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The UN and SSR: Between the primacy of politics and the echoes of context

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Introduction

SSR is a fundamentally political process. Thus, individual political contexts significantly impact the SSR interventions pursued in various countries, as well as their potential "success" or "failure." This chapter aims to explore the primacy of politics in SSR, particularly with regard to the UN, and to identify and account for the resounding lessons ("echoes") learned from the contextual realities of various UN attempts to support SSR processes. While the UN has played a leading and unique role in defining the principles and normative frameworks that should guide SSR processes, this chapter posits that a combination of political factors and contextual specificities continue to define and constrain the impact of reform.

The focus here is primarily on peacekeeping, for four reasons. First, the original proto-SSR (or SSR-related) initiatives of the UN took place in a context of peacekeeping and as part of peacekeeping exit strategies. Second, in such environments, the UN has played a critical role in providing the broader political and structural context for SSR initiatives. Third, the UN's SSR efforts are still mostly implemented in conflict-affected or post-conflict contexts, often shaped greatly by the peacekeeping environment that preceded it. And fourth, these are the contexts within which the most important contemporary challenges to SSR are emerging.

This chapter is structured into five parts. Following this introduction, the second part offers an analytical framework that conceptually positions SSR within the broader spectrum of political processes and identifies the challenges that confront the UN in operationalizing such a political dimension of SSR. The third part explores the realities of specific country contexts, emanating from the primacy of politics. The fourth section encapsulates the implications of these "echoes" for the future of the UN's role in supporting SSR processes, from the perspective of a subject-matter insider and an institutional outsider. Finally, the last part takes a brief look ahead, given current contexts and challenges.

Evaluating the UN approach to SSR

In assessing the role of the UN in supporting SSR processes, several challenging factors must be acknowledged. First, barring exceptional cases such as Timor-Leste, the UN itself is rarely a significant SSR player and lacks the independent resources to be one. This fact is appreciated by the UN, which emphasizes a focus on "comparative advantage" and "partnerships" as the basis for its SSR strategy. The operational reform capacity of the UN has traditionally been largely directed at police reform, and the organization only grappled for the first time with defence reform in the DRC, and then more recently, in contexts such as Mali. There are also areas, such as intelligence reform, in which the UN is not involved at all. And even in its self-assigned priority roles (coordination, guidance, good offices, etc.), the effectiveness of the UN is often open to question.

The UN's role in SSR is shared with other actors that are often beyond its control. Some leading bilateral actors have their own agendas, are endowed with more SSR expertise and resources than the UN, and are not always open to external coordination. Moreover, when Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) are parachuted in from the outside, they may lack the necessary awareness of local dynamics and of the complex political calculations surrounding local security establishments, which are required to move the game forward against well-grounded (and hard-bitten) regime operatives and rebel forces.[1] While the UN is frequently saddled with the most disagreeable assignments in the most difficult environments (often those in which the P5 and powerful bilateral actors show little interest), mandates have become even more ambitious in recent years even as cuts in the UN's budget become deeper. This has led to a widening gap between UN mandates and resources.

As we have seen in the case of Mali in particular, the climate for UN missions has also deteriorated markedly in recent years, with the implementation of more and more SSR initiatives within stabilization contexts as the security situation has worsened worldwide, often with no peace to keep. This is having a discernible impact in practice on SSR, and on security agendas in general. Equally importantly, the UN has stepped into this expanded and increasingly militarized mandate with substantial and growing credibility deficits. The scope of action taken by the UN is necessarily shaped, and constrained by, its very design and founding principle as a multilateral organization of *states*. In SSR, the principal counterpart to the UN is quite often the very state that represents the root of the security problem; this is the "sovereignty trap" that has all too often locked the UN into partnerships with states that have questionable human rights records.

The notion that the UN exists to support Member States and "restore state authority" creates moral dilemmas and real confusion as to where the organization's

priorities lie. Is the primary goal civilian protection (often from state actors of the government the UN is supporting), or the restoration of state authority (which may at the least be contested due to abuses associated with the state)? Among the "collateral damage" that may result from UN peacekeeping is that host governments postpone or deprioritize reconciliation efforts and dismiss opposition voices, both of which would be necessities if not for the ability to rely on UN troops to maintain order, as seen in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

Over the years, the UN has attempted to expand opportunities for non-state involvement, particularly by civil society organizations, in its activities. But in many cases, this remains limited and largely rhetorical at the national level, in part because of the sovereignty trap. Current challenges to states – and the perception that the very foundation of the international community of states, in which the UN itself is embedded, is at risk – has swung the pendulum in favour of efforts to preserve states and promote state-building as a principal objective of peace support and peacebuilding operations.[2] Arguably, this collides with, rather than supports, other priorities such as the protection of vulnerable communities or the promotion of genuine democracy. Perhaps it is not surprising then that the protection of civilians (POC) has been the most spectacular and persistent failure of the UN, particularly in the context of very large missions such as in the DRC and South Sudan, with crimes occurring sometimes in plain view of peacekeepers. This is hardly an encouraging precursor to SSR, which is designed to position national governments and security establishments to more effectively protect their own populations. Given these failures of peacekeeping, it follows that some missions have either fostered "militia-ization" or have deterred militias and other "self-defence" groups from disarming.[3]

The lack of political strategy informing UN missions was thus rightly identified by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) in 2015 as the Achilles' heel of peacekeeping operations.[4] Even while investing considerable resources in apparently interminable missions, the UN has repeatedly proved inept at dealing with ruthless but wily leaders who find the UN useful in buttressing their power, but have no qualms in undermining the mission when they no longer believe it serves their interests. There can surely be no more eloquent testament to this than the fact that some of the largest and most expensive UN missions in Africa have frequently been relegated to the sidelines as a host-government clings defiantly to power and shows no hesitation in killing protesters under the very gaze of the UN. The result, as one critic has argued, is that "the UN, having aspired to instil democracy and good governance in countries like the DRC and South Sudan, has ended up propping up unreliable and even autocratic leaders in the absence of better alternatives. Peacekeepers have to try to defend civilians from precisely the governments and security forces they are meant to partner with."[5]

The most important note to draw from these experiences is that the great variety of contexts in which the UN operates precludes (pre)scripted responses to SSR. Each mission presents new challenges and demands some level of innovation and lesson-learning; navigating the shifting and contextual politics of any particular peace agreement becomes a major challenge in itself. Similarly, regardless of the UN's own ideal to-do list, the actual space for UN involvement in SSR and the specific nature of that involvement is largely shaped by context, as well as by available partners. In fact, in a number of cases, the role of the UN in SSR has had no relationship to its broader role in supporting peace processes and state-building. For instance, in South Sudan, UNMISS was tasked with a very broad and ambitious state-building mandate in 2011 as compared with its predecessor mission, but the UN role in SSR has ultimately been relatively minor, especially following the conflict that began in December 2013.[6] The UN approach to SSR should thus be judged not simply on its objectives, but on the specific contexts in which it chooses to pursue SSR efforts. What "politics" means in these contexts is examined below.

