# Too much Western Bias? The need for a more culturally adaptable approach to post-conflict Security Sector Reform

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The existing guidelines for security sector reform (SSR) tend to draw on theoretical work in the field of civil-military relations, which in turn has been derived from Western, liberal democratic models of governance. Although guidelines strongly advise that local culture and context need to be considered when drawing up objectives for post-conflict SSR programmes, this is not often reflected in practice. This article considers some of the reasons for this, citing both in-country challenges and donor-related issues, and suggests that one of the biggest problems is a lack of alternative, non-orthodox models of civil-military relations to draw upon. It is further suggested that elements of suitable alternative models may be found in states which possess political structures not entirely dissimilar to the Western, liberal democratic ideal, but which can offer different perspectives. Detailed research of these structures should produce a pool of sub-models which could then be employed to create bespoke, culturally appropriate objectives for use in post-conflict SSR programmes.

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## Introduction

When conflicts draw to a close, whether internal or external, the transition from war to peace is never straightforward and much usually remains to be done in terms of both security and development. Ensuring that there is a workable and sustainable security system in place, including a satisfactory and broadly democratic relationship between the legitimate government and the forces of the state, is the primary aim of Security Sector Reform (SSR). However, the record of success in SSR programmes is at best inconsistent, and there are very few examples of truly successful programmes to reflect upon. If we are to improve on this record then it is important to understand some of the reasons why this is.

Post-conflict SSR programmes are focused on delivering a safer and more secure environment after a violent struggle has concluded. The objectives tend to be drawn from what is seen as the ideal civil-military relations model, or what Cohen describes as the “normal” theory of civil-military relations.[[1]](#endnote-1) This model essentially requires a relationship between the civil government and its military forces that imitates those found in most Western, liberal-democratic states. But of course these states have evolved their own particular relationships over hundreds of years in order to meet a peculiar set of circumstances pertaining to their individual histories and cultures, and seldom can it be said that the situations in which contemporary post-conflict SSR programmes are implemented are even remotely similar. There is a incongruity here.

Post-conflict SSR is a complex business, and there are many reasons why it has not had the success rate that might have been hoped for, and it would be unreasonable to expect to find a single solution to such an intricate problem. Nevertheless, if we ignore the place of local culture and historical context when drawing up SSR programmes, and as a consequence get the objectives wrong, then inevitably this will greatly increase the likelihood of failure from the outset. This conclusion is perhaps somewhat obvious, and it is certainly far from original. Much has been written about the importance of local ownership in SSR and the need to take into account the context of the situation when drawing up programmes, and yet frequently it is still not achieved.[[2]](#endnote-2) Why this should be is a question that has not gone un-asked, particularly after the disappointments of Iraq and Afghanistan, and a great deal of analysis has been carried out, looking at the problem from both the donors’ and the recipients’ perspectives. However, in this article the author proposes the view that there is perhaps a quite straightforward reason why ‘normal’ Western, liberal-democratic models of civil-military relations continue to be inappropriately taken as the focus of SSR in post-conflict states, and that is that there has been very little research carried out to identify alternative, non-Western, models. Therefore, even when advice suggests that less orthodox, more locally appropriate, solutions should be considered, only the standard models are readily available to be used to set objectives and construct programmes.

It is important, of course, to ensure that one, inappropriate Western template is not simply replaced with another non-Western, but potentially equally inappropriate, one. Instead, it is suggested that we need to think in terms of the component parts of these models, and identify the sub-models from which they are constructed. It might then be possible to create a repository of such sub-models that could help programme designers to compile bespoke packages for particular situations, drawing on the local cultural narrative as their primary focus. In this way, coupled with a much longer-term approach to SSR, a more practical set of graduated objectives could be identified which could act as stepping stones along a slower, more evolutionary process of reform.

