EUROPEAN REPORT
ON **DEVELOPMENT**

MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY
THE SECURITY SECTOR REFORM PROCESS
IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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**MOBILISING EUROPEAN RESEARCH
FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

ABSTRACT

Analysing how the SSR process in CAR has been defined and then implemented, this article puts emphasis on the international interactions between institutional actors who may be geographically/territorially situated at different levels of the policy-making process in different places around the world, thus suggesting ways to grasp multi-actor and multi-sited governance. Therefore, it advocates an approach which consists of expanding the agenda of the traditional multi-level governance approach. The issue at stake here is to capture the interactive institutional dynamic at an international level, thus developing a methodological framework that is likely to seize both the top-down and the bottom-up dynamics of decision-making processes. The first objective is to capture the sets of actors and procedures which drive the process, and to map out the various levels of government at which decisions are made, either the more top-down, or the more bottom-up oriented ones, answering two sets of questions: How is security governance organised? Who decides, and on which matters? Secondly – and more fundamentally – is to capture the intermingling of domestic and international decision-making processes which increasingly overlap and interfere with each other in Southern countries.

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1 Introduction[1]

In 2008, under international pressure, the Central African Republic government accepted the challenge to engage in a holistic and comprehensive security sector reform (SSR) process. This SSR process was launched during a national seminar whose conclusions were officially endorsed by President Bozizé.[2] To oversee the SSR process, a twofold co-ordination structure has been set up that consists of:

1. a national committee, headed by the Deputy Minister of Defence, which brings together representatives from each ministry that deals with security and justice matters;

2. an international committee, which is in charge of co-ordinating financial and technical assistance and is made of international partners, namely, the European Union (EU), the UNDP and France (see appendix).

This co-ordination structure aims at harmonising the action between the different levels of decision-making, and can be seen as a formalised "*forum*" that is meant to deal with the complexity of governance (Benz and Papadopoulous, 2006). Security governance in the Central African Republic (CAR) involves a wide range of institutional actors with competing agendas and objectives. Both national and international stakeholders are involved in the management of the security sector which, consequently, must be seen as governed increasingly on multi-levels.

Probing the decision-making processes at stake in security sector reform is particularly important since security policy is traditionally seen as the preserve of sovereign states. One could argue that the Central African State has never been sovereign in the area of security, due to France's historical influence in its security policy after independence. However, the phenomenon that is presently at stake is much more than a simple post-colonial bilateral relationship.

This article aims to investigate the governance of the security sector in the CAR by using the lens of the multi-level governance approach (MLG), which offers a relevant framework in which to investigate the inter-institutional processes, particularly to hijack the formal arrangements (administrative procedures and legal framework), as well as the informal dynamics (social network ties, ideas and beliefs) which do have an effect on policy-making. One way to get a better understanding of the international movement of ideas and practices is to deepen and widen the concept of multi-level governance – which is usually utilised almost exclusively to study EU policies – in order to grasp policy-making processes in a non-EU context (Central Africa) that is characterised by its own governance specificities.

Analysing how the SSR process in the CAR has been defined and then implemented, this article puts emphasis on the international interactions between institutional actors who may be geographically/territorially situated at different levels of the policy-making process in different places around the world, thus suggesting ways to grasp multi-actor and multi-sited governance. Therefore, it advocates an approach which consists of expanding the agenda of the traditional multi-level governance approach. The issue at stake here is to capture the interactive institutional dynamic at an international level, thus developing a methodological framework that is likely to seize both the top-down and the bottom-up dynamics of decision-making processes. In addition to theory development around the concept of multi-level governance, this article aims to contribute more broadly to the knowledge and understanding of security policy-making in Southern countries.

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[1] The author wants to thank Dr. Yves-Alexandre Chouala and Prof. Michael Barnett for their invaluable comments.

[2] *Crucial steps: Security Sector Reform in CAR*, report published with the support of the UNDP, http://hdptcar.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/undp_ssr_report_may_2008.pdf.

Analysing multi-level security governance requires the adoption of an approach that is likely to identify where power is located, taking into account the inter-institutional relationships and the governance arrangements in the particular social context of the CAR. The first objective is to capture the sets of actors and procedures which drive the process, and to map out the various levels of government at which decisions are made, either the more top-down, or the more bottom-up oriented ones, answering two sets of questions: How is security governance organised? Who decides, and on which matters? Secondly – and more fundamentally – is to capture the intermingling of domestic and international decision-making processes which increasingly overlap and interfere with each other in Southern countries.

First of all, this paper will present the theoretical framework based upon a multi-governance approach. Then, it will analyse the decision-making processes that are specifically at stake in the formulation and implementation of the SSR process in the CAR, focusing on the interactions between the international actors, on the one hand (both bilateral and multilateral), and the national stakeholders, on the other.

2 Expanding the multi-level governance approach beyond the analysis of the EU

In recent years, a multi-level governance approach has become increasingly fashionable amongst scholars who study the European Union (EU). Research based upon a multi-level governance approaches mainly deal with the complexity of decision-making processes within the EU itself, focusing on the relationships between a wide range of European institutional actors, at supranational, national and sub-national levels[3]. Recently, the multi-governance approach has been expanded to emphasise the role of the actors involved in EU foreign policy, and the way in which they interact with each other. According to Michael Smith:

> "governance can be broadly defined as the authority to make, implement and enforce rules in a specified policy domain.[4] Multi-level governance refers to the sharing of this authority across an institutionalised, hierarchically structured set of actors with varying degrees of unity/coherence, commitment to EU norms and power resources."

Yet, most of the research that uses a multi-level governance approach, including those studying the foreign policy of the EU, is primarily focused on the decision-making processes in EU circles, which involve the institutional actors of the CFSP/ESDP (Communautarian and European Council actors on the one hand, and national constituencies within the Member States on the other). Whilst this is very relevant to the capturing of the power configuration and decision-making processes that shape EU foreign policy at European level, this multi-governance approach has too often only addressed one side of the question. Put another way, most of the multi-level governance streams of research do not take into consideration the fact that governance is "internationally multi-sited", and that local partners have to be integrated into the analysis: the multi-level governance approach to EU foreign policy is focused mainly on the formulation phase of the CFSP/ESDP.

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[3] For a critical overview of the literature dealing with a governance approach to European Integration, see Jachtenfuchs, 2001)

[4] The multi-governance approach is related to the "actor-centred institutionalist approach to policy research" proposed by Scharpf (1997) – and derived from the study of political-organisational fields. Scharpf's approach focuses on the "policy domain concept" whose basic idea is that *the solutions to a given policy problem must be produced by the interdependent choices of a plurality of policy actors with specific capabilities and with specific perceptions and preferences regarding the outcomes that could be obtained"*.