Defining politics: Process vs. transformation

In a "normal" polity (operating according to rational-legal rules), politics constitute the public space within which more or less organized interests compete in a prescribed fashion to acquire state power or influence its application, including the allocation of public resources, with policy being the outcome. In the kind of contexts under discussion here, however, both the polity and politics may be privatized in whole or in part, and policy is best seen as what the state *does* and not what the state *says* it is doing or planning to do.[7]

The mantra punctuating all UN pronouncements is that SSR is "highly political," and yet there is rarely any effort to unpack which of many senses SSR can be described as political.[8] In particular, there is an insufficient distinction between politics as *process,* and politics as the achievement of a *transformation of power relations* and the way power or authority structures actually function – in other words, the "how" and the "what" of SSR. It is well-established that SSR should be process-driven, consultative, participatory, and inclusive, and there is a whole corpus of prescriptions in this area.[9] Less explicit attention is paid to what it is about the aim of SSR that makes it political, and what the indicators of change should be.

SSR is political in several overlapping senses: first, it targets the nerve centre of state power and national sovereignty, the security sector, and the foundation of its ability to exercise coercion; second, it seeks to reshape how this instrument functions and in whose interest (i.e., who is protected and who is excluded) and relatedly, the nature and locus of control over the security establishment; and third, it implies, at a deeper level, the transformation of historical and existing power relations. At the

root of SSR is thus a larger question of who controls the state and who benefits from its protection. In this way, SSR is inherently revolutionary and is most effective in contexts where it is associated with broader political and social transformations (as in 1990s South Africa), as an essential component of a rupture with the existing power arrangements and underlying culture of politics. While this requires process-driven politics, SSR cannot be a stand-alone project. A transformative outcome is unlikely without broader conditions that facilitate deep change in the underlying structures of power, as reflected in governance, economic relations, and social equity. Indeed, by itself, *politics as process* (at least as it appears to be understood by the international community, in the form of elections and other procedures of formal democracy) has often frozen in place the very practices and power structures that precipitated crises to begin with.

The first of three crucial lessons that emerge is that meaningful SSR programmes (let alone successful implementation) are ultimately pointless and ineffective as long as regimes remain untransformed, as the DRC and other less notorious cases have demonstrated. Bluntly put, regimes set the tone for security sectors. Hence, SSR that does not entail a broader, transformative political strategy will ultimately be futile. Misreading the nature or intentions of a regime – as the UN did in the cases of Burundi, the DRC, and South Sudan either due to an excess of optimism or a failure to undertake serious political or contextual analysis[10] – can prove costly, primarily in terms of financial and other resources and the organization's reputation with external actors, but also in the very lives and safety of civilians. Robust states and democratic cultures have not emerged from these "state-building" exercises, any more than effective and accountable security sectors have emerged from SSR in these contexts.

The second key lesson, emerging again from South Sudan and Burundi, is that SSR is not sustainable without an underlying and viable political settlement, particularly in the form of peace agreements and political transitions. This requires power arrangements undergirded by consensus, and commitment by all parties to the formal rules of the political game, *especially* regarding who has "legitimate" control of the instruments of coercion and what constitutes their legitimate use. In the absence of such a settlement, SSR poses the grave danger of further enabling the use of force by one or more parties against others,[11] and a similar reputational risk to external supporters of SSR.

Third, while external actors may be able to reshape national institutions (at least at a superficial level), cultures of politics and power are precisely the areas least subject to influence or control by external actors. This is where the UN is traditionally at its weakest, and at the same time, is perhaps most sorely needed. Indeed, as former UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Marie Guehenno has observed, the "United Nations and its secretary-general, in a world of nation states, can do little to shape national

perceptions,"[12] or, one may add, political processes and outcomes. Even a large and protracted UN presence in conflict-torn countries such as the DRC or South Sudan has barely influenced their prevailing political cultures.[13] Yet, reforms of political behaviour represent the *defining context for successful SSR.*

The blind spot of SSR with regard to politics emanates from the fact that reform is rarely rooted in an essential starting point: a conceptualization of the security establishment as pre-eminently a *political actor*. Instead, the tendency is to emphasize (prosaically) its role as a *service provider.* To describe the security sector as political is not to suggest that it is politicized, and thus a partisan competitor for political power, although this has often been the case, but rather that it is a core and indispensable instrument of the modern state, and hence the ultimate guarantor of power arrangements. It is, and should be, the product of a political process.

The current approach results in a notable lack of investment in political analysis and research as a foundation for SSR,[14] and even less in understanding the micro-politics of the security sector it is meant to transform. This may be partly because SSR evolved as a paradigmatic shift from the more probing and sceptical civil-military relations (CMR) literature that preceded and inspired it, departing from the former insofar as it is a "policy and operational science" focused on formal institution-building (often in the mould of what was referred to in the 1960s as "institutional transfer"), long on prescription but short on research. This institutionalist focus is another departure from the analysis of CMR, which examined underlying power relations, often constituted in the *informal* domain and not necessarily residing in *institutions* per se. It is precisely these and similar insights – related to informalization and the variety of informal tools, devices, and inducements that shaped civil-security relations – that have disappeared from SSR policy discourse.[15] SSR has thus been poorly positioned to grasp, let alone address, the murky political calculations and relationships bearing upon security actors, much less the complex micropolitics of the security sector itself. This "cluelessness by design" may be ascribed to the fact that SSR is primarily a sovereign transaction, which makes it imprudent to question the *realpolitik* of recipient governments and regimes, particularly as it is linked to national ownership. And so, despite all the rhetoric about "democratic oversight," the development of capable organs of security governance (in other words, precisely where politics hits the tarmac) has typically been a low priority of external sponsors of SSR.

The State, stabilization, and national ownership: Post-Westphalia illustrated

This section expands on the preceding observations, with a particular focus on the political challenges associated with stabilization and state authority, as well as on interventions where political contexts and political leaders are not what they seem.

Mali and the DRC: The UN and SSR in the era of "stabilization"

A growing number UN mission mandates carry the term "stabilization," and more and more SSR initiatives are taking place within this context. But what exactly does stabilization mean? As Robert Muggah and others have noted, while "stabilization has become a buzzword in peacekeeping," there is insufficient clarity on its definition, intent, and limits.[16] The meaning of stabilization, while shifting somewhat from mandate to mandate, can nevertheless be distilled from the content of these mandates – which result in missions and environments that have a distinct and often regressive impact on the implementation of SSR, and indeed on how security is defined and operationalized, reflecting the securitization of state-building.

