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THESIS

**CHALLENGES FACING CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE
MILITARY AND THEIR IMPACT ON DEMOCRATIC
CONSOLIDATION: THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE**

by

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March 2021

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THEIR IMPACT ON DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION: THE CASE OF
SIERRA LEONE**

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ABSTRACT

Developing democracies, especially in countries such as Sierra Leone, that have experienced military interventions in politics, face challenges in establishing civilian control over their armed forces. Until the UK-led post-war defense reform of 2002, Sierra Leone's military was politicized and had a history of intervening in politics following the country's independence in 1961. While the government is still consolidating post-reform gains, attendant problems of civilian control are apparent. Using a case study method, this thesis investigates the challenges to civilian control of the military in Sierra Leone. The study tests four hypotheses that relate to military prerogatives, politicization of the military and acceptance of civilian supremacy, engagement in domestic security, and limited civilian defense expertise or interest. The thesis finds that military engagement in domestic security and civilian leadership's limited defense expertise or interest pose potential risks to democratic civilian control of the military. The risks of heightened military prerogatives and politicization are currently low, making them less worrisome. Failing to address these two challenges, however, increases the likelihood for the latter two to become risks as all four factors are found interrelated. The thesis recommends policy action to enhance and strengthen military acceptance of civilian supremacy, civilian defense expertise and interest, institutional control, and resource provision.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFPC	Armed Forces Personnel Center
AMISOM	African Mission in Somalia
APC	All People's Congress
BECE	Basic Education and Certificate Examinations
CDS	Chief of Defense Staff
CISU	Central Intelligence and Security Unit
DC	Defense Council
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DG	Director General
DPOC	Defense Policy and Operations Committee
DWP	Defense White Paper
IMATT	International Military Assistance Training Team
ISAT	International Security and Assistance Team
MACA	Military Aid to Civil Authority
MACC	Military Aid to Civil Community
MACP	Military Aid to Civil Power
MAGD	Military Aid to Government Departments
MDA	ministries, departments, and agencies
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NACOVERC	National COVID-19 Emergency Response Center
NASCIA	National Security and Central Intelligence Act
NERC	National Ebola Response Center
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NSC	National Security Council

ONS	Office of National Security
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLANGO	Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SSD	Special Security Division
TCC	Troops Contributing Country
UNAMID	United Nations Mission in Darfur
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UK	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States
WASCE	West African School Certificate Examinations

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Disclaimer

The views expressed here are entirely mine (the author) and do not represent the official position of the RSLAF, GoSL, or NPS.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my loving wife, Mrs. Ayone Ferema Dumbuya, and my mother, Madam Fatmata Bangura. Their love and support have immensely inspired me to get to this level. May Allah bless them.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Sierra Leone armed forces have been an influential actor in the country's political history since Sierra Leone's independence in 1961.¹ Indeed, the country has a long tradition of military interventions in politics, beginning in 1967 when, during the political struggles between the two existing political parties, the military overthrew the elected civilian government.² This military intervention led to counter-coups two days after and in 1968, and subsequently, the military handed over power to the civilian leadership of the All People's Congress party (APC) in the same year of 1968.³ Similarly, in 1992, a group of military officers led by Captain Valentine Strasser overthrew the one-party rule of the APC and created a military regime called the National Provisional Ruling Council that ruled until 2005.⁴ During that time, and amidst the background of a civil war, another coup occurred in the mid-1990s. This coup was carried out by elements of the then Sierra Leone Army (SLA) led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma in collaboration with rebels of the Revolutionary United Front led by an ex-military corporal—Foday Sankoh—who wanted to replace the APC regime for allegations of poor governance, corruption, national hardship, and ethnic divide.⁵ The civil war continued until 2001, even after a democratic transfer of power in 1996. Since then, Sierra Leone has striven to consolidate its democracy by holding regular democratic elections and endeavoring to build democratic institutions, including civilian control of the military.

¹ University of Central Arkansas, Dept. of Political Science, "Sierra Leone (1961-Present)," accessed March 1, 2020, <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/sub-saharan-africa-region/sierra-leone-1961-present/>.

² Christopher Allen, "Sierra Leone Politics since Independence," *African Affairs* 67, no. 269 (1968): 306.

³ Humphrey J. Fisher, "Elections and Coups in Sierra Leone, 1967," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 7, no. 4 (December 1969): 611–13, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X00018863>.

⁴ University of Central Arkansas, Dept. of Political Science, "Sierra Leone (1961-Present)"; C. Magbaily Fyle, "The Military and Civil Society in Sierra Leone: The 1992 Military Coup d'Etat," *Africa Development / Afrique et Développement* 19, no. 2 (1994): 134.

⁵ Fyle, "The Military and Civil Society in Sierra Leone," 133.

Yet, given Sierra Leone's multiple military interventions in politics, the relationship between the military and the civilian political leadership has been contentious. The relationship started to improve in the early 2000s, when the military started a British-led postwar security sector reform program, which included a military transformation element.⁶ During this period, the reform process resulted in the creation of the Office of National Security that coordinates all security matters in the country; a civilian-led Ministry of Defense; and legislative oversight of the armed forces. The objective of these reforms is to place the armed forces in a democratic framework. Notwithstanding these reforms, democratic civilian control of the military remains weak.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Against this backdrop, this thesis asks: What are the challenges that currently affect civilian control of the armed forces in Sierra Leone? The thesis seeks to identify the current problems of democratic civilian control of the military and determine the implications associated with these challenges in relation to the armed forces' intervention in politics. The objective of this research is to assess the existing civilian control over Sierra Leone's armed forces and identify gaps in civilian control that could prompt the military's involvement into politics. For the purpose of this thesis, civilian control refers to direction and oversight of the armed forces by the executive, legislative, and judiciary.

B. SIGNIFICANCE

The democratic consolidation efforts of Sierra Leone after its eleven-year civil war and the recent past of the military's involvement in disrupting civilian governance makes civilian control of the armed forces crucial, which underscores the importance of this thesis. The study seeks to capture the interest of three groups—Sierra Leone defense policymakers, policymakers and consultants in other African countries, and scholars of civil-military relations. First, it intends to provide policy guidance and a roadmap to Sierra Leone's defense policymakers on how effective civilian control could be achieved, which

⁶ Ashlee Godwin and Cathy Haenlein, "Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone: The UK Assistance Mission in Transition," *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 6 (December 2013): 31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2013.869721>.

is critical to democratic consolidation by keeping the military apolitical and averting any form of military intervention in politics. Given its internal security challenges, Sierra Leone must continue to democratize civil-military relations and ultimately ensure that the military remains subordinated to civilian authority.

Second, the study is useful to African policymakers engaged in similar reforms—particularly those in the West African sub-region, which has been most prone to military coups in the continent.⁷ Military interventions in politics across African countries often stem from an executive dominance that thrives where state institutions are ineffective, patrimonial, and lack autonomy—much of which are legacies of European colonialism.⁸ Many African nations sustain their fragile democracies by devising various strategies to dissuade the military from intervening in politics, which is among the main objectives of civilian control of the armed forces. The study hopes to provide an understanding of the type, approach, and level of civilian control that is required by African nations to ensure the existence of a healthy partnership between the armed forces and their civilian authorities with a view to sustaining their developing democracies. The study also speaks to debates about the significance of the military’s autonomy in state democratic consolidation.

Third, this study contributes to the existing literature of civil-military relations in Africa and beyond. It provides insights into the relationship between the military and the civilian political elites in the region and provokes thoughts about their applicability in the young democracies of other parts of the world.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is limited scholarship on civilian control that particularly relates to Sierra Leone, but the existing rich literature of civil-military relations in general, and on Africa

⁷ Ebere Onwudiwe, “Military Coups in Africa: A Framework for Research,” in *The Military and Politics in Africa: From Intervention to Democratic Control*, Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies (Aldershot, Hants, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 18.

⁸ Michael Bratton, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 62.

in particular, helps to explain some of the key concepts of this study. Civilian control of the armed forces is a crucial endeavor undertaken by most developing democracies in the overall democratic consolidation process, especially those that have experienced past military interventions in politics. This literature reviews analyzes five key themes that could help to provide answers to the main research question of the study. The review begins with the aspect of military professionalism as an enhancer of the acceptance of civilian supremacy by the military. The second, third, and fourth themes explore the challenges posed by high military prerogatives, lack of civilian expertise, and coup-proofing, respectively, on democratic civilian control. Finally, the fifth theme centers on some key debates surrounding institutionalizing democratic civilian control.

1. On Military Professionalism and Its Connection to Civilian Control

There is a body of literature that links political neutrality of the armed forces to democratic civilian control. This group of scholars argues that political neutrality is achieved through maintaining a professional military. In his book, *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel P. Huntington argues that military professionalism is the pathway to civilian control as both aspects reinforce each other in a democracy.⁹ With a focus on the officer corps, he describes military professionalism on the basis of three attributes of a specialized, distinguished vocation in terms of “expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.”¹⁰ He explains that the expertise makes the military a specialized body that is bestowed with state responsibility in the area of violence management.¹¹ Huntington further notes that military professionalization comes through a systematic process of training and education in terms of skills, knowledge, and behavior that compels the uniformed men to adhere to strict professional ethics and norms.¹² He also points out that military professionalism has a direct nexus with an apolitical military, which is the end state of objective civilian

⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 7.

¹⁰ Huntington, 11–16.

¹¹ Huntington, 11–16.

¹² Huntington, 11–18.

control.¹³ He views objective civilian control to be conducive for democratic nations as it ensures clear separation of roles between the civilian elites and the military. This type of control gives clear demarcation and autonomy to the military by enabling it to focus on its area of specialization and maximize professionalism while the civilians refrain from interfering in the affairs of the military.¹⁴ Objective control, according to Huntington, automatically prevents the military from intervening in politics and promotes the military's subordination to civilian authority and control.¹⁵ Richard H. Kohn shares a similar view, as he argues that the military must demonstrate unwavering loyalty to civilian authority, which is crucial to their professional responsibility:

civilian control requires a military establishment dedicated to political neutrality: one that shuns under all circumstances any interference with the constitutional functioning or legitimate process of government, that identifies itself as the embodiment of the people and the nation (and not a particular party, agenda, or ideology), and that counts unhesitating loyalty to lawful authorities and the system of government as crucial aspects of its professionalism.¹⁶

Yet, Kohn contradicts Huntington's view that military autonomy leads to civilian control. He argues that as the military gains autonomy and is barred from politics, the civilian elites equally lose control of the armed forces as each group remains focused on its own affairs, which in turn invites military intervention in politics.¹⁷ Morris Janowitz shares Huntington's concept of professionalism, even if he disagrees that professionalism ensures military autonomy. In his 1971 book *The Professional Soldier*, Janowitz proposes a convergence theory between the military and civilian groups, and a new type of military—the so-called constabulary force—demanded by the changing security environment and society. He posits that socializing and upholding of the existing values of

¹³ Huntington, 82–83.

¹⁴ Huntington, 83.

¹⁵ Huntington, 83.

¹⁶ Richard H. Kohn, "How Democracies Control the Military.(Civil-Military Relations)," *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 4 (1997): 146, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1997.0060>.

¹⁷ Kohn, 143.

society by the professional military helps to enhance civilian control of the armed forces.¹⁸ But, like Kohn, Janowitz also posits that these developments inevitably increase the political role of the military, which in turn limits its autonomy.¹⁹

The advocates of this concept of professionalism have received many criticisms. In his 1996 article “The Civil-Military Problematique,” Peter D. Feaver observes that Huntington’s and Janowitz’s claims about military professionalism remain more theoretical than realistic in today’s circumstances.²⁰ He holds this view because the military’s turning against the civilian authorities may still occur even in democracies where professionalism is relatively high.²¹ Samuel E. Finer in *The Man on The Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* also argues that military professionalism is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for political neutrality, as in the case of Germany and Japan in the 1930s.²² Thus, he notes that a professional military does collide with the civilian authorities.²³ He explains that the “military’s consciousness of themselves as a profession may lead them to see themselves as the servants of the state rather than the government in power.”²⁴ This view implies that the military leadership could regard themselves as powerful and independent and refuse to be subjected to checks, hence disposing them to become a threat to civilian administrations. He argues that the military will stay away from politics and remain under civilian control when the military becomes professional and accepts the principle of civilian supremacy.²⁵ Since the goal of civilian control is the subordination of the military, the need for a civilian-led institution therefore

¹⁸ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press, 1971), 420.

¹⁹ Janowitz, 3.

²⁰ Peter D. Feaver, “The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control,” *Armed Forces & Society* 23, no. 2 (January 1, 1996): 150, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X9602300203>.

²¹ Feaver, 164.

²² S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2002), 25.

²³ Finer, 25.

²⁴ Finer, 25.

²⁵ Finer, 25.

becomes crucial to demonstrating authority over the armed forces.²⁶ This development, in turn, requires a military with a low degree of prerogatives and civilian defense expertise, both of which are the focus of the next themes of this literature.

2. Challenges to Civilian Control: High Military Prerogatives

Several scholars argue that military prerogatives pose a threat to civilian control. In his *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*, Alfred Stepan examines the dangers of military institutional prerogatives, which he describes as the circumstances where the military becomes powerful and politically influential enough to manage its institutional affairs as well as intervene in political decision-making. He explains that such conditions have deleterious effects on civilian control because they give the military a feeling of being indispensable and having a role in state governance.²⁷ Stepan argues that minimizing these prerogatives would pave the path for democratic civilian control.²⁸ Civilians can also exert greater control over the armed forces by reducing military prerogatives and autonomy.²⁹ Narcís Serra agrees and further contends that the gradual reduction of military autonomy enhances democratic civilian control and is vital for democratic consolidation. He cites Felipe Agüero's delineation of two situations when the military can pose challenges to civilian control: when the armed forces control and manipulate political decision-making, and when they make it complicated for the civilians to establish control over them.³⁰ In expressing this view, Serra illustrates seven stages of

²⁶ Harold A. Trinkunas, *Crafting Civilian Control of the Military in Venezuela: A Comparative Perspective* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 5, https://doi.org/10.5149/9780807877036_trinkunas.

²⁷ Alfred C. Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 68, 94–97. Stepan identifies eleven military prerogatives that, once minimized, could enhance democratic civilian control: constitutionally sanctioned role, relationship to the chief executive, coordination of the defense sector, military participation in cabinet, legislature's role in military affairs, role of civil servants and political appointees, intelligence collection roles, policing roles, role in promotions, state enterprise roles, and role in the legal system.

²⁸ Stepan, 93.

²⁹ Narcís Serra, *The Military Transition: Democratic Reform of the Armed Forces* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 47.

³⁰ Serra, 47.

reducing military autonomy to facilitate democratic civilian control.³¹ In sum, scholars equate reducing the military prerogatives after democratic transition to civilian control.

