Where are the Men and Boys?

Security Sector Reform, Local Ownership and Gender

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<tr>
<td>DCAF</td>
<td>Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces</td>
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<td>GFN-SSR</td>
<td>Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OECD-DAC</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1 Problem statement
In November 2008, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom arranged a seminar in Geneva on the topic of human security. The issue was examined from various angles and dissected by both scholars and professionals, with special attention given to its gender dimensions. Yet, when the organization’s new UN Office Director asked where the men and boys were in the discussion, the room fell silent.

The invisibility of civilian men and boys in discussions about security is striking. Feminists have long argued for the inclusion of gender analysis in security discourse and practice, yet progress is slow. The past decade has seen national security gradually give way to a greater focus on human security, at least in rhetoric, and with that a somewhat increased interest in the gender dimensions of security. Recent developments have also made it increasingly clear that for security and development projects to be successful, they need to be supported by local stakeholders. Some scholars have gone further, and suggest that programs not only need to be supported, but initiated, planned, enforced and evaluated by local actors in order to be legitimate. The idea of ‘local ownership’ as a prerequisite for successful development has been most clearly articulated within the field of security sector reform (SSR), though many claim that it is more policy than practice.

‘Local ownership’ raises interesting questions of agency, legitimacy and representation. It also encounters practical problems in terms of “which locals” and “what kind of ownership” is desirable. It would be reasonable to assume that gender analyses have much to offer when it comes to answering at least the first question, yet gender perspectives remain scarce. The gendered accounts that do exist not only tend to focus on the specific security needs of women, but also identify them as key stakeholders in the development of security. The unique security needs of civilian men and boys remain largely unexplored, and even more rare are accounts identifying them as potential partners in the effort of reforming the security sector.
1.2 Aim
The aim of this thesis is to study the debate around local ownership and security sector reform. I want to bring attention to the fact that civilian young men are overlooked in the debate and show how this impedes the objectives of local ownership and security sector reform. I further want show that those claiming to represent a gendered perspective on these issues actually themselves neglect gender dimensions by focusing solely on women as security providers.

1.3 Operational questions
What is security?
What is SSR and what are its objectives?
How is local ownership understood and valued?
How is gender understood within SSR?
How is gender understood in local ownership?
Where are civilian men situated in the debate?
What implications do ideas about gender have for the objectives of SSR and local ownership?

1.4 Delimitation
I have chosen to conduct this investigation within the framework of security sector reform because of its growing relevance in international security and development policy, and because of its identification of local ownership as a key feature and objective. I am also limiting the scope of research to post-conflict SSR, which is a crucial window of opportunity for reforming both security and gender relations.
2. Theory

2.1 Feminist gender analysis

I have chosen to use a feminist gender analysis to make visible how assumptions about gender work to exclude civilian men and boys from the process and discourse of security sector reform.

2.1.1 Why feminist analysis?

It is the aim of all feminist research to “reverse the usual understandings of events, and reveal hidden assumptions in dominant theories or common-sense views of the world” (Steans 1998: 169). By adopting a gender perspective, it is possible to challenge dominant assumptions about what is significant and what is not (ibid: 5).

Fen Osler Hampson has argued that feminist analyses offer promising methodologies for examining phenomena that concern human security scholars. Such analyses can advance research and help develop creative human security policy by “reorienting the focus of research to life as it is lived by the most insecure in any society” (Hampson 2008: 242). As I will show, the concept of human security is central to security sector reform and local ownership.

Feminist theories are especially well suited for examining and critiquing the meaning of power, sovereignty and security. It can help reformulate such concepts in ways that make visible new possibilities for solving our current insecurities (Tickner 1992: 18).

2.1.2 What is gender analysis?

The term “gender” was developed by feminists in the 1970’s and refers to “the roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to men and women” (Bastick 2008: 3). When we talk about gender, we are therefore talking about a historical process involving the body, not a fixed set of biological determinants (Connell 1995: 71). The term does not refer to “what women and men are biologically”, but to the material and ideological relations between them (Steans 1998: 10).
Central to a gender analysis are the terms ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’. They point beyond categorical sex differences by illustrating that women and men cannot be thought of as distinctive groups. If they could, there would be no need for the terms ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, signifying that people can be more or less of one or the other. Hence, women differ among themselves, and men differ among themselves (Connell 1995: 69).

Gender has in general been recognized as an issue about women. According to R.W. Connell, this is a consequence of the patriarchal structure of culture itself and the introduction of gender politics through women’s struggles for equal pay, property right and the right to vote (1995: 227). Because the construction of gender difference in most cultures has meant the subordination of women (Tickner 1992: 7), the ambition of challenging dominant assumptions has usually implied making women and women’s experiences visible. However, equating ‘gender’ with ‘women’s issues’ and focusing only on a particular set of gender relations masks the “analytical importance of gender as a constitutive element of all social relationships and as signifying a relationship of power” (Cornwall 2008: 305, my emphasis).

The concept of gender has been adopted within academic literature and development programming as a way to understand the different roles and behaviors of men and women within their particular social context. Using gender as a point of reference highlights that differences between the sexes are not immutable and may change, for example during periods of armed conflict or as a result of development interventions (Bastick 2008: 3)

In later chapters, I will argue that many scholars in the field of local ownership, gender and security sector reform have not been able to apply a gender perspective on the issues. This is not intended as a critique of the theory itself, but that it has, in many instances, been misinterpreted and applied too narrowly.

2.2 Hegemonic masculinity
To further understand how assumptions about gender work to exclude civilian men from local ownership in security sector reform, I have chosen to apply the theory of ‘hegemonic masculinity’.

R.W. Connell has argued that ‘masculinity’ is an inherently relational concept that only exists in contrast with ‘femininity’. Cultures that do not regard men
and women as holders of “polarized character types” may therefore have accounts of gender, but not of masculinity in this sense. Connell stresses that this was true of European culture before the 18th century, as women were then regarded simply as incomplete examples of the same character as men. Today’s conception of masculinity rests on an assumption of women and men’s qualitatively different characters. The modern conception also holds that one’s behavior is a consequence of the type of person one is and that a masculine person would therefore be expected to behave differently from an unmasculine person (Connell 1995: 67f).