## A Brief History of Civil-Military Relations Theory and Security Sector Reform

One of the clearest definitions of civil-military relations is that it simply refers to the interactions between the armed forces of a state, and the institutions and people of that state.[[3]](#endnote-3) This relationship, when working well, is barely noticed in public life and is just something that goes on in the background. However, the consequences of poor civil-military relations can be catastrophic for a country, potentially resulting in coups d’état, civil wars and military dictatorships. Getting it right, therefore, is of critical importance, and the question of how to do this is addressed by a wide variety of disciplines, including political science, international relations, sociology, law and philosophy amongst others, each of which sees the topic from a different angle. Whatever perspective is taken though, the key issue that has to be addressed is what has been described as the paradox of the “civil-military problematique” whereby, in order to afford protection against external violence, the state finds it necessary to create a strong military force of its own, but must then find a way to ensure that this force is obedient to the civil government and does not attempt to wrest power for itself.[[4]](#endnote-4) Over the years, various theoretical solutions to this problem have been presented as normative, with the subordination of the military to a legitimate, democratically elected civilian government always being seen as a critical element of any theory.[[5]](#endnote-5) In the end, however, nearly all of these solutions have simply been different variations of Cohen’s ‘normal’ theory of civil-military relations.[[6]](#endnote-6)

The most predominant work in this field, and arguably that which still overshadows almost every discussion of civil-military relations today, is Huntington’s *The Soldier and the State*.[[7]](#endnote-7)Through the lens of an empirical review of the development of US and European civil-military history Huntington concluded that successful civil-military relations is all about achieving the right balance between “functional and societal imperatives”. Focusing on America in the late 1950s he argued that the way to attain this is by employing what he calls “objective civilian control”. This involves establishing a system in which the military are isolated from government and the rest of society, and have minimal input to any political decision-making. For their part (reassured by the “professional” nature of the military officer corps) the civilians can then give the military a free hand in the operational delivery of state violence, allowing them to conduct their business without political interference. In this way civil control of the military is maintained, but at the same time military effectiveness is not diminished.

Arguably Huntington’s model has remained the most dominant in the field of civil-military relations ever since it was first published in the late 1950s. Of course, over the years his ideas have not been above criticism, and even when his book first came out, there were those who disagreed with his views. Both Janowitz and Finer offered different perspectives on the problem, with the former advocating a military more closely in tune with the civilian politicians, and the latter focusing on the importance of the “political culture” of a state.[[8]](#endnote-8)

 However, despite their important contemporary contributions, neither Janowitz nor Finer ever achieved Huntington’s prominence. Since then there have also been others who have contested Huntington’s theories; these include Burk; Cottey, Edmunds and Forster; and Feaver as noteworthy amongst many.[[9]](#endnote-9) Most of these have, nevertheless, still taken a similar Western, liberal-democratic viewpoint and have only engaged with particular aspects of the debate such as the precise meaning of professionalism, or the need to separate or integrate the military and civilian echelons. A few have, in a comparable way to Finer, pointed towards the need to consider the local culture and context of the situation. The foremost amongst these are Schiff; Bland; and Cawthra and Luckham.[[10]](#endnote-10) The latter recognized that the style of the political framework of a state is fundamental, acknowledging that when considering military involvement in politics the place of a particular nation’s “historic trajectory” is critical. Schiff with her Concordance theory and Bland with his Unified theory both also contested the idea of the Western, liberal-democratic model as a normative ideal, making the point that by ignoring the cultural, historical and contextual background to a situation any attempt to successfully reform it is unlikely to succeed. However, none of these approaches succeeded in moving from the periphery to the mainstream of civil-military relations studies and Huntington’s ideas still prevail.

For many years, within the international relations community, the reform of a state’s defence structure was seen as a stand-alone activity, unrelated, except perhaps tangentially, to other areas of development that might also be taking place within the same state. This changed, in the late 1990s when the idea began to take shape that security and development could, and indeed should, be delivered together, with an early advocate for what has now become known as Security Sector Reform (SSR) being the then, UK Secretary of State for Development, Clare Short. Since then SSR as a concept has continued to grow, and is now accepted as a fundamental aspect of the international development agenda. Prior to this there had always been a strict distance kept between the security specialists and the development experts. The advent of the widespread recognition of the concept of human security also helped to broaden the focus of security away from being state-centric to people-centric, which further contributed to both sides seeing the advantages of a more synergistic approach. Although today there does still remain a degree of mistrust between the hardliners in each camp, there is no doubt that the broad, holistic idea of SSR is now firmly established as the primary accepted practice in both the security and development arenas.

