RESEARCH ARTICLE

Security Provision and Political Formation in Hybrid Orders

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The security sector reform literature is increasingly turning towards the inclusion of non-state security providers, but the long-term patterns of political development to which such engagement might contribute remain underexplored. This article thus provides several lenses with which to understand the relationship between non-state security provision and political development. It first presents three perspectives (functionalism, political economy, and communitarianism) with which to understand the nature and behavior of non-state security providers. Second, it outlines five possible long-term trajectories of political formation and the role of non-state security providers in each. These discussions highlight the idea of hybridity, and the remainder of the paper argues that the concept can be usefully applied in (at least) two ways. The third section proposes that hybridity can help overcome longstanding but misleading conceptual binaries, while the fourth rearticulates hybridity as a dynamic developmental process – *hybridization* – that can be contrasted with security politics as the underlying logic by which security providers (both state and non-state) interact and change over time.

From various directions, a growing range of analysis has converged upon the robust, multifaceted and inescapable role of non-state actors in the governance of weak states. Mark Duffield (2001) argues that zones of conflict and insecurity feature innovative political complexes while Mampilly (2011) recognizes that rebel and insurgent groups are simultaneously governance actors; others stress that purportedly 'ungoverned spaces' are rather *alternatively governed* by systems different from statehood (Clunan and Trinkunas 2010; Risse 2012); several authors suggest that informal actors do much more policing than

state authorities (Baker 2007, 2010; Albrecht and Kyed 2010) while others argue that local practices that are generally excluded from peacebuilding programs as backwards and illiberal nonetheless contain important potentials for peace (Richmond 2014; Mac Ginty 2011).

The security sector reform (SSR)[1] literature has engaged with this theme in its recent focus on *non-state* providers of justice and security, considering whether and how such actors should be included in SSR programming (Baker and Scheye 2007; Scheye 2009; Albrecht et al. 2011; Lawrence 2012; among others). Some authors even suggest that support to non-state security providers can advance statebuilding programs in the medium-to-long term by providing the stability necessary for them to unfold

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(Scheye 2009: 4; Boege et al. 2008: 10). There is, however, reason to doubt this proposition because such actors tend to guard their autonomy against the processes of centralization, integration and homogenization that characterize historical processes of state formation and contemporary statebuilding efforts. But in any case, the matter raises a fundamental yet underexplored question: *What is the relationship between non-state security providers and political formation in conflict-affected societies?*

Because both non-state security providers and political development are highly context specific, there is no general answer to this question. This paper instead provides frameworks with which to analyze the various dimensions of the issue. It ultimately argues that the concept of hybridity can be operationalized to yield important insights about security provision in conflict-affected societies. The analysis proceeds in four steps.

The first section provides a detailed definition of the term *non-state security provider* and outlines three perspectives – functionalism, political economy, and communitarianism – with which to apprehend their origins, nature, and behavior. Turning to the *political formation* side of the research question, the second section considers possible long-term trajectories of political development – the processes by which systems of governance develop and evolve – and highlights role of non-state security providers in each example. This section ultimately highlights *hybrid political order* as the developmental trajectory of greatest relevance to non-state security provision, but one that requires much greater elaboration. The third section therefore interrogates the concept of *hybridity* and the ways in which it assists the analysis to overcome longstanding but misleading conceptual binaries. Finally, the fourth section rearticulates hybridity as a dynamic developmental process – *hybridization* – that can be contrasted with *security politics* as the underlying logic by which security providers (both state and non-state) interact and change over time. Together, these frameworks situate non-state security providers within the broader context of political development as a crucial concern for any SSR strategy that engages such actors.

Methodologically, this paper is part literature review and part theory-building exercise. In particular, it surveys the diverse understandings of *hybridity* in the field of peace and conflict in order to operationalize the concept for the analysis of security provision in conflict-affected societies. The analysis is grounded in the three case studies – Afghanistan (Derksen 2016), South Sudan (Schomerus and Rigterink 2016), and Somalia (Menkhaus 2016) – of the Centre for Security Governance's recent project *Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Conflict-Affected Societies.* These accounts employed detailed fieldwork (including interviews with government and international officials and relevant experts, as well as surveys of affected populations) in order to investigate the core issues of this paper by analyzing extant examples of non-state security provision.

I. Understanding Non-State Security Providers

To understand the role of non-state security providers in political development the analysis must begin by considering the nature of *non-state security providers*. The term refers to actors engaged in at least one of three activities, whether as their central purpose or as a consequence of other activities:

1) Resolving conflicts and disputes, thereby stopping them from escalating into violence.
2) Maintaining a predictable and acceptable order within a community by preventing, deterring, investigating, and punishing breaches (Baker and Scheye 2007: 512).
3) Defending a community from external threats (such as insurgents or rival communities).