Apart from where one stands in critical debates on this turn towards so-called "robust peacekeeping" and its implications for the core mission of the UN,[17] the reality is that the UN was ill-prepared to conduct stabilization missions, which coincided with a period of steady decline in UN peacekeeping capacity as the militaries of advanced Western states gradually withdrew from these activities. This left the UN to depend increasingly on developing country troop contributors, often with rudimentary military and police capacity, while developed states "facilitated" from the sidelines by providing funding, equipment, or limited specialized assets, often preferring to join "coalitions of the willing" or act within their own alliance structures, such as NATO. This has had consequences for the ability of the UN to conduct effective peacekeeping, let alone peace enforcement, as it lacks critical financial, management, logistical, and intelligence assets.[18] In 2015, the HIPPO was candid that the UN was not equipped to wage asymmetric warfare and should only seek to do so in partnership with bilateral partners or coalition forces.[19]

However, such partnerships sometimes come with their own baggage and potential for reputational risk. For instance, Sophia Sabrow's analysis of local perceptions of regional and international intervention forces (from France, ECOWAS, and the UN) in Mali in 2013–14 revealed much scepticism among Malians: "While French forces are pragmatically valued for their military achievements, they receive little ideological legitimacy. The [ECOWAS] regional force has high ideological legitimacy but disappoints in its performance on the ground. The UN force scores low in ideological legitimacy and is ambiguous in

terms of pragmatic legitimacy."[20] The UN's partner of choice in a series of muscular interventions across Africa has been France, which carries some particular baggage on the continent as a (not always welcome) former colonial power with its own history of imperial interventions. The French have subsequently become a target of jihadis, who have tracked and attacked French interests across West Africa, with considerable local collateral damage. This blurring of the line between bilateralism and multilateralism in contexts like Mali has the potential to threaten the legitimacy of the UN, bring its neutrality into question, and make UN actors targets of terrorist groups. However, the problem obviously goes much beyond the French, and includes growing tendencies towards unilateralism on the part of the P5. That said, it is the stunning lack of preparation on the part of the UN itself for such stabilization missions that has been most damaging, including by sending 10,000 personnel to Mali that were "unprepared for counterterrorism and explicitly told not to engage in it. More than 80 percent of the force's resources are spent on logistics and self-protection."[21]

These partnerships have also brought wider geopolitical interests and designs into play in stabilization missions. Though MINUSMA, in Mali, marked a welcome reengagement of Western member states in UN peacekeeping, the objectives behind this extend well beyond the security of the Malian state and population. Indeed, "combating terrorist groups and stemming migration to Europe have motivated their contribution of troops . . . One of the more possible scenarios for Mali is that the aggressive stance of the mission will be self-fulfilling, turning it from a peacekeeping to a counterterrorism mission, leading to an escalating circle of violence with a high likelihood of civilians being targeted and killed."[22] Violent extremism has thus come to be touted as the major security threat in Mali, despite the fact that many Malians see "unresolved traditional conflicts, rising criminality and banditry – frequently driven by poverty and a chronic lack of jobs and opportunities – as the biggest risks to their personal and local security. The breakdown in trust between communities and in the government has increased levels of armed aggression, resulting in the normalisation of violence across much of central and northern Mali."[23]

Additionally, the ambiguity of the concept of stabilization as used in UN mandates leaves ample room for both external actors and local politicians and elites to manipulate it. As Muggah warns, "in the absence of a clear definition, stabilization is being (re)conceived and (re)interpreted on the basis of parochial bilateral and national or host government interests."[24] Hugo de Vries has underscored this in the case of the DRC, where support for military operations, infrastructure, training, and economic alternatives to armed groups only "led to new types of predatory behaviour by state agents and training had little impact on behavioural change," such that "the preconditions for stabilization to work, such as political dialogue with local communities, working against impunity, and reforming the security sector, were

barely addressed."[25] In the contested politics that define stabilization environments, there is also a real possibility that the UN may be viewed as effectively aligning itself with the incumbent politicians of the existing state. John Karlsrud warns that in Mali, the UN is "torn between its mandate to be an impartial mediator and the charge to help 'extend and re-establish State administration throughout the country'."[26]

This notion of restoring and extending state authority is at the core of stabilization initiatives. Still, the ideological influence of the state-building thesis is hard to miss, and the UN's decision to commit to state-building occurred under circumstances that severely compromised both its image as neutral and its reputation. Guehenno has explained the origins of this "securitization of state weakness" and the UN's role in it:

> "State weakness had not been seen as a threat to peace and security and therefore not an area requiring the Security Council to act. But the possibility that weak states might become havens for terroristic organizations and the destabilizing consequences of civil wars on neighboring countries – massive flows of refugees and proliferation of small arms – have made fragile states a genuine security threat. In an international system based on the sovereignty of states, states are the first line of defense of a stable order. If some of them lose the capacity to exercise their sovereignty, the whole system is at risk. There again, the implications were wide-ranging, and they were reflected in the ever-expanding responsibilities of peacekeeping operations, which were increasingly engaged in helping shore up the fragile sovereignty of states in distress."[27]

Correspondingly, stabilization has come to be regarded in some quarters less as a means of *supporting* than of *controlling* transitions in fragile contexts, in ways that place a premium on consolidating central authority, often at the expense of democracy and progressive political change.[28] And typically – though not surprisingly – this activity of restoring or extending state authority involves or implies the refurbishment of discredited state structures and institutions rather than their transformation or the reimagining of state-society relations.[29]

State-building also embraces several questionable assumptions, depending on the context. First, it assumes that there is indeed a past tradition of state authority to be *restored*, even if this may never have existed in the first place, as in Mali, where this thinking precluded any serious analysis of the historical or contemporary character of that state and why it had failed. Second, and perhaps most importantly, the fragile state thesis does not consider the possibility that "fragility" is not accidental, unanticipated, or inexorable. As repeatedly demonstrated in the DRC, fragility may be engineered by ruling political elites. In fact, de Vries suggests that the policy of the government of the DRC has been "to maintain and extend a state that is kept purposefully weak so as to better manipulate it on behalf of private interests."[30]

In any case, as Robert Lamb reminds us, fragile states are not states in the Western sense, having developed their own distinctive histories, trajectories, political

underpinnings, and elite practices and interests; and thus cannot be fixed through Western-style state-building.[31] The concept of hybridity further challenges orthodox conceptualizations of African states. And, ultimately, the evidence suggests that stabilization simply does not work: "the results of international intervention have been patchy at best, despite the expenditure of blood, money and prestige."[32]

Finally, as we argue below, the focus on state-building comes at the cost of a balanced emphasis on social cohesion and solidarity—in other words, repairing the shredded social fabric that underlies many conflicts, and restoring trust that has been eroded by violence, among communities and between communities and the state.[33] Of course, state-building and nation building approaches (the latter recalling the prevailing paradigm of the 1960s) are not mutually exclusive. In practice the UN has attempted to pursue both, though without equal attention or enthusiasm.