Connell has further argued that because gender is a way of structuring social practice, it is unavoidably connected to other social structures. Gender interacts with race and class, as well as with nationality and position in the world order. According to Connell this interconnectedness has strong implications for the analysis of masculinity as it demonstrates that at any given time, there exist multiple masculinities (ibid: 75f).

In order to understand how masculinities are constructed, and to explore the gender relations that exist among men, Connell has introduced a theory of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 829). The theory suggests that it is not enough to recognize the diversity in masculinity, but that we must also recognize the relations between different kinds of masculinity. These can be relations of dominance, subordination or alliance and are constructed through practices that include and exclude, intimidate and exploit (Connell 1995: 37).

By suggesting that there exists both a plurality and hierarchy of masculinities, the theory argues that there are masculinities that are oppressed and that there are those that oppress (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 846). The term ‘hegemony’ derives from Antonio Gramsci’s analysis of class relations and refers to “the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life” (Connell 1995: 77). ‘Hegemonic masculinity’ is thus “the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations” (ibid: 76).

The term should not be understood as describing a type of masculinity that is actually enacted by most men, but rather as the norm they are expected to strive for and are constantly measured against (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 829). Hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type, and the theory rejects essentialist ideas about masculinity and views of masculinity as a “fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals” (ibid: 836ff).
The concept has had considerable influence in contemporary thinking about men, gender and social hierarchy (ibid: 829). It shows that we need a more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy, which recognizes both the power of dominant groups and the agency of subordinated groups (ibid: 848). Not all men benefit from and subscribe to the dominant values of ’hegemonic masculinity’, which can be oppressive for those men who refuse, or fail, to conform. Ultimately, it shows that we need to realize that not all men have power, and that not all those who have power are men (Cornwall 1997: 11). There are, for example, many women who invoke hegemonic masculinities in their relations with other women, as well as with men (Connell 1995: 230). It is also important to remember that hegemony does not imply complete control and that hegemonic masculinity can be disrupted, and even disrupt itself (ibid: 37).

What the theory of hegemonic masculinity implies is that there are men subjected to oppression and that it might be time to consider ‘men’s rights’ as an integral part of the human security framework. Unfortunately, as Adam Jones has pointed out, “the very phrase immediately conjures images of hegemonic, socially conservative males beating their breasts as they desperately erect bulwarks against women’s liberation” (Jones 2006:463). This is of course not the intention of this thesis. I fully recognize the pressing need to include women in the processes of security sector reform and local ownership, which are extremely dominated by men. I merely wish to illustrate that there are other men than those in power, and that their vulnerability needs to be explored and their agency valued.
3. Method

3.1 Research design
The following thesis is a theory consuming study. As such, it is intended to explain a certain phenomenon by applying theories that can further the understanding of the chosen topic. It is not intended to develop or strengthen the chosen theories, though it may certainly help illustrate their relevance (Esaiasson et al. 2007: 42f).

To understand how assumptions about gender work to exclude certain men from the process of security sector reform and local ownership, I have chosen to conduct a qualitative text analysis. In a qualitative text analysis, information is obtained through a careful reading of texts parts, entirety and context to which it belongs. One of the greatest advantages of such an analysis is its ability to view texts in their entirety as something more than the sum of its parts (ibid: 237). Its advantage can however also be considered a shortcoming, as results may appear to be resting on subjective grounds due to the open attitude towards the object of study. However, reducing the results of a text analysis to predefined or abridged categories runs the risk of trivializing rather than enlighten the studied issue (ibid: 245).

Because the aim of my research is to discern how the concept of gender is understood in contemporary SSR debate, and the consequences this holds for civilian men and boys, a qualitative text analysis is a more appropriate choice of method than a quantitative content analysis. Simply measuring the presence of the concept of gender would not answer the question of how it is understood in the debate.

There are many different forms of text analyses, most of them overlapping in one way or another. For the purpose of this study I have chosen to undertake an idea analysis.

3.2 Idea analysis
Though most idea analyses focus on political ideas and messages, Göran Bergström and Kristina Boréus, have emphasized that the method is applicable to many different kinds of ideas, and to social as well as natural phenomena (Bergström and Boréus 2005: 149).
They have further argued that idea analyses are appropriate when attempting to investigate the occurrence of certain types of ideas in, for example, the policy material of organizations (ibid: 19).

An idea is in this context regarded as a ‘thought construction’ with a certain amount of continuity. It can be a perception of reality, a valuation of phenomena or an opinion of how one should act (ibid: 149). The ideas presented in my study of the SSR debate often encompass all of these criteria, simultaneously conveying a perception of the meaning of gender, assigning it a certain value and expressing an opinion about how it should be dealt with.

According to Bergström and Boreus, three different purposes for conducting an idea analysis within social science can be discerned; descriptive, explanatory and normative (ibid: 155). In other words, the aim of research can be to describe the content of an idea, explain the origin and consequences of an idea, or to form an opinion about the strength of an idea (Beckman 2005: 14).

This thesis is essentially normative, aiming to critique current ideas about gender within the framework of SSR and local ownership, but is also descriptive, as it illustrates the understandings of gender, as well as ‘security’ and ‘local ownership’, that permeate the debate. It is to a certain degree explanatory, discussing broadly the consequences and origins of certain ideas. Ludvig Beckman stresses that keeping these objectives separate does not exclude the possibility of combining them in research (ibid: 14).

When conducting an idea analysis, it is possible to further differentiate between actor and idea centered analyses. The choice is ultimately a matter of which research question is being pursued. In my research, it is the presence of ideas and understandings that are important, rather than who is expressing them, making my analysis idea centered. Beckman underscores that choosing an idea centered analysis naturally has consequences for the material selection (ibid: 17f), an aspect that will be further elaborated on in the material discussion.