In addition, having clear definitions of the role(s) of the armed forces are also important for civilian control. Paul Shemella suggests countries should be clear on the roles and functions of their military; these roles and missions should be clearly defined and legislated to ensure a fair and balanced utilization that could avert ambiguity and problems of control.³² This clarity and legislation becomes more important where the military is either utilized unilaterally or integrated with other security agencies on the execution of internal security roles, which differs from its traditional role of external defense. Shemella points out that failure to make clear distinctions on the security roles or the circumstances during which security institutions should integrate for internal security leads to “military and political failure”³³ and impacts civilian control. Serra also cautions that “[a]rmies who think they foster permanent values are a real danger to democracy.”³⁴ Similarly, Finer warns that involving the military in too many activities in the country, especially in internal security issues, increases the military’s popularity and brings it closer to politics, which may be detrimental to any stage of democracy.³⁵ This situation may become even more worrisome where the internal security roles that the military should be engaged in are not well-defined in the overall national legal instruments. In sum, the reduction of military prerogatives is crucial to the enhancement of democratic civilian control.

³¹ Serra, 48. Serra’s seven stages of reducing military autonomy and gradual civilian control of the military include military control of political power; guardians of national essences; constraining of government policies, defending organizational and operational autonomy; formal, but partial, acceptance of civilian supremacy, retention of ideological control, and democratic civilian control of the armed forces.

³² Paul Shemella, “The Spectrum of Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces,” in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Scott D. Tollefson, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 122–23.

³³ Shemella, 124.

³⁴ Serra, *The Military Transition*, 58.

³⁵ Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, 75–80.

3. Challenges to Civilian Control: Civilian Interest in Defense Matters and Civilian Defense Expertise

The next theme is civilian expertise, which is another challenge for civilian control. Most civil-military relations literature on civilian expertise emphasizes that civilian elites should have the required knowledge and experience to exercise authority and oversight over the armed forces.

Several scholars argue that democratic civilian control requires civilian-led institutions for the effective control of the armed forces. Kohn argues that commanders-in-chief of the armed forces often depend on the civilian elites who work in civilian-led ministries and departments of defense for the management and control of the military.³⁶ Civilian ministers of defense, according to Kohn, need the support of a well-structured civilian staff with the requisite knowledge and expertise in defense matters whom both the political masters and the military leadership will trust so as to ensure effective civilian control. Referring to the U.S. particular context, Kohn maintains that adequate defense expertise is required to enable the executive branch to carry out its functions and authority as enshrined in the constitution such as commanding the armed forces, declaring war, developing strategy, and administering enlistment, procurement of equipment, and determination of the defense budget.³⁷ In such a system, the professional military will choose to follow professional ethics to only serve as advisers to the civilian authorities and not as advocates in defense decision-making or policy development.³⁸ Friction could arise between the military and the civilians, however, when decisions do not match military missions, principles, resources, and procedures. For this reason, Kohn warns that if the civilian authorities lack the appropriate knowledge and experience to handle military affairs, challenges to civilian control could emerge even when responsibilities are clearly delineated as in stable democracies.³⁹

³⁶ Kohn, "How Democracies Control the Military.(Civil-Military Relations)," 149.

³⁷ Kohn, 150.

³⁸ Kohn, 146.

³⁹ Kohn, 147.

Similarly, Thomas Bruneau emphasizes that, apart from just subordinating the military, there is the need for civilians to be knowledgeable enough in defense matters so as to have the armed forces execute the instructions of the civilians as they are told.⁴⁰ Agreeing with Bruneau, David Pion-Berlin and Rafael Martínez in *Soldiers, Politicians, and Civilians*, contend that the civilians should endeavor to demonstrate authority by knowing how to carry out their defense roles and not relinquish them to the military leadership.⁴¹ Both authors state that the challenge does not only stop with the expertise but the structures to ensure those with the specific defense qualifications, training, and experience are recruited to lead and direct the nation's defense policies.⁴² In this way, the military will develop confidence in its civilian leadership and allow this leadership to come up with policy direction; this ensures military subordination and civilian control. Pion-Berlin comments that in the defense sectors of developing and non-democratic countries, in particular, staff with little or no defense knowledge get hired either on political grounds or with administrative qualifications and gain knowledge on the job through training and defense courses.⁴³ While new in the job with little or no defense knowledge and experience, civilian staff may be more likely to deal only with administrative matters of the defense ministry and shift the more technical aspects of strategy defense development to the military leaders, according to Anthony Cottey, Timothy Edmunds, and Anthony Foster.⁴⁴ This shift of responsibility has serious implications for civilian control as the potential exists for the military to increase its interests.

Cottey et al. further agree with authors who see the need for civilian expertise and note that civilian elites need to be fully knowledgeable on defense policies that are relevant

⁴⁰ Thomas C. Bruneau, "Civil-Military Relations in Latin America: The Hedgehog and the Fox Revisited," *Revista Fuerzas Armadas y Sociedad* 19, no. 1 (2005): 112–13, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/43105>.

⁴¹ David Pion-Berlin, *Soldiers, Politicians, and Civilians: Reforming Civil-Military Relations in Democratic Latin America* (Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press, 2017), 169.

⁴² Pion-Berlin, 223.

⁴³ Pion-Berlin, 223–24.

⁴⁴ Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds, and Anthony Forster, "The Second Generation Problematic: Rethinking Democracy and Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 29, no. 1 (2002): 41, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X0202900103>.

to the state, with a clear understanding of the available resources and the feasibility of their implementation.⁴⁵ The authors maintain that in addition to the establishment of defense ministries, having a suitably qualified civilian staff to carry out detailed security analysis vis-a-vis the required force structure, budget in relation to military missions, and realistic assessments of the available resources versus the defense policies remains crucial.⁴⁶ Kori Schake and Jim Mattis in *Warriors and Citizens* concur with this view and explain some challenges associated with lack of expertise. They argue that civilian political leaders with limited defense expertise and experience are unlikely to develop good strategies that could aid the military to conduct successful operations.⁴⁷ They explain that inexperienced civilians may not be able to determine and are sometimes not willing to provide what the military needs to become victorious in battles; they may also be unable to comprehend the military's virtues especially when those virtues conflict with civilian interests and values.⁴⁸ Such a situation has the potential to instigate friction between the civilians and the military leadership, which could subvert civilian control, especially where democracy has not firmly taken root.

Nevertheless, several scholars note that notwithstanding their level of expertise in defense, civilians are the ultimate defense decision makers. In democracies, as Schake and Mattis assert, there is an acceptance that the decision to go to war rests with the political leaders who are liable to make mistakes; the business of the military is to execute the civilians' orders,⁴⁹ which means the need for contestation should not arise whether the decision favors the military or not. In *Who Guards The Guardians and How?*, Thomas C. Bruneau and Richard B. Goetze Jr. contend that civilian expertise is also needed for

⁴⁵ Cottey, Edmunds, and Forster, 41.

⁴⁶ Cottey, Edmunds, and Forster, 42.

⁴⁷ Kori N. Schake and James N. Mattis, *Warriors & Citizens: American Views of Our Military*, Hoover Institution Press Publication No. 667 (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 2016), 3.

⁴⁸ Schake and Mattis, 3–4.

⁴⁹ Schake and Mattis, 4.

ensuring appropriate defense acquisitions.⁵⁰ If the civilian authorities should be able to exercise their authority in terms of defense spending and determining defense policies related to military operations, they should be able to establish institutions that define “key elements of the domestic political system and the armed forces.”⁵¹ These institutions could lay out defined roles and responsibilities whose processes may limit the excesses of the uniformed men and women while also legitimizing the authority of the civilians over the armed forces.

Similarly, scholars argue that expertise is not enough to secure democratic civilian control of the armed forces. These academics posit that lack of interest in defense matters by civilians can also hinder democratic civilian control. For example, Pion-Berlin views that civilian politicians in Latin American countries are disincentivized in acquiring defense knowledge because of the levels of subordination already achieved over the armed forces as well as the fact that those countries do not face eminent external threats.⁵² He further asserts, in response to Bruneau’s emphasis on civilian defense expertise as a necessity for civilian control, that, aside from Latin American countries facing few foreign threats, civilian politicians in those countries lack interest in defense education because it adds no political gain in terms of votes.⁵³ In like manner, Bruneau agrees with Pion-Berlin and adds that this lack of interest by civilians results in little prioritization of defense investment.⁵⁴ It is therefore revealing that this interest deficit adds to the problem of civilian defense expertise. Thus, Serra advances reasons for civilians’ lack of interest in defense matters to include uncertainty in post, few defense benefits, and absence of

⁵⁰ Thomas C. Bruneau and Richard B. Goetze Jr., “Ministries Of Defense and Democratic Control,” in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Scott D. Tollefson, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 87-88.

⁵¹ Bruneau and Goetze Jr., 88.

⁵² David S. Pion - Berlin, “Political Management of the Military in Latin America.(Latin American Defense Affairs),” *Military Review* 85, no. 1 (2005): 19.

⁵³ David Pion-Berlin, “The Defense Wisdom Deficit in Latin America: A Reply to Thomas C. Bruneau,” *Revista Fuerzas Armadas y Sociedad*, 51, accessed February 23, 2021, https://www.academia.edu/2867810/The_Defense_Wisdom_Deficit_in_Latin_America_A_Reply_to_Thomas_C_Bruneau.

⁵⁴ Thomas C. Bruneau, “Civilians and the Military in Latin America: The Absence of Incentives,” *Latin American Politics and Society* 55, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 157, <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2013.00216.x>.

political will by the leaders.⁵⁵ To this end, Pion-Berlin and Harold Trinkunas reiterate the point that civilians' interest is diverted from defense by other more important and sometimes less expensive non-defense matters.⁵⁶ They view that the costs involved in developing strategic defense policies are sometimes relatively higher, especially when the military does not pose any threat to the civilian administration.

4. Challenges to Civilian Control: Coup-Proofing

Several academic works examine how coup-proofing poses challenges to civilian control.⁵⁷ Many authors including George Clay Kieh and Pita Ogaba Agbese, and Aurel Croissant, agree that government leaders who suspect high risks of coups adopt coup-proofing measures as a strategy to limit the ability of the military to seize power. According to these authors, such measures may be helpful in protecting regimes but can render the military ineffective or increase rivalry as a result of counterbalancing among troops, both of which could pose challenges to civilian control. According to Croissant, effective coup-proofing could avert military coups, but when not effective, it could actually increase risks and can be disastrous to the regime.⁵⁸

Some scholars highlight the role of defense pacts in coup-proofing. For example, in *Military and Politics in Africa*, Kieh and Agbese mention that African civilian leaders use defense pacts, which are bilateral agreements for the intervention of foreign militaries when required, to politically and constitutionally control their local militaries.⁵⁹ In

⁵⁵ Serra, *The Military Transition*, 33.

⁵⁶ David Pion-Berlin and Harold Trinkunas, "Attention Deficits: Why Politicians Ignore Defense Policy in Latin America (Falta De Atención: ¿Por Qué Los Políticos Ignoran Las Políticas de Defensa En América Latina?)," *Latin American Research Review* 42, no. 3 (2007): 77, <https://doi.org/10.1353/lar.2007.0031>.

⁵⁷ Coup-proofing relates to the strategies coup-prone countries take to mitigate the risks of coups.

⁵⁸ Aurel Croissant, "Coups and Post-Coup Politics in South-East Asia and the Pacific: Conceptual and Comparative Perspectives," *Australian Journal of International Affairs: Post-Coup Societies and Processes of Redemocratization in Southeast Asia and the Pacific* 67, no. 3 (2013): 270, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2013.788121>.

⁵⁹ George Klay Kieh and Pita Ogaba Agbese, "Introduction: The Military Albatross and Politics in Africa," in *The Military and Politics in Africa: From Intervention to Democratic Control*, ed. George Klay Kieh and Pita Ogaba Agbese, Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies (Aldershot, Hants, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 180.

highlighting some of the advantages of this strategy for developing countries, Kieh and Agbese argue that defense pacts help institute constitutionality and legitimize the relationship of the executive, legislative, and military.⁶⁰ This strategy could be counterproductive, however, if there are no established institutional arrangements or if external guarantors (foreign militaries) deal with a local militia instead of the modern army.⁶¹ Moreover, most African leaders may only be concerned about the protection of their regimes and not worried about putting institutions in place. Though Kieh and Agbese affirm that some defense pacts, such as state-state, state-liberation movements, and state-mercenary agreements, have been effective in protecting some governments from coups, mutinies, and mini-wars, they also contend that others have failed to restrict the military from intervening in politics, thereby resulting in the fall of some regimes or leading to loss of constitutional control.⁶²

Other scholars, including Kieh and Agbese, and Sudduth, posit that political leaders adopt various coup-proofing methods that include the creation of different but parallel forces to the military, segregation of the military, meddling with appointments in line with their (politicians') interests, and the formation of presidential guards composed of personnel from an ethnic or regional background associated with the regime in power.⁶³ Thus, once a leader coup-proofs him/herself with a particular group of forces, these strategies may contribute to division among the military, which could result in rivalry between military services or units. This rivalry poses challenges for the democratic civilian control of the armed forces as a single entity as one unit will aim to serve the president rather than the state, potentially making that entity political.

⁶⁰ Kieh and Agbese, 177.

⁶¹ Kieh and Agbese, 177.

⁶² Kieh and Agbese, 177–80.

⁶³ Jun Koga Sudduth, "Coups Risk, Coup-Proofing and Leader Survival," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343316676885>.

5. On Achieving Democratic Civilian Control through Institutionalization

There is a corpus of literature that discusses the relevance of institutionalization in the enhancement of democratic civilian control. According to Harold Trinkunas in *Crafting Civilian Control of the Military in Venezuela*, institutionalization relates to the establishment of a set of rules, such as the development of successful strategies into institutions, that provide more authority to the civilian politicians to control the armed forces.⁶⁴ He describes institutionalized civilian control in two forms: containment and oversight.⁶⁵ In the former, institutions grant autonomy to the military with civilians having less involvement in military affairs; while in the latter, which he argues is crucial to democratic control, politicians determine policies and direct the activities of the armed forces through an institutionalized defense bureaucracy.⁶⁶ In the same vein, Bruneau and Matei provide a comprehensive framework for democratic civilian control of the armed forces, which involves three sets of mechanisms: “institutional control, oversight, and professional norms.”⁶⁷ They make this argument on the consideration of effectiveness and efficiency.

