Security sector reform in Africa: donor approaches versus local needs

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Abstract:

Many African states have security sector reform (SSR) programs. These are often internationally funded. But how do such programs account for previously existing security institutions and the security needs of local communities? This article examines SSR all over Africa to assess local ownership and path dependency from a New Institutionalist perspective. It finds that SSR, particularly in post-conflict countries, tends to be driven by ideas and perceptions of international donors promoting generalized blueprints. Often, such programs only account in a very limited way for path-dependent aspects of security institutions or the local context. Hence the reforms often lack local participation and are thus not accepted by the local community eventually.

Keywords: Security Sector Reform, African security, international engagement, local ownership, New Institutionalism

Many African states have security sector reform (SSR) programs. SSR is commonly defined as changes in the structure and conduct of those state institutions responsible for the prosecution and punishment of non-legal manifestations of violence: the military, police, and judiciary. This raises the question how do internationally funded or nationally led programs account for previously existing security institutions and the security needs of local communities? And what are the implications for the effectiveness of these efforts? The security sector represents the most visible arm of governments. In a Western centric perception, these three institutions work together to sustain the state monopoly on the legitimate use of force in order to establish and maintain security in a country and protect its people from any kind of violence (Weber, 1980 [1922]). According to international donors, many countries in the world, however, suffer from an imbalance of these security institutions–and African countries are no exception.

One common strategy by governments and international donors to tackle ongoing armed conflict and political instability in African countries is security sector reform (SSR). This often includes the following measures (Brzoska, 2003; Brzoska & Heinemann-Grüder, 2004; Hänggi, 2004):

(a) *military reform*, such as the restructuring, reduction, merging, or creation of armed forces, the education and training of recruits and the separation of the tasks of police and the military;

(b) *police reform,* such as the restructuring, creation, education and training of police forces and the recruitment of officers;

(c) *judicial reform,* such as the creation of an independent judiciary through legal separation and changes to judicial appointments, and the development of basic foundations of rule of law and training of judicial personnel.[1]

In post-conflict countries, programs towards the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants (DDR) are seen as necessity to re-establish the monopoly on the use of force. DDR is, however, often not considered as part of SSR. It is considered a necessary prior step creating appropriate conditions for SSR activities (Bendix & Stanley, 2008, p. 17). Hence, only a few international actors, such as the United Nations (UN) or the World Bank, engage in DDR activities.

To understand processes of SSR, it is useful to consider insights from New Institutionalism and its variant historical institutionalism. According to Fioretus, Falleti, and Sheingate (2016, p. 9; see also Ansorg & Kurtenbach 2016), historical institutionalism adopts two ontological claims: (1) causally relevant conditions can combine in varied ways to produce a given outcome, and (2) that the same inputs and causal mechanisms, in different contexts, can yield different outcomes. In other words, once a decision for a particular institutional path is made, it is hard to go back and go another way (Pierson, 2004). Furthermore, different institutional choices have different implications according to the domestic, cultural, and political context.

When analyzing SSR efforts, it is useful to apply an institutionalist lens. First, the reform of the security sector does not happen from scratch. It is path dependent upon previous

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[1] Due to limited data availability, I will not include penal reform or reform of the intelligence services and thus follow a rather narrow understanding of SSR.

choices of how police, military, and judiciary were designed in a country and what role they played in the previous political regime or throughout violent conflict. According to Pierson (2004, p. 20), path dependency is defined as "dynamic processes involving positive feedback," or self-reinforcement. Large set-up costs or increasing returns, for example, generate positive feedback effects that make the departure or deviation from an existing path increasingly more difficult over time. Particularly the establishment of a security sector and civilian trust (or distrust) towards it involves significant commitment and once it is established it is very difficult to change it easily. Hence, Pierson's more general claim that any revisions will be "powerfully constrained and channeled by previous institutional choices" (p. 152) is also valid for the security sector.

Second, and related, the local environment also affects the effectiveness of a reform of the security sector. As the literature on local ownership in peacebuilding and SSR repeatedly pointed out, international reform efforts cannot ignore the local needs of security provision (Hirblinger & Simons, 2015; Hönke & Müller, 2012; Zanker, 2016). Rather, the needs of the local community should be included in the reform programs so that the local community eventually accepts the reform.