Security providers are 'non-state' when they are not constituted or regulated by states, but instead operate autonomously by their

own logic and rules, distinct from the state's bureaucracy. They are not formally (legislatively) integrated into state institutions such as the military, police, and judiciary though they may have persistent contacts with officials in these bodies. Examples include militias, strongmen, warlords, community leaders, self-defense groups, councils of elders, and traditional courts. As explained further below, however, the state/non-state distinction is a blurry one that may not accurately capture the nature of security providers in many societies.

Perhaps the most important objection to engaging non-state security providers in SSR is their often dubious human rights records, poor performance, and lack of accountability. The strength and behavior of such actors can be overestimated and misunderstood in perverse ways (Meagher 2012). Many state governments, however, are equally susceptible to these failings, and there is no *a priori* reason to assume that they are any more or less amenable to reform than their non-state counterparts. Yet the above concern requires careful analysis of the ways in which non-state security providers arise, develop, and behave, particularly insofar as these considerations shape the character of security such actors provide. The literature includes at least three perspectives which to assess these questions (Lawrence 2012: 15–16).

1) Functionalism and the *purpose* of security provision: In this approach, informal security mechanisms develop as a response to the threats confronting a community. People act as creative problem solvers to develop innovative methods of reducing insecurity. In this way, their development is driven by the problems they address. The Arrow Boys in Western Equatoria State of South Sudan provide a good example, as a self-organized group of local youth who successfully banded together to defend their communities from attacks by Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) when state security forces failed to do so (Schomerus and Rigterink 2016). The key question in this perspective is: what issues confront communities and their security providers?

2) Political Economy and the *means* of security provision: This framework suggests that the nature of a security provider derives from its supply of resources. William Reno (2007), for example, uses this approach to distinguish protective militias from predatory ones in West Africa: those who depended upon the patronage of patrimonial states had little interest in the needs of local communities and were thus exploitative, unaccountable, illegitimate, and ultimately bad security providers; militias that did not receive regime funding depended on local communities for resources and support, and therefore had to negotiate with local populations in ways that fostered reciprocity and an interest in serving the community. Also using a political economy lens, Ken Menkhaus (2016) notes that private security companies in Somalia have an interest in maintaining certain levels of *insecurity* and resisting efforts to strengthen public security forces in order to maintain demand for their services. The key question within this approach is: how do the sources of a security provider's resources shape the character of the security they provide?

3) Communitarianism and the *right* of security provision: In this approach, security provision occurs within a web of shared values, beliefs, and identities that provides it with a foundation in traditional, community-based legitimacy. An inter-subjective normativity determines who has the authority to provide security, as well as the particular rules, norms, and procedures of proper security provision, in ways that ensure popular support for these mechanisms. In this vein, Menkhaus (2016) observes that clan identity

and customary law (*xeer*) empower clan elders to mediate disputes and resolve security issues in Puntland and Somaliland. The key question within this approach is: what systems of normativity enable non-state security provision?

These three perspectives provide distinct yet non-exclusive ways in which to account for the origins of non-state security providers and the character of the services they provide by highlighting, respectively, their functions, interests, and values.[2]

II. Trajectories of Political Development

Where the previous section considers the nature of non-state security providers, this section turns to the other half of this paper's core question: the trajectories of political development to which non-state security providers might contribute. One of the biggest uncertainties of an SSR strategy that engages non-state actors concerns the structures of governance that might result. Many donors are likely to reject a non-state SSR strategy because it precludes the venerated state monopoly of legitimate force; this ideal, however, has proven highly elusive in many statebuilding programs. Do non-state security providers contribute to broader processes of state formation in conflict-affected societies? What character of statehood might result from statebuilding strategies that engage non-state actors? How and under what conditions might non-state actors develop into legitimate governance structures capable of providing security, regulation, rights, and welfare?

To answer these questions, the analysis should look for broad trajectories of political development; it must consider the ways in which certain developmental dynamics – such as centralization or fragmentation – become self-reinforcing so that they persist through time, and how non-state security providers contribute to such processes. Understood this way, political formation can take a

wide variety of directions, but the literature suggests five broad trajectories, with non-state security providers occupying a specific role in each, that are presented here as example possibilities.