In an idea analysis, the researcher must decide early on which arguments, claims and ideas in the text material that should be studied (ibid: 19f). In this thesis, the principal concept of study is ‘gender’. However, ideas expressed about ‘security’ and ‘local ownership’, as well as their relation to gender are considered crucial to answering the research question and will therefore also be analyzed.
Beckman suggests that three different analysis techniques are possible for idea analysis; *concept analysis, argumentation analysis*, and *content analysis*. Because the aim of this thesis is to study how ‘gender’, a highly contested concept, is understood, a concept analysis is by definition the appropriate choice. Studying closely how important concepts are used and understood is an important aspect of making a text intelligible (ibid: 31). Through a concept analysis the meaning of a text or a debate can be revealed, after which the researcher can proceed to evaluate the strength of the observed understandings (ibid: 55).

The method of idea analysis is easily reconcilable with feminist theories and with ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in particular, due to the theories focus on ideas and perceptions about men and women, masculinity and femininity.

### 3.3 Sources

When conducting a textual analysis, the choice of material will inevitably affect the results. For an idea centered analysis, the author of the material is not of primary importance. However, in order to answer my research question I needed the ideas to be those expressed and held by people currently shaping the debate, and have consequently focused on material produced by key actors. The material includes *primary sources*, such as policy documents by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as *secondary sources*, such as academic articles and publications, mainly accessed through the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). A strict classification of my material into categories of primary and secondary sources is however difficult, as even the sources of essentially secondary nature for the purpose of this research are primary sources of the *ideas* I am studying.

Because this thesis explores the ideas presented in the selected material, the authenticity, independence, simultaneity and tendency of the material is not seen as criteria for inclusion. Rather, these aspects form part of the actual analysis, as the material is the very focus of the study.

It is however interesting to note that the analytical DCAF publications were often referred to in official OECD documents and that DCAF analyses, in turn, referred to OECD documents not only for official positions, but also to strengthen it’s argumentation. Such a close exchange between policymakers and academics can of
course be a strength, signaling that the OECD considers recommendations from outside. Unfortunately, it also indicates a small, closed, circle of SSR “experts” with a slightly disturbing consensus. It is fair to assume that this small environment is one of the reasons that divergent views, like those advocating the inclusion of marginalized men and boys in local ownership practices, are not part of the debate.

As my thesis will show, finding material relating to SSR, local ownership and gender was quite difficult. Most material spent very little time on gender issues, and even fewer on gender issues that were not only ‘women’s issues’. I searched for material through the official organs and leading institutions concerned with security sector reform, as well as conducted wider database searches. I do however recognize that despite this, I may have overlooked other sources and that this will have influenced my results.

3.4 Previous research

The topic of this thesis was chosen specifically for the lack of earlier research on gender within the particular field of local ownership and security sector reform.

Although the field is still quite small, the specific needs of men and boys have received some attention within development and security studies. What this research has shown is that men and boys face a number of specific vulnerabilities and insecurities, and that these are not being properly recognized or addressed.

The positive agency of men and boys, and their prospects as local stakeholders, is a highly underexplored area of research. R.W. Connell and other masculinity researchers have interacted with the topic of men’s agency in other research areas, such as education and equality work. There is however not much work done concerning the value of integrating marginalized men and boy’s in post-conflict initiatives, such as security sector reform.

My own research will therefore draw on findings from various other fields, including development studies, masculinity research and security theory, in the attempt to gain deeper insight to the issue.
4. Security

4.1 What is security?
While the concept of security is highly contested and carries many different meanings, definitions usually center on the absence, or alleviation, of threats to important values (Williams 2008: 5). However, no consensus exists as to what constitutes important values or what essential threats consist of (Brzoska 2003: 19). The choice of definition carries with it a large amount of power, as a means of setting the security agenda and controlling how money is spent (Williams 2008: 2). As Charli Carpenter has highlighted, treating something as a ‘security’ issue is to “imbue it with a sense of importance and urgency” (2006: 85).

Traditionally, debates have been dominated by realist and neo-realist ideas about what constitutes security and how it may be achieved (Steans 1998: 106). When discussing the influence of realism, it is however important to bear in mind that within this school of thought, there exists a variety of approaches to security. Classical realists, for example, explain ‘conflictual behavior’ by human failings, such as aggressive statesmen or political systems that allow the pursuit of expansionist foreign policy. Neorealists, on the other hand, exclude leaders motivations and state characteristics as contributing factors, although they accede to the minimal assumption that states seek to survive (Elman 2008: 17f).

However, what the different theories within the realist school of thought have in common is that their views of security center on the same entities, namely states. For realists, states are both the most important agents and referents of security, the achievement of which is equated with the survival of the nation-state (Williams 2008: 3, Steans 1998: 106). Security is believed to be attained through military power, and realist concerns have consequently revolved around how best to employ the threat and use of armed force (Williams 2008: 3).

The realist definition of security, defined in terms of states, militaries and force, has been criticized for being limited (McDonald 2008: 60). A narrow understanding of security as national interests, defined primarily as maintaining the territorial integrity of the state against external military assault, ignores that it in reality
often includes “protection against internal fragmentation or challenge to the ruling elite” (Thomas 208: 247).

A fundamental problem with the realist view of security is its simple assumption that states provide their citizens with security. This notion has become increasingly questioned in the last decades, as states have failed to fulfill their security obligations, and even “actively compromised the security of their own people” (GFN-SSR 2007: 3). As internal struggles have become more frequent, a state’s capacity to keep foreign invaders at bay has become less important than creating a secure environment for its people. The idea that security has to do with people, rather than states, has been advocated through the concept of ‘human security’ and is currently gaining increased attention and influence (Hampson 2008: 229).

In such a conceptualization of security, the pursuit of national, regional or global security can only be considered relevant and legitimate to the extent which it supports human security (Thomas 2008: 248). Keith Krause has argued that the concept of ‘human security’ is the latest in a line of attempts to broaden traditional ideas about security, and that it is significant for two reasons. First, because it stands in tension with state-centric ideas that have long dominated the debate, and secondly because policymakers have adopted the discourse. The concept of ‘human security’ has therefore led to the development of new important security policy initiatives (Krause 2007: 1). Promoting an agenda of human security draws attention to a number of important challenges and forces policymakers to ask basic questions about how to increase people’s security in their daily lives. According to Krause, it also makes visible links between violence and insecurity, and underdevelopment and poverty (2007: 19).

