

<b>Institution:</b> University of Cambridge		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28. Faculty of History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Informing international policymakers and humanitarian practitioners on militarised political economies in South Sudan		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2017-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>  Nicki Kindersley	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>  Research Associate in History  Harry F Guggenheim Research Fellow, Pembroke College	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2017-2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Through a development partnership with South Sudanese universities, Kindersley developed new understandings of migrant and military labour markets and political-economic systems in South Sudan and its central African borderlands from the 1960s to the present that have directly informed policy makers at the FCO, UN, US AID, and EU. These engagements built on months of field interviews, training early-career research capacity and engaging communities in debates and dissemination. The research provides critical insights into fundamental shifts in military recruitment, North African migrant labour, and near-famine economies. It informs donor and humanitarian interventions and policy-making at a critical time in regional peace-building. Kindersley has also worked extensively with academics and students at universities in South Sudan to increase research capacity there. Her research and collaboration with local academics have also created space for key debates to be held over local government and courts.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>The UK Government has spent hundreds of millions of pounds in South Sudan over the last five years attempting to mitigate a humanitarian disaster and end a vicious civil war that has created one of the largest refugee crises in the world. But the UK Government (among other major donors in the region, including the US and EU) did not understand how the South Sudan government and rebel factions sustain their economic and military bases in the face of sustained economic collapse. They also struggle to understand how people survive and evade war-induced famines and economic crisis. Without understanding these two core issues, UK aid and political intervention is misdirected, and opportunities for fundamental change are lost.</p> <p>Kindersley's research over 2017-2019, involving extensive locally-collaborative fieldwork in remote South Sudan regions, made a series of interventions in our understanding of political authority, militarised livelihoods and migrant labour [R1]. This incorporated methodological and fieldwork research training for University of Juba and Catholic University of South Sudan early career researchers and postgraduates. A series of research reports, articles and briefings provided major insights for donors, humanitarian actors and policymakers into previously-unstudied fundamental shifts in political-military economic systems that have developed through wars since the 1960s, and which underpin the political economy of conflict in South Sudan. This work has provided key data on local survival strategies in near-famine and</p>		

migrant crises (for humanitarian agencies) [R2, R3] and the workings of military-political-judicial systems (for political intervention and development policy) [R4, R2] and have reshaped diplomatic and humanitarian strategy for the UK Government.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R1] Nicki Kindersley & Joseph Diing Majok, '[Monetized Livelihoods and Militarized Labour in South Sudan's Borderlands](#)', Rift Valley Institute (June 2019)

[R2] Nicki Kindersley & Øystein H. Rolandsen, 'Who are the civilians in the wars of South Sudan?', [Security Dialogue](#) (August 2019) [DOI](#)

[R3] Nicki Kindersley & Joseph Diing Majok, '[Politics, power and chiefship in famine and war: a study of the former Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, South Sudan](#)', Rift Valley Institute (June 2018)

[R4] Nicki Kindersley, 'Rule of whose law? The geography of authority in Juba, South Sudan', [Journal of Modern African Studies](#) 57(1) (2019) [DOI](#)

[R5] Nicki Kindersley, 'Armed work and state reconstruction in South Sudan: beyond the peace deal', [Note Analyse 10](#), *Centre d'études et de documentation économiques, juridiques et sociales* (CEDEJ), Khartoum, Sudan (June 2019)

[R2, R4, and R5] were all peer reviewed, while [R1 and R3] drew upon the research for a policy audience. The outputs therefore meet the 2\* minimum requirement.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research has benefitted three constituencies: it has shifted diplomatic and development policy for the UK Government and other donors; it has expanded the size and capacity of the South Sudan research sector; and it has created space within the South Sudanese political sphere for key debates that have supported better local government and court decision-making.

#### **Impact on UK Government, NGOs, the US, and UN:**

Despite sustained civil war in South Sudan, donors and the development community have – or had, before Kindersley's research – very little understanding of military mobilisation and the armed labour economy in the region, which underpins the elite power brokerage and (lack of) progress on the 2018 peace deal.