Liberal Peace Statebuilding: This scenario provides the blueprint for a wide range of international interventions aspiring to build strong, centralized states that can authoritatively wield a monopoly of coercion and provide public goods to their citizens through democratic politics. In many ways, liberal statebuilding comprises efforts to deliberately replicate and accelerate the processes that drove state formation in Europe (Tilly 1985, 1992; Spruyt 1994; Scott 1998; Weber 2004):

- The *centralization* of coercion and taxation by either eliminating rivals or co-opting them into centralized institutions.
- The *concentration* of capital and coercion by disarming society and forging alliances with key productive sectors in order to expand the tax base.
- The *homogenization* of social regulation by the imposition of a common, 'legible' administrative grid upon diverse peoples and territories, generally through the rationalization of administration.
- The *enfranchisement* of peoples, encompassing which rights and services the state provides, to whom, and why, as determined by popular demands and the relevance of different segments of the public to state interests (positive by their relation to economic production, negative in their potential for rebellion).
- The *identification* of peoples with the state, as citizens of the state, based in shared conceptions of justice, rightful authority, and national community.

International statebuilding efforts use programs such as the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, security sector reform (SSR), democratization, rule of law, and other types

of institutional support to develop and reform electoral institutions, executive agencies, parliament, the judiciary, the military and the police. Such interventions, however, have seen scant success in war-torn and post-colonial societies. They construct the formal institutional *outcomes* of European state formation, but without replicating those long-term and highly contingent processes of institutional development that made them work in Western societies (Ottaway 2002).[3]

Within liberal peace statebuilding efforts, non-state security providers are generally seen as 'spoilers' (Stedman 1997) or as rivals to the state that must be either incorporated into formal state institutions or eliminated and replaced by state security provision. Traditional governance actors and the plurality of security and justice providers are perceived as a backwards condition to be left behind as the state modernizes. Yet the state often lacks the resources and incentives to realize the aspirations of liberal peace statebuilding, especially when non-state security providers enjoy local legitimacy, guard their autonomy through their 'illegibility' (nonconformity to the state's patterns of formal regulation), and remain entrenched within local forms of governance.

Neo-Tillyean State Formation: Where the liberal peace assumes that state formation can be peacefully replicated through international assistance, others argue that these processes are inherently violent and must unfold by their own logic, so that the international community should stand back and 'give war a chance' (Luttwak 1999) to drive state formation forward. In this view, peace processes merely freeze an unstable balance of power and prevent state formation from (violently) proceeding. While the international community pursues strong statehood, rule of law, and democracy all at once, Francis Fukuyama (2007: 13) argues that in Europe these processes 'occurred in three distinct phases, often separated by decades if not centuries.' Statebuilding requires the exercise and concentration of violence to change boundaries, move populations, and eliminate rivals, whereas rule of law and democracy are about limiting the exercise of violence; the former must first forcibly establish centralization and control before the other two are feasible. The neo-Tillyean perspective thus suggests that the brutal civil wars of recent decades may be replicating the war-driven processes of state formation Charles Tilly observed in Europe (Ayoob 2007; Newman 2013).

Within this developmental trajectory, non-state security providers comprise potential proto-states and war drives key processes of state formation. Referring to this as the 'coercive mode' of non-state security provision, Sven Chojnacki and Zeljko Branovic (2012: 92) explain that such actors 'advance processes of governance formation – that is, the establishment of institutionalized political and economic systems of rule. First of all… armed actors use their ability to control territory and social relations (i.e. the civilian population) to build up internal and external protection systems; second, they no longer finance themselves by means of organized looting, but rather through institutionalized taxation systems.'

There is, however, ample reason to doubt the proposition that today's civil wars are replicating the European state formation of centuries ago. Anna Leander (2004) argues that today's global neoliberal economy comprises a very different systemic context of political formation that favors the *decentralization* and *dispersion* of capital, coercion, and authority, rather than their centralization and concentration. Transnational firms generally obtain their security from local powerholders and private security companies rather than public security services, and negotiate minimal tax rates. Meanwhile, the state acquires its means of coercion, its capital, and its legitimacy from external sources, obviating the need for a large administrative apparatus and for bargaining with its population. Mary Kaldor (2012: 6) thus argues that the new wars represent 'a *reversal* of the processes through which modern European states evolved' rather than their replication (emphasis added).

Hybrid Political Orders: Where the above are trajectories of state formation, it is also possible that state and non-state modes of governance co-exist within a 'hybrid political order'. Boege et al. (2009: 24) propose that:

> Regions of so-called fragile statehood are generally places in which diverse and competing claims to power and logics of order co-exist, overlap and intertwine, namely the logic of the 'formal' state, of traditional 'informal' societal order, and of globalization and associated social fragmentation (which is present in various forms: ethnic, tribal, religious…). In such an environment, the 'state' does not have a privileged position as the political framework that provides security, welfare and representation; it has to share authority, legitimacy and capacity with other actors.