Several authors submit to the important role of defense bureaucracies in the strengthening of civilian authority over the armed forces. First, executive branch institutions can promote democratic civilian control through rules and procedures associated with the ministries of defense and national security councils. Bruneau and Goetze highlight that a ministry of defense can control the military through the establishment of effective and efficient defense strategies that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of both the civilian elected authorities and the military leadership while ensuring the authority of the civilians.⁶⁸ Therefore, once such civilian authority is

⁶⁴ Trinkunas, *Crafting Civilian Control of the Military in Venezuela*, 4.

⁶⁵ Trinkunas, 5–6.

⁶⁶ Trinkunas, 6.

⁶⁷ Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana (CRIS) Matei, “Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations,” *Democratization* 15, no. 5 (December 2008): 916, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340802362505>.

⁶⁸ Bruneau and Goetze, “Ministries Of Defense and Democratic Control,” 71–76.

achieved, democratic civilian control could be assured and may help to prevent the armed forces from intervening in politics. Serra agrees with Bruneau and Goetze and cites the relevance of creating a single ministry to handle defense matters.⁶⁹ Bruneau, Florina Cristiana Matei, and Sak Sakoda note that the role of the National Security Council (NSC)—also in the executive branch—in promoting civilian control is to provide professional information and advice to the executive on national strategic defense matters for informed decision making as well as to serve as a bridge between the legislature and the executive.⁷⁰

Other scholars highlight the important role of the legislative branch in civilian control. Pion-Berlin and Martínez mention that in a democracy where separation of powers prevails, the legislature serves as the checks and balances over the executive to counter excesses such as misuse of the military for political advantage; it also limits the potential for military prerogatives, and guides the jurisdiction of the military, which falls within the constitution.⁷¹ Reducing the powers of the executive over the military may not only avert arbitrary use, but also deter discontent from political opponents as well as promote the society's wider trust in the military. The consideration of using the military for the right purpose compels lawmakers to be clear in capturing defense matters both in the constitution and the associated national and institutional legal frameworks. As observed by Pion-Berlin and Martínez, the legal frameworks developed by parliament help to regulate the activities of the military, define its chain of authority, and establish the manner and purpose for utilizing the armed forces.⁷² They caution, however, that the success of these legal instruments in limiting the misuse of the military depends on how much the rule of law is respected and upheld. Jeanne Giraldo and Cristiana Matei both agree with this view and further note that legislative control over the military is carried out through oversight committees that provide guidance and policy direction on defense budgets, the economy,

⁶⁹ Serra, *The Military Transition*, 118.

⁷⁰ Thomas C. Bruneau, Florina Cristiana Matei, and Sak Sakoda, "National Security Councils: Their Potential Functions in Democratic Civil-Military Relations," *Defense & Security Analysis* 25, no. 3 (2009): 157–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751790903201406>.

⁷¹ Pion-Berlin, *Soldiers, Politicians, and Civilians*, 125.

⁷² Pion-Berlin, 125.

and the education of the military, thereby establishing a balance in control of the armed forces between the executive and the legislative branches in a democracy.⁷³

Similarly, some scholars emphasize the importance of judicial control over the armed forces as another key mechanism to sustainable civilian control. In democratic civilian control, Serra states that military justice is integrated in the judiciary as a unitary system that complements the other branches of government (executive and legislative) in the control of the military.⁷⁴ In the same vein, Bruneau and Matei point out that the defense laws are interpreted by the judiciary and enshrined in the national constitutions; these laws help to thwart the military's legacy of predominance, as the authors cited was the case of Argentina during its democratic transition in the early 1980s to 1990s.⁷⁵ These legal instruments define the roles, responsibilities, do's and don'ts of the armed forces, the limitations of the executive, and the authority for civilian control over the military. Matei and Halladay share similar thoughts in their unpublished study—*The Control-Effectiveness Framework of Civil-Military Relations*—in which they acknowledge the oversight function of the judiciary with the national legal instruments helping to shape the ideals of institutions and the development of policies.⁷⁶

Finally, other scholars argue that when formal oversight mechanisms fail, other oversight mechanisms outside of government such as the civil society and the media help boost civilian control of the armed forces. Feaver suggests the media as another important control agent of the armed forces as it brings to the attention of the civilian authorities any wrong-doings or excesses of the military during peacetime, but cautions about the media's

⁷³ Florina Cristiana Matei, "A New Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2013), 30, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203105276>; Jeanne Giraldo Kinney, "Legislatures and National Defense: Global Comparisons," in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Bruneau, Thomas C. and Scott D. Tollefson, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 41–42.

⁷⁴ Serra, *The Military Transition*, 45.

⁷⁵ Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei, "Asserting Civilian Control, Argentina," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C Bruneau and Cristiana F. Matei, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 153, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203105276>.

⁷⁶ Florina Cristiana Matei and Carolyn Halladay, *The Control-Effectiveness Framework of Civil-Military Relations* (unpublished manuscript, read July 22, 2021).

role in war time because of the associated consequences.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Kohn adds that for countries to realize effective civilian control, the media—which reflects public opinion—and the civilian society should be able to encourage opposition to military action that is contrary to the national interest through established institutions such as the judiciary.⁷⁸ In his thesis on the role of civil society in shaping democratic civil-military relations in Nepal, Bhuwan Purna Satyal mentions that civil society pressure acts in some ways to reverse coups or bring military coupists to the negotiating table.⁷⁹ This is an important factor that could limit the unconstitutional actions of the armed forces.

6. Potential Explanations and Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and conditions prevalent in Sierra Leone, I propose four key hypotheses that relate to 1) military prerogatives; 2) military roles and missions; 3) the political context and partial acceptance of civilian supremacy; and 4) lack of civilian defense expertise or interest. The hypotheses serve as potential explanations for Sierra Leone’s weaknesses in democratic civilian control. The thesis does not consider coup-proofing as a potential hypothesis because the current arrangement of the presidential guard system has an established process of vetting individuals selected, who are drawn from all three branches of the services which suggests coup-proofing is not likely to be a major challenge to civilian control in Sierra Leone at present.

First, I hypothesize that continued military prerogatives—especially the military’s control and coordination of aspects of the defense sector, and the military’s role in promotions—remain high. This high level of discretion helps to maintain military autonomy and, in turn, weakens democratic civilian control.

Second, I posit that the increased involvement of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces in many domestic security roles and missions, which differ from external

⁷⁷ Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 82–83.

⁷⁸ Kohn, “How Democracies Control the Military.(Civil-Military Relations),” 147.

⁷⁹ Bhuwan Purna Satyal, “The Role of Civil Society in Shaping Democratic Civil-Military Relations during Political Transition in Nepal” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), 30, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/4525/>.

defense roles and are not clearly legislated in the national legal instruments, will lead to weak civilian control. This result could occur because the involvement of the military in internal security roles, particularly in policing functions in the country, could make the military more popular and autonomous and give it a feeling of being powerful and indispensable in the state's governance. This situation arises, for example, where the police lack the capacity and trust to effectively handle internal security matters. In such circumstances, with the military engaged in policing or other internal roles, the military's political influence will increase and enable it to manipulate political decisions in its favor or interest. This high political influence and power will make it difficult for the civilians to assert their authority and control over the armed forces.

The third hypothesis is that the politicization of the military by Sierra Leone politicians results in the partial acceptance of civilian supremacy by the armed forces, which leads to weak civilian control. The partial acceptance of civilian supremacy could result when politicians use the military to try to protect their regimes and, in return, grant the military favors. Politicization of the military can be especially problematic where the military's professionalism is just gaining ground. This situation will pose a challenge to civilian control because of the low legitimacy of the regime, and the military could use this weakness to contest political decisions not in its favor or intervene in politics when the regime in power is not in its interest. These dynamics threaten civilian control because of the increased incentives for the military to intervene in politics.

The fourth hypothesis is that the lack of civilian interest or expertise in defense matters leads to weak civilian control in Sierra Leone. Lack of civilian defense expertise and interest hinders policymakers' ability to conduct oversight (for example, ask the right questions) or to develop strategic and defense policies. This result occurs in every democracy, but is more challenging in emerging or consolidating democracies where other democratic institutions are weak or not established. The military will be more willing to execute civilian strategic directions when they are clear and based on expertise. In the absence of this civilian expertise, the military can take over the task of strategic policy

development, thereby increasing the military's power and influence and weakening civilian authority.⁸⁰

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis uses a single case study and process tracing methods to investigate the research question.⁸¹ The focus of the study is on Sierra Leone, but results could be generalized to some African countries with similar conditions. Sierra Leone is a notable case study because of the country's history of military interventions in politics, the role the last military regime played in the country's democratization process, and the influence the military still has in the state's governance. Sierra Leone also resembles other new democracies in Africa in that elections have become more competitive and there have been four successful electoral turnovers of power between the two main political parties in the country.

The study focuses on four key aspects of Sierra Leone's civil-military relations. First, the study investigates the military's prerogatives that are connected to its relationship with the chief executive, defense coordination, and its role in promotions, and determine their impact on democratic civilian control. To investigate military prerogatives, I look at decision-making processes around key defense and security issues. I assess the extent to which military leaders and civilians influence these decisions.

Second, the thesis examines the new roles and missions of the military in relation to its involvement in domestic security. To assess this hypothesis, I examine the military's degree of involvement in the conduct of policing and other internal roles and their implications for the behavior of the military as it relates to civilian control.

Third, the thesis assesses the implications of civilian leaders politicizing the military to gain advantage over their opponents. The study examines the informal

⁸⁰ Kohn, "How Democracies Control the Military.(Civil-Military Relations)," 151–52.

⁸¹ Michele A. Lobo et al., "Single-Case Design, Analysis, and Quality Assessment for Intervention Research," *Journal of Neurologic Physical Therapy : JNPT* 41, no. 3 (July 2017): 187–97, <https://doi.org/10.1097/NPT.000000000000187>. Single Case Study: This method allows the assessment of causal relationships between interventions and outcomes such as independent and dependent variables, using internal validity and external validity to generalize the results.

relationship between civilian politicians and the military to identify whether there are any special favors given to a set of military personnel and any political manipulations in military promotions, appointments, deployments, and recruitment. Furthermore, the study determines the impacts of these manipulations on the control of the armed forces.

Fourth, the thesis analyzes the problems posed by the limited civilian defense expertise at the Sierra Leone defense ministry (MOD) and assesses the impact of such conditions, if any, on control of the Sierra Leone armed forces. The study examines the qualification requirements for employment as civilian staff at the Sierra Leone MOD, the development procedures of strategic defense policies and their implementation, the role of the legislature and judiciary in serving as checks and balances for the executive's use of the military, and the national legal instruments that provide the civilian authority over the armed forces. The study analyzes the findings and determines their impact on prospects for democratic civilian control.

This thesis utilizes information mainly from scholarly books, journals, and academic articles as well as national documents such as the country's constitution and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) Act. The constitution and the RSLAF Act help to present the legal instruments related to the armed forces in Sierra Leone. Additionally, relevant media publications provide information on the military's involvement in the conduct of domestic security roles.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis consists of four chapters. The introductory chapter has provided a brief historical background of the military's intervention in politics, established the research question on the challenges to civilian control of the military and its significance, reviewed the existing literature, and outlined hypotheses. Chapter II covers the country's civil-military relations development process from 1996 to present. The chapter also outlines the military's external defense roles and contemporary domestic security roles and missions in line with their lawfulness. It also features the various roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government and their relationship with the defense bureaucracy. Chapter III analyzes the empirical evidence of the challenges facing civilian control of the military

from 1996 to the present, after the return of democracy, and evaluates their implications for the consolidation of democracy in Sierra Leone. The third chapter also investigates the evidence for each hypothesis. Finally, Chapter IV concludes the thesis, summarizing the findings of the study and making feasible recommendations that may be of significance to Sierra Leone's defense policymakers as well as serve as examples for other African countries.

II. THE DYNAMICS OF CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS IN SIERRA LEONE (1996–2020)

Like many West African countries, between the periods of decolonization in 1961 and the third wave of democratization in the 1990s, Sierra Leone’s civil-military relations were characterized by high military politicization resulting in several military coups and counter coups.⁸² In other words, the uniformed men who were charged with protecting their citizens became a threat to both the state of Sierra Leone and the people.⁸³ The armed forces at that time saw themselves as an arbitrator in the political affairs of the state, especially as the 1978 constitution and the Military Forces Act of 1961 designated the military as the “guardian of the constitution and the guarantor of national independence and territorial integrity.”⁸⁴ Nevertheless, despite attempts by civilians to prevent a full takeover of government by co-opting the military, the armed forces remained a threat to the civilian administrations from 1967 until 1996, when democracy was ushered in by the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) military regime that had taken over power in 1992.⁸⁵ The subsequent subsections elaborate on the NPRC regime.

This chapter focuses on the relationship between the civilian politicians and the military to better understand patterns of civil-military relations in Sierra Leone since its democratic transition in 1996 to the present. The chapter starts with a brief reflection on the postcolonial era before democratization, and then proceeds to examine the 2002 democratic institutional reformation of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, civilian-led institutions, and the main branches of government. The chapter further explores the non-traditional roles and missions of the military in comparison to its traditional

⁸² Thomas S. Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of African Soldiers in Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 59.

⁸³ Thomas C. Bruneau, “Introduction,” in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau, and Scott D. Tollefson, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 3.

⁸⁴ Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone*, 77–78; Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, “Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1978,” SierraLii, sec. 175, accessed November 6, 2020, <https://sierralii.org/sl/legislation/act/1978/12>.

⁸⁵ Fyle, “The Military and Civil Society in Sierra Leone,” 139.

defense functions, and the relationship of the main branches of government and the military in terms of democratic civilian oversight. Finally, the chapter examines the role of civil society and the media in ensuring democratic civilian control of the armed forces in the country.

A. THE SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES AND POLITICS PRIOR TO DEMOCRATIZATION (1967–1996)

Following the attainment of independence in 1961, Sierra Leone inherited a traditional colonial force—small in size and capacity—limited mostly to regimental duties and defense of political regimes.⁸⁶ Since the early period of post-independence, the civilian rulers used the military leadership to protect their regimes and intimidate political opponents, which increased military involvement in politics and ultimately undermined the armed forces' professionalism.⁸⁷

The first major political action of the military occurred in the midst of the stalemate of the 1967 election, when, on March 21, the force commander Brigadier David Lansana took over government following a standoff between the two main contesting political parties—the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC). The military takeover prevented the APC, which was declared winner of the elections, from taking office.⁸⁸ This intervention marked the first military coup in Sierra Leone and the beginning of the Sierra Leone armed forces' praetorianism. The coup leader, a southerner, was linked to the SLPP, which had its stronghold in the south; hence, some observers viewed his action as partisan.⁸⁹ This observation was evidenced by the gathering of SLPP supporters in the coup leader's house, which Thomas Cox mentions as “prima facie evidence.”⁹⁰ Therefore, the 1967 military coup revealed the underlying ethnicization,

⁸⁶ Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone*; Mac Dixon-Fyle, “Reflections on the Role of the Military in Civilian Politics: The Case of Sierra Leone,” *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 35, no. 2 (1989): 213, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.1989.tb00017.x>.

