

# From entitlements to power structures

Improving analysis for community  
security programming

CRU Report

Megan Price  
Erwin van Veen



**Clingendael**

Netherlands Institute of International Relations



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Cover photo: Afghan boys look at canal project in Gorgai Village.

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# Executive Summary

The security of communities matters because it has a direct and positive bearing on the daily lives of individuals as well as an indirect, longer-term effect on their development opportunities. Insecurity, in contrast, disables both activities and prospects. This shortens the time horizon and expectations of the future, which reduces hope and investment and truncates human development. Programmatic interventions are a potentially powerful vehicle for improving the security of communities as they can combine activities, resources and collective effort in a focused format of delivery. They also offer a human-centred approach at the micro-level that can complement prevailing state-centric security promotion initiatives at the macro-level.

Security and insecurity in communities tend to be functions of existing authority structures, elite incentives and political forces that shape, perpetuate and use security actors and institutions to acquire and maintain power and privilege. This is why community security programmes must account for, and be responsive to, the structures of power and political forces that influence local security. However, current programmatic practice shows an excessive focus on the needs of communities, often conceptualised as entitlements. Not only is this not reflective of the realities or obligations and rights in many volatile settings, it also downplays the agency of community actors and may lead to programmes that focus on palliative measures. Available evidence suggests that the principle of security as an entitlement should be better reconciled with the empirical reality that security is often organised as a means of enforcement. This starting point means that programmes will often have to engage in ongoing thinking and negotiations about how they might affect the existing distribution of power, whether this is feasible/acceptable in a particular local context and how the associated obstacles might be overcome.

The present report substantiates why 'needs-' or 'entitlement-based' thinking by itself is inadequate for generating a good understanding of security in a particular community. It proposes a complementary approach to analysing community security that is more power-oriented. This approach offers a set of lenses to examine the different disabling and enabling roles that security actors can play in a community, and how communities perceive or experience these roles in relation to underlying authority structures.

In addition, the report examines a number of internal organisational and process characteristics of international non-governmental organisations that influence how they undertake the analysis necessary for designing and implementing their community security programmes. Research shows that, in addition to the sophistication of the organisations' analytical approaches, these issues remain key factors for how

intervening organisations understand community security. This analysis suggests that there is a general need for international non-governmental organisations to generate and demonstrate greater awareness of their own institutional strengths and weaknesses, and how these affect their analytical and programming processes.

This produces three recommendations that are grounded in a mix of desk, field and organisational research. These are reflected in the following recommendations and substantiated in the remainder of the report

### Recommendations for international organisations to improve their understanding of community security

Recommendation 1:	Recommendation 2:	Recommendation 3:
<p><b>Ensure that analysis intended to support community security programme design contains an explicit ‘power and politics lens’</b></p>	<p><b>Develop an understanding of how the organisation’s general structure influences its approach to development programming</b></p>	<p><b>Map how analysis is structured within the organisation so that strengths can be built upon and weaknesses mitigated</b></p>
<p><i>Why is this necessary?</i></p>	<p><i>Why is this necessary?</i></p>	<p><i>Why is this necessary?</i></p>
<p>Security arrangements challenge or uphold the status quo by enabling or preventing certain behaviours and compelling compliance. Mapping them helps understand the security landscape and offers entry points for actor-specific analysis.</p>	<p>The research suggests that the general structure of international non-governmental organisations influences how they approach developmental programming (including community security).</p>	<p>The research suggests that the way in which analysis is organised within international non-governmental organisations is at least as influential on their understanding of local power and security dynamics as the sophistication of their analysis.</p>
<p><i>How can this be accomplished?</i></p>	<p><i>How can this be accomplished?</i></p>	<p><i>How can this be accomplished?</i></p>
<p>Institutions of power, and how security structures uphold those institutions, can be analysed by examining what role community members ascribe to particular security actors:</p> <p><b>Guardians</b> are actors described as enabling activities. The way their performance is considered by community members indicates whether and how they prioritise people’s need for security in their daily lives.</p> <p><b>Enforcers</b> are actors who systematically discourage and disrupt activities that would challenge the dominant institutions of power. They can be recognised by community members as either a reassuring or a threatening presence.</p> <p><b>Actors of recourse</b> are those to whom community members turn when enforcers and guardians overstep their bounds or fall short of local performance standards. They may not be visible or accessible to everyone.</p>	<p>Consider which of the following organisational profiles best matches the organisation, builds on associated strengths and mitigates the risks (see table 1 in Section III):</p> <p>In ‘<b>centralised and directive</b>’ organisations, headquarters retains most or full authority over organisational activities. The focus is on setting organisational direction, central guidance and control over country offices.</p> <p>In ‘<b>centralised and facilitative</b>’ organisations, headquarters retains much authority over organisational activities but focuses more on the empowerment and facilitation of country offices.</p> <p>‘<b>Decentralised</b>’ organisations operate more as a network, comprised of country offices that are either partially or completely autonomous, and united by a shared corporate philosophy rather than central structures.</p>	<p>Map the organisation against four structural dimensions of undertaking analytical work, using associated strengths and mitigating risks (see tables 2-5 in Section III):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Where is analytical work located</b> in the organisation? 1) headquarters staff; 2) country office staff; 3) mixed teams; 4) consultants.</li> <li>• <b>How much analytical specialisation</b> does the organisation feature? 1) specialised experts; 2) generalised responsibility.</li> <li>• <b>How is the process of analysis structured?</b> 1) a dedicated, specific process and tools; 2) an ongoing process that can be informal.</li> <li>• <b>How is budget for analysis allocated?</b> 1) a separate budget line/fund; 2) a portion of each project or programme.</li> </ul>

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The inevitable hazard in naming those to whom we owe our thanks is that the list is never complete. However, we hope that we have, at one time or another, expressed our gratitude to everyone who has helped us in this pursuit, and have done so in ways more sincere and familiar than can be expressed in typeface.

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# Introduction

'In order to understand why end-users are (in)secure one needs a good empirical understanding both of their day to day experience of security and of the wider political and social forces shaping that experience and all too often disempowering them.'<sup>1</sup>

Both academic research and practitioner reports have contributed to a growing body of evidence demonstrating the political nature of security arrangements. Despite this, security programming for the 'community level' consistently frames security as an entitlement, and primarily focuses on insecurity in terms of the immediate threats experienced and reported by local people. This perspective and the approach it fosters can lead programmes to err on the side of the palliative, addressing outward symptoms of insecurity rather than its deeper drivers.

This report argues that programmes must account for and be responsive to the power structures and institutional forces that determine local security, rather than attending solely to the outcomes of these systems. Programme efficacy thus relies on understanding the relationships between powerful actors and institutions, and how they might be incentivised to become more responsive and accountable to citizens.

To this end, the report presents concepts and ideas for strengthening the integration of the 'end-user perspective' into the political analysis of the local security context. Leveraging local knowledge does not begin and end with asking people about their immediate security concerns or needs, as much common practice seems to assume. Rather, community members also hold a wealth of insights into how local power structures shape local security. These insights, however, are rarely gathered and even more seldom applied.<sup>2</sup> Building such knowledge could enable community security programme staff and local stakeholders to better analyse the environments in which they engage, and realistically assess the potential for encouraging behaviours and relationships that promote equitable security at the community level.

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1 Luckham and Kirk (2012) *Security in Hybrid Political Contexts: An End-User Approach*, Justice and Security Research Programme (JSRP), London School of Economics, London, p. 50.

2 Ó Súilleabháin (2015) *Leveraging Local Knowledge for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in Africa*, International Peace Institute, New York.

With this in mind, Section I argues for going beyond a needs- or entitlement-based approach to community security, as such an approach tends to ignore the power dynamics that the organisation and provision of security reflect and perpetuate. For this reason, more focus on politics and power is required in the analysis of community security issues and in programmes that seek to address them. On this basis, Section II outlines three concepts that can be applied as lenses to analyse powerful actors and authority structures at the local level. Such analysis is proposed as a complement to, not a replacement for, security needs assessments within communities. Finally, Section III demonstrates that particular institutional characteristics of international non-governmental organisations that support community security programmes matter a great deal for their approach to the analysis of community security – in addition to the quality of the analytical lenses they deploy and local complexities. Unpacking these characteristics provides a starting point for organisational self-profiling and for considering measures to improve analytical capabilities that could bring about better programming.

### **Box 1. What constitutes a ‘community’ in community security?**

*‘An association of people, identified in large part by virtue of their collective living arrangements, and synchronised with the anticipated scale and ambition of a programme’s intervention.’*

As a universally apt definition of ‘community’ is difficult to render, the above must be considered a working definition for the purpose of this report. It is based on a few key and elastic parameters typically used in programming.

First, a community refers to how people organise themselves for living together. More often than not, a community is designated according to proximity (a neighbourhood, a village, etc). It can also be described according to association, that is, shared identity markers, values, governance system, ancestry, language and/or history (a religious denomination, a political party, etc). Thus, communities are constructed and fluid, with individuals moving among multiple ‘communities’ simultaneously. Likewise, some people who inhabit the same geographic space may not share the same ‘sense of community’. This underscores the need to pay attention to relationships as well as geographical cohabitation, working towards both inclusive and empirically grounded notions of community.