Institutionalists have therefore repeatedly stressed the endurance of institutions, and their invariance despite the turnover of individuals; in other words, institutions tend to be resilient to change (March & Olsen, 1989, 2008; Pierson, 2004). However, there may be particular moments, or windows of opportunity (Pierson, 2004, p. 152), which make institutional development more likely. First, institutional reform of the security sector is particularly likely during or after conflict. When a previous political system is turned over by violent conflict, there is often a critical juncture that can contribute to a reform of security sector institutions. Former warring parties, but also international peacebuilders like the UN or bilateral donors, may support a change of the security institutions and an adjustment to the needs of a post-conflict environment, such as increased need of civilian protection as well as DDR programs for former rebels.

Second, security institutions can also change incrementally in peaceful times. As Mahoney and Thelen (2010) have shown, even in the absence of exogenous shocks, gradual institutional change is possible, though in subtle way and observable over a span of a couple of years and decades. The need for institutional change then often reflects contradicting opinions by opponents and challenges by social and political actors on the ground (Capoccia, 2016) and the possibility to slowly displace, layer, drift, or converse existing rules (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010, p. 15ff.). In this article, I take a look at security sector reform in different circumstances–after conflict and during peaceful times–and assess if SSR programs take into account path dependent practices and local contexts.

To assess the reform of the security sector, I explore 47 different countries in North and sub-Saharan Africa,[2] dividing them into two groups. First, those that experienced large scale violence with over 1,000 cumulative battle-related deaths over the period of an armed conflict (Gleditsch, Wallensteen, Eriksson, Sollenberg, & Strand, 2002; Pettersson & Wallensteen, 2015). This includes 20 conflict and post-conflict countries such as Mozambique or South Sudan. Second are those countries that have not experienced large-scale violence (although they may suffer from smaller incidences of armed violence or coup

attempts), and can be seen as either transitional or stable countries. In these 27 countries, particularly Cameroon and Tanzania, the challenges do not lie in post-conflict reconstruction itself, but more in a transformative reform of the security sector.

I assess if there was, in the period of 1990-2015, any kind of substantive reform of the security sector.[3] If there are only superficial efforts towards reform, I do not count it as SSR. To assess reform aspects of the security sector I looked into single case studies, policy reports, as well as news sites to find any information on the implementation of the different areas of SSR. I then coded a "1" if a program was implemented. If I could not find any information on a SSR program, I coded a "0". Additionally, I collected descriptive information on the inclusion of previous institutional settings as well as the attendance towards local context conditions for the reform of the security sector.

I find that SSR processes all over Africa, but particularly in post-conflict countries tend to be disproportionally driven by ideas and perceptions of international donors promoted in generalized blueprints. Often, these programs only account in a limited way for the local context of SSR. Hence, the reforms often lack local participation and are thus not accepted by the local community eventually.

One result of this misfit between donor-driven approaches and local needs is that the dominant paradigm of SSR and security governance is fundamentally at odds with the underlying realities of African states, where state authority and security can be exercised also by different local or traditional actors that exist beyond the nation state (Bagayoko, Hutchful, & Luckham, 2016, p. 2). Most international SSR programs do not account for these local contexts and thus do not include informal, alternative actors of security into their programs. At the same time, there are only a handful of states where SSR is driven by local actors, often in cases where there is a strong motivation of local actors due to military victory as in Angola or Rwanda or in case of a strong unifying moment as in South Africa. Further, SSR in transitional countries is often a matter of elite control. Again, due to the requirements of donors, which fund these activities, governments try to comply with the Western notion of security sector and its reform and do only narrowly account for path dependency or the local contexts of the security sector. They turn their back towards alternative and more informal aspects of security sector that are already existent in most of the countries.

The article proceeds as follows: the next section will deal with the particular challenge of SSR in post-conflict countries, before I turn to SSR in transforming countries. By way of conclusion, I discuss the possibility of a turn towards more informal security structures.