Regrettably, the MLG approach has been little used in the study of the relationships between the EU's institutional actors and their non-European partners (*i.e.*, out of EU territory and jurisdiction) on the one hand, and, more importantly, in the study of governance in other regions or other polities, on the other. Yet, the MLG approach can offer a relevant framework in which to study governance in Southern-countries.

2.1 Identifying the distribution of power

Although stimulating as an overriding framework, the multi-level governance concept's explanatory powers are not self-evident. A number of authors have criticised MLG for standing purely as a "*compelling description of changing process of public policy-making*". Recently, Ian Bache (2008) has made an attempt to address the multi-level governance approach's silence with regard to the issue of the distribution and exercise of power. As he states, "*multi-level governance is an intuitively appealing concept that offers some insights and informs a research agenda. (…) There is a need for empirical research on multi-level governance that adopts a more critical stance on the issue of power*" and is informed by the following requirements:

1. firstly, a clear explanation of its assumptions in relation to the nature and location of power. "*There is a need to explicitly theorise how actors' power is structured (generally unequally) within governance arrangements*". According to Bache, a good starting point is to situate MLG in relation to three aspects of the power and policy-making debate: 1. decision-making; 2. agenda-setting; and 3. preference-shaping;

2. secondly, clearer empirical benchmarks for what does and what does not constitute multi-level governance. If a growing number of actors are involved in policy-making, the question is to determine whether this changes the outcomes. "*Presumably, governance should signal more dispersed influence over outcomes*", as stated by Bache. Consequently, there is a need to specify empirically when participation becomes meaningful, that is, whether different participants actually do influence outcomes, and when multi-level governance arrangements demonstrate a dispersal of power. The resources dependence framework can help here. "*Governance networks are made up of resources-dependent organisations: it is why they interact. Key resources are: financial, informational, political, organisational and constitutional-legal. Understanding the distribution of these resources and the skills with which actors use them is key to explaining policy-decisions and outcomes-implementation matters. These tools allow us to sharpen our understanding of whether what we are investigating is a substantive or superficial change in power over decision-making and outcomes. High interdependence equals dispersed power*";

3. thirdly, explicit theorising of the relationships between actors, governance arrangements and social context. "*The social context in which governance arrangements exist largely explains the distribution of resources between actors. (…) There is a further structuring of actors resources by the nature of the particular governance arrangements (for example, formal rules, rules of the games, type of network). Beyond this distribution of resources, policy decisions (and outcomes) are shaped by the skills with which actors employ the resources available to them (agency). Social constructivism brings to MLG research a focus on the social characteristics of agents to highlight their cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital. There is a need to go beyond first face of power to investigating less tangible forms of power by relating governance dynamics to the context. (…) Members with particular social and/or functional backgrounds [are] able to dominate decision-making in the process of MLG*". Elsewhere, Bache states that "MLG research tends to focus on observable decision-making: [this is] an important part of the puzzle, but leaves it open to the charge that it does not account for the different capacities between actors (of-

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ten concealed), that is key to understanding the nature and impact of the decisions made".

2.2 Bringing into the analysis the "policy transfer approach"

As mentioned above, most scholars who refer to the multi-level governance approach have left out the question of the impact that national partners do have on the ground on the policies supported by international stakeholders. In fact, in order to integrate into the analysis the role of the national partners, the multi-level governance approach has to be deepened and enriched with the burgeoning literature on "*policy transfer approach*".

Developing a research agenda on multi-level governance in Central and Eastern Europe, Paul Stubbs (2005) has addressed the "*missed opportunity*", which characterises most of the research based upon a multi-governance approach by proposing to bring into the analysis the challenging perspectives which can be provided by political sociology, political anthropology and political economy. With reference to Bache and Flinders (2004), Paul Stubbs' research on the EU policy in Central and Eastern Europe highlights the need to conceptualise and understand decision-making processes "*in terms of complex overlapping networks*". Stubbs' research focuses on "*the way the multi-level governance concept allows for an understanding of the transformation of the role of the state towards new strategies of coordination, steering and networking*". When placing the stress "*on the ways in which traditional notions of democratic accountability are being undermined and challenged*", Stubbs relates the crisis of accountability to the development of multi-level governance. To do so, he refers to the "*policy transfer*" approach, defined by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) as "*the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system*". The aim of this research agenda is to capture the impact of foreign institutions as the source of policy ideas, policy design as well as implementation in developmental countries, and enrich the grasp of politics, policies and practices. More importantly, Stubbs explains that "*the multi-dimensional, confusing and contradictory nature of policy transfers can be understood in terms of the ways in which codified knowledge, seen as globally applicable, and working through standards, techniques and "best practices", becomes tacit knowledge through a series of interpretative encounters*". Finally, Stubbs highlights the importance of taking into account the dimensions of "*policy resistance*" and "*resistance strategies of apparently weak groups in the context of asymmetric dependencies*", using contributions from anthropology (Bache and Taylor) and referring to James C. Scott (1987; 1992), which focuses on the different strategies of internal actors not only in terms of immediate interests, but also with respect to the profound importance of historical legacies, experience and contexts[5]. These perspectives of Stubbs' advocate an understanding of how international decision-making processes (in his case study, the EU decision-making processes) interact with formal and informal channels of decision at national level in partner countries. His interest is not just on formal decision-making processes, but also on semi-formal and informal ones.

2.3 Methodology

Following the frameworks suggested by Ian Bache and Paul Stubbs, this paper suggests an analysis of the security governance arrangements aiming at capturing the distribution of power in the social context of the CAR, by analysing the kinds of resources that are

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[5]   Focusing on the interface between donors and recipients, Janine Wedel (2004) has developed a similar approach. She addresses the interactions between multiplex networks where actors interact in a variety of capacities, with multiple identities.

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mobilised by different set of actors (national and international) at every stage of the decision-making process.

To capture multi-level, multi-sited governance, there is a need to focus both on the formulation phase (agenda-setting and programming phase) and the implementation phase of policy-making (managing and monitoring)[6]. Indeed, security governance in the CAR involves a wide range of domestic actors (national authorities as well as non-governmental and non-state actors) and international stakeholders (international organisations as well as other states) which intervene along with specific policy-making processes (both formal and informal), which themselves interact and interfere with each other. Consequently, security governance in the CAR is shaped by inter-institutional power relations, and the outcomes of this policy result, to a large extent, from the interactions between the international and national resources mobilised during the policy-making processes. As stated by Jeanie Bukowski (2001):

> "unlike neo-realist analyses, the multi-level governance view dictates the consideration of all actors involved in the various stages of policy-making. The rationale here is that, in reality, those people and groups in charge of carrying out a policy have as much or more influence over its actual impact as those who initiate and legislate the policy. Moreover, the "formulators" and "implementers" may or may not be the same actors."