⁸⁷ Dixon-Fyle, 213–14. The military personnel mostly received training from the United Kingdom.

⁸⁸ Allen, “Sierra Leone Politics since Independence,” 323.

⁸⁹ Allen, 324.

⁹⁰ Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone*, 119.

regionalism, and loyalty of the military leadership to the ruling party, and hence, set the stage for subsequent coups in the country.⁹¹

Two counter-coups followed Lansana's 1967 military intervention. The first took place just two days later, on March 23, 1967, led by Majors Blake and Jumu, and Lieutenant Colonel Juxon-Smith, who formed the National Reformation Council military regime. These military coupists were earlier supporters of General Lansana and shared his objectives of the earlier coup, but overthrew him because they disliked the then SLPP leader, Prime Minister Albert Margai, to whom they suspected Lansana would hand over power.⁹² In 1968, barely a year later, the second counter-coup was executed by enlisted soldiers who were led by two warrant officers believed to hail from the north.⁹³ Immediately, the coupists handed over government to the earlier declared winner of the 1967 elections—the APC—marking a return to civilian administration with Siaka Stevens as the Prime Minister.⁹⁴ He ruled from 1968 to 1985. Hence, the involvement of the military in determining which political party was in governance of the state indicates the military's high level of politicization at the time.

The seventeen years of the Stevens administration were marked by increased military politicization and a personalistic authoritarian rule, with the country evolving to a republican and presidential system of governance in 1971, and later in 1978, turning into a one-party state.⁹⁵ Mindful of the military's threat of staging coups, the Stevens administration adopted a policy to neutralize this threat by increasing the number of its regional northern officers, and purging suspected opposing and disloyal southerners.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, this strategy, which was meant to establish control of the armed forces and protect the regime, failed to work for the administration as two other coup attempts and an

⁹¹ Dixon-Fyle, "Reflections on the Role of the Military in Civilian Politics," 213.

⁹² Allen, "Sierra Leone Politics since Independence," 324.

⁹³ Allen, 328.

⁹⁴ Allen, 329.

⁹⁵ C. Magbaily Fyle, "The Military and Civil Society in Sierra Leone: The 1992 Military Coup d'Etat," *Africa Development / Afrique et Développement* 19, no. 2 (1994): 128.

⁹⁶ Allen, "Sierra Leone Politics since Independence," 214; Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone*, 206.

attempted presidential assassination occurred in the mid-1970s.⁹⁷ Some of the soldiers and civilians involved in the coup attempts were prosecuted and those found guilty executed by the Stevens administration to send a stern warning to others.⁹⁸ The civilians involved were allegedly dissident members of the United Democratic Party—the third registered party in Sierra Leone at the time—and opposed to Stevens’ policies and governance.

In devising further methods of control and mitigation of the threat of the military, Stevens introduced what Mac Dixon-Fyle calls “dyarchy”—a measure of having limited incorporation of the military leadership into the political system in order to simultaneously address the interests of both the civilian authorities and the military.⁹⁹ Thus, the force commander, Brigadier General Joseph Momoh, who was a northerner and shared the same ethnicity with the president, was appointed as a member of parliament alongside his police counterpart; Momoh was given a ministerial post in 1974.¹⁰⁰ In addition to this dyarchy approach, the Stevens administration adopted a coup-proofing strategy with the signing of a defense pact with neighboring Guinea, and also established an Internal Security Unit, which was later dubbed the Special Security Division (SSD), a paramilitary force to protect the regime and key government offices. The SSD, which has now been transformed into the Operational Security Division under the Sierra Leone Police, was highly privileged and even equaled the regular army in terms of utilization by government; this was much to the annoyance of the Sierra Leone military.¹⁰¹

By 1985, high levels of corruption within the Stevens administration and increased inflation seriously degraded the country’s economy, leading to soaring unemployment and high cost of living.¹⁰² This increased corruption had a direct nexus with the heightened

⁹⁷ Dixon-Fyle, “Reflections on the Role of the Military in Civilian Politics,” 212–14.

⁹⁸ Dixon-Fyle, 214; Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone*, 210–16.

⁹⁹ Dixon-Fyle, “Reflections on the Role of the Military in Civilian Politics,” 212.

¹⁰⁰ Fyle, “The Military and Civil Society in Sierra Leone,” 1994, 129.

¹⁰¹ Dixon-Fyle, “Reflections on the Role of the Military in Civilian Politics,” 214.

¹⁰² Dixon-Fyle, 214.

inflation in the country.¹⁰³ Under this situation, President Stevens retired in 1985, and appointed the force commander—General Joseph Momoh—to succeed him; this appointment was approved through a national referendum with Momoh as the only candidate.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the military-turned civilian president inherited an administration that was confronted not only with a battered national economy and a frustrated populace, but also weak, ill-equipped, and politically divided armed forces. The military's weakness and low level of professionalism were manifested in its poor handling of the civil war, which was launched by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in March 1991.¹⁰⁵ The war ravaged the country to a great extent.¹⁰⁶ The general populace and the military blamed President Momoh for his inability to repel the RUF rebels. In April 1992, the country saw yet another successful military coup staged by junior military officers from the war front, who overthrew the Momoh administration and formed the National Provisional Ruling Council military regime.¹⁰⁷ After five years of military rule, the NPRC handed over power to Tejan Kabba, who won the 1996 presidential elections, bringing a dawn to democracy in the country.¹⁰⁸ With this democratic change, Sierra Leone hoped for national stability and democratic control of its military.

In sum, from the period of Sierra Leone gaining its sovereignty in 1961 to the mid-1990s, the relationship between the Sierra Leone armed forces and the politicians was at times contentious as politicians battled to keep the armed forces from intervening in politics, and prevent them from overthrowing their governments. Civilians used various strategies to exert control over the armed forces, including ethno-regional stacking, co-

¹⁰³ Corruption increased in the country as officials of the Stevens administration, as well as favored senior military officers, embezzled state funds and were not held accountable. This seriously impacted cost of living in the country as the country's currency depreciated in terms of value.

¹⁰⁴ Dixon-Fyle, "Reflections on the Role of the Military in Civilian Politics," 216.

¹⁰⁵ Fyle, "The Military and Civil Society in Sierra Leone," 135–36.

¹⁰⁶ The eleven-year civil war was launched by rebels of the Revolutionary United Front led by retired corporal Foday Sankoh, with the aim of unseating the APC regime which the RUF accused of corruption, nepotism, bad governance, and as being responsible for the further economic decline and political divide in the country.

¹⁰⁷ Fyle, "The Military and Civil Society in Sierra Leone," 136.

¹⁰⁸ Fyle, 139.

optation, and coup-proofing. Nonetheless, the military continued to pose a threat to the regime up through the mid-1990s. The lack of civilian-led institutions, like a MOD led by civilians and a framework of oversight of the military by main branches of government other than the executive, such as the legislature and judiciary, laid the foundation for future weaknesses in civilian control of the armed forces.

B. DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

After 1998, when the Kabbah administration returned to power following its overthrow by a coalition of some RUF and military elements in 1997 and its subsequent exile in neighboring Guinea, the attention of the administration turned to reforming the security sector and particularly the military and the police. This reform emerged as a result of the military's continued threat to the civilian administration and its poor performance in the country's eleven-year civil war. This section describes the key reforms and transformation processes in the security sector after the end of the country's eleven-year civil war in 2002, with a focus on reforming the military after the civil war while reestablishing national stability and ensuring democratic governance.

Post-war consolidation of state governance and efforts to establish civilian authority guided the signing of a ten-year peacebuilding memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2002 between the Kabbah administration and the government of the United Kingdom.¹⁰⁹ The strategic goal of the MOU was to help build a trustworthy relationship between the government of Sierra Leone and the post-war fragmented Sierra Leone military, while establishing a democratic system of governance. Thus, the government initiated a security sector reform program in 2002 aimed at restructuring and transforming the military under the framework of democratic civilian control, which is a replica of the British dual civil-military partnership, while at the same time reshaping the other security

¹⁰⁹ Christopher von Dyck, "DDR And SSR in Sierra Leone," in *DDR and SSR in War-to-Peace Transition*, vol. 14 (London: Ubiquity Press, 2016), 31, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv6zdb87.5>. Note: The UK's commitment to Sierra Leone is tied to the latter having been a colony of Great Britain.

agencies such as the police and the civilian intelligence cell.¹¹⁰ This defense reform was premised on the consideration that a professional and accountable military is a precursor to the broader advancement of democratic institutions.¹¹¹

The reform included two key parts: military transformation and overhauling of civilian-led institutions. Each reform component is discussed in turn in the next sections.

1. Restructuring and Transforming the Military

The first part of the defense reform included restructuring and retraining the armed forces with the integration of the ex-combatants of the warring factions of the eleven-year civil war. The integration of the ex-fighters, who met the set criteria, into the reform was part of the United Nations peacekeeping force-led disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program (DDR) in the country. This DDR program was among the activities implemented by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to end the war, and bring peace and stability in the country.¹¹² Thus, the defense reform paved the way for the professionalization of the military and establishment of structures for democratic civilian control.

Professionalizing the Sierra Leone armed forces was tied to a five-year framework that began in 1999 with a refresher training run by the British-led International Military Assistant Training Team (IMATT). It mentored the RSLAF on leadership roles, and taught them to adopt an attitude of refraining from politics and focusing on the institution's primary mandate of external defense, with the police having primacy on internal security.¹¹³ This transformation followed the UK's military model in terms of the British military's relationship with its politicians. These professionalization efforts led to the establishment of a military college—Horton Academy—where command and staff training was taught to improve the knowledge base of the military. Part of the reform process was

¹¹⁰ Adrian Horn, Funmi Olonisakin, and Gordon Peake, "United Kingdom-Led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," *Civil Wars* 8, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 119, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698240600877247>.

¹¹¹ Horn, Olonisakin, and Peake, 109.

¹¹² Horn, Olonisakin, and Peake, 112.

¹¹³ Godwin and Haenlein, "Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," 32.

also ensuring a manageable force size in terms of both quality and resources. The military was downsized from its postwar size of 15,000 to its current strength of a little less than 9,000; and its name changed to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) while other aspects of infrastructure and military equipment were addressed.¹¹⁴ In further professionalizing the military, the reform effort also addressed areas of military recruitment and transparency.

In the area of recruitment, a set of standards was established by the IMATT based on educational qualification, fitness, ethical norms, and good conduct, and required that candidates be Sierra Leonean nationals. These criteria were set to remove the influence of ethno-regionalism, which was viewed as a key driver of the military's involvement in politics. With regard to the educational qualification, potential candidates were required to have at least three credits in the Basic Education and Certificate Examinations (BECE), and those opting to become officers were required to have at least five credits in areas including Mathematics and English at the West African School Certificate Examinations (WASCE). These recruitment standards and training processes are still in place and followed today.

The reform has improved the level of the military's standard of training and transparency within the institution. During the restructuring, trainings for officer candidates and other ranks were changed to last six to twelve months during which professional skills and ethics were developed; this training process has remained to date. At present, on completion of training, personnel are assigned to their respective service arms—army, navy, and air force—based on the trainers' determination, individual interests, and/or qualification, especially for those with trade, technical expertise, and university degrees. The ethics and specialization of the personnel develop over time during a period of one or two months of follow-on training received at the service arm to which the individuals get assigned after initial training. Today, the Sierra Leone military upholds and follows these standards of recruitment and training.

¹¹⁴ Godwin and Haenlein, 32.

Additionally, on top of the improved recruitment standards and increased training levels introduced by the reform, there has been increased transparency in the activities of the military, including promotions, recruitment, and financial accountability, through the creation of a defense website (www.mod.sl) and defense news magazine.¹¹⁵ Some military issues including the mentioned areas are now published for public consumption; for example, the current 2020 recruitment was advertised and the progress of that process regularly published on the website. Also, there has been improvement in meeting some of the material needs of the RSLAF such as housing, conditions of living and salary structure, and deployment. Some structures for the management and administration of the military, such as the civilian-led MOD (which is elaborated on in the subsequent section), and the Armed Forces Personnel Center (AFPC), which is responsible for the career management of personnel in the RSLAF, have been established through the reform process.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, the reform redefined RSLAF's roles and missions—to include non-traditional tasks—in addition to its traditional external defense roles. Section 165 (1) of the country's 1991 constitution spells out the traditional function of the armed forces: to “protect and secure the country, preserve its safety and territorial integrity, and take part in its development; it is responsible for protecting the people's achievement and the constitution.”¹¹⁷ Thus, the main external defense roles and missions of the RSLAF focus on territorial defense, which aim at protecting the state from foreign aggression and contributing to regional and international peace and stability through peace support operations. These external defense tasks focus on securing the borders between Sierra Leone and its immediate neighbors—Liberia and Guinea—in the three domains of land, sea, and air. Today, in addition to these external defense functions, however, the reform program has led to the RSLAF performing domestic security tasks in support of the Sierra Leone Police. Some of these tasks include participating in response to disaster and

¹¹⁵ Osman Gbla, “Security Sector Reform under International Tutelage in Sierra Leone,” *International Peacekeeping* 13, no. 1 (March 2006): 90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310500424843>.

¹¹⁶ Gbla, 84.

¹¹⁷ Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, “The Constitution of Sierra Leone,” SierraLii, January 1, 1991, <https://sierralii.org/sl/legislation/act/1991/6-0>.

pandemics, quelling civil riots and street violence, fighting organized crime, securing elections and transporting election materials, providing prison security, enforcing maritime law at sea, and ensuring the security of very important state functions such as the opening of parliament and presidential inaugurations. The military also participates in the country's nationwide monthly cleaning exercise, and helps coordinate and ensure that the citizens comply. These new roles and missions are broadly framed in the policy document called Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA), and enshrined in the country's 2002 National Security and Central Intelligence Act (NASCIA 2002) and the 2003 defense white paper.¹¹⁸ The NASCIA and Defense White Paper inform Sierra Leoneans on the contemporary roles of the military in addition to its external defense role.¹¹⁹

This MACA policy defines the non-traditional roles of the military and all those operations that require close cooperation and collaboration with civilian entities for civil protection. The policy is further subdivided into military aid to civil power (MACP), military aid to government departments (MAGD), and military aid to civil community (MACC). Nonetheless, the engagement of the military in any of these functions must be requested and authorized by the Office of National Security, which is responsible to the president.

