
The USIP Learning Agenda: An Evidence Review

Postconflict Security Sector Reform

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Introduction

States recovering after conflict and transition, as well as the international interveners that try to support them, have struggled greatly with the questions of how to transform security force behavior to prioritize the safety of all citizens and how to convince citizens that their government will protect them. Success in reaching this goal in recent years has been intermittent, but not unheard of. However, there is considerable uncertainty about what types of efforts are most likely to succeed and in which contexts.

This evidence review represents a metasynthesis of the extensive but incomplete relevant body of evidence.¹ Trying to produce meaningful answers addressing the record of all types of approaches to security sector reform across all possible contexts is a task beyond the scope of this or any other single work. Therefore, this review seeks to illuminate a much narrower, but highly policy relevant, set of questions: To what degree, and under what circumstances, do international or domestic reform programs focusing on organizational change to increase the transparency, accountability,² and inclusivity of domestically operating security sector institutions³ lead to (1) measurable institutional changes, such as behavioral changes in security forces, leading to reduced risk of abuse and improved responsiveness to the public; (2) public perceptions of greater personal safety; and/or (3) a measurable reduction in various objective indicators of physical insecurity? Further, within the states that have emerged from active conflict and regime transition since 9/11, what specific types and combinations of programming approaches have been most often associated with reform progress?

METHODOLOGY

To address these questions, this review is broken out into three sections. First, an introductory section discusses why and how approaches seeking to bolster transparency, accountability, and inclusion in security force institutions were adopted in the first place. What unmet need did these approaches address, and through what mechanisms were they expected to operate? Given that desired results frequently failed to materialize, what problems with this approach have been identified?

Next, the review presents the types of evidence examined. Because much of this evidence is focused on individual cases, it is necessary to define and justify the scoping conditions used to produce a list of cases to be examined in depth, to discuss why and how this examination drew from these particular case narratives to produce a list of frequently attempted types of reform efforts, and finally, to examine how the extent to which various efforts were attempted in each case was judged.

The second section describes nine types of efforts at security force reform focused on transparency, accountability, and inclusion:

- changing of laws and doctrines
- security force training
- security force vetting
- integration of previously excluded groups
- community policing
- integration of informal security institutions
- creation of institutions to facilitate accountability
- building of civil society capacity
- conducting of security dialogues and consultations

We then detail the basic reasoning that leads practitioners to expect an impact from each type of effort and the observed results (and general conclusions of the relevant scholarship) across different contexts, largely but not exclusively across the reform cases identified by the scoping process.

The third section provides a quantitative assessment of reform efforts for various cases by measuring the changes in states' security provisions and levels of state violence against civilians. This measure includes objective indications of citizen security over time and public perceptions of personal safety. The level of state violence toward civilians serves as a close proxy for changes in security force behavior. Finally, we combine the results of these indices with the findings of the previous section to offer conclusions regarding the efficacy of different types of transparency, accountability, and inclusion efforts in different combinations and in different contexts.

FINDINGS

The most notable findings of this synthesis are that various types of security force reform efforts focused on increasing transparency, accountability, and inclusivity *can* yield the intended progress in physical security, public perceptions of safety, and security force behavior. However, such progress has taken place in only a small subset of the cases examined. The evidence as a whole suggests that success is more likely (and may only be possible) in specific contexts and as the result of specific combinations of types of effort. Most notably, outcome progress almost never takes place outside of a context of democratization, or to any dramatic extent beyond the first five years following a political transition.

Further, in all cases where significant progress occurred across outcomes, the reform efforts involved significant amounts of legal and doctrinal reform, security force training, and force vetting or revetting, along with various combinations of efforts to build civil society capacity, hold popular security dialogues, and develop or strengthen nonsecurity-force institutions

with the power to enforce security force accountability to the public. More generally, country cases where many different types of reform efforts were attempted at significant scale in the immediate aftermath of a political transition were substantially more likely to make sustained progress across any of the outcomes of interest than cases where few types of effort were implemented, regardless of scale.

Development of the Reform Approach

Before evaluating the success of efforts within the scope of this piece, it is useful to briefly review the evolution of these (and closely related) efforts. While individual countries—at least those invested in citizen approval—have always faced the question of how to reform or reconstruct security forces that can maintain approval while also delivering basic services in the wake of upheaval, the question was not a focus of international donors until the end of the Cold War.⁴

However, after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, priorities changed and donors became much more concerned with promoting and consolidating democratic transitions alongside economic development. This shift was driven partly by changing values but also by increasing evidence that states that experienced stalled transitions were especially likely to contribute to transnational instability. This instability might include hosting drug cartels and terrorists, engaging in regional rivalries and sponsorship of insurgents, and/or exporting a stream of both refugees and militants.⁵

Research in the early 1990s identified a lack of everyday security and justice as a primary concern of citizens and a driver of dissatisfaction, feeding into the evolution of the human security paradigm in development efforts.⁶ More specifically, it led to what is now called security sector reform (SSR), to be attempted across a broad range of states. Based on the reported priorities of citizens in the countries targeted by SSR efforts, the approach's advocates argued from the beginning for a focus on transparency and accountability.⁷ As Mark Sedra characterizes, “The main innovation of the SSR model as compared to previous forms of security assistance in the Cold War and before . . . [is] its focus on governance. The professionalism and effectiveness of the security sector is not just measured by the capacity of the security forces, but [also by] how well they are managed, monitored and held accountable.”⁸

These advocates strengthened their case over time, as externally funded reform efforts focused on capability failed to produce the desired results. These efforts, often referred to in brief as “train and equip,” emphasized security force “right-sizing, doctrinal presentations, professionalization drills, budgetary calculations and other similar institutional check-lists” and were (and, in many cases, still are) most often adopted when donors are under pressure to stabilize an unstable situation and effect an exit strategy.⁹ As Dylan Hendrickson notes, these conditions create “pressure on donors to act before . . . [having] an adequate understanding of the

problems, not to mention what has worked and what has not worked in more conventional areas of development activity.”¹⁰

Over time, donors replaced (or at least supplemented) these efforts with programming focused specifically on improving governance by improving the transparency; accountability; and, based on growing awareness of the role of ownership, inclusiveness of security force institutions.¹¹ The mechanisms by which improvements in each area were expected to have an impact on public safety and the public perceptions of security force effectiveness are both direct and indirect. Many mechanisms are discussed within this review in reference to specific types of reform efforts and/or context conditions.

However, a common link is the contention that these efforts increase legitimacy and that legitimacy levels, in turn, determine the level of effort and resources that states must devote to maintain domestic security. As Robert Lamb recounts, “Legitimacy got a significantly higher profile in Western military doctrine during the mid-2000s, when the U.S. occupation of Iraq was challenged by a growing insurgency and it had become clear that the American stabilization strategy was failing.”¹² The idea of legitimacy as key to stabilization was also promoted by the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID, which is now part of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).¹³ In 2009, the president of the World Bank called for legitimacy to henceforth become the “strategic centre of gravity” for all state-building interventions.”¹⁴

A basic explanation of this link is that loss of legitimacy is a key element in a destabilizing downward spiral.¹⁵ Legitimacy—which is commonly measured, if not fully captured, by a population’s general willingness to obey the law, respect the decisions of courts, pay taxes, support government initiatives, and so forth—significantly lowers the costs a government faces in trying to provide services (including security) and otherwise perform usual state functions. Thus, a state with declining legitimacy will have diminished capacity. This lack of capacity, in turn, makes a population less willing to cooperate with a government, since the benefits they can expect to receive for doing so continue to decrease.¹⁶

Implementation Problems

Unfortunately, a switch in focus to theoretically legitimating activities has also frequently failed to consistently produce the public approval and general security gains hoped for by those who pursue them. The key qualifier is “consistently”: There are widely known cases of reform success, such as South Africa or Sierra Leone. These cases, along with a lack of more promising tools to reach the same ends, continue to drive interest in the approach. However, these success stories are greatly outnumbered by cases where reform clearly failed to take root or where results are debated. As this track record has developed, Mark Downes and Robert

Muggah warn that “the lack of an evidentiary case for SSR will, over time, erode the ability of practitioners to argue in favor of conventional security promotion as a viable means of helping to avert conflict recurrence and consolidate peace.”¹⁷

Disappointing reform results are generally attributed to varying combinations of implementation issues.¹⁸ Only some of the major and nonmutually exclusive types identified are briefly summarized here, as most are detailed in sizable stand-alone literatures:

Failures based on political context. Many SSR scholars argue that institutional and other reform efforts attempted in contexts of autocracies are always unlikely to succeed. This is because security force institutions that are transparent, accountable, and inclusive are fundamentally at odds with autocratic interests. Autocrats rely on their direct control of security force institutions to stay in power. Further, unelected autocrats have less need to meet the general public’s demands for security services.¹⁹

Failures of local ownership. When key stakeholders within a state do not support reform, no amount of donor resources or pressure is likely to lead to successful implementation. It is important to note that there are disagreements about the context conditions under which local ownership exists, whether ownership can be generated or must already be present, whether it can be limited to government or must be society-wide, whether active collaboration or simple lack of opposition is required, and numerous other questions.²⁰ Further, there is disagreement about whether reform implementation fails in the absence of ownership mostly because of lack of political support or also because these efforts are unlikely to be tailored to local needs.²¹

Donor failures of commitment, coordination, and motivation. Reserved for reform efforts where external forces provide substantial support and resources, these criticisms focus on donor behavior. The first such concern is based on the contention of prominent SSR practitioners that reform is likely to take at least a decade to produce results and then be sustainably incorporated into institutions and state practice, while donor support for reform efforts often follows funding cycles of just a few years.²² The second is that external donors working toward the same stated reform ends often fail to coordinate with one another, lessening the impact of the total resources applied and potentially fostering incompatible doctrines and institutional structures.²³ The third related criticism is that implementation failures in general—in context, coordination, and ownership—are most common where donors are primarily motivated by some other goal (commonly, but not exclusively, counterterrorism and countertrafficking) rather than security sector reform, and this motivation prevents them from prioritizing local needs.²⁴

Finally, donors are criticized for seemingly paying lip service to the truism that security sector reform is a political endeavor while repeatedly treating such reform as a technocratic exercise. This is made evident through failures to conduct the basic political analysis that would reveal whether or not political conditions for reform progress are present, which specific reform priorities have the greatest and least elite and/or popular support and why, what

political conditions are necessary for reforms to be sustained past donor involvement, and how donor involvement is likely to be perceived in ways that can either promote or doom efforts.²⁵

Failures of scale. Security sector reform efforts are often executed on a scale clearly inadequate to reform a larger institution and/or fail to include critical institutions in reform efforts—for example, reforming police without reforming jails.²⁶ Program designers justify these efforts on the grounds that they will be scaled up in the future, but critics argue that planned-for expansion efforts rarely materialize.

Sources of Evidence

Any attempt to explain why various efforts within this review’s specific scope succeed or fail is complicated by the types of evidence available for the task.²⁷ As Graham Ellison and Nathan Pino observe,

development assistance programmes channeled to any number of transitional, conflicted and war-torn states have included police and Security Sector Reform (SSR) as integral components of democratization and peace-building. However, in spite of large budgets and the tendency to include police and security sector reform in reconstruction efforts, the phenomenon remains something of an under-researched area. . . . [T]here are few studies that seek to provide a holistic and conceptually grounded analysis of overseas assistance to police reform endeavors and their ultimate success or failure.²⁸

In other words, there is a dearth of evidence ideally designed to address the questions posed by this review, such as cross-national controlled comparisons of postconflict reform efforts structured to explore the varying interactions of context and type of effort. Consequently, this review relies on the following indirect or incomplete sources of evidence, which are nonetheless relevant to this metasynthesis.

Evaluations of security force reform efforts at the state and substate level. These studies take the form of “SSR in postconflict state X.” This category comprises both case studies of the collective impact of all or most reform efforts conducted in a given state and studies focused on one or several domestic security force institutions targeted for reform (for example, “Police reform in state X,”) over a given period of time. As both types of case studies usually try to describe the joint impact of multiple types of reform efforts, they often include at least some information as to the sustainability of observed impacts.²⁹

Reviews of efforts with scopes differing from that specified for this review. These include reviews of community policing in certain regions or types of contexts not necessarily postconflict; reviews of efforts with different goals than those specified here—for example,

the impact of greater police inclusiveness on the durability of peace agreements; quantitative and qualitative analyses of related phenomenon, such as the impact of service delivery on legitimacy in developing states or the impact of differing institutional structures on security force practices; and public evaluations of the impact of a specific reform program or effort (usually donor funded) within a state (such as a community police project taking place only within a single province). While ideal for assessing the immediate impact of that program, these evaluations frequently lack information about broader impacts or the sustainability of results reported and are often vague about the content of, for example, trainings delivered.³⁰

Reviews of community policing are the second most commonly produced studies (after individual program evaluations) and among the most useful for examining the relative impact of various types of transparency, accountability, or inclusion-focused reforms on state-level outcome progress over time. Consequently, this review draws most heavily from these types of sources.

Overall, in terms of both case-specific works and other sources of evidence (a potentially enormous pool), we prioritized works that

- were best fitted to address the primary questions examined by this review—that is, those that focused on reforms targeting domestic security provision and security force behavior, preferably in postconflict states; and that further examined the impact of efforts aimed at achieving these outcomes by increasing the transparency, accountability, and/or inclusivity of security forces;
- produced the most generalizable conclusions: if not focused on multiple states, then focused on the entirety of a single state or the entirety of a major security force institution within a state; and
- provided evidence for the long-term impact of efforts.

Some types of reform efforts, and some reform cases, have been much more widely studied than others. For cases and types of efforts that have received less scholarly attention and/or have been attempted less frequently, it was possible to review much of the evidence available.³¹ However, for cases and types of efforts that have been well covered (for example, Sierra Leone or community policing), we prioritized existing metasynteses when possible and consulted a range of viewpoints as well as the best-known, most frequently cited works, preferentially by authors with no obvious biases (that is, not employed and/or funded by the government of a relevant implementer or recipient state).

CASE SCOPING AND IDENTIFICATION

Part of the reason for the dearth of cross-case comparisons of reform efforts is the potentially massive scope and complexity of the task. To control the number of variables involved, it is first necessary to define scoping conditions for a limited range of statewide reform efforts.

This section describes the process of defining and then identifying the country cases falling within the scope of this review: postconflict and political transition, post-9/11, sufficient time since reform efforts to assess impact, and sufficient evidence available for examination.

The cases examined in detail for this review were identified by applying two criteria:

A shared geopolitical context. The goals of sector security reform, and approaches to it, changed significantly after 9/11. For this reason, only cases where SSR efforts took place between 2002 and 2016 were considered (the latter boundary was included so that impacts could be considered over a minimum five-year period).³²

The reform effort closely (within three years) followed a regime transition in the direction of greater openness, including transitions from “closed autocracy” to “electoral autocracy” and from “electoral autocracy” to “electoral democracy,” relying on the Varieties of Democracy (Vdem) Episodes of Regime Transformation (ERT) dataset.³³ In addition, this regime transition is sustained for a sufficient period (five years) for an organizational reform effort to reach basic implementation.³⁴ This criterion was applied because the vast majority of SSR literature (both case-specific and general) suggests that SSR efforts to achieve broad organizational change within security services with the goal of improving human security outcomes are virtually never attempted except in the context of a regime change toward greater democratization.³⁵ However, the dataset captures regime changes more nuanced than simply “autocracy to democracy” (or the converse), which allows this study to examine the relative impacts of different types of regime transition—to ask, choosing a particularly pressing question in the field as an example, whether and to what extent significant SSR gains can be made in states experiencing increasing levels of political openness but not yet qualifying as democratic.

