Abstract

Since the 1990s, the human security norm has contributed to reframing the discourse and practice surrounding Security Sector Reforms (SSR). People-centered security thinking brings vulnerable groups into the center of attention and declares gender-sensitive approaches to be crucial. However, while the inclusion of gender perspectives into SSR may seem perfectly logical in the theory, it creates dilemmas in practice: Who represents whom? How should SSR programs involve women (and which ones)? Should women's organizations cooperate with state institutions that regularly fail to protect women at all? A study of local women's rights organizations in Turkey illustrates that there cannot be just *one* definition of women's security needs. The diversity of female life-worlds leads to public contestations surrounding the right forms of representation. It is, however, essential to recognize that such conflicts are important contributions in the evolution of localized gender security norms. The article draws on fieldwork with Turkish women's organizations and expert interviews carried out in 2013 and 2014.

Biography

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Competing Gender Perspectives in Security Sector Reforms in Turkey

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of our article involves the ways in which local women's organizations perceive of their relations with Turkish state security institutions as well as the reform processes that have affected these institutions over the past 15 years. Security Sector Reform (or SSR) describes a reform concept that attempts to transform the security system—including all its involved actors—in order to improve the system's functioning in accordance with the principles of democracy and good governance (OECD 2005, 2006). Clare Short, the then UK Secretary of State for International Development, introduced the concept of SSR in 1998 as a call for increased co-operation between security forces and the development community. The aim was to better address the many interconnected challenges in the realm of peace building processes. Several international development institutions and national governments have since adopted SSR and applied it in a number of post-conflict and post-communist countries. The institutions primarily targeted by reform initiatives are: state defence institutions (military and military police reforms), the public security sector (police reform), and the justice system.

It is still relatively unconventional to make use of a gender perspective to study transformations triggered by reforms in this field. We will therefore first explain the relevance of gender as an analytical tool for this field. In a second step, we turn to the case of Turkey and introduce the characteristics of this particular reform arena before discussing results from ethnographic fieldwork that we carried out with reform experts and local women's organizations in Turkey in 2013 and 2014. We close our article by summarizing some assessments and recommendations for further research.

THE RELEVANCE OF GENDER FOR SECURITY ANALYSES

Traditional Security Studies are, first and foremost, concerned with the national security of states, which entails questions of their territorial integrity, sovereignty and defence strategies. In the same vein, the delivery of security is often conceptualized with reference to specifically defined state institutions, technical definitions, and Max Weber's template of statehood. Recent scholarship has rendered such approaches misleading; in many cases, and particularly outside the OECD world, a rather diverse array of security actors can be identified—among them grassroots initiatives, traditional authorities, religious leaders and informal groups. However, state institutions often fail to provide their citizens with adequate physical safety in many countries (for critical accounts see for example Luckham and Kirk 2013; Chappuis and Schroeder 2014; Mannitz 2014). It has been the merit of what Keith Krause and Michael Williams termed "Critical Security Studies" (1997) to highlight this problem and examine security questions from a constructivist perspective. In this understanding, securities and insecurities are culturally generated "in the sense that they are produced in and out of 'the context within which people give meanings to their actions and experience and make sense of their lives'" (Tomlinson 1991, 7; quoted from Weldes and others 1999, 1). Critical approaches in contemporary security studies have contributed to the development of new conceptualizations of security since the 1990s, such as "comprehensive security" or "human security," by shifting the focus from instrumental concerns to the transformative potential of socially defined ideas. The latter concept, in particular, has effectively reframed the global policy discourse since its emergence in the 1994 United Nations Human Development Report. The concept calls for a shift in the understanding

of security, from state-centric perceptions towards the goal-oriented notion of catering for the security of people:

> "Human security … embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment—these are the interrelated building blocks of human—and therefore national security."
> (Annan 2000)

Though Kofi Annan emphasizes that human security should not be understood in opposition to national security in this quote, the shift to the individual or the human community as the referent objects of both security and development brings with it important implications. The turn towards people-centered security thinking ultimately places social, economic and ecological policies on the security agenda, and it likewise brings vulnerable groups into the center of attention. Many scholars have stressed the need for a localization of such ambitious reform activities as crucial in order to ensure that initiatives achieve their ends and become sustainable. Broad consensus exists in the expert community as to the idea that SSR should ideally be in the hands of local actors and thereby replace established systems of reform patronage with relationships of effective partnering. As Timothy Donais concludes, "the principle of local ownership has been viewed increasingly as a precondition for effective development assistance, even if the translation of the principle into actual practice remains an ongoing challenge" (Donais 2008, 3).