The second defining element is externally determined, and is contingent upon the scale of a programme intervention. A working concept of ‘community’ often corresponds to the group of people that a programme is able to engage. This includes the so-called ‘beneficiaries’ and ‘stakeholders’ of a programme, as well as the organisations and institutions that are seen to influence how security is experienced by those beneficiaries and stakeholders.

# 1 Beyond needs: the politics of community security

## Key messages

- Framing security as an ‘entitlement’ and focusing on security ‘needs’ alone fails to recognise how the distribution of power can influence or even determine security arrangements.
- Analysing institutions of power, and how security structures uphold those institutions, can help reveal incentives for or barriers to security reform at the community level.
- Affecting how and for whom security is provided means negotiating the distribution of power; it means working politically.

Over the past two decades, community security has come into focus as a lynchpin concept, helping to bridge the tandem goals of promoting security and development.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it promotes this link at the level of citizens and their daily experiences. Deeply embedded in this approach is the notion that impediments to human development are likely to incite conflict and perhaps violence. Social, economic and political exclusion not only reduce marginalised groups’ opportunities for development. Inequality and the denial of certain societal guarantees can also rend societal cohesion, eroding social barriers to violence as a means of access to political voice, justice, basic needs or capital.<sup>4</sup> The community security approach thus promotes efforts to strengthen relationships among people, social groups, and public authorities and citizens, as a strategy to address both development obstacles and deeper drivers of insecurity.<sup>5</sup>

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3 An early reference to ‘community security’ can be found in United Nations Development Program (1994) *The Human Development Report (HDR): New Dimensions of Human Security*, UNDP, New York, p. 34.

4 Stewart (2008) *Horizontal inequalities and conflict: understanding group violence in multiethnic societies*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York; Tilly (2003) *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Cambridge University Press, UK.

5 UNDP (2009) *Community Security and Social Cohesion Towards a UNDP Approach*, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, New York. UNDP has also devoted increasing attention to advancing a ‘social contract’, for example UNDP (2012) *Governance for Peace: Securing the Social Contract*, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, New York.

## Shifting to 'people-centred' security

Community security programming currently sits at the core of many international engagement strategies.<sup>6</sup> Its emergence from the development community has shaped its founding principles and practical application in ways that distinguish it from national security reform models. Two aspects in particular set community security approaches apart from conventional security assistance, which operates primarily or exclusively through strengthening state structures.

First, and rather intuitively, community security is largely calibrated to the micro-level, locations that are sometimes inaccessible to or neglected by the state. In practice, this requires community security approaches to include systems and agents locally recognised as responsible for people's security, regardless of their relationship with state authority.<sup>7</sup> As a complement or counterbalance to more state-oriented policy instruments, such as community policing or security sector reform, community security approaches often seek to involve a broader array of actors.<sup>8</sup> Foremost among these are the people residing in the community, often (imprecisely) referred to as 'end-users'.<sup>9</sup>

Second, the community security approach frames security as an individual's entitlement to safety and protection. This normative principle has provided a sharp critique of large international investments in building state capacity. While effectively managed and functioning state security structures are essential and deserve support, such reforms do not quickly or consistently increase people's felt security.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the community security approach tends to assert function over form, championing interventions that

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6 UNDP, for example, prioritised community security as a key goal of its Strategic Plan 2008-2013, UNDP (2009) *op.cit.*, p. 22.

7 Price (2016) *Setting the Aperture Wider: a synthesis of research and policy advice on security pluralism in Tunisia, Nairobi and Beirut*, Plural Security Insights, The Hague; Boege (2006) 'Traditional approaches to conflict transformation: Potentials and limits', *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Berghof, Berlin; Hill, Temin and Pacholek (2007) 'Building Security Where There is No Security', *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 3(2): 38-52; Raeymaekers, Menkhaus and Vlassenroot (2008) 'State and non-state regulation in African protracted crises: Governance without government?', *Afrika Focus*, 21(2): 7-21; Derks (2012) *Improving security and justice through local / non-state actors*, Clingendael Institute, The Hague.

8 For example: Denney (2015) *Securing Communities: redefining community policing to achieve results*, Overseas Development Institution, London. [<http://www.odi.org/publications/9438-community-policing-security>]; Gordon (2014) 'Security Sector Reform, Local Ownership and Community Engagement', *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 3(1): 1-18.

9 This term is not a particularly nuanced or accurate description of the variety of roles community members play in shaping and contributing to local security and development. It is used here to note its salience in development discourse, but henceforth the report will simply refer to 'community members'.

10 Gorur (2014) *Perceptions of Security Among Internally Displaced Persons in Juba, South Sudan* International Peace Institute, New York.

effectively respond to citizens' needs. In this way, community security programming has contributed to shifting the rationale and focus of interventions from strengthening the state toward the security of individuals.

## The entitlement paradox

The ideal that security is an entitlement to be delivered as a basic public good resonates with similar working philosophies in development thinking. It has been a critical element in the campaign to prioritise people's needs for development and security in lockstep with promoting the economic growth and stability of the state. However, this principle of 'security as an entitlement' reveals both a normative preference for, and a starting presumption of, 'impersonal political orders'.<sup>11</sup> This is neither surprising nor unproblematic.

'Impersonal political orders' refer to systems that provide services on unbiased terms, regardless of a citizen's social standing, political connections or identity markers.<sup>12</sup> In these contexts, uneven or inadequate responses to citizens' needs are generally attributed to inefficiency or insufficient capacity and/or resources.<sup>13</sup> Yet, this is not generally an accurate description of the contexts where community security programmes are initiated. It is equally (or perhaps more) likely that intervening private interests or unchecked power structures are (also) responsible for inequitable and unresponsive public services. A concrete example: extortion and predation by police is often diagnosed as a result of low wages, which officers supplement with bribes extracted from the community. While underpayment may indeed be a part of the problem, the solution – to pay police better wages – does not address the power imbalances that make it easier for police to abuse communities than to collectively negotiate for better wages. This implicates power dynamics between community members and police, and between police and government administration.

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11 For an elaboration of this argument, applied to development aid, see Gutierrez (2011) *Introducing Political Settlements*, Christian Aid Occasional Paper No.4, p. 9.

12 This definition is built directly from North, Wallis and Weingast (2009) *Violence and Social Order: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 113.

13 Gutierrez (2011) *op.cit.*, p. 12; BRAC and Saferworld (2015) *Community Security: Experiences From Bangladesh*, June Brief, Saferworld, London, p. 2. This may also be due to the need or desire to avoid 'sensitive' political issues when engaging government actors in multi-stakeholder processes and dialogues.

Framing security as an entitlement is a valuable aspiration, but implicitly neglects how powerful actors<sup>14</sup> influence the distribution of public goods, like security, in their own favour.<sup>15</sup> This often means such entitlements are unequally distributed by design, to sustain certain systems of power. This notion has gained traction in development circles, but has not yet been fully seized in relation to security, specifically not at the community level, where it is arguably all the more relevant.<sup>16</sup>

### **Capturing 'power': actors and institutions shaping security**

Asserting control over the organised use of violence is typically resource intensive. While a perfect monopoly on the use of force is rare, competition can be limited by the relatively high threshold of resources required to coordinate, manage and compel groups empowered with lethal force. Therefore, security arrangements are often sponsored by and organised according to the interests of actors controlling relatively high levels of capital.<sup>17</sup> This may be **financial capital**, for instance an elite business class that is able to pay private agencies to guard their homes and business assets. Powerful actors may also rely on their **social capital**. A religious or political leader or a traditional authority may be able to conscript local followers into enforcing a specific code of behaviour as a duty or social obligation, for little or no compensation.<sup>18</sup> What is more, powerful actors are likely to invest some of their capital and influence into reinforcing the institutions that underpin their power.<sup>19</sup>

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14 'Actor' here is used to imply either a singular agent or a powerful coalition, such as a trade union, a political faction or a social class with (near) exclusive control over valuable resources (e.g., land, industry).

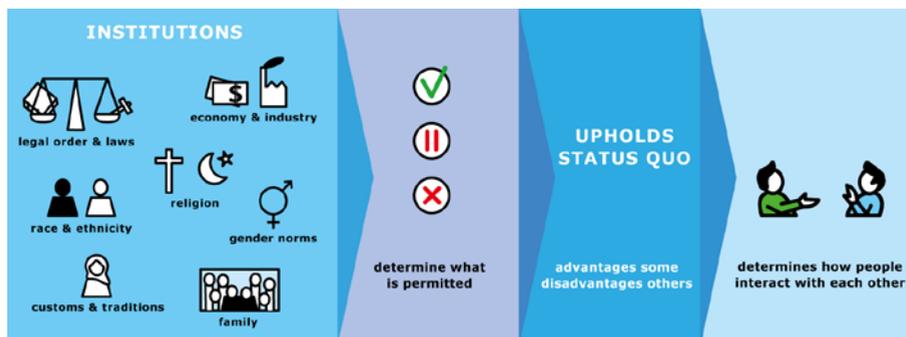
15 Gutierrez (2011) *op.cit.*; The Liaison Office (2014) *Justice & Security: Practices, Perceptions and Problems in Kabul and Nangarhar*, The Liaison Office, Afghanistan; and Van Veen (2015) *Elites, Power and Security: How the organization of security in Lebanon serves elite interests*, Clingendael Institute, The Hague.