Consequently, we propose to capture power distribution in security governance by identifying the kind of resources (both material and normative) that are mobilised by each set of actors that have been involved in security governance in the CAR since the launching of the SSR process, namely the EU[7], France and national stakeholders (both governmental and non-governmental) at the following stages of the policy-making process:

1. policy formulation phase (agenda-setting and programming);
2. Implementing phase (managing and monitoring).

3 Policy formulation phase: agenda-setting and programming

To identify the distribution of power during the agenda-setting/programming phases, there is a need to identify who has been providing the guidelines, setting the priorities and defining the general purpose of the process meant to reform the security sector in the CAR, and then identify who has been involved in programming the different stages of the process. Throughout this policy formulation phase, three kinds of resources have been primarily mobilised: the normative resources, the assessment resources, and the programmatic resources.

3.1 Normative resources

Studying the normative resources enables one to capture the representation of security that underlies the approach of each set of stakeholders. This paragraph therefore emphasises the representation of security in a context marked by a plurality of actors with different objectives, strategies and expectations.

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[6]   Gary Marks (1993) has taken into account both of these phases when analysing European integration in his first conceptualisation of multi-level governance.

[7]   It is important here to mention the fact that the UNDP is also a major stakeholder in the SSR process in the CAR. However, due to the focus of the ERD Conference, this article does not address its role in detail, and specifically focuses on the EU's role.

3.2 Multilateral stakeholders

The EU is the most important international stakeholder that supports the SSR process in the CAR. The European approach to SSR is one of the most operational applications of the multi-functional approach promoted at the strategic level by the *European Security Strategy*, which highlights the holistic approach of the EU foreign policy, in which security, economic development and democracy are seen as essential contributions to the generation of political stability in the EU's international environment. In addition to anti-terrorism and disarmament missions, the European Security Strategy has identified support to SSR in partner countries as a new EU field of intervention, thus contributing both to enlarging the initial spectrum of the Petersburg Tasks,[8] and to the inclusion of security missions in the framework of Community policies. Consequently, the EU SSR policy is rooted in two different policy frameworks:[9] first, the ESDP under Pillar 2; second, Community policy under Pillar 1.[10] The EU's support of the SSR process in the CAR process is exclusively a Community-driven policy which provides a good example of the policy-making processes at stake in a foreign policy led outside the framework of the second Pillar.[11]

The EC (as well as the ESDP) SSR documents explicitly refer to the SSR guidelines ("*Security System reform and Governance: Policy and Good Practice*") adopted by the OECD/DAC and translated into political and operational principles in the "*OECD Handbook on Security Systems Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*". The SSR process supported in the CAR by the EU appears as an ideal-type illustration of the holistic approach developed by the OECD/DAC, according to which, security sector reform (SSR) consequently seeks to increase its partner countries' ability to meet the range of security needs within their societies in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of governance, transparency and the rule of law. SSR not only includes, but extends well beyond, the narrower focus of more traditional security assistance on de-

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[8] SSR is also mentioned in several other papers such as: *Council conclusions on security and development* (2007), *EU concept for crisis management missions in the field of civilian administration* (2003), *The European consensus on development* (2006), *The Commission communication on governance and development* (2003).

[9] For an overview of the EU SSR approach, see Babaud (2008) & Bagayoko (2008).

[10] There are two documents that define the role of the EU in the field of SRR: The "*EU concept for ESDP Support to Security Sector Reform*", draft in October 2005 by the General Secretariat of the Council, in accordance with a PSC's (Political and Security Committee) tasking (*EU Concept for ESDP Support to Security Sector Reform*; Council of the European Union, 13/10/05, Brussels.

The May 2006 "*Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform*", which provides a framework for the EC support to SSR. A third document - "*Council Conclusions on a Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform*; General Affairs Council meeting, 12/06/06, Luxembourg – is meant to synthesise the ESDP and the EC SSR Concepts.

[11] The support provided by the European Commission to the SSR process in the CAR gives a sense of the major role that the EC in EU foreign policy can play. Whilst most of the time the foreign and security policy of the EU is seen as exclusively referring to the second pillar – and consequently to the role of the Member States and of the General Secretariat of the Council – the EU SSR policy sheds light on the key influence of the European Commission. Because the EC institutional actors are major stakeholders, the EU SSR policy proves how the first conceptualisation of multi-governance - which is used to concentrate on the central role of the European Community institutions in the integration process (Marks G. 1993; Marks Hooghe and Marks,1999) - remains topical and relevant. Furthermore, the EU SSR policy also demonstrates the validity of Michael Smith's approach (2004, 2006) which, as mentioned above, has recently expanded the multi-level governance approach to studying EU foreign policy by stating that "*the TEU provides a greater degree of autonomy for EC organisational actors in European foreign policy during specific phases of policy process*". The EU support to SSR-related programmes confirms that the Commission can have a determining influence over the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

fence, intelligence and policing. Consequently, the EC support to SSR in the CAR specifically focuses on: democratic governance of the armed forces (including transparency and accountability in budgeting processes); judiciary institutions; institutions responsible for enforcing the law, especially the police forces; supervision and oversight institutions, particularly the Parliament, the media and civil society; DDR processes; and integration of SSR-related programmes in the peace and security agendas of REC (Regional Economic Communities), such as ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States).

The overall objective of the OECD approach is to introduce a rationalisation in the organisation of the security apparatus, and to promote democratic oversight and supervision mechanisms. It is important here to note that the SSR concept itself, as framed by the OECD, promotes a multi-level approach of security governance. As stated by the OECD/DAC Manual, the overarching objective of SSR processes is to introduce a system of "*multi-layered security governance*", which promotes a democratic accountability at multiple levels of oversight:

> "A multi-layered approach to justice and security divides international assistance between: the state, at its various levels, as one of many providers of justice and security service delivery; the state, in its role of regulator to establish the parameters for justice and security service delivery and ensure accountability of providers; non-state justice and security providers, given their position as primary purveyors of day-to-day service delivery; the users and recipients, state an non-state, of justice and security services, to increase their voice and hold providers accountable (…) In many developing and fragile states, the design of justice and security development indeed requires a multi-layered approach that provides assistance to a range of legitimate state and non-state providers at the multiple points at which actual day-to-day service delivery occurs. (…) The objective is to make the delivery of justice and security services more accessible, effective, accountable and rights respecting."[12]

Five inter-dependent pillars of oversight and control are thus defined: internal control; executive control; parliamentary oversight; judicial review; and civil society oversight.