In sum, the restructuring and transformation portion of the reform helped to improve the operational effectiveness of the armed forces. This professional enhancement is demonstrated in the military's participation in regional peace support operations and its successes in the performance of state security tasks. The RSLAF peacekeeping troops received praise for their performance in the joint UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2009 and the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2009.¹²⁰ Also, in

¹¹⁸ Republic of Sierra Leone, "National Security and Central Intelligence Act, 2002 [No. 10 of 2002] | Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute," SierraLii, SierraLii, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://sierralii.org/sl/legislation/act/2002/10>; Global Security, "Sierra Leone - Military Doctrine," Global Security, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/africa/sl-doctrine.htm>.

¹¹⁹ NaSCIA 2002, enacted as part of the 2002 SSR, informs the establishment of the National Security Council and provides the core framework for civil protection. The 2003 Defense White Paper charted the new path for a restructured RSLAF in postwar democratic Sierra Leone, incorporating both external and internal security roles.

¹²⁰ Godwin and Haenlein, "Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," 33.

2014, the RSLAF was instrumental in the fight against the Ebola epidemic, and continues to play a significant role in the current fight against the corona virus (COVID 19) pandemic.¹²¹ Furthermore, the newly restructured RSLAF was hailed by many observers for professionally complementing the police in successfully securing three successive national elections (2007, 2012, and 2018), two of which it covered when the large UN peacekeeping force left the country in 2005, and ensured the smooth transfer of power in all three elections.¹²² Though there were a few allegations of some military meddling, and isolated violence in the 2018 elections in the social media, local tabloids, and some international media like the *New York Times*, these allegations were not substantial enough to erode the general achievement of the armed forces in ensuring the successful conduct of the elections.¹²³

On the other hand, the five-year RSLAF reform and transformation process (1999–2004) was too rushed to be fully effective. Military reforms require some considerable time to take effect, as emphasized by Bruneau and Matei, and especially in the circumstances of Sierra Leone’s military.¹²⁴ This rushed reform effort in Sierra Leone can be linked to the government’s endeavors then to quickly unify the fragmented national force and establish stability for the furtherance of democratic governance after the war.¹²⁵ This urgent fix could be the reason for the government’s action to integrate the UN-led DDR program in the defense reform process as part of the postwar peace settlement and stabilization efforts.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Fred Barbash et al., “Sierra Leone Declares State of Emergency in Ebola Crisis,” *Washington Post*, July 31, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/07/31/sierra-leone-declares-state-of-emergency-in-ebola-crisis/>.

¹²² Godwin and Haenlein, “Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone,” 33.

¹²³ Jaime Yaya Barry, “Sierra Leone’s Opposition Leader Is Sworn In as President,” *New York Times*, April 4, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/world/africa/sierra-leone-president.html>.

¹²⁴ Bruneau and Matei, “Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations,” 913.

¹²⁵ Von Dyck, “DDR And SSR in Sierra Leone,” 33.

¹²⁶ Serra, *The Military Transition*, 63.

2. Reformation of Civilian-Led Institutions

The second part of the reform program involved the establishment and structural modification of the civilian-led institutions to foster democratic civilian control. The process included the transformation of a previously military-led and dominated defense ministry to a civilian-led institution that now oversees the newly restructured RSLAF, the development of a national defense policy, and the establishment of a National Security Council.¹²⁷ The reform also established a civilian-led intelligence and national policy coordinating body—the office of national security—which is now responsible for coordinating all security matters in the country with the informed decision of the president.¹²⁸ The new MOD, now headed by a civilian minister and his deputy, operates in a joint partnership between the civilian authorities and the senior military leadership. Within the framework of democratic governance, the MOD civilian leadership is responsible for defense acquisition and procurement, management and accounting of finances, administration, and policy direction of all defense matters.¹²⁹

Currently, the professional sector of the civilian administration is headed by a Director General (DG) whose position is equivalent to a permanent secretary, and is equal to the Chief of Defense Staff of the armed forces (head of the armed forces). The civilian administration comprises two broad directorates including Finance and Administration, and Policy and Procurement. Each of these directorates is headed by a deputy secretary who serves as direct assistant to the DG. Many of the civilian staff at MOD are recruited through the government's public service commission and are periodically rotated within the respective ministries, departments, and agencies (MDA) in the country. This employment process implies that many of these civilian staff members are political appointees, while the few career employees are recruited not necessarily with defense qualifications and expertise, but rather administrative credentials. This process has serious

¹²⁷ Gbla, "Security Sector Reform under International Tutelage in Sierra Leone," 88; Horn, Olonisakin, and Peake, "United Kingdom-Led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," 119.

¹²⁸ Gbla, "Security Sector Reform under International Tutelage in Sierra Leone," 82.

¹²⁹ Gbla, 84.

implications for the expertise and knowledge to carry out strategic defense roles such as defense acquisition and procurement, structuring the military, and policy direction.

Since the civilian-military partnership is yet a new concept at MOD, the IMATT, now transformed into the International Security and Assistance Team (ISAT) and still led by the British, continues to play a mentoring role to both the military and civilian staff in order to enhance its knowledge and expertise. Moreover, ISAT conducts short term training and education to strengthen the skills and confidence of the MOD staff to carry out their functions in the ministry. The training and education of civilian staff remains a continuing process because of the periodic rotation and the arrival of new staff from other MDAs who replace prior staff. Thus, newly assigned or employed staff will always require training to adjust to their new defense jobs at MOD. In fact, to continue its mentoring and supervising role, the ISAT maintains a UK–MOD employee who serves as civilian adviser to the defense ministry. Thus, the continued UK advisory role indicates the shallow level of civilian defense expertise at MOD, which could be responsible for the delay on the part of the civilian defense leadership to develop the national security strategy from which the RSLAF could have framed its military strategy. Hence, the new civilian-led MOD has a critical role in influencing civilian control of the armed forces.

The MOD serves as the bridge between the executive branch of government and the armed forces. This connection is enhanced through the Defense Council (DC), which was established by the country's 1991 constitution and is chaired by the president.¹³⁰ The DC comprises the president (commander-in-chief of the armed forces), the vice president, the ministers of defense and internal affairs, the MOD permanent secretary, the chief of defense staff (CDS), the chiefs of the three service arms, and two other persons appointed by the president.¹³¹ According to section 169 of the 1991 constitution, the “DC advises the president on all major matters of policy relating to defense and strategy including the role of the armed forces, military budgeting and finance, administration, and promotion of

¹³⁰ Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, “The Constitution of Sierra Leone,” sec. 169.

¹³¹ Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, “The Constitution of Sierra Leone.”

officers above the rank of lieutenant or its equivalent.”¹³² It is further empowered in section 169 (3), with the consent of the president and commander-in-chief, to make regulations related to the control and tasking of the armed forces, conditions of service, command and appointments, and the delegation of authority to try military offenders. With the president being the chairman of the DC, the recommendations of this body usually align with his interests and are sanctioned by him.

As a republican state, Sierra Leone’s constitution provides enormous powers of control of the armed forces to the president, who is the head of the executive and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Equally, the other branches of government, including the parliament and judiciary, have considerable constitutional oversight powers but contesting decisions of the commander-in-chief over issues of the military is rarely visible or practical. The executive dominates control of the armed forces in terms of operational tasking and general administration. With regard to the parliament, it is responsible for the laws of Sierra Leone and any related legal instrument. It has constitutional powers for parliamentary oversight functions over the military and the general security sector, but practically—those that are related to finance—resource allocation and expenditures, remain more visible even after the limited capacity building by the reform.¹³³

In enhancing the parliament’s oversight role over the military, the reform program provided some capacity-building with the refurbishment of the parliament building and revitalization of the national security and defense committees.¹³⁴ Today, the defense budget is approved by parliament, and its expenditures, including procurements and general utilization, are monitored by the defense committee through regular periodic auditing. Though the civilian leadership is responsible for the financial accounting to parliament, the CDS or his military leaders can be called for questioning if required, unlike prior to the reform. As a present norm, the defense committee does periodic checks on

¹³² Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute.

¹³³ Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, sec 93.

¹³⁴ Gbla, “Security Sector Reform under International Tutelage in Sierra Leone,” 88.

defense expenditures and utilization of allocated money and material resources. This financial monitoring has increased accountability in the MOD. Furthermore, military promotions and appointments of very senior officers in the ranks of brigadier and above or its equivalent are ratified and approved by parliament upon receipt from the military through the executive chain. Nevertheless, promotions or appointments are rarely rejected by parliament, and the procedure is routinely observed. On the other hand, regular scrutiny of defense finances and expenditures remains visible and is made public as it is for all other government departments.

Similarly, the oversight role of the judiciary over the armed forces is limited only to ensuring the RSLAF abides by the constitution and rules of the land, and conforms to international regulations, treaties, and norms signed and ratified by the country.¹³⁵ The judiciary is responsible for interpreting the country's laws and the administration of justice in the country. Like the legislature, the reform program was only able to refurbish the main court, and accomplished some training for judges and magistrates in order to enhance effective delivery of justice in the country.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, revision of the national legislation to clearly include judicial democratic control of the armed forces has yet to be achieved. The military, however, is subject to both the military system of justice and the national judicial system, with the latter being supreme depending on the type of offense committed (civil or criminal). Military personnel who commit a criminal offense outside the realm of the RSLAF or are sued by a civilian in a civil matter can be tried in the civilian courts, and if found guilty will serve the punishment like any other civilian. On the other hand, civilians are not tried in military courts or tribunals. When there is a mix of civilians and military in the commission of, for example, treasonable offenses, which are among the most serious offenses in the country, civilians are separated and prosecuted in the High Courts of Sierra Leone, while the military personnel are subjected to court martial.

The RSLAF justice system, which conforms to the country's constitution, is guided by the Defense Act of 1961, as amended. It mainly focuses on military discipline,

¹³⁵ Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, "The Constitution of Sierra Leone," sec 120.

¹³⁶ Gbla, "Security Sector Reform under International Tutelage in Sierra Leone," 88.

professional conduct, and other related offenses. For serious offenses, the RSLAF utilizes the court martial system in line with section 84 of the RSLAF Act. In line with the Act, the convening of courts martial or military tribunals, is authorized by the force commander or his delegated authority and presided over by at least five military officers, as well as a civilian judge advocate who is appointed as a professional adviser. The responsibility for any ruling in a matter rests squarely on the officers of the jury, and not the judge advocate.

In sum, apart from the few capacity-building efforts for both the parliament and judiciary, the 2002 reform program largely failed to fully integrate the two institutions, which are key for the oversight functions on the security sector including the military. Thus, the executive and particularly the president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces remain dominant in the control of the military in Sierra Leone.

C. CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE MEDIA

Sierra Leone has a vibrant civil society that is largely supported by NGOs, and is geared towards monitoring the government for good governance.¹³⁷ Through advocacy, civil societies and the Sierra Leone Association of Non-governmental Organizations (SLANGO) place pressure on the government to observe democratic principles and international best practices in dealing with the citizens. Similar pressure is placed on the Sierra Leone Police when abuse or ill-treatment of civilians is observed, but not as much with the armed forces.

On the part of the media, the constitution provides for freedom of expression and the press. Hence, there are over twenty local print media companies, several broadcasting radio stations, four television stations, and web-based media outlets in the country.¹³⁸ Most of these media outlets are critical about the government's activities, state institutions, and the general politics in the country. By contrast, access to military information remains bureaucratic and procedural, which some media agencies are hardly able to contend with. Nonetheless, the defense reform resulted in the establishment of the public relations

¹³⁷ William Reno, "Countries at the Crossroads 2012 - Sierra Leone," Freedom House, September 20, 2012, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/505c172ac.html>.

¹³⁸ Reno.

directorate at MOD, which has helped pave some inroads for the public media to access military information, while the RSLAF also regularly publishes some of its activities. This access has enabled the public media to publish reports of military promotions, appointments, retirements, recruitment, professional misconduct, defense expenditures, or ill behavior of military personnel. The defense PR Directorate, however, always cautions the public media to ensure certain news about the military is cleared for correctness before publication.

Despite these improvements, the oversight role of the media, civil society advocacy groups, and NGOs on the armed forces remains rather weak; this weakness could be a result of the non-inclusion of these organizations' oversight role in the national legal framework like the constitution, or because it is yet a relatively new phenomenon for the country. The history of military coups, oppression of political opponents and dissidents, and beating and targeting of media personnel by the military could also be other reasons that civilian and military leaders exclude the media and civil society from military issues.

In sum, the civil society and the media focus only on issues of the armed forces that affect the citizens' civil liberties but hardly touch defense policies, nor do these public watchdogs attempt to push for a review or scrutiny of certain strategic decisions that may not be favorable to the military. Instead, the success stories of military operations, promotions, recruitment, and financial expenditures remain the media's focal issues.

D. CONCLUSION

From the early post-independence period until 1996, when democracy was ushered in, Sierra Leone's civil-military relations were largely focused on civilians exerting subjective control of the armed forces to protect political regimes. As described in this chapter, the RSLAF became highly politicized and posed a threat to the civilian administrations from 1967 into the late 1990s. The politicization of the military adversely affected its professionalism and effectiveness, resulting in its poor performance and fragmentation in prosecuting the eleven-year civil war. The end of the war brought about the 2002 defense reform, which was integral to the introduction of more stable governance and civilian control over the national armed forces. The reform helped to improve the

RSLAF's professionalism and acceptance of civilian supremacy, while simultaneously improving on the military's operational effectiveness to conduct internal security tasks alongside the police. In the process of accepting civilian supremacy, the reform has increased the military's accountability through its civilian leadership at MOD which has improved the level of defense transparency.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF CIVILIAN CONTROL IN SIERRA LEONE

Despite the postwar defense reform that the military and other associated relevant civilian-led institutions went through, there are still challenges with democratic civilian control of the armed forces. This chapter analyzes the challenges to democratic civilian control of the military based on the four hypotheses of this thesis: high military prerogatives, engagement of the military in new roles and missions, military politicization, and lack of civilian defense expertise. This chapter also investigates the reasons for the presence of these problems and their gravity, and how they undermine the consolidation of democracy in the country. These four assumptions are interconnected in their impact on the health of civil-military relations and particularly on democratic control of the military in Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, this chapter finds that the military's internal roles and missions and low levels of civilian expertise are currently the weaker dimensions of civilian control in the country. Each of the hypotheses is discussed in the following subsections.

A. CHALLENGES FACING DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN CONTROL

In this section, I investigate the four hypotheses introduced in Chapter 1: military prerogatives, roles and missions, politicization, and civilian expertise. The engagement of the military in domestic security and the low levels of civilian defense expertise indicate challenges to democratic civilian control of the armed forces in Sierra Leone. The other two hypotheses—high military prerogatives and military politicization—do not show immediate challenges, which is attributable to the country's reform process, but could become problematic if the other two are not addressed.