16 Van Veen (2016) *The political dynamics of security in fragile states*, Online Commentary, Clingendael Institute, The Hague.

17 Tilly (1990) *Coercion, Capital and European States 990-1990*, Basil Blackwell Inc, Massachusetts.

18 USAID (2007) *Community-Based Development in Conflict-Affected Areas: An Introductory Guide for Programming*, USAID, Washington, DC.

19 Hudson and Leftwich (2014) *From Political Economy to Political Analysis*, Research Paper 25, Developmental Leadership Program, Birmingham; The Liaison Office (2014) *op.cit.*, p. 59; Valters, Van Veen and Denney (2015) *Security progress in post-conflict contexts: between liberal peacebuilding and elite interests*, Overseas Development Institute, London, pp. 12-14.



‘Institutions’ refers here to norms, customs and laws that organise and regulate behaviour in a society and which are often enforced through the threat of social sanctions or violence.<sup>20</sup> For example, religion, economic systems, status associated with age, gender, ethnicity or other identity markers are all institutions that partially determine what is or is not ‘permitted’ behaviour. These patterns and rules are liable to give certain groups more access to opportunity and capital, empowering them and incentivising them to maintain the ‘status quo’. As such, upholding (or challenging) institutions of power is often part of the logic that shapes local security arrangements.

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20 This definition is paraphrased from the work of Douglas North, who defines institutions as ‘humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic, and social interactions. They consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, tradition, and code of conduct) and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights).’ North (1990) *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 97.

## Box 2. Institutions: setting the 'rules of the game'

Institutions include both the explicit and the understood patterns of behaviour in society. Below are a few illustrative examples of how such institutions may shape local security:

*Economic institutions* – In areas where criminal markets provide the backbone of the local economy, many actors have a vested interest in their preservation and will defend them.<sup>21</sup>

*Political institutions* – The transition from local 'strongman' rule to impartial legal orders often sparks competition between representatives of a central government asserting its authority and those of the 'old guard' who may genuinely be the most effective in ensuring local stability, at least in the short term.<sup>22</sup>

*Gender institutions* – Where males are expected to demonstrate their masculinity through aggressive sexuality, this has the potential to increase both men's and women's exposure to sexual violence.<sup>23</sup>

*Religious institutions* – If security providers derive their legitimacy from their reputation for piety or austere observance, this can create incentives to enforce stringent adherence to religious law, and shun or even threaten those who contravene strict interpretation.<sup>24</sup>

A recent Oxfam briefing paper details the way in which state police and justice authorities in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) use their position as 'gatekeepers to a failed system', extracting payments from local citizens wishing to issue complaints

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- 21 Shortland and Varese (2014) 'The Protector's Choice: An Application of Protection Theory to Somali Piracy', *British Journal of Criminology*, 54(5): 741-764; Santamaría (2014) *Drugs, gangs, and vigilantes: How to tackle the new breeds of Mexican armed violence*, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF), Oslo. [[http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/Santamar%C3%ADa\\_NOREF\\_Drugs%2C\\_gangs\\_and\\_vigilantes\\_December%202014.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/Santamar%C3%ADa_NOREF_Drugs%2C_gangs_and_vigilantes_December%202014.pdf)]
- 22 Raghavan, 'Afghanistan's defining fight: Technocrats vs. strongmen,' *Washington Post*, 12 April 2015, Asia & Pacific section. [[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/former-warlords-test-the-rise-of-a-new-afghanistan/2015/04/12/73e052ae-b091-11e4-bf39-5560f3918d4b\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/former-warlords-test-the-rise-of-a-new-afghanistan/2015/04/12/73e052ae-b091-11e4-bf39-5560f3918d4b_story.html)]; Derksen (2016) *Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Afghanistan*, Centre for Security Governance, Kitchener.
- 23 Smits and Cruz (2011) *Increasing Security in DR Congo: Gender-Responsive Strategies for Combating Sexual Violence*, Clingendael Institute, The Hague. [[http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20110531\\_cru\\_policybrief\\_rsmits.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20110531_cru_policybrief_rsmits.pdf)]
- 24 Hanafi (2010) *Governing Palestinian refugee camps in the Arab East: governmentalities in search of legitimacy*, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, Beirut, pp. 18-20.

or report crimes.<sup>25</sup> This arrangement actually discourages the provision of security as an entitlement to protection. ‘This reflects a widely held view that officials have little incentive to improve the situation when people have to give corrupt payments to officials in order that they will agree to investigate complaints. A woman in Masisi said, “If [the authorities] protect people, they will not eat [receive bribes].”<sup>26</sup>

In Beirut, neighbourhood-level security is often determined by the locally preponderant political party. One party representative described the ‘security’ provided by his association as ‘more of a propaganda’ than an effort to establish a safe environment. By convincing the local community that supporting the political party could guarantee their security, they would be able to gain credibility and demand allegiance. Such support was critical for the political party to continue its active ‘protection’ of local shops, a service for which they required ‘contributions’ to the party.<sup>27</sup>

In both of these examples, security was not provided as an entitlement, but was rather used to uphold a system that privileged some (e.g., the police, members of a political party) over others. Nor was it the case, in either situation, that insecurity was the result of actors’ low capacity and/or inadequate resources. In the Beirut example, there appears to be more opportunity to encourage and incentivise local security providers to become more responsive to citizens’ needs. While in the DRC case, the arrangement has created a perverse incentive for the police to allow low-level insecurity to persist in order to ensure their supplemented income. Identifying these actors and the institutions they uphold is crucial to understanding the incentives and power dynamics shaping local security provision.

### The pitfall of prioritising needs

While community security experts and advocates may already acknowledge these power dynamics, addressing them has proven elusive in practice.<sup>28</sup> Remarkably, one reason for this may actually be the current emphasis on individual security and citizens’ needs. Community security programming models commonly encourage community members to identify their own security challenges and demands, and address these through collaborative interventions. Similarly, *problem-driven* approaches advocate designing programmes around locally identified (development) issues in order to enhance the

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25 Oxfam International (2015) *Securing Insecurity: the continuing abuse of civilians in eastern DRC as the state extends its control*, Oxfam Briefing Paper 202, Oxford.

26 Ibid., p. 17.

27 Belhadj et al. (2015) *Plural Security Provision in Beirut*, Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law, The Hague. [<http://www.kpsrl.org/browse/browse-item/t/plural-security-provision-in-beirut>]

28 Saferworld (2013) *Community Based Approach to Safety and Security: Lessons from Kosovo, Nepal and Bangladesh*, Saferworld, London, p. 36.

salience of the initiative among a broad range of community members.<sup>29</sup> Thus, by virtue of its people-centred focus, community security is often portrayed in concrete terms of immediate security threats and direct mitigating responses, and programmes are shaped accordingly.<sup>30</sup>

Where successful, this typically results in concrete and visible achievements, such as establishing gun-free school zones, installing streetlamps or building toilets within a safe proximity to the community.<sup>31</sup> Such steps are undeniably meaningful to individuals' sense of safety and for that reason should not be discounted. Yet these activities do not always move towards interrogating the relationship between security and the distribution of power.<sup>32</sup> Nor do they reliably add up to a transformative change in *how* and *for whom* security arrangements are organised and governed.

Here, a fissure emerges between the stated aims of community security – to work towards equitable relationships among citizens and authorities – and its typical modes of implementation, which focus on addressing people's immediate and concrete experiences of insecurity.

## The consequence: politics of security left unaddressed

With its developmental lens firmly in place, community security approaches emphasise the priorities, perceptions, anxieties and experiences of individuals both as the starting point and as the continual guiding input for programming. This report argues that such an approach may provide partial solutions, but is not an assured route to addressing the power structures that keep people insecure. This is because, though people

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29 Andrews (2013) *The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Booth and Unsworth (2014) *Politically smart, locally led development*, Discussion Paper, Overseas Development Institute, London. A tool-kit outlining steps to link problem-driven approaches to local political realities is presented in Denney (2016) *Using political economy analysis in conflict, security and justice programmes*, Tool-kit, Overseas Development Institute, London.

30 Hill, Temin and Pacholek (2007) *op.cit.*; Gorur (2013) *Community Protection Strategies*, Civilians in Conflict Issue Brief No.1, Institute for International Peace, New York.

31 Which, it may be argued, are the kind of results most demanded and acclaimed by donors. Even in cases where interventions may be the outcomes of local dialogue and negotiations, they are often considered the end-result rather than the '*intermediary* results – a route through which the more substantive impact of the intervention takes place'. Saferworld (2013) *op.cit.*, p. 36.