Liberal peace statebuilding and neo-Tillyean state formation are both *teleological* processes of political formation: political development proceeds towards the end state of modern Weberian statehood. Hybrid political orders, in contrast, are *non-teleological* (Kraushaar and Lambach 2009: 15) in nature. A plurality of governance actors and arrangements persist in a dynamic process of interaction and change that does not move toward any particular end state.

One of the central empirical issues concerning such orders is the manner in which state and non-state, formal and informal, governance actors interact with one another, and the stability of these relationships. Helmke and Levitsky (2004) delineate four broad types of interactions between formal and informal institutions. They may be: *complementary* by supporting each other in pursuit of shared goals; *mutually accommodating* by operating in tandem without impeding one another; *competing* when informal institutions undermine formal ones; or *substitutive* when informal institutions compensate for absent or ineffective formal institutions.

Neopatrimonialism and indirect rule provide examples of the ways in which such relationships comprise systems of political order.

Christopher Clapham (2002: 780–781) defines neopatrimonialism as 'the construction of reciprocal relationships of an essentially personal kind between leaders and their followers, within the formal hierarchy of the state' thereby linking the bureaucracy and legal structure of the state to narrow personalistic networks often based on kinship or traditional forms of authority. While patronage networks can be highly exclusive, unequal, self-serving, and corrosive upon formal institutions, they nonetheless 'may be essential to the functioning of security agencies within the hybrid political and social spaces in which they have to operate' (Bagakoyo 2016: 12). Such networks compensate for state weakness by using short-term, individual reciprocities in the absence of long-term, generalized ones (Clapham 2002: 780–81). Informal social forces hijack formal state structures, but the former are themselves reformulated through their supportive links to the state (Boege et al. 2008: 7–8).

Indirect rule provides another example of hybrid political order. Naseemullah and Staniland (2014) note that state governance is highly uneven in post-colonial settings, often utilizing forms of indirect rule via informal and non-state actors.[4] Within 'hybrid rule' a state lacks a monopoly of force and therefore shares 'authority with social actors, in overlapping spheres of social control and coercion' that are formally codified. Within 'de jure rule' the state claims exclusive legal authority over a territory but lacks actual control so that 'in reality coercion is enforced by intermediate political elites' (ibid: 17).[5] Such arrangements are often stable and enduring because states have no incentive to develop and maintain the direct rule of Weberian statehood in areas of local resistance and little relevance to state interests.

Within the hybrid political order trajectory, non-state security providers are not understood as spoilers, but as but as indispensable parts of the broader governance picture that

compensate for weak and absent statehood in a persistent manner. They comprise a key source of societal resilience and open new possibilities for improving security (Boege et al. 2008: 16). Yet the quality of security provided within such pluralistic orders to the different populations they contain remains a crucial issue for empirical exploration.

Autonomous Non-State Governance: In some situations, non-state security providers are autonomous from state rule and free to pursue their own distinctive forms of non-state governance. For example, Menkhaus (2007: 69) observes that 'faced with state collapse, Somali communities have vigorously pursued alternative systems to provide themselves with essential services normally associated with the state – first and foremost security and public order.' Reno's analysis of West African militias (described above) suggests that the types of taxation and bargaining that characterize state formation can also operate at a more local scale under non-state security providers. But as subsequent developments in Somalia suggest (see Menkhaus 2016), non-state security providers generally do have some sort of relationship to the state rather than complete autonomy (Luckham and Kirk 2013: 11).

Governance Turmoil: Finally, some contexts might feature a frequent turnover of security providers and governance actors, so that whatever security and governance exist are unstable, if not entirely ephemeral. In such cases, patterns of social regulation are highly tumultuous (if not absent), especially amidst ongoing conflict, and there is no developmental trajectory to speak of. These conditions often occur in areas of illicit resource extraction when the order provided by one group is upended by another and new entrepreneurs arise to violently capture control, creating a continuous cycle of insecurity (Chojnacki and Branovic 2012: 101–2).

The hybrid political order scenario best captures the three case studies considered below, as each invokes the concept of hybridity in significant ways. Yet the diversity of these examples suggests that the category

'hybrid political order' encompasses a much broader range of developmental possibilities than the above description would suggest. Indeed, the concept of hybridity pervades the recent literatures on peace, conflict, and security, but is used in a wide variety of ways to explore the 'hybridity' of a range of different referents.