A “postconflict” reform effort. To examine the impact of a variety of implementation contexts, *conflict* is here defined to include cases not only of violence but also of intense political and social upheaval preceding a regime transition (thus excluding not-uncommon cases of gradual political transition). Combined with other noted criteria, this generates a list of postconflict states that are further broken down by the intensity of the pretransition conflict:

Postwar. For postwar cases, the criterion was that, within the ten years preceding the ERT’s regime transition date, violence was at some point widespread and intense enough to likely have some impact on virtually every citizen, defined as at least one specific conflict within a state reaching or exceeding the level of Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) category 4, Serious Warfare: “Areas affected by warfare may be extensive but the intensity and the effects are limited, otherwise, warfare is confined to distinct areas and/or periods of time. If armed conflict is protracted, long periods of dormancy will be punctuated by sporadic operations (re)establishing opposing group boundaries. Population dislocations may exceed one hundred thousand in affected regions; deaths range from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand.”³⁶

Additionally, to be considered postwar, violence in these states must have dropped below this level before or during the ERT transition. This notably excludes well-known SSR cases

such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia, which are better understood as cases where reform was attempted in the context of ongoing warfare, rather than postconflict. The postwar cases examined here are Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone.

Lesser Conflict. The criterion for cases of reform attempted after lesser conflict (intense political upheaval) was that within the five years preceding the ERT's regime transition date, the country underwent a massive disruption in governing structures, defined as either a change in Polity V designation of more than six points (over the specified five years) or two or more years spent in a state Polity V defines as "interregnum."³⁷ The cases examined here are Madagascar, Nepal, Niger, Peru, the Solomon Islands, and Tunisia.

This scoping process led to the exclusion of a number of cases because no record of large-scale SSR efforts involving transparency, accountability, or inclusivity could be found for these states: Angola, Sri Lanka, and the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) for the postwar list; and Bhutan, Comoros, and Pakistan for the lesser-conflict list. While it is notoriously difficult to prove a negative, it is extremely unlikely that reform efforts of the specified types were attempted on a national scale without leaving a noticeable evaluation record. Interestingly, Comoros was excluded on different grounds: the documentation of its somewhat ambiguous reform efforts was too limited for meaningful assessment.³⁸ The country case list produced by this scoping exercise contains a sufficient amount of regional, size, population, development, and wealth diversity to produce generalizable conclusions. Unfortunately, it excludes many Latin American cases of the early to mid-1990s of particular interest to programmers looking for insight into security sector reform in the context of state capture by criminal interests. However, analyses relevant to these cases exist elsewhere in the SSR literature.³⁹

Further, the scope of reform efforts examined for each case was limited to ten years posttransition (to differentiate security force reform efforts in immediate postconflict contexts from those merely conducted in a state that had experienced conflict in the past).

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM EFFORTS BY CASE: TYPE AND EXTENT OF EFFORT

While the individual cases identified above are those whose institutional reform efforts were closely examined for this review, this evaluation is overall organized by type of reform effort—relevant training, legal and/or doctrinal reform, and so forth—rather than by country case. We employed this structure primarily to increase the relevance and usability of this review for SSR program designers, who are generally more interested in whether and under what conditions they should consider various types of reform effort than with the overall outcomes of specific past cases. This structure allows for the incorporation of sources of evidence that were not based on case studies, such as existing general reviews of certain types of efforts, where relevant.

To identify different types of efforts, the research categorized those conducted in the ten cases examined after an initial review of case narratives (with additions as necessary

upon further, more detailed review). This categorization process permitted the review to focus on types of efforts that are commonly implemented (as opposed to those that have only been proposed or have now fallen out of usage) and to compare the results of their implementation in broadly comparable contexts. To determine whether a type of effort fell within scope conditions—whether it aimed at achieving institutional change within a domestic security force by promoting transparency, accountability, or inclusivity—we have relied on the self-reported goals and theories of change reported by programmers themselves or those assessing such programming. This is particularly necessary, as reform practitioners do not define transparency, accountability, or inclusivity consistently across time and various efforts.

Finally, to fully understand the impact and interactions of different types of reform efforts in different cases, we had to control for scale of effort (see table 1). Especially in some cases that attracted more donor attention over an extended period, virtually every type of reform effort was attempted by someone, somewhere. However, there are vast differences in scale and intensity of implementation, and thus in documentation and probable impact. We applied the following criteria to determine whether a particular type of effort took place in a particular country and, if so, on what scale:

- If a type of reform effort was not mentioned at all in the literature consulted for a given case (mentioned only in passing with no references in other works), or was implemented only on a pilot scale (not across any of the major domestic security force institutions), or was at some point mandated but dropped before significant resources were dedicated or changes in force structure or protocol were enacted, that type of effort is not listed for a given country case.
- If a type of reform effort was mentioned in the literature for a given case but evidence of institutional or countrywide implementation over time was lacking, the effort was coded in the chart below as “lesser scale.” Concretely, examples include situations where certain efforts were pursued for short periods (such as focused attempts to expand the capacity of Liberian civil society leading up to negotiations, but not afterward); situations where some key legal and doctrinal reforms were drafted or even enacted but largely unimplemented (Madagascar and Nepal); or situations where efforts went beyond a pilot scale but were still implemented only in one or a few regions (such as community policing in the Solomon Islands).
- If a type of reform effort is well covered in the literature for a given case, was implemented countrywide over an extended period of time, involved at least one major domestic security institution, and/or involved significant resource allocations and major upheavals to security force organization and day-to-day practices, the effort was coded as “central.”

Table 1. Scale of Effort

Country	Changing laws and doctrine	Force training	Vetting	Force membership inclusion and representation	Community policing	Accountability institutions	Incorporating informal structures	Building civil society capacity	Popular dialogues
Burundi	x	x		x	o	o	o		
Liberia	x	x	x	o	x	o	o	o	o
Madagascar	o	x			o	o			
Nepal	o	o							
Niger	o	o				o			o
Peru	x	x	x			x	o	o	x
Rwanda	x	x	x	x	x	o	x		
Sierra Leone	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Solomon Islands	x	x			o				
Tunisia	x	o			o			o	o

Note: x=effort was a central part of this nation’s institutional reform process; o=effort was attempted but on a lesser scale.

Qualitative Evidence by Type of Reform

The implementation record of the types of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity security force reform efforts previously identified are explored here, largely but not exclusively within the case countries identified by the scoping process. We also briefly summarize the logic behind why and how, for each type of effort, gains in transparency, accountability, and inclusivity were expected to translate into improvements in civilian security, perceptions of public safety, and security force behavior.

EFFORTS TO CHANGE LAWS AND DOCTRINES

Efforts that seek to change security institutions by changing a state’s legal framework—reforming laws (including constitutions) and official doctrine to better mandate/enable transparency, accountability, and and/or inclusivity—are, alongside force training, the most frequently attempted aims of any approach to security sector reform. The immediate goal of

these changes is usually to make a state's basic security architecture more closely reflect international norms, such as the formal subordination of the military to civilian authority; and such efforts are often paired with attempts to spread knowledge of the new framework and encourage informed oversight from elected civilians. The varying degrees to which these efforts have succeeded or failed illuminates a great deal about how various types of programming interact with one another and with context conditions to produce various outcomes.

To better understand these outcomes, it is first necessary to review the basic logic by which these efforts are supposed to operate. On a practical level, "it makes little sense to consider police reform in the absence of legal and constitutional reform since it is from here that the police derive their powers and mandate."⁴⁰ One of the key changes these efforts often seek is accountability through greater transparency by making the limits of security force powers and mandates clear, both inside institutions and to the general public. In a surprising number of states, these basic framework documents either do not exist or are classified. Even actual security force members below a certain rank may know no more about their roles, responsibilities, and the lawful limits on their behavior than what commanders tell them. This is exacerbated in contexts of limited literacy or where a state has no common language.

In many of the cases—Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone—where these types of efforts, combined with others, correlate to improved public security outcomes, the state itself was, before such efforts were made, severely degraded by intense conflict. Consequently, a new legal framework for security forces was an indispensable part of the peace-making and reconstruction process. These contexts of reconstruction following extreme and widespread conflict create many challenges but largely spare reformers the task of uprooting an entrenched system of security force stakeholders who benefit from the prereform status quo. The war has done the work for them, and the state's subsequent security system, whether or not it improves on the postconflict status quo, will be a new construct.

However, rebuilding security forces from the ground up does not guarantee sustainable change. In Rwanda and, to an even greater extent, Burundi, early improvements in security force behavior (as captured through measures of state violence toward civilians) were not sustained. Notably, both states remained autocratic in the postreform period and, as previously noted, the autocratic need to retain tools of repression strongly disincentivizes the establishment of security force accountability. Burundi is a particularly disheartening but illuminating example: legislation removing a previously abusive military from an internal security role was quite successfully implemented, but the role of the state tool of political repression was ultimately assumed by police forces.⁴¹

In cases of less dramatic disruption surrounding political transitions, entrenched systems are often at the root of failures to achieve much lasting institutional change. One common type of failure occurs when an unwilling and/or incapable government promises donors and citizens legal reform, then stalls at every stage of the legislative process until political winds

change and the effort can be abandoned. Frequently, some type of highly visible change (such as constitutional reform) does take place quickly in the posttransition period but has limited impact owing to a lack of follow-on implementing legislation.

Limited, however, is not nonexistent. Both Tunisia and Nepal have seen some degree of reduced security force violence toward civilians in the wake of constitutional changes, though these impacts were fairly minor (as in Nepal) or did not correspond to any improvement in security forces' willingness or ability to protect citizens from other threats (as in Tunisia).⁴²

Cases of more dramatic stalling include Madagascar, where a drawn-out legislative drafting process seems to have been rendered moot by the election of a new president hostile to reform (though the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which inherently delays progress on this and other reform issues, affords the new regime some plausible cover for stalled implementation);⁴³ and Niger, where a decade after a coup, democratic revival, and new constitution, security sector reform laws linger in draft form.⁴⁴

Stalling out of legal/doctrinal reform seems to be a particular danger in situations where external interveners have mixed motives (such as Niger and other Sahel states). Scholars have noted that the War on Terror of the last decades created a situation where interveners were unwilling to push the states on whom they bestowed military equipment, training, and other assistance to live up to their commitments to security force reform out of concern that these states might then refuse to cooperate in counterterrorism operations.⁴⁵ The extent to which foreign-trained and -equipped troops have spread regional instability by, among other things, launching repeated coups (frequently in Mali, and recently in Guinea) continues to raise questions about the wisdom of this trade-off.

Success cases where legal/doctrinal reform was both passed and implemented without requiring the prior destruction of the state include Peru and South Africa. In both instances (as well as in Sierra Leone), a clear pattern emerges: potential legal/doctrinal reforms in security forces were discussed, debated, and broadly agreed upon through a consultative process in which the public could and did participate. This process (importantly, always combined with the effects of security force vetting and other types of efforts) seems to have ensured that when the momentum for follow-on legislation and implementation following high-profile legal reform flagged (as it did at several points), an informed civil society was ready and willing to push the government to follow through.⁴⁶

The overall upshot is that changing laws and doctrine in transitional states should not be expected to have much of an impact in isolation. However, such efforts lay a necessary foundation for broader efforts and can be successful where strong popular support combines with the conditions (especially, but not limited to, democracy) to make such support politically potent.

EFFORTS TO TRAIN SECURITY FORCES

The other most common efforts toward security force reform are attempts to directly build or bolster accountable and transparent structures, attitudes, procedures, and practices within security force institutions. These efforts are focused on training and on establishing internal review and oversight structures (in this typology, internal structures are those where the chain of command is entirely internal to the institution—such as police departments’ internal affairs divisions—as contrasted with completely independent inspectorates or ombuds institutions).

It can be extremely difficult to judge whether, to what extent, and at what level of quality these types of efforts have actually been implemented in any given state. These efforts are the closest to the older “train-and-equip” model previously discussed, where training focused on the mastery of set skills rather than values and practices specifically targeted at accountability and transparency. As approaches to security reform have evolved, the actual change in training practices has been less a shift and more a layering; usually, instruction in basic skills is still a large part of any effort, with additional values and rights-based training added on in varying amounts and with various degrees of commitment.

Additionally, training efforts (of various mixes of skills rather than values) are often conducted within the same state by different external interveners on different scales, in different regions, in different parts of the posttransition process, and involving different security force institutions; this is especially likely in complex settings, such as Somalia.⁴⁷ Aggregating upward from project-level assessments of these efforts is unreliable, given that such reports usually do not directly measure the sustainability of results and often measure success in terms of changes in force attitudes without empirically connecting this with improvements in force behavior or general public safety.