32 The Liaison Office (2014) *op.cit.*, effectively identifies the impact of 'power holders' on access to justice. However, it does not explore the basis of these actors' power or the various roles they play in the community. Such information could further help to identify important points of leverage.

may experience and describe insecurity at a personal or community level, it is often determined at various political levels.<sup>33</sup>

As part of this research, case studies were carried out in Afghanistan and South Sudan to explore how the programming strategies of locally based, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) frame and respond to community security in conflict-affected countries. Though the case studies accessed only a small sample of (I)NGOs in each setting, these included large and notable agencies. Many programmes were designed explicitly to ‘empower’ local constituencies to identify, articulate and develop responses to their security and justice needs. These operated on the premise that local communities lack the capacity to express their security needs. One programme document made reference to the goal of changing the ‘passive mind-set’ of local communities.<sup>34</sup> Yet, such assumptions tend to obscure the relationship between security and the distribution of power. In both contexts, programme models were prone to focus on identifying and responding to specific ‘local security needs’, without carefully weighing the power dynamics implicated.

In one example, a programme in Afghanistan sought to educate women about the formal legal system, ‘empowering women to make informed choices’, particularly when local customary justice structures did not recognise women’s equal legal rights, for instance to inherit land.<sup>35</sup> However, the objective of ‘empowerment’ inevitably entails shifting power. Encouraging women to take cases out of the hands of local councils and refer them to district courts, particularly land tenure cases, was seen to directly threaten the authority of local council members. While programme staff were innately aware of gender and economic institutions disempowering Afghan women, they were less prepared to discuss the implications of challenging those institutions or promoting alternatives.

In South Sudan, a series of INGO-facilitated community dialogues with local police had led the commanding officer to request radio equipment for a local community policing initiative. With limited police units available, local youth had been mobilised to report on ‘security threats’ in the community, to enable uniformed services to take targeted action. The radio equipment was seen to facilitate more rapid response. However, at the risk of supporting a de facto intelligence network at the disposal of local power holders, the

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33 That is, local, regional, national, international or transnational levels: ‘Although bottom-up analytical perspectives on security are the focus, it should be recalled that national and municipal governments play a critical role in creating an enabling environment and providing resources to maintain local-level successes.’ OECD (2009) *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*, OECD, Paris, p. 51; further arguments on local-transnational links can be found on pp. 56-58.

34 Internal Monitoring & Evaluation Tool Box, INGO working in Afghanistan.

35 Interview with implementing NGO partner staff, Kabul, Afghanistan, 7 October 2015.

project required deeper contemplation on the incentives and motives of the police and the likelihood of such a system working in the public interest.

Successfully pursuing community security, therefore, means situating specific security issues within the local political context, and understanding how security actors may be incentivised or discouraged from addressing these issues.<sup>36</sup> In short, affecting how and for whom security is provided means negotiating the distribution of power; it means working politically.<sup>37</sup> This is where a strictly ‘service delivery’ approach inevitably falls short.

Addressing the politics underpinning security arrangements involves building a strategic network, knowing with whom to speak, what leverage they may have, and what ideas or incentives they may respond to favourably. The ultimate goal is to influence ‘standard’ or ‘customary’ practice to a point where the desired impact is no longer reliant upon a particular actor’s presence and sponsorship. In this way, change made is not only more sustainable, but also has the potential to be transferred to and replicated in other parts of the system.<sup>38</sup>

An example comes from a comparative study of community policing initiatives<sup>39</sup> carried out by The Asia Foundation and the Overseas Development Institute. In some of the cases, ‘community policing’ meant staffing a specific police unit with the explicit remit to engage communities in remote areas. Another, more systemic approach involved building a ‘community policing philosophy’ into police deployment strategies and the standard officer’s mandate. In this latter case, the hierarchical structure of the police force meant that, once the initiative took hold, it had stronger potential for broadly disseminated impact and institutional transformation.<sup>40</sup> So while the first option proved beneficial for a certain community, it remained stunted at the micro-level. The second example was more effective in making fundamental changes to how security is

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36 For an explanation of how Political Economy Analysis is meant to facilitate an exploration of the context before problems are defined, see Fisher and Marquette (2014a) *Donors Doing Political Economy Analysis: From Process to Product (and Back Again?)*, Developmental Leadership Program, Birmingham, pp. 7-12.

37 For an elaboration on this argument, applied to the field of development, see Kleinfeld (2015) *Improving Development Aid Design and Evaluation: A Plan for Sailboats, Not Trains*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, p. 26.

38 UNDP (2011) *Supporting Transformational Change: Case studies of sustained and successful development cooperation*, New York, p. 9.

39 These reflections emerged from a workshop and roundtable discussion that took place at ODI on 18 August 2014 in London. For the synthesis paper on the community policing cases studies, see Denney (2015) *op.cit.*

40 It is worth noting that this was not always considered a positive impact, as concerns were raised about strengthening the state’s surveillance system. This again points to the need to closely examine actors’ roles.

provided and authority is exercised, but required much more political engagement and negotiation.

Thus, to 'scale up' results it is necessary to be aware of and plugged into the political structures and institutions that are able to transcend local situations. In this way, political arrangements and institutions should not be considered only as a constraint on reform, or as inert structures. Indeed, they may provide the very lattice through which reform can spread.<sup>41</sup>

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41 Hudson and Leftwich (2014) *op.cit.*, p. 87; Bennett (2014) *Community Security handbook*, Saferworld, London, p. 19.

## 2 Analysing community power structures

### Key messages

- Security arrangements challenge or uphold the status quo by enabling activities, preventing certain behaviours and compelling compliance. Understanding such arrangements helps map the security landscape and provides an entry point for actor-specific analysis.
- Various community members' perceptions and descriptions of security actors as 'guardians', 'enforcers' and/or 'actors of recourse' can reveal 'for whom' local security arrangements are working, and how to address misconduct.
- Understanding who benefits from security arrangements, and who benefits from challenging them, has direct implications for building constituencies and initiatives for reform.

The principle of security as an entitlement should be reconciled with the empirical reality that security is often organised as a means of enforcement. Thus, just as state-centric security must incorporate a people-centred perspective, so must community security be understood as 'inseparable from the exercise of political power'.<sup>42</sup> At the community level, this power may be the authority of the state, the territorial control of a local strongman, the public support of a political party or the privileged position of a particular identity group. Competition between such powers can mean that security actors are more preoccupied with enforcing, challenging or benefiting from the current balance of power than they are with providing a safe environment. The aim of community security then is to shift those priorities, or the local power balances, towards arrangements that promote security for citizens.

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42 Luckham and Kirk (2012) *op.cit.*, p. 11; Power' is itself, in its simplest form, typically defined as the ability to compel the actions of others. It can be expressed by an actor, but also in terms of the way institutions (norms, values, laws and rules) compel certain behaviours. The complexity of the topic is, for practical reasons, dealt with only sparsely here. For a deeper examination, see Hudson and Leftwich (2014) *op.cit.*, pp. 82-87; Dahl (1957) 'The Concept of Power', *Behavioral Science*, 2(3): 201-215.

To do this, community security practitioners must invest in understanding and continually analysing local institutions of power, and the agents and interests 'that control or are controlled by them'.<sup>43</sup> Practitioners working in field offices are often all too aware of these dynamics. The critique made here points to the lack of integration of that knowledge into programme design.<sup>44</sup> This section seeks to operationalise this logic by offering three concepts that can be applied as lenses to analyse powerful actors and power structures at the local level. Such analysis is proposed as a complement to, not a replacement for, security needs assessments within communities.

## Concepts for analytically informed programming

The notion of security is difficult to capture, but the experience of security can be explained in terms of one's (in)ability to carry out activities of daily life due to (perceived) physical threats. That is, security is often experienced as either an enabling or an encumbering factor of other pursuits. In this way, three concepts help link the personal experience of security and how it relates to entitlement and power.

- **Safeguarding** – enabling activities, free from or at an acceptable reduction of risk. *Security as a means for enabling activities* is akin to the idea of security as an entitlement and a human need. It is usually asserted through mechanisms that allow people to go about their daily lives, attending school, carrying out their livelihoods and interacting with other community members free from anxiety of being in harm's way. If the activities being enabled are perceived to challenge the power of some, or the status quo,<sup>45</sup> proactive protection may be necessary, such as escorting or negotiating with powerful actors. Safeguarding also includes preventing violence, such as patrolling 'hot spots' or setting up community warning systems.
- **Enforcement** – disruption or discouragement of activities; or compulsion to comply. *Security as a means to enforce the status quo* is typically manifested in rules or behaviour patterns that members of the community are not allowed to contravene, such as stealing or entering certain territory uninvited. Enforcement may restrict people's mobility or means of expression. Enforcement is also enacted through compelling community members to observe certain behaviours. These rules may help maintain social order, such as property laws or social etiquette. They may also be key in upholding prevailing power relations, such as paying (informal) taxes or

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43 Hudson and Leftwich (2014) *op.cit.*, p. 106.

44 Ó Súilleabháin (2015) *op.cit.*

45 For example, staging political protests or traversing land used by drug traffickers are activities that can only be pursued with protection, as they either directly challenge or unintentionally intersect with powerful interests.

observing strict dress codes. Understanding the role security plays in maintaining the status quo and preserving power structures can reveal the institutions and incentives to address.

- **Recourse** – opportunity to seek remedy for inadequate security performance. *Security must also be understood in terms of governance* over how the authority to enforce or safeguard is exercised. In the broadest terms, recourse refers to the power to hold actors (state or otherwise) to account for their performance. Some community members may have more access to recourse, and others less or none. Understanding these differences helps illustrate the distribution of security and power among community members. In so far as citizens are able to issue a complaint against a security actor, and reasonably expect this complaint to be acted upon, they have a mode of recourse. This signals that a system of governance can be appealed to in order to correct behaviour or provoke change. Hereby, patterns of enforcement and safeguarding could be encouraged to evolve into effective security as an entitlement of all citizens.