Mac Ginty (2011) and Richmond (2014; also Richmond and Mitchell 2012) examine the 'hybrid peace' at the intersection of top-down international peacebuilding programs and bottom-up local agency, proposing that the former can only succeed if they can be contested, reformulated, and adapted by the latter into hybrid forms embedded in everyday life. Schroeder et al. (2014) analyze the same interactions within the specific sphere of SSR where they produce 'hybrid security governance' while Belloni (2012) highlights the encounter between liberal and the illiberal norms, institutions and actors to produce 'hybrid peace governance'. Alternatively, Albrecht and Moe (2015) examine the hybridity of political discourse as it integrates multiple sources of authority to enact political order. Where some advocate hybridity as prescription (that is, to anticipate and steer hybridization), Millar (2014) highlights the difficulty of such efforts by distinguishing four levels of social relations of decreasing susceptibility to deliberate hybridization. And where many authors view hybridity in a positive light, Keith Krause (2012) examines 'hybrid violence' to emphasize its coercive side.

These and other accounts provide helpful conceptualizations and typologies of hybridity (summarized in the Appendix), but the term remains under-theorized. At its core, it implies the mixing of different entities, but the definition provided by Mac Ginty and Sanghera (2012: 3) reveals just how broadly it can be construed: 'Hybridity is understood as composite forms of practice, norms and thinking that emerge from the interaction of different groups, worldviews and activity.' Amidst these variable definitions, the utility

of the concept remains open to question: *When we characterize a particular order as* hybrid*, how does that actually advance the analysis?* Below I draw upon case studies from the aforementioned Centre for Security Governance project to outline two ways in which the concept of hybridity can be deployed more productively: by challenging the basic conceptual binaries that underpin empirical investigation, and when theorized as a particular mode of political development.

III. Hybridity within Frameworks of Analysis

Hybridity occur within our analytical frameworks when empirical realities belie – and even invalidate – the core conceptual dichotomies employed in research by simultaneously exhibiting supposedly opposite qualities.[6] Concepts represent hidden assumptions about reality that precede its empirical investigation. Many accounts begin with conceptual binaries – such as state/non-state, formal/informal, public/private, traditional/modern, liberal/illiberal, and internal/external – that originate from and reflect the Western history of political development but can potentially misdirect investigation within non-Western contexts (Schroeder and Chappuis 2014: 141–3; Mac Ginty 2011: 3–5).

The conceptual dichotomies mentioned above, however, remain central to the literature on hybrid political order and the substantial advances it has made. In some cases, these binaries remain productive. The question is thus: *under what conditions do our conceptual dichotomies collapse into hybridity and cease to apply?* This section scrutinizes the state versus non-state and formal versus informal dichotomies (which are generally used interchangeably) by examining two scenarios in which they can mislead the analysis: when actors (or systems of governance) are simultaneously *both* of these supposed opposites, and cases in which the two are, in practice, inseparable parts of a greater whole.

At the crux of the formal/informal dichotomy is legal-rational codification. As Bagakoyo et al. (2016: 5), following Helmke and Levitsky (2004), delineate the two:

> Formal institutions are institutions whose boundaries, authority structures and ways of working are for the most part codified through publicly recognized rules, regulations and standards (constitutions, laws, property rights, charters, organizational blueprints and so on). Informal institutions are largely structured around implicit practices, social understandings, networks of interaction, and socially sanctioned norms of behavior (conventions, customs, traditions etc.) – relying on expectations of reciprocity, which are neither officially sanctioned nor codified, but are commonly and widely accepted as legitimate.

The term 'state' is generally applied to those actors whose role is formally codified by the *de jure* state authority, and 'non-state' as everything else. 'Formal' thus closely coheres to Weberian understandings of bureaucracy as legal rationalization, a defining feature of modern statehood. There are obvious grey areas within these two dichotomies – for example when decisions rendered by customary justice systems are recognized as legally binding under state law, or when traditional oral proceedings are documented as legalistic judgments, or when tribal chiefs are salaried state officials – but the issues presented here are of a different nature.

The first way in which these dichotomies collapse is when individuals bear dichotomous qualities simultaneously. Menkhaus (2016) observes that security providers in Somalia often wear 'multiple hats' by engaging in different forms of security provision. Soldiers and police officers, for example, are generally also part of clan paramilitaries whose commanders are formal military

officials, but pursue clan agendas while acting as state agents. Further, soldiers and officers frequently double-time as private security guards, often while in uniform and on the official clock, and in some cases work for private security companies owned by prominent politicians. Finally, Mogadishu's 16 District Commissioners – formal agents of the state – generally command extralegal militias composed of clan paramilitaries, soldiers and police, in order to prevent the formal security sector from operating in their territories.