In combination, the local ownership norm and the quest for human security have opened up the global security discourse. This is especially true for the recognition of women's specific security needs (along with those of other politically marginalized groups): Gender-sensitive approaches are declared to be crucial across relevant donor programs, and recent research documents indeed highlight the significant correlation between the security conditions of women and the overall peacefulness of states. Security Sector Reform programs are increasingly being informed by these findings, so that, today, again in the words of Kofi Annan: "the integration of a gender perspective in Security Sector Reform" is claimed to be "inherent to an inclusive and socially responsive approach to security" (2008). A detailed toolkit for the implementation of gender awareness exists for all SSR domains, and gender mainstreaming even occupies a prominent place in the SSR Integrated Technical Guidance Notes issued by the United Nations' SSR Unit (2012). This document stresses that gender-responsive reforms "can enhance the security sector's ability to grapple with key post-conflict security issues" such as relapses into violence; it likewise states that gender mainstreaming is essential to "ensure that all activities integrate the human rights of all persons" (SSR Technical Guidance Notes 2012, 37-38). As such, the "basic principles of democratic governance and human rights require that women be equal participants in the design, implementation and oversight of security policies" (2012, 42).

In fact, SSR appears to be a very suitable sort of intervention in the promotion of gender equality in society. The Security Sector Reform concept stresses the fact that sustainable security governance—in post-conflict reconstruction settings in particular—affects a far greater number of societal and political levels than formal state security institutions (and includes, for example, local media, civil society and NGOs as well). SSR is thus a convincing entry point for gender-responsive development strategies.

Security Sector Reforms set the ambitious goal of promoting a governance culture that is both democratic and accountable, catering to the security of people. However, "human security is not just a list of objective universal indicators" (Winslow 2003, 7); security is a qualitative condition that entails individual and collective perceptions. It assumes differing meanings across different social contexts in which it is produced, reproduced and subject to changes. The present study on positions taken by local women's organizations in Turkey illustrates this point very well, showing that there cannot be just *one* definition of women's security needs. Though security policies impact men and women differently, the gender-security nexus along with concrete reform policies also generate adaptation pressures that impact different women in various ways. The actual diversity of female life-worlds leads to contestations regarding the right forms of representation of women's interests, as well as surrounding the most effective strategies for making Turkish women "free from fear," as the official human security definition has it, and improving their access to justice. It is essential to understand that such contestations are not an indication of weakness but in themselves serve as important contributions to the contextual evolution of gender-responsive security norms and cultural expressions of agency for local ownership.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS IN TURKEY

Turkish Security Sector Reforms were brought about by the EU Accession Partnership Agreements that dictate the political and constitutional changes necessary so that Turkey may fulfil the European Union's entry requirements—the so-called Copenhagen Criteria.

With regard to state security institutions, the Republic of Turkey has, since its inception in 1923, been characterized by strong fears that internal and external enemies could threaten its territorial integrity, with the Kurdish population in the southeast embodying the most pronounced opposition to the notion of the Turkish nationality, an ideology of statehood that conflates ethnicity, Sunni Muslim belief and Turkish citizenship. State founder Kemal Atatürk created constitutional provisions that granted the military forces a central role on the National Security Council with the aim of guarding the related state principles of national integrity and strict secularism. Three military coups have since taken place—in 1960, 1971 and 1980—and they were legitimized with reference to this guardian role. When assessing the traditionally strong position of the military along with the practical absence of democratic civilian oversight mechanisms against established standards of democratic civil-military relations, it was clear that Turkey would, first, not merely have to reform a few state security institutions but the entire constitutional setting in preparation for EU accession. Secondly, a mental re-orientation of the military would be crucial for creating a sense of responsibility among the armed forces in regards to the protection of the democratic order—rather than merely protecting Kemalist principles by intervening in domestic politics (see Atlı 2010 for an analysis of the Turkish military's societal legitimacy and for an interesting comparison with the case of Indonesia).

