

Research Project C10

Alternatives to State-Sponsored Security in Areas of Extremely Limited Statehood (Central African Republic and South Sudan)

1 Principal Investigator

Prof. Dr. Andreas Mehler

German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)
GIGA Berlin-Office
Friedrichstr. 206
10969 Berlin
Germany

2 Description of Research Project

This research project aims to explain differing effectiveness of security provision in areas of extremely limited statehood – more precisely: in local arenas of security production in South Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR). The angle is a micro-perspective from below. Exemplary statements will be made on (1) local arenas of security provision, (2) typical situations in areas afar from the state, and (3) policy implications. The project comparatively investigates the following factors as to their significance for security: varyingly institutionalized actor constellations, presence/absence of external state-building actors, social capital/social integration of local populace, nation state politics (claim to power) and socio-spatial distance to the capital.

Relevant statehood indicators rank the neighboring countries of the CAR and South Sudan (the most recent UN-member state) at the very bottom. International troops are stationed in both countries, becoming part of the local constellation of actors in the security market and increase pressure on nation state, local and international actors to legitimize any form of security governance. There are self-help initiatives and rebel movements with advanced weaponry on the ground that in part have local roots and legitimacy.

Within local arenas these groups encounter further actors – scattered representatives of the administration and (generally weak) security personnel of the truncated state, as well as secret societies and organized crime organizations. How effective and by whom security is created in this conflict situation, shall be examined empirically. Albeit commonalities exist, local situations can differ widely in their central national context conditions (extremely limited statehood), espe-

cially with regard to intrinsic problems and actor constellations (oligopolic to polypolic control of force, inclusion of international actors, residual importance of the ‘truncated state’).

The project reviews several of the explanatory factors discussed within the Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700 on governance effectiveness, namely, the degree of institutionalization of governance constellations and their adaptability, the interaction of formal and informal institutions, the relative importance of the truncated state, and functional equivalences to the shadow of hierarchy. Should strong variations under similar national conditions exist, it must be checked, whether developmental paths or standard solutions for areas of limited statehood can exist generally or rather only for specific local constellations and conditions.

3 Research goals and central questions

In the context of extremely limited statehood the institutional design of the governance constellation is essentially equal to its commencing formalization through arrangements. It is scrutinized in particular, whether specific local actor constellations are more effective in providing security than others. This entails the number of relevant actors, the relative distribution of power (symmetries/asymmetries), the cooperation and conflict orientation among each other, arrangements/communication and the significance of only temporarily present international actors (especially *peacekeepers*) in local arenas. These constellations’ validity is examined in a local context and modified where necessary.

Furthermore, we ask whether certain context conditions (in part as structures of opportunity) can be identified that influence forms, effectiveness and legitimacy of local security production: relative (ethnic, religious, social) homogeneity of the local populace (assumption: heightened degree of social trust), socio-spatial distance to the capital (assumption: lower expectations towards the truncated state and increasing ineffectiveness of its rhetoric on the provision of public goods = absence of a *shadow of hierarchy*), claims of power of the central government (assumption: greater tendency towards hierarchical management also in the periphery), massive versus lacking presence of international state building agents (assumption: higher expectations that services are provided externally/centrally, few local self-help efforts).

The project aims to investigate the aforementioned influence factors through a qualitative comparative approach: we analyze six local areas of extremely limited statehood in two countries that have reached formal suzerainty on different paths (granted independence in 1960 and subsequent widely abandoning the penetration of the hinterland [CAR] versus militarily gained secession 2011 [South Sudan]). As the countries are neighbors, we can assume similarity in culture and ecological context, especially in presumably four arenas (two in South Sudan, two in CAR) that belong to the *Zande*-Culture. Thus, a mostly subordinate level of comparison – that between the two states – concerns the differences in the emergence of a state and focuses on the respective national framework (context conditions: claim to power of the central government in the periphery). More importantly, however, is the level of comparison between all six local arenas of security production, whereas we seek variation in contextual conditions aside the aforementioned commonalities (in the socio-spatial distance to the state centre, in the relative social homogeneity of the populace, in the presence of international actors – especially *peacekeepers*).

Furthermore, the project is interested in the policy implications of governance in areas of limited statehood: can general conclusions be drawn in which cases alternatives to the state can produce more effective governance services? Under which conditions are ignoring, accepting, cooperating (and possibly “certifying”) or combating these alternatives reasonable, when (1) optimizing local governance or (2) containment of global security threats are paramount?

Hypotheses

The first set of hypotheses combines the connections raised from the state of the art between actor constellations and security governance.

Hypothesis 1: actor constellations/institutionalization

- (1a) A hierarchical form of coordinating actions in terms of an *oligopoly of violence with a dominant market leader* is superior to other constellations regarding effectiveness of security governance.
- (1b) International *peacekeepers* can only provide security – temporarily – when they are dominant within the actor constellation or cooperate closely with the dominant actor.
- (1c) Local security provision is particularly volatile when relative claims to power between significant violent actors are unresolved, to which international *peacekeepers* and special forces belong just as much as local representatives of the central state.

Local arenas differ widely in regards to the composition of their populace.

Hypothesis 2: social homogeneity/social capital

- (2) Ethnic/religious/social homogeneity are important preconditions for trust/social capital on a local level. The effectiveness of alternative local security production varies with social homogeneity/heterogeneity.

However, the position of the local arena towards the national polity can also crucially influence actor constellations and motivations.