1. High Military Prerogatives

The current situation in Sierra Leone shows that the military's prerogatives are low and do not pose an immediate challenge to civilian control. One of the main reasons for this achievement is the civilian-military dual partnership introduced by the British-led

IMATT defense reform in 2002.¹³⁹ The establishment of the civilian-led MOD has eroded the military's dominance compared to the past, and hence, decreased its self-governance. As such, currently, the military does not have absolute discretion over the entire affairs of the institution. For example, the military presently receives direction and orders from the democratically appointed political leaders (the defense ministers and civilian staff at MOD), which contrasts with what prevailed in the past when the military dealt directly with the president to advocate for its interests.¹⁴⁰ Also, the defense policy and operations committee (DPOC) at MOD formulates and implements operational policies. The DPOC, which comprises civilian staff and senior military officers, is headed by a civilian (the deputy defense secretary for policy). It is responsible for coordinating development of operational policies in partnership with the military leadership. DPOC directs all operational policies and makes the military apply its professional and technical knowledge to execute what the civilians direct. A specific example is the assignment of the military to work with other security agencies in the provision of security for the 2018 elections. The National Security Council (NSC), through the Office of National Security (ONS), directed and provided a security framework by which the security sector could ensure effective policing of the 2018 elections.¹⁴¹ With this framework, the civilian elites achieved considerable progress in reducing the military's powers.

The key driving force behind the reduction in the military's prerogatives is the embedding of British military officers into the armed forces during the 2002–2004 restructuring and transformation process. Working with the then political leadership of President Tejan Kabba, the UK military reformers had executive powers for resource allocation to the military, pay, retention of military officers with particular focus on the

¹³⁹ Godwin and Haenlein, "Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," 31.

¹⁴⁰ Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, "Defence White Paper: Informing the People," Center for Security Studies, 2003, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/156808/SierraLeone.pdf>.

¹⁴¹ Carter Center, "March 7, 2018 - Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Sierra Leone - Final Report - Sierra Leone," Carter Center, 2018, 44, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/march-7-2018-presidential-and-parliamentary-elections-sierra-leone-final-report>.

senior cadre, and policy decision-making.¹⁴² The British reformers purged any military officers who were observed either by IMATT or political elites close to the president to resist the reforms. For instance, in implementing the controversial downsizing of the military from its immediate postwar number of 16,000 to 8,500 in 2002, eighty officers were removed from the military for allegations that they had conducted wartime abuses; this action was viewed by others to be connected to their resistance or non-cooperation with the British-led reforms.¹⁴³ Even though some observers viewed several instances of purging to be a politically motivated way to remove hardline senior military officers who opposed the reforms and posed a threat to Kabba's civilian administration, the IMATT took responsibility for the purging. IMATT did so provided that the interests of the Kabba administration for stable government as well as the reform's main objective to establish control over the armed forces were achieved. Thus, the military leadership gradually became attuned to the new democratic framework through the mentoring of the embedded reformers, and hence, accepted civilian leadership and reduced prerogatives.

On the intelligence side, the flow and reporting of security information and intelligence to the executive was led and dominated in the past by the military, but it is now centralized under the civilians at ONS.¹⁴⁴ Though initially opposed by the military leadership during the reform process, this civilian-led architecture was achieved through the creation of the NSC and ONS.¹⁴⁵ The ONS comprises the Central Intelligence Unit (CISU), which is responsible for all intelligence in the country including military intelligence, and reports directly to the president. This way, the dominance of the armed forces in some of the key state functions has been reduced along with their prerogatives.

¹⁴² Louis-Alexandre Berg, "Elite Bargains and External Influence: Security Assistance and Civil-Military Relations in Post-War Liberia and Sierra Leone," *Civil Wars* 22, no. 2–3 (2020): 278, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2020.1707495>.

¹⁴³ Berg, 78.

¹⁴⁴ Berg, 77.

¹⁴⁵ Berg, 77.

In regard to the judiciary, RSLAF plays little or no role other than following the rules as provided by the country's constitution and international obligations.¹⁴⁶ The military has its own judicial system in line with the amended RSLAF Act of 1961, and conducts courts martial trials for very serious offenses such as treason committed by military personnel.¹⁴⁷ The military courts do not try civilians. For example, thirty-four military personnel were tried and convicted by court martial in 1998 for offenses related to the 1997 military coup that sent the Kabba administration into exile in Guinea, while fifty-seven civilians were separately tried in the High Courts of Sierra Leone for treason offenses in relation to the same military coup.¹⁴⁸ Unlike its civilian counterpart, the military court system, which is yet to meet international standards of fair trial, lacks a higher tribunal for appeals after sentence. Generally, though, convicts given death sentences "have the right to seek clemency from a presidential committee for the prerogative of mercy."¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the military justice system remains supported and guided by the civilian judicial architecture, which mitigates the military's prerogatives.

Table 1 summarizes the prevailing situation of military prerogatives in Sierra Leone and is adapted from Alfred Stepan's eleven military prerogatives in a democratic regime.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, "The Constitution of Sierra Leone."

¹⁴⁷ RSLAF Act of 1961, as amended, focuses on maintaining discipline in the military and provides guidance for processes and procedures in the conduct of summary dealings and courts martial.

¹⁴⁸ Amnesty International, "Sierra Leone, 34 Soldiers Could Face Imminent Execution - Sierra Leone," Amnesty International, accessed January 23, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/sierra-leone-34-soldiers-could-face-imminent-execution>.

¹⁴⁹ Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, "The Constitution of Sierra Leone"; Amnesty International, "Sierra Leone, 34 Soldiers Could Face Imminent Execution - Sierra Leone."

¹⁵⁰ Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics*, 93–97.

Table 1. Military Prerogatives Status*¹⁵¹

	Prerogatives level	Description
1. Constitutionally sanctioned military role in politics	None	Military supports the police in internal security in accordance with national policy.
2. Military relationship to the chief of the executive	Low	The president is de jure and de facto commander-in-chief.
3. Coordination of the defense sector	Low	De jure and de facto exercised by the two ministers of defense supported by civilian staff and military leaders at MOD.
4. Active duty military participation in the cabinet	None	Military not allowed by law, and not done.
5. Role of the legislature	Low	Defense budget has to be explained and defended by MOD civilians in parliament. When required, military goes before defense committee for questioning.
6. Role of senior career civil servants or political appointees	Moderate	Civilian staff play leadership role at MOD in defense policies but greatly require military support in strategic defense policy development.
7. Military role in Intelligence	Moderate	De jure and de facto controlled by civilian authorities. Military intelligence fused into centralized civilian intel report.
8. Role in police	Moderate	Police has primacy in internal security while RSLAF provides support when required.
9. Role in military promotions	Moderate	Military promotion boards make recommendations through defense council to executive; the latter approves, subject to parliament's confirmation.
10. Role in the state enterprise	None	Not allowed by law and practice.
11. Role in the legal system	Low	No role in legal jurisdiction. Military is subject to both civil and military laws. Military handles its justice system to maintain military discipline and guard professionalism.

*The status of military prerogatives in Sierra Leone in line with Stepan's eleven military prerogatives in a democracy.

¹⁵¹ Adapted from Stepan, 93–97.

Table 1 indicates the military's prerogatives are generally low across a multitude of areas. This development differs from the period before democratization (1960s–1990s) when the military's prerogatives were higher due in part to higher levels of politicization.¹⁵² At the time, the military viewed itself as having a big stake in state governance, as in the case of the military's involvement in the stalemate of the 1967 elections.¹⁵³ The current institutional arrangement ensures the military does what the civilian authorities tell it to do, whether the instructions are in its favor or not, and fosters authority and democratic civilian control.

On the side of institutional control, rows 5, 6, and 9 in Table 1 indicate that the civilian authorities are in control of the affairs of the military. The civilian-led defense council (headed by the president), for example, has final decision on military promotions and appointments, while the defense budget and spending are controlled and monitored by civilians at MOD and the parliament's defense committee, respectively. These civilian-led institutions (the DC, MOD, and Defense Committee) have helped to reduce military prerogatives and enhanced civilian control of the armed forces in Sierra Leone. For instance, the military's financial expenditures are now handled and regulated by the civilians at MOD. Unlike in the past, the procurement of military equipment is now done by the civilians, which diminished the interests of the armed forces.

In the area of financial management and control in the defense sector, the MOD civilian staff led by the director general, and the defense committee in parliament, play a crucial role and lead as shown in rows 5 and 6 of Table 1, assigning the military low to moderate prerogatives. In common with other ministries, departments, and agencies in the country, MOD prepares a detailed three-year tier of defense plans and estimates using the medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) and submits these plans for allocation of funding by the ministry of finance. Allocation of funding is contingent on availability of

¹⁵² Berg, "Elite Bargains and External Influence," 275.

¹⁵³ Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone*, 114–15.

funds in the country.¹⁵⁴ In this respect, despite the defense sector being critical for the government, it does not have preferential treatment. For instance, according to the SIPRI 2020 database, the military budget expenditure has been decreasing for the past four years, from 2016 to 2019 (from \$47.0 million in 2016 when it peaked, to \$25.6 million in 2019).¹⁵⁵ Though the military leadership likely wants to receive what it asks for in the budget, the finance ministry allocates funding based on the government's priorities and the funds available. The military, under the civilian leadership, operates within the new democratic framework established by the reform and conducts its operations in line with the interest of its civilian authorities.¹⁵⁶

The composition of representation in the Defense Council for both the military leadership and the civilian authorities rests at a ratio of almost 1:1.¹⁵⁷ Thus, it becomes difficult for the armed forces to pursue any particular interest; for example, take unilateral decisions on military promotions, as shown in Table 1 in row 9, as every decision of the DC is sanctioned by its civilian leadership (the president). For example, in 2018, through the DC, the president promoted and appointed three generals, including Brigadiers Augustine Fefegula, Victor Samba, and Dauda Alpha, who were later confirmed by parliament.¹⁵⁸ The Chief of Defense Staff (head of the armed forces) expressed gratitude to the president and commander-in-chief for the generals' promotions, which came through recommendations from the MOD (DC);¹⁵⁹ this process of effecting military promotions indicates civilian authority over the armed forces.

¹⁵⁴ Osman Gbla, "Sierra Leone," in *Budgeting for the Military Sector in Africa: The Process and Mechanisms of Control*, ed. Wuyi Omitoogun, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and Eboe Hutchful (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 188.

¹⁵⁵ SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database," Annual SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, 2020, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

¹⁵⁶ Gbla, "Sierra Leone," 192.

¹⁵⁷ Sierra Leone Legal Information Institute, "The Constitution of Sierra Leone," sec 167 (1).

¹⁵⁸ Patriotic Vanguard, "Sierra Leone: Promotions in the Army," Patriotic Vanguard, September 22, 2018, <http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/sierra-leone-promotions-in-the-army>.

¹⁵⁹ Patriotic Vanguard.

2. New Roles and Missions of the Military

Though the military's role in domestic security is not new, the increased engagement of Sierra Leone's armed forces in the performance of domestic security roles and missions has occasionally posed challenges to democratic civilian control of the armed forces. Because the military performs such tasks, this role brings them closer to politics and makes the armed forces more nationally popular and powerful when state institutions are yet to be deeply rooted.¹⁶⁰ The 2002 postwar reform created ways to have the military support the national police when they are overwhelmed through established national structures (NSC/ONS) and defense policies (MACA/DWP).¹⁶¹ The DWP helps to guide the military in its integration into internal security roles.¹⁶² The performance of the RSLAF in these activities has been generally lauded, especially in the areas of elections security, disaster response, and the country's national cleaning exercises.¹⁶³ These successes and praises earn more popularity for the military and increase public respect and trust for the armed forces.

In the area of election security, the military, in collaboration with other security services, has been generally acclaimed to have exhibited the required professionalism for ensuring a secure environment for the conduct of democratic elections.¹⁶⁴ For the four consecutive elections since the end of the civil war (2002, 2007, 2012, and 2018), the RSLAF has supported the police in ensuring a safe and secure environment, which

¹⁶⁰ In most democracies like the United States, military involvement in domestic security is not a welcome practice and may be interpreted as a constitutional contravention; however, in Sierra Leone, contemporary issues of security (internal and external) could be justifiable reasons for such involvement but requires firmly functioning institutions.

¹⁶¹ Today, the current RSLAF, through the new structures of the NSC, the country's MACA policy, and defense white paper, performs both its traditional roles of external defense of the country as well as domestic security duties in support of the Sierra Leone Police. In non-traditional defense roles, the RSLAF engages in various domestic tasks including elections policing, provision of security in political campaigns and presidential inaugurations, provision of personal security for some political appointees such as ministers, provision of prison security, quelling of street violence and protests, disaster response, and participation in periodic national cleaning exercises. Global Security, "Sierra Leone Army," Global Security, accessed January 17, 2021, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/africa/sl-army.htm>.

¹⁶² Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, "Defence White Paper: Informing the People," Center for Security Studies, 2003, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/156808/SierraLeone.pdf>.

¹⁶³ Gbla, "Security Sector Reform under International Tutelage in Sierra Leone," 89.

¹⁶⁴ Godwin and Haenlein, "Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," 33–34.

culminated in generally peaceful and successful elections, and the smooth transfer of power between the two rival political parties in the country.¹⁶⁵ In the 2018 elections, the Standing Together for Democracy Consortium in Sierra Leone, the UK department for international development (DFID) funded program in collaboration with Institute for Good Governance, Sierra Leone (IGR-SL), stated that 69 percent of the public believed the security forces ensured a secure environment for the conduct of the elections.¹⁶⁶ The report mentioned that only five percent of the respondents in the survey stated having experienced violence while ten percent claimed to have heard some people being harassed. Additionally, the international community as well as other regional elections observers and NGOs such as the U.S.-based Carter Center, an NGO supporting democratic transformation in West Africa, indicated the general successes of the security sector in providing a secure electoral environment in the 2018 elections.¹⁶⁷ As such, there has been an increased level of public trust for the military as it continues to demonstrate a satisfactory level of professionalism in the conduct of its duties.

On the other hand, other quarters of the populace express contrasting views, especially about the military's security role in the 2018 elections. The *New York Times* publication of April 4, 2018 noted the presence of heavily armed soldiers in the capital and other parts of the country, stating such a presence created an intimidating atmosphere for the voters.¹⁶⁸ This assertion was, however, not substantiated. The executive director of the Institute for Governance Reform (IGR), Andrew Lavalie, stated that "the military's presence was even higher than what the country had during the 1996 elections, when the country was still at war."¹⁶⁹ These accusations about the military, which need further substantiation, could be damaging to the military's image, continued neutrality, and

¹⁶⁵ Godwin and Haenlein, 33; "Institute for Governance Reform – IGR," 7, accessed January 17, 2021, <http://igrsl.org/>.

¹⁶⁶ Institute for Governance Reform, "IGR Home page," 7, accessed January 17, 2021, <http://igrsl.org/>.