For some time there was a great deal of debate about what comprised a working definition of SSR, but a consensus on what the term actually means appears to have finally been reached. It is true that there are still some semantic issues to be resolved (is it security *sector* reform or security *system* reform?) but by and large most people are content to work with the definition offered by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) as SSR being: “the process through which a country seeks to review and enhance the effectiveness and the accountability of its security and justice providers”.[[11]](#endnote-11) Discussion continues about precisely which organisations should be included within the remit of security and justice providers, but this will always vary from programme to programme and so precise definitions here are perhaps of less concern. What is important is the recognition that defence reform cannot stand on its own but must be implemented alongside programmes addressing such elements as the police, the intelligence community and the justice system, and that how the security sector is governed and overseen is as important as the organisation and structure of the armed forces itself.[[12]](#endnote-12) This of course is just theory; as with most issues involving people and politics, those who attempt to implement such programmes in the real world inevitably confront many unanticipated complications.

## Problems with SSR in Practice

Since the early 1990s, SSR programmes in various forms have been undertaken in many countries around the world. The focus of these programmes has not always been post-conflict reform, with programmes are often being enacted in failed states more generally, and even in developing democracies such as those emerging from the collapse of the Warsaw Pact after the fall of the Soviet Union. Although the literature is rich with case studies from SSR, in all of these scenarios post-conflict studies such as South Africa, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste tend to dominate, (see Cawthra; Jackson; and Schroeder, Chappuis and Kocak amongst others[[13]](#endnote-13)). Of course, most recently it has been Iraq and Afghanistan that have generated the greatest amount of research and analysis.

For post-conflict SSR to be successful the timing of the initiation of the programme is critical. There is some debate over which preconditions are necessary if an SSR programme is to at least have a chance of succeeding, but Schnabel and Born have offered some clear thoughts on what they believe such preconditions might be:

“These include the presence of an environment that is conducive to reform, characterised by an absence – or at least low levels – of violence; the availability of basic infrastructure and a working and favourable legal framework; the presence of solid, stable and well‐organised domestic security and political institutions; low levels of corruption; and an active and informed civil society.” [[14]](#endnote-14)

It is fair to say that such a benign environment is rarely, if ever, going to be found in a post-conflict situation, but it does at least provide a benchmark against which to assess the likelihood of success. It is also easy to see from this why, although very different cases from one another, both Iraq and Afghanistan are in fact not the best examples from which to draw lessons about what comprises successful post-conflict SSR. In fact, given their extreme distance from this ideal, it is probable that almost any programme in these scenarios would have had a high chance of failure. It has been suggested that, even in situations where the indicators are more positive for SSR programmes, the intrinsic challenges found in any post-conflict situation are likely to be so considerable that failure is always going to be a more likely outcome than success.[[15]](#endnote-15) This view may be overly pessimistic, nevertheless it is perhaps unsurprising given that the reason most post-conflict SSR is contemplated in the first place is because serious instabilities and uncertainties already exist in the states under consideration.

The problems that SSR programmes encounter can be seen as having one of two origins - they are either in-country challenges or donor-related issues. That is not to say that the two can always be entirely separated, but this is a useful lens through which to examine the question of what impediments post-conflict SSR faces. Perhaps the most obvious in-country challenges relate to the inherent difficulties found in any post-conflict scenario, which were alluded to earlier in Schnabel and Born’s view of the necessary preconditions for a programme to begin. Another key concern is that many SSR programmes tend to require what Jackson describes as “a radical restructuring of values and cultures within usually secretive and insular institutions”.[[16]](#endnote-16) Successfully dealing with this is difficult and in many cases it is only achieved on the surface, with the changes never becoming genuinely embedded in the way the state actually operates on the ground. This can result in what Schroeder, Chappuis and Kocak describe as “hybrid security governance” in which new structures and organisations are created on paper, but in reality nothing alters in the way in which day to day practices are enacted.[[17]](#endnote-17)