SSR as part of (post-conflict) peacebuilding

In African countries affected by large-scale violence, we can see an increased need for institutional reform of the security sector. Often, the state itself, together with military and police, is involved in the armed conflict and thus not able to protect its people anymore. The population may lack trust in the security institutions, and as a result they seek for their safety from attacks by either the state or non-state actors. The judiciary is often completely destroyed or malfunctions. And opposing parties challenge the formerly enduring collection

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of rules and organized practices. At the end of the conflict and particularly in peace negotiations, warring parties will push for a reform of the security sector and an inclusion in the different security institutions. Exogenous pressure might come from international donors, which engage in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. In these difficult times, the two aspects that New Institutionalism has stressed as particularly important for institutional reform need to be included: the path dependency of security institutions as well as the local contexts and needs of the population (Pierson, 2004, p. 150ff.).

Most of the African conflict and post-conflict countries had or have seen some kind of SSR activities. As Graph 1 shows, for post-conflict countries, a majority saw the need for some sort of reform of security sector institutions, with only the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), Chad or Libya having no tangible reform activities. While most SSR programs or activities comprise comprehensive reforms that cover multiple areas at the same time, it is possible to distinguish between the different activities of institutional security sector reform. As a DDR program is seen as a necessary prior step creating appropriate conditions for SSR activities (Bendix & Stanley, 2008, p. 17), it is unsurprising that a majority of the post-conflict countries saw a DDR program implemented. This includes the demobilization and reintegration of the fighters from RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) in Mozambique with the help of the UN.

A second big area of reform is military reform. After large-scale armed conflict, the military often needs to be reduced to a size appropriate to peaceful times. Military reform can also include the societal make-up of the military, as occurred in Burundi where the share of Tutsi and Hutu in the army was changed in the course of the military reform program. Police and judiciary reform are slightly smaller reform areas, as most SSR programs first target short-term security establishment before they attend to build up police and judiciary. Again unsurprisingly, most of the countries saw some kind of engagement by external actors in the reform process. This can include large-scale reform programs such as in South Sudan, Liberia, or the DRC; or smaller activities such as technical support or funding of activities as in Uganda or Algeria.

Graph 1 – SSR in conflict and transitional countries (in percentage)
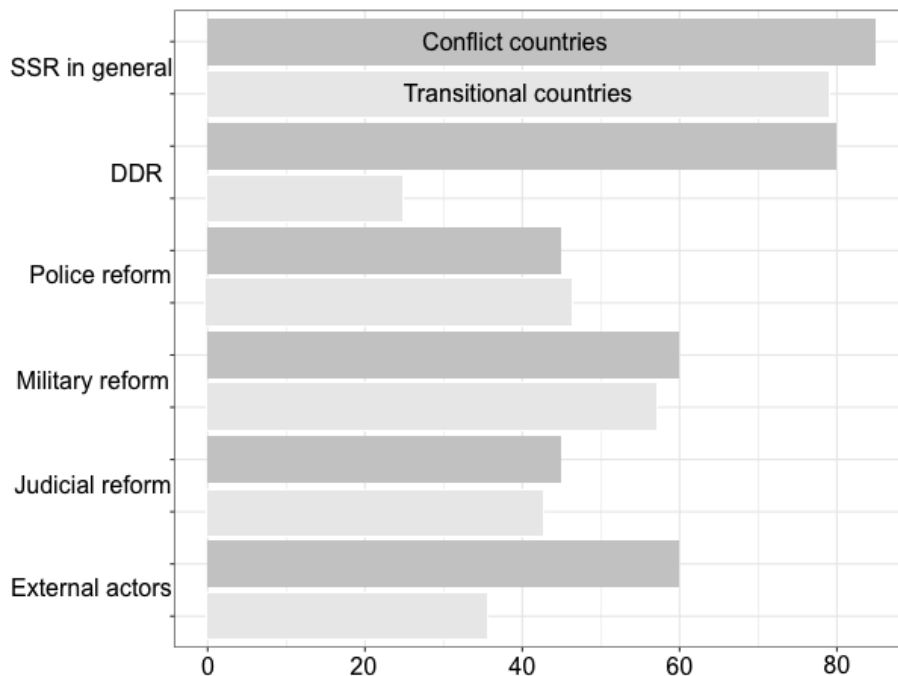
Evidence from the analyzed countries shows that international engagement is strong particularly in those cases where the conflict cleavages between conflict parties or ethnic groups are particularly severe and thus the commitment problems with the conflict actors are particularly high (Fearon, 1995; Walter, 2001). In those cases, external actors often set the agenda of the reform program, and they are the ones who push into the direction of a Westernized SSR program. Countries affected by an intense involvement of the international community include Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, or South Sudan.