Furthermore, the OECD/DAC Manual deeply envisions the role that international partners are likely to play when providing support to SSR processes: international donors are seen as an integral part of the multi-layered governance system promoted through SSR.[13]

3.3 National stakeholders

Different representations of security reform are competing among the Central African Republic's actors.

First, the CAR's political actors, namely, the opposition parties and rebel groups as well as governmental authorities, do refer to a very traditional conception of security: security reform is overall seen as a means of building up a security apparatus (essentially, a militarised one) that can guarantee the state's monopoly of violence, and thus ensure the political continuity and hegemonic stability of the ruling actors. The context of war, which has prevailed in the CAR for more than a decade, has deepened this tendency. It is extremely important to mention the fact that almost all the influential political actors on the CAR political scene today have played a leading role for decades: most of them have occupied the highest functions (Former Presidents of the Republic, Ministers of Defence, Prime Minister, Chiefs? of Staff) before joining the ranks of different rebel outfits or of the opposition. All these political leaders have seen the military as the best instrument to support their access to power and for twenty years the successive

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[12] "*OECD Handbook on Security Systems Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*", p.68.

[13] *Idem*, pp. 63-86 and Section 8.

heads of state have attempted to instrumentalise the armed forces in order to ensure their position. Consequently, the sense of security developed by political stakeholders in the CAR's SSR process fundamentally differs from the normative approach promoted by the OECD and international actors such as the EU, who do refer to it.

Beyond government and political circles, it is possible to identify two alternative representations of security reform among Central African actors:

1. the representation of security reform among security actors themselves: the armed forces as well as the police forces and other security services (intelligence services, customs, water/forest services) have developed an approach to security reform which is mainly focused on the ways in which their working conditions and individual financial and social conditions could improve. The most widespread claims among security providers themselves are their systematic demands for the payment of back pay; regular access to the so-called PGA (Prime générale d'alimentation – Food allowance); free access to medical care; the construction of barracks where their families could be accommodated; the supply of new equipment; and access to training.

2. the representation of security among the population at large: the civilian population, especially in the provinces, has been suffering for years from the abuses committed by the armed forces in total impunity or from their inability to cope with new threats (such as the so-called *zaraguinas*, *i.e.*, the road-cutters) they are confronted with on a daily basis. Consequently, the populations' definition of security reform is mainly framed in terms of physical safety, which private actors (vigilante groups set up by the villagers themselves) or customary actors (traditional justice providers), are seen as the most likely to provide. In the CAR, a large part of the population depends on a variety of traditional and religious conflict resolution mechanisms, other than the formal state systems. The EU (as well as the other international stakeholders) increasingly tends to acknowledge the existence and the relevance of these systems in some cases. However, these formal systems are also legitimising some practices – for instance, the persecution of the alleged "witches" – which do not uphold international human rights standards as promoted by the DAC/OECD approach to SSR.

3.4 Assessment resources

The agenda-setting phase of the SSR process in CAR sheds light on the important role played by international experts in the policy-making process. A team made of international (and non-African) experts, from a variety of backgrounds (both academics and practitioners) was initially contracted by the UNDP[14] to make a comprehensive assessment of the CAR's security apparatus: each sector (the armed forces, the police forces; the justice sector; the intelligence services; management procedures and mechanisms; and parliamentarians and civil society resources) have been audited in detail. This expertise provided the rationale for the 2008 SSR National Seminar.

On the other hand, a Preparatory Committee, all Central African nationals, was set up to prepare the National SSR. The National Seminar itself formally involved an important number of Central African participants (both from governmental and non-governmental circles). However, most of the Central African stakeholders involved in the assessment process were, in fact, hardly able to mobilise a credible expertise capacity. Seeing the striking lack of national assessment capacities, the international partners finally decided to send an international SSR team from the OECD to train all the members of the Pre-

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[14] Initially, some of these experts had been contracted by one of the EU Member States, namely, Belgium – eager to resume a more active policy in Central Africa after having withdrawn from the African scene following the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

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paratory Committee. National stakeholders thus have been unable to put forwards their own conceptions of security.

Therefore it is clearly the expertise and analyses of international experts which have largely framed the agenda and a two-year timeline of the SSR process. Peter Haas' definition (1992) of an epistemic community as "*a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area*" perfectly describes the importance of the external experts in the SSR process in CAR. The approach developed by Ruth Hanau Santini (2006)[15] should be extended to integrate into the analysis the cognitive influence that experts deployed in Southern partner-countries can have on policy-making.

3.5 Programmatic resources

The mobilisation of programmatic resources is meant to identify the priorities, to establish a hierarchy between them, and to select appropriate resources and funding mechanisms in order to set up a planning programme. These resources have been mobilised by three international actors – the EC, the UNDP and France - and have been combined to put SSR on the CAR's agenda: goals, objectives and timelines have been defined in order to fit into the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The identity of the EU institutional actors involved in SSR-related programmes in the CAR is to a large extent derived from the financial instruments dedicated to external assistance.[16] The support provided by the EC to the SSR process in the CAR is funded by the Instrument for Stability, the Development Co-operation Instrument, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the EDF (European Development Fund). In accordance with the guidelines on project cycle management,[17] the Directorate General External Relations (DG Relex) and the Directorate General External Development (DG Development) have been involved in the programming phase of the SSR-process in the CAR. Indeed, the framework for EC led-SSR processes is the Country/Regional Strategy Paper (CSP or RSP), which sets out the main objectives and sector priorities for co-operation for a seven-year term (six years for ACP countries). More specifically, SSR-related programmes are included within National or Regional Indicative Programmes (NIP or RIP), which detail specific activities and expected results corresponding to the strategy objectives of the CSP/RSP. DG Dev and DG Relex have overall responsibility for developing CSPs, in theory, in close collaboration with partner countries. Besides this, the EuropeAid office has also been involved in the programmatic phase. However, the key EC actor is clearly the EU Delegation in Bangui,[18] which has

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[15] Ruth Hanau Santini advocates an approach based upon the relationship between French and German foreign policy epistemic communities (composed of experts as well as policy-makers) to analyse the CFSP and the elaboration of the European Security Strategy.

[16] In 2005, the OECD/DAC has agreed that a number of SSR-related activities (SSR-civilian activities and democratic oversight of the military forces) could be funded on development budgets. Accordingly, several thematic and geographic financial instruments dedicated to external assistance are supporting SSR-related programmes, including the Instrument for Stability, the Development Cooperation Instrument, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. Furthermore, some SSR programmes can be funded under the European Development Fund (FED - which does not come under the Community's general budget but is managed by a special Committee within the Commission). Finally, some plans are being considered with the option of funding some SSR activities using the Peace Facility budget.