To a certain extent, many of these in-country issues are unavoidable – they are simply indicative of most post-conflict conditions and occur as a result of the nature and complexity of the situation; they just have to be seen as challenges that need to be overcome. The donor-related issues are different as, in theory at least, any possible solutions to these should be within the gift of the donors to apply. One concern that has been expressed, that of donor self-interest, is linked to the historical distrust between the development and security communities regarding SSR that was previously noted. Greene and Rynn talk about suspicions that are harboured by some development bodies that SSR may be “a cover for self–interested pursuit of contestable foreign and security policy objectives”.[[18]](#endnote-18) If such suspicions are founded, and unless the aims and objectives of a given SSR programme are specifically aligned to needs of the recipient state not those of the donors, then it is always going to be very difficult to obtain a sense of local ownership – something that is widely recognised as being an important key to achieving success. Amongst other donor issues that have been highlighted are:

* the reluctance of many donors to engage in long-term commitment to programmes, and the associated problems of the relatively short length of staff positions in donor organisations;[[19]](#endnote-19)
* an unwillingness of donors to work with non-state actors, despite the reality being that they are often critical players in post-conflict scenarios;[[20]](#endnote-20)
* a preference for the more clearly defined tasks such as demobilization and reintegration, police reform or civil society-based work, rather than the essential, but more challenging, areas of policy development, budgeting and legislative reform.[[21]](#endnote-21)

Given these problems, various studies have looked at the gap between what is expected of SSR programmes and what is regularly observed in the field. Sedra has suggested that a complete re-evaluation is required of the suitability of the whole way that SSR is planned and delivered.[[22]](#endnote-22) He believes not only that some aspects of the orthodox model of SSR may be inappropriate in certain cases, but also that the speed with which the donors expect results is unrealistic, given the level of cultural change that is required. In Schnabel’s look at the mismatch between SSR theory and reality, he expresses the view that, whilst many of the obstacles to success will always exist, they can be made easier to deal with if the process and the method of the reform programme can be “attuned to local contexts”.[[23]](#endnote-23) He points out that societies which are still feeling the effects of recent, and perhaps still unresolved, conflict may not yet be ready to accept what can be seen as “peacetime security institutions”. Furthermore, such societies may view ‘Northern’ solutions as failing to understand the place that traditional security and justice bodies have always played in the ‘South’. To put it more succinctly, there is too much Western bias in most SSR programmes. This is not always deliberate, and often the need to avoid such ethnocentrism is recognised at the start of the programme development process. Nevertheless, despite the fact that so much of the literature highlights the need for this, more culturally relativist approaches (especially with regards the defence elements of SSR) are uncommon.

## The Need for a Less Conventional Approach to SSR

As has been shown, the problems faced by SSR programmes in post-conflict situations are manifold and each situation is unique. It would therefore be very rash to suggest that something as simple as changing the model of civil-military relations on which the desired outcome is based could be an all-embracing solution that would successfully address all of the issues. However, establishing an appropriate and effective working relationship between the legitimate state government and its military forces can be perceived as a necessary baseline from which to begin the process. An attempt to illustrate this idea can be seen in Figure 1. Here the ultimate objective of an effective and accountable security and justice system is shown as being the result of assembling the individual elements of the security sector identified in the DCAF SSR manual.[[24]](#endnote-24) The legitimization of the military by the civilian government, and the reciprocal acknowledgement of that authority by the military, is seen as a fundamental necessity if the other blocks are to be able to interlock and play their part.



Figure 1. The baseline position of civil-military relations with respect to SSR.