These components are described as a way to help nuance the understanding of local security and multiple security actors. It does this by providing programme staff with more specific frames for the various ways security is seen to be provided and the different kinds of roles security actors are perceived to play. These frames should be applied in accordance with local community members' perceptions and descriptions, not external actors' expectations or observations.

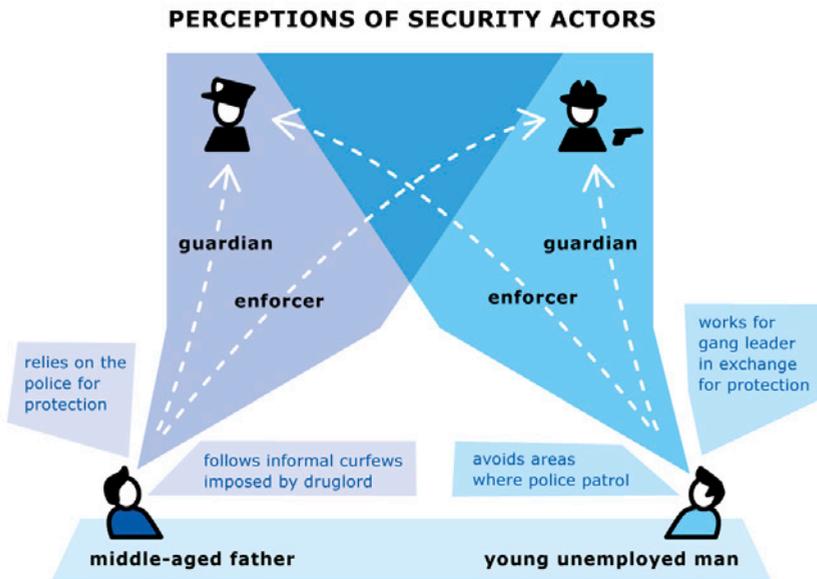
## Identifying actors: a starting point for power analysis

As discussed above, analysing the broad array of 'security actors'<sup>46</sup> according to the roles they are perceived to play allows for a more precise notion of how certain agents work, for whom they work, and what this indicates about their role in the upholding or challenging the prevailing power structures. Though far from a 'neutral' topic, inviting community members to discuss the actors that affect their security is a concrete way to begin mapping the security landscape and can reveal insights about these actors' incentives or their reluctance to support local reform.

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<sup>46</sup> Here again, the idea of 'impersonal political orders', which would encourage a focus on 'official' actors, is not to be presumed. Community security approaches have long understood that mapping only the official security actors in a community usually provides an incomplete picture of the 'real players' that influence local security. See Price (2016) *op.cit.*

Engaging a variety of community members in this discussion will help reveal differences between the ways in which various groups (women, men, minority communities, the elderly, young people, occupational communities) perceive security actors. Diligently and strategically widening the diversity of participants will provide a more accurate and more useful mapping. Concretely, this means an initial awareness of local power distribution in a community is necessary to ensure the consultation process is sufficiently representative of various (including marginalised) perspectives.



The following descriptions should not be applied as a normative prescription, sorting out 'good guys' and 'bad guys'. First, there is bound to be some overlap in how actors are described. Second, distinction between these concepts and actors is not necessarily the point; it is not an exercise in taxonomy. These concepts are meant to help clarify how different security actors are perceived by various members of the local community and what that may reveal about the institutions and power structures these actors are upholding or challenging. This is not to ignore the fact that actors who are 'guardians' for some are seen as threats by others.<sup>47</sup> Part of what this analytical framework seeks to reveal is 'for whom' these security arrangements appear to be working.

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47 Sometimes referred to as the 'Robin Hood' phenomenon, this underscores the need to have more nuanced frames through which to view actors who have an influence on local security.

- **Guardians** could be generally recognised as those actors who are described as enabling certain activities, despite perceived interference or threat.<sup>48</sup> The way their performance is described by community members can indicate whether and how they prioritise people's need for security in going about their daily lives and livelihoods. Understanding how people feel protected or protect themselves comes from listening to how they describe the people or practices that allow them to safely accomplish what they need to do.
- **Enforcers** are actors who systematically discourage and disrupt activities that would challenge the dominant institutions of power or, similarly, those who can oblige compliance. The way their performance is described by community members would indicate that enforcers' priority is to maintain (or establish) a certain 'status quo' or balance of power. Enforcers can be variously recognised by community members as a reassuring or threatening presence. For instance, seeing a policeman on the street may make some feel safer and others scrutinised or intimidated. The difference can shed light on who sees themselves as benefiting from the current arrangement of power and how security is distributed among different groups.

Identifying guardians and enforcers, and analysing the interests they serve, can prompt deeper analysis of these actors' links with powerful elites and/or authorities within a community. These powerful entities thereby constitute the third element of analysis:

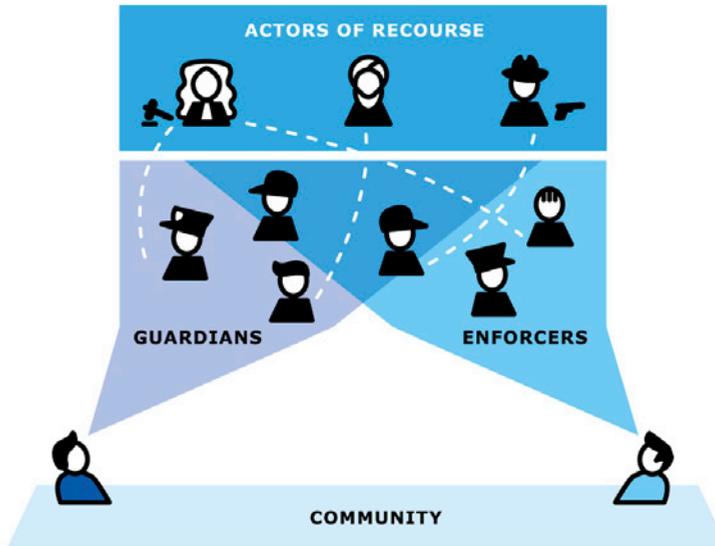
- **Actors of recourse** are those to whom community members turn when enforcers and guardians overstep their bounds or fall short of the local performance standards. For example, a police chief, a respected elder (group), or the media may have official or moral authority to influence security actors' conduct.<sup>49</sup> Working toward a situation where security is provided as an entitlement implies looking for ways community members 'demand accountability from [...] security and justice institutions, and [asking] how they cope when these are ineffective, corrupt or oppressive'.<sup>50</sup>

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48 There may be a need to distinguish guardians from 'racketeers' who provide 'protection' from violence or damage - 'damage that the strong man himself threatens to deliver. The difference, to be sure, is a matter of degree: A hell-and-damnation priest is likely to collect contributions from his parishioners only to the extent that they believe his predictions of brimstone for infidels; our neighborhood mobster may actually be, as he claims to be, the brothel's best guarantee of operation.' Tilly (1985) 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime', in: *Bringing the State Back In*, Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol (eds), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 170.

49 An example of the media being called upon as an actor of recourse was documented in Wall, Aulin and Vogelaar (eds) (2014) *Empowerment and Protection: stories of human security*, The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), The Hague, p. 37.

50 This quote is modified slightly from Luckham and Kirk (2012) *op.cit.*, p. 12. The specification of 'state security and justice institutions' was removed in order to be inclusive of any and all institutions designated by local communities, regardless of their association with the state.



The objective here is to gain a more fine-grained understanding of how security actors' behaviour is perceived and described by the local communities they engage. As such, it is imperative not to let normative impressions overshadow local views. For example, if a woman describes religious police as 'enabling' her to wear a veil without fear of persecution, that 'guardian perception' must be duly recognised. Its value is analytical: it helps reveal which institutions these security arrangements uphold or challenge, and who benefits from and supports them. This information has direct implications for building constituencies and initiatives for reform.

### Box 3. Actors: the many faces of security

There are no 'archetypes' of enforcers, guardians or actors of recourse; security actors are perceived differently by different community members. Gathering local perceptions of the roles these actors play in a community can reveal the interests they are compelled to serve and their incentives, or their reluctance, to support reform.

The following quotes, drawn from fieldwork in Nairobi,<sup>51</sup> provide examples of how community members' descriptions of security actors, viewed through the analytical lens proposed, can divulge such insights.

51 Price, et al. (2016) *Hustling for Security: managing plural security in Nairobi's poor urban settlements*, Plural Security Insights, The Hague.