If these various identities were discrete and an individual embodied only one at a time, shifting neatly between different modes of security provision, then the formal/informal and state/non-state dichotomies would apply without issue depending on which hat was worn. But this is hardly the case in Somalia where the dichotomies state/non-state, formal/informal, fail to capture the simultaneous occurrence of supposedly opposite qualities in particular individuals. More generally, Bagakoyo et al. (2016: 11, 19) argue that 'in a growing number of African states the boundaries between state and non-state security institutions have eroded to the point where they have become almost indistinguishable and their personnel are virtually interchangeable… [the] distinctions between state and non-state security actors are fluid and in some cases virtually non-existent.'

A second way in which empirical realities belie the state/non-state, formal/informal, dichotomies is when elements from both sides form a single, mutually constituted, indivisible whole outside of which none can be understood in isolation. This argument draws upon the new institutionalist literature, which proposes that formal institutions are inexorably founded upon and dependent upon informal institutions (such as norms, expectations, customs, habits, and routines) without which they cannot function. 'State institutions work because they are embedded in social and cultural norms and practices' (Boege et al. 2008: 17).

James C. Scott (1998: 309–41) provides a helpful analogy by arguing that *techne* – technical knowledge amenable to formal codification and written transmission – cannot operate without *metis* – practical knowledge that is intuitive, contextualized, and acquired by doing. Rather than strike, for example, assembly line workers can mount a work-to-rule action in which they follow their instructions to the letter, but without all the 'tricks' and rules of thumb they have acquired, and thereby grind production to a halt. 'Formal order, to be more explicit, is always and to some considerable degree parasitic upon informal processes, which the formal scheme does not recognize, without which it could not exist, and which it alone cannot create or maintain' (ibid: 310).

Along these lines, Lisa Denney (2014) charts the security arena of Sierra Leone and argues that those actors commonly labeled state or non-state, formal or informal, actually comprise indivisible parts of a greater, interactive security system navigated in many different directions by end users. 'It is unhelpful to try to isolate one part of a security and justice system for engagement in reform that in practice exists not in isolation, but in an interactive system of which it is just one part' (ibid: 263).[7] Similarly, Albrecht and Moe (2015: 14) argue that much state-centric programming fails because it does 'not recognize the ways in which different actors and institutions are intrinsically interconnected (rather than divided into state and non-state formations, respectively)'. If the formal/informal, state and non-state, cannot be understood separately, then these binaries cease to apply as dichotomies. As an analytical lens, therefore, hybridity serves as a caution against presuming the applicability of typical conceptual distinctions, and applying them too rigidly (Denney 2014: 264; Peterson 2012: 12).

A third caution against employing the usual dichotomies in non-Western settings is not based on hybridity *per se*, but rather the fact that local populations often do not view their social realities in these terms. Survey work by Schomerus and Rigterink (2016) in the Western Equatoria State of South Sudan, for example, found that locals tend to understand security provision in terms of a military versus civilian dichotomy rather than a state versus non-state one. As many argue, the starting point for any successful SSR programming must be 'how those who use security and justice services experience security and justice' (Denney, 2014: 259). The categories and dichotomies the analyst brings to the investigation may be simply irrelevant to the local experiences that comprise political order, and which shape the outcomes of reform initiatives (Schroeder and Chappuis 2014: 138).

IV. Hybridization as a Process of Political Development

Where the above section argues that characteristics typically conceived as binaries are in many cases hybridized and simultaneous, this section argues that hybridity can be conceptualized as a particular mode of political development. At the core of the hybridity concept is change through the mixing of different things, but the question remains: *what sort of mixing requires a new concept like hybridity?* Is a hybrid political order the same thing as a *plural* political order, in which a range of different actors interact? And if compromise is the essence of politics, then is not *any* political process one of mixing the interests and values of a wide range of actors? Hybridity implies a specific theory of change that has yet to be elaborated. Here, I take a step in that direction by theorizing *hybridization* as a process of change that involves a deeper sense of mixing than politics and pluralism.

Originating in anthropology, the concept of hybridity involves a cultural ontology (though one that emphasizes dynamism over essentialism): actors have identities that define their core values, purposes, interests, organizing logics, and norms of behavior. When actors of different identities interact with each other, each may incorporate some of these constitutive factors from the other in ways that change their identity. The process produces different (or even new) actors and governance systems that embody characteristics of their sources, but are nonetheless irreducible to them. In this way, hybridization highlights the *fluidity* of actors and the relationships between them.

Within this perspective, it is *this process of hybridization* by which political order develops and changes, that produces its key characteristics, and that drives the course of events. Hybrid political order is the condition, hybridization is the process that animates it and accounts for its ever-changing nature. The focus of analysis should thus be on the ways in which seemingly different forms or characteristics meet and mix to re-create actors and systems of governance. The key outstanding question is: under what circumstances does this kind of mixing encounter occur? There is surely no simple, straightforward answer, which leaves hybridization highly contingent, hard to predict, and resistant to deliberate steering (Millard 2014).