[17] See Babaud(2008).

[18] The EU Delegation in CAR is part of the External Service of the European Commission (Directorate General for External Relations). However, the Delegation does not only represent the Commission, but the EU as a whole. As such, the Delegation is responsible for promoting the

played a pivotal role, both at the political and the technical level, in the programmatic phase of the Central African SSR process and has been acting as an interface between the Directorates-General in Brussels and the international and national stakeholders in the CAR. In fact, the major guidelines of the EU support to the SSR process are based upon the Delegation's input into DGs Relex and Dev.[19]

The programmatic phase of the SSR process has also been highly shaped by the interactions between the EU Delegation and the major bilateral player (namely, France) in the CAR.[20] Since the independence of the Oubagui-Chari provinces, France has been the main bilateral funder in the Central African Republic and has been deeply involved in the governance of the CAR's security sector. France has signed an official defence agreement with the country. Furthermore, after the 1997 withdrawal of its military forces that had previously been permanently stationed in the country, France has maintained a contingent of 220 soldiers and, in October 2006, it strengthened this contingent by sending supplementary soldiers when a rebel group launched an attack against the government. Besides direct military assistance, French servicemen have also been participating in the training of Central African servicemen, whilst French technical advisers work on a daily basis within the Central African Ministries (Defence, Interior, Customs, Justice, *etc*). Since 2003, the military co-operation of France with the Central African Republic has been characterised by the application of an emergency plan for the benefit of the Central African armed forces, which is based upon the re-organisation of the Central African armed forces (FACA) and the *Gendarmerie*. Significant support has also been provided to the police forces. When the EC and the UNDP decided to get involved in supporting the SSR-process, France proved to be eager to see its own bilateral policy integrated into the process:[21] the EU Delegation as well as the UNDP office have had to work

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EU's interests and values, and conducts all official relations between the CAR and the European Union. This includes presenting, explaining and defending EU policies to the Central African Authorities, NGOs, Civil Society and the private sector. In 2003 the EU Delegations' responsibilities expanded considerably as a consequence of the devolution policy adopted by the Commission in 2000. From then on, the Delegation covered all aspects - from identification to implementation and evaluation - of the EU external assistance and aid programme. This increased responsibility is part of the overall reform of the management of the EC's external assistance programmes, which is aimed at improving the quality, and the speeding up of the implementation of its assistance.

[19] This pivotal role of the EU Delegation in the implementation of the EU support to the SSR process in CAR sheds light on the major importance – often underestimated – of the EU Delegation in the European foreign and security policy decision-making processes. Little has been published about European Commission delegations or their precursors. Veronique Dimier's research (2006; 2003) – dealing with the evolution of the status and role of the delegations of the European Commission in Africa from the 1960s onwards and showing that this evolution reflects the bureaucratisation of the external service (in the Weberian sense of a rational and professional civil service) in parallel with that of the administration of the Commission as a whole – offers an interesting (neo-intuitionalist) approach to grasp the growing influence of the EU Delegations in the EU foreign policy-making processes.

[20] It is important to mention that the SSR process in CAR is also shaped by interactions between the different multilateral stakeholders. Since 2005, international donors' co-ordination in partner countries has supposedly meant to be based, wherever possible, upon the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness which lauds donors' co-ordination. The UNDP is the major multilateral partner of the EU in the SSR process. Consequently, one of the most important tasks of the EU Delegation is to co-ordinate the EC SSR-related programmes with those of the UNDP, in order to clearly define roles and responsibilities, and to avoid ambiguity about divisions of labour that could hamper implementation. As stated by Liisa Laakso (2005), EU interactions with international organisations (and third states) are not sufficiently acknowledged in the multi-level model.

[21] The integration of French assistance into the SSR process allows France to remain involved in the governance of the CAR's security sector whilst rendering groundless the accusations of paternalism and neo-colonialism. The multilateralisation of its bilateral security policy also enables France to rationalise and share the costs of defence and security co-operation.

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closely with the French embassy in the CAR to co-ordinate all matters relating to the SSR process.

3.6 Distribution of power in the policy formulation phase

Mainly based upon the human security paradigm, the OECD/DAC approach to SSR endorsed by the major international partners fundamentally challenges the state-centric and sovereign conception of security: it aims to broaden the set of actors involved in the definition and the implementation of security policy beyond government circles. Through SSR, donors are fundamentally trying to change power relationships in Southern countries by making policy-making processes more inclusive. International actors are trying to support a greater involvement of national non-state and non-governmental actors as well as to promote the role of international ones (in fact, themselves) in the governance of the security sector, by promoting more decentralised and pluralistic decision-making processes. From this point of view, the OECD approach to SSR is an illustration of governance as defined by Marcussen and Torfing (2007):

> "governance implies a decentring of governing away from the state and a pluralisation of actors involved in governing"

SSR is not in essence a move from the state but an attempt at embedding security policy-making in wider regulatory and control networks. In summary, security reform as conceived by international actors is primarily seen as a way of diffusing liberal norms and values of democracy and human rights.

However, the representation of security promoted through the SSR concept is not in accordance with the representation of security, which is most widespread among the CAR's political stakeholders, be they in the government or not. However, the political actors (including those currently ruling the country) have not been able to mobilise assessment and programming resources to promote their own conception of security reform, which is primarily seen as a means of re-inforcing the military apparatus. Central African actors have not been able to mobilise significant expertise and programmatic resources to have a major impact on the formulation phase. The SSR process has consequently been almost exclusively framed by international donors, who have favoured the local conceptions of security, which were more congruent with the OECD approach (namely, those of the security services themselves, and, to a lesser extent, those of the population at large). In summary, it is difficult to identify any major influence by the national actors over the policy formulation phase of the policy-making process.

4 Implementing phase: Managing and monitoring

To assess the distribution of power in this implementing phase, we will focus on three kinds of resources which are mobilised:

- institutional resources (constitutional, legislative, decentralised);
- technical resources;
- financial resources; and
- monitoring resources.