### **Box 3. (cont'd) Actors: the many faces of security**

**Guardians** – quotes indicating those who are seen to enable and protect people:

*'There is an idea to create a "grassroots HRD kitty" [Human Rights Defenders communal savings] to help if someone is in a threatening situation. We understand each other's needs. We can provide one another with safe houses, where children can come too. We call each other when we go to the police station, so that someone knows where we are, we can alert each other if something is not right. Or sometimes we go together; it's a safety measure.'*

*'Sex workers have their own network of solidarity. Working with these strong groups is useful to create awareness among them of their rights.'*

*'Pequininos [slum-based NGO, Nairobi] are really good...The Pequininos defend the street kids from thugs. They give them small jobs like collecting trash. They tell people not to harass them. If the police raid Mlango Kubwa, they speak up for the street kids if they're arrested.'*

**Enforcers** – quotes indicating how people are made to comply with the status quo:

*'We [Human Rights advocates] get cultural pressure to "act like a woman", which means not acting too strong, not speaking out. We get pressure from our husbands and our families.'*

*'Police don't provide us with protection, they come to collect money. They mainly focus on the business people. Most people who have a business are in the illicit brewing economy. The police don't come to protect people at all; they come to tax [take bribes from] the brewers.'*

*'Mothers will confront each other if their sons are caught in petty crime, try to stop it while it is still early, just small crimes in the neighbourhood. Women will warn the other mothers to get their son in order or he will be killed [by mob lynching] later.'*

**Actors of recourse** – quotes that indicate who people go to when security systems fall short:

*'Can't go to a person who had directly committed the crime; you have to go to their boss or the ring leaders. You invite a dialogue with the leaders of the community, the elders. But if they refuse to come you can suspect that they support the criminals. Then you know who they are working with.'*

*'The judicial system is arranged by the elite for the elite. It only works for those who have resources. Lawyers only work for those with money, so only those with money get out of jail. This is why people get frustrated and resort to mob justice.'*

### 3 The ability of international organisations to understand local power dynamics

#### Key messages

- When considering how well international non-governmental organisations understand the local power dynamics that shape community security, particular organisational characteristics appear at least as influential as the sophistication of their analytical models.
- Three general logics can be distinguished that influence how organisations envisage their development programmes: 'centralised and directive', 'centralised and facilitative' or 'decentralised'. Each organisational logic has implications for how community security programmes will be conceptualised and implemented.
- It matters where analytical capability is located in such organisations, what the level of analytical specialisation is, how the process of analysis is structured and how the budget for analysis is allocated. This creates potential strengths and risks for the analysis that supports community security programmes.

The previous sections have suggested that there is a strong case for more and better analysis of the power structures that influence the shape of, and local arrangements for, community security. The concepts of 'safeguarding', 'enforcement' and 'recourse' provide analytical lenses to understand such structures and enable mapping of the local security actors and power holders, and the incentives that inform their behaviours. These lenses can be used to sharpen existing open-source tools that also focus on the power dynamics of (community) security (see Box 4 below).<sup>52</sup>

However, a complementary insight is that neither the sophistication of analytical models, nor the complexities of the local environment, are necessarily the main determining factors in how well organisations are able to understand and respond to the local power dynamics that shape community security. Particular organisational characteristics of the intervening organisation appear to be at least as influential. Focusing on international

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52 Other digestible approaches for understanding the power structures of local security include: Hudson, et al. (2016) *Everyday Political Analysis*, Developmental Leadership Program, Birmingham; Bennett (2014) *op. cit.*

non-governmental organisations, the study identified two sets of characteristics that appear to determine an organisation's ability to conduct useful analysis of power structures relevant to community security and to apply that knowledge to programming choices.

#### **Box 4. Tools and frameworks for political analysis**

The evolution in thinking about politics and power, and its salience for development and security programme design, has resulted in a number of open source analytical frameworks:

*Stability Assessment Framework* (Clingendael, Conflict Research Unit): This tool helps develop the institutional capacities necessary for a coordinated and integrated policy including governance, security and socio-economic development in a specific country.<sup>53</sup>

*Do-No-Harm Framework* (Collaborative for Development Action): This framework addresses the impact of humanitarian and development assistance in conflict settings, in particular the risks of aid being misappropriated by conflict parties for political or military interests.<sup>54</sup>

*PEA in Conflict, Security and Justice programmes – Toolkit* (ODI): This framework assists practitioners in conducting a political economy analysis at the design or inception phase in order to incorporate findings into conflict, security and justice programming.<sup>55</sup>

*Power Analysis* (Sida): This learning process helps staff, partners and other stakeholders to recognise different forms of power that reinforce poverty and marginalisation as well as to identify positive types of power that could be mobilised to fight poverty and inequality.<sup>56</sup>

*Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts* (World Vision): This 4-day workshop stimulates macro-level analysis of national or regional conflicts based on the insights and experience of local actors, aiming to generate practical recommendations for aid positioning and strategy.<sup>57</sup>

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53 Versteegen, et al. (2005) *The Stability Assessment Framework: Designing Integrated Responses for Security, Governance and Development*, Clingendael Institute, The Hague.

54 Collaborative Learning Project (2004) *The Do No Harm Handbook (The Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict)*, The Collaborative for Development Action, Cambridge.

55 Denney (2016) *op.cit.*

56 Pettit (2013) *Power Analysis: a Practical Guide*, Sida, Stockholm.

57 World Vision International (2015) 'What is MSTC?', Factsheet, available online: <http://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WhatisMSTC.pdf> (accessed May 2016).

## Organisational structures that influence development programming

The first set of these characteristics is the general structure of the organisation undertaking community security initiatives. Interviewees were asked about, among other things, who had the authority to select community security activity sites, hire and manage country-office staff and local partners, determine monitoring and evaluation indicators, and design or adapt activities and project objectives. Based on the range of responses, we can generally categorise organisations according to three distinct organising logics: 'centralised and directive', 'centralised and facilitative' or 'decentralised'.<sup>58</sup> None of these organisational forms in itself is necessarily better than the others. Each has strengths and weaknesses that influence, among other things, the ability of their organisation to conduct useful political analysis in the service of programming. Basic descriptions of these three labels are given below; they are not unique to community security programming, but rather reflect the larger corporate environment in which community security programmes are organised, developed, funded and evaluated.

**'Centralised and directive'** refers to organisations in which headquarters retains most or full authority over organisational activities and focuses more on setting organisational direction and ensuring control than on the empowerment of particular country offices. Programme strategy, design and reporting, as well as budget allocation, fundraising and results reporting are usually driven and signed off by headquarters. While headquarters provides a 'service bundle', its constituent elements are not typical services in the sense of being on-demand or client-focused and are better seen as corporate interventions. Country offices are consulted regularly, but they are primarily implementing and administrative agents. Directives, programme design parameters and funds make their way from headquarters to country offices, while reporting and financial data make their way from country offices to headquarters.

**'Centralised and facilitative'** organisations are also those in which headquarters retains most authority over organisational activities but focuses more on the empowerment of country offices. This is accomplished by providing country offices with a service bundle that is more client-oriented and more on-demand. Such services tend to include programme and trouble-shooting support, coordination support (convening partners, organising workshops), as well as fundraising support (advocacy, grant writing). While headquarters tends to preserve a final say over most 'services', sometimes under the denominator of 'quality assurance', this is carried out in a collaborative way with greater weight attached to the competence and role of country offices. For example, country offices may be primarily responsible for programme

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58 'Organising logic' refers to how decision-making processes, financial management, the programme cycle and results reporting, as well as advocacy and fundraising, are structured.

implementation, while analysis and programme design are undertaken jointly, likely with a final-sign off by headquarters.

**‘Decentralised’** organisations operate more as a network, comprised of country offices that are either partially or completely autonomous and which are united more by a shared corporate philosophy than by central structures. In the partially autonomous variant, country offices and headquarters have clearly delineated competences with a modest corporate centre. In the completely autonomous variant, country offices are served by an even ‘lighter’ headquarters that provides a limited number of shared services. In both cases, headquarters focuses on advocacy and fundraising and may offer some technical support.

The general strengths and weaknesses of these organisations are reflected in Table 1. This provides a broad-brush impression of how these organisations are likely to approach the type of analysis that the preceding sections outlined as necessary for good community security programming.

**Table 1 Potential strengths and risks of centralised and decentralised organisations that support community security initiatives**

<i>Organising logic</i>	Centralised & directive	Centralised & facilitative	Decentralised
<b>Potential strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good traceability and accountability of decisions</li> <li>• Greater likelihood of objective analytical distance</li> <li>• Good ability to mobilise resources behind decisions</li> <li>• More effective competitor vis-à-vis other organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better mix of objective analytical distance and proximity</li> <li>• Good likelihood of effective knowledge-sharing</li> <li>• Service empowering mindset and organisational culture</li> <li>• Still an effective competitor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation strongly attuned to local realities</li> <li>• More effective management of local stakeholder relations</li> <li>• Greater longevity of staff experience</li> <li>• Better selection of local opportunities and partners</li> </ul>
<b>Potential risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient analytical proximity</li> <li>• Suboptimal use of local knowledge and resources</li> <li>• Limited or no downward accountability to country offices</li> <li>• Likely limited transfer of skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confusion over ‘jurisdictions’ can emerge, be created or manipulated</li> <li>• Dilution of responsibilities and roles</li> <li>• Reduced organisational focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of comparative perspective and experience</li> <li>• Difficult to develop niche competencies</li> <li>• Local decisions can be undermined by poor central fundraising or coordination</li> </ul>

Centralised organisations often display a more streamlined and systematic approach to programming, which helps ensure clarity on objectives, resource allocation and strategy. However, such structures tend to minimise opportunities for adaptation at implementation level and are more likely to rely on generic theories of ‘what works’ rather than contextually specific analyses,<sup>59</sup> risking discrepancies between strategic goals and local realities.<sup>60</sup> More decentralised organisations, on the other hand, assert the context-responsiveness of their programmes and rely upon their country offices’ ability to take decisive action and manoeuvre more fluidly. However, these organisations also experience difficulty in objectively monitoring or charting clear progress or obtaining concrete and consistent reporting on achievements.