The Arrow Boys (Schomerus and Rigterink 2016) present one potential example of such a hybridization process. As outlined above, they began as a local community self-defense group that spanned several ethnicities. As the LRA threat has receded, many members have engaged with a movement restore the Zande king as a form of traditional governance by proposing that the Arrow Boys become a permanent king's guard. In this way, the group's basic identity could shift from multiethnic community defense to official security providers within a particular ethnic kingdom based on the re-imagining of tradition. Alternatively, if the Arrow Boys are incorporated into the Sudan People's Liberation Army, their basic nature would surely shift to accommodate military hierarchy and practices. Both potential hybridizations, however,

remain prospective, as the future of the Arrow Boys is an open question.

Menkhaus (2016: 9–10) provides another good example of the process of hybridization in the Somali custom of *abbaan*. Within a broader system of traditional clan governance, an *abbaan* was a contracted protector for outside travelers, merchants and migrants moving through his clan territory. The precolonial practice was extensively revived with the collapse of the state and proliferation of international aid workers in need of safe passage. In its encounter with the latter, the *abbaan* custom has hybridized to become both part of a longstanding system of traditional law and a modern form of rent seeking.

The above theorization of hybridization as a dynamic of political development can be contrasted with a more realist ontology of *security politics* as an alternative perspective. In this framework, actors are understood to have relatively fixed identities and a persistent core interest in protecting and augmenting their power – whether measured in terms of political clout, economic resources, or social status – in strategic competition with other actors pursuing the same interest. The core focus of analysis is on the ways in which actors utilize their role as security provider (or control of force more broadly) to advance their interests.[8] Barnett and Zürcher (2009: 25), for example, argue that subnational elites, as rational actors, create the *appearance* of advancing the change sought by international peacebuilding in order to access resources they can use to maintain their own standing and autonomy against the encroachment of a central state, thereby 'leaving largely intact existing state-society relations.'

Within the security politics perspective, it is *this strategic interaction between security actors pursuing their interest in power* that drives events and the course of political development. When the control of force offers powerholders key resources – such as foreign aid, legitimation, or private means of accumulation – then 'the security forces themselves, not the civilian institutions, constitute the chief arena of competition for power' (Rubin 2008: 37).[9] Here, actors with different identities, values, and interests encounter each other, but do not experience the strong *intermixing* and *change* of these elements that is at the core of hybridization. Power, rather than identity, is the focus of analysis.

The warlord politics of Afghanistan provide an apt example of security politics. Derksen's (2016) case study of Uruzgan outlines the ways in which local strongmen utilize their formal position within government to strengthen their personal bases of power by maintaining their own military forces, local taxation regimes, illicit economies, and security services for international missions. By controlling local security provision through the personalistic, semi-autonomous organization of coercion outside the state's formal security institutions, such strongmen render themselves indispensable to local order by impeding the institutionalization of state security provision. In this way, strongmen interact with the state strategically in order to enhance their wealth, power, and prestige. But contrary to hybridization, their basic identity as warlords has not changed much with their official positions, as they maintain the same interests, modes of organization, and local bases of power.

Hybridization and security politics thus offer two different possible dynamics of political development, as summarized in the **Table 1** below. Where hybridization emphasizes change, security politics highlights continuity; it suggests that certain incentives can entrench particular actors by creating enduring and self-perpetuating structures of political economy. Such structures tend to maintain actors in their identities, interests, and behaviors. Hybridization and security politics each capture some cases and not others, and there are surely additional modes of political development than just these two. The point, however, is to refine the concept of hybridization to a specific dynamic that can be compared and contrasted to other processes.

Table 1: Hybridization and Security Politics as Dynamics of Political Development.

Theory:	Ontology:	Key Assumptions:	Focus of Analysis:
Hybridization	Cultural, focused on shifting identities	Security actors have mutable identities composed of their values, purposes, interests, organizing logics, and norms of behavior. These elements change through interaction with actors of differing identity.	Moments of hybridization when actors or systems of governance take on new characteristics as the key driver of political formation.
Security Politics	Realist, focused on the strategic pursuit of power	Security actors are stable in their identities and pursue a core interest in maintaining and augmenting their power in strategic competition with other actors pursuing the same interest.	The ways in which security actors leverage their role as security provider in order to expand their authority and strategically pursue their interests.