This particular set-up involves very complex and diverse reform fields and entails institutional and constitutional reforms with the aims of:

- separating civilian politics from the military, thereby ensuring democratic civilian control over the armed forces, including military budgeting and expenses,
- increasing the transparency and accountability of state security forces,
- improving the human rights regime, and
- expanding civil liberties.

These goals were all described in detail in the Accession Partnership Document for Turkey that was decided on in Helsinki in 1999; a number of "harmonisation packages" have since been implemented. The European Union has observed and reported on the progress made—or not made, as may be for some cases. In the first years of the new millennium, discontent was prevalent in these reports over the limited progress that could be observed, and it was noted, in particular, that the military continued to exert strong influence on political decision making in Turkey (Narlı 2005, 160-162).

In order to respond to EU conditionalities and to cope with the reform pressures against the persistence of the domestic military stakeholders, the Turkish Ministry of the Interior finally decided on partial outsourcing. While then Prime Minister Erdoğan actually began to move forward with the constitutional amendment process—drafting reform acts that transformed the functions and the composition of the National Security Council and introducing full parliamentary oversight (see Narlı 2005 and Cizre 2007 for details), the United Nations Development Programme became tasked with a funding program from the European Union in 2006 that aimed "to structurally embed the expanded enjoyment of civil rights by Turkish citizens and democratic control of internal security in the regulatory system and public administration practice of Turkey" (UNDP Project Description, in: UNDP 2006). Since 2002, the Turkish government had decided on several reform acts to expand human rights and also declared a zero-tolerance policy against torture and the ill treatment of people in police custody. Little was done, however, to implement or monitor abidance to these norms in the everyday service of the military, police and gendarmerie. The same holds true for the newly created possibilities for civilian oversight: the practice was limited while civilian authorities, media and civil society lacked in the capacity to effectively engage in the security sector. Moreover, the strong tradition of state-security concerns continued to influence the understanding of security within the Turkish government administration. It was thus necessary to create a reform environment for a comprehensive capacity building and dialogue, a task that was delegated to the UNDP. This meant that the Turkish government worked to provide amended legislation while the UNDP was engaged in supporting the implementation of civilian oversight of the security sector at the provincial level—at which the police and gendarmerie forces are the most present.

> "The Project aims at establishing framework conditions for governors, district governors and MoI staff to make transition from narrowly conceived, bureaucratically and legalistically managed oversight of policing to a system of security sector governance based on human centred understanding of security and public safety and transparency with partnership with the civil society."
> (UNDP Project Description 2006, 4)

After a preparatory phase from 2007 to 2010, the UNDP project launched a second package that was implemented between 2012 and 2014. This aspect of the SSR activities in Turkey is pertinent to our study for three reasons:

(1) The program's overall objective quotes the concept of human security in a very pronounced manner and recognizes this shift to be a major challenge for Turkey, a place where "the effectiveness of the military bureaucracy ... was achieved against an internal conflict/enemy," with the effect that "Turkey is one of the countries which have wide experience of the kind of tensions that can arise between the security sector's effectiveness and the fundamental rules of human rights" (Cizre 2007, 5).

(2) The UNDP project follows a comparably exceptional strategy of citizen-focused localization: Local Security Commissions are being established at selected pilot sites in cities and provinces all across the country. These commissions are meant to function as institutionalized forums for communication between civil society representatives, media and local governors on the issues of local security needs and related planning; local security contracts are meant to institutionalize citizen participation.

(3) The abuse of women and children is a notorious security problems in the country. UNDP has normatively committed itself to the promotion of gender equality, empowering women (Millenium Development Goal #3) and systematically monitoring gender mainstreaming. One can therefore expect local women's organizations to be included in SSR activities as part of the outreach towards and capacity building within civil society.