However, a high international engagement does not necessarily mean that institutional reform is more successful and the chances of peace are more likely. This is due to two reasons: first, previous research has shown that international actors like the UN tend to engage in the most severe cases, where third party guarantees are most needed due to the severity of the conflict or the deep cleavages between the conflict parties (Ruggeri, Dorussen, & Gizelis, 2016). This means that chances of peace are lower from the outset than in countries where conflict is less severe.

Second, in those cases of utmost emergency, international peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions tend to build peace and implement security sector reform according to fixed blueprints but often without linking them to the previous institutional settings or specific local contexts. SSR programs including DDR, police, military, and judiciary reform are then merely a box-ticking exercise without attention to local needs and wishes. Due to the emergency of many post-conflict situations, this might be the quickest and easiest way. However, institutions tend to be sticky and the endeavor of reform will fail if the reformers do not attend to the path dependent nature of institutions. Hence, these programs often do not create security institutions accepted by everyone in society, but they rather lead to a lack of trust by the local communities in these security institutions, in particular towards police and judiciary.

For instance, even though Burundi saw UN engagement as well as a thorough DDR program and military and police reform (Edmonds, Mills, & McNamee, 2009), serious challenges remain in the country and it just recently suffered from a renewed outbreak of violence. The DDR program that was run by the World Bank prioritized working through the national government and did not include local actors such as local NGOs, community members, and ex-combatants themselves (Willems, Kleingeld, & van Leeuwen, 2010, p. 13ff.). The lack of rooting the program at the sub-national level led to frustration of local actors (ibid.).

Furthermore, while the peacekeeping mission was engaged in a reform of security institutions such as the police or military, they failed to account for past make up and historical dependency of these security institutions. This led to a mistrust of the security institutions by the local population. The police are not following the rule of law, but often serve the ruling party for their political ends (Ball, 2014). Further, the international

peacekeeping mission implemented institutional reform of the security sector, but did not actually link this to trust-building measurements on the ground. Thus, many Burundians perceive the police as agents of repression and do not see them as independent and objective source of order. As a consequence, the willingness amongst the population to resort to vigilantism or "mob justice" increased in the years since the end of the conflict (Ball, 2014).

Another critical case where international perceptions of SSR are far from local needs is South Sudan. In South Sudan, an ambitious plan for SSR clashes with the lack of sufficient resources for the mammoth task to establish a new state in the shadow of ongoing violence. For instance, prior to South Sudan's independence in 2011, the international peacekeeping force UNMIS focused only minimally on SSR as the mission was under-resourced and often distracted by conflict management of South Sudan's internal conflicts (Yakovenko, 2014, p. 45). Not enough attention was paid to diverging political interests of the actors on the ground–hence, international actors as well as the new national government failed to account for path dependency and the societal context that make up South Sudan's security situation until today.

Nowadays, insecurity continues to be high due to tensions at the border with Sudan and inter-factional and inter-ethnic tensions in South Sudan itself (cf. Snowden 2012: 9ff.). Thus, any process of SSR is only slow or will be postponed to a later point in time. For example, in 2013 the World Bank estimated that the SPLA and the southern militias made up about 300,000 soldiers in combined strength (Yakovenko, 2014, p. 52f.). A reduction of fighters would be more than necessary, as the size is unsustainable and the previous integration of militias without vetting led to massive human rights abuses (Yakovenko, 2014, p. 53). However, the current security situation prevents any thorough reform of the military. As Munive states, standard DDR programs and their templates do not fit in a context like South Sudan, were perceptions of international donors clash with (in-)security and political realities of actors on the ground (Munive, 2013, p. 8).