The reason for this criticality of the civil-military relationship is explained quite uniequivocally by Finer when, in his consideration of why some states seem more susceptible to coups than others, he suggests that:

“Instead of asking why the military engage in politics, we ought surely ask why they ever do otherwise. For at first sight the political advantages of the military vis-à-vis other and civilian groups are overwhelming. The military possess vastly superior organisation. And they possess arms.”[[25]](#endnote-25)

Once the importance of achieving effective civil-military relations is recognised, it becomes easier to understand why setting outcomes and objectives that are based on a culturally inappropriate model is likely to severely hinder the chances of success from the outset – and yet this phenomenon appears to be consistent with what has been happening in many SSR programmes over the years. Bland makes the point that even when we are in a position to improve situations of dysfunctional civil-military relationships, replacing them with examples from the mature democracies is rarely either appropriate or relevant to the conditions.[[26]](#endnote-26) Mannitz also highlights the fact that, in research on security sector governance and civil-military relations, insufficient attention has been paid to what she describes as “the subjective dimension of democratic political culture and its capacity for transformation”, pointing out that such transformation takes time to achieve.[[27]](#endnote-27) Apart from one or two texts which have attempted to address this in depth (Schiff and her Concordance theory being one of them[[28]](#endnote-28)) most approaches do not highlight the fact that the way in which a military force is embedded in a democracy can be, and indeed should be, different in different states. In other words, with civil-military relations one size does not fit all. All of this might appear to be quite obvious, even to anyone who is not an expert in the subject, and certainly most of the guidance that is now produced for SSR practitioners highlights the need to be open-minded and adaptable when designing programmes.[[29]](#endnote-29) Nevertheless, the issue remains, and there is still a surprising lack of flexibility displayed by donors when implementing reform programmes, so it is worth asking the question why this might be.

For many donors, the difficulty with taking a more flexible approach is that, due to the strategic policy agendas to which SSR funding is often tied, it may not be possible for them to easily accept the idea of compromise. For them, the purpose of a reform programme is to replace unacceptable practices with acceptable ones, however challenging that might be, and any suggestion of a less rigid application of the ideal can be hard to accept. Nevertheless, provided that any compromises do not cause the overall strategic objectives and core principles to be abandoned, and that they are seen as steps along the way to achieving those more idealistic long-term goals, then they should be embraced.[[30]](#endnote-30) The key is to ensure that any such practical changes to the mainstream, orthodox approach of SSR are fully recognised for what they are, and do not become long-term, embedded solutions – resulting in what Sedra has described as “illiberal liberalism”.[[31]](#endnote-31) To avoid this, right from the outset their amendment or reversal at an appropriate point in the future of the programme must be planned for.

For Sedra another, perhaps more fundamental issue with the orthodox model is that, “donors simply lack the outlook, political wherewithal and institutional tools to implement the model’s principles in today’s complex reform contexts.”[[32]](#endnote-32) If this is the case, then perhaps a different approach is necessary, one that is less fixated on the traditional, state-focused, orthodox model, one that is more willing to adapt to, and accommodate, non-state elements.[[33]](#endnote-33) One way that this could be achieved is by drawing on less-traditional, non-Western examples of civil-military relationships and using them to create alternative, non-orthodox SSR aims and objectives.

If an approach were to be taken which made more use of non-orthodox civil-military relations models, then for it to be of any practical use there would need to be a number of different models available for consideration. If not, the danger would be that one rigid, inappropriate Western template would simply be replaced with a different, equally inappropriate one drawn from elsewhere. In fact, given the richness and variety that we see in the states in question, the whole concept of templating does not make much sense at all. Rather, those who are charged with designing SSR programmes should be able to draw on a wide selection of lower level civil-military relations elements, or sub-models, from which they could then construct a bespoke higher-level model that would be unique and appropriate to the problem in hand.

