countries, let alone the interaction between formal state actors and informal providers of

security. The latter is made more important by the growing privatisation and retraditionalization of security. At the regional level, there is a need to consider the intermeshing of domestic insecurities with inter-state antagonisms and the reinforcing overlaps of the insecurities of different weak states inhabiting the same region. In addition, we need to go beyond dichotomous categories of state vs. non-state or state vs. community and gain a more nuanced understanding of social structure and how this is reflected within the state and impacts upon security decision-making processes.

The informalization of policy-making processes. Development policy embodies a strong preference for formal institutions and procedures because they increase the scope for enforcing the accountability of political authority to citizens. This can, however, lead to a tendency to downplay the importance of informal norms and practices and the impact of special interests, patronage, and so on in security decision-making. This is an inherently political process, influenced by a wide range of formal and informal practices that both increase and decrease accountability. Where formal rules and procedures are weak, informal practices are often more influential and explain why security policies are often not implemented in line with stated policy objectives. By the same token, the functioning of these informal institutions may be the key to ensuring that security services are provided in a manner that meets the needs of different social groups.

The influence of external ideas, agendas and interests. SSR assumes a heavy degree of autonomy of security decision-makers in relation to their external partners. Yet decision-making processes are typically influenced by various external agendas which can have mixed effects on the outcome of security policy processes. These agendas include:

1) new normative frameworks such as *human security* which have been heavily promoted by development agencies;
2) the impact of the global War on Terror;
3) aid policy, including conditionalities, in countries which are heavily aid-dependent; and
4) defence relations, particularly where these bind countries into – or encourage – the purchase of military equipment.

We need a better understanding of where external security interests are supportive of national policy processes and in what circumstances they can work at cross-purposes with each other, and with internal agendas.

The exclusionary nature of security decision-making. The democratic model of security decision-making is based on the ability of groups within society to assert their demand for security through the political process. Whether and how this occurs may depend more on the nature of the informal relationships which bind security elites with populations (ethnic, religious, communal, etc.) than the functioning of formal political processes and accountability mechanisms. Furthermore, the reality in many countries is that security decision-making remains the closed preserve of a small number of military and political elites, and that it is a matter

of policy to exclude outside participation in this process. State-making usually involves a process of consolidating power by central authorities, which may run counter to the security interests of certain social groups. Control of the security policy process, more so than other areas of public policy, underpins the exercise of power.

The discontinuity of policy-making processes. The standard linear model of policy-making, which is rational, balanced, and analytical, is characterized by the objective analysis of options and the separation of policy from implementation. There is much evidence to suggest that this model is far from reality, and that policy-making 'is actually rather messy, with outcomes occurring as a result of complicated political, social and institutional processes.'[10] These processes often result in a *narrowing* of policy alternatives considered by decision-makers, rather than a *broadening*. The lack of continuity and predictability in policy process is accentuated in states with lower levels of institutionalization and which are faced with persistent political turmoil. Because there is less likely to be a clear structure in the security decision-making process which is amenable to analysis, it is important to understand how the political and institutional environment, as well as personal preferences, shape decision-making.

These five themes provide a framework for our comparative analysis of security decision-making processes. We set forth three broad propositions about the factors which affect decision-making in the context of states with a weak monopoly over the instruments of coercion, low levels of institutionalization, and minimal political community:

1) Decision-making authority in the security domain is diffuse, forcing central authorities to accommodate competing sources of decision-making authority at different levels of the state structure and outside the state domain in order to implement security policy.
2) Different groups in society exercise their 'demand' for security more through informal relationships (class, kinship, ethnic and other ties) rather than formal political processes and accountability mechanisms, which affects the state's ability to provide security as a public good.
3) The nature of the state's relationship with external actors (including donors and regional and global powers) impacts on the political and policy environment for security decision-making, with consequences for the state's ability to maintain sovereignty over security matters.

Our research findings will help us to reach some broad conclusions about whose interests are secured in the decision-making process, and how, and the specific factors which shape policy responsiveness in different political contexts. This will open the way for an assessment of where entry-points exist to promote more responsive state decision-making, and the complementary approaches that may be required to address the needs of specific groups neglected by the state security system.