4.1 Institutional resources

4.1.1 Constitutional resources

The new Constitution of the Central African Republic, adopted by referendum on 5 December 2004, was promulgated on 28 December 2004 by President Bozizé. Elaborated upon the basis of the previous Constitution of 14 January 1995 (and constantly violated by President Patassé), this new fundamental law establishes a semi-presidential regime. The constitutional framework is largely inspired by the Fifth French Republic Constitution, which formally favours the concentration of power in the hands of the Presidency. According to the Constitutions, the President of the Republic, the Supreme Chief of the Armed Forces, is able to define the national defence policy, which is executed by the Minister of the Armed Forces, under the *aegis* of the Prime Minister: as in most Francophone African countries, these constitutional provisions have resulted in a situation in which the security domain is, to a large extent, the exclusive monopoly of the President, assisted by a limited circle of civilian and military advisers. However, such exorbitant prerogatives were apparently not sufficient. Since 2003, General Bozizé has concurrently held the roles of President of the Republic and Minister of Defence, in violation of Article 23 of the Constitution, which stipulates that the function of the President of the Republic is incompatible with the exercise of any other political function. Under international pressure, General Bozizé finally decided to create the post of Minister of State of Defence, which he conferred on his son.

4.1.2 Legislative resources

One of the central objectives of the SSR process is the promotion of the role of Parliament in the supervision and oversight of the defence and security institutions.

In the CAR, the Parliament is unicameral: the National Assembly consists of 105 representatives. At present, the Central African National Assembly is dominated by representatives associated with President Bozizé. They include: the independent group KNK (a political association created by General Bozizé and not yet constituted as a political party), the PDCA, the PNCN, the MDI, the PLD, the MDD, the PLD, the MUD, the FODEM and the PUN. The KNK holds 45 seats of the whole 77 seat majority. The parties of the opposition are the MLPC (Patassé's party, taken over by Jean-Jacques Demafouth), the RDC (Kolingba's party), the APD (Koyambo's party), the FPP (the party of the historical opponent Abel Goumba, companion of the CAR's founder Barthélemy Boganda) and some other small associations of lesser importance on the political scene.

According to Article 61 of the Central African Constitution, the National Assembly is empowered to exercise parliamentary control over the defence and security forces. Two Parliamentary committees are in charge of security matters: the "Defence" Committee, in charge of questions relating to the FACA and to the *Gendarmerie*; the "Home/Law" Committee, in charge of questions relating to the internal security forces. These Committees are endowed with the power of inquiry and are supposed to control ministerial responsibility through oral or written questions, or can even vote for a censure motion against Ministers; they are also supposed to approve and control the defence and security budget and to supervise the interventions of the armed and security forces.

However, the Parliamentarians do not, in practice, exercise the powers that they are entrusted to by the Constitution. In fact, empowering the National Assembly as planned by the SSR process largely amounts to re-inforcing the government itself, given that the Central African National Assembly is dominated by Parliamentarians belonging to political parties associated with, or affiliated to, the President. Consequently, most of the members of the Defence and the Internal Affairs Committees belong to parties from the majority group and are very unlikely to launch information missions or to adopt legislation that the government does not agree with. It is worth noting as well that it is hard to consider the political parties not affiliated to the presidential majority as opposition

groups: most of the members of these parties have been participating in one way or another in successive governments of the current regime. However, the democratic legitimacy of the Central African Parliamentarians cannot be denied: indeed, the unquestionably fair legislative elections of May 2005 truly gave the head of state a majority in parliament. However, it is also an unquestionable fact that most of the political groups in the National Assembly are chaired by close relatives of President Bozizé.

4.2 Decentralised resources

The SSR process is also planning to increase the influence of decentralised actors over security governance. The objective is to create zones of defence to develop a defence of proximity: these zones of defence should coincide with the government of administrative regions and are meant to be managed by the prefects of each zone. The idea is to confer to the prefect the responsibility to co-ordinate the troops deployed in his prefecture. It also planned, on the other hand, to re-inforce the municipal police forces and, consequently, the power of the mayors, who are legally responsible for overseeing those forces.

However, these zones of defence, as well as the regions, are empty shells. Indeed, administrative regions were created on paper and should be headed by governors.[22] It is Law 88.005 and Order 88.006 of 5 and 12 February 1988, which determine the administrative organisation of the CAR and override Laws 64/32 and 64/33 of 20 November 1964. However, both these 1988 orders have only been partially implemented so far. The municipality is a territorial jurisdiction, consisting of villages, districts, areas and neighbourhoods, the territorial limits of which are determined by law. According to the texts, mayors are elected by the city council, who are themselves elected for 5 years. However, no municipal election has ever been organised in the Central African Republic, and, at present, mayors are appointed by the central power by decrees or orders. This is why mayors are called *"presidents of special delegation"*. Besides, mayors failing in their duties can be revoked by the President of the Republic, in a decree of revocation. Moreover, in spite of the 1988 laws, there were no prefects in the country's provinces until 2003: it was the military governors who managed the problems of administration and police. The 1988 law regarding prefects and sub-prefects is now effective. In his district, the prefect is the representative of state.

However, it is doubtful that increasing the responsibilities of decentralised actors as envisioned by the SSR process would result in a more balanced management of the security sector. Indeed, decentralised actors such as prefects and mayors are appointed by the central government, and these positions are also all of the time entrusted to close relatives of the President.

4.3 Financial resources

As one of the poorest countries in the world, the Central African state clearly cannot mobilise the financial resources needed to fund a holistic SSR process. In fact, the funding required is almost exclusively provided by the international community. Following the 2008 National SSR Seminar, the EC decided to focus its support of the SSR process on the following core actions: supporting the deployment of an international SSR multidisciplinary team[23] in charge of assisting the Central African stakeholders (both in gov-

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[22] Currently, the Central African Republic is divided into 16 prefectures, each placed under the responsibility of a prefect. These prefectures are divided into 66 sub-prefectures, then into 175 municipalities. Moreover there are 8,800 villages or districts.

[23] The EC is funding 5 experts of the team, namely, the head of the team, the defence sector reform adviser, the police sector reform adviser, the public finances expert and the land settlement expert. The UNDP has committed itself to funding three experts of the international SSR multi-disciplinary team.

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ernmental and non-governmental circles) in the implementation of the reforms defined in the two-year timeline; funding the 33 months of back-pay of the servicemen (7 million euros); financing a 10 million euro plan to support justice sector reform; continuing to provide financial support to the regional peacekeeping force, MICOPAX, which the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has created. France (on a bilateral basis), and, to a lesser extent, the UNDP, are also major funders of the SSR process.

However, international donors only have partial control over the resources that they provide to fund the SSR process. It appears that the CAR's government is largely able to control the way in which the financial resources dedicated to the SSR process are used, particularly those dedicated to the defence sector.