In theory, these types of efforts have an impact on public safety, because once security forces are seen to have improved (transparency) and are clearly punished when they fail to do so (accountability), the public will observe changes and consequently view these forces as more legitimate and thus more worthy of trust and cooperation. The empirical literature on service delivery and procedural fairness generally supports this reasoning, with the caveats that impact will likely be greater where the newly transparent and accountable institution provides services relevant to ordinary people’s lives (police improvement in a capital city, for example, has little salience elsewhere) and where the population has some reason (political transition or otherwise) to believe that the government and relevant institutions are genuinely trying to improve.⁴⁸

However, external interveners have persistently and repeatedly failed to match both the targets and content of training to local needs, despite being roundly criticized for such failures since the advent of the approach. As Sinclair Dinnen and Gordon Peake relate,

the default position continues to be . . . a focus on perceived deficiencies in recipient police institutions. There remains a misalignment between the solutions suggested by the analysis and the current repertoire of responses available to donors, which are predicated upon notions of linear institutional development and the universalism of institutional forms. . . . The focus is on addressing perceived deficits in organizational capacity rather than one derived from a context-specific understanding of how governance and security actually work in the society concerned. This ‘deficit’ approach draws attention away from local strengths that might be mobilised in forging locally relevant solutions to problems of insecurity.⁴⁹

These failures to adjust for context crop up frequently in the cases examined for this review. Examples include the heavy focus on training the military (which had no internal security role postconflict) over the police in Burundi and Liberia; the focus on training “official” police, where such police played little actual role in public security (instead provided by nonstate actors) for most of the population in the Solomon Islands, Liberia, Niger, and Nepal; and the failure to provide training and resources to Liberian justice chain institutions, such as prisons and local courts, without whom the police cannot function.⁵⁰

Some of these failures can be blamed, at least partially, on a lack of quality control and supervision. As Ellison and Pino observe, “The police reform landscape is dotted with any number of policy entrepreneurs—often retired police officers, or representatives of small aid agencies—who crisscross the world’s trouble-spots promoting particular models of policing.”⁵¹ David Bayley and Robert Perito add, “Local police training in post-conflict operations is debilitated by ad hoc planning, systemic lack of documentation, and weak accountability.”⁵² Recently, in its review of police reform efforts focused on rule of law, the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine concede that training curricula still are not aligned with evidence.⁵³

However, many have argued that this problem of implementation springs as much from the problem of mixed motivations. In many instances of external intervention, training intended to enhance transparency and accountability has been deemphasized within ostensibly training-for-reform programs in favor of the short-term goal of enhancing security force antiterror and antitrafficking capacity. Observers note this trend—and often the local resentment it engenders from a populace that feels that its security forces are serving foreign rather than local priorities—as a contributor to numerous reform failures, notably in Mali, Niger, Tunisia, and Somalia.⁵⁴ This is particularly apt to be a problem where multiple foreign interveners, with different motivations, essentially compete to train (in differing systems) and thus influence parts of a state’s security sector, as in Somalia.⁵⁵

On a more granular level, training efforts that follow a template approach often fail by leaving deeper issues unaddressed. One of the most prominent of these is security force members’ beliefs about their institutions. As several scholars have observed, “Many recruits in

post-conflict situations don't see the police force itself as a legitimate institution. . . . These perceptions . . . greatly dictate officer behavior; those with a weaker sense of self-legitimacy are more sensitive to provocations and more likely to use force, as opposed to officers who view the force and themselves as legitimate, who express more support for procedurally just policing and the rights of suspects."⁵⁶ For example, in Burundi, many former combatants (unvetted) given postconflict police jobs had little interest in or respect for the role, resenting that they had not received more prestigious military posts and maintaining many of the patronage structures and behaviors of their insurgent pasts.⁵⁷

Further, especially if training is externally mandated, force members may (accurately or inaccurately) be unconvinced that their superiors want them to change behavior. As Robert Lamb emphasizes, legitimacy in a functioning state runs in two directions: not only must citizens believe the state is worthy of being obeyed, but the state (and its security forces) must believe that citizens are worth protecting.⁵⁸ When security force members are not convinced that the goals of their institutions have actually changed, outcomes are similar to those observed in a postconflict human rights training program in Northern Ireland: "A subsequent evaluation concluded that there appeared to be a belief on the part of some PSNI [Police Service of Northern Ireland] trainers that the point of human rights training was to teach officers what they could get away with under the UK's [United Kingdom's] Human Rights Act (e.g., how many punches constitute an assault), rather than to instill human rights as a core value of modern police-work."⁵⁹

Of course, some of the strongest possible signals that leaders are serious about organizational change are the changes they make to the incentives of force members. Failure to change incentives has been a major obstacle to progress through training in cases where networks of corruption and patronage remain relatively undisrupted. In these settings—including in the Philippines, Indonesia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), among many others—ordinary force members are paid less than subsistence wages and expected to make up the difference by extorting bribes or offering paid protection to legal and illegal enterprises.⁶⁰ They owe a cut of these proceeds to superior officers (who, in turn, pay their own superiors), and promotions must be bought or finagled through political/familial ties.⁶¹ Recipients of police training in the DRC have explicitly reported that participating in training costs them money (in time away from moneymaking ventures) and that their agreement or disagreement with the content of rights-based training is largely irrelevant: pressure from superiors makes such principles impossible to implement if they expect to keep their jobs and support their families.⁶² Even more obviously, force members are unlikely to fear accountability in previously unaccountable environments until and unless they see others punished.

These dynamics play out in various combinations. In Burundi, as mentioned, insurgents integrated into the police were used to supporting themselves by extorting the population from their wartime experiences, had little to no previous positive experiences with the police as an

institution, and were ultimately shielded from accountability by politicians who came to rely on them as tools of political repression.⁶³ In Tunisia, Nepal, Madagascar, and the Solomon Islands, police institutions stayed largely intact following regime transitions and have so far successfully avoided accountability for previous abuses. In the face of these incentive structures, it is difficult to see how training of any quality could have successfully induced organizational change.

By contrast, in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda, following conflict, the police force was essentially refounded—new doctrine, new names, and largely new personnel. Even in these more promising contexts, extensive training from international donors is sometimes unable to override basic incentives and messages from domestic leadership; in Rwanda, notably, the government still relies on the police for domestic repression.⁶⁴

In some situations, donors have achieved reform results by a combination of long-term and heavy investment in force training and essentially replacing the domestic government at the top of a forces' accountability structure. The UK played this role in Sierra Leone, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) played it in Liberia, and the UN (and later the European Union) in Kosovo.⁶⁵ However, this seems logistically feasible only in instances where an external intervener is able to act as a security guarantor (to the extent of providing basic security to the population) over an extended period. Repeated international failures in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia have strongly underlined the disastrous consequences when external interveners attempt to play this role without the commitment, resources, or knowledge sufficient to accomplish the task.⁶⁶

However, there are cases where training, combined with other efforts, appears to have changed force behavior without the need for institutions to be completely rebuilt. Peru provides interesting lessons. First, posttransition reform could be framed as restoration. Security forces in Peru were not especially accountable or transparent historically, but they became much less so over the intensely corrupt tenure of President Alberto Fujimori. Fujimori's attempt to spread clientelist networks throughout the security forces (with an accompanying decrease in the reputation and effectiveness) was resented by many officers.⁶⁷ A postreform purge of officers loyal to Fujimori thus helped establish a norm of accountability—especially among younger officers, according to subsequent research—and was less resisted than might otherwise have been the case.⁶⁸ Further, underlining the importance of incentives, reformers (who initially faced substantial resistance to further security force changes) were able to win support by taking seriously the input and interests of rank-and-file force members: "The inclusion of rank-and-file officers proved to be one of the more important aspects of the process, as they provided information on the corrupt practices of senior management, made concrete proposals and ultimately became the strongest internal pro-reform constituency."⁶⁹

Critically, a number of reforms directly promoted the interests of these officers: an internal Ombudsman's office was created to investigate claims of corruption or unfairness surrounding promotions, benefits, and assignments; and various other changes, including

merit-based exams, further insulated police from political interference.⁷⁰ This concurs with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s finding of “consistent evidence indicating that policies aimed at creating a culture of accountability, fairness, and justice within a police department can have a notable effect on police interaction with the community.”⁷¹

In summary, existing evidence suggests that for force training and restructuring focused on increasing accountability and transparency within security forces to be effective, such training must exhibit three qualities: It must actually prioritize accountability and transparency as outcomes, rather than merely adding these to the end of a long list of other (often more kinetic) training objectives. It must be built to fit the context, specifically factoring in the actual role of various security forces in providing services to the ordinary citizens, the interdependent nature of various justice-chain institutions, and the existing attitudes of the population, elites, and forces themselves about these institutions. And it must focus on changing force behavior and practice by altering incentives and, in particular, by increasing transparency and inclusion within security institutions in ways that benefit rank-and-file members.

Force training also seems to be minimally effective in isolation. In all the cases examined for this review, the joint goals of improved security provision and decreased security force toward civilians were only achieved to any significant degree when such training was paired with both legal/doctrinal reform and force vetting.

SECURITY FORCE VETTING EFFORTS

Police training is sometimes, though far from invariably, executed alongside the efforts that aim to boost accountability, transparency, and (indirectly) inclusion by vetting security force members. These vetting efforts sometimes cover serving members of one or several institutions, sometimes new recruits, and sometimes both. As Jesse Wozniak summarizes, these efforts are pursued less frequently than their track record might suggest:

It is a widely held consensus that the newly established force [should] have few, if any, officers from the previous regime. Yet in practice, many efforts have instead problematically focused on immediate quantity over long-term quality, recycling officers from the old regime and accepting recruits well below acceptable standards, despite the fact that it has been well documented that a rush to have officers on the street as soon as possible leads to significant problems.⁷²

It is useful to explore the varied reasoning behind and execution of these efforts, as well as the consequences when vetting does not take place. Directly, vetting can be expected to improve the composition of a force by getting rid of members least able or willing to adopt new modes of policing. It can also support inclusion by freeing up resources to create a force that is more representative of the population. Further, it can send an accountability message

to remaining officers. If the process and/or results are transparent, the population also receives the message that the government is firmly in charge and taking concrete action, both theoretically legitimating signals—the more so if the public is actively involved.⁷³

The cases examined for this paper support the broader literature’s finding that vetting has the hypothesized positive impacts, to varying degrees. In Rwanda, many previously serving police officers implicated in the genocide fled, reducing the effort involved in vetting the remainder. However, notably, members of the victorious Rwandan Patriotic Army received significantly less vetting than others upon integration into either the police or military and dominated leadership positions; these forces have subsequently been used by the Rwandan government to repress opponents.⁷⁴

In Liberia, the postconflict vetting process removed roughly 60 percent of the previous police force.⁷⁵ The public was encouraged to participate: vetters “published the names of recruits in newspapers for approximately a week, asking readers to come forward with information that might disqualify applicants. . . . Complaint boxes were set up for people to submit their concerns in writing.”⁷⁶ However, this approach was dubiously participatory in a context where much of the population lived out of reach of printed news and had limited literacy.⁷⁷ The impact on force behavior and quality is difficult to judge: the lows of the pretransition era were largely avoided, but UNMIL’s prolonged policing role and the fact that the police are largely inactive in rural areas complicates attribution.⁷⁸

The successful Peruvian experience was notable for targeting mostly senior officers and also for including the security forces themselves in the process.⁷⁹ Sierra Leone is an interesting example because the official vetting process for the security forces took place after an unplanned de facto vetting process for local chiefs, who hold considerable power over everyday security and justice for much of the population. Before the war, “everything was handled by a core of chiefs with little or no input from community members.”⁸⁰ During the war, chiefs were targeted and killed by rebels wherever they could be found; the chiefs who survived were those popular enough to be hidden by their communities. As one Liberian observed, “Although a large number of chiefs died during the war period, their positions were easily refilled afterward. . . . After the war, the chiefs came back with the spirit of working together with all stakeholders . . . This reduced conflicts within our community as all of us saw ourselves as stakeholders.”⁸¹

Other efforts with successful reputations were also participatory, including South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation process, where testimony from past victims resulted in the removal of various security force members.⁸² Notably, in numerous transitions with successful reputations—in Kosovo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and West Germany—the vetting (as well as retraining) process took place while basic security was being provided by an occupying power, preventing security vacuums such as the one that followed de-Baathification in Iraq.⁸³

Unsurprisingly, in a number of the cases where posttransition security forces have not significantly improved in transparency or accountability, such as Nepal and the Solomon

Islands, no significant vetting took place. In Burundi, the failure to vet former combatants directly inducted into the police force as part of a power-sharing deal, and the subsequent abusive behavior of these inductees, mirrors similar results following similar arrangements in Sudan, South Sudan, and the DRC.⁸⁴

Overall, force vetting (in combination with legal/doctrinal reform and force training) was a feature of every case examined for this review where forces achieved and sustained major gains in both security provision (by objective measures and popular perceptions of safety) and reduction of security force violence toward civilians (see Quantitative Analysis and Overall Conclusions). Interestingly, these three approaches were also combined in one case—Rwanda—where such gains were not achieved and also where, as noted, the vetting process was decidedly lopsided in favor of those forces associated with the new ruling party.

EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE PREVIOUSLY EXCLUDED GROUPS

Among efforts to promote inclusive practices in security force institutions, the most straightforward is direct inclusion—the integration of previously excluded groups (usually whichever ethnic/gender/regional/religious groups are marginalized in a particular context) into the ranks. This approach is often adopted after conflict has ended as part of a formal peace agreement. Implementation varies considerably—in some cases, control of different parts of the security force is completely divided. At the other extreme, the goal can be to thoroughly integrate various groups into all levels of all security institutions at levels representative of the population.

Inclusion of this sort usually aims to bolster public trust by reassuring previously underrepresented population groups that, as they now have representation within the security forces, those representatives can protect them from targeted abuse or predation. Additionally, in contexts where government jobs are desirable, it can give the previously marginalized their share of these positions. Finally, this type of inclusion can, in theory, make security forces more effective by ensuring that they have members who understand the cultures, community norms, and unique challenges particular groups face.

Insofar as inclusion results in more equitable distribution of security services among various societal groups, the literature supports claims of a legitimating impact. As Audrey Sacks notes, evidence from several fields and over an extended period of time (both case study and experimental) supports the finding that “a reduction in discriminatory policies and behavior . . . is likely to have a positive effect on citizens’ evaluations of their governments and their willingness to comply with the law.”⁸⁵ Other studies have found that in states emerging from conflict specifically, perceptions that the government has become fairer in service delivery can have a strong re-legitimizing effect, whereas perceptions of continued unfairness cause considerable harm.⁸⁶

The potential gains and risks of major changes in a security institution in the name of inclusion are higher in postconflict settings, which is also where the most dramatic transformations are usually attempted. Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda provide illuminating contrasts. In the first two cases, formal peace agreements critical to ending conflict mandated inclusion. In Sierra Leone, newly reintegrated force members were spread across various units in a successful effort to break their ties to wartime commanders, and new units generally received training before assuming security responsibilities.⁸⁷ In Burundi, wartime ties persisted—reportedly fueling subsequent corruption and banditry—and training often took place only after the newly integrated forces had taken up their posts.⁸⁸ Notably, the pause for reintegration and training in Sierra Leone was enabled by the British and UN forces assuming temporary policing responsibilities. In Rwanda, inclusion was probably critical to preventing further conflict. However, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), as a victorious military force, was able to a degree to impose the terms under which reintegration would take place—the vast majority of postwar senior officers were Tutsi and former RPA members.⁸⁹

Another major risk of inclusion through rebel reintegration in the wake of conflict is that, in political marketplace settings, inclusion can lead to cycles of rebellion/integration.⁹⁰ A rebel group is rewarded for making peace with security force posts (in a reintegration process that often attracts foreign assistance), whereupon another group, having lost relative power within the force, rebels itself, is similarly rewarded, and so forth.⁹¹ The regional or ethnic ties these groups share are often a convenient organizing principle, but a desire for the spoils that come with force membership is often an equal or more powerful motivating force. These cycles can be observed in Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Côte d’Ivoire, the DRC, and Mali.⁹² Interestingly, Abdou Saidou explicitly contrasts Niger and Mali, making the case that the Nigerien government’s relatively greater coup resistance and security force cohesion comes from its persistent refusal to use security force inclusion as a means of settling rebellion.⁹³

In terms of women’s inclusion, access to security and justice for women in Liberia has received a considerable boost from the significant postwar increase in women serving in the police force.⁹⁴ By contrast, Nepal has made some progress, albeit extremely slow and minor, in integrating either ethnic/regional/religious minorities or women posttransition.⁹⁵ This carries risks, given that Nepal’s conflict was driven by exclusion: about a third of Maoist guerillas were women, and many of these women reported abuse by security forces as their motivation for engaging in conflict.⁹⁶

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the impact of inclusion appears to be context dependent. Of the cases examined, Peru and Liberia have made considerable and sustained progress (and Nepal lesser but sustained progress) regarding both security provision (both objective measures and popular perceptions of safety) and reduced security force violence without significant efforts toward security force inclusion (see the Quantitative Analysis and Overall Conclusions section). However, it is notable that in these cases of pretransition conflict, ethnic conflict was only one of many factors driving upheaval. In contrast, it is hard to envision how peace, let

alone progress in security sector reform, could have been sustained in the wake of the intense intercommunal violence that took place in Burundi and Rwanda without these states' policies on security force inclusion, however imperfect.