Besides the post-conflict countries with major peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions, there are a couple of countries where the international engagement was quite low. This might be due to different reasons: first, local actors feel responsible for their own reform efforts and are reluctant to let a huge peacekeeping or peacebuilding mission into the country, as happened in Rwanda or Angola. Second, there might be a local need of international assistance, but international actors on the other hand are reluctant to engage in the reform process as it might be seen to cost- or time-intensive and political or economic will is lacking, as occurred in the Central African Republic.

In Rwanda, for example the government "owned" the whole process from conceptualization to implementation and the international community only partially funded the SSR activities (Edmonds et al., 2009). One reason for this is the lack of international prevention of the genocide in 1994, which is why the Rwandan government did not allow major international intrusion in security or statebuilding matters. After the complete destruction of the security sector during the genocide, the new government managed to reinstall military, police, and judiciary within only a couple of years (Edmonds et al., 2009). During this process, Rwanda has maintained a strong commitment to the idea that reform must be locally owned and driven, and not be imposed from the outside (Edmonds et al., 2009). The government in Kigali has been able to set its own agenda based on the assessment of what needs to be done to meet the country's requirements and invites international partners to complement its

efforts where local capacity and resources are lacking. While this can be a model for countries with a strong willing and able government, it comes with certain drawbacks: Rwanda is an authoritarian country today, which hardly allows for critical comments on government policies.

In most conflict and post-conflict countries, we find what New Institutionalism conceptualizes as critical juncture: political opponents challenge the old institutional system, and there is the chance of establishing a new system. Thus, there is a window of opportunity (Pierson, 2004, p. 152) that makes institutional development, also in the security sector, more likely. Particularly in those cases where conflict cleavages between conflict parties or ethnic groups are severe, we can find a strong international engagement in the reform of the security sector. However, due to the difficulties of compromise between conflict actors, the most obvious solution for international donors in these cases seem to be a prescription of Western SSR approaches as stabilizing tool–often without enough attention to the given institutional realities on the ground and thus without the necessary inclusion of path dependency and local needs in the design of the reform programs.

The internationally-driven SSR programs and the related templates do not account for specific circumstances or societal contexts that are seen as most important by New Institutionalism (cf. March & Olsen, 1989; Pierson, 2004). Due to very high expectations on the donor side to create a security sector in the Weberian style, a "failure" in the Western sense of SSR is often inevitable. Moreover, this approach is blind on the side of local, traditional attempts of security provisions that might work better for some African contexts. There are few exceptions were the process is in the hands of the governing elite, such as in Rwanda or Angola. This often comes at cost at authoritarian decisions and the creation of a security sector that is not driven by rule of law, but the political will of the government.

SSR in transitional or stable countries

Institutional reform can also occur in the absence of exogenous shocks or critical junctures in a gradual and subtle way and incrementally over a span of a couple of years and decades (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). This is also the case with SSR in transitional countries. The need to reform the security sector is not as pending as it is in countries affected by large-scale violence. However, due to ongoing insecurities, for instance by low scale armed conflict or military coups, SSR can take place incrementally. In fact, institutional reform of the security sector often reflects underlying processes of imperfect compliance, rule reinterpretation, and coalition building among social and political actors (Capoccia, 2016). International donors often fund the reforms, as there are not enough resources available in many countries.

As Graph 1 shows, despite the lack of urgency, a majority of the non-conflict countries in the sample still implement some reforms of the security sector. Five countries, Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, and Zimbabwe, did not see any tangible SSR efforts in the analyzed time period. The number of DDR measures in transitional countries is naturally lower than for post-conflict countries, and most of the transitional countries implement DDR as part of a post-coup process to reduce the numbers of the military as in Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, or Zambia. Others implement a DDR program as part of their attempted transition towards democracy or after minor armed conflict, such as in South Africa, Mali, Namibia, or Niger. Military reform is prevalent in a majority of the analyzed transitional countries, which is unsurprising given the role the military plays in many African

polities. Police and judiciary reform is less pending in transitional countries, and thus both reform areas are only tackled in about half of the analyzed countries. Even though the urgency of SSR is not as pending in transitional countries as it is in conflict countries, there is still quite some international engagement in the SSR activities (41%).