The conception of the nation-state as the fundamental referent of security in international relations has long been challenged by feminists (Steans 1998:105). Feminist thinkers have argued that comprehensive security cannot exist until people are recognized as primary subjects. Feminist thinking about security stresses that “security is not just the absence of threats or acts of violence, but the enjoyment of economic and social justice (ibid: 126f). Feminist theory therefore aligns itself with a broader conception of ‘human security’, in which security is seen as ‘freedom from want’, rather than the narrower ‘freedom from fear’ (Krause 2007: 4). By focusing on people, it is possible to see how gender hierarchies and power inequalities constitute major sources of domination and hinders the achievement of genuine security (Steans 1998: 126).
The traditional debate has also been questioned for its assumption that the international system creates certain interests that are held by all actors (McDonald 2008: 60). The same assumption must not be made in human security discourse. A human security approach should not, and usually does not, assume that all people are equally vulnerable, “but that there are multiple sources of insecurity which particular groups face according to their specific circumstances” (Steans 1998: 126). Insecurities can therefore vary according to the gender, class, race or nationality of the individual (ibid: 126).

Feminist contributions to the human security debate have begun to make an impact, and gender-directed violence is now receiving increased attention as sources and symptoms of human insecurity (Hampson 2008: 230).

The understanding that individuals experience insecurities differently according to their gender has led to the adoption of two recent UN Security Council resolutions. Resolutions 1325 and 1820 acknowledge that gender matters when it comes to people’s security. Resolution 1325 recognizes that women have traditionally been excluded from conflict resolution and argues that for such efforts to be sustainable and representative, women need to be included at all levels of decision making (S/RES/1325). Resolution 1820 further acknowledges that violence can be gendered, and condemns sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations (S/RES/1820). Neither resolution does however challenge existing ideas about women and men, but merely call for the understanding of women’s particular needs.

4.2 Security Sector Reform

4.2.1 What is security sector reform?
As the concept of security has shifted away from a primary focus on military capacity to a responsibility to ensure the safety of people, discourse on security issues and actors has become more comprehensive and now refers to more than just military systems (OECD 2001: 37).

It is within this new climate that the concept of security sector reform has evolved. According to the OECD, security sector reform attempts to transform the ‘security system’, so that it is managed and operated in a manner that is consistent with
democratic norms and sound principles of good governance. The security system here refers to “all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions” (ibid: 38). The actors are in this context understood to encompass oversight bodies, such as the executive and legislature; justice and law enforcement institutions, such as the judiciary and prisons; civil society organizations and non-state security providers; as well as traditional security actors, such as armed forces and police units (GFN-SSR 2007: 1). The roles and responsibilities of the different actors are however still being debated.

The SSR concept grew out of constant discussions among theoreticians and practitioners on how best to target and implement development assistance (Brzoska 2003: 2). Until recently, development practitioners have generally avoided security issues, considering them to be bound up with political ideologies. After the end of the Cold War, it has become increasingly acknowledged that security and development are closely linked and that coordination between the two is needed if either is to be attained (GFN-SSR 2007: 3). The OECD acknowledges that “a democratically run, accountable and efficient security system helps reduce the risk of conflict, thus creating an enabling environment for development to occur (OECD 2007: 3).

Security sector reform became a concept around which development donors and security actors could come together. It suggested a comprehensive approach to security, as well as a comprehensive perspective for the direction of change (Brzoska 2003: 13). SSR has an apparent normative and practical commitment to development, and reform is preferably carried out in a way that maximizes its contribution to development. Its normative agenda also covers the strengthening of democracy and good governance, the promotion of human rights, and the creation of a culture of accountability and transparency (ibid: 16).

According to the OECD, security sector reform should be “seen as a framework to structure thinking about how to address diverse security challenges facing states and their populations, through more integrated development and security policies and through greater civilian involvement and oversight” (OECD 2007: 21). Within the SSR framework, it is subsequently people that should be secured by practices and institutions of the security sector (Donais 2008a: 14f).

Security sector reform also allies itself with the aims of human security by stressing the importance of civil society in oversight and security provision. Anchoring SSR in the values of human security is meant to ensure that it addresses the needs of the entire population (Bastick 2008: 3). Laurie Nathan suggests that SSR should serve
people in four ways. First, it should not itself constitute a threat to their safety. Second, it should be responsive to their security concerns. Third, SSR should enhance public safety, and finally, it should attend to the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society (Nathan 2008: 31).

States need to be given the tools and expertise to address and prevent security threats that affect the well-being of society and to alleviate the vulnerabilities of its people. Because traditional security actors have sometimes constituted the biggest threats to people’s security, an important part in realizing the objectives of SSR is the establishment of appropriate civilian oversight of security actors (GFN-SSR 2007: 1)

4.2.2 Objectives of security sector reform
The OECD-DAC handbook states that, “the overall objective of international support to security system reform processes is to increase the ability of partner countries to meet the range of security and justice challenges they face in a manner consistent with democratic norms, and sound principles of governance and the rule of law” (OECD 2007: 21). In essence, it can be argued that security sector reform is a democratic, as well as a democratizing project (Nathan 2008: 25). The handbook further identifies four overarching objectives of SSR:

- Establishment of effective governance, oversight and accountability in the security system
- Improved delivery of security and justice services
- Sustainability of justice and security service delivery
- Development of local leadership and ownership of the reform process

(OECD 2007: 21)

Although the four overarching objectives are mentioned separately, it has become increasingly recognized that the first three can not be achieved without the fourth. The OECD recognizes that “reforms that are not shaped and driven by local actors are unlikely to be implemented properly and sustained” (ibid: 32).