Officially, the defence budget, voted for by the Parliament, amounts to 12-13% of the national budget. However, the budget of the armed forces appears as virtual. It is extremely difficult for the parliamentarians - just as for oversight bodies (auditor general, inspector general, Ombudsman, Audit Account Court) - to obtain information about the realities of the defence budget. Only the President and the Deputy Minister of Defence (his own son) know the reality of the available amounts, and, apparently, they are the only ones who can decide upon the allocation of funds. Nobody within the armed forces, not even the CEMA (Chief of Staff), has access to the budget which is administered directly by the Presidency: the CEMA has to send requests monthly to the Deputy Minister of Defence to be allowed to engage in any expenditure, from the toners necessary to print documents to the funding necessary to buy ammunitions or to organise training. A number of international experts (both contracted by multilateral donors and by France) confess that the question of the defence budget remains totally misty to them: this question is too sensitive for them to dare to ask questions.

This situation partly explains why one of the key objectives of the SSR process is to introduce transparency and sound principles into the management of the security sector, particularly by favouring the development of auditing capacities. However, most of the institutions and procedures that international partners are trying to support are, in fact, deprived of any significant influence over the budgeting process. For instance, whilst the Audit Account Court is seen by international donors as a key independent oversight body, the magistrates from this jurisdiction confess to be more than reluctant to control the expenses of the security sector, tacitly considered as an exclusive monopoly of the Head of State. Furthermore, the Audit Account Court has not been given any means by government or parliament to fulfil its missions: the Court members do not have any cars or computers. Similarly, the parliament votes on security budgets as requested by the government without being given any information regarding its content.

In fact, it appears that external funds cannot be sufficiently controlled through the national budget system: the audit and control procedures are not functioning and the budgeting process is, in fact, largely controlled not by the government as such, but exclusively by the Presidency.

4.4 Technical resources

To supervise the SSR process, the so-called "National Technical Permanent Secretariat", in charge of co-ordinating the implementation of the reform in seven interdependent fields, has been set up. In addition, seven "thematic groups", co-ordinated by a so-called "focal point" identified in each ministry involved in the reform, have been put on their feet (defence reform; police reform; financial and managerial reform; devolution reform; justice reform; and democratic control and DDR). To show his good political will, President Bozizé has been eager to integrate into the Technical Permanent Secretariat personalities seen as affiliated to his political rivals, following his policy consisting of bringing personalities from other political background than his own into the government. The Secretariat has thus been headed by the former chief of staff of President Patassé, assisted by four technical assistants, thus guaranteeing that the political opposition is

formally associated to the process. Moreover, a significant number of the members of the seven thematic groups seem to have been hired according to their technical knowledge and competencies.

The international experts are also important stakeholders in the implementation process: indeed, as mentioned above, an international multi-disciplinary SSR advisory team - which includes eight experts - has been set up with the support of the EU and the UNDP. These experts - co-ordinated by a head of the team who is permanently assisting the National Technical Permanent Secretariat - are assisting each of the seven thematic groups on a daily basis. Furthermore, forty or so French "*cooperants*" are still embedded in the Central African administrative services of the Ministries dealing with security matters (Defence, Interior, Justice, Finances, etc.). The mandate of these international experts is to implement the chronogram adopted after the National SR Seminar.

However, beyond this formal structure, it is clear that people who do have a real influence over the security policy (chief of staff and deputy chief of staff; director-general of the police; state prosecutor; director of the customs; director-general of state finances, etc.) are closely related to the President himself. Reforms seen as contradictory to their own interests are regularly postponed. In addition, even if (contrary to his predecessors), General Bozizé cannot really be accused of leading a systematic ethnic policy in the administration, only the Mbayas (from the President's ethnic group) have authority, whilst the Yakoma (from the ethnic group of former-President Kolingba) are marginalised: all the highest positions are occupied by those who have the ascendancy of the Mbaya group.

4.5 Monitoring resources

The monitoring resources are mobilised to review the progress and achievements and to evaluate the impact of the SR process. Monitoring is used as a management tool to adjust assistance programmes to the changing context and needs. In the CAR's SSR process, the monitoring resources are exclusively mobilised by international actors. The EU Delegation is responsible, in co-operation with EuropeAid, for evaluating and auditing the reform process: to do so, international independent experts are contracted on a regular basis to bring an external view on the reforms implemented both by the international experts embedded in the CAR's administration on a permanent basis and by the national actors.

4.6 Distribution of power in the implementation phase

The implementation phase of the CAR's SSR process is clearly dominated by the government and more precisely by the Presidency, which is proving to be able to control both an important part of the financial resources (even if they are almost exclusively provided by international partners) and the institutional resources located in non-governmental policy-making circles. Non-governmental decision-making circles (especially the parliamentarians and the decentralised actors), who are meant to be associated with the governance of the security sector or to control and supervise it, are, in fact, to a large extent – if not fully – controlled by the government, which has penetrated most of the other decision-making centres. So, the local actors with whom the international players are aiming to associate fully, the security decision-making process are more often an instrument of the government itself.

Notwithstanding this range of formal mechanisms, it is worth noting that most of the decision-makers supposed to be involved in SSR process belong to the same ethnic group as the president or are closely related to him by kinship relationships. Today, as an ICG (International Crisis Group) report succinctly underlines, the real power is monopolised by the President of the Republic and his close relatives. General Bozizé, after his election,

> "brought many prominent personalities from other backgrounds than his own into the government. However, as analysis of the Bozizé regime reveals, real power was monopolised by the president and his close associates, most of whom were members of his immediate family or ethnic group. (…) Analysis of the list of names most frequently mentioned in this context by both foreign and CAR observers aware of the workings of the regime leads to a triple conclusion: the alveolar division of power, the strong personalisation of power and the over-representation of General Bozizé's ethnic group, the Gbaya. We can distinguish several operational circles around President Bozizé, all of which are supported by the state's institutional framework (…). They all depend on direct access to the head of state, a source of a power unhampered by rules. This is clearly true for his close friends, more distant relatives and also for the regime's political commissars, the people who silently get the work done and their auxiliaries in key administrative posts or serving as brokers at the international level."[24]

In fact, inter-institutional relationships in the CAR are underpinned by a complex system of processes and interfaces of a non-institutional nature. Informal links and structures of power based upon such factors as ethnic, family and political connections count as much as the formal institutional mechanisms. Put another way, inter-institutional relationships in the CAR's social context are working "*via a range of subjective interfaces and partnerships of which the formal mechanisms are either a component thereof or are, alternatively, merely the formal expression of these power relations*" (Williams Rocky, 2005).[25] Governance is networked in the CAR but the informal social solidarity networks do not necessarily contribute to the democratic governance of the security sector: the actors that the international stakeholders are seeking to mobilise are, in fact, controlled by the government, which does not have the same agenda or, at least, the same definition of security as the one underlying the SSR concept.

On the other hand, international stakeholders only have a limited influence – essentially exercised via their financial and monitoring resources - on the implementation of the SSR process.

