

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Reading</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 21 Politics and International Studies</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Improving UK Anti-Corruption Policy in Stabilisation Environments and Fragile States</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>The impact of Professor Dominik Zaum’s research is a model of how to bring novel and imaginative scholarship into the practical world of policymaking. The research, which was conducted within the UoA, examined the role of corruption in the political economy of statebuilding and stabilisation efforts. Its impact has derived from two achievements: it has shown that some forms of corruption can, in some circumstances, have stabilising effects; and it has produced a rigorous assessment of what works – and what does not work – in donor-funded anti-corruption efforts. It has thus influenced and informed the debates of policy-makers in the Department for International Development (DFID) and the inter-departmental Stabilisation Unit (SU: the UK government’s centre for expertise and best practice in stabilisation). The impact of Zaum’s work has been both recognised and amplified by fellowships with DFID and the SU. This has enabled Zaum himself to accentuate the impact through formal presentations, informal internal discussion, and implementation-oriented publications, thus influencing the perspectives of a policymaking community both inside and beyond these institutions. The impact can be evidenced through such measures as downloads of his policy papers, the use of these papers in training and as resources, and through the testimony of officials.</p> <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Between September 2006 (when he came to Reading) and July 2013, Professor Zaum conducted extensive research into international statebuilding and stabilisation practices in fragile states, some of it based in fieldwork in state-building operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. While state- and peace-building scholarship has been a rapidly growing field, there has been little thorough investigation of the effect of specific state-building policies and practices, including anti-corruption policies. For the last five years, his research has therefore focussed on the effect of state-building and stabilisation efforts on the political economy of fragile and conflict-affected states, including work on corruption and anti-corruption practices. This has involved conceptual work, especially on corruption, as well as desk- and field-based empirical research. The main research question underlying these efforts has been: what is the effect of contemporary state-building activities on conflict-affected societies?</p> <p>Zaum’s first book (completed at Reading) was <i>The Sovereignty Paradox: The Norms and Politics of International State-Building</i> (2007). His subsequent research (conceived and carried through at Reading) has shifted focus from the character of state-building interventions to their effects, specifically their effects on the political economy of conflict-affected countries. This problem has been largely unaddressed by the existing academic and non-academic literature, but is relevant to the urgent practical need to hinder a relapse to violence. In 2009, Zaum undertook a project co-directed with Professor Mats Berdal of King’s College London entitled ‘Power after Peace: The Political Economy of Post-Conflict State-building’, supported by a \$390,000 grant from the International Peace and Security Programme of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This project has highlighted in particular the different ways in which state-building interventions have frequently inadvertently entrenched war-time and pre-war economic and political structures (rather than transforming them), and the important role of informal (often war-time) institutions in post-war transitions. Both are often ignored by current state-building and stabilisation policymakers. The project has resulted in a range of workshops with policymakers and practitioners - including a large conference at Wilton Park (an executive agency of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office providing a global forum for strategic discussion) - to engage them in the research process, and in a major co-edited volume.</p> <p>This line of research has been complemented by more specialised work on corruption and state-building/peacebuilding interventions; in particular, a World Bank-funded project that resulted in a co-edited (with Christine Cheng) special issue of the journal <i>International Peacekeeping</i> and a co-edited book, <i>Corruption and Post-conflict Peacebuilding: Selling the Peace?</i>, which updated and extended the contributions to the special issue, and is the first book-length treatment of the problem. Six of its chapters, including the chapter by the editors, were included in the anti-</p>

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corruption background paper for the landmark 2011 World Bank World Development Report on Conflict, Security and Development.

Zaum's research into corruption and the political economy of state-building

- Uncovered how external interventions often inadvertently entrench existing informal political and economic structures, including structures and relationships characterised by corruption;
- Distinguished between two separate effects of corruption. While corruption undermines 'vertical' state-building - the emergence and consolidation of a social contract structured around formal governance institutions and the provision of basic public services - and frequently fuels insecurity, it can, however, be central to 'horizontal' state-building; managing and stabilising the relationships between different politically salient identity groups, and between these groups and state institutions.
- Demonstrated, in consequence, that certain forms of corruption can contribute to stabilising conflict-affected states, even though this often comes at the price of entrenched injustice. Corruption can be central to the maintenance of elite settlements that strengthen state resilience against violence. Anti-corruption efforts that undermine these settlements can therefore be destabilising, and can fuel violence.