10 Sutton, 'The Policy Process: An Overview'.

3. Methodology

3.1 *General principles*

The following questions provide a general framework for the comparative analysis of security decision-making processes. Flexibility in terms of determining the exact focus and approach will be required to ensure that the country studies address those issues which have been particularly influential in the historical evolution of the decision-making culture in each country. In addition, sensitivities around this area of research will determine what is feasible and what is not in each country.

Drawing on this framework, each of the country teams will clarify the methods to be used, including the micro-case studies for each country. The research programme will be summarized in a Research Matrix which will be agreed with CSDG before the fieldwork begins.

The comparative element of the study will be based primarily on the three propositions elaborated above. While the micro-case study analysis will enrich the comparative dimension of this project, case studies should be selected primarily in terms of how they contribute to our understanding of the decision-making culture in each country. A generic question guide has been developed for the micro-case studies which will offer a basis to compare and contrast how decision-making works in different contexts.

3.2 *Guiding questions*

3.2.1 Context for conflict and insecurity

- ***Historical context***
  What are the historical and structural factors which impact upon insecurity? How has the security sector evolved in response to political and security events? What factors explain the degree to which security decision-making is integrated into wider government planning and oversight processes?
- ***Socio-political structure***
  What are the key sources of conflict and insecurity? How is this affected by the country's social and political make-up? To what extent do various social groups accept the authority of the state? What other factors explain the state of security or absence of violent conflict?
- ***Threats and vulnerabilities***
  What are the key military and non-military threats facing the country and population, both internal and external? How are these influenced by levels of human development and other vulnerabilities?

3.2.2 Mapping security arrangements

This section will provide a broad mapping of the spectrum of arrangements which exist for security provision, ranging from the formal state apparatus to the informal.

- ***Formal security apparatus***
  Who are the key state actors involved in security provision? What instruments are available to the state to promote security? To what degree is security provision centralized or decentralized?

- ***Informal security arrangements***
  In the absence of state security provision, what strategies do populations use to secure themselves? By what means do they lobby government or other groups for security services? What kinds of irregular security formations have emerged to fill the security vacuum? What is the nature of their relationship with the communities within which they exist?
- ***Individual coping strategies***
  Which are the key groups which fall into the 'gap' in security provision? What are the political and institutional dilemmas the state faces in providing security to these groups? How are these security provision constraints linked to wider governance challenges facing the state and society?

3.2.3 Security decision-making dynamics

The aim of this section is to explore, by means of micro-case studies, how the institutional machinery for security decision-making works in practice.

- ***Decision-making structures***
  Sources of decision-making authority
  From where do the key security decision-makers derive their legitimacy? How much support does the general populace accord the decision-making mechanism? To what extent is it based on legislative processes? Is it personalized?

  Security policy orientation
  What is the country's security posture, interests and values? How does its geo-strategic context influence security thinking? What external alliances exist? How is the country influenced by its development partners? What are the key security legislation, doctrines and policies? What is the level of national consensus on ends and means of security policy?

  Decision-making structures
  What is the institutional machinery for planning, formulation and implementation of security policy? How do these policy processes function? What is their composition? How integrated are they into government-wide planning and budgeting processes? How decentralized are they? What is their degree of autonomy?
- ***Decision-making processes (questions to inform case studies)***
  Context
  How did the security issue emerge on the decision-making agenda? What was the issue? What was the context?

  Process
  How did the decision-making process evolve? Who was involved in the process? How was the security problem defined? Were different courses of action weighed up? On what basis was the chosen option selected?

  Influencing factors
  Which factors impacted upon the decision which was taken?

  - *Decision-makers' own preferences.* How was the decision affected by the mind-set and values of the decision-maker? How did conceptions of security influence the

process? Did this result in a narrowing or broadening of the discussion of options? What personal, institutional or political interests were at stake in the decision? Are formal structures bypassed? Did the decision-making process conform with an established procedure? If not, in what way was it a departure from this? What was the rationale for the change in approach?