¹⁶⁷ Carter Center, "March 7, 2018 - Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Sierra Leone - Final Report - Sierra Leone," 43–45.

¹⁶⁸ Barry, "Sierra Leone's Opposition Leader Is Sworn In as President," April 4, 2018.

¹⁶⁹ Barry.

position of public trust if proven true. Because of the risks involved with elections security, the former Chief of Defense Staff, General Samuel Williams, detested the inclusion of the military in such sensitive and complicated tasks because he wanted to prevent it from being dragged into politics particularly when the armed forces were still professionalizing.¹⁷⁰

Nevertheless, RSLAF has so far generally proven professional in its conduct of elections security, as Freedom House also affirmed the non-involvement of the military in the 2012 elections. This was the first time the former military commander and head of the NPRC military regime, Brigadier (retired) Julius Maada Bio, contested and lost an election.¹⁷¹ It was generally speculated that the military was going to provide him all the necessary support as a former military comrade to win the election, but that did not happen; the RSLAF remained apolitical and ensured a widely acclaimed successful election professionally.¹⁷² Although the outcome and conduct of both the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2018 were declared to be satisfactory by international observers, a Freedom House 2019 report determined them to be marred by political violence and voter intimidation.¹⁷³

In the areas of national cleaning exercises and disaster response, the RSLAF has received commendation nationally as well as in the sub-region for the military's immense contribution to national service. For example, in the 2014 Ebola outbreak, the RSLAF, in collaboration with both local and international partners, assumed a prominent role in the coordination of the national response including erection of Ebola Treatment Centers following the appointment of the defense minister, Major (retired) Paolo Conteh, as head of the National Ebola Response Center (NERC).¹⁷⁴ Just as in most West African countries,

¹⁷⁰ Godwin and Haenlein, "Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," 32.

¹⁷¹ Reno, "Countries at the Crossroads 2012: Sierra Leone," 10.

¹⁷² Carter Center, "March 7, 2018 - Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Sierra Leone - Final Report - Sierra Leone."

¹⁷³ Freedom House, "Sierra Leone 2019: Freedom in the World Country Report," accessed February 26, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/sierra-leone/freedom-world/2019>.

¹⁷⁴ Adam Kamradt-Scott et al., "Saving Lives: The Civil-Military Response to the 2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (Final Report)," October 26, 2015, 17, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.4659.5288>.

the use of the military in responding to disasters is a common practice because the armed services are readily available to governments and arguably equipped both in terms of personnel and equipment to respond to crises;¹⁷⁵ hence, the military is employed in medical, logistical, and compliance enforcement roles. For Sierra Leone, the military covered the gap created by the inability of the country's health ministry and the ONS to coordinate the response as required by the country.¹⁷⁶ Because of the military's successes in the Ebola response, a similar arrangement has been put in place to fight COVID-19 in the country. The RSLAF has again taken the lead with the defense minister, Brigadier (retired) Kellie Conteh, appointed as head of the National Covid-19 Virus Emergency Response Center (NACOVERC).¹⁷⁷ While the military is actively engaged in ensuring compliance with the health regulations, its hospital (34 Military Hospital) currently serves as the only medical center for the management of COVID-19 patients in the country.¹⁷⁸ All of these military engagements serve as positive service to the nation, though the compliance enforcement role is not without controversy, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.¹⁷⁹

In sum, the military has engaged in a variety of internal roles and missions, and some of these have exposed it to the risk of politicization. The military could become too popular and powerful, and politicians could exploit these roles and missions for their own political advantage and thus jeopardize democratic control of the armed forces. Generally, however, the new roles have helped the military gain trust and popularity in the country as a force for democracy and the population's well-being. These positive benefits are due to the mostly professional behavior of the troops when executing these missions. Thus, a tendency has been created for the RSLAF to be called upon as frequently as possible on

¹⁷⁵ Kamradt-Scott et al., 17–18.

¹⁷⁶ Kamradt-Scott et al., 18.

¹⁷⁷ Partners In Health, "Facing COVID-19, Preparedness Is Key in Sierra Leone," accessed January 17, 2021, <https://www.pih.org/article/facing-covid-19-preparedness-key-sierra-leone>.

¹⁷⁸ Partners In Health.

¹⁷⁹ The military's actions in helping to enforce compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures are viewed by some to be hard line, unfair, and trampling on citizens' human rights, while others see the military as being used as state tool to achieve political gains by the sitting government.

matters the police should handle. If politicians were to exploit this development, however, it could lead the military to become a threat to the regime when its interests are not met, as mentioned by Thomas Durell-Young.¹⁸⁰

3. Military Politicization

The problem of military politicization that was largely responsible for the military's past intervention in politics is presently not a challenge to civilian control of the RSLAF. This improvement has been the outcome of defense reform and the establishment of civilian-led institutions that have helped shield the military from politicization. The establishment of the civilian-led defense ministry and ONS, through which national security matters are coordinated, reduces direct dealings between the politicians and the military. Also, the construction of the military academy (Horton Academy) by IMATT for the education and training of senior and mid-level military officers, and other training schools, has helped increase the educational levels and defense knowledge of both officers and other ranks.¹⁸¹ Thus, these developments have increased both the RSLAF's professionalism and understanding of the concepts of democratic governance, hence, enhancing the military's acceptance of civilian supremacy. Today, the RSLAF is administered by the civilians and does what it is told by civilian authorities as manifested in their professional conduct of domestic security tasks as highlighted in previous sections.

In the present circumstances, regular training and education given to the armed forces in Sierra Leone, and the continuing presence and mentoring of the UK-led ISAT, help to strengthen the military's professionalism and acceptance of civilian authority. The military has adopted the attitude of refraining from politics as taught and trained, and conducts domestic tasks professionally without being partisan, which indicates the absence of politicization. For example, the RSLAF remained professional and neutral in the 2012 presidential election even though many speculated the RSLAF was going to side with its

¹⁸⁰ Thomas - Durell Young, "Military Professionalism in a Democracy," in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Scott D. Tollefson, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 24.

¹⁸¹ Horn, Olonisakin, and Peake, "United Kingdom-Led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," 119–20.

former military colleague who was one of the candidates. The military was widely removed from any election meddling, and this was corroborated by the 2012 Freedom House report.¹⁸² Equally, the Freedom House 2019 report showed the 2018 elections were generally pronounced credible though marred by violence and voter intimidation.¹⁸³ While the Freedom House 2020 report does not cover much on security, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED – a widely used real-time and analysis source on political violence and protests around the world) indicates in its 2020 report an increase in political violence and disorder from its 2018 elections data and involvement of the security forces in the intimidation of individuals.¹⁸⁴

4. Lack of Civilian Expertise or Interest in Defense Matters

There is little data available on civilian defense expertise or parliamentary defense oversight specific to Sierra Leone. Thus, empirical evidence of the aspects of civilian defense expertise are based largely on the author’s work experience and reasoning in line with theoretical concepts.

One indication that civilian expertise may be lacking at the MOD is that the civilian leadership, who is responsible for the administration and development of strategic defense documents, has not produced a national security strategy since the postwar reform.¹⁸⁵ The delay could emanate from either a lack of interest, as explained in the literature on civilian expertise, or pending a lead from the ISAT mentors who are still playing a supervisory/mentoring role at MOD. The national security strategy informs the development of a military strategy by the leadership of the military. The long wait for this national strategy could ultimately lead the military to take up the strategy’s development and frame it in their own interest—which in turn could diminish civilian control of the armed forces.

¹⁸² Reno, “Countries at the Crossroads 2012: Sierra Leone.”

¹⁸³ Freedom House, “Sierra Leone 2019: Freedom in the World Country Report,” accessed February 26, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/sierra-leone/freedom-world/2019>.

¹⁸⁴ ACLED, “When Emerging Democracies Breed Violence: Sierra Leone 20 Years after the Civil War,” ACLED Data, December 16, 2020, 13, <https://acleddata.com/2020/12/16/when-emerging-democracies-breed-violence-sierra-leone-20-years-after-the-civil-war/>.

¹⁸⁵ My experience working in RSLAF.

Hence, as explained in the literature, it becomes needful for civilians to acquire the right defense qualifications, training, and expertise as well as the interest to lead and direct the nation's defense policies.¹⁸⁶

On the other hand, the defense reform established a democratic civilian authority framework at the MOD that allows the civilian staff to lead defense acquisition and procurement.¹⁸⁷ Even so, the military has yet to have better and modern equipment for military operations, as evident in RSLAF's dependence on external partners (UK and United States) for equipment provision to deploy on its peacekeeping operations in Somalia and Sudan in 2009 and 2014, respectively.¹⁸⁸ For reasons that are difficult to establish, Sierra Leone has not been able to participate in peacekeeping missions as a troops contributing country (TCC) since RSLAF's last mission in 2014, which could be a result of the withdrawal of external support for equipment. This lack of equipment affects the military's operational effectiveness. Therefore, an unbalanced strategic defense prioritization ensues, which could result from civilian lack of interest or a limitation in defense expertise. Though such a situation has not been evident, it has the potential of eroding the confidence of the military leadership in its civilian leaders, which is detrimental to civilian control.

Further, in spite of the enormous constitutional oversight powers provided to parliament, the members of the defense committee exercise notable defense financial oversight but exhibit little on the technical defense matters such as scrutinizing military structure and composition, military operations, and recruitment. This lack of comprehensive oversight, which could be due to limited defense knowledge or lack of interest, risks giving the executive the freedom, in addition to the massive provisions of the national instruments, to use the armed forces in its own interest, which could disadvantage political opponents and erode democratic control of the military.

¹⁸⁶ Pion-Berlin, *Soldiers, Politicians, and Civilians*, 223.

¹⁸⁷ Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, "Defence White Paper: Informing the People" (Ministry of Defence, 2003).

¹⁸⁸ Godwin and Haenlein, "Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone," 33.

Furthermore, apart from the consistent monitoring of defense budget and spending, and routine approvals of promotions and appointments of very senior military officers, it could be assessed that the parliament is passive in asserting authority on how and when the armed forces can be employed or called upon to execute internal security functions, or in scrutinizing the size of the military, its composition, promotions, and appointments. This situation, which might be driven by the lack of MPs' expertise or interest in defense affairs, indicates constrained democratic civilian control of the armed forces. Sierra Leone's parliament, as is the case in most countries, can ensure effective democratic civilian control if it knows how to conduct its oversight roles on the armed forces—that is, by having a wealth of knowledge on defense issues beyond finance and must be backed by the authority to execute its functions. The apparent limited knowledge or lack of interest in the oversight functions of the military results in the executive branch becoming the main player in all areas of the armed forces including recruitment, promotions, and the making of key command appointments; key command appointments simply receive routine parliament accession.

B. OTHER ISSUES

Though the focus of this thesis is on the domestic determinants of democratic civilian control of the armed forces in Sierra Leone, it is worth briefly mentioning another important issue that could undermine civilian control: external involvement. External involvement has risks associated despite being crucial for civil-military relations in Sierra Leone following the civil war. For Sierra Leone, these risks relate to the military viewing the reform process as a foreign concept or practice, and the issue of overdependence on foreign financing to sustain the reforms. If the military fails to accept and adopt the reforms, and the country lacks the resources to sustain the new structures and processes, the military's general professionalism and the nascent institutions established by the reforms are put at risk, which will as a whole subvert civilian control. Fortunately, this has not yet been the case, as the British-led IMATT/ISAT has so far been able to enhance professionalization of the RSLAF and improve its operational effectiveness in executing assigned national tasks. It, however, remains to be seen how these gains will be sustained if or when the British assistance/support and mentoring is completely withdrawn.

On the other hand, external involvement has downsides. External actors often have vested political or economic interests that drive their involvement. In the case of Sierra Leone, the UK funded most of the reform process, purged officers that wanted to resist change with the backing of the government, and introduced its model of dual civilian-military partnership.¹⁸⁹ Its interest has been to ensure the Tejan Kabba administration is sustained, and the armed forces brought under civilian control. Though this transformation remains very significant, its sustainability becomes a vital concern in the absence of adequate economic strength coupled with weak institutional oversight in Sierra Leone. As Adrian Horn, Funmi Olonisakin, and Gordon Peake put it, “one of the enduring tests of a reformed security sector reform (in addition to operational effectiveness) is the extent to which the security establishment is democratically governed.”¹⁹⁰ If the institutions to uphold the reforms are not adequately resourced and strengthened, there is the possibility to lose the gains already made. In Sierra Leone, the fate of the nascent civilian-led institutions remains to be seen in the wake of the country’s weak economy to sustain the functions of these institutions.

C. INTERRELATIONSHIPS

In sum, the four aspects of military prerogatives, new roles and missions, military politicization, and limited civilian defense expertise are all interrelated in terms of their impacts on democratic civilian control. None of these stands completely alone. The engagement of the military in many domestic security tasks in the circumstances of weak institutions, coupled with limited civilian defense expertise and much executive power, all pose risks to each other and could work in tandem to undermine democratic civilian control of the armed forces.

¹⁸⁹ Horn, Olonisakin, and Peake, “United Kingdom-Led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone,” 119–20; Comfort Ero, “Sierra Leone: The Legacies of Authoritarianism and Political Violence,” in *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and Security Establishments in Transitional Democracies*, ed. Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham, Democratic Transition in Conflict-Torn Societies, v. 1 (London: Zed Books, 2003), 250.

¹⁹⁰ Horn, Olonisakin, and Peake, “United Kingdom-Led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone,” 120.

The internal roles and missions are not so problematic if the military continues to professionally execute them and accept civilian supremacy. The conduct of domestic security tasks such as policing elections is highly sensitive and requires a great demonstration of professionalism and neutrality. The prospect of politicians drawing the military into partisan politics remains high, though, especially when institutions are not effective enough to delineate and guard the boundaries of such military engagements.

Civilian expertise will not matter much as long as military prerogatives remain low and the military remains outside of politics. When the prerogatives of the military remain low as in the current case of Sierra Leone, the civilian leadership's gaps in defense knowledge will unnoticeably be filled by the military in a mutual civilian-military partnership without the military losing confidence in its civilian leadership. Nonetheless, this situation depends on the level of military subordination and acceptance of civilian supremacy. Thus, to avert the risk of increased military prerogatives, it is critical to enhance civilian defense knowledge at both the MOD and the legislature.