On the basis of such insights, Zaum was awarded an ESRC Public Sector Placement Fellowship (2011-12) – one of only nine knowledge exchange fellowships in the public, private and third sector awarded by the ESRC in 2010/11 – and a Senior Research Fellowship in Conflict and Fragility at DFID (2011 – 2013). As part of these fellowships, Zaum has produced further work of intellectual value for a non-academic audience, including: an internal paper and a Stabilisation Issue Note on *Addressing Corruption in Stabilisation Environments* (2012); and a critical evaluation of the evidence about the effect of donor-supported anti-corruption interventions. This critique was peer-reviewed and later published by U4 (the leading anti-corruption resource centre for donor practitioners) as *Mapping Evidence Gaps in Anti-Corruption* (2012).

### 3. References to the research

Publications by Professor Dominik Zaum. These have been internally assessed as of at least 2\* quality:

- Special Issue of *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.15/3 (2008), on corruption and peacebuilding. ISSN 1353-3312 Peer reviewed journal
- *Corruption and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Selling the Peace?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011). Co-edited volume with Christine Cheng, 300 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-62048-2 (hbk) Anonymously peer reviewed
- *The Political Economy of Post-Conflict Statebuilding* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), co-edited with Mats Berdal, 416 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-60478-9 (hbk)
- *Corruption and Stabilisation*, London, Stabilisation Unit, March 2012. A revised version of this internal paper was published as "Corruption and State-Building", in David Chandler and Timothy Sisk (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of International Statebuilding*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 15-28. ISBN: 978-0415677028. Chandler and Sisk are internationally leading scholars in the field.
- *Addressing Corruption in Stabilisation Environments*, Stabilisation Issue Note, Stabilisation Unit, London, September 2012. ([www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk](http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk))
- *Mapping Evidence Gaps in Anti-Corruption: Assessing the state of the operationally relevant evidence on actions and approaches to reducing corruption*, (with Jesper Johnson and Nils Taxell), U4 Issue Paper, Bergen, 2012. Peer reviewed for U4 before publication.

Grant: Power after Peace: The Political Economy of Statebuilding

PI: Dominik Zaum

Sponsor: Carnegie Corporation of New York

Value: \$390,000

Duration: 2009 - 2013

### 4. Details of the impact

Through his research on statebuilding and on corruption, Zaum has become a leading authority in the field, who has been sought out by policymakers and practitioners. Its impact has been much facilitated by his appointment in October 2011 to two public-sector fellowships, initially held simultaneously: the ESRC Public Sector Placement Fellowship held at the Stabilisation Unit and

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the Senior Research Fellowship held at DFID (the Stabilisation Unit is the UK government's centre for expertise and best practice in stabilisation, reporting to DFID, the Ministry of Defence, and the Foreign Office). These fellowships have enabled him to engage directly with these institutions on corruption-related issues, especially in the context of fragile and conflict-affected states. They also supplied the occasion for internal papers and presentations that have shaped the way corruption is discussed and understood among a wide range of British public servants.

The research has been disseminated among non-academics through at least three different channels:

1) The findings of the Carnegie-funded project on 'Power after Peace' have been widely presented to policymakers and state-building practitioners. In the UK alone, events designed to publicise the findings have included a large policy conference at Wilton Park in 2011; two presentations at the Foreign Office (one on the general findings in 2013, and one specifically on implications of the research for stabilising Libya in 2011); and one each at DFID, the Stabilisation Unit (SU), and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Foreign Affairs. Outside the UK, invited presentations have been given to policy audiences in the US (CSIS and State Department), Norway, Sweden, and Germany.

2) Zaum wrote two policy-oriented papers for the Stabilisation Unit on corruption and stabilisation. These papers have been circulated across Whitehall. One of the SU papers has been published on the SU's website as a *Stabilisation Issue Note* in July 2012. These Issue Notes are substantial and original papers reflecting the SU's understanding of the evidence and good practice which '[draw] on and amplify UK government policy and thinking on conflict'. On the basis of this work, the anti-corruption resource centre U4 (which is supported by several leading donor agencies) commissioned Zaum to write an additional briefing paper on corruption. The research has been presented at the SU, DFID, the Land Intelligence Fusion Centre Afghanistan, and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

3) Zaum led a research team writing a systematic appraisal of the evidence on donor-funded anti-corruption interventions for DFID, which showed that strong evidence of efficacy existed for only 2 of the 22 interventions. The findings of the anti-corruption evidence appraisal have been formally presented to policymakers and practitioners, especially in Whitehall. The presentations included a large workshop with international partners and NGOs (including the World Bank, UNDP, the OECD/DAC, and Transparency International, the leading anti-corruption NGO and research institute) and a lecture to over 100 DFID conflict and governance advisors at their professional development conference (2012). It has also included a large number of smaller presentations to policymakers and practitioners, such as members of the SU, DFID's Fragile States and Conflict team, the DFID Fraud and Anti-Corruption team, and Foreign Office diplomats working in Latin America. The anti-corruption evidence appraisal has been peer reviewed and published by the U4 in October 2012 as *Mapping Evidence Gaps*, enabling it to reach a wider audience of practitioners.