Three conclusions emerge from experiences in Mali and the DRC: (i) in both contexts, stabilization has been interpreted primarily in military terms, contributing directly to the militarization of the UN mission;[34] (ii) stabilization in which state-building and the "restoration of the state authority" are core aims undermines possibilities for people- and community-centred approaches to SSR and favours top-down, "muscular" approaches inclined to capacity-building over governance; and (iii) at least in the case of Mali, stabilization efforts have further undercut already weak national ownership.

Burundi: Prioritizing politics, high-level political engagement, and informal arrangements

Even well-designed bilateral interventions focusing on long-term, transformative change may offer cautionary lessons for UN support to SSR. The sustained and governance-focused SSR engagement of the Netherlands in Burundi under the Security Sector Development programme included high-level national and bilateral political engagement and featured flexible programme structures to adapt to changing needs.[35] The programme, which started in 2009, was touted as a model of high-level political engagement, but it has nonetheless raised the question in Burundi of who constitutes the "political elite." This is particularly relevant given how progress on SSR has been disrupted by fraught relations with the UN and other international actors in the country since a rise in political tensions and human rights abuses starting in 2015.

One potential lesson from events in Burundi is that the elite who influence and shape security policy and use of force – including, in particular, the role the security establishment plays in the political calculations of the regime – is largely faceless. It includes not only, or even primarily, visible political office-holders, but also presidential confidantes, ethnic and party bosses, and leaders of informal networks

and other interests located both within and outside formal state structures. Similarly, the Burundi crisis exposed the limits of engaging nerve centres of power. While ongoing engagement took place among a range of national stakeholders, particularly in terms of dialogue, training, and M&E, the country's core political elite was insulated from the programme, though no one seemed to have noticed at the time. This speaks to the importance of better understanding the incentives and motivations that compel the political elite in any context, and thus more realistically appraising the ability of external actors to thereby influence attitudes. For a ruling elite, SSR is a potentially high-risk, high-stakes gamble that brings uncertain rewards and little immediate material inducement or compensation.[36] In unstable or contested political environments, control over the security sector is the one sure avenue to gaining or retaining power, and requiring a ruling regime to voluntarily loosen its grip on the tools of coercion constitutes, at the very least, a leap of faith.

South Africa and Sierra Leone: Building national ownership – "No Commitment, No Ownership"

Giving appropriate space to politics, particularly in the form of national reconciliation and political accommodation, in turn entails national ownership of the SSR process – which is now considered a staple for successful SSR. What is often lost, however, is the fact that achieving national ownership is a difficult and expensive slog, and one that is unlikely to be realized without robust and sustained commitment; not least because SSR often embeds lopsided and asymmetrical relationships between powerful and well-resourced external actors on the one hand, and national populations and elites devastated by the aftermath of violent conflict on the other. If the oft-cited case of South Africa is any indication, one might as well stand the current SSR mantra of "No Ownership, No Commitment" on its head: "No Commitment, No Ownership." Even so, the South African experience was far from the norm, given the favourable conditions that prevailed, in some ways more akin to a first-world than third-world country: availability of independent national resources and funding; exceptional levels of popular participation, fostering broad national consensus; local technical talent and capacity, both within the security sector and civil society more broadly; strong political direction and commitment to broad-based, democratic oversight; and elite coherence forged though a political settlement. In other words, South Africa had both the political commitment and the technical and financial capacity to exercise national ownership, under which it was able to traverse a path that departed in important respects from the conventional SSR model, in terms of vision, scope, sequencing, and timeframe.

The more applicable model of national ownership under post-conflict conditions may instead be the quite different instance of Sierra Leone. Already deeply

impoverished prior to war, Sierra Leone emerged from conflict with its economy and national institutions devastated, political authority contested, national and community trust eroded, and a deep crisis of national self-confidence. The security sector was widely regarded as a pariah, and popular sentiment initially favoured the dismantling of the armed forces over reform. Sierra Leone's path to SSR at first entailed a high level of external dependency (facilitated, ironically, by the fact that the population was looking outward for national salvation) and very limited national resources and technical capacity. Still, a bilateral security partnership with the UK incorporated a number of best practices: a long-term strategic partnership; a holistic and consultative approach to SSR; an intelligence-led security reform process managed and coordinated through a central agency located in the office of the president; a new national security architecture designed around pragmatic approaches incorporating hybrid, decentralized, and locally-rooted security structures, with chieftaincy committees as the local hub; and an M&E and research programme that allowed for periodic assessment. Over time, this led a once imbalanced security partnership to be increasingly remoulded towards greater national and strategic ownership, as local partners gained greater confidence and as imported UK models proved cumbersome and unsustainable.[37] While the Sierra Leone experience featured many downsides – such as persistent resource scarcity and chronically underfunded institutions, including very weak parliamentary oversight capacity, as well as endemic poverty and low social development indicators – it nevertheless telegraphs what is feasible in terms of reforming the security sector even under dire post-conflict conditions with committed external support. It is arguably an example, too, of how SSR can underpin and sustain a democratic political settlement.

Rethinking SSR?

While SSR is now accepted as an indispensable component of the peacebuilding and development agenda, as underscored by Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), it faces at least two contemporary challenges. First are the questions that continue to emerge about the effectiveness of SSR as it is presently configured and implemented. There is a growing consensus that SSR has failed to deliver on its promises (or has been over-hyped), due as much to flawed conception and design as to implementation, even as its accomplishments deserve to be upheld.[38] What is clear is that the ability of the UN to leave functioning and accountable security sectors as the core of exit strategies has proved consistently elusive. The jury is still out as to how much of this is to be blamed on the UN itself and how much is a function of SSR as a conceptual and policy framework, or indeed how much can be attributed to national actors and other international actors beyond the UN. Second, SSR is

challenged by the shifting priorities of major external partners as they grapple with their own changing political and national security challenges, such as mass migration, escalating humanitarian interventions, and violent extremism.

There are both opportunities and risks in this climate. Risks include the possibility and even the likelihood that SSR will become still more focused on stabilization imperatives and counter-terrorism initiatives to the detriment of longer-term governance and institution-building, that more and more SSR funding will be diverted to humanitarian and migration issues, and that violent extremism will lead to an increase in security assistance. At the same time, there appears to be a greater focus by donors on their own security agendas rather than on those of recipient states, as well as a concentration on capacity-building in security institutions (via train-and-equip efforts and "robust SSR") and even less on security governance, as well as a willingness to tolerate serious human rights violations (even with its Human Rights Due Diligence Policy) and growing restrictions on political freedoms by governments. Then again, the current context presents opportunities to return to a human security and governance focus in SSR and to more comprehensively address the root causes of conflict and violent extremism, such as poverty and marginalization, including by examining some of the tenets of SSR orthodoxy – including the nexus between security and development and the role of politics, governance, and non-state actors and institutions. How SSR may be reconfigured to respond to myriad challenges remains an urgent but open question. What is undeniable is that there is a growing consensus that SSR must be reimagined. Indeed, there is now much talk of "second generation SSR" but what direction it will take is far from clear.[39] Below, we seek to contribute to this emerging debate by expanding on some earlier observations.