Due to the nature of the political situation in transitional countries, international donors engage far less and less extensive than in conflict or post-conflict countries. Usually, they focus on funding and support for SSR programs, although not without pushing into a certain direction of the Western model of state and security and with similar implications for success and failure of the missions. This comes often at the cost of leaving the local perception of security and the established institutional settings.

The EUSSR Mission in Guinea Bissau from 2008-2010 is a notorious example here (Kohl, 2014, 2015). Designed as comprehensive SSR mission that included three different areas of security assistance–military reform, police reform, and judicial reform including rule of law– it lays bare the problems many developing countries face with the unrealistic expectations of international donors: There were differing understandings and expectations on EU and Bissau-Guinean side; the mission lacked coordination, integration, flexibility and continuity among the different fields of activity; the financial resources of the mission were inadequate; there was insufficient incorporation of societal actors and representatives from the Bissau-Guinean security sector in the reform process; and there was poor communication between the involved parties (Kohl, 2014, p. I).

Furthermore, as Ansorg and Haastrup (2016, p. 14ff.) point out, while the EU mainly cooperated with male elites in the country, local-level and particularly female-driven NGOs were not consulted. The efforts of the EU mission did not speak to the institutional settings on the ground and did not account for path dependency and local contexts. The misfit between expectations of the EU and local needs and wishes became particularly evident when the mission was completed and regarded as failure by the local community.

South Africa on the other hand seems to be an exception in regards to the inclusion of local level actors (Africa, 2008; Rauch & Van der Spuy, 2006). After the end of the Apartheid, the responsible majority party ANC did not have any expertise in the matter of security sector reform, and hence they made significant use of the security knowledge of domestic policing researchers, lawyers, peace workers and human rights activists (Rauch & Van der Spuy, 2006, p. 21). Thus, NGOs enjoyed a particularly high visibility in the South African program, which was due to the transparency and consultative character (Hutchful & Fayemi, 2005, p. 82). The SSR program in South Africa shows a high attention to previous institutional settings and the problems that evolved out of the Apartheid rule. To solve these problems, local actors were included in the design and implementation of the program. Thus, in this case reform was implemented with regards to path dependency and context of institutions. However, the high levels of crime that still persist in South Africa until today could not be tackled by this approach. They are more a matter of lacking economic opportunities for large parts of the society than of successful security sector reform.

In South Africa, the inclusion of the societal and political context played a prominent role, thus highlighting the importance of path dependent practices. These factors, however, have been limited by a combination of political constraints, limited capacity and interest in most other African countries (Hutchful & Fayemi, 2005). In other African transitional countries,

security is often a matter of elite control and the process of reform is in the hands of a few political elites, who only narrowly account for the path dependency and context of institutional settings. In some cases, institutional change in the security sector tends to serve the government to strengthen their power rather than to transform the system and include the local level in the security sector. Parliaments also have been relatively marginal actors in defense management and oversight, despite constitutional provisions (Hutchful & Fayemi, 2005).

In Guinea, for example, security sector governance is traditionally an unfamiliar topic (Bangoura, 2015). Guinea is a country that has long been governed by successive dictatorial regimes that were strongly linked to the military–from Sékou Touré to Lansana Conté to Moussa Dadis Camara, who was removed from power by the military in 2009. Some first cautious steps of military, police, and judicial reform were initiated under President Alpha Condé, but without particular attention to the specific role of the military in the Guinean politics. Path dependency and the local context did not play a role, and the reform efforts were only half-hearted. Thus the reform died again slowly in the years after.