COMMUNITY POLICING

After police training, the most common type of effort focused directly on the quality of interactions between security forces and citizens is the basket of approaches collectively called community policing, or sometimes community-oriented policing. This approach also provides a dramatic illustration of security sector reform's implementation gap: despite extensive criticism of the approach and the lack of quality, generalizable evidence supporting its implementation (and/or specifying the context conditions under which success has occurred), especially in postconflict and posttransition efforts, it remains part of the standard template of reform approaches.⁹⁷

As numerous researchers have noted, defining community policing is exceptionally difficult, given the many uses to which the label has been put.⁹⁸ In an early definition, community policing is "full-service personalized policing where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems."⁹⁹ Further, "community policing is both a philosophy and organizational strategy to allow community residents and police to work together in new ways."¹⁰⁰

The numerous definitions available highlight the difficulties in distinguishing between community policing as an approach rather than a list of goals, and also the challenges of determining whether any given effort should be labeled as community policing.¹⁰¹ Many have speculated that this ambiguity is part of the appeal: as Annabelle Dias Felix and Tina Hilgers argue, community-oriented policing is important because "it marks a shift in emphasis . . . from reactive to preventive policing, from the ends toward the means of policing, and from the police as representing external coercion to police embedded in and working in partnership with communities. Yet the use of the idea differs so much from one location to another that it can deeply affect police structures and organisations or have no meaningful impact at all."¹⁰² Ellison and Pino comment that "the broad and flexible ideal that community policing is said to embody, together with a rather loosely articulated organizational and operational structure, has meant that it has become the export model of choice . . . an international merry-go-round of community policing evangelists and missionaries plying their wares."¹⁰³

In theory, a shift to community policing works to promote accountability, transparency, and inclusion simultaneously. Close communication between security forces and communities, often in the form of local joint councils or committees, both gives police an opportunity to communicate and demonstrate to the community that they are doing their job and allows the community to shape service by communicating to police which issues and areas are most

critical. Further, the community will be able to identify the individual officers involved in service delivery and hold them accountable for specific commitments. Research on legitimacy and service delivery suggests that the opportunity to demonstrate procedural justice, to show that a government is making a salient effort to improve, and to encourage force members and community leaders to build mutual respect (bilateral legitimacy) should have a sizable impact on general legitimacy, trust, and thus public safety.¹⁰⁴

However, this seems to require a number of enabling context conditions—high-level political will for change, a unified demand signal from the population, and a scale and quality of implementation—that are rarely present. Jacques de Maillard and Jan Terpstra characterize some of the autocratic and chaotic contexts in which community policing is sometimes attempted: “A political system in which corruption is endemic, police/population relations notoriously degraded (or non-existent), and untrained and poorly paid police officers are being asked to put in place systems that Western countries themselves have had a hard time translating into practice.”¹⁰⁵ Community policing can be an especially poor fit for highly divided postconflict states, in that

it implies that an identifiable “community” exists. . . . Even in stable democracies it is difficult to identify a homogeneous community, but in transitional and conflicted states, varying ethnic loyalties and allegiances, extreme patterns of residential segregation and historically variant relationships with the police (whether as perceived oppressor or defender) problematize the development of police–public relations. . . . An unintended consequence of introducing community policing in an already conflicted setting is that the police become repoliticized, not depoliticized.¹⁰⁶

Systematic reviews of community policing efforts have yielded little evidence to support the approach in developing, transitional, or postconflict states specifically. In central Asia, the community-police model programs implemented by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) were found by evaluators not just to have failed to advance reform but to have undermined the OSCE’s reputation by linking it to that of abusive security forces.¹⁰⁷ Dias Felix and Hilgers summarize their review of community-oriented policing (COP): “In Latin America and the Caribbean, COP is often locally and regionally (mis)appropriated in ways that challenge common assumptions both of what COP is and of what it can be in contemporary highly unequal politico-economic systems. Indeed, regional and local specificities mean that COP has been used as much to legitimise [*sic*] harsh policing tactics, as it has been used to undertake serious reforms.”¹⁰⁸

Considering the cases examined for this review, it is difficult to determine where community policing reform was attempted to an extent where it is reasonable to evaluate results (other than the previously noted controlled studies). Given the popularity of the approach with donors, police reform initiatives are more often than not labeled community policing

efforts at some point during the programming life cycle, regardless of content. To handle this ambiguity, this review examines only those contexts where it can be determined that some type of reform effort officially labeled as community policing was widely implemented across a given nation. This reveals a number of patterns.

One recurrent trend is the tendency of mechanisms ostensibly set up to facilitate communication between police and community to devolve into (or sometimes even originating as) one-way information channels for the police to gather intelligence and cultivate informants, which understandably discourages community-wide participation over time. In Rwanda, this purpose has never been especially concealed.¹⁰⁹ “Under [the] Community policing program, [the] Rwanda National Police works with various stakeholders; owners of hotels and lodges [and] Civil Society including church leaders collaborate with Police in preventing crime by giving out information on any action which is likely to create disorder.” In contrast, police commanders are only required to occasionally update the public as to “the overall situation.”¹¹⁰

In other cases, community policing efforts played a positive role in the critical postconflict transition period but could not maintain that role. In postwar Liberia, Community Police Forums were established around the country “to educate the public about the role of the police, and, conversely, to sensitize local police to the needs of the communities they served. By bringing the police and the local population closer together on important local issues, the forums aimed to empower the public to monitor police activity more closely and to discourage citizens from vigilantism.”¹¹¹ Notably, these forums did reportedly serve their intended purpose of helping police identify various community security priorities, particularly important in Liberia’s low-resource environment. However, five years after these forums were established, as Sarah Meharg and Aleisha Arnusch observed in 2010, “citizens are not provided with many opportunities for true participation. Moreover, the LNP [Liberian National Police] prefer to see the role of community-based police as serving to complement their own activities rather than acting in partnership; this is evidenced by the unidirectional flow of information between them.”¹¹²

Community Police Forums were similarly established in posttransition South Africa, with the goal of establishing local oversight over a rapidly changing police system, where federal oversight still had considerable gaps. These forums decayed quickly: Anthony Minaar relates that it took “a little more than 5 years after the initial community police policy document for the new community policing style to largely become abandoned (or at best simply ignored or disregarded in terms of operation planning).”¹¹³ However, Janine Rauch and Elena van der Spuy make a persuasive argument that the forums “played a crucial role in building positive police-community relations in the early transition period,” buying the new regime time to strengthen centralized control over the police and build public trust.¹¹⁴

The appropriateness of local policing models is shaped by political and institutional legacies. In Tunisia, where posttransition community police reforms have been attempted but as yet have failed to noticeably improve the deep distrust between the police and the population, the

police have to overcome a legacy not of absence but of malevolent saturation. During the autocratic period, “the introduction of neighbourhood committees and the presence of police stations in most neighbourhoods and villages marked the omnipresence of the surveillance apparatus but failed to prevent crime in the cities or trafficking in the border regions. In fact, Tunisia demonstrated that ‘community’ policing without proper oversight, decentralization and participation mechanisms merely results in a hyper-localized form of surveillance.”¹¹⁵

In the Solomon Islands and Madagascar, localized efforts to build stronger police-community relations have shown promise, but the effort in the former was never implemented at scale and was abandoned once external funding ended.¹¹⁶ Madagascar’s effort has yet to expand beyond one region or to see the sustainability of its gains tested, but, in an illustration of another common obstacle, it now faces a potentially hostile political environment, raising the odds that the effort will be abandoned before becoming solidly established.¹¹⁷

Recent attempts at quality-and-scope controlled implementation have produced additional insights. In Blair et al.’s recent six-country study, many aspects of community policing that experimenters could control—scope, content of training and interventions, buy-in at inception from local officials and communities—were held constant. Despite interventions being held to these common “real” community policing standards, researchers have found “no improvements in citizen-police trust, no greater citizen cooperation with the police, and no reduction in crime in any of the six sites.”¹¹⁸ Notably, the researchers connect this lack of progress to what one might term systemic-level implementation challenges—that is, “a lack of sustained buy-in from police leadership, frequent rotation of police leadership and their officers, and a lack of resources to respond to issues raised by citizens.”¹¹⁹ These are all issues that, to ameliorate, require state-level and statewide commitment to a police reform plan. The “good example” of particular units that have undergone intensive reform does not appear to spread throughout policing institutions; the theory of change undergirding many pilot efforts is not borne out. Rather, the incentive structures and standard operating procedures of the wider institution, if unchanged, will inevitably reassert themselves over local aberrations.

Characterizing community policing efforts overall, de Mailard and Terpstra offer the somewhat tepid reassurance that “even in post-conflict societies, where the task is immense, failure is not total” but also the useful guidance that “where community policing strategies have been successful, they have involved a learning process. The police have set up iterative evaluation processes, based on surveys and feedback, which have made it possible to adapt to evolving constraints. These reforms, moreover, have been part of a medium-term dynamic in order to install this new professional and organizational model, overcoming the opposition it generates.”¹²⁰ Critically, however, and speaking to the importance of a broader appetite for reform, “above all, the reforms were not limited to the police apparatus alone: the steps taken to meet with the public, and the problems they brought to light, required the involvement of all the public services.”¹²¹

EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE INFORMAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

As observers frequently note, many efforts to reform formal institutions are doomed to minimal impact, regardless of quality, simply because these institutions are not (and frequently have never been) the actual providers of basic security services for a significant proportion of the population. This role is instead filled by various informal providers.¹²² Further, in many instances, the state either simply does not have the resources it would need to take over from informal structures (as in large, diverse, lightly populated, and impoverished states such as Sudan and Mali) or would face violent opposition from communities who trust these providers far more than formal institutions. These dynamics occur especially when the legacies of conflict have empowered self-defense forces and deepened communities' distrust of the state. In response to this, some efforts have focused on expanding the state to cover informal providers by completely or partially formalizing them and officially granting them specific, bounded roles and responsibilities. These informal forces then legally take on some or all of the roles they had already been filling.

These efforts can, in theory, simultaneously target transparency, accountability, and inclusion by increasing the extent to which local communities can monitor, sanction, and participate directly in security service provision. Where the formal laws of the state are not necessarily well known or accepted by a community, relying on that community's own security and justice practices can increase popular perceptions of procedural justice.¹²³ Further, Sacks has found that "citizens are likely to incorrectly attribute government services to non-state actors when they are satisfied with services and when they live in areas with active service-delivery oriented NGOs, churches and donors."¹²⁴ Formally associating the state with selected nonstate actors who provide highly salient services is one way of simultaneously avoiding this misattribution and building the legitimacy of the state by association with informal but locally legitimate institutions.¹²⁵ Finally, granting formal recognition to previously informal institutions, especially if such institutions are deeply rooted in communities on the margins of a state, sends the message that the state believes that these communities are legitimate as citizens—that their practices are worthy of formal recognition.¹²⁶

There is some evidence for the success of this type of effort when well executed. In low-capacity cases, Susy Ndaruhutse et al. (along with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) have found that there is "evidence that service provision that was not managed or was poorly managed by the state can weaken its legitimacy. . . . By contrast, where the state plays a strong role in setting the legal and policy framework for non-state service delivery this at the very least adheres to the principle of 'do no harm' and in some contexts helps contribute to building state legitimacy."¹²⁷ Our previous work supports this finding, specifically regarding security services in postconflict contexts.¹²⁸

There are several clear examples of how a failure to either formalize nonstate security service providers or effectively replace them with state providers can seriously undermine

security. Police efforts in the Solomon Islands have been widely criticized for focusing on the capital city, leaving security services elsewhere to be handled mostly by informal institutions of varying quality, whose resources and local legitimacy are strained by both the legacy of conflict and a rapidly changing economic/demographic environment.¹²⁹ Local leaders are forced to solve security and justice problems that they have not previously encountered with what resources they can muster and with little support to help handle conflicts that involve more than one community, leading to predictably inconsistent security and justice environments across the country.¹³⁰ In Nepal, similarly, the police postwar remained absent from most of the country, leaving security to various informal providers and creating security vacuums in areas where defeated rebels withdrew protection.¹³¹

At the same time, cases of integration of informal forces yield mixed results. Generally, as Paul Jackson and others have pointed out, giving formal state authority to informal actors risks giving tacit state approval to existing informal practices that reinforce marginalization and are poorly aligned with the principles of rule of law or equal protection.¹³² Alongside this is the risk of state co-optation, where a regime assumes a degree of control of an informal institution that delegitimizes the institution in the eyes of the community.

The cases of Burundi and Rwanda demonstrate the risks, benefits, and importance of the state's own incentives. In Burundi, for example, basic justice and some community security services traditionally relied on the institution of the *bashingantahe*, a council of elders whose members "played an important role in conflict resolution at the local level, with the aim of guaranteeing peace, order and harmony. The *bashingantahe* were local notables with judicial, moral and political authority."¹³³ In the years leading up to and during conflict, the regime thoroughly co-opted the institution, installing its own candidates. Postconflict, "several international donors and aid agencies contributed to the so-called 'rehabilitation' of the *bashingantahe* institution. . . . The investiture of the *bashingantahe* at the national level was not able to counter the specter of the politicization of the institution—quite the contrary."¹³⁴

It is unclear whether or not the new Burundian regime could have restored the legitimacy of the institution of the *bashingantahe*, but they were uninterested in doing so, given the institution's association with the previous regime. Instead, the regime founded a competing institution of local hill councils. Both institutions still exist, sometimes competing and sometimes cooperating, but in either case undermined by the fact that both are frequently overruled by the central government.¹³⁵

In Rwanda, by contrast, delegating formal authority to the traditional *gacaca* justice system helped the new regime tackle the problem of how to try the massive number of genocide suspects (more than 120,000) in a way that would be relatively thorough and locally legitimate and yet achievable in a reasonable time frame with the limited resources available.¹³⁶ The *gacaca* process is generally considered a success, though not a complete one.¹³⁷ At the same time, accusations against soldiers of the victorious and still-dominant Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) "have always been dealt with in military courts, which have delivered very mild judgments. . . .