Taking governance, and the "political" in SSR, seriously

While a great deal of emphasis has been placed on governance as a defining element of SSR and a key to accountable security institutions, this is contradicted in practice by the meagre resources usually directed towards reforming or strengthening governance institutions. There is also a need to go beyond thinking of governance only in terms of oversight and accountability, critical as these are, and to focus on proactivity in terms of *political will* or *commitment to protect and protect equally* – this being the crucible for translating capacity into service delivery (on the basis of the observation that the problem in African states is less the *ability* than the *will* to protect). If governance is to be taken seriously, politics must also be taken seriously.

We have argued that describing SSR as "political" – let alone "highly political" – implies that the end-game is a transformation of power relations and of the way public institutions actually function. This should in turn inform the political strategy

of the UN and other purveyors of SSR. The UN has gone the route of "politics as process," but there is no indication that this is in any way influencing underlying power structures or making them, or the security sector, any more accountable.

Rethinking the security-development nexus

While it is now considered virtually axiomatic that security and development go hand-in-hand, and that both may be facilitated by SSR, experiences in the countries described in this chapter suggest a somewhat different reality: that the achievement of minimum conditions of security following the cessation of armed conflict may not necessarily improve livelihood prospects or alleviate poverty in any meaningful way. Quite the contrary; the end of war has continued to be accompanied by massive dislocation and unemployment (among youth and ex-fighters in particular) and deepening economic distress. Hence, it is all too typical for countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia to emerge from SSR still trapped in a pattern of low or negligible growth and abysmal social and development indicators. This, rather than SSR programming per se, may well be the main challenge to the sustainability of both SSR and broader peacebuilding.

This lesson was not lost in Liberia, where the saying "the best form of SSR is jobs!" was popularized in the early stages of reform. The provision of employment and social services has since become the cornerstone of strategies to counter violent extremism there.[40] Still, this is often impeded by poverty and chronic social marginalization, in turn fuelling illegal migration and people-trafficking. The ways in which insufficient growth impedes state-building are clearly manifested in Mali, where the restoration of state authority has not been realized primarily because the state itself lacks the resources to extend its remit in the first place, which has obstructed the implementation of critical provisions of the peace agreement such as the establishment of interim administrations. The material base simply does not exist for robust statehood there, however it is defined.

The example of Côte d'Ivoire is potentially significant here, not least because it departs from this familiar paradigm. Unusually, SSR is taking place in an economic context of considerable growth and successful recovery in Côte d'Ivoire, which has one of the highest economic growth rates in Africa and is already attracting significant levels of foreign investment, thereby restoring a pre-conflict pattern. This growth has been characterized by high levels of inequality and marginalization, though, which is encouraging social and political alienation and low levels of political mobilization and participation. In the country's cocoa-growing areas, where land conflicts between indigenous people and migrant cocoa farmers and labourers were key factors in the war, the success of the export economy is placing an additional premium on access

to land. Combined with shifts in local power relations precipitated by wider national politics, this is exacerbating community-based conflicts.

There are broader lessons to be drawn about the distributive impacts of such free-market based economic growth in the era of globalization. The deadly surge of illegal migration across the Mediterranean has coincided with the highest economic growth rates (in most cases resource-based) across the African continent, suggesting increasing marginalization and inequality at a time of growing national prosperity. And amidst the high-blown rhetoric of "Africa Rising," the military mutinies in 2017 that tarnished the "Ivory Coast miracle," though expressed in corporatist terms, exposed wider dynamics of social marginalization and political alienation.[41] But these mutinies also underlined a dangerous weakness of SSR in Africa, and one which reproduces a flaw of the public sector reform strategies of the 1980s and 1990s that preceded and inspired it.[42] The resources invested in institutional reform have not been matched by similar investment in sustainable livelihoods and human security, including in government and the security sector. For this reason, SSR has been unable to address the corruption endemic to security institutions. Except for privileged units, conditions of service in the security sector across Africa have often been abominable, particularly for those in the ranks (Ali Mazrui's allusion to a "lumpen-militariat" in the 1970s continues to resonate). SSR has typically done little to address this in any sustainable way. Essentially, this is because whether as institutions, professions, or simply as human beings, the military and police get little respect from their political masters, except insofar as they help to shore up regime power. Tolerance of (often organized) corruption gives a green light to security actors to prey on the population for their livelihood, while implicating the security services in public corruption becomes an informal strategy of control.

Engaging security and justice actors and institutions beyond the State

Recent thinking has begun to move away from the Westphalian notions of the legal-rational state on which SSR has been modelled, instead stressing the "hybrid" constitution of African states, in which informal norms and systems operate alongside or within nominally formal political institutions. States and informal networks are not mutually exclusive, but rather are embedded in each other; formal and informal systems overlap, interrelate, and interpenetrate at various levels. The concept of hybridity thus underscores the fact that in many African states, the security sector and its governance mechanisms reflect a complex amalgam of statutory and non-statutory actors and institutions.[43] At a conceptual level, hybridity has been used to critique notions of fragility, and at a programmatic level, as an approach to reconstructing security and justice systems in countries emerging from conflict. In such cases, customary, clan, and informal institutions are often the only ones left standing,

and are therefore widely implicated in the delivery of security and in support of community resiliency.

One example of this innovative approach of tapping into customary institutions to provide security and justice in the aftermath of conflict is the pioneering of women's Peace Huts in Liberia by UNMIL and UN Women, based on the traditional Palava Hut. Sierra Leone offers another example, with the use of "chieftaincy committees" as a rural building bloc of the national security architecture, a system which is in the process of being replicated in Liberia. At the same time, hybridity has moved dangerously close to becoming a new orthodoxy among certain donor circles, particularly in its uncritical, "neo-traditionalist" forms, which suggest that Africans possess their own organic and culturally rooted institutions and are best governed under those institutions. This was a line of thinking that suffused Lugardian notions of "indirect rule," which often bordered on neo-romantic because of a (paternalistic) idealization of tradition and a failure to recognize the power dynamics embedded within these institutions, or their corruption by colonial and post-colonial co-optation.

It is debatable whether the rhetoric on hybridity is an indication of genuine appreciation of customary institutions, sometimes approaching neo-romanticism, or of instrumentalism. Both featured in previous colonial indirect rule narratives that sought to co-opt and convert traditional authority structures into tools of the colonial administration, less due to notions of the intrinsic value or appropriateness of traditional institutions, and more due to pragmatic concerns about keeping down the cost of colonial administration. This could also reflect what Scheye terms "pragmatic realism," which asserts that "because the fragile state is unable to provide an adequate level or equitable distribution of public goods and services, the delivery of security has been, in many instances, privatized."[44]

What is clear is that the constant recalibration of customary structures since colonial times to align with the purposes of states and regimes speaks to fluid motives and an essential instrumentalism (as opposed to principle) behind hybrid constructions. While hybridity may prove useful in addressing immediate dilemmas of security and justice delivery, in the final analysis, it is not necessarily a solution. In many instances of hybridity, such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the formal sector has continued to be weak, inaccessible, and in habitual crisis while the customary sector, which continues to provide most services, has been hollowed out or corrupted by government policies – in tandem with broader environmental and demographic factors and forces of historical change – and starved of resources.