Local ownership is not only seen as a program objective, but a working principle during the process of SSR. That is, local ownership is not just a goal among many, but a way to realize the overarching ambitions of SSR (ibid: 21).
5. Local Ownership

5.1 What is local ownership?
The term local ownership was first used in the area of international development to address the problems of failing development projects. It was a critique of mainstream development practice, in which all agency was attributed to foreign donors. This had proved to be problematic and self-defeating as policies imposed from outside, though superficially accepted, would rarely be implemented as intended (Donais 2008a: 3). The OECD early recognized the importance of local ownership, stating that:

“In a partnership, development co-operation does not try to do things for developing countries and their people, but with them. It must be seen as a collaborative effort to help them increase their capacities to do things for themselves. Paternalistic approaches have no place in this framework. In a true partnership, local actors should progressively take the lead while external partners back their efforts to assume greater responsibility for their own development” (OECD 1996: 13).

Recently, the idea has gained momentum in the area of security sector reform and is currently identified by the OECD as a key SSR objective (ibid: 21). However, despite the growing recognition of local ownership as a prerequisite for effective and sustainable development, questions still remain as to who the ‘locals’ are, and what ‘ownership’ actually entails (Donais 2008a: 3f).

5.2 What kind of ownership?
To the question of what kind of ownership should be advocated, there is no easy answer. A common view is that “the reform of security policies, institutions and activities in a given country must be designed, managed and implemented by local actors” (Nathan 2007b: 9). In such a conceptualization, local ownership goes far beyond ‘participation’ and demands minimal interference by outsiders.
Such a maximalist approach is favored by both Laurie Nathan and Hannah Reich (Hansen 2008: 43). According to Reich, local ownership must also include local control of modes of organization, planning and time management, a view that is rarely shared by SSR practitioners (Reich 2006: 15). Although it is generally agreed that local ownership should be as extensive as possible, the maximalist approach faces certain problems. It does not, for example, account for situations in which the goal of local ownership collides with the overarching goals of SSR. The dual goals of establishing a democratically accountable security sector and promoting local ownership are not always easily reconcilable, especially in post-conflict contexts (Donais 2008a: 4). It has therefore been suggested that there exists a particular responsibility for “outsiders” to ensure the inclusion of groups that are marginalized or have traditionally been excluded, and who might be left out from discussions about security if local dynamics were allowed to rule (Hansen 2008: 47).

Reich argues that using the term ‘local ownership’, when SSR processes are actually driven by external actors, is misleading and counterproductive, and that the term covers up inherent asymmetrical relations between donors and beneficiaries (Reich 2006: 14ff). However, most authors agree that although complete ownership may not be achievable in the close aftermath of conflict, it is still a valuable guiding principle (Donais 2008b: 283), and should not be limited to local support for donor strategies, when what is needed is donor support for local initiatives (Nathan 2007b: 9).

5.3 Which Locals?
Alex Martin and Peter Wilson identify the question of which locals as the other key problem facing the contemporary use of local ownership in security sector reform (2008: 83).

Laurie Nathan has argued that as a democratic project, broadening the idea of local ownership to include not only the executive but also the parliament and civil society, needs to be an additional ambition of SSR. By broadening the concept beyond government ownership, the overarching goal of national ownership becomes attainable (Nathan 2007: 9). National ownership further increases the efficiency and legitimacy of SSR initiatives, because “the degree to which local elites are representative of the wider population and have the capacity to mobilize support may well be limited” (Hansen 2008: 45).
In a similar manner, Eric Scheye and Gordon Peake argue that in order to determine who the local owners should be, one must first establish who the ‘customers’ are. Only the beneficiaries of SSR can determine what their needs and interests are, and resolve whether reform has been successful by assessing whether those needs and interests have been met (Scheye and Peake 2005: 238). The authors further show that ‘customers’, from the perspective of recipient countries, are understood to be the “citizens living and working in neighborhoods and communities desirous of concrete, tangible improvement in their physical safety” (ibid: 240). If these people are the principal customers of SSR, they must also be acknowledged as important local owners of the SSR process (ibid: 240f).

The need for a broader local constituency is however not recognized by everyone. In reality, many practitioners choose to work with national-level political elites rather than the population at large (Donais 2008a: 9). By doing so, they are often opting for effectiveness rather than legitimacy, and results are neither representative nor rooted in local structures (Martin and Wilson 2008: 84). Working with national level elites may be appropriate in well established democracies, where governments can be regarded as representative and legitimate, but this is rarely the case in post-conflict security sector reform (Donais 2008a: 9).

5.4 Civil Society and Local Ownership
The lack of legitimacy surrounding local elites has led the SSR community to turn to civil society in search of local partners. The OECD recognizes that the involvement of civil society stakeholders in reform design can increase support, ensure that local needs are addressed, and increase the possibility of effective programmes (OECD 2007: 64). Just as local ownership in general, the participation of civil society is seen as a precondition for sustainability and legitimacy. Most notably, the OECD emphasizes that civil society organizations “have an important role to play owing to their potential for giving voice to the interests and concerns of the wider population and encouraging reforms that respond to popular security and justice needs” (ibid: 224).

It is emphasized in the OECD handbook on security sector reform that practitioners should pursue collaboration with civil society organizations that have local networks of partners and that engage women and community-based organizations, which are considered to be more in touch with grassroots movements (ibid: 231).
Some argue that those who advocate the inclusion of a broad constituency, including civil society, underestimate the amount of social fragmentation that exists within societies, especially those undertaking SSR. It is argued that the concept of local ownership carries “an assumption of coherence and commonality of purpose among domestic political forces that is rarely present in any state” (Donais 2008a: 10). The argument that the existence of a range of local stakeholders with different needs and interests renders the concept of local ownership vague and ambiguous is however mistaken for two reasons. First, the “free and open contestation of politics and interests is integral to democracy and entirely consistent with local ownership” (Nathan 2008: 22). Second, the claim does not consider that the various actors have different “functions, responsibility and authority in relation to governance” (ibid 2007b: 9).