[I]t is questionable if the Gacaca process has increased support for liberal values such as the rule of law, since the rule has been always determined unilaterally by the government; instead, Gacaca has helped to entrench the political order established by the RPF.¹³⁸

Sierra Leone offers a largely successful example of the incorporation of semiformal institutions that, critically, also addresses questions of balancing local and central authority. In postwar Sierra Leone, security and justice outside of urban areas was provided by local chiefs, who could be removed only by the central government. The exclusionary and abusive practices of these chiefs have been identified as several of the main drivers of the civil war. However, as previously discussed in reference to vetting, surviving chiefs postwar were on the whole open to change.¹³⁹ As a practical matter, postwar basic security and justice had to be decentralized: the country simply did not have the resources to maintain a conventional police presence.¹⁴⁰ The new government addressed this situation by reestablishing the local chiefs system but making it an elected (and thus locally accountable) position, clearly defining in law the limits of the chief's roles and responsibilities, and finally establishing a new system of local security committees to both check and be checked by the chiefs.¹⁴¹ This system is imperfect and has led to some judicial forum shopping and competition among institutions (as well as continued corruption), but it also has far greater transparency and accountability.¹⁴²

Finally, in Peru, the posttransition government addressed a persistent lack of police services for rural and indigenous citizens by decriminalizing local self-defense forces, most notably the Rondas Campesinas.¹⁴³ Legacies of attempted (and sometimes successful) previous state co-optation and the involvement of some Rondas in war crimes in the conflict between the government and communist insurgent group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in the 1980s and 1990s made full integration unlikely.¹⁴⁴ However, the Rondas played a role in local security and, even more important, in justice and reconciliation, that the distant and distrusted state could not assume.¹⁴⁵ The posttransition solution was a series of legal rulings that upheld the Rondas patrols activities as an expression of indigenous culture. This essentially created a dynamic of compromise and ongoing negotiation, allowing the Rondas room to operate but allowing the state legal space to push back should such operations expand beyond a limited local scope.¹⁴⁶

Overall, the advisability and likely impact of attempts to integrate informal security institutions is extremely context dependent. In situations where the government has not and cannot or will not provide everyday security, working with these groups is not only advisable but essential if an increase in ground-level transparency and accountability in security provision is the goal. While the exact balance between the dangers of state co-optation on one side and undermining the rule of law by sanctioning fundamentally unaccountable groups on the other will also vary, programmers who are aware of these risks will most likely be better able to avoid them.

EFFORTS TO CREATE INSTITUTIONS TO FACILITATE ACCOUNTABILITY

If community policing fails because regular contact is not enough to change security force mindsets and incentives or to restore public trust, a more direct approach is to create (or revive) institutions operating through separate chains of command, with the mandate to gather information about security force failings and, sometimes, the power to enforce sanctions and other changes. These institutions work to enforce existing law, rather than establishing new law, and take many forms along a spectrum from more to less decentralized.

On this last point, it is interesting that truly decentralized arrangements are almost never adopted by states that were not founded with such divisions of power already in place. This is, in general, an understudied area, and overall, regarding security provision, even very recent reviews of research find that “there is no clear evidence about the effects of placing decision-making authority at higher or lower levels of government. . . . Neither is there any clear evidence concerning the consequences of national or subnational organization of police forces or of the fragmentation of police forces on outcomes related to public protection or the rule of law.”¹⁴⁷

The most common institutional form is the ombudsman institution (sometimes called a mediator or inspector general), which act “in dealing with the citizens’ complaints concerning injustice or cases of bad administration committed by state organs. . . . [H]e [or she] determines if the complaint is justified and makes recommendations in aid of the organisation to resolve the problem.”¹⁴⁸ When these organizations cover security forces, they range in mandate from those empowered simply to collect, aggregate, and publicize citizen complaints (with any concrete sanction, reform, or further investigation left to the institution in question or to higher government authorities) to those with the power to suggest reforms or sanctions, those with the power to directly impose various changes/sanctions (much rarer), and those empowered to initiate investigations. In reach, they range from one or two centralized reporting locations, usually in capital cities, to offices spread out across a state to better facilitate citizen access. The key distinguishing feature of these institutions are that they are constructed, in theory at least, to be impartial and independent from political influence and “located outside the hierarchy of the government agencies, including the armed forces that they are supposed to oversee.”¹⁴⁹

One of the ways these various institutions operate in theory is to promote accountability through a type of transparency produced by citizens themselves. When a state has limited means to oversee security forces or detect nascent problems directly, a community reporting structure can effectively transfer this oversight role to citizens. As important, when the results of this reporting are public, the government can publicize (and receive credit for) the action it takes in response or civil society organizations have the information they need to pressure the government to take action regarding priority reforms. When the central government cannot or

will not take timely action, structures that directly empower local institutions to respond to complaints become more important; these structures are also susceptible to pressure from local civil society groups. These structures ideally expand the proportion of a state's citizens who, should they be harmed by security forces, feel that they have a realistic pathway to demand accountability.¹⁵⁰

The general track record of ombudsman institutions among the cases examined for this piece is modest but positive. Niger's Mediator is respected for its independence but has very limited capacity and resources. Similarly, Liberia's posttransition Professional Standards Board made political interference in police discipline more difficult and established channels for public complaint, but was again too limited and centralized to be an option for much of the population (many of whom are not reached by conventional policing services, in any case).¹⁵¹ Rwanda's Inspectorate Department receives complaints directly from the public and certainly represents progress against a pretransition baseline, but it is far from free of political interference.¹⁵² Madagascar's Independent Anti-Corruption Office (BIANCO) and National Independent Commission for Human Rights have been active and internationally praised in recent years, but both have limited reach outside the capital. The recent efforts of the Geneva Center for Sector Security, or DCAF, to expand the role and reach of the nation's inspectors general are too recent to have yielded substantive results.¹⁵³

The most obviously successful of these types of efforts is Peru's Defensoria del Policia, which was founded before the transition but dramatically expanded afterward, from five offices to twenty-eight (regionally dispersed) a few years later. "At a basic level, the data points to the willingness of Peruvians to approach the institution with their grievances. The steady growth from 12.7 complaints per 10,000 inhabitants in 1999 to 39.9 in 2007 suggests enhanced access to and awareness of the Defensoria."¹⁵⁴ The Defensoria's ability to effectively advocate for change despite limited power to directly implement reform may come from strong initial capacity: posttransition, the institution hired a number of human rights activists, and its transition-era leader, Jorge Santistevan, "frequently referred to the role of the Defensoria as a bridge between the state and civil society. During his tenure much emphasis was placed on coordinating actions with prominent human rights NGOs."¹⁵⁵

In a variation, postwar Sierra Leone took an unusual and very different approach to creating accountability institutions, establishing District and Provincial Security Committees (DISECs and PROSECs) and eventually even lower-level Local Police Boards and Chiefdom Security Committees.¹⁵⁶ Importantly, these institutions (neither directly elected nor centrally appointed but made up of a mix of local elected officeholders, traditional leaders, and other local notables) were established primarily to provide decentralized intelligence to the central government and loosely direct the mix of formal and informal security providers in each locality. However, the central government, which had no prospect of being able to afford to provide state-based policing services nationwide, was dependent on the cooperation of these local institutions, a dependence that resulted in increased transparency, accountability, and (due to these

institutions being decentralized across different parts of the country) inclusion.¹⁵⁷ As Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson recount, “By 2001, as the conflict was coming to an end, . . . if national security was to work in Sierra Leone, it had to have buy-in by the people at the grassroots level. In retrospect, district and provincial involvement in security not only satisfied accountability and transparency standards, but also helped to consolidate democratic national security institutions.”¹⁵⁸

The overall takeaway is that accountability institutions can play an important role in consolidating and sustaining gains in security force accountability, transparency, and in some cases, inclusion: the few cases (Peru and Sierra Leone) where these efforts were intensively applied experienced substantial and sustained gains in both security provision (both objective measures and popular perceptions) and, to an even greater extent (possibly because of the focus on accountability), reductions in security force violence toward civilians (see Quantitative Analysis and Overall Conclusions). However, these efforts are only as effective as the mandate and resources they have been granted allow. Thus, it may be worthwhile for inter-veners to bolster and expand these institutions where they already exist and to apply what leverage they have to protect organizational investigative and sanctioning authorities. In particular, Sierra Leone provides an example of how locally adapted institutions of this kind can help fill in gaps where state resources are minimal. However, these types of institutions are unlikely to be effective in situations where reform momentum and high-level political support for change is not already present.

EFFORTS TO BUILD CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY

If integrating informal actors is a way of drawing on societal resources to make up for deficits in direct service provision, efforts that aim to build the security-relevant knowledge and technical capacity of nongovernmental actors, usually civil society, can be described as drawing on societal resources to make up state deficits in oversight and policy capacity. These efforts are rarely attempted at scale, and in some cases, they are essentially organic outgrowths of relationships of mutual creation and interdependence with reformist regimes.

In Peru and South Africa, for instance, civil societies that were already strong and knowledgeable regarding security policy issues played a critical role in bringing reformist regimes to power, regimes often then staffed by reformists drawn from civil society. These regimes were strongly incentivized to further empower these forces so that they might serve as a domestic political check on antireform actors and help organize broader efforts to consult the general public on reform issues.¹⁵⁹

To avoid the conceptual confusion usually surrounding the term *civil society*, it is defined for the purposes of this piece as “individuals, organizations, and other groups within a given state that are independent of the government” and also do not directly provide security and justice services, do not use violence to advance their goals, and “seek specific policy outcomes,

but through advocacy aimed at political actors rather than by becoming formal political actors (seeking election, forming political parties, etc.). Notably, this definition includes the press.”¹⁶⁰

Efforts to strengthen civil society capacity regarding security policy are motivated by the same logic, and indirectly supported by the same evidence base, that has in recent decades caused researchers and practitioners to argue that civil society actors with the numbers, unity, and knowledge to take action can make the difference between success and failure in peace making, peacebuilding, and human rights advocacy efforts. A few prominent examples include Desire Nilsson’s statistical analysis of post–Cold War peace agreements, which found strong evidence that the inclusion of civil society actors in settlements increases the durability of peace; Beth Simmons’ statistical analysis of human rights treaty compliance and the key domestic pressure role played by civil society; Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink’s “spiral model,” showing the enhanced power of domestic and international advocates when coordinated; and William Evan’s and Katia Papagianni’s reviews of inclusive versus exclusive political settlements.¹⁶¹ Our previous comparative work offers direct support for the hypothesis that civil society has enabled security reform progress through participatory processes across a range of cases at key transitional moments.¹⁶²

The dense literature examining the ways in which civil society may create an impact is beyond the scope of this review.¹⁶³ However, in summary, capacity building usually focuses on increasing the technical knowledge (such as knowledge of how security forces are organized, funded, and deployed, as well as knowledge of alternative models) and reach—the extent to which civil society organizations are able to communicate/collaborate on a given issue with one another, government institutions, external donors, and the general population. Civil society actors with increased capacity may be expected to strengthen transparency, assuming greater knowledge will allow participants to better understand, monitor, and communicate broadly about security and justice issues; accountability, assuming that those trained and connected use their new knowledge and networks to hold the security sector accountable; and inclusion, in that a wider variety of actors now have the knowledge to participate in conversations about reform.

The most extensive effort of this kind took place in postconflict Sierra Leone, spearheaded by the British government but supported by a newly elected regime attempting to create forces to counterbalance armed group remnants quickly. Jackson recounts, “The development of NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) has been a deliberate attempt to construct a series of oversight mechanisms within civil society, partly to compensate for the extremely weak justice oversight mechanisms at state level.”¹⁶⁴ Importantly, this strategy could only have the intended effect if implemented at scale and over an extended time period, conditions created by the intensive British presence in Sierra Leone but rarely present in other cases. While success in a context of extensive reform investment is especially difficult to attribute to any single effort, the civil society–strengthening strategy in Sierra Leone seems to have worked as intended and acted as a catalyst for further capacity building.¹⁶⁵

Evidence of less dramatic but notable impacts of external efforts to foster and protect civil society can be gleaned from a comparison of Liberia and Burundi's reform processes:

While both states had weak civil societies ravaged by the effects of prolonged war, in Liberia, civil society was, both in negotiations and throughout the reform period, consistently protected and empowered by highly involved and powerful external actors. In Burundi, external actors were also highly involved, but, especially during the critical (and in Burundi, prolonged) negotiation and early transition period, these actors had less leverage than [those] in Liberia. . . . The follow-on impact of all these developments for the later reform period was that Liberia's civil society was able to modestly expand, build technical capacity, and start to demand accountability from the state. In contrast, after most external intervention ended, the Burundian state quickly moved to stifle what civil society growth had managed to take place.¹⁶⁶

It is notable that in both Sierra Leone and Liberia, external actors looking to boost civil society had significant leverage over new regimes and were dealing with populations to whom security sector reform was highly salient. More limited attempts in Tunisia, where observers have noted that popular attention has moved from a focus on reform to prioritizing antiterror and economic growth, have yet to produce a national impact.¹⁶⁷ Similarly limited efforts in Nepal foundered against a civil society highly polarized by ethnicity and region and a government uninterested in, if not actively hostile to, security reform input.¹⁶⁸

Overall, efforts of this kind have produced very promising results when attempted at scale. Scale as a qualifier is important: many attempts of this kind that have been and are being attempted involve building the capacity of only one or a handful of groups, usually not representative of the population as a whole. Unfortunately, the basic logic driving the success of these efforts—that civil society groups with expanded capacity will be able to push domestic political actors toward accountability and transparency—breaks down if these groups are too few and/or too divided to exert concerted and substantial pressure. It also does not apply in autocratic contexts, where ruling elites are under less pressure to attract and keep popular support. However, efforts of this kind may be an especially good option where (1) there is a track record and/or reason to suspect that other types of assistance will be diverted to malign or corrupt ends—efforts to build civil society capacity, even when ineffective, are difficult to misuse; and (2) the political conditions for substantial reform (a transitional moment such as the retirement or death of a longtime ruler or the end of a civil war or other conflict) do not yet exist but are on the foreseeable horizon.¹⁶⁹ As Peru demonstrates, a civil society that is prepared with a common agenda and already has substantial capacity is well prepared to seize opportunities for reform progress, while more divided civil societies, as in present-day Sudan, struggle to combine their efforts and exploit such promising moments.

SECURITY DIALOGUES

An even more direct way of incorporating the population into the process of institutional reform is to conduct a popular dialogue (ideally, developing a rough national consensus) as to what security sector reforms are most necessary and appropriate for a particular state. This approach relies on similar logics of transparency and inclusion as those that guide civil society capacity building: in general, that a population will have more trust in a process that takes place in public and into which they can directly provide inputs.¹⁷⁰

One advantage of such a dialogue, if conducted at a fairly wide scope, is that it draws the input of a greater and more representative array of voices than are often represented by “official” civil society groups, which tend to be dominated, to varying degrees, by educated elites in major urban areas who are also (due in many cases to close social, familial, and other ties to regime elites) liable to state co-optation. Another is that dialogues can be conducted during the critical postconflict window where major reforms, such as constitutional changes and the creation or abolishment of security force institutions, are most likely to take place, while capacity-building efforts tend to require more lead time to take root. In turn, this helps reformers build and deploy domestic political pressure for reform implementation when such pressure is hardest for a new regime to ignore.