Importantly, vulnerable groups (and women in particular) tend to fall between the cracks in these contexts, trapped between an inaccessible and often unresponsive formal sector on one hand and a decaying customary sector informed by patriarchal and gerontocratic values that particularly undervalue poor and younger women,

on the other. While the international community has been quick to deplore the human rights deficits of these customary organs, such as in confronting incidents of rape, it has not been as willing to acknowledge the patriarchal nature of customary institutions, much less the hierarchy and power relations within women's groups (usually based on age seniority as much as class) and their collusion with patriarchal structures and principles. There is some irony in the fact that celebrated "customary" devices such as the women's Peace Huts in Liberia have been donor-funded, raising questions about their sustainability once funding dries up.[45]

Dealing with armed non-state actors

Traditional and customary organs are by no means the only "non-state actors" taken on board in the context of hybridity. The much-demonized non-state armed group has been a particular target of peace agreements, and such groups present particular challenges for post-conflict peacebuilding. While rebel formations may be quickly demobilized, with some fighters likely integrated into new armies, militias aligned with the state rarely disappear so easily, tending instead to persist as parallel units of the state and/or its various factions. The anti-Balaka in the Central African Republic (CAR) serve as a case in point.

While it is safe to say that the rise of powerful non-state armed groups has come to be considered the most significant single challenge to international security and to the international system of states, the reality is that these groups would rarely exist but for their instrumentalization by nation states and state actors. Indeed, the ultimate paradox of state-building in the state-obsessed international system is that states have quite often called up armed non-state entities to salvage, if not their authority, at least their control over territory and populations,[46] and to execute a variety of geopolitical tasks. Not only do states then appear unable to suppress these armed actors unless bailed out by other more powerful states, they seem unable to dispense with their services.

In Mali, the Government in Bamako has long relied on a "militia-tary strategy,"[47] employing local militias, including those operating under the Platform movement, and manipulating local rivalries and ethnic and political divisions to contain irredentist movements in the north. In Côte d'Ivoire, both the Ouattara government and the security establishment have had difficulty divesting themselves of the Dozos, not to mention the continued existence of the regional *Comzone* commanders as a parallel structure within and alongside the armed forces. In Sierra Leone, the *kamajors* continue to enjoy varying degrees of legitimacy as providers of community security, even as the state has sought to distance itself from them in theory. Wider afield, in Afghanistan and the Middle East, the effort to salvage or restore the territory and authority of the state has relied on the indispensable support of non-state armed

groups – including the Shia Popular Mobilization Forces, the Sunni Tribal fighters, and the Kurdish Peshmerga in Iraq, along with the Hizbullah and Iranian-backed militias in Syria.

In all of these instances, non-state armed groups seem to enjoy a level of legitimacy and effectiveness that eludes state security formations. Why is this? In a powerful critique of the Westphalian orthodoxy, which envisions state-building and SSR as avenues to order and security in post-conflict contexts, Alice Hills has argued that it is not states but rather hybrid formations that have emerged as instruments of order and security after conflict, involving "a mixed economy in which state police (indigenous and international) are supplemented by local voluntary groups such as militias, mosques or neighbourhood watchmen, and by commercial security or guarding companies."[48]

Strengthening social inclusion: Less state-building, more nation-building and social cohesion

While the current focus is on state-building, contemporary conflicts, with their cultural and identity issues, seem to underscore the deeper issue of social cohesion. Thus, a more pertinent approach might be the nation-building paradigm of the 1960s. This is particularly true in post-conflict contexts, where trust and social capital are at a low, but also because local conflicts interact dynamically with state-based conflicts and, if unresolved, provide a basis for wider and more incendiary conflicts. And indeed, the UN has often flagged the need for national reconciliation and programmes that promote social cohesion, but following through in practice has been a different matter. UN missions have adopted various approaches to social cohesion in the different contexts cited in this chapter: while UNOCI prioritized such programmes, neither UNMIL nor the Government of Liberia did so; UNMISS preferred to defer to the (ultimately disastrous) big-tent policy of the SPLM government; meanwhile, conditions in Mali have been too dangerous for MINUSMA to attempt such programmes on any significant scale, urgent and much-needed as they are; and finally, in the DRC, while addressing community-based conflicts is at the core of the revised International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (I4S), the perception is that MONUSCO itself is not fully invested in this approach.

A social cohesion lens is much more likely to identify and prioritize embedded causes of conflict and real threats to community security, which may not necessarily be a priority to national leadership or the international community, such as in the widespread conflicts between herders and farming communities in parts of West, Central, and East Africa,[49] or between settlers and indigenous people in the cocoa growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire. In fact, this focus on social cohesion is more necessary

than ever, and not least because these hidden conflicts – largely invisible to the international community – are now being exploited by the very forces of terrorism privileged by the international security agenda.[50]

Looking ahead

The contexts and interventions examined here make the case that UN missions and SSR efforts have not been designed with "politics as transformation" in mind. The (re)negotiation of the social contract between states and their populations is seen as best left to the societies in question, with the objective to restore political stability and bring states into formal compliance with internationally accepted norms and standards of political behaviour, and in particular human rights. But even with such a project, inadequate as it has repeatedly proved in practice, the UN is swimming against the tide in an international order characterized by revived big-power rivalries and unilateral interventionism, increasingly punctuated by gross abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law by both non-state and state actors.

The UN must simultaneously confront a resurgence of authoritarian politics, in particular the election of a new breed of populist leaders who revel in unpredictability and outlandish and jingoistic rhetoric, and a corresponding upsurge of xenophobia and social authoritarianism across the "civilized world." This development speaks to the larger reality that while forms (or elements) of democratic governance have spread, and in some respects been entrenched, across the globe, "democracy" has also often been appropriated and progressively hollowed out by political elites. As a result, "democratization" no longer evokes the insurgent movement and tool of accountability that it did a scant two decades ago. The risk in this context is that SSR will increasingly be refocused away from objectives of democratic governance and peacebuilding towards initiatives to build military and police capacity to counter terrorism and violent extremism. Or, reform will simply stall because client states and their international partners are unable or unwilling to establish the political conditions that make SSR possible or meaningful.