Despite conflicting opinions over the fragmentation of civil society, it has been identified as an important counterweight to official state organs in the process of security sector reform. It has a legitimate role to play in the democratic and democratizing efforts to reform the security sector. As Timothy Donais puts it: “If local ownership is to be taken seriously as an operational principle of SSR programming and if SSR is to be genuinely ‘people-centered’, both theorists and practitioners will have to pay far more attention to the role of non-state actors in the delivery of security” (Donais 2008b: 284ff).

In order for civil society to become a significant local stakeholder, it needs to be provided with the capacity to effectively express the security concerns and demands of civilians. At the same time, decision makers need to be provided with “the ability to read, interpret and respond to signals from society” (Donais 2008a: 13). It is therefore important that donors interested in supporting and building capacity among civil society organizations acknowledge that elites exist within civil society as well. Donais has, for example, pointed to the importance of extending donor support beyond the usual civil society organizations, those that are “formal, national-based NGO’s with Western-trained, English-speaking staff”. He stresses the need to ensure that “those traditionally without a voice in SSR have a chance to be heard”. This means reaching out to marginalized groups, who are usually both the most insecure and most alienated from mainstream security debates (Donais 2008b: 285). A similar critique is that SSR practitioners rarely engage with the full “mix of local civil society and community based entities”, and therefore fail to address the specific insecurities of marginalized groups (Naraghi-Anderlini 2008: 106, Donais 2008b: 285).
Whether practitioners work with national elites or parts of civil society, the choice of partner must be recognized as a political act “which inevitably favours some groups over others” (Martin and Wilson 2008: 84). For those who choose to work with sections of civil society, it is therefore important to choose their partners with care.

Some of the key stakeholders identified within civil society are women’s organizations (Nathan 2007a, Naraghi-Anderlini 2008, Barnes and Albrecht 2008). Laurie Nathan argues, for example, that local women’s groups should be consulted in the design of security sector reform programs (Nathan 2007a: 12). He also uses women’s groups that work with rape and sexual abuse when exemplifying organizations that work with ‘vulnerable groups’ in need of support (ibid: 32).

Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini is responsible for one of the few gender accounts of local ownership. She identifies “women in general and women’s groups in particular” as important and underutilized SSR stakeholders due to their “interest in promoting the value-based changes that help define successful SSR” (Naraghi-Anderlini 2008: 105). The assumption that “women in general” share the values of SSR is strange coming from someone claiming to represent a gender perspective. To speak of women as a coherent group with a shared set of values is, as Connell has shown, problematic (Connell 1995: 69). According to Andrea Cornwall, gender and development discourse is full of such “gender myths of female solidarity and general community-minded selflessness” (Cornwall 2008: 321). The claim that sharing the values of donor governments is a qualification for being asked to contribute to the reform of security is also questionable, especially as the goal of local ownership is to reflect the values and interests of the population.

That SSR processes are in general planned, agreed and implemented by men is true. Men usually control traditional security institutions in countries undergoing reform and are often overrepresented among SSR practitioners and donors (Bastick 2008: 8). There is every reason to argue for a better inclusion of women at all levels of decision making, as called for by the UN Security Council (S/RES/1325). Giving voice to civil society is, however, generally considered a good way to strengthen the participation and representation of women (Bastick 2008: 8). This would imply that women are already an essential part of civil society, and that it is in other places that their participation is acutely needed.
6. Gender

6.1 Gender and security sector reform
By grounding the understanding of security in the needs of people, security sector reform opens up a space where gender can play an important role in the conception of security.

The OECD-DAC handbook on security sector reform defines gender as pertaining to the different needs of women, girls, marginalized men and boys (OECD 2007: 49). The need to account for women and men’s different insecurities is acknowledged and suggestions are made on how to increase, for example, the safety of women and men to walk around their community. Yet, a careful reading of the handbook, and other OECD material, reveals that gender is often confused with women’s issues. Beyond acknowledging how situations may be experienced differently by men and women, the handbook calls for special inclusion of security threats that affect women in particular, such as rape and domestic abuse (ibid: 44). No similar acknowledgement of specific security threats to men and boys is made.

Charli Carpenter has argued that although there is an urgent need to sensitize humanitarian workers to women’s issues, excluding the “gender-specific victimization of civilian men and boys from both the discourse and the programmatic realities of this agenda is problematic, serving neither to protect the civilian population nor to promote gender mainstreaming as a policy” (Carpenter 2006: 88).

Gender-based violence can be defined as violence targeted at men or women because of their gender (ibid: 83). Adam Jones has argued that the most vulnerable and targeted group in situations of war and genocide is “noncombatant men of ‘battle age’, roughly 15 to 55 years old” (Jones 2006: 452). Due to gendered perceptions of masculinity, unarmed men are regarded as posing a potential threat to their enemies and designated as acceptable targets of lethal violence (ibid: 458). A well known example of the kind of sex-selective violence men are routinely subjected to during conflict is the Srebrenica massacre in July 1995, which cost around 8,000 men their lives (Valasek 2008: 4).
Jones has pointed out that although men of “battle-age” are the primary targets of such victimization, older men are more often targeted than older women, and that the recruitment of child soldiers, one of the cruelest atrocities of modern warfare, is primarily directed toward boys (Jones 2006: 452).

The lack of consideration of men and boys vulnerabilities, and conceptions of them as gendered beings seems to depend on the deeply rooted idea of man as norm. Ideas about gender in the SSR debate spring from an understanding that men’s needs have traditionally been addressed at the expense of the needs of women. Although it is true that most people-centered analyses of security have focused on men, they focus on men as combatants, generals, prisoners of war and state leaders (Withworth 2008: 108). What the theory of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ has shown is that not all men have power and that it is not men per se, but rather certain ways of being, that can be associated with dominance and power (Cornwall 1997: 11). If we conceptualize men only as people in power, we overlook the gendered dynamics between different masculinities (Connell 1995: 37). If we deny the hierarchies that exist between masculinities, the vulnerabilities of marginalized men and boys will never be properly addressed.