- *Interest groups.* How was the decision affected by different interest groups? Were these groups state- or society-centred? How was their influence exerted? Through formal or informal mechanisms or relationships? At what stage of the process? What was the impact of political bargaining, special interests, patronage, etc.? Did the social obligations of decision-makers affect their conduct? To what degree is the decision-making body penetrated by private interests and influences? How does this affect decision-making?
- *External actors.* How have external factors influenced the decision-making process? In what ways have external and internal agendas been complementary or worked at cross-purposes?

Implementation

Which factors impacted upon how the decision was implemented? How robust, adaptive and responsive are structures for managing security policy? How have institutional, financial and political constraints affected the speed and flexibility of implementation? How do capacity issues affect decision-making? Does the final outcome reflect the decision which was taken?

Outcome

What was the outcome of the decision-making process? Does the security decision reflect enunciated policy aims? Do the stated policy aims reflect the security challenges? Whose interests are secured in the policy process? How responsive was the decision-making machinery to the needs of different social groups affected by the security problem?

3.2.4 Assessment of findings

This section examines each of the three propositions and assesses the degree to which they are validated by the country study.

- Sources of authority in security decision-making
- Channels of influence for 'demanding' security
- External determinants of security policy

3.2.5 Entry-points for enhancing policy responsiveness

In light of current structures, capacities and interests within the security domain, this section identifies entry-points which exist to enhance state responsiveness.

3.3 *Methods*

The research will require a multi-method approach, combining desk-based and primary research. The methodology will be qualitative in nature as the research demands in-depth investigation of complex political processes.

Each country study will be based on six micro-case studies which will help to draw out the contours, nuances and details of decision-making processes. (The criteria for selecting these case studies are discussed below). The research methods will need to be determined by the specificities of each study and in consultation with the lead researcher. In each case, analysis of relevant secondary material should provide background for the event, to be supplemented with data gathered from focus groups, key informant interviews, and workshop discussions.

CSDG's research partners have the requisite knowledge of research methodologies, including experience in participatory methods, and also have access to researchers who are sensitive to and skilled in various research techniques. It is anticipated that the local partners will lead in determining the specific methods and questions which are most appropriate for the study. CSDG will support this process, including the development of a Research Matrix to organize the relevant information for each country study.

The research process will require the convening of three meetings in each of the case study countries. The first will be to brief the research team on the project, to clarify the methodology and assign micro-case studies; the second for researchers to present their preliminary findings for critical discussion, before completing their final papers; the third for the research convenors to feed back to the project participants for comment, a draft of the final consolidated paper.

This workshop approach should be seen as a learning process. It will offer an opportunity to bring together independent policy analysts and decision-makers, and to share views on how decision-making processes work, or might work better. This is a process that could be supportive of incipient SSR processes in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda, but given the obvious sensitivities a decision on whether formally to link the research and policy processes should be carefully considered.

The key to the success of this workshop approach will be our ability to bring together people from the different policy communities and social groups who can enrich our understanding of state-societal dynamics in the decision-making process. This dimension is currently missing or downplayed in the SSR literature as well as more general academic studies on security in developing countries.

3.4 *Micro-case studies: criteria for selection*

The aim of the case studies is to enhance our understanding of the micro-politics of security decision-making in different institutional contexts. The case studies should:

- consist of a distinct decision-making event from within the past five years which has had a significant impact on security provision or the management of security policy;
- bring out the nature of interaction between those who make decisions, those tasked with implementing decisions, and the intended beneficiaries;
- provide a perspective on how decision-making occurs at different levels of the state system and, as relevant, the interaction between formal and informal security institutions;

- shed light on the actions and preferences of individuals who may fall into the 'gap' in security provision and consequently rely primarily on their own protection strategies; and
- provide insights into how external actors or influences have impacted upon decision-making processes and how this has affected the outcome.