As challenges to the international order have multiplied, the UN has concentrated on salvaging states and propping up the international state system against multifaceted and emergent threats, rather than on deepening democratic spaces and strengthening citizen security and human rights. The UN is already grossly over-extended[51] in seeking to contain or resolve stubborn conflicts, and yet is still left to clean up the mess from others' ill-considered power-plays, including the thankless job of orchestrating peace negotiations in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Initiatives to "restore and extend state authority" in this complicated and contested international environment risk enabling (or alternatively being blunted by) errant

political leadership and undermining (or being stymied by) the very notions of sovereignty that the UN was set up to serve and protect. In any case, the primacy of politics, so often embodied in high-level international rhetoric, has predictably run aground on the echoes of context, resulting at best in a patchwork of adaptive practices – or what might be referred to less charitably as expediency. A more concerted approach is urgently needed going forward.

Notes

1 This may be true even of seasoned SRSGs intimately familiar with the local terrain and key actors, such as Hilde Johnson in South Sudan. On the other hand, such SRSGs (as in this case) may become embroiled in regime factional politics and may (rightly or wrongly) lose their image of impartiality. See Hilde F. Johnson, *South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016).

2 See Jean-Marie Guehenno, *The Fog of Peace: A Memoir of International Peacekeeping in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Brooking Institution Press, 2015), 7.

3 On the failure to protect civilians in the DRC, see Human Rights Watch, *"You Will be Punished": Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009); Jeffrey Gettleman, "Report Cites Vast Civilian Killings in Eastern Congo," *New York Times,* 14 December 2009; and ?Muhindo Sengenya Claude, "The Danger of Fighting Fire with Fire: Civilians in Congo Turn to Self-Defence Groups to Stop Massacres," *IRIN*, 26 August 2016, www.irinnews.org/feature/2016/08/26/danger-fighting-fire-fire. On civilian massacres in South Sudan, see United Nations, "Executive Summary of the Independent Special Investigation into the Violence which Occurred in Juba in 2016 and UNMISS Response" (S/2016/924), 1 November 2016; and Obi Anyadike, "Can UN Peacekeeping be Fixed?," *IRIN*, 4 November 2016, http://www.irinnews.org/opinion/2016/11/04/editor's-take-can-un-peacekeeping-be-fixed.

4 United Nations, Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People (A/70/95–S/2015/446), 16 June 2015.

5 Richard Gowan, "Happy Birthday, UN: The Peacekeeping Quagmire," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs,* 12 August 2015.

6 See Johnson, *South Sudan: The Untold Story*, 47. UNMISS was still in the process of defining a coherent role for itself in SSR up to the outbreak of the conflict in 2013, and this role remained modest both within the overall activities of the mission and in relation to bilateral partners. After UNMISS and the UN began to criticize human rights abuses by the armed forces, certain elements within the regime and national security apparatus moved to block UNMISS from any meaningful role in SSR.

7 See Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: New Left Books, 1973).

8 For references to SSR as political, see United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39), 23 January 2008, 11; *Security System Reform and Governance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series (Paris: OECD/DAC, 2005), 28; *Improving Security and Justice Programming in Fragile Situations: Better Political Engagement, More Change Management*, OECD Development Policy Papers series No. 3 (OECD, 2016), 3; and "SSR Trends and Challenges in Africa: a Partners' Summary of the first Africa Forum on SSR," 2014, 7.

9 See *OECD-DAC Guidelines on Security System Reform and Governance* (Paris: OECD, 2005); and *OECD-DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (Paris: OECD, 2008)

[10] This argument emerges strongly, for instance, in Hugo de Vries, "The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo," Rift Valley Institute PRSP Briefing Paper No. 8, February 2016; and Valerie Arnould and Koen Vlassenroot, "EU Policies in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Try and Fail?" paper commissioned by the Human Security Study Group, No. SiT/WP/06/16, Security in Transition, February 2016.

[11] Samuel Huntington's resonant (but oft ignored) dictum is that civil-military relations are often shaped less by relations between military and civilians than by political competition between civilian factions and the temptation to use the military to secure political advantage. See Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957).

[12] Guehenno, *The Fog of Peace*, 6.

[13] The case of the SRSG in South Sudan, Hilde Johnson, is a dramatic illustration of the limits of influence of an SRSG once relations with the ruling regime begin to sour, and indeed it is not unusual for relations between the SRSG (and the UN as such) and regimes to deteriorate sharply, usually over human rights issues, once policy and political disagreements emerge. See Johnson, *South Sudan: The Untold Story*.

[14] A notable exception is Sierra Leone, where DFID and the UK government commissioned a series of evidence-based studies on the UK-funded SSR.

[15] On the other hand, these key insights continue to be captured and (in some cases) further elaborated in the current literature on "hybridity," but this remains outlier science as far as official SSR is concerned. See Niagale Bagayoko, Eboe Hutchful, and Robin Luckham, "Hybrid Security Governance in Africa: Rethinking the Foundations of Security, Justice and Legitimate Public Authority," *Conflict, Security & Development* 16, no. 1 (2016): 1–32.

[16] Robert Muggah, "The United Nations Turns to Stabilization," *Global Observatory*, 5 December 2014, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2014/12/united-nations-peacekeeping-peacebuilding-stabilization; Cedric de Coning, "What does 'stabilisation' mean in a UN Peacekeeping context?" *Complexity 4 Peace Operations* (blog), 19 January 2015, https://cedricdeconing.net/2015/01/19/what-does-stabilisation-mean-in-a-un-peacekeeping-context; and Cedric de Coning, "Implications of Offensive and Stabilisation Mandates for the Future of UN Peacekeeping," *Complexity 4 Peace Operations* (blog), 15 February 2015, https://cedricdeconing.net/2015/02/15/implications-of-offensive-and-stabilisation-mandates-for-the-future-of-un-peacekeeping.

[17] See John Karlsrud, "The UN at war: examining the consequences of peace enforcement mandates for the UN peacekeeping operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali," *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2015): 40–54; and Charles T. Hunt, "All necessary means to what ends? The unintended consequences of the 'robust turn' in UN peace operations," *International Peacekeeping* 24, no. 1 (2017). It should also be noted that there has been some resistance to expansion of UN mandates and use of force within both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

[18] "UN Peace Operations in Violent and Asymmetric Threat Environments," IPI meeting note, International Peace Institute, 2016.

[19] Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace (A/70/95–S/2015/446).

[20] Sophia Sabrow, "Local Perceptions of the Legitimacy of Peace Operations by the UN, Regional Organizations and Individual States – a Case Study of the Mali Conflict," *International Peacekeeping* 24, no. 1 (2017): 159–186.

[21] Anthony Banbury, "I Love the U.N., But It Is Failing," *New York Times,* 18 March 2016.

[22] Karlsrud, "The UN at war," 50.

[23] "'They treat us all like jihadis': Looking beyond violent extremism to building peace in Mali," Policy Brief, International Alert, December 2016, 2.

[24] Muggah, "The United Nations turns to Stabilization."

[25] de Vries, "The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo."