Kindersley made sustained efforts at policy intervention based on her research findings over 2017-2019, with eleven meetings including six major presentations [E2]:

- Juba (South Sudan) Swiss Embassy meeting, 45 attendees from DFID, UK FO, the EU, Swiss Embassy, British Council, USAID, UN and humanitarian agencies over 6-8 Mar 2018.
- Two-day workshop at the UK High Commission in Kenya, 25-26 June 2018, with 31 members of DFID and FCO including Ambassador to Kenya Nick Hailey, and Alex de Waal, Professor at LSE and Director of the World Peace Foundation.
- Two-day research workshop for UK FO and DFID at Durham University, 11-12 Mar 2019, with 14 attendees including Ambassador to South Sudan Chris Trott, and British Special Envoy to the Sudans Robert Fairweather OBE.
- Chatham House closed-door global mobility policy meeting, 25 attendees from UK FO, DFID, The Asia Foundation, and the Carnegie Middle East Center, including Charlotte Morris, Senior Conflict Adviser, Research & Evidence Division DFID, 19 Mar 2019.
- UK Embassy in South Sudan economic and military policy research meeting, 12 people including Helen Lewis, Head of DFID South Sudan, 2 Apr 2019.

- Two-day workshop at the UK High Commission in Kenya, 26-28 Nov 2019.

Cedric Barnes, Principal Research Analyst, FCO, notes in his testimonial that as a result of these engagements [E3]:

Substantive research inputs have come from Dr. Kindersley's participation in the Cross-Border Research Programme, which is funded by HMG through DFID's Research and Evidence Division. This work has shaped the way that HMG understands the South Sudan context, and the design and goals of its intervention and programs.

Alongside these targeted interventions, Kindersley worked with the Rift Valley Institute to reach a wider policy, development and humanitarian audience, including newly posted diplomats, to inform their work through a series of research-led courses [E4, E9]:

- UNICEF Three-day course in Juba, South Sudan, 24-26 May 2018, focused on child recruitment, 45 attendees including the Representative to South Sudan Dr Mahimbo Mdoe.
- Sudan field course in Kenya, 21-25 June 2018, 24 participants including UN Political Affairs officers Majida Rasul and Adwoa Owoo, US Department of Defense attaché Cheryl Dumas, Head of Political Affairs Australian Embassy Cairo Carlo White, Canada Department of National Defense Research Analyst Cameron Maclean, and Associate Expert in Political Affairs for the UN Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Maia Giorgio, among others.
- Intensive training course at SOAS, London, for South Sudan Representative for the World Food Programme Matthew Hollingworth (WFP budget is c. USD1.08bn for South Sudan every year).
- Sudan field course in South Sudan, 16-19 Sept 2019, 13 participants including Deputy Head of Programmes for WFP Ernesto Gonzalez, Swedish Ambassador Urban Sjoström, Political Officers for the British Embassy Terry Seagriff and Geoffrey Roberts, five representatives from the Dutch Embassy, the EU Ambassador Sinead Walsh and the EU Deputy Ambassador Alessandro Rossi.

Anna Rowett, Head of South Sudan Office, Rift Valley Institute, comments in her testimonial that Kindersley [E9]:

has implemented a key research stream on militarised labour, coordinating closely with researchers in Sudan and across the region. Her work under the project continues to shape the overall direction and directly inform policy makers in DFID and more widely ... In addition, Nicki has worked with RVI to ensure clear ethical guidelines are development and implemented across the project.

With the Rift Valley Institute's open access policy, Kindersley published a series of policy reports and articles based on the findings and key messages of this research, disseminated through events and through social media. The courses and publications have introduced new knowledge and perspectives to policy makers and directly influenced the work of policy practitioners. For example, a senior analyst with the UN Mission to South Sudan, writes in his testimonial that:

I have regularly relied on Dr. Kindersley's research publications – for the RVI and beyond – to inform my analysis and contextual understanding. On more than one occasion, her writings have served as the “saving grace” in my briefs. [E7]

In a similar vein, the EU Ambassador to South Sudan, describes in her testimonial how Kindersley's research alerts diplomats like to local-level dynamics, which often have wider political ramifications. Walsh then notes the broad impact of [R4] which:

was presented to a wide group of stakeholders last year, including myself and EU development and humanitarian colleagues. While my rural development colleagues were particularly interested in the programming implications in Northern BEG, one of our focus areas, I was able to take from it some insights about the border dynamics and issues such as the impact of in-country remittances of government soldiers based in the area. [E1]