Purely from the perspective of these organisations’ ability to effectively *analyse* the power dynamics influencing community security, the ‘centralised and facilitative’ arrangement appears the best suited, *a priori*, to match local knowledge with comparative experience while maintaining critical analytical distance. This is assuming that procedures are in place to create and maintain adequate clarity in respect of roles, responsibilities and processes. As a result, an initial cue for exploring better community security initiatives would be how ‘centralised and directive’ and ‘decentralised’ organisations could introduce elements of ‘central and facilitative’ approaches into their approaches to analysis.

For example, interviews with country office staff in Kabul, Afghanistan, indicated that making country offices responsible for domestic fundraising could increase national staff’s local leverage (*vis-à-vis* local donors and partners) and their incentives to participate in strategy development, context analysis and programme design. In most cases, such a strategy would need to be accompanied by significant investment in staff capacity at the country level and should be weighed against the risks of exposing smaller organisations (country offices or local organisations) to political manipulation.

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59 Denney and Domingo (2015) ‘Turning the Gaze on Ourselves: Acknowledging the Political Economy of Development Research’, *Humanity Journal*, online periodical, 4 December 2015.

60 Interview, Afghanistan Country Director for a Dutch INGO, October 2015.

## The organisation of analysis in international organisations

The second set of characteristics that has a bearing on how well international organisations are able to analyse the power structures of community security consists of different sub-organisational aspects. Since these aspects do not map neatly on the more generic organisational types outlined above, they are each best considered as a range of options – each with their potential strengths and risks. The research identified the following four aspects:

- the locus of analytical work in the organisation
- the level of analytical specialisation
- the structure and process of analysis
- the allocation of budget for analysis

***The locus of analytical work*** refers to where in an organisation the analytical function is based. For example, is analysis commissioned, planned and overseen from a central office, or are these tasks the prerogative of regional or country offices? This is an important factor in designing good community security programming because the acute influence of local politics on local security arrangements requires analyses to strike a balance between objective distance (to retain impartiality and integrity) and subjective proximity (to understand and engage local power holders). Table 2 reflects the options the research identified and maps their respective strengths and weaknesses before discussing strategies to enhance or mitigate them.

Key strategies for enhancing strengths and mitigating risks can be culled from combining potential strengths from the different options discussed above to address corresponding weaknesses. This would not fully resolve the issues highlighted, but building awareness of strengths and risks at different organisational levels is a first step in identifying measures to improve the quality of analytical capability. This could, for example, result in headquarters staff engaging local research partners to a greater degree when conducting analysis to compensate for their lack of local awareness. Headquarters staff could also arrange for strong peer review processes that would expose their thinking to local expertise. Conversely, if country office staff conduct the analysis, they would need to organise, at a minimum, dedicated challenge sessions in which, for example, colleagues from other country offices or headquarters would have the opportunity to critically interrogate their data and assumptions, and offer comparative experiences from elsewhere.

**Table 2 Organisational options for placing the locus of analytical work**

<i>Locus of analysis</i>	Headquarters staff	Country office	Mixed teams	Consultants
<b>Potential strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More ‘objective distance’ in analysis</li> <li>• Comparative perspective</li> <li>• Better integration of analysis as evidence in advocacy and fundraising efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater local proximity and attentiveness to local dynamics</li> <li>• Experience with local issues, stakeholders and area</li> <li>• More feasible recommendations likely to emerge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relies on local insights while placing ‘checks’ on their coherence, validity and relevance</li> <li>• Builds consensus and capacity throughout the organisation</li> <li>• Can more easily combine rigorous methodology with adaptability to the local context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can deliver on short timeframes while relieving regular staff</li> <li>• Can be highly specialised</li> <li>• Can facilitate access to areas or people otherwise out of reach</li> <li>• Can convey more neutrality of analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Potential risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduces a template approach to analysis</li> <li>• A lack of appreciation for contextual idiosyncrasies</li> <li>• Can promote ‘silver bullet’ recommendations across different contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can limit headquarters’ awareness of local power dynamics</li> <li>• Personal or institutional interests to continue current programming can influence analysis</li> <li>• Local bias may influence validity of analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disagreements can spark ‘competition’ and undermine local stakeholder relations</li> <li>• Power imbalances between centre and country office prevent truly ‘equal’ collaboration</li> <li>• Responsibilities, roles and procedures become unclear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little knowledge transfer</li> <li>• Inadequate knowledge of capabilities of a commissioning organisation</li> <li>• Lower accountability to local stakeholders</li> <li>• Can be overly rigid, sticking strictly to terms of reference</li> </ul>

***The extent of analytical specialisation*** refers to the degree to which analytical competences are concentrated in dedicated research-type roles or are considered a generic skill that most employees should demonstrate to a certain level. A follow-up consideration is how well human resource policies subsequently promote the development of analytical competences, irrespective of the dominant organisational model. These are pertinent factors for good community security programming because conducting sensitive and in-depth analysis of power structures requires appreciable competences and diplomatic skills within the programming team – whether analytical skill is envisaged as specialisation or generalisation. Table 3 makes explicit the respective strengths and weaknesses of the two options, before elaborating on how to enhance the advantages and mitigate the associated risks.

**Table 3 Organisational options for the extent of analytical specialisation**

<i>Analytical specialisation</i>	<i>Specialised experts</i>	<i>Generalised responsibility</i>
<b>Potential strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a professional community with an interest in analysis of high quality standards, based on tested methods and good practices</li> <li>• Likely to increase analytical rigour and credibility</li> <li>• Increases the level of accountability for analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases likelihood that analysis will actually impact programming</li> <li>• Engenders a sense of responsibility throughout the organisation for being analytically conscious</li> <li>• May encourage building analytical skills among (local) staff</li> </ul>
<b>Potential risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis produced may be too technical</li> <li>• Analytical methods may be too rigid, increasing time and cost</li> <li>• Recommendations less likely to be sufficiently relevant to policy or programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May result in insufficient investment in analytical capabilities among staff</li> <li>• Analysis becomes neglected when it is seen as 'add on' instead of 'core'</li> <li>• Focus comes to lie on whether analysis has been conducted instead of how good it is ('tick the box')</li> </ul>

Key strategies for enhancing such strengths and mitigating risks should be a function of two factors: the volume of analysis that an organisation conducts and the quality of its staff development policies to stimulate analytical skills among employees.

- Where volume is **high** and staff development policies **basic**, a dedicated improvement initiative is urgently required, possibly aiming for the creation of an in-house group of specialists.
- Where volume is **high** and staff development policies **good**, the core organisational logic of the institution should guide a decision on whether to create a group of specialists or to ensure every programme manager is also a competent analyst. 'Central and directive' and 'decentralised' organisations would seem better served by groups of specialists, whereby 'central and facilitative' organisations would likely benefit from having analytical skills scattered throughout country offices and headquarters as a loosely linked community of practice. Additional consulting capacity may be required in this combination of factors.
- Where volume is **low** and staff development policies **basic**, outsourcing analysis is a good option.
- Where volume is **low** and staff development policies **good**, mainstreaming modest analytical skills appears efficient, as the economies of scale that merit a specialist unit are unlikely to be in place.

**The structure and process of analysis** refers to the extent to which an organisation utilises specific tools and pre-designed frameworks and cycles to carry out its analysis, or whether research is conducted in more spontaneous, ongoing or unstructured ways. For example, some organisations see field trips, strategic meetings and ad hoc workshops with local partners as contributions to a continuous and largely undocumented process of updating and assessing local political realities. For others, analysis is carried out in a more methodical, overt and transcribed way. Consideration must also be given to which components of analysis are supported or required by internal procedures, and therefore more likely to be carried out in a consistent way, and which are left to the discretion of a programme manager. The structure and process of analysis is a relevant factor for good community security programming as its local nature, gradual development and permanent sensitivity probably necessitates a hybrid of analytical structure and analytical fluidity. Table 4 lists the potential advantages and weaknesses of each option. It is followed by a discussion of strategies to maximise these strengths and reduce risks.