V. Conclusion

This article has elaborated several frameworks of analysis with which to better understand the relationship between non-state security providers and the development of broader systems of governance. The first section outlined three perspectives – functionalism, political economy, and communitarianism – with which to apprehend the origins, nature, and behavior of non-state security providers, including the quality of the security they provide. The second section explored examples of long-term trajectories of political development to which non-state security providers might contribute. Hybrid political order in particular characterizes many conflict-affected societies hosting non-state security providers, but the notion of hybridity requires deeper theorization. Section III argued that the concept of hybridity can aid analysis by highlighting conditions in which typical dichotomies – such as state versus non-state, formal versus informal – collapse in practice and can mislead the investigation. And section IV theorized a particular dynamic of political development – hybridization – that can be contrasted with security politics.[10] This formulation suggests caution against using the concept of hybridity too widely when other theoretical approaches, such as security politics, may better capture political developments.

More broadly, this paper has delved into one of the most important issues for an SSR strategy that engages non-state security providers: the processes of political development and the governance arrangements that may result. It has situated non-state security providers within the ongoing, contingent, and non-teleological processes of change that comprise a continually evolving hybrid political order. While the present policy paradigm – statebuilding – aspires to particular outcomes or end states (modern statehood), environments of hybrid political order require a process orientation. Governance arrangements are open-ended and any engagement must readjust strategies and tactics to dynamic realities. Policy should aim to facilitate the relationships that will best improve human security at a given moment in a particular context. The frameworks presented here provide tools with which to better understand non-state security providers within the dynamics of political development in order to advance such an approach.

Additional File
The additional file for this article can be found as follows:

- **Appendix.** Conceptualizations and Categorizations of Hybridity. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.554.s1

Notes
[1] *Security sector reform* is a policy program that aspires to change the institutional structures and practices of security and justice institutions in ways that better support peace, democracy, and human rights, particularly in post-authoritarian and post-conflict states. It is often understood as a key component of *statebuilding* – efforts to enhance the capacity and legitimacy of state institutions in the provision of governance and public goods. Statebuilding, as a set of deliberate efforts pursued in the timeframe of policymaking, is here distinguished from *state formation* understood as the long term, structural, and often unintended processes by which states come into existence. Security sector reform and statebuilding are commonly understood to support *peacebuilding* – initiatives to prevent the recurrence of violent conflict.

[2] Supplementing these frameworks, other authors provide alternative schemes for profiling non-state security providers. Ulrich Schneckener (2009) develops eight ideal types of non-state armed actor (rebels, militias, clan chiefs, warlords, terrorists, criminals, private security/military groups, and marauders) distinguished by four dichotomies: change versus status quo orientation; territorial control versus non-territorial tactics; physical versus psychological use of violence; and political versus economic motivations. Payton L. Knopf (2011) outlines seven factors to help determine when, why, and how the United States should engage non-state armed groups: their leadership, military effectiveness, constituency, degree of territorial control, political platform, sponsors, and needs.

[3] As Lisa Denney (2014: 255) astutely puts this point, SSR 'has overwhelmingly prioritized form over function' by aspiring to build 'institutions that *look like* those that provide security and justice functions in Western countries' rather than those that actually work in non-Western contexts.

[4] Ken Menkhaus depicts such arrangements as 'mediated' statehood and Eric Scheye (2009: 5) as the 'rule of intermediaries' in which weak states negotiate their rule with other governance actors.

[5] Bagakoyo et al. (2016: 12) similarly observe: 'From colonial times state elites in Africa have pursued strategies of indirect rule: forming alliances with local elites; codifying 'traditional' law and sources of legitimacy; formalizing traditional chiefs and justice bodies; and subcontracting security provision to local policing bodies and militias.'

[6] Keith Krause (2012: 44–5) similarly outlines 'categorical hybridity' as the ways in which reality defies the key conceptual dichotomies and distinctions of academic analysis. See also: Denny 2012: 12.

[7] Along the same lines Bagakoyo (2012: 4, 5) argues that 'in Africa, the state and the informal networks have to be seen as embedded one in the other… the relationship between formal and informal institutions is mutually reinforcing and in fact, there is an integration of the formal and informal security spheres.'

[8] As Luckham and Kirk (2013: 14) point out: 'Security elites tend to act as power and profit maximizers, translating their control of security and organized violence into personal or institutional gain within national, regional and global political marketplaces.'

[9] Rubin (2008: 37) continues: 'In a country barely emerging from civil war, the transformation of the institutions

of violence and coercion constitutes the main arena for power struggles. Actors devise and evaluate such proposals not based on their technical effectiveness—though they will use such arguments when they seem useful—but on the degree to which they maintain their power and own security, not necessarily that of a politically neutral, inclusive—and elusive—"public."'

[10] These formulations of hybridity are meant to add to, but in no way replace or exclude, the variety of existing conceptualizations of this yet under-theorized term, some of which are summarized in the appendix.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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