Annex C Country research matrices

Research matrix: Nigeria

Institutional partner: Centre for Democracy and Development, Abuja

Lead researchers: Dr Jibrin Ibrahim (Director, CDD), Prof. Okechukwu Ibeanu (University of Nigeria, Nsukka), Dr Gani Yoroms (National War College), and Dr Abubakar Momoh (Lagos State University)

Micro-case study	Author	Point of entry	Key questions	Methodology
1. Deployment of the Nigeria military in Zaki Biam in 2001	Dr Toure Kazah-Toure, Ahmadu Bello University	The killing of 19 soldiers by Tiv militias which precipitated military reprisals by the state	■ What was the historical context for the formation of militia groups in the region? ■ What was the context in which the massacre of government soldiers occurred? ■ Who was responsible for the decision to deploy the material into Zaki Biam and who was consulted? ■ Who were the key security actors involved in the deployment, and how was the security decision implemented? ■ What were the consequences in terms of security for the Tiv community and its relations with the state?	Secondary materials ■ news reports ■ academic material ■ official reports examining the crisis, including by the Commission of Enquiry Key informant interviews ■ Tiv community leaders ■ militia leaders ■ military commanders ■ government officials ■ members of the Commission of Enquiry Focus groups (subject to security considerations) ■ members of the Tiv community affected by the violence ■ militia members
2. The formation of the Bakassi boys (vigilante group) in Abia state in the late 1990s	Dr Omenihu C. Nwaorgu, Dept. of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Port Harcourt	The breakdown in public security in 1999 in Aba which led to a violent backlash against criminals by local traders, and the subsequent formation of the Bakassi boys	■ What was the context in which the Bakassi boys emerged? ■ To whom were they responsible and whose interests did they secure? ■ How did the Bakassi boys evolve over time and why were they legitimized by the local government? ■ What was their relationship with local police forces and the national government?	Secondary sources ■ newspaper reports ■ other academic sources Key informant interviews ■ local community leaders ■ local and national government officials ■ leaders of the Bakassi boys Focus groups ■ members of the Bakassi boys ■ market traders

			■ To what extent did the Bakassi boys effectively meet local security needs?	
3. The impact of external assistance on national reform and policy processes	Dr Julie Sanda, Dept. of Conflict Studies, National War College, Abuja	The government's decision to invite MPRI to support the military's reform programme	■ How was the need for reform identified? Who defined the agenda? ■ How was the decision to invite MPRI arrived at? ■ Was there any convergence between the local demand for reform and external interests? ■ What was the role of the defence establishment and national legislature in this decision? ■ To what extent was the decision externally influenced?	Secondary material ■ news reports ■ policy documents Key informant interviews ■ senior military officers ■ key government officials ■ diplomats ■ civil society leaders and academics ■ members of the legislature ■ politicians
4. The role of the O'odua People's Congress (OPC) in providing security	Dr Abubakar Momoh, Lagos State University		■ What is the context in which the OPC emerged in Lagos State? ■ What were the objectives of the OPC and how were these linked to Yoruba nationalism? ■ How does the OPC function in terms of its internal decision-making? ■ What has been the nature of their interaction with state security forces in light of their dual militia / vigilante role?	Secondary material ■ news reports ■ other academic studies ■ police records Key informant and in-depth interviews ■ state police command ■ community leaders ■ OPC faction leaders Focus groups will be conducted in three locations in Lagos State: Ikorodu, Mushin, and Somolu ■ members of different OPC factions ■ community elders ■ community members
5. The formation of the Hisbah Corps (police) in Kano State following the implementation of Sharia law in northern Nigeria	Y. Z. Ya'u, Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), Kano	The decision by the State House Assembly to establish the Hisbah Board which was empowered to recruit 'justices of peace' to ensure compliance with Sharia law	■ Why did the State Assembly form the Hisbah Board? ■ How was this decision taken, and who influenced it? ■ What was the involvement of the public in this decision? ■ How did the public and specific social groups respond to this decision? ■ To what new security concerns did the decision give rise, and what were the policy responses? ■ What was the impact of the Hisbah Corps on the security of different social groups?	Secondary research ■ news reports ■ government documents Key informant interviews ■ members of the Hisbah Board ■ local police officials ■ court officials ■ religious leaders ■ Hisbah Corps members Focus groups with representatives of interest groups that have challenged the Hisbah Corps