The most immediate impact is that the research has informed and enriched debates about corruption in fragile and conflict-affected societies within both DFID and the SU. The impact claimed is not that it has altered the basic principles of the UK's or more specifically DFID's anti-corruption policy: DFID officially has a 'zero-tolerance' policy towards corruption; this is neither changed nor challenged by Zaum's research. But his dissemination of his analysis has had the effect of altering perspectives by showing that corruption can contribute to stabilising conflict-affected states, even though this often comes at the price of entrenched injustice. Anti-corruption efforts that undermine these arrangements can therefore be destabilising, and can fuel violence. Evidence for the uptake of this research includes:

- The popularity of the *Stabilisation Issue Note*. The note has been downloaded over 300 times from the SU Website between September 2012 and February 2013, after which the SU no longer systematically recorded downloads. This makes it one of the most popular downloads for this period.
- The use of the note used by senior UK military officers in a NATO conference on "Building Integrity" in Monterey in February 2013 in a presentation on UK thinking on the subject
- Inclusion of the note in the reading pack prepared for DFID's Governance and Conflict Advisors Professional Development Conference in Leeds in December 2012.
- Use of the note by the Transition Planning Team for the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in their post-2013 transition planning. The transition advisor to the head of the

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PRT, Peter Rundell, confirmed that the paper 'affected the way we in the PRT...thought about corruption and planned anti-corruption work'.

- A presentation on the note to the Land Intelligence Fusion Centre (Afghanistan), at a workshop informing their planning and analysis of developments in Afghanistan post-2013. In the judgement of the Centre's commander, Lt.Col. Andrew Perrey, this helped LIFC(A) 'to view the challenges relating to Afghanistan from a very different perspective than their usual military one'.
- Continuing demand for similar work: at the end of the assessment period Zaum was commissioned to write a briefing Note for publication by U4 on corruption in fragile and conflict-affected states, and to present on the issue to senior military officers at the Royal Defence College in October 2013.

On the more specialised question of what works - and does not - in anti-corruption, the *Mapping Evidence Gaps* paper highlighted that there is strong evidence for the effectiveness of only two anti-corruption interventions: public financial management reforms; and supreme audit institutions. For the remaining 22 interventions, the evidence was either fair or weak, or the findings were contested. For advisors who are developing anti-corruption programmes, this constitutes important evidence for their business cases. Evidence of its impact includes:

- The appearance of the paper in a list of top-12 readings for DFID advisors on anti-corruption.
- The use of the paper's findings to set the research agenda for a proposed £10 million DFID operationally oriented research programme, to strengthen the evidence base for its anti-corruption interventions.
- The use of the paper as background reading and in training sessions for DFID country offices for writing anti-corruption and counter-fraud strategies. 29 country offices, which design and manage development programmes, have now adopted such strategies.
- Its popularity as a download from the U4 anti-corruption resource site ([www.u4.no](http://www.u4.no)), a donor-funded resource centre not confined to UK government employees, suggests that it is also having a wider impact on corruption debates amongst researchers and practitioners beyond DFID.

Zaum has taken social-scientific findings informed by properly rigorous comparative research to the officials who have found them practically useful. The immediate beneficiaries have been DFID and the SU, whose understanding of what works and what does not work in anti-corruption, and of the effect of corruption on stabilisation and state-building environments, has improved. As a result of DFID's influential role and 'thought leadership' on many development issues, the benefits have extended to other development and state-building actors, most strikingly to soldiers based in Afghanistan at several removes from Zaum himself. As corruption is both a key challenge to the effectiveness of development and a key source of insecurity in any state recovering from conflict, it would be hard to exaggerate his impact's social value.

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

The individuals below can corroborate the detailed impact. Contact details have been provided separately.

- Head of Governance, Conflict and Social Development Research Team, DFID (can confirm the impact of the *Mapping Evidence Gaps* paper on DFID's thinking and its future research agenda).
- Head of Lessons Team, Stabilisation Unit (can confirm the impact of the corruption and stabilisation work on thinking in the SU).
- Head of the Fraud and Anti-Corruption Team, DFID (can confirm the impact of the *Mapping Evidence Gaps* paper on thinking in DFID and its use in training).
- FCO research analyst (can confirm the impact of the *Power after Peace* work on thinking in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office).
- Anti-corruption lead, DFID Fragile States and Conflict Group (can confirm the impact of the *Corruption and Stabilisation* work on DFID, especially DFID CHASE (Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department)).