For the purpose of this article, our empirical question concentrates on whether and in what ways this program actually translates into practice, as well as on the impact it has on the "ownership" conditions on the ground. While the normalization of Turkish civil-military relations has clearly progressed in the shape of institutional and legislative regulations that have reduced the military's influence within politics, the respective "mindset transformation" (Toktaş and Kurt 2010, 401) remains a lasting challenge. This becomes evident *inter alia* upon scrutinizing the gender responsiveness of security norms in the Turkish reform arena from the perspectives of various local women's organizations.

POSITIONING OF LOCAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Ongoing SSR initiatives in Turkey are meant to foster the greater involvement of civil society in the oversight of security institutions and in the reform process itself. Furthermore, they are supposed to pay particular attention to the gender dimension of security questions (UNDP 2006). This normative trajectory does, however, demand empirical validation by, for instance, granting local women's organizations in Turkey a voice. To this end, our research comprised of fieldwork in Turkey on the issue of Security Sector Reform and its gender dimension from March to June 2013 and was complemented with focused expert interviews in 2014. In the following, we briefly present our research design and some crucial findings. These are further elaborated on elsewhere in a detailed anthropological study of local women's organizations in Turkey and the ways in which they perceive state security institutions (Reckhaus 2014) and in an analysis of the competing views of democracy held by the AKP government on the one hand and the young urban educated of Turkish civil society on the other (Mannitz and Gögüs 2016).

The sampling of the 2013 interview partners adhered two criteria: First, the women's organizations had to be active in cities where the Turkish government and the UNDP had installed Local Security Commissions. We thereby hoped to establish contact with representatives from women's organizations who were familiar with the reform efforts in Turkey. Secondly, in order to do justice to the heterogeneity of the women's movement in Turkey, interview partners were selected from women's organizations operating in diverse regions and with varying social, political, cultural and ideological backgrounds. During the period of field research, a total of 30 qualitative interviews were conducted in six Turkish cities, namely Istanbul, Ankara, Erzurum, Van, Diyarbakır and Mersin. The spectrum covered Kemalist, Islamist, Kurdish, and Socialist women's organizations along with scientific research institutions in the field of women and gender studies.

The first major outcome pertains to the security concepts held by the various interviewees. This relates, in particular, to the question of what, exactly, they understand by "women's security." The answer(s) to this question bore a notable resemblance to the human security concept that is so central in the context of SSR intervention agendas.

Most of the interviewed women understood women's security to be the absence of any form of violence against women. This is an issue that virtually every women's organization in Turkey is engaged in. Their security understanding thus focuses on the physical and mental integrity of each individual woman, closely resembling the people-centred human security concept that impacts the global discourse and intended practice of Security Sector Reforms. At the same time, however, it contrasts sharply with the national security discourse that has dictated Turkish security policy until today. Şule Toktaş, an academic at the Kadir Has University in Istanbul, even used the term "human security" prior to explaining the need to systematically differentiate between women's security and the security of other social groups:

> "We need a specific understanding of women's security. Women's security is very different from a child's security or men's security or an elderly person's security or a disabled, handicapped person's security. Women have distinct needs and women have distinct threats. They experience distinct threats in the society by their families, their fathers, their partners (...). Even on the streets, anonymous people may strike them on the streets. This is just because they're women. Women need a specific security concern. They need special attention." (Şule Toktaş of Kadir Has University Istanbul 2013)

This particular understanding of security challenges the state-centred security conception held by the Turkish state elite, one which continues to define the national security agenda. Whereas the majority of interviewees from the various women's organizations described women's security in everyday terms as an integral part of universal human rights, the wording of the human security concept can so far only be found in academic discourse in Turkey. One may nevertheless conclude that women's organizations—whether grassroots or academically oriented—must serve as important partners within the Security Sector Reform process if it is to be based on a human security understanding, especially in terms of the specific security needs of women. As expressed in the language of SSR donors, the participation of women's organizations in the reform process supports local ownership, despite the fact that (organized) women only represent a portion of the affected "locals" in the context of SSR initiatives.