Hypothesis 3: (socio-)spatial distance

- (3) State task fulfillment in ensuring security varies with socio-spatial distance of the region being studied to the capital (diminishing “shadow of hierarchy”); core functions are fulfilled within a close perimeter to the capital. Simultaneously, local self-management improves with increasing socio-spatial distance to the capital/national decision-making centers.

Methods

Field research is paramount to our project by combining a mix of qualitative methods: focus group discussions, *actor mapping*, elite interviews and (limited) non-participatory observation. Existing, but sparse primary resources and secondary literature on the two countries will be reviewed for the time 2003/2005-2013, i.e. for the CAR since the era Bozizé and for South Sudan since the *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (2005).

The unit of analysis is the local arena of security production. Relevant social (and political) actors in areas of limited statehood are:

- (1) directly involved security actors (that also claim to maintain security), such as state institutions, especially the police and army, as well as possibly international *peacekeepers*, as well as communal organizations such as secret societies, *vigilantes* or neighborhood watch committees, private actors such as commercial security services, as well as rebel organizations;
- (2) criminal organizations (that while threatening security also organize mafia-type “protections”) and party youth organizations (with similar attributes);
- (3) administrative and political leaders (that participate in negotiations of the aforementioned actors).

Inhabitants of a locality can on occasion form security oriented interest groups and thereby become active participants in a local security arena. The arena term illustrates – unlike a social space – that namable actors compete for influence/power. The relational aspect, which is decisive for the definition of social spaces, is determined by a geographic centre, which is empirically either

- (1) the administrative center with its core institutions – from administrative buildings, a market and basic infrastructure to a landing field, or
- (2) an important production area (e.g. for diamonds, oil, etc.)

Control of these spatially bound centers of an arena is the key interest of the most important local actors. In this tightly defined territory security is of special interest also to the local populace, as it can expect at least minimal provision of services and economic opportunities here.

Operationalization of the effectiveness of security provision

We understand the effectiveness of security provision to signify the problem-solving oriented provision of collective goods in the domain of security. We adhere to the distinction of output, outcome and impact when measuring effectiveness as a dependent variable. We aim to measure *output* with a limited number of indicators: Quantity of deployed security personnel, number of patrols, number of arrests (each per identified security actor and in total with regard to the respective area and local populace). For this purpose we will compare statements of the respective actors with those of focus groups as well as our own standardized *event log*, and take the average if necessary.

We aim to measure *outcome* with two further indicators: Number of violent deaths, number of acts of serious crime (presumably differentiated further along the lines of the most common local phenomena).

Security perceptions of the local populace are paramount for the measurement of *impact* and will primarily be determined during focus group discussions. Self perceptions of security actors, especially also of *peacekeepers* (when available), will be consulted in relation to the former to achieve values (from “very secure” to “very insecure”) as objectively as possible.

We will record dynamic changes in the effectiveness of security provision through chronological *recording* by local research assistants (so called *event logs*, possible at least for output and outcome dimensions). We will include a temporal dimension for on the ground interviews (elite interviews and focus group discussions).

Operationalizing the independent variable

Local actor constellations are identified through actor mapping during focus group discussions and reviewed through non-participatory observation as well as elite interviews – here in particular the aspect of commencing institutionalization (i.e. arrangements, communication).

Relative social homogeneity can be distinguished only tentatively through available statistical resources. On the ground surveying is also important in this regard, especially for ethnic and religious composition.

Nation state framework conditions (claims to power and real politics) are ascertained initially through a literature review and the evaluation of available discourses and verified through elite interviews, especially with local state representatives.

Rationale for the country selection

Both states are extreme cases of limited statehood, but with one main difference: the government in Bangui (CAR) as well as previous colonial authorities never showed a large interest in governing the back country and inducing new forms of social life. Trust and solidarity would have been the prerequisite for larger community projects. These never emerged in a region historically known as a capturing area for slaves (Lombard 2012a). In contrast, the government in Juba (South Sudan) attempts to centralize authority, however, is met with local resistance (as far as efforts for autonomy). Thus, one country is marked by negligible efforts for *state building*, while the other is actively negotiating its relations towards regional and local authorities (as well as internationally). Consequently, we expect differences with regards to the independent variable in hypothesis 1 (1a, 1c): in South Sudan the local governance constellation should exhibit stronger state representatives than in the CAR, as the *Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)/Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)* is at least attempting to become the dominant “market leader” in local oligopolies of violence in the periphery. Similarities on the other hand are evident: Both states have experienced over the last decades and continue to experience intense violent conflicts. The most recent episodes were each erupted due to contestation of the central state authority, however, with opposing dynamics. A loose alliance of peripheral rebel groups – the Seleka – took over central government power briefly in the CAR, before ad hoc militias – the anti-balaka – drove them out in Januar 2014. In South Sudan a group was excluded from the central power and under the leadership of Riek Macher is violently challenging the remaining central government from the periphery.

Rationale of case selection: local arenas

Es explained above, too few data on effectiveness of security provision exist to select cases according to the dependent variable. Thus, we aim to initially create variation in both states as to the independent variables. This should be possible with regards to the actor constellations, especially concerning whether international *peacekeepers* are stationed locally, former rebel movements are fixated locally within the frameworks of a peace agreement and relevant self-help groups (*arrow boys, archers*) are causing something of a stir. Furthermore, we have sufficient information on ethnic divisions as well as (socio-) spatial distances to justify a preliminary selection.