Ghana, on the other hand, has always been very open to the reform and democratization of its security sector. It is seen as island of peace and stability in Western Africa, and several donors, including the British DFID, the German GIZ, Denmark, the US, as well as the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development were engaged in supporting Ghana in the endeavor of SSR (Bendix & Stanley, 2008, p. 50). However, some of the reform efforts have not been particularly successful as they did not account for the role of path dependency in institutional reform: Ghana's police service is a direct descendant of the British colonial police force, and it continues to exhibit many of the same traits (The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2007, p. 7). The experience many people in Ghana make with the state police is often shaped by corruption, illegal arrest and detention, excessive use of force or a failure to respond to complaints (The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2007, p. 27). At the same time, traditional policing by ethnic communities such as the Akan or Ewe that would be more accepted on a local level has never been included in the colonial or post-colonial reform efforts (The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2007, p. 10). And, internationally supported police reform looks more towards "modernizing" the police force and making it more "effective and disciplined" (BICC/GTZ, 2006, p. 5) than to integrate traditional, communal forms of policing.

As transitional countries lack exogenous shocks or windows of opportunity, reform of the security sector is often very slow and gradual, as has been theorized, inter alia, by Mahoney and Thelen (2010). In those cases where the international community was engaged in the SSR programs, we can see a promotion of Western priorities at the expense of the historical or societal contexts of the incumbent country. In other cases reform efforts were very slow and died out eventually. A positive example is South Africa, which paid attention to particular historical legacies of Apartheid and faced the challenges by including local actors in the process.

Conclusion: A way forward towards more informal security structures?

Current international approaches to SSR have largely failed to account for existing structures as fundamental to institutional reform. Institutional reform cannot be seen as independent

from previous institutional choices that constitutes the local context. This has implications for the reform of the security sector. In other words, the reform of the security sector does not occur in a historical vacuum, but is dependent upon previous choices of how police, military, and judiciary are designed in a country. Moreover, the local context of the security sector also highly affects the effectiveness of a reform.

However, when analyzing SSR programs across Africa, it becomes evident that international donors, in particular, do not take history and the local context into account. Rather, they continue to follow the Weberian paradigm and adopt a generalized template of SSR that does not fit well with the historical and local conditions in many African countries. The programs are then accompanied by large claims and unrealistic expectations on the side of the funding international actors (Chappuis & Bryden, 2015, p. 152). The agenda of these SSR programs is often set by international funding agencies from the Global North, which do not account for local needs or specific context conditions. This in turn creates a dependency on the West for funding resources, which counters the attempt of local ownership of reform (Rauch & Van der Spuy, 2006, p. 17). At the same time, Western approaches of SSR are blind on the side of local, traditional attempts of security provisions that might work better for some African contexts.

The dominant paradigm of SSR and its related templates of reform are at odds with many underlying realities of the African state, where authority and security can be exercised by different state and non-state actors (Bagayoko et al., 2016, p. 2). These alternative security actors may be active within or outside the formal arenas of the state. Often, they are more accepted by local communities and individuals far away from the capitals as they have a closer link to these communities. But because they fall outside of the types of interlocutors that international donors and Western actors engage, they are disregarded in many internationally funded attempts of SSR.

Instead of only promoting one model of security governance that does not relate to African realities, international donors and agencies promoting SSR should try and capture the different, informal security institutions and integrate informal security actors in the reform processes as well. There is a wide variety of informal institutions that exist alongside or within formal political institutions and that are at play in decision-making processes and public policies (Bagayoko, 2012, p. 3; Hall & Taylor, 1996).

Approaches such as community policing in Sierra Leone could be exemplary here. After the end of the civil war, it was promoted as one way of regaining trust on a very local level: Among the institutions created to involve the public was a civil society forum that gave communities a voice in local policing, a role in crime prevention, and a means of monitoring the police (Groenewald & Peake, 2004, p. 7). In South Africa, community policing was also a useful tool to transform a former apartheid institution into an acceptable and legitimate tool of social control (Rauch & Van der Spuy, 2006, p. 21). Such kinds of activities create a higher ownership at a local level and increase trust of the local population in security institutions. They further account for the historical legacies of policing in these countries. The challenge therefore is not to terminate existing local and informal social contracts for the sake of Western models of security, but instead to make local governance more responsive and effective in a manner that accommodates the legitimacy of local authorities (Leonard, 2013, p. 7).

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