How women's organizations in Turkey perceive their roles in the SSR process is a question that ultimately touches upon the difficulty of practically implementing the local ownership norm. Answers to this question rest in the perspectives of women activists regarding three relevant actors in the reform process, namely: (1) the government along with its ministries, (2) the police as the most important state force on the streets, and (3) international organizations supporting SSR in Turkey. Here, we will limit our scope to the governmental level (1), as it provides rich material that attests to the diversity of perspectives on the SSR process and its relevant actors in Turkey. There are, of course, many other individual actors and institutions in reference to whom women's organizations position themselves within the reform process.

…VIS-À-VIS THE GOVERNMENT

One topic that was discussed with the interview partners in detail was the government's willingness to involve women's organizations in the ongoing reform process. Many activists who saw themselves to be representatives of feminist organizations criticised the ruling party's (the AKP's) religiously conservative perception of women's roles in society. The following quotation shows that they also identify a connection between the party's traditional perceptions on gender roles and the government's understanding of how to deal with the specific security needs of women:

> "The government established counselling centers for women who are affected, for instance, by domestic violence from their husbands. We observe that there is a tendency to convince women to stay with their husbands, to be patient with them, and not to destroy the family; a tendency to attach more importance to the protection of the family than to the protection of the individual woman and her specific security needs. The government's perspective is more focused on the family; women's security is of secondary importance."
> (Ayla Oran Erciyas of Mersin Bağımsız Kadın Derneği 2013)

It is evident that, compared to the acting AKP government, some of the women's organizations we consulted hold fundamentally different views on women's status in society and, consequently, on how to deal with the specific security needs of women. Against this background, we may suppose that differing images of women make cooperation in the field of women's security difficult—all the more so when they do not subscribe to the ruling party's conception of the family as a quasi-natural protection for women.

Additionally, there was little concordance in regards to an evaluation of the government's efforts in working with women's organizations on the issue of security. Women's issues are mostly addressed in the Ministry of Family and Social Policy under the incumbent minister Fatma Şahin. Opinions concerning the ministry's willingness to cooperate with women's organizations to improve the situation of women's security deviated from one another significantly. Some interview partners regarded Fatma Şahin as pioneer for bringing gender issues on the government's agenda, an argument that was repeatedly underpinned by the newly adopted Protection against Violence Act. As Ayşe Nur Gedik from Diyarbakır stated in this context:

> "In the course of the Protection against Violence Act the Ministry of Family and Social Policy brought together women's organizations from all over the country. This was actually the first time that women's organizations were invited to Ankara to work on the legislation. At least as far as we know, it was the first time. So they are not doing the best but this is a good step forward."
> (Ayşe Nur Gedik of KAMER Diyarbakır 2013)

This quotation represents well all the voices among women activists that take a rather positive tone about the government's—or at least the ministry's—efforts to work together with women's organizations. These were mainly activists who stood close to the government and were either academically oriented or pragmatic in nature. Other activists considered the Ministry of Family and Social Policy's professed willingness to cooperate with local women's organizations as meaningless. Interestingly, the Protection against Violence Act was again frequently mentioned to substantiate this argument, but with the view that it had demonstrated inappropriate behavior on the part of the ministry

in terms of civil society concerns. In this regard, Elif Berk from an Istanbul Women's Center stated the following:

> "And then, in the process of the Violence against Women Act, again, women's organizations prepared their own draft and defended it at the meetings with the ministry and other state institutions. The ministry for a while said: 'Ok, you are important for us, we are going to take your ideas, and your draft is in our interest.' But then, in a real sense, they cheated women's organizations. And when the Act was introduced to the public, we looked at it and there were very, very, very few things in the Act that women's organizations had demanded."
> (Elif Berk of the Gökuşağı Kadın Derneği Istanbul 2013)

According to the unanimous opinion of activists critical of the government, the ministry only *pretends* to involve women's organisations in the legislative process in order to generate public trust in political decisions; any critical discussions of draft legislation, however, would not be carried out in earnest. Some interview partners pointed out that the ministry only worked with women's organizations that shared the government's conservative image of women. Other women's organizations that held many years of experience but adopted a critical stance towards the government were largely ignored. Moreover, the Government even supported the purposeful establishment of like-minded women's organizations to be used as consultants. As such, it became increasingly difficult to criticize the government for not listening to the voices of women's organizations.