6. The role of irregular security forces in the Niger Delta region with respect to community grievances and conflict between different ethnic groups and the state	Fidelis Allen, Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Port Harcourt	The decision by the leader of the Niger Delta Volunteer Force to declare war on the Federal Government in Sept. 2004	■ Who are the key irregular security actors in the Delta region? ■ Whose interests do they serve and on what is their legitimacy in local communities based? ■ To what extent do these irregular forces meet the security needs of the local populace? ■ How has the role of oil production in the region conditioned the nature of the interaction between the state and irregular security forces? ■ How have the decisions of different actors in the region (state, oil companies, informal armed groups) been conditioned by their interpretations of security?	Secondary material ■ news reports ■ academic material Key informant interviews as well as focus group discussions will be conducted in Rivers and Bayelsa States. ■ oil companies ■ youth associations ■ militants ■ government officials ■ community members ■ traditional rulers In the event that the security situation precludes focus group discussions, questionnaires will be used to solicit information.

Research matrix: Sri Lanka

Institutional partner: Social Scientists' Association (SSA), Colombo

Lead researchers: Prof. Jayadeva Uyangoda (SSA) and Sunil Bastian (International Centre for Ethnic Studies)

Micro-case study	Author	Point of entry	Key questions	Methodology
1. Factors which explain why government decision-making has not been responsive to the security needs and concerns of the Muslim community.	Fara Hanifaa, Law and Society Trust, Colombo	Three key political events where security of the Muslim community was at stake: a) Indo-Lanka Accord (1987) b) CFA (2002) c) Post-tsunami administrative structure (2005)	■ Why security guarantees for the Muslim community were key to an effective peace settlement (despite the fact the community was not party to the conflict) ■ Avenues of influence by which Muslims have sought to influence political processes ■ Why structures of the peace process have not allowed for Muslim security concerns to be taken on board ■ Relationship between the decision-making process and exclusion of the Muslim community	Secondary material ■ text of peace agreements ■ civil society commentary Key informant interviews ■ political leaders active at the time ■ Muslim community leaders ■ officials involved in decision-making Fieldwork (possibly through use of focus groups) ■ people within Muslim community who bore the security consequences
2. How state legislation impacted upon the security of an ethnic community	S. I. Keethaponcalan, Dept. of Political Science, University of Colombo	The decision to pass the 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), how it was reached, and its impact on the security of the Tamil community	■ Why did the Government pass the PTA? ■ What factors explain why avenues for the Tamil community to influence this decision were closed? ■ What does this say about the space within the state for other communities to lobby for their security interests? ■ Implications for the human rights and security of Tamils ■ How Tamils coped in the light of security problems created by the PTA	Secondary sources ■ parliamentary debates (Hansard) ■ press ■ reports from human rights monitors and organizations Key informant interviews ■ those involved in passing the PTA ■ victims of the PTA ■ human rights activists ■ Tamil lawyers
3. The security implications of the government's mishandling of a political crisis	Jagath Seneratne, independent researcher	Government handling of the Sinhalese riots of July 1983 which precipitated Sri Lanka's civil war	■ Government's role in precipitating the riots ■ The political purpose which the riots served ■ How the riots were managed ■ Security consequences for the Tamil community ■ Factors behind the breakdown of the legal infrastructure	Secondary material ■ archive material ■ newspapers Key informant interviews ■ political leaders ■ victims of the riots ■ ex-officials ■ former military officers