Popular dialogues at a national level as part of security sector reform processes are not common; they are notably a feature of several reform success stories, though several instances of failure underline that such dialogues are not effective where regimes lack the political will and incentives to act on the input they produce. While an array of qualitative studies of postconflict states have found that government activities are much more likely to be considered fair if citizens feel that their voices will be heard and will influence policy, collecting citizen input only to disregard it can actually have a delegitimizing impact.¹⁷¹

The most famous instance of popular dialogue as part of a reform process occurred in South Africa, whose post-Apartheid government conducted an extensive Defense Review process, including “hundreds of consultations with a wide range of NGOs, business, academia, other government departments, rural and urban communities and specialist groupings,” the findings of which influenced the shaping of new security-related legal frameworks, doctrines, and institutional structure at a foundational level.¹⁷² Peru’s transitional government conducted a similarly broad consultation on the narrower topic of police reform, which those involved credit with creating a “baseline of support and legitimacy” necessary to push through reform in the face of opposition.¹⁷³ Sierra Leone’s process was less deliberate: its postwar Office of National Security (ONS) reached out to stakeholders throughout its hinterland, initially to make up for extremely limited postwar intelligence-gathering capability, but later relied on information from these contacts (through which locals in various regions reported their most pressing security concerns) when establishing security priorities and new institutional structures.¹⁷⁴ South Africa and Sierra Leone, in particular, seem to validate early SSR theories about the likely human

security priorities of postconflict populations, since they produced programs focused on the link between threat and poverty reduction rather than national militaries and external threats.¹⁷⁵

Failures of this approach (in terms of observable reform impact) include the DRC's security needs–mapping exercise, Mali's National Conference on Peace and Security (2005), and the Central African Republic's Political Inclusion Dialogue (2008). All three efforts were praised when conducted but produced so little action that many who participated were deeply discouraged about reform prospects—a pessimism unfortunately justified by lack of progress in the years that followed.¹⁷⁶

As with efforts to build civil society capacity, security dialogues appear to be a very effective type of effort (gains in objective measures of security, public perceptions of safety, and reductions in security force violence) when attempted at scale and in moments of opportunity for reform created by a political transition, as in Sierra Leone, Peru, and South Africa (see the next section).¹⁷⁷ However, given the potential for such efforts to be discredited (and thus less useful when promising conditions arise) when they leave out large societal groups (such as the poor or those living in rural areas) or collect input that is then ignored, these efforts should only be attempted when it seems likely that such dangers can be avoided.

Quantitative Analysis and Overall Conclusions

MEASUREMENT AND COMPARATIVE REFORM PROGRESS

The foregoing approach-based analysis is useful for illuminating cross-case patterns in the strengths and weaknesses of different types of reform efforts in different contexts. It is less useful for determining whether a combination of reform efforts resulted in measurable changes in the primary outcomes of interest within a particular country. These outcomes of interest are:

- measurable institutional changes, such as behavioral changes in security forces leading to reduced risk of abuse and improved responsiveness to the public;
- increased public perceptions of personal safety; and/or
- measurable reductions in various objective indicators of physical insecurity.

Like most SSR practitioners, we have had to make such judgments based on a rough collation of expert opinion combined with the rare general survey or quantitative study, both of which vary in availability for different aspects of reform processes across cases. This is a weakness of the field in general. As David Law observed, in 2007, “Techniques for assessing individual SSR programmes and comparing outcomes across them are sorely underdeveloped. There are as yet no overarching systems of performance measurement for SSR. Moreover, information on the intended objectives of SSR programmes can be difficult to come by, an obvious

complication when it comes to monitoring outcomes.”¹⁷⁸ Unfortunately, these techniques have remained underdeveloped. As Ellison and Pino noted years later, “Definitions of success and methodologies to assess programmes vary widely. Researchers are often quick to label their own projects as successful even though current methodologies for testing the efficacy of these programmes often lack rigour”; and of policing specifically, “we remain somewhat in the dark about how well particular reform efforts succeed, and under what conditions. The policing studies literature has not been particularly illuminating in respect of these questions.”¹⁷⁹

In 2010, Ursula Schroeder proposed addressing this problem by constructing composite indices from existing datasets that capture various aspects of security provision and security governance.¹⁸⁰ We have adapted previous indices created to realize this proposal in order to meaningfully capture and compare postreform change over time regarding the outcomes of interest for the cases that were examined in greatest depth for this review.¹⁸¹

Had measurement indices been constructed specifically for this review, they would quite likely have sought to measure each of the three specified outcomes—transparency, accountability, and inclusivity—separately. However, since those used here are adapted from existing indices, it is necessary to specify how and to what extent the concepts they measure map to the outcomes of interest to this review.

The first of these, the Security Provision Index, contains both objective measures of change over time in the level of physical insecurity that both individuals and groups experience and measures of change over time in public subjective perceptions of safety (where “public” is an amalgam of different respondents) (see appendix 1). The full list of sources contributing to index results, the relative weight applied to those sources, and metrics such as coverage are listed in appendix 2. In brief, the index combines measures of the general level of political violence within a state, measures of political violence specifically committed by non-state actors, measures of the overall level of violence within a state (not clearly attributable to criminal, political, or other motives), measures of the general efficacy of justice chain institutions (primarily security services) in preventing or punishing ordinary crime, and measures of popular access to those institutions (for example, whether the police are available to and effective for the rich but not the poor, men but not women, and so forth). Objective measures include direct sources such as casualty counts and indirect sources such as number of refugees displaced. Measures of public perception are—inevitably, given the data available—somewhat biased toward the privileged and literate.

The second index, Level of State Violence, is simpler and draws from fewer, equally weighted sources (see appendix 1). It contains both objective and subjective (based on the assessments of county experts) measures of the extent to which a regime uses violence against citizens. Sources include measures of political killings, state torture, one-sided state violence against civilians, and the prevalence of executions and deaths from police action. Change over time in this index is used in this review as a strong if incomplete proxy for change over time in security force behavior, since such violence is almost always carried out by institutions that

play a significant role in maintaining domestic security. (As mentioned earlier, this review's working definition of *security forces* is limited to institutions providing domestic security.) It is important to note that this index does not capture change in all important aspects of force behavior, such as the propensity to solicit bribes or collude with organized crime—another demonstration of the need to combine, as attempted in this review, quantitative measures with qualitative/reputational sources for each case.

The two indices are calculated for this work so as to capture change from the prereform period (several years before the outbreak of active conflict, where relevant, to avoid illusory gains simply from cessation, otherwise several years pretransition) to five years post-ERT transition, and then the change from five years to ten years posttransition. This focus on change within the two time periods helps capture the full impact of implementation and the sustainability of change, where feasible (some cases are less than a full decade into the posttransition period).¹⁸² Given that the countries examined start from different security provision and state violence baselines, the key metric for capturing and plausibly comparing reform progress in the outcomes of interest is change over time (see appendix 1 for the raw scores from which changes were calculated).

INTERPRETING CHANGE-OVER-TIME DATA: SECURITY PROVISION

The changes in security provision for each country are displayed below, graphically in figure 1 and as scores in table 2.¹⁸³ For this index, a positive number indicates an increase in security provision metrics over time. A negative number indicates a decrease in security provision metrics over time. It is important, when examining scores for each state, to consider not just whether and to what extent gains were made (from a postconflict and/or pretransition baseline) in the first five years posttransition (Baseline-to-Midpoint Change) but also whether and to what extent those gains were sustained (and possibly added to) in the next five-year period (Midpoint-to-Decade Change). The final score, Baseline-to-Decade Net Change, is critical in that it represents the sum total of change over time in the posttransition decade: if early gains were ephemeral, or early losses or lack of progress were made up for by later gains, the final score will reflect this.

For example, from the baseline to the five-year midpoint after transition, Burundi had a positive increase of 26.7 on the Security Provision Index (see table 2). Then, from that five-year midpoint to a decade after transition, the index decreased by 11.7 points. However, there was still a 15.0-point net increase in security provision from the baseline, prereform period to the decade after transition. Considering only that the Baseline-to-Midpoint Change exaggerates Burundi's successes, while the score for the Midpoint-to-Decade Change overemphasizes its failures, the Net Change score is the best overall measure of change across this period.

For all three scores, numbers that are closer to 0 indicate that relatively little change occurred; for example, Niger, in the baseline-to-midpoint period, had only a 0.3-point increase in the security provision score. Figure 1 illustrates these changes: Sierra Leone, Liberia, and

Figure 1. Security Provision Change over Posttransition Decade

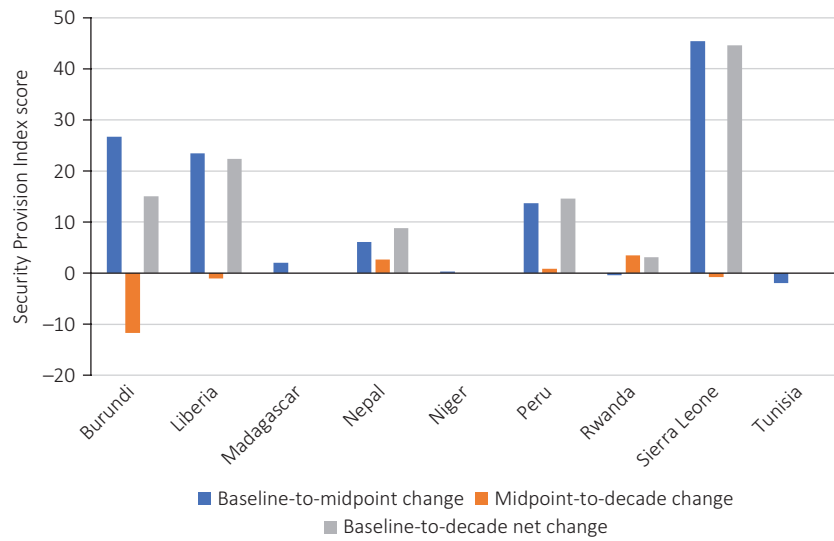


Table 2. Security Provision Change over Time

Country	Baseline-to-midpoint change	Midpoint-to-decade change	Baseline-to-decade net change
Burundi	26.7	-11.7	15
Liberia	23.4	-1	22.4
Madagascar	2	N/A - future date	N/A - future date
Nepal	6.1	2.7	8.8
Niger	0.3	N/A - future date	N/A - future date
Peru	13.7	0.9	14.6
Rwanda	-0.4	3.5	3.1
Sierra Leone	45.4	-0.8	44.6
Tunisia	-1.9	N/A - future date	N/A - future date

Burundi had the largest net increases in security provision change from the baseline to the decade after transition. Note that Madagascar, Niger, and Tunisia do not have an overall Net Change score, as those dates are in the future as of the time of data analysis.

INTERPRETING CHANGE-OVER-TIME DATA: STATE VIOLENCE

The changes in the level of state violence for each country are displayed below, graphically in figure 2 and as scores in table 3. For the Level of State Violence Index, a positive number indicates a decrease in state violence, and a negative number indicates an increase in state violence (see table 3). For example, from the baseline to the five-year midpoint after transition, Sierra Leone had a positive change of 50.4 points on the index, indicating a large decrease in state violence. Then, from that five-year midpoint to a decade after transition, the level of violence score changed by -3.8 , indicating a slight increase in state violence. The overall change from the baseline to a decade after transition was a positive 46.6 points on the index, indicating a large decrease in state violence. Figure 2 illustrates these changes, with the largest net decreases in state violence occurring in Sierra Leone, Peru, and Liberia. As with security provision, it is important to examine the Net Change score to determine whether gains or losses in the early or midreform period collectively added up to a sustained change over the period examined.

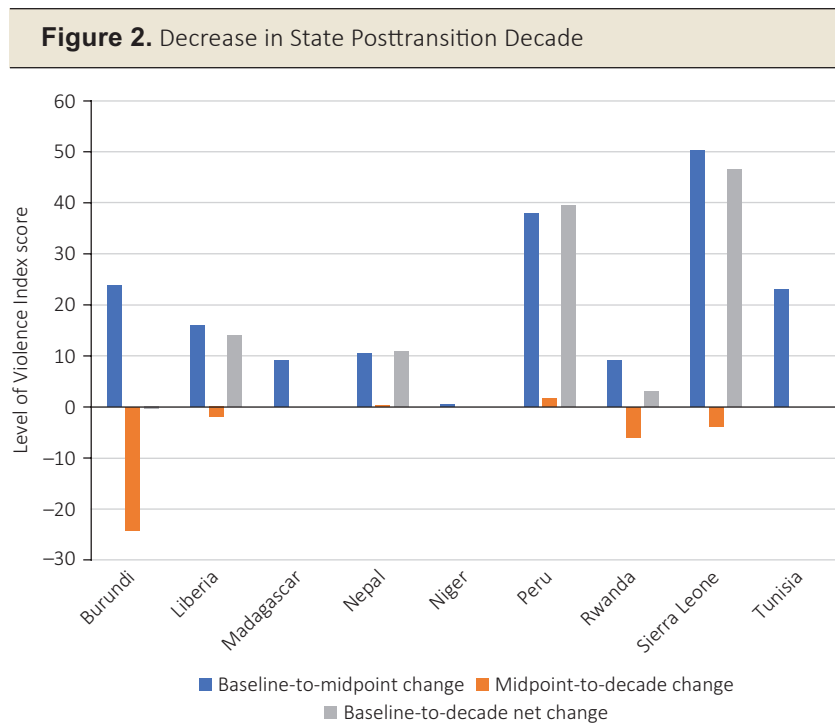


Table 3. Decrease in Level of State Violence Change over Time

Country	Baseline-to-midpoint change	Midpoint-to-decade change	Baseline-to-decade net change
Burundi	23.8	-24.3	-0.5
Liberia	16.0	-2.0	14.0
Madagascar	9.0	N/A - future date	N/A - future date
Nepal	10.6	0.3	10.9
Niger	0.6	N/A - future date	N/A - future date
Peru	38.0	1.6	39.6
Rwanda	9.1	-6.1	3.0
Sierra Leone	50.4	-3.8	46.6
Tunisia	23.0	N/A - future date	N/A - future date

Note: Higher value indicates greater decrease.

SYNTHESIS OF COMBINED SCORES: RELATION BETWEEN SECURITY PROVISION AND VIOLENCE

Finally, examining the results of both indices together reveals a number of interesting trends. First of all, for all states except Tunisia (for which only the first five-year baseline-to-midpoint data point is available), net improvements in security provision are accompanied with decreases in state violence (though not always to the same degree). Without making any statement about causality, it does seem that states cannot make progress in one area without also some type of improvement to the other. Further, these scores strongly suggest that either major gains in security provision or decreases in state violence happen in the first five years following reform or not at all—a finding that tends to negate gradualist approaches to reform progress and instead support “window-of-opportunity” thinking in these contexts (a key point for those designing and implementing interventions).

Finally, these results illustrate (as demonstrated particularly by Burundi and Rwanda) that gains, even dramatic gains, can be lost as quickly as they were made, pointing to the need to pay attention to which combinations of efforts are associated with sustainability as well as progress.

These index results, combined with the qualitative case findings discussed earlier in this review, are the basis for the conclusions explored here; and the results provide a basic underpinning for claims made throughout this review as to where various cases should be placed on a spectrum from total success to total failure. In most instances, each country’s scores align

with its general reputation: South Africa, Sierra Leone, and Liberia are widely discussed as successes. Peru is somewhat neglected in the literature in general but viewed positively where discussed. Nepal is often assessed more negatively than its modest but sustained gains would suggest.¹⁸⁴ However, this is somewhat a result of failures of judicial reform, which are not tracked by these indices.¹⁸⁵ Burundi and Rwanda have often received more ambiguous assessments, based on whether the assessor's focus is on the sustained relative peace after intensive civil wars or on poor day-to-day citizen access to security and a high level of threat from security force violence. These results are perhaps most revealing (and concerning) regarding Tunisia, Niger, and Madagascar, in that none of these states have had the levels of early success in both provision and decreased state violence that characterize every other sustained reform success, casting doubt on their future reform prospects.