This idea of having a series of sub-models of civil-military relations that can be brought together to create an overall model that is appropriate and practical for a particular situation at any given time, actually fits well with current thinking on how the design process should work. For example, employing an understanding of local culture to establish a tailor-made programme for SSR is already advocated by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). In their reference document on SSR they explicitly state the need for external actors to become “more finely attuned to the context in which they work”, and it is made clear that it is essential for SSR programmes to be preceded by a security environment assessment, which in turn must consider the local context.[[34]](#endnote-34) Equally, the ISSAT web site lays out an approach to SSR which involves an iterative assessment and design sequence, which theoretically should lead to a reform programme that is specifically suited to the country in question. Although not described as such by ISSAT, the various strands of SSR such as defence, the police, intelligence services, the judiciary etc are in fact already aggregates of a series of lower level elements, or sub-models, within each field. The precise way they are all then brought together to produce an overall set of aims and objectives, together with a programme which is designed to achieve these, will of course vary from one situation to another.

For this to be effective of course, the assumption is that those drawing up any bespoke solution possess a deep enough knowledge and understanding of the state with which they are working to allow them to do this effectively – something which is a separate concern and which needs to be addressed elsewhere. The other issue is that, even where there is a genuine desire to do so, donors are hampered in their attempts to design more culturally and contextually appropriate aims and objectives as there is currently no pool of well-researched, alternative, non-Western, liberal-democratic sub-models for them to draw upon. Likely sources do exist, they just need to be identified and then analysed from a slightly different perspective than perhaps they have been in previous research.

## Alternative Models of Civil-Military Relationships

Every state, whatever its political situation or history, has a civil-military relationship which might be considered as source of potential non-orthodox sub-models. However, not all are likely to be both relevant to a post-conflict situation, and at the same time meet the minimum acceptable standards and principles required even for interim solutions. In drawing up a short list of states which might be considered, it is suggested that there are three criteria which should be employed:

1. the presence of a democratic basis for government;
2. the acceptance of a substantial role for the military in society;
3. the acknowledgement of the existence of a potentially existential threat to that society.

Each of these should be present in some form if the sub-models identified are to be of any value in creating an overall model for a reformed security sector that is to benefit the society it serves in a post-conflict environment.

To meet the first criterion the state in question must be some form of a democracy, albeit perhaps very different in nature from those found in Western Europe or North America. It is neither advisable in terms of international acceptance, nor desirable in terms of the possible consequences, for any reform programme to base its outcomes and objectives on a non-democratic model. However, it should also be recognised that democracy is a broad term, with many different interpretations of what it can look like in practice. This should not be such a problem as perhaps it has been in the past. In a recent article discussing non-Western democracies Youngs points out that not only have both the UN and the EU accepted that there cannot be any single concept of democracy that excludes all others, but that in the US too it is now recognised that in following democratic values, each society will inevitably build a unique form of democracy based on their own particular cultural background and history.[[35]](#endnote-35) The critical point is that, whilst they may differ in many respects from the traditional Western exemplar, these unorthodox models of democracy must all still share basic common accepted democratic values*.*

The second criterion specifies that sub-models must be drawn from societies in which the military plays a significant and well-recognised role; it is not sufficient for it to hold a purely a ceremonial position in society, or for it to be little more than an inconsequential player in state affairs. In post-conflict situations local military forces are likely to figure strongly in any peacebuilding and reform agenda, and in such scenarios any proposed civil-military relations solution must take this into account. This is recognised in the strong links that exists between the aims of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes and SSR.[[36]](#endnote-36) Both processes deal with the issues of dismantling illegal military forces, planning and implementing the size and structure of the legitimate armed forces of the state, and the subsequent relationship between those forces and wider society. For this reason, potential sub-models must offer solutions that address this issue of military significance.