4. The ineffectiveness of mechanisms used to seek redress in response to abuses committed during the government response to the JVP insurgency	Prof. Amal Jayawardama, University of Colombo	1996 Commission of Enquiry established to examine government-perpetrated disappearances during the JVP insurgency	■ Factors behind the violent outbreak of JVP nationalism in the late 1980s ■ Establishment of a Commission of Enquiry on disappearances ■ Why this mechanism was ultimately ineffective ■ What this says about the political space for justice ■ What were the implications for justice?	Secondary material ■ reports from the Commission of Enquiry ■ press reports Key informant interviews ■ Commissioners involved in the Enquiry ■ victims who went before the Commission ■ key government officials ■ human rights activists
5. The failure of a defence reform initiative, and the reasons why	Sundari Jayasuriya, Aus-Aid	Factors explaining the decision to establish and subsequently close the Defence Review Committee (DRC)	■ What were the sources of decision-making authority at the time? ■ Analysis of military strategies – and who was driving them (political influence) ■ Limitations in donor understanding of the political climate (including the LTTE's perspective, the security sector, etc.) ■ Politicization of security policy-making	Secondary material ■ reports from the DRC ■ donor reports Key informant interviews ■ Head of the DRC (Dennis Pereira), defence secretary at the time ■ UK officials from both BHC and London ■ King's College personnel involved in supporting the DRC ■ other donors
6. The relationship between the political class and the military	Austin Fernando, former Secretary to the Ministry of Defence	The fractured nature of decision-making which underpinned the signing of the 2002 Cease-Fire Agreement and the subsequent collapse of the De-Escalation Committee in 2003.	■ Context for the signing of the 2002 Cease-Fire Agreement ■ Reasons there was not integrated machinery for government decision-making ■ Why the military was not adequately consulted on the CFA, and why this was of concern to them ■ Factors behind the collapse of the De-Escalation Committee ■ What does this case say about the relationship between the political class and the military?	Secondary material ■ documentation from the peace process ■ sub-committee reports ■ articles written on the subject

Research matrix: Uganda

Institutional partners: Makerere University and Centre for Basic Research (CBR)

Lead researchers: Sabiiti Mutengesa (CSDG), Frank Muhereza (Centre for Basic Research), Prof. Dent Ocaya-Lakidi (Makerere), and Dylan Hendrickson (CSDG)

Micro-case study	Author(s)	Point of entry	Key questions	Methodology
1. Government policy concerning the war in the north of Uganda	Phillip Kasaija, Dept. of Political Science, Makerere University John Ssenkumba, Centre for Basic Research	The GoU's 'carrot and stick' approach to the north of Uganda, focusing in particular in the period following the launch of Operation Iron-Fist in March 2002	■ How does the state choose between available policy instruments to deal with security crises? ■ What purposes did the following policy responses serve: amnesty/peace negotiation, Intl. Criminal Court, movement of populations into 'protected' camps? ■ What were the factors and processes involved and the pressure on the state to adopt or eschew any one option?	Secondary materials ■ news reports ■ academic literature ■ government policy documents Key informant interviews ■ senior government officials ■ military officials ■ local government officials ■ Acholi leaders ■ civil society groups ■ donor actors Focus groups: John Ssenkumba will assist in conducting three focus group discussions in the Gulu area
2. Donor impact on government security policy-making	Dylan Hendrickson, CSDG, King's College London	The May 2003 decision to increase military spending by 30% following completion of the Defence Review	■ What was the context for tensions between donors and government over military spending? ■ How have donors sought to influence levels of military spending? ■ How was the May 2003 decision made? ■ To what extent is the determination of defence spending seen as the prerogative of the C.-in-C. and senior military leadership? ■ How have donor efforts to constrain military spending impacted on security policy?	Secondary material ■ grey literature from the Defence Reform Unit and other donors Key informant interviews ■ Defence Reform Unit ■ MoD/National Sec ■ UPDF ■ Ministry of Finance ■ President's Office ■ President Museveni ■ UK, Dutch, US, and Irish missions in Uganda ■ World Bank, IMF ■ SSDAT ■ DFID, FCO and MOD
3. Changing government approaches to public security in response to changes in the nature of urban crime	John Ssenkumba, Centre for Basic Research, Kampala	The decision in 2003 to establish a special unit headed and manned by military personnel to address escalating organized crime in Kampala	■ The channels through which critical decisions on security policy and public safety are processed ■ The process through which the decision to form the VCCU was reached (whether through or in exclusion of parliament, the National Security Council, cabinet, etc.)	Secondary material ■ court records ■ police records ■ key informant interviews ■ focus groups Key informant interviews ■ senior security officials ■ key government officials ■ civil society groups ■ community leaders