Adam Jones observes that the most lethal gender role today is that of the feminized male. By feminized male, he refers to those men who have, willingly or unwillingly, adopted “a cultural identification with traditionally feminine roles and behavior” (Jones 2006: 452f). Such feminized masculinities include those of the civilian or noncombatant male. Although these men do not embody a hegemonic masculinity, ideas about gender lets us assume that, as men, they do in fact have power. As men, they are by definition potential combatants and are as such vulnerable to sex-selective violence and killings (True 2008: 418). Men “are nearly universally perceived as the group posing the greatest danger to the conquering force, and are the group most likely to have the repressive apparatus of the state directed against them” (Jones 2006: 452).

By not challenging this perception, SSR policymakers and academics continuously reconstruct the hegemonic masculinity and further increase the insecurity of men and boys, in direct opposition to their stated goal of creating a secure environment for men, women, boys and girls (OECD 2007: 49). Jones argues that it is time for men’s rights to be recognized as an integral part of the human rights framing, just as women’s rights are now understood as human rights. To do so, it is crucial that
we “confront and surmount the obstacles that hegemonic gender identities place in our path” (Jones 2006: 463f).

Although men are usually the primary subjects of security analysis, the opposite is true for gender analysis. Most gender contributions to the security debate focus primarily on women (Cornwall 2008: 308). Connell has shown that the reason for this can be found in the history of gender politics. Because gender was introduced to highlight the ways in which women were excluded, many still think of it as a women’s issue (Connell 1995: 227). However, in contemporary SSR debate, it is not women, but marginalized men, that have received least attention. Furthermore, marginalized men and boys are not recognized as gendered beings with particular needs and interests, and are therefore easily submerged within the generic category of “the poor” (Cornwall 2008: 325).

Andrea Cornwall further argues that the understanding of gender among people who shape processes will have a significant impact on whether and how gender issues are raised (ibid: 321). As long as policy narratives on security sector reform and gender are framed as being about women, the needs and interests of marginalized men and boys are not likely to be addressed.

### 6.2 Gender and local ownership

Within the local ownership debate, women’s groups are currently being identified as key stakeholders in civil society by virtually all policymakers and SSR experts (see for e.g. Nathan 2007a, Naraghi-Anderlini 2008, Barnes and Albrecht 2008). This may not reflect the actual practice in many countries undertaking SSR, but clearly expresses the ideas about gender that permeate the debate. The Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit argues that integrating gender issues in local ownership ensures that “both men and women are engaged and have a stake in the development or reform of the security sector as it affects their communities and countries” (Barnes and Albrecht 2008: 4). However, they also assert that it highlights the importance of women’s organizations as key local stakeholders (ibid: 4).

Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini offers, as mentioned earlier, one of the few gender perspectives on local ownership, a perspective that according to her can reveal untapped partners and local supporters of security sector reform (2008: 113). Yet her conclusion, that “women in general and women’s groups in particular” should be the
primary stakeholders of SSR, completely ignores the vast untapped resource that marginalized men constitute (ibid: 105). The assumption that women’s organizations are the most appropriate partners within civil society rests on a number of ideas about men and women, as well as masculinity and femininity.

First, the discourse on gender in development is full of ideas about women’s “community-minded selflessness” and female solidarity (Cornwall 2008: 321). There further seems to be an underlying assumption that women are more open to security reform processes and somehow have more to gain from it. Women are being defined as having an inherent interest in promoting the value-based changes of security sector reform (Naraghi-Anderlini 2008: 105). Women’s groups are presumed to wholeheartedly embrace the core values associated with security sector reform (ibid: 119).

Unfortunately, such uncritical approaches run the risk of essentializing gender identities. They can also serve to conceal situations in which voice is given to elite women who may have little interest in improving the security of other groups of women, and deepen “the gendered exclusion of others – notably, younger, poorer men” (Cornwall 2008: 309). Such approaches will only reproduce inequality between women, and between men, not build the basis for more equitable gender relations.

Second, and related to the earlier discussion on the construction of men as having power, the promotion of women’s groups as civil society stakeholders rests on a conception of women-as-civilian and men-as-military. When discussing the inclusion of certain groups, reference is made to “women or civil society more generally” (Naraghi-Anderlini 2008: 105f), as if women and civil society are inextricably linked, or somehow extensions of one another.

Charli Carpenter has argued that while men are seen as belonging to the state or military, women are usually assumed to be civilian (Carpenter 2006: 89). The positioning of men as combatants and women as victims can significantly shape and limit their experiences in positive and negative ways. Because women are assumed to never have been combatants, they often experience greater freedom in organizing within civil society. However, regarding women as victims is also what makes them possible to neglect in official peace processes (Whitworth 2008a: 111). This is clearly visible in security sector reform, where women’s relative lack of participation in government security agencies, especially at the highest levels, is striking. This is true for both donor states and countries undertaking SSR (Bastick 2008: 8). The promotion of women in
civil society contexts can therefore work to cover up their absence in formal institutions, rather than strengthen their influence over security issues.

The designation of civil society as a space for women, and official security institutions as a realm for men serve to uphold current gender hierarchies. Connell explains that injustice in gender relations is constantly defended by appealing to “a masculine/feminine opposition defining one place for female bodies and another place for male bodies” (Connell 1995: 231).

The very concept of “civilian” is constructed in international society as female (Carpenter 2006: 89). When discussions about local ownership center on whether it is traditional security actors, such as the state and military, or civil society stakeholders that should form the principle owners of reform, the gendered ideas that uphold the civilian/combatant dichotomy remain unchallenged.

In failing to recognize that women and men can be both active agents and victims of conflict, men’s motivations easily become suspect. Because men are assumed to have been combatants and instigators of conflict, they are also assumed to have a hidden agenda for getting involved in conflict transformation (Whitworth 2008b: 398).

Finally, men and boys are not considered key stakeholders in security reform programs because they are perceived as threats to security, rather than potential allies. In noting the absence of marginalized men in participatory development, Andrea Cornwall remarks that men were recognized as becoming marginalized through unemployment and the absence of alternative opportunities. This recognition did however not lead to a discussion about men’s vulnerabilities, but rather to a debate on how men, as a result of marginalization, posed “an economic and physical threat to women and children” (quoted in Cornwall 2008: 325).