[26] Karlsrud, "The UN at war," 46.
[27] Guehenno, *The Fog of Peace*, 299.
[28] Roger Mac Ginty, "Against Stabilization," *Stability*: *International Journal of Security and Development* 1, no. 1 (2012): 20–30.
[29] *Mali: An Imposed Peace?* (New York/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2015); and Mac Ginty, "Against Stabilization," 21.
[30] de Vries, "The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo."
[31] Robert D. Lamb, "Fragile States Cannot Be Fixed with State-Building," *Commentary*, 31 July 2015, Center for Strategic and International Studies, www.csis.org/analysis/fragile-states-cannot-be-fixed-state-building.
[32] Mac Ginty, "Against Stabilization," 21. Amitai Etzioni and others have argued that, historically, the only unambiguously successful instances of post-conflict state-building have been Germany and Japan; in other contexts (the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere), given prevailing sociological conditions, the outcomes have fallen well short. See Amitai Etzioni, "Reconstruction: An Agenda," *The Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10, no. 1 (2007): 3–24.
[33] Indeed, as we are witnessing in the case of Somalia, this policy of "restoring" a broken state or fabricating a new one, usually without serious analysis of why that state failed in the first place, has the potential to stoke competition or intensify rivalries between communities and clans as they or their leaders struggle to control the perceived resources that will come with this state, courtesy of the international community. See Jason Mosley, *Somalia's Federal Future: Layered Agendas, Risks and Opportunities* (London: Chatham House, 2015).
[34] de Vries, "The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo;" and Delphine Mechoulan, "Redefining State Authority in Mali," *Global Observatory*, 28 June 2016, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2016/06/mali-minusma-united-nations-peacekeeping.
[35] Nicole Ball, *Putting Governance at the Heart of Security Sector Reform: Lessons from the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development Programme* (The Hague: Clingendael, 2014), 9.
[36] This is residue of earlier public-sector reform thinking, when governing and bureaucratic elites were required to undertake often risky liberalization schemes, on the basis of an appeal not to self-interest but too often to abstract tenets of neo-liberal orthodoxy. While the risks were often fairly evident (food and subsidy riots, for instance), the economic rewards did not pan out. One of the notable aspects of civil service reform, and now SSR, for instance, is how little institution building funding went into actually improving human security through, for example, salaries and other conditions of service, with the result that even senior officers managing millions of dollars in donor funding subsisted on absurdly low salaries.
[37] Eboe Hutchful, *SSR Provisions in Peace Agreements: Main Report* (University of Birmingham Press, 2009), 40; and Eboe Hutchful, "Role of Security Sector Governance in Peacebuilding," in *Peacebuilding in Africa,* eds. Devon Curtis and Gwinyayi Dzinesa (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2012).
[38] Erwin van Veen and Megan Price, *Securing Its Success, Justifying Its Relevance: Mapping a Way Forward for Security Sector Reform*, Clingendael Research Unit Policy Brief (The Hague: Clingendael, 2014).
[39] Arguably, this reimagining is further advanced, or at least more explicitly acknowledged, among donor countries than among recipients of SSR support. See Erwin Van Veen, *Improving Security and Justice Programming in Fragile Situations: Better Political Engagement, More Change Management*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016; and "The 'Technocracy Trap' of State-Building: How to Improve the Effectiveness and Legitimacy of Security and Justice Sector Reforms," report from a workshop by the German Federal Foreign Office, Berlin, 14 September 2016. For an assessment and evaluation from an African standpoint, see the AU Handbook on SSR Good Practices and Lessons Learned.

[40] "Joining up security in the Sahel," *Africa Confidential* 55, no. 9 (24 April 2014). Available from www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/5593/Joining_up_security_in_the_Sahel.

[41] Didier Niewiadowski, "Le coup d'éclat militaire en Côte d'Ivoire est-il un coup de semonce?" *Jeune Afrique*, 11 January 2017. Available from www.jeuneafrique.com/391886/politique/coup-declat-militaire-cote-divoire-coup-de-semonce.

[42] Eboe Hutchful, *Ghana's Adjustment Experience: The Paradox of Reform* (London: James Currey, 2002).

[43] Bagayoko, Hutchful, and Luckham, "Hybrid Security Governance in Africa."

[44] See Eric Scheye, *Pragmatic Realism in Justice and Security Development: Supporting Improvement in the Performance of Non-State/Local Justice and Security Networks* (The Hague: Clingendael Institute, 2009); and *State-Provided Service, Contracting Out, and Non-State Networks: Justice and Security as Public and Private Goods and Services* (OECD, 2009).

[45] Frieda M'Cormack, "Gender, transitional justice and justice sector reform in Liberia," unpublished paper prepared for the research network Hybrid Security Governance in Africa, African Security Sector Network (ASSN), June 2017.

[46] Hassan Abbas and Nadia Gerspacher, *The Irregulars: Vigilante Police-Security, Iraq and Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2015). Also see: Eboe Hutchful, "Disposable or Indispensable? The monopoly on the use of force in the 21st century," Think Piece No. 7, Reflection Group "Monopoly of the Use of Force 2.0?", Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. The work and reports of the Global Reflection Group, established by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in 2014, are available from http://www.fes.de/de/reflection-group-monopoly-on-the-use-of-force-20.

[47] Martin Van Vliet, "The Challenges of Retaking Northern Mali," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 11–12 (2012); and Rodrigue Kone, "La Confrérie des Chasseurs Traditionnels Dozo en Côte d'Ivoire: Enjeux socio-culturels et dynamiques sécuritaires," unpublished paper prepared for the research network "Hybrid Security Governance in Africa," African Security Sector Network (ASSN), June 2017.

[48] Alice Hills, *Policing Post-Conflict Cities* (London: Zed Books, 2009), 202.

[49] Jonah Leff, "Pastoralists at War: Violence and Security in the Kenya-Sudan-Uganda Border Region," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 3, no. 2 (2009): 191. An example of the way in which endemic rural pastoralist-farmer conflicts may feed into wider and more violent conflicts is that of the Seleka and anti-Balaka in CAR (pastoralists are Muslim and farmer communities largely identify with Christianity or various forms of animism). See: International Crisis Group, "The Central African Republic's Hidden Conflict," Briefing No. 105, 12 December 2014.

[50] Kaley Fulton and Benjamin P. Nickels, "Africa's Pastoralists: A New Battleground for Terrorism," African Center for Strategic Studies, 11 January 2017. Available from http://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-pastoralists-battleground-terrorism. One example of this is the Macina Liberation Front of Hamadou Kouffa, which has carried out several attacks in central Mali since January 2015.

[51] A decade ago in 2008, just as the UN SSR agenda was ramping up, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned that the UN was overextended and should be cautious about taking on any new tasks without greater member state support. See Warren Hoge, "Annan Says U.N. Is 'Overstretched' by Global Conflicts," *New York Times*, 21 March 2008.