The third and final criterion is that of the existence, perceived or otherwise, of an potentially existential threat to the state, whether it be external or internal. There have been several civil-military relations theorists who have discussed the place that threat plays in determining the nature of the relationship that is required in order for the civil government to exercise control over the military. These include Lasswell, Andreski and more recently, and in most depth, Desch.[[37]](#endnote-37) However, whether you subscribe to any of these particular theories or none, the way in which a state contrives to organise itself in a situation in which it perceives no significant threat to its own existence is likely to be very different from that which it is willing to employ if it feels it’s very survival is in question. This is perhaps best illustrated by considering the exceptional civil-military relationships that were established in the United States during the second world war.[[38]](#endnote-38) The structures of governance and decision making that were put in place at this time recognised the need for more power to be placed in military hands, compared with the peacetime norm, and priorities were much more focused on military issues. In the same way, when dealing with post-conflict situations in which the risk of a resumption of hostilities will always be present, either in the form of external or internal threats, the ability of a possible sub-model to address these issues is essential.

Meeting these three selection criteria alone does not guarantee that a state will yield suitable sub-models of civil-military relations that could be used to help develop alternative SSR models - the criteria are merely initial filters that can help to eliminate options that are outside the boundaries of the acceptable. Having passed through that filter, each would then need to be analysed and judged on its merits, which will undoubtedly prove to be a time-consuming task. That having been said, there is no need to start completely from scratch and there are cases where much research has already been undertaken, and which would seem to suggest that they may be useful fields for further study. Examples of possible candidates that readily come to mind are South Korea, Taiwan, India and Israel. The first two are relatively new democracies (1998 and 1992 respectively) and are interesting because they have only recently undergone a process of SSR themselves.[[39]](#endnote-39) The second two are similar to each other in that they have longer democratic pedigrees, but their considerable disparities in history, culture, size and background have produced very different civil-military relationships. All of these would merit further study and each has the potential to produce a number of useful, non-orthodox sub-models.

Whichever alternative models are reviewed, it will be necessary to break them down into their constituent parts and examine each aspect in some detail. Only in this way will it be possible to identify elements of their civil-military relationships that might contribute to hybrid constructs, which could subsequently support specific post-conflict SSR programmes. It will also be critical to identify any necessary pre-conditions that are required for any given sub-model to be applicable. It is perfectly feasible that some feature of the way in which the civil-military relations works in one country is only possible because of an historical or cultural nuance that is unlikely to be replicated elsewhere. If so, then this will need to be noted. Equally, it may be that similarities between otherwise apparently very different situations can be detected when the analysis is carried out, hence providing previously unseen potential for adoption.

## Conclusion

All of the recent literature on SSR, both discursive and prescriptive, points towards the need to make programmes more culturally relevant and locally owned. In order to do this, and to avoid setting outcomes and objectives that are based on inappropriate Western, liberal-democratic civil-military norms, programme designers require a pool of non-orthodox sub-models addressing the various lower-level elements of each of the strands of SSR. It is hard to be certain at this stage what precise topics these would cover as the number and type of sub-models within the wider security sector is almost limitless. However, for defence reform these could include, amongst many others, such aspects as:

* the degree and nature of military input to planning and policy making;
* the significance placed on the military in politics and government;
* the relationship and division of tasks between civil police and military;
* the nature and structure of civil judicial oversight of the military;
* any methods of dealing with religious or ethnic divisions between members of the armed forces;
* the position and roles of the military within society as a whole.

It may be for example that, in some circumstances, the way in which manning and recruitment is managed and overseen in order to achieve an ethnic or religious balance might prove to be of value, whilst in others a sub-model that dealt with the use of the military in non-martial tasks to support the development of the nation could be more relevant. In the end, it is only after an initial programme assessment has taken place that it would be possible, in any given case, to more clearly identify which sub-models might be required in order to build up a culturally appropriate and practical bespoke solution for that particular situation.

When coupled with other suggestions for improvement in SSR - the most important of which is probably the need to take a much longer-term view when drawing up timetables for reform – the use of non-orthodox sub-models could greatly enhance the possibility of successful transformations in post-conflict states. The aim would be to at least reduce the level of Western bias that is currently, almost by default, found in SSR programmes, and to create a more culturally adaptable approach. This way, in future post-conflict situations, it should be possible to successfully stimulate locally-led, progressive evolutionary reforms of the security sector, rather than continually trying, unsuccessfully, to create externally-driven revolutionary changes.

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