However, it is important to note some of the limitations of this approach. For one, this approach is not adjusted for all possibly relevant context factors. Tunisia's very minor posttransition gains in security provision, for example, are very likely dragged down by the impact of conflict spilling over from neighboring Libya, among other states. Additionally, further research is needed to understand how a country's baseline level of security provision or state violence impacts the amount of effort necessary for further gains. It may well be, for example, that countries that begin security sector reform processes at a relatively high level of security provision and low level of state violence will require more effort to make subsequent gains, compared with those countries with "nowhere to go but up."

Conclusion and Cross-Case Analysis

The challenge for those hoping to design reform strategies based on the evidence of past cases is the difficulty of combining various sources of evidence, with varying levels of applicability and reliability to the subject at hand, so as to produce plausible claims about what has worked, what it means to "work," and to what extent observed effects can be attributed to specific inputs. This review has sought to be clear at least about what success means, examining a fairly precise if complex question (reiterated here from earlier): To what degree, and under what circumstances, do reform programs (whether international or domestic) focusing on organizational change to increase transparency, accountability, and inclusivity of domestically operating security sector institutions lead to measurable institutional changes, such as behavioral changes in security forces, leading to reduced risk of abuse and improved responsiveness to the public; public perceptions of greater personal safety; and/or a measurable reduction in various objective indicators of physical insecurity?

Unsurprisingly, this complex and multipart question yields a similar set of answers. Most important is the basic question of whether the types of effort described ever yield all or most of the desired results, and the simple answer is yes: security reform programs focused on the

transparency, accountability, and inclusivity of these institutions *can* lead to substantial and sustained gains across all three of the specified outcomes—as seen (based on both the quantitative scores presented in the previous section and the reputational consensus of works reviewed) in Sierra Leone, Peru, and Liberia. These three cases show potential reformers that substantial progress is possible under very different context conditions. In the reform period examined, Sierra Leone and Liberia were both very poor states attempting reform after intense conflict, while Peru was a middle-income country restoring democratic structures after a less catastrophic disruption.

However, this does not mean progress is possible under all conditions, and the contextual similarities of these success stories are critical. Pulling back, a look at patterns in all cases examined supports the contention that significant reform success across outcomes requires not just a context of increasing political openness but actual democracy: none of the countries examined that moved from “Closed Autocracy” to the somewhat more open “Electoral Autocracy” make notable progress across outcomes in terms of index scores, and all have, at best, highly contested reputations within the SSR literature (see appendix 1 for full ERT regime change designations).¹⁸⁶ The cases of Rwanda and Nepal provide a contrast relevant to this issue. Despite substantially implementing many different security reform efforts, Rwanda, a closed autocracy that transitioned into an electoral autocracy, made only minor gains across outcomes. Nepal, by contrast, which jumped during its transition period from closed autocracy to electoral democracy, partially implemented only a few types of reform efforts but was still able to make and maintain modest but sustained outcome gains.

For donors and programmers, this suggests that interventions intended to achieve reform in autocratic states in the near term, rather than simply lay groundwork for a future moment of political opportunity, are extremely likely to fail. Even where autocratic regimes, such as Rwanda and Burundi, appear willing to accept outside support for reform attempts, they are far more likely to ensure through various strategies that reform efforts are funneled toward train-and-equip efforts and cannot threaten the regime’s use of security forces as an enforcement tool. As a recent US Institute of Peace report notes about the poor track record of external attempts to counter security sector corruption in such contexts, “the house always wins.”¹⁸⁷ Donors may still choose to support such efforts if they believe the alternative is the resumption of violence, and Burundi demonstrates that sustainable gains in physical security and public perceptions of safety are possible. But donors should be clear in their goals, modest in their expectations, and diligent in designing support programs so they have the least possible chance of fueling future security force abuse and/or corruption.

The patterns across all cases also point to the need for those considering interventions to treat the timing of reform efforts as a key factor: as the index results highlight, security institutions in postconflict settings reform quickly or not at all. All large spikes in security provision or governance were observed in the first five years posttransition. This is in alignment with Ndaruhutse’s more general finding that governments have a limited window where service

improvement will produce significant gains in legitimacy; and it suggests that programmers who start with small pilot reform programs in the hope that they will expand later—or in the hope that changes in security force attitudes and practice will gradually spread—are unlikely to succeed.¹⁸⁸ This further aligns with evidence from the cases and efforts types examined by this review, where antireform forces often seem able to kill the momentum for change if they succeed in stalling for a few critical years, and where promising small-scale reform programs are more likely to be abandoned than expanded if not paired with a multitude of other efforts.¹⁸⁹

As far as the content and mix of reform efforts, the first clear finding is that those designing interventions should embrace a “more is more” approach to combining different types of simultaneous efforts.¹⁹⁰ Clearly, states where many different types of security force reform approaches were implemented in close proximity experience greater gains than those where fewer approaches were combined, even if a more limited menu of approaches (such as legal reform and force training in the Solomon Islands) was pursued with significant resources. Given the interdependent relationships explored previously in this review—between civil society capacity and legal reform, legal reform and training, vetting and training, popular dialogue and community policing, and so forth—this is unsurprising.

Beyond this, reform programs within clear success story cases all featured the combination of substantial efforts toward changing laws and doctrines, force training, and force vetting. Further, these cases all featured varying levels of effort (some substantial, some on a smaller scale) toward developing accountability institutions, incorporating informal security actors into the state’s overall security system, building civil society capacity, and conducting popular dialogue processes. All of these types of effort can anchor and amplify other reforms, though, importantly, only when well executed.

In terms of sustainability, reformers should consider that external accountability institutions (such as an Ombudsman’s office) that the general public can use to report force abuses (as done in Peru and Sierra Leone) at both the local and national levels have been observed to anchor improvements in security force behavior achieved by other means—training, vetting, and the like. This has been accomplished by making ongoing malfeasance more difficult to hide and sometimes, when such institutions are more empowered, by imposing direct personal and/or institutional consequences for backsliding. However, it is important to note that in many instances, the effectiveness of these institutions is sharply limited by the fact that they are underresourced and not accessible to most citizens.

Incorporating the majority of those who actually provide security services, whether official, semiofficial, or unofficial, throughout a state’s territory is key to achieving security provision gains when limited resources are available and/or the central government is distrusted. This is highlighted by Sierra Leone’s notable success with a highly localized, multilayered strategy and by the clear security gaps that persist owing to the Solomon Island’s failure to either replace, sufficiently support, or supplement the efforts of traditional providers. However, these and other cases also demonstrate that any strategy for accomplishing this is highly context

dependent: cooperation with informal providers will depend on the state's previous relationship to those providers and the providers' relationship to the communities in which they operate.

Capacity-building efforts and popular dialogue processes have the potential—by making civil society groups and citizens in general aware of potential, draft, and implemented security force reform efforts (especially changes to laws and doctrines)—to ensure that domestic political pressure for reform is mobilized at key moments; that planned reforms match citizen needs and priorities; and that enacted reforms are implemented, pay political dividends for their champions (encouraging future efforts), and are difficult to roll back or scale down without an outcry, as seen particularly with police reform in Peru and legal/doctrinal reform in both Liberia and South Africa. Critically, variations on these types of efforts are good choices for reformers attempting to prepare the ground in (especially) states where a window of political opportunity has not opened but might in the near future—at which point having civil society capacity and strong proreform coalition ties already in place can make a substantial difference to the odds of rapid reform implementation and success. However, this must be balanced against the reality that where dialogue and consultation efforts are perceived as pro forma and/or ineffectual, they have the potential to increase cynicism, citizen disengagement, and eventually vigilantism and other violent alternatives to state security and justice. Moreover, once a reform process is underway, involving citizens in vetting, as was done in Peru, South Africa, and Liberia, seems to increase awareness of and confidence in the results of that vetting.

The fact that Burundi's dramatic gains in reducing security force violence toward the population in the first five years posttransition were then lost in the subsequent five years is an unfortunate illustration of how progress that is not anchored through mechanisms of accountability and through an ongoing, protected role for media and civil society actors can be unsustainable. This finding may serve as a warning for Tunisia, which had similarly dramatic gains in this outcome five years posttransition and which, like Burundi (but unlike Liberia, Peru, and Sierra Leone), has failed to vet its police force posttransition. This caution also applies to Madagascar's less dramatic gains in this area.

This review's key findings relevant to specific types of reform efforts are generally discussed where those efforts are individually explored. However, a few of the more notable conclusions are highlighted here for emphasis. Specifically, given the prevalence of community policing efforts, those designing reform interventions must bear in mind that community policing efforts that do not attempt to shift the underlying balance of power between security forces and the populations they serve have rarely, if ever, produced sustainable gains. Further, poorly designed and executed efforts of this type (of which the literature suggests there are many) are particularly likely to leave the general public disillusioned with reform generally, since the close contact this approach mandates positions them to directly observe when changes in attitude and practice fail to occur. While there is some evidence (from South Africa and Liberia) that efforts of this kind can be effective when police use community input to

target resources toward priority threats, these types of efforts are employed with far greater frequency than the limited evidence base supports. More research is needed to narrow down what subset of this type of effort is likely to be effective in various contexts.

There are also lessons for those designing interventions to learn from cases with mixed reputations and ambiguous or nonexistent index score gains as well. The examples of Niger and the Solomon Islands (and, in terms of security provision as an outcome, Tunisia) serve as a reminder that intense external donor attention and resources devoted to reform efforts are no guarantee of reform progress, especially where such efforts are not designed or executed with much in the way of local input and in highly volatile regions (Niger and Tunisia). This is especially a problem where multiple donors are simultaneously involved pursuing separate agendas. While there are nonetheless instances of admittedly poor donor coordination (between the UN, US, and others in Liberia) producing reform successes, none of the priority counterterrorism states (Niger and Tunisia in this review, and also Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali, and Somalia) are achieving similar gains.

Overall, a primary conclusion of this review is that a greater volume of carefully designed cross-case analyses of these types of reform efforts—with a focus on the sustainability of gains and objective and comparable measures of progress—is critical to expand the evidence base on which future reform programmers should draw.

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Appendix 1

COUNTRY CASE YEARS AND TRANSITION TYPES

The four ERT regime transition categories include Closed Autocracy, Electoral Autocracy, Electoral Democracy, and Liberal Democracy. Liberal Democracy was not applicable to any of the cases this review examined.

Country	ERT transition year	ERT transition type	Baseline years	5/6 Years posttransition	10/11 Years posttransition
Burundi	2005	Closed Autocracy to Electoral Autocracy	2003/2004	2010/2011	2015/2016
Liberia	2006	Electoral Autocracy to Electoral Democracy	2003/2004	2011/2012	2016/2017
Madagascar	2013	Closed Autocracy to Electoral Autocracy	2010/2011	2018/2019	Not yet available
Nepal	2008	Closed Autocracy (1 yr pause at Electoral Autocracy) to Electoral Democracy	1999/2000	2013/2014	2018/2019
Niger	2011	Electoral Autocracy (1 yr dip to Closed Autocracy) to Electoral Democracy	2008/2009	2016/2017	Not yet available
Peru	2001	Electoral Autocracy to Electoral Democracy	1998/1999	2006/2007	2011/2012
Rwanda	2003	Closed Autocracy to Electoral Autocracy	2002/2003*	2008/2009	2013/2014
Sierra Leone	2002	Closed Autocracy (1 yr pause at Electoral Autocracy) to Electoral Democracy	1996/1997**	2007/2008	2012/2013

(continued)

(Contd.)

Country	ERT transition year	ERT transition type	Baseline years	5/6 Years posttransition	10/11 Years posttransition
Solomon Islands***	2002	Electoral Autocracy to Electoral Democracy	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tunisia	2012	Electoral Autocracy to Electoral Democracy	2009/2010	2017/2018	Not yet available

*2002/2003 chosen (rather than 2001/2002) to mitigate the data impact of Rwanda's border conflict with the DRC in this period.

**1996/1997 used as a baseline because data from 2001 and 2000 would capture a state of heightened conflict just prior to the war's end. 1996/1997 represents, to the closest possible extent (given the unavailability of earlier data), the status quo for much of the 1990s.

***Index data not available for the Solomon Islands, as most component sources do not collect data for this state.

FULL INDEX RESULTS

Security Provision

Country	Baseline	5/6 Years posttransition	10/11 Years posttransition	Baseline-to-midpoint change	Midpoint-to-decade change	Baseline-to-decade net change
Burundi	42.4	69.1	57.4	26.7	-11.7	15
Liberia	53.5	76.8	75.9	23.4	-1	22.4
Madagascar	68.6	70.6	N/A - future date	2	N/A - future date	N/A - future date
Nepal	68.8	74.9	77.6	6.1	2.7	8.8
Niger	71.6	71.9	N/A - future date	0.3	N/A - future date	N/A - future date
Peru	63.7	77.4	78.2	13.7	0.9	14.6
Rwanda	74.9	74.5	78.1	-0.4	3.5	3.1
Sierra Leone	29.3	74.7	73.9	45.4	-0.8	44.6
Tunisia	90.1	88.3	N/A - future date	-1.9	N/A - future date	N/A - future date

Level of State Violence

Country	Baseline	5/6 Years posttransition	10/11 Years posttransition	Baseline-to-midpoint change	Midpoint-to-decade change	Baseline-to-decade net change
Burundi	29.9	53.7	29.4	23.8	-24.3	-0.5
Liberia	77.5	93.4	91.5	16.0	-2.0	14.0
Madagascar	71.2	80.1	N/A - future date	9.0	N/A - future date	N/A - future date
Nepal	73.8	84.4	84.7	10.6	0.3	10.9
Niger	79.2	79.7	N/A - future date	0.6	N/A - future date	N/A - future date
Peru	50.8	88.8	90.4	38.0	1.6	39.6
Rwanda	57.7	66.8	60.7	9.1	-6.1	3.6
Sierra Leone	39.6	90.0	86.2	50.4	-3.8	46.6
Tunisia	60.5	83.5	N/A - future date	23.0	N/A - future date	N/A - future date

Appendix 2: Description of Index Composition

Note that the scores for all countries were calculated by using a rescaler to adjust all sources to the same scale before weights were applied.

SECURITY PROVISION

Source: Access to Justice—Men (Varieties of Democracy Project)

Description: The Varieties of Democracy (Vdem) Project indicators used in this review are coded by a group of scholars and/or professionals considered by Vdem to be country experts.

This indicator attempts to answer the following question for various states over time: “Do men enjoy secure and effective access to justice?” Further, “This question specifies the extent to which men can bring cases before the courts without risk to their personal safety, trials are fair, and men have effective ability to seek redress if public authorities violate their rights, including the rights to counsel, defense, and appeal.” The final scores take into account disagreement among participating country experts and estimates of measurement error.

Weight: 2.5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Access to Justice—Women (Varieties of Democracy Project)

Description: The Varieties of Democracy (Vdem) Project indicators used in this review are coded by a group of scholars and professionals considered by Vdem to be country experts.