Further, although formal oversight is the responsibility of the three branches of government including the executive, judiciary, and parliament, there is overwhelming control from the executive—as provided both by the constitution of Sierra Leone, and in practice. Yet, balanced oversight is required, especially from the parliament, but that oversight remains low, perhaps due to limited defense knowledge. This weakness in parliamentary oversight, which may give abundant freedom of control and use of the military to the president-executive, obscures democratic control and has ramifications for the consolidation of democracy. The literature on achieving democratic civilian control through institutionalization establishes the essence of institutional oversight, and emphasizes the key role played by parliament in serving as checks and balances over the excesses of the executive.¹⁹¹ The current situation in Sierra Leone that is characterized by weak oversight by the relevant institutions both formal (especially parliament) and informal (media, civil-society, NGOs) has the potential to provide more leverage to the military to become closer to the executive and eventually get dragged into politics. For

¹⁹¹ Pion-Berlin, *Soldiers, Politicians, and Civilians*, 125.

now, the presently established civilian-led structures/institutions are preventing that possibility. Nevertheless, once the armed forces become closer to the executive and politics, the potential exists for politicians (the regime) to use the RSLAF to their advantage and subvert democratization, as other democratic players become deprived of their role within the system.

The limited civilian defense expertise or lack of interest in defense matters and the engagement of the military in new roles have been identified as the most important current challenges to democratic civilian control of the armed forces in Sierra Leone. Given the interrelationships discussed previously, if either of the other two factors (military prerogatives and politicization) worsens, there could be much broader problems—not only for democratic civilian control but also for the consolidation of the nascent democracy in the country. With the military executing domestic security tasks, especially providing elections security and quelling civil protests or street violence, the RSLAF becomes prone to politicization. Where the military fails to remain professional and neutral in policing elections, its public trust will be eroded as political opponents of the regime will lose trust in it and assess the military to be partisan. As a key national instrument for democratic consolidation, the military requires the public trust or risks negative impacts on democratization.¹⁹² Public trust in state institutions like the military is key to democratic consolidation because of its significant role in sustaining democracy. This is especially true when institutions—both formal and informal, including political opponents—share the responsibility of controlling the armed forces in a democratic environment.

It is common in consolidating democracies in Africa, especially those with presidential systems, for the executive to be tempted to use the military to achieve set national goals; this temptation could be contentious if the other branches of government and informal institutions, such as the media and civil-society, are left out of the decision-making process. Thus, the effective participation of the three branches of government and the informal institutions becomes relevant for democratic civilian control.

¹⁹² Zoltan Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas* (Princeton, NJ: University Press, 2012), 14.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the assessment in this chapter, the main challenges of civilian control in Sierra Leone are the engagement of the military in many new roles and missions and the limited defense knowledge or lack of interest of civilian leaders within the MOD and parliament. There are also risks that politicization and high prerogatives of the military could emerge as challenges in the longer term; at the moment, they have been suppressed by the positive impacts of the 2002 defense reforms. Although much progress has been achieved in institutionalizing democratic civilian control of the armed forces, if the observed challenges observed are not addressed, they have the potential to escalate, distorting civilian control and generally adversely impacting the country's gradual process of democratic consolidation.

The weaknesses in civilian control of the armed forces due to the RSLAF's new roles and missions and civilian leadership's limited defense knowledge could undermine democratic consolidation as the armed forces will have the room to pursue their interests; and hence, revert to their old practices of intervening in politics and becoming a threat to civilian administration. It is therefore prudent that the current challenges are addressed to ensure effective democratic civilian control of the military. Ultimately, this will help to consolidate democracy with the contribution of the armed forces.

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IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis has explored the challenges of democratic civilian control over the armed forces of Sierra Leone. Effective democratic civilian control of the military is pivotal for national stability and the process of democratic consolidation. For Sierra Leone, just as for most developing democracies in Africa, civilian control of the armed forces is important because of the number of military coups and counter coups it has experienced in the past. The process of establishing civilian control over the military is cumbersome. Hence, despite the country's postwar reform in 2002, democratic civilian control of the armed forces remains incomplete. To answer my question on the current challenges facing civilian control of the armed forces, I proposed four hypotheses that relate to: 1) military prerogatives; 2) military roles and missions; 3) military politicization and acceptance of civilian supremacy; 4) lack of civilian defense expertise or interest in defense matters. This chapter provides a summary of the key findings of the thesis and proffers feasible recommendations for defense policymakers in Sierra Leone. The chapter ends with suggestions for additional avenues of research.

A. SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

The current situation of civilian control of the armed forces in Sierra Leone appears encouraging due to the positive impact of the postwar reform and the transformation of the RSLAF. However, among the four assumptions just mentioned, the thesis finds that the aspects of the military's engagement in domestic security, especially in policing elections, and the limited civilian defense expertise or lack of civilian interest have an immediate and high potential to pose as challenges to the democratic civilian control of the armed forces in Sierra Leone. Both challenges have not manifested in an observable way, which makes it a little difficult to clearly identify their effects, but a few instances indicate their potential problems. Table 2 provides a summary of the findings based on the four hypotheses.

Table 2. Summary of Findings

Hypothesis	Level of Risk/ Challenge	Description	Indicators
1. Military prerogatives	Low	Civilians lead in defense matters and decision making. Military executes civilians' directives.	Established civilian-led institutions; e.g., NSC, MOD, ONS
2. Military politicization	Low	Institutions established that limit direct dealings between politicians and military.	Functioning institutions coordinate defense matters and oversight.
3. New roles and missions	Moderate (contingent on military politicization remaining low)	Engagement of military in election security and quelling of street violence tasks increase risks for politicization.	Level of neutrality and acceptance of civilian supremacy
4. Lack of civilian defense expertise/ lack of civilian Interest	Moderate–High	Limited defense knowledge or lack of interest in development of strategic defense policies and oversight functions.	Major involvement of military in strategic policy development and decision making; potential for increase in military prerogatives.

1. Roles and Missions

In the area of domestic security (new roles and missions), rows 3 of Table 2 shows that though the country's national policies, including the military aid to civil power (MACA) and the defense white paper, legitimize the military's support to the Sierra Leone police, the military's engagement in elections security and quelling of street violence brings it closer to politics, which makes RSLAF vulnerable to politicization, especially as it is still professionalizing. Thus, there is a high risk for the military to be politicized while engaging in the policing of elections. For example, during the 2018 elections, the military and police were accused of turning a blind eye to the beating of a journalist from one of the local presses, as if to ensure a peaceful electoral environment by responding to the violence the

military and the police would be considered biased.¹⁹³ Such a response could easily be misconstrued as the security forces taking sides with the political party that might have been behind the beating of the reporter. Also, when the military is heavily deployed with arms for election security, as mentioned by the IGR executive director in the April 4 edition of *The New York Times* that year,¹⁹⁴ it is intimidating for voters, particularly those in opposition who may not fully know the level of neutrality of the military. Therefore, the execution of some sensitive domestic security tasks like policing elections exposes the military to higher risks of politicization by civilian elites who could be seeking an advantage over their political opponents.

The situation is different from the engagement on disaster response tasks and national cleaning exercises. The military has been integral in responding to the impacts of natural disasters, which fall within the new roles and missions of the armed forces and have contributed to increasing the military's popularity and public trust.¹⁹⁵ As part of the positives of the reform, RSLAF's operational effectiveness underscores their performance in the execution of disaster response tasks such as in the cases of the country's Ebola epidemic in 2014/15, the mudslide of 2017, and the present COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁹⁶

Even so, while some of these internal security tasks may only increase the popularity of the military, others place it at high risk of politicization. Hence, the mitigation of risks in the tasks of elections security and quelling of street violence depends on how professional, neutral, and resilient the military remains during the conduct of such sensitive tasks. Conversely, in the circumstance where institutions are deeply rooted and

¹⁹³ Jaime Yaya Barry, "Sierra Leone's Opposition Leader Is Sworn In as President (Published 2018)," *The New York Times*, April 4, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/world/africa/sierra-leone-president.html>.

¹⁹⁴ Barry.

¹⁹⁵ Freedom House, *Countries at the Crossroads 2011: An Analysis of Democratic Governance*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012).

¹⁹⁶ Partners In Health, "Facing COVID-19, Preparedness Is Key in Sierra Leone"; Emma Ross, "Command and Control of Sierra Leone's Ebola Outbreak Response: Evolution of the Response Architecture," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 372, no. 1721 (May 26, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2016.0306>.

functioning, effective oversight on the military will mitigate the risks of politicization while the military performs domestic security functions.

2. Civilian Leadership's Defense Expertise and Level of Interest

With regard to civilian defense expertise, row 4 of Table 2 indicates the risk associated with low civilian defense knowledge is moderate to high. While such information is limited, the thesis finds that the continued supervisory and mentoring role of the UK-led ISAT at the MOD is an apparent indicator of progress, but it also reveals that the civilian staff are yet to be fully knowledgeable in their strategic defense roles and responsibilities—and most importantly—in the area of strategic policy development. Since the reform was completed in 2005, the country has yet to develop a national security strategy to guide the development of a military strategy. This failure may be a result of either limited defense knowledge or a lack of interest on the part of the civilian leadership. Similarly, the deficiencies in the effective balancing of defense priorities with resources, for example, the failure to procure the adequate peacekeeping military equipment, points to civilian leadership's limited qualifications or preparedness.

The same limitation in defense knowledge or lack of interest affects the parliament in its execution of oversight roles. The parliament, with its expansive constitutional powers, has been robust with defense financial oversight but less so on technical matters of defense. Defense issues related with military structure and composition, recruitment, promotions, appointments, and military operations are largely dealt with by the executive and the defense council. The authority of the commander-in-chief over the armed forces as contained in sections 167 to 169 of the Sierra Leone 1991 constitution remains more visible than parliament's involvement. This limited oversight by parliament as well as the limited interest of civilian staff in strategic defense matters at MOD weakens democratic civilian control of the armed forces, thereby influencing either the power of the military or making the executive dominant over the control of the military.

3. Military Prerogatives and Politicization

The other two hypotheses, military prerogatives and politicization, remain low at the moment as indicated by rows 1 and 2 in Table 2, most probably due to the 2002 reform.

The reform enhanced the military's professionalism and acceptance of civilian supremacy, which is evident in its conduct of internal security tasks as explained in the previous sections, and created oversight institutions for the democratic control of the armed forces. This development gives less room for the military to pursue its own interest as well as limits the likelihood of the military's politicization. Nonetheless, to sustain and improve on these low levels of risk, the two challenges identified need to be resolved.

Therefore, any failure to address the risks involved with domestic security tasks and the lack of interest or civilian defense expertise will have a direct impact on military politicization and an increase in military prerogatives. Thus, all of the four assumptions are interrelated. These four assumptions work in tandem to potentially constrain democratic civilian control of the armed forces and erode the prospects for democratic consolidation in Sierra Leone. Therefore, these four aspects need to be addressed simultaneously to ensure effective democratic control of the armed forces.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The sustainability of and further improvement on the current gains from the defense reform largely depend on the continued professionalization of the military, its ability to remain apolitical through consistent training and education on democratic governance, and the strengthening of state institutions for effective democratic oversight of the armed forces. The continued professionalization of the military and its acceptance of the authority of civilians, along with the strengthening of state institutions, will not only address the risks involved with the RSLAF's domestic security roles and the lack of civilian defense expertise or interest, but will also counter the potential problems of military politicization and prerogatives. Thus, the following recommendations are focused on areas of strengthened military professionalization and acceptance of civilian supremacy, improvement of civilian defense expertise and interest, increased institutional control, and more effective resource provision.

1. Strengthening Military Professionalism and Attachment to Civilian Supremacy

Military professionalism and acceptance of civilian supremacy are critical elements to the enhancement of democratic civilian control as mentioned in the literature on professionalism and its connection to civilian control. The relevance of these aspects has been manifested after RSLAF's reform in its current operational effectiveness and its adoption of an apolitical attitude. Therefore, the government should give priority to enhancing this environment by continuing military education, training, and ethics development. The following should therefore be prioritized:

- Establishing more and better quality military academies and training centers where personnel will be taught issues of democratic governance, civil-military relations, professional norms, and the importance of civilian supremacy.
- Ensuring civilian authorities recruit individuals with the right qualifications to avert difficulties in improving levels of education among the military.
- Participation of the RSLAF in peacekeeping operations to gain experience and enhance the professional ethics, knowledge, and operational effectiveness of the armed forces through interaction with foreign militaries. This participation will also keep the RSLAF away from politics.

These structures, once in place, will help to increase the military's level of professionalism and acceptance of civilian supremacy.

2. Improving Civilian Leadership's Defense Expertise and Interest

The importance of civilian expertise and interest in defense and security has been emphasized in the literature. It is essential to ensuring the armed forces are administered and controlled so as to cause them to remain subordinated and to accept the leadership and direction of the civilians. Hence, increasing the knowledge and interest of civilians in defense matters remains crucial. Therefore, the following should be given consideration:

- Enhancing the defense education of the civilians, with emphasis on more technical matters of strategic policy development.
- Reviewing the policy on employment rotations to enable the civilian staff at the MOD to stay for much longer periods and reduce the need to train and educate fresh staff. In this way, experienced civilian staff will not be quickly lost to other MDAs.
- Offering opportunities for personal advancement in terms of further education, attractive emoluments or incentives, and pensions as part of the conditions of service to increase the interest of civilian staff in executing their responsibilities.

3. Increasing Institutional Control

Functioning state institutions can mitigate the problems associated with domestic security and limited civilian defense expertise through effective oversight, and can thereby sustain democratic civilian control of the military. Further, the institutions should be given the latitude and capacity to operate and perform their roles within a democratic framework. Therefore, the following should be given consideration:

- Defining clearly in the national constitution and other associated legal instruments the authority of oversight over the armed forces by all the relevant institutions, including government branches and non-governmental institutions.
- Creating the environment for a balanced participation of all the branches of government in the oversight of the armed forces.
- Integrating other non-governmental institutions such as the media, civil-society, and NGOs in the performance of oversight for the armed forces.

4. Providing Adequate Resources

To sustain the gains of the reform and the continued subordination of the military to civilian control, priority should be given to the provision of adequate resources for both the military and the oversight institutions. Government should place attention on the following areas:

- Equipping the military to enhance its participation in peacekeeping operations and its ability to keep up with the standards of other African countries, especially within the sub-region.
- Addressing issues of the military's conditions of service, including salaries, housing, pensions, and uniform to maintain its morale.

C. OTHER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

This thesis complements the limited scholarship on civil-military relations in Sierra Leone, especially from 1996 when democracy was introduced and onward. To further develop the literature on Sierra Leone's civil-military relations, future research could be done on how challenges to civilian control of the military have impacted the consolidation of democracy in the country. Also, it may be worth investigating the nexus between defense reforms and professionalization in relation to military democratization. This nexus will help ascertain whether the reform is actually responsible for the eventual increase in the military's professionalism and acceptance of civilian supremacy, or whether it may such changes in the military are attributable to the wave of politics and relative stability in the country. Such research opportunities will be relevant not only for Sierra Leone but also the region.

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