These meetings, courses, and reports restructured and refocused their analysis, giving a deep understanding of how military mobilisation is being organised, the realities of the peace process implementation, and how international economic and humanitarian interventions can positively affect these patterns of recruitment, and the elite politics of the peace deal. Sensitive findings on militia recruitment and military reconstruction fundamentally changed established thinking on the progress of Demobilisation and Disarmament work, and highlighted security sector shifts that fundamentally affect the peace deal: these findings were fed into the UK FO via a confidential briefing note (Sept 2019), and a redacted public report via the *Centre d'études et de documentation économiques, juridiques et sociales* (CEDEJ) at the University of Khartoum (June 2019). Without this long-term remote fieldwork with impoverished recruits, militiamen and local authorities, the international community would not have had access to this analysis.

### **Impact on Higher Education Policy and Practice in South Sudan:**

The secondary beneficiaries are early career researchers and the small academic community in South Sudan [E8]. Despite a peace deal, there is extreme repression and surveillance of civil society, including repeated closures of the two working universities and security intimidation and closures of lectures and seminars. Students have almost no opportunities to develop skills in critical research and analysis. The research involved sustained support and training for top-performing UG and PG students at the Universities of Juba and the Catholic University of South Sudan, including:

- Oral history research training workshop, 18-21 Jan 2017, 19 students
- Archival research training, 9 Jan 2018, with staff from the South Sudan National Archives and 35 third year undergraduate students
- Workshop on gender & generation research and analysis, Nairobi, 8-9 April 2019, 39 participants including 14 early career researchers and 11 academics from the Horn of Africa
- Gender research in South Sudan public lecture, Institute for Justice and Peace studies, Catholic University, 9 April 2019, to c. 120 students and members of the public.

The EU ambassador to South Sudan notes that 'it's important to recognise that the way this research is being done, alongside South Sudanese researchers, is critical for the long-term capacity building aims that we all share for the country'. [E1] Outcomes include the professional development of research capacity including direct impact on the career progression of five researchers now employed in qualitative research projects with the RVI in Juba (Joseph Diing Majok, John Justin Kenyi, Machot Amuom, Alex Miskin Simple, and Gabriel Kiir). One researcher describes in his testimonial how Kindersley not only taught skills and methodologies to local researchers but also provided materials, computers, textbooks, and finance that proved key in expanding capacity. [E5] These activities supported South Sudanese academics and ECRs to present their research and analysis at the courses above, directly speaking to the donor and diplomatic corps; and provided a basis for a further research funding application on youth livelihoods led by ECRs (to the UKAid East Africa Research Fund, August 2019).

### **Impact on the Political Sphere in South Sudan:**

The final beneficiaries are local communities in South Sudan research sites. Via public engagement via theatre and radio, open access / free prints of reports and local dissemination meetings for the general public, the research attempted to mitigate research fatigue, promote trust in research and information, and create space for civic debate in the face of extensive

securitisation and intimidation. For example, in April 2018 with a local arts group the Likikiri Collective, Kindersley turned some of the main points of the first stage of research into a series of plays in local languages, which were presented in our research sites to local communities, government authorities, chiefs, youth and women leaders (using local actors). This led to community meetings with difficult conversations (and confrontations) over chiefly authorities' roles in famine migrations, and the exploitation of young men and women through military recruitment. These plays have been filmed and extracts subtitled in English [E7].

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[E1] Testimonial from EU Ambassador to South Sudan

[E2] Workshop invitations and programmes

[E3] Testimonial from Senior Analyst, Africa Desk, UK FO

[E4] Testimonial from Lecturer in Law, University of Juba

[E5] Testimonial from Early career researcher, Rift Valley Institute

[E6] Testimonial from Joint Mission Analysis Centre, UN Mission to South Sudan

[E7] Likikiri Collective video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ph2yfN2IDqs>

[E8] Testimonial from Head of Mission for Rift Valley Institute in South Sudan