			■ Public perceptions on the conduct and efficacy of the VCCU	
4. Factors behind the emergence of civil militias in Teso region focusing on the role of local communities in shaping key policy decisions	Abbas Wetaaka Wadala, Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute, Islamic University in Uganda, Mbale	Formation of the 'Arrow Boys' militias in response to the expansion of LRA operations in the Teso region in late 2002	■ Popular pressures that led to the decision to constitute militias ■ The channels used by local communities to advance their demands for improved security in the face of stock thefts by raiders from Karamoja, and LRA incursions ■ The interplay of the motivations of central state decision-makers, implementers and beneficiaries	Secondary materials ■ documentation from local councils ■ academic literature In-depth interviews – RDCs, DS officers, local council leaders, MPs, Arrow Boys and Commanders, community leaders, NGOs
5. The role of parliament in providing oversight of government decision-making	Prof. Dent Ocaya-Lakidi, Dept. of Political Science, Makerere University	The war in the north, especially with regard to 'Operation Iron Fist' and the Juba Peace Talks, to highlight the role of parliament in security decision-making.	■ What kind of security issues or challenges confronted parliament? ■ In what kind of decision-making activities did parliament engage? ■ What were the outputs? ■ What impacts, if any are discernable, came out of parliament's outputs? ■ What were the constitutional, political and international contexts within which parliament functioned?	Secondary material ■ records of parliament (Hansard) ■ committee minutes Key informant interviews ■ participants in decision-making ■ non-participant experts (e.g. from academia) ■ parliamentarians ■ Defence Committee
6. The parallel 'state' and pastoral security systems which coexist in Karamoja	Frank Muhereza, Centre for Basic Research, Kampala	Factors behind the process of arming and rearming the Karamajong pastoralists in the face of persisting government 'disarmament' campaigns in the region	■ What is the historical context for tensions between the state and pastoral 'security' strategies in Karamoja? ■ What decisions underlie community livelihood and security strategies? ■ What are the factors driving recent disarmament campaigns and how successful have they been?	Secondary material ■ press reports ■ policy documents ■ academic literature ■ civil society documentation Key informant interviews ■ Karamajong traditional leaders ■ government officials from the Office of the PM ■ military officers involved in disarmament

Annex D Partner institutions

The **Centre for Basic Research** (CBR) is a research and training organization based in Kampala. Established in 1988, CBR is a centre of excellence on sustainable development issues. CBR conducts basic and applied research of social, economic and political significance to Uganda in particular and Africa in general, so as to influence policy, raise consciousness and improve quality of life.

www.cbr-ug.org/

The **Centre for Democracy and Development** (CDD) is an independent, not-for-profit, research, training and advocacy organization based in Abuja, Nigeria. Its primary mission *is to be a catalyst and facilitator for strategic analysis and capacity building for sustainable democracy and development in the West African sub-region*. Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, who managed the Nigeria research, is Director.

www.cddwestafrica.org/

The **Social Scientists' Association** (SSA) is a leading civil society institution in Sri Lanka committed to the production and dissemination of critical knowledge in the areas of political economy, gender, social and political change, conflict and peace processes. The SSA is also engaged in community education and advocacy. SSA publishes *Polity*, a monthly journal on current critical issues concerning Sri Lanka.

www.ssalanka.org/

The **Conflict, Security and Development Group** (CSDG) is a leading international resource for research, analysis, training and expert policy advice on issues at the intersection of security and development. CSDG was established at King's College London in 1999 with the aim of bridging the academic and policy communities. Its core mandate is to deepen understanding about the development challenges confronting societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and to help translate this knowledge into practical agendas for change at local, national, regional and international levels.

www.securityanddevelopment.org/