If men and boy’s insecurities are not dealt with, this may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Marc Sommers has shown that young men, if ignored, may well become a public health and security threat, stating that “their demographic dominance, vulnerability and involvement in violence virtually assure this” (Sommers 2001: 363). What this means is that young men actually hold an important key to lasting peace and security, a fact that is unfortunately not recognized in current security debates. There is a pressing need to recognize the diverse roles that young men play in displaced societies as a gender issue, and to incorporate it in post-conflict initiatives (ibid: 365ff).

To brand men and boys as threats, rather than recognize that it is the practice of masculinity that poses a danger, ignores the various roles that both men and
women play in the construction of hegemonic masculinity, and the threats faced in displaced societies (Cornwall 1997: 11). As Connell has shown, women can incorporate aspects of hegemonic masculinity as well (Connell 1995: 230). Women can construct complicit masculinities and by doing so benefit from the subordination of other women (Messerschmidt 2004: 122). They can also help sustain the hegemonic masculinity by reproducing the polarized femininity that is needed to uphold the dichotomy (Connell 1995: 68). No one can therefore be considered an innocent bystander, as everyone is engaged in the construction of a world of gender relations (ibid: 86). Again, it needs to be emphasized that not all men benefit from or subscribe to the dominant values of hegemonic masculinity, which can be as oppressive for those men who refuse, or fail, to conform, as it is for women (Cornwall 1997: 11).

Apart from these (mis)conceptions of masculinity and femininity, the exclusion of marginalized men as actors in SSR has implications for the equality work trumpeted in SSR policy as a key feature of reform (OECD 2007: 66).

It has been recognized that post-war situations form remarkable ‘windows of opportunity’ for the introduction of broad reform projects (Brzoska 2003: 32). Because ideas about gender are not static, but constantly produced and reproduced, post-conflict environments have also proven important times for reforming ideas about gender. In times of disruption, gender relations tend to be either challenged or reinforced (Bastick 2008: 3). It is therefore especially important not to reinforce, for example, the gendered civilian/military dichotomy.

According to Megan Bastick, the most important resources and opportunities for integrating gender in post-conflict SSR are local stakeholders (ibid: 21). Connell has similarly suggested that “the best opportunities to alter relations may be found outside pure gender politics, at the intersections of gender with other structures” (Connell 1995: 237). Such situations, where men pursue solidarity for other reasons than masculinity and express solidarity with women, include unions, environmental movements, movements for cultural democracy and racial equality (ibid: 237). A similar case can be made for civil society involvement in SSR as an excellent opportunity for gender reform.

Unfortunately, men are often excluded from processes of gender reform and confrontation of gender inequality simply because they are male (Cornwall 1997: 11). Instead of falling in to the trap of seeing equality work as a women’s issue, Connell
argues that it is important to seize this moment, which is ripe to confront old norms and stereotypes, to include men in equality work. As shown earlier, gender inequality is intertwined with social definitions of masculinity. A gender-equal society therefore requires men and boys to reconsider traditional ways of thinking and acting and to reshape relationships with women and girls (Connell 2003: 4). If this is to be possible, men cannot be excluded from equality work, and there is a need to identify the specific roles they can play in gender reform processes (ibid: 30).
7. Concluding discussion

Security means different things to different people. Not only do definitions vary between theories of international relations, but also between individuals. In the growing framework of human security, people are understood as primary subjects in the provision of security, and a much larger focus on the different security needs of individuals is therefore being promoted.

Security sector reform is grounded in this new framework. Its main objective is to create a secure environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire population. A common understanding within the SSR debate is that such an environment can only be achieved by involving the recipients of security in the process of reform. The concept of local ownership is consequently highly valued in SSR policy and held as a prerequisite for legitimate reform and sustainable development.

In the studied debate about security sector reform and local ownership, it is clear that attempts are being made to incorporate gender as a significant variable in the provision of security. However, despite official definitions of gender as pertaining to women, girls, marginalized men and boys, this thesis shows that within the SSR debate, gender is still primarily associated with women and women’s issues. The thesis further shows that such understandings are problematic as they serve to marginalize the gendered experiences of civilian men and boys.

The debate also expresses a number of ideas about men and women that have important consequences for their involvement and contribution to reform processes. I have attempted to show that local ownership, and especially civil society ownership, is valued as a source of legitimacy and representation. Yet, the debate lacks any considerable reference to civilian men as valuable local stakeholders, while women’s organizations are presumed to legitimately represent all of civil society.

My analysis shows that one of the reasons for this is that women are assumed to be more open to reform and generally more community-minded. They are also automatically perceived as civilian. As such they are considered ideal civil society stakeholders, but are easily excluded from formal security institutions. Men are on the other hand commonly understood as potential combatants and therefore essential to
formal security provision, but suspected of having ulterior motives for engaging in civilian security transformation.

The perception of men as potential combatants has also led many to portray them as potential threats to security. My analysis shows that men per se are not the actual threats, but that it is the current form of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ that poses a danger in displaced societies. The positioning of men as combatants, though many are in fact civilian, is also an underlying reason for many of the gender-specific vulnerabilities of men and boys, such as armed violence and sex-selective killing. By perpetuating these ideas, the SSR debate is actually enhancing the vulnerability of many civilians, rather than increasing their security.

Most policymakers and experts agree that for local ownership to be legitimate it needs to extend beyond traditional stakeholders to include the full variety local constituents. By excluding men and boys from this process, the very idea of civil society ownership is therefore rendered meaningless. Following the internal reasoning of the debate, that no reform is possible without substantial local ownership, this neglect also leaves the objectives of security sector reform unattainable.

What this thesis has shown is that there is a pressing need for more research about the vulnerabilities of men and boys in relation to security sector reform and local ownership. It is especially important to further study the positive agency of men and boys in the reform of both security and gender relations.

The conclusions drawn in this study are ultimately a product of the chosen method and material. Other methods would most likely have produced different, though not necessarily incompatible, results. As this thesis only studies the SSR policy debate, an interesting complement would be to investigate how gender is dealt with in the actual practice of security sector reform.
References


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