This indicator attempts to answer the following question for various states over time: “Do women enjoy secure and effective access to justice?” Further, “This question specifies the extent to which women can bring cases before the courts without risk to their personal safety, trials are fair, and men have effective ability to seek redress if public authorities violate their rights, including the rights to counsel, defense, and appeal.” The final scores take into account disagreement among participating country experts and estimates of measurement error.

Weight: 2.5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Cross-National Time Series (CNTS) Data Archive

Description: The CNTS archive is a dataset made up of annual data from 1815 to the present for 200 countries, covering a wide array of indicators. Data are drawn from public news sources the compilers consider reputable, and bibliographic references are available for each data point.

Definitions:

“Guerrilla Warfare: Any armed activity, sabotage, or bombings carried on by independent bands of citizens or irregular forces and aimed at the overthrow of the present regime.”

“Riots: Any violent demonstration or clash of more than 100 citizens involving the use of physical force.”

Indicators and weights: Guerilla Warfare (1); Riots (.5)

Adjusted for population: Yes (Note: Indicators adjusted for population using United Nations Populations figures for each year examined, averaged across years where indicators were also averaged.)

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Propriety, available with subscription

Notes on usage and reliability: CNTS’s reliance on news sources means it can be expected to be more complete for later periods (particularly after the spread of the internet) and for countries with more open and widespread press coverage.

Source: Global Burden of Disease (GBD)

Description: A consortium of researchers across many countries use reports from local health systems and other sources to “capture premature death and disability from more than 350 diseases and injuries in 195 countries, by age and sex, from 1990 to the present, allowing comparisons over time, across age groups, and among populations.”

Definitions:

Interpersonal Violence: Estimated deaths per 100,000 within a country as a result of interpersonal violence, including sexual violence and physical violence by firearm, sharp object, or other means.

Conflict and Terrorism: Estimated deaths per 100,000 within a country as a result of conflict and terrorism. As the definitions of these terms are not held constant throughout the many country-level sources from which GBD draws, it is used only in the “General Violence” subcategory of the Security Provision index.

Indicators and weights: Interpersonal Violence (2.5); Conflict and Terrorism (2.5)

Adjusted for population: Data preadjusted by GBD

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Notes on usage and reliability: GBD relies on country-level reports and sources available to researchers and can thus be expected to be more complete for countries with more developed health care infrastructure. Further, for reasons of precision, only deaths, rather than other potential metrics including injury and disability, were considered.

Source: Global Competitiveness Index (GCI)

Description: Published by the World Economic Forum, the Global Competitiveness Index draws from a variety of sources to assess the economic competitiveness of states over time. The components used for this research are drawn from GCI’s Executive Survey, wherein a “representative sample of business leaders” in various states is asked to answer various questions related to economic competitiveness.

Definitions:

Effectiveness of Police: Executives were asked to what extent their “country’s police are effective in safeguarding personal security that is an important consideration in business activity.” The wording of this question goes through minor changes in the period examined, but to a degree unlikely to bias results.

Organized Crime Impact: Executives were asked to what extent “organized crime does/does not impose significant costs on business” in their country. The wording of this question goes through minor changes in the period examined, but to a degree unlikely to bias results.

Indicators and weights: Effectiveness of Police (3); Organized Crime Impact (2.5)

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Propriety, available with subscription

Notes on usage and reliability: Given that it is produced largely for use by the business community, GCI data can be expected to largely reflect the experience of elites in major population centers where business is conducted, rather than that of the average citizen of the state examined. Thus, data should be expected to be less accurate for states with large, less-populated peripheries, urban rural divides, and income disparities.

Source: Global Terrorism Database (GTD)

Description: Maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland, the dataset is compiled from worldwide media sources through a combination of automated and manual strategies. To qualify, an incident “must be intentional—the result of a conscious calculation on the part of a perpetrator.” Further, “The incident must entail some level of violence or immediate threat of violence—including property violence, as well as violence against people,” and finally the “perpetrators of the incidents must be sub-national actors. The database does not include acts of state terrorism.” The act must further meet at least two of the following three criteria:

- “The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal. In terms of economic goals, the exclusive pursuit of profit does not satisfy this criterion. It must involve the pursuit of more profound, systemic economic change”;
- “There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims”; and
- “The action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities. That is, the act must be outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law (particularly the prohibition against deliberately targeting civilians or non-combatants).”

Weight: 2

Adjusted for population: Yes (Note: Indicators adjusted for population using ratios based on United Nations Populations figures for each year examined, averaged across years where indicators were also averaged.)

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Notes on usage and reliability: The current research uses GTD’s data on both deaths and injuries for each country year examined. Deaths are assigned a value of “1,” while injuries are assigned a value of “0.5.” As with any source culled from media accounts, this indicator is likely to undercount areas with extensive press coverage and undercount areas for which sources are less available.

Source: Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) Conflict Barometer

Description: Researchers with regional expertise qualitatively code conflicts within various states on a 1–5 scale, ranging through war, limited war, violent crisis, and dispute. The focus is on conflict processes—“concrete actions and communications between conflict parties”—rather than purely quantitative measures of conflict intensity and type, such as casualty thresholds.

Weight: 3.5

Adjusted for population: Yes (Note: Indicators adjusted for population using ratios based on United Nations Populations figures for each year examined, averaged across years where indicators were also averaged.)

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Notes on usage and reliability: This work draws only on the barometer’s coding of intrastate or substate conflicts. Further, it omits conflicts that the barometer groups into the least intense categories of “disputes.” This is because these categories of conflict do not generally involve violence and thus do not yet indicate a failure of security provision.

Finally, the barometer has gone through several adjustments in methodology since its inception in 1992. One of these changes, the move from a 4-point to a 5-point intensity scale in 2003 (breaking up the category “war” into “limited war” and the more intense “war”), has been dealt with in the current research by coding both categories as intensity 4. This has the effect of slightly understating the intensity of conflict for a small number of later cases. More generally, as the barometer has become larger and more extensively staffed, and as global information flows have improved since 1992, there is reason to believe that it has in recent years captured conflicts it might earlier have overlooked, potentially producing slightly lower security provision scores for more recent years than a strictly comparable longitudinal comparison would generate.

Source: International Country Risk Guide (ICRG)

Description: The ICRG, produced by the risk-rating agency PRS Group for commercial purposes, ranks 140 countries monthly based on a number of risk metrics. Those used in this review are described below.

Definitions:

Law and Order: This indicator is a composite of two scores, one for “Law,” which considers the “strength and impartiality of the legal system,” and one for “Order,” which assess a population’s general propensity to observe the law. Unfortunately, these scores are not available in disaggregated form, leading to a certain amount of ambiguity as to which concept is being measured.

Bureaucracy Quality: This indicator measures whether the bureaucracy in a given state is strong and entrenched enough to be “somewhat autonomous from political pressure” and, consequently, whether policies and administrative functions are likely or unlikely to vary with changing political conditions. For the purposes of this review, it has particular bearing on whether citizens can expect to be treated equally in bureaucratic processes regardless of political affiliation.

Indicators and weights: Law and Order (3.5); Bureaucracy Quality (1.5)

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: Source does not provide values for Burundi or Nepal for either indicator

Availability: Proprietary, available with subscription

Notes on usage and reliability: In general, given that it is produced largely for use by the business community, ICRG data can be expected to largely reflect the experience of elites in major population centers where business is conducted, rather than that of the average citizen of the state examined. Thus, data should be expected to be less accurate for states with large, less-populated peripheries, urban rural divides, and income disparities. All scores are taken from December of the year examined.

Source: Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) Dataset

Description: The MEPV dataset “lists annual, cross-national, time-series data on interstate, societal, and communal warfare magnitude scores (independence, interstate, ethnic, and civil; violence and warfare) for all countries.” A major episode of political violence is defined as “the systematic and sustained use of lethal violence by organized groups that result in at least 500 directly related deaths over the course of the episode.” Further, each episode is assigned a magnitude score based on the coder’s assessment of the magnitude of the effect of the episode upon the state or states involved. Of the seven categories of armed conflict within the dataset, the four categories relating to internal conflict—civil violence, civil war, ethnic violence, and ethnic war—have been combined to produce a single score for each country year examined. This is because the case universe has already been specified so as to exclude countries that suffered any significant degree of interstate conflict.

Weight: 2.5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Rigorous and Impartial Public Administration (Varieties of Democracy Project)

Description: The Varieties of Democracy (Vdem) Project indicators used in this review are coded by a group of scholars and professionals considered by Vdem to be country experts. This indicator attempts to answer the following question for various states over time: “Are public officials rigorous and impartial in the performance of their duties?” The final scores take into account disagreement among participating country experts and estimates of measurement error.

Weight: 2.5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Trafficking in Persons Report (U.S. State Department)

Description: The Trafficking in Persons dataset is pulled from the annual Trafficking in Persons Report published by the U.S. State Department as a diplomatic tool to encourage foreign governments to make progress in combating human trafficking. Each year, each state is placed within a 0–3 tier system. The higher the tier, the more present and/or effectual the state’s attempts to combat trafficking. Finally, scores have been adjusted using report descriptions so that scores for earlier years, scaled on a 0–2 system, can be accurately compared to the 0–3 tier system of later years. Further, for a small number of case years of interest that took place before the formal tier system was implemented, but for which the State Department provided narrative reports, scores have been hand coded based to match the later criteria for placement in each tier.

Weight: 1.5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Notes on usage and reliability: Since these scores are assigned as part of the diplomatic strategy of a single state, they are almost certainly influenced by considerations other than producing purely objective and comparable scores across time. In particular, as with the PTS, one should expect later-year scores to be somewhat biased downward as antitrafficking gained priority as a U.S. diplomatic goal.

Source: Transparent Laws with Predictable Enforcement (Varieties of Democracy Project)

Description: The Varieties of Democracy (Vdem) Project indicators used in this review are coded by a group of scholars and/or professionals considered by Vdem to be country experts.

This indicator attempts to answer the following question for various states over time: “Are the laws of the land clear, well publicized, coherent (consistent with each other), relatively stable from year to year, and enforced in a predictable manner?” The final scores take into account disagreement among participating country experts and estimates of measurement error.

Weight: 2.5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Population Statistics Database

Description: This data, organized in this research by country of origin (self-reported), includes all those recognized as refugees under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (or its 1967 Protocol), the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, people recognized as refugees in accordance with the UNHCR statute, people granted refugee-like humanitarian status, and people provided temporary protection. It does not include asylum seekers.

Weight: 3

Adjusted for population: Yes (Note: Indicators adjusted for population based on United Nations Populations figures for each year examined, averaged across years where indicators were also averaged.)

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) One-Sided Violence: Nonstate Perpetrator

Description: UCDP defines one-sided violence as “the use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organized group against civilians which results in at least 25 deaths. Extrajudicial killings in custody are excluded.” One-sided Violence, Non-state Perpetrator is defined as the number of deaths in the years examined (using UCDP’s “best fatality estimate”) attributed to nonstate actors.

Weight: 3

Adjusted for population: Yes (Note: Indicators adjusted for population using United Nations Populations figures for each year examined, averaged across years where indicators were also averaged.)

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Nonstate Conflict

Description: UCDP defines nonstate conflict as “the use of armed force between two organized armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year.” This index uses as a measure the number of deaths in the years examined (using UCDP’s “best fatality estimate”).

Weight: 2.5

Adjusted for population: Yes (Note: Indicators adjusted for population using ratios based on United Nations Populations figures for each year examined, averaged across years where indicators were also averaged.)

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) State vs. Nonstate Conflict

Description: UCDP defines conflict as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year.” This review includes only conflicts coded as taking place between a state and a nonstate actor and uses as a measure the number of deaths in the years examined (using UCDP’s “best fatality estimate”).

Weight: 3

Adjusted for population: Yes (Note: Indicators adjusted for population using United Nations Populations figures for each year examined, averaged across years where indicators were also averaged.)

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

LEVEL OF STATE VIOLENCE

Source: Freedom from Political Killings (Varieties of Democracy Project)

Description: The Varieties of Democracy (Vdem) Project indicators used in this review are coded by a group of scholars and professionals considered by Vdem to be country experts. This indicator attempts to answer the following question for various states over time: “Is there freedom from political killings?” with the clarification, “Political killings are killings by the state or its agents without due process of law for the purpose of eliminating political opponents. These killings are the result of deliberate use of lethal force by the police, security forces, prison officials, or other agents of the state (including paramilitary groups).” The final scores take into account disagreement among participating country experts and estimates of measurement error.

Weight: 5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Freedom from Torture (Varieties of Democracy Project)

Description: The Varieties of Democracy (Vdem) Project indicators used in this review are coded by a group of scholars and professionals considered by Vdem to be country experts.

This indicator attempts to answer the following question for various states over time: “Is there freedom from torture?” with the clarification, “Torture refers to the purposeful inflicting of extreme pain, whether mental or physical, with an aim to extract information or intimidate victims, who are in a state of incarceration. Here, we are concerned with torture practiced by state officials or other agents of the state (e.g., police, security forces, prison guards, and paramilitary groups).” The final scores take into account disagreement among participating country experts and estimates of measurement error.

Weight: 5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Source: Global Burden of Disease (GBD): Executions and Police Conflict

Weight: 5

Description: Data gathered by a consortium of researchers across many countries using reports from local health care systems and other sources to “capture premature death and

disability from more than 350 diseases and injuries in 195 countries, by age and sex, from 1990 to the present, allowing comparisons over time, across age groups, and among populations.”

Definition: Executions and Police Conflict: Estimated deaths per 100,000 within a country as a result of state executions and conflict with security forces.

Adjusted for population: Data preadjusted by GBD

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Notes on usage and reliability: GBD relies on country-level reports and sources available to researchers and can thus be expected to be more complete for countries with more developed health care infrastructure. Further, for reasons of precision, only deaths, rather than other potential metrics including injury and disability, were considered.

Source: Political Terror Scale (PTS)

Description: “The ‘terror’ in the PTS refers to state-sanctioned killings, torture, disappearances and political imprisonment that the Political Terror Scale measures. . . . Coders are instructed to turn a blind eye towards violence by non-state actors, and that their primary goal is to measure levels of violence by the state.” The PTS is coded on a five-level scale based on annual reports on human rights practices produced by the United States State Department, Amnesty International, and, in some cases, Human Rights Watch.

Weight: 5

Adjusted for population: No

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Notes on usage and reliability: The scores used in this work are, whenever available, the average of the US State Department and Amnesty International scores for the period examined. Both of these organizations are obviously subject to political biases; as these biases are not always identical, it is hoped that this averaging can partially correct for them. It should also be noted that accurate longitudinal comparisons are likely hampered by both organizations’ changing (generally rising) standards for acceptable state practice over time, meaning that scores from later periods are likely to be somewhat higher than a pure comparison would produce.

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) One-Sided Violence: State Perpetrator

Description: UCDP defines *one-sided violence* as “the use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organized group against civilians which results in at least 25 deaths.

Extrajudicial killings in custody are excluded.” One-sided Violence, State Perpetrator is defined as the number of deaths in the years examined (using UCDP’s “best fatality estimate”) attributed to a state actor.

Weight: 5

Adjusted for population: Yes (Note: Indicators adjusted for population using United Nations Populations figures for each year examined, averaged across years where indicators were also averaged.)

Coverage: 100%

Availability: Publicly available

Notes

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