5 Conclusion

The case study of SSR process in the Central African Republic shows how decision-making competencies are shared amongst a variety of actors, internationally located at different territorial and institutional levels. Investigating the kind of power distribution at stake in the SSR process clearly suggests that there is a growing dispersion of power in the CAR's security governance. As stated by Yves-Alexandre Chouala,

> "multi-level governance context is characterised by the multiplicity of actors with a different nature and unequal resources and positions. It's therefore a situation marked by divergent objectives and interests. In such a context therefore, triumphed objectives and interests are those of actors having the advantage of the balance of resources within the security governance field."

New international players have been able to set up new priorities and new conceptions of security. However, their influence over the outcomes is, in fact, limited to a large extent to the policy formulation phase. The implementation phase, in contrast, is mainly dominated by the Central African executive power, which is the only actor able both to mobilise and to control both the local resources and, to a lesser extent, some of the international resources. The approach to security sector reform, as promoted by multilateral actors such as the EU (and the UNDP), is mainly framed in terms of technical questions of co-ordination and political questions of democratic governance. Such an

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[24] International Crisis Group (2008), pp. 18-19.

[25] Only a few researches have investigated the security decision-making processes in Southern countries (Hendrickson, Bastian, 2008).

approach interferes with the CAR's proliferating jurisdictions, value systems, and patronage networks, which are, in fact, largely dominated by Bozizé's regime. One of the main problems of the SSR concept, itself derived from the OECD approach, is that it is too often based upon theoretical models that are drawn from western political science, which are of limited use in understanding how the security sector actually works in practice in African states. It is then necessary to take into consideration the micro-social dynamics and the diverse forms of organisation and civil control which are non- formal-legalistic in nature, and involve other social processes and interfaces. A wide range of informal procedures shape decision-making in the CAR, and interfere with the norms and procedures that are promoted by external actors. These kinds of informal processes, often rooted in kinship, customary and patronage networks, but also in shadow-political networks, co-exist with the state's formal decision-making structures, inspired by the Weberian rationalist organisational model and increasingly with the decentralised mechanisms that international actors are attempting to introduce via the SSR process.

The multi-level governance approach is well-equipped to grasp such processes. Indeed, the value that is added by a multi-level governance approach is that it goes beyond formal organisational arrangements, and formal decision-making mechanisms, recognising complexity far more than traditional politico-administrative models do.[26] When complemented with the policy transfer approach, it can provide a relevant framework to study the way in which domestic security governance in some African countries is reshaped by the interactions of the heterogeneous norms, standards and procedures underlying international and domestic decision-making processes, which thus contribute to challenge the state-centric definition of sovereign security governance. The question of the state-centric notion of sovereignty does matter, particularly in the context of a foreign policy aimed at reforming a sector that is traditionally at the core of kingly state institutions. Investigating the SSR process in the CAR through a multi-level governance approach, thus enables one to draw conclusions about the kind of security governance which is emerging in the Central African context. The security sector, traditionally seen as the preserve of the sovereign state, is no longer centrally governed, but increasingly multi-level governed. However, this situation does not mean that the Central African state has lost its prominence in the realm of security. Presently, local or indigenous procedures and patronage networks controlled by the state are likely to prevail for technical procedures and inclusive governance arrangements promoted by international actors.[27] The actors that can be seen as an alternative or rather as a complement to the state are presently not located in the check-and-balance institutions inspired by the Western institutional model. Those actors can be seen as belonging to two categories: first, the vigilante and self-defence groups (the so-called "local forces" and "archers") established by the villagers in the provinces; secondly, traditional and customary justice institutions. However, these actors, even if they meet some expectations of the population, do not always intervene with the democratic standards and human rights standards promoted by the SSR concept.

To conclude, it is important to note that, while one could object that the multi-level governance approach developed here, based upon the identification of the resources mobilised at each stage of the policy-making process, is, in fact, reproducing the methods used by international stakeholders to set up the SSR process (needs assessment, programming, implementation, monitoring). In fact, these methods are far from reflect-

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[26] This is why the multi-level governance approach is very close to the "*network governance approach*" which puts the stress on informal, loose structures, network ties and belief affinities that extend across, and beyond, hierarchies.

[27] According to Yves-Alexandre Chouala, "*Historically and practically, sovereignty has never been absolute and in this sense, the Central African Republic has never been a full sovereign State in the security field. But, if one agrees that sovereignty is more often conceived as the room for manoeuvre and autonomy that a State conserves in a constraint and relational context, the Central African Republic probably remains a sovereign security state*".

ing the way in which the policy-making process is functioning in a country such as the CAR. However, this is objectively the way in which the SSR process has been conceptu-alised and then implemented. Putting the stress on the kinds of resources that all the stakeholders, especially the international ones, have mobilised is particularly important in order to inform the Central African actors themselves (especially those with no access to policy-making circles) about the kinds of procedures and mechanisms which have an impact on their daily-lives. From this point of view, the multi-level governance approach also enables a focus on the lack of accountability of the international actors involved in the SSR process. If international stakeholders want to convince Central African citizens of the relevance of the SSR approach that they are promoting, there is a need for greater transparency: as it is crucial for international partners to understand the way in which decision-making is functioning in Southern countries, it is also essential for the local actors to understand the procedures and decision-making processes with which in-ternational actors are intervening in their social environment.

6 Appendix: Twofold SSR Co-ordination Structure

National structure	Interface between the national and the international structure	International structure
Sectorial SSR Committee (inter-agency structure): - Chaired by the Deputy Minister of Defence, seconded by the Minister of Justice; - Made of all the Ministers involved in the SSR process; - Rapporteur from the Ministry for Internal Affairs and Public Security; - Rapporteur-adjoint (également Président du STP); - Representatives (1 to 3) from civil society (Human rights and women associations); - 10 representatives of international donors.	**International Multidisciplinary Team** (8 members) + **External Monitoring International multidisciplinary team**	**International SSR Committee** - Ambassadors (France, Belgium, *etc.*) and multilateral organisations representatives (United Nations via the BONUCA; UNDP; European Union);
Secrétariat technique permanent (STP) - National Co-ordinator, assisted by a Deputy; - 3 permanent secretaries (in charge of transversal issues: gender; legal and institutional framework; synchronisation of activities), working under the supervision of the Head of the International permanent multi-disciplinary team);		**Attachés and political counsellors in the embassies and multi-lateral organisations' offices (France, EU; UNDP; BONUCA)**
7 Thematic groups (defence, police, public finances; justice; devolution policy; democratic control; DDR) **co-ordinated by a national "focal point" and assisted by the experts of the permanent multi-disciplinary team**		**Technical co-operants embedded in Central African Ministries**

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