**Table 4 Organisational options for the structure and process of analysis**

<b><i>The structure and process of analysis</i></b>	<b>A dedicated, specific process and tool</b>	<b>An ongoing process that can be informal</b>
<b>Potential strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A standardised process is likely to produce ‘absorbable’ recommendations</li> <li>• Can be used across, but tailored to, specific Theories of Change or internal programme strategies</li> <li>• A pre-set methodology can increase rigour and thereby credibility of results</li> <li>• Having a variety of pre-defined tools, for a variety of contexts or issues, accelerates analysis and makes analysis transparent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick to execute in response to shifting local power dynamics</li> <li>• Supports adaptive programming more easily as it is more flexible</li> <li>• Increases opportunities for continuous knowledge exchange</li> <li>• Is more likely to contribute to capacity building of national staff if good coaching is in place</li> <li>• Can help build dialogue and trust among local stakeholders</li> <li>• May save costs</li> </ul>
<b>Potential risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis is undertaken as an end in itself rather than as an integrated part of programming</li> <li>• Can be resource intensive, which reduces frequency</li> <li>• Can take so long that results are obsolete before they can be put into programming</li> <li>• Can be too rigid in process or methodologies</li> <li>• Emphasises ‘hard data’ over ‘intuition’ or ‘local knowledge’</li> <li>• Formal written reporting (e.g., in high-level English) may reduce the role national staff can play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can focus narrowly on micro-dynamics</li> <li>• Creates over-reliance on ‘intuitive’ knowledge of local staff, who may be biased</li> <li>• Vulnerable to staff turnover and loss of knowledge</li> <li>• More difficult to share outcomes for the purpose of general knowledge accumulation and synthesis</li> <li>• More difficult to verify sources of information, which reduces reliability and can increase bias</li> </ul>

Key strategies for enhancing these specific strengths and mitigating risks should be calibrated to organisational size combined with levels of decentralisation. Larger organisations will generally need to improve their analytical processes as they face greater volumes, higher transparency demands and more complex, interwoven work processes (i.e., an output of one phase becomes an input for another). However, large organisations could also be decentralised (consider the Oxfam confederation), in which case analysis could be done more informally at country office level. As long as adequate validation and challenge strategies are in place, for example by soliciting input and reviews from constructively critical peers, analytical quality does not have to suffer from bias or groupthink. Smaller organisations and/or more decentralised organisations have less need for structured analytical processes but will benefit from a dedicated knowledge-gathering and sharing function, and the occasional expert input on more specialised topics, to ensure that the assumptions implicit in their analysis are surfaced and tested.

***The allocation of budget for analysis*** refers to how money for research is distributed and who manages and oversees those funding lines. Some organisations have an explicit budget line to fund research and analysis, independent of specific projects or programmes. In other cases, (additional) funding for research and analysis may be made available as a designated part of a project or programme budget. The two are not mutually excluding, but rather demonstrate unique strengths and pose specific risks. This is a significant factor for good community security programming, as the way in which analysis is funded may partially determine the analytical objectivity and depth of understanding of local power structures. If analysis is initially conducted independently from programming this may create the space needed for 'inconvenient' truths. Table 5 maps the identified strengths and weaknesses of each before discussing strategies to enhance or mitigate these.

**Table 5 Organisational options for allocating budget for analysis**

<i>The allocation of budget for analysis</i>	<b>A separate budget line or fund</b>	<b>A portion of each programme or project</b>
<b>Potential strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables research <i>before</i> a programme is funded or designed</li> <li>• Enables unprejudiced analysis</li> <li>• Underlines organisational commitment to analysis for programming</li> <li>• Can be allocated more flexibly, as contexts or changing dynamics require</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates integration of analysis into programming as the programme manager is likely to be responsible for both</li> <li>• Facilitates design of effective monitoring measures</li> <li>• Helps ensure each project has a clear analytical baseline</li> <li>• Helps ensure analysis is fit-for-purpose for a particular programme</li> </ul>
<b>Potential risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases 'overhead', which can reduce organisational competitiveness</li> <li>• May disassociate analysis from programmatic needs</li> <li>• May reduce programme managers' sense of responsibility for analysis</li> <li>• May enable or encourage previous analysis to be 'cut-and-paste' into various project or programme proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme might already be far along in its development before analysis is initiated</li> <li>• May result in analysis as the first phase of a programme, which can rush the process to get to results</li> <li>• Analysis becomes a 'tick-the-box' activity for donors rather than a preponderant strategy of the organisation</li> <li>• As the budget will be allocated up front, it is difficult to conduct more analyses when needed once the budget is depleted</li> <li>• Funds might be re-appropriated away from analysis</li> </ul>

Key strategies for enhancing these specific strengths and mitigating risks could focus on combining elements of both options. For example, an initial analysis of a country or theme that precedes programming could be executed from a dedicated, separate budget line to ensure the greatest measure of objectivity and quality without undue pressure from programme owners or managers. Subsequent analysis, conducted *after* the decision to launch a particular programme, could, in contrast, be funded from the programme's budget on the proviso that this allocation cannot be unilaterally reduced by the programme manager. Such an approach could combine the benefits of analytical independence and those of analytical responsiveness. It might generate two analytical products that arrive at different conclusions of course, but this could be turned into an advantage by triggering a productive conversation about the strengths and weaknesses of the respective analytical approaches, assumptions and findings. Finally, convincing donors of the need to have programme (proposals) feature dedicated research budget lines and continuously engaging them on the results of such research could help prevent analysis becoming a 'tick-the-box' exercise, and could also generate deeper understanding of programme dynamics.

# Research methods

The reflections and ideas presented in this report have emerged from a multi-stage process of investigation, re-examination and verification. Over the course of one year, the following phases of exploration were undertaken.

An **extended desk study** identified and focused on key concepts that have consistently demonstrated an important influence on community-level security configurations in a variety of contexts. The literature reviewed for this report included peer-reviewed academic research, papers from policy research institutes and practitioner reports written by implementing organisations. A complete list of sources consulted can be found in Annex II. The desk study also delved into existing models of political economy analysis, adaptations of those models for security programming, as well as reflections by practitioners on applying such analyses. This helped to ensure that findings reflected current scientific study, relevant policy and actual practice. This overview was then applied to the development of a baseline analytical framework, which distilled key concepts and lines of inquiry that could inform a political analysis of community security and help guide programming choices.

An **expert workshop** was held in early summer 2015 to test the underpinning assumptions, theoretical foundations and practical implications of the baseline analytical framework. The one-day gathering benefited from the input of over 25 practitioners, scholars and policy experts working in the field of community security. Alongside civil society representatives and academics from Europe and North America, the group included individuals leading security programmes in their home countries of South Sudan and Afghanistan. The outcomes and critique that emerged during the day were taken up into a revised and condensed conceptual framework.

**Two field trips** were subsequently undertaken. The aim of these visits was to gain firsthand insight into the operational structures and practices of implementing community security programmes at field level. The first case study was carried out in South Sudan, between 6 and 17 September 2015. Interviews were conducted in the country's capital, Juba (Central Equatoria State), as well as in Torit and Ikwoto (Eastern Equatoria State). Interviews were held with staff engaged in community security programming, ranging from international organisations like UNDP, Cordaid and Saferworld to local organisations such as the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) and the Organization for Nonviolence and Development (ONAD). Interviews were also conducted with these organisations' implementing partners and envisioned project beneficiaries. The second case study took place in Afghanistan from 28 September to 9 October 2015. Interviews there focused on a similar assemblage of

informants, namely national and international community security programme staff, national implementing partner staff, community liaisons and beneficiaries from Kabul and Nangarhar provinces.<sup>61</sup> In addition, this report benefited from the review of a small number of internal programme and project documents.

**Interviews with headquarters and regional office staff** overseeing various organisations' community security programmes rounded out the final stage of data collection. Interviews were largely carried out remotely, via Skype or phone, with programme directors or senior policy officers between February and April 2016. Interlocutors were invited to describe their organisation's approaches to context analysis and to incorporating contextual and/or local political insights into programme cycles. Discussions also culled information on what informants saw to be the necessary organisational capacities and arrangements that would ensure the political salience of their community security programmes.

It should also be acknowledged that the research confronted limitations, as all investigations do. The volume of literature on the subjects of political economy analysis and community security is expansive, and exceeds the absorption capacity of a few individuals. That said, the literature review was conducted in such a way as to focus on articles and reports that demonstrated either high impact (in terms of the number of times articles were cited and referenced) or current salience (in terms of referrals made by interviewees regarding relevant, inspiring, insightful or helpful reports).

During the field trips, security conditions in both countries made it prohibitively difficult to pursue impromptu meetings or speak with individuals outside known and trusted networks. Mobility was also restricted to travelling with designated vehicles and drivers, which implied that meetings be planned well in advance and take place at secure locations within working hours. This again raised the threshold for scheduling ad hoc meetings outside the original itinerary. Though such constraints are reasonable and perhaps inevitable given security conditions, they should be acknowledged, as they reduced the number of people and scope of perspectives that could be included in the research.

And finally, interviews with heads of programmes in central offices were often obstructed or limited by time constraints and the heavy demands on interlocutors' schedules. This ultimately limited the sample of organisations to nine, though the small number was offset by high-calibre individuals and organisations. Interviewees represented organisations recognised among the foremost in community security and

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61 For both case studies, a number of complementary interviews took place in the Netherlands with central office programme counterparts, and a country office director who happened to be visiting the organisation's headquarters in The Hague.

local security programming: CARE International, Cordaid, Human Security Collective, International Alert, Oxfam Novib, PAX, Peace Direct, Saferworld and World Vision International.

In view of the above, this study does not claim to be a complete or exhaustive authority on the subject of community security or local political analysis. The authors of this report do aspire, however, to make a contribution to its advancement, and look forward to future critiques and elaborations of this work that constitute the markers of collective progress.

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