This example is meant to illustrate the diversity of perspectives held by women's organizations regarding the relevant actors in the SSR arena; it likewise indicates that attention to women's perspectives in the reform process is selective and strategically motivated. It thus becomes evident that the abstract plea for local ownership does not answer the question of whom exactly the reform processes would best be "owned" by. Likewise, and for our purposes, the question of which organizations should be involved in SSR programs and how they should be involved in order to best meet the specific security needs of women remains open. At this point in the reform operationalization, there is a need to empirically research the patterns of interaction that exist between regional and local state and non-state actors in a given case, which may then serve as a basis for the tailor-made design of reform activities.

In the Turkish case, one important aspect relating to the ministries' scopes of action concerns security legislation. Some of the activists pointed out that central initiatives for security legislation originate from the Ministry of the Interior. According to law, this ministry is responsible for internal security which, technically speaking, includes women's security issues. However, Sevna Somuncuoğlu, an activist from Ankara, refutes that any awareness exists in the ministry of women-specific security needs or gender sensitivity:

> "But unfortunately, the Ministry of the Interior does not have gender sensitivity. And I am sure they do not have a topic like women's security. They are not interested at all in working together with local women's organizations in central security issues."
> (Sevna Somuncuoğlu of Uçan Süpürge Ankara 2013)

In fact, collaboration between women's organizations and the Ministry of the Interior is limited to a handful of trainings that mostly cater to the police, including lessons about how to deal with cases of domestic violence. To sum up, even if close cooperation between local women's organizations and the

Ministry of the Family and Social Policy does exist, the relevant security legislation is mostly designed outside of the women's organizations' spheres of influence. As a consequence, interviewees regard opportunities for women's organizations to exert any sort of influence on relevant security policy decisions as very limited.

Finally, another aspect that sheds light on the complexity of SSR interactions—even (or perhaps especially) in a democratically constituted state with a vibrant civil society—relates to the established mutual estimations held by various actors in the field. Aylin Çelik, an activist from the city of Van, spoke about a serious problem of confidence between the Turkish government and Kurdish women's organizations. She concluded that it remains practically impossible for Kurdish women's organizations to work with the government—especially on the fundamental issue of security. In the following example, she illustrates the extent to which this problem of confidence affects work done by her organization:

> "There is a charge against us to stop our work. There is a case now. They want to close our association because of our work during the earthquake in Van. They say that we sympathized with PKK through our work. They claim that we actually only helped the PKK, that we didn't help the women. It's impossible, because we were very clear. We wrote down every woman's name when we delivered a pair of shoes, a sanitary towel or a napkin for babies. The government aims at stopping our work because we are independent. We are not depending on the government. It's political: They don't want to accept that this area here is Kurdish populated, that here is Kurdistan. They say everybody is Turkish in Turkey."
> (Aylin Çelik of the Van Kadın Derneği 2013)

The Kurdish question, as we may assume here, still plays an important role within the country's predominating security concept. Kurdish efforts to attain autonomy have been classified a threat to the country's sovereignty since the early days of the Turkish Republic. The fact that the government treats Kurdish women's organizations more as a security problem than as a potential partner on security issues is evidence that the government still lacks a people-centered approach to security up to this day but is—at the least—in parts influenced more by the established patterns of collective distrust in Turkish society. This distrust continues to recall boundaries along the lines of party politics, modernization theories, religious belief and ethnic identities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An analysis of the research results clearly implies that, in the first place, we cannot talk about merely *one* gender perspective that must be taken into consideration when planning and implementing gender-sensitive Security Sector Reforms. On the contrary, for women to reclaim their agency, the diversity of women's perspectives on the topic must be recognized and strategies must be developed to make these a part of the planning and implementation routines.

Secondly, many women's organizations have practical experience that extends back a long time in regards to questions of human rights as well as women's rights in particular. In Turkey, this is very clearly the case. Nevertheless, these organizations believe that they do not receive sufficient recognition as important security actors—here especially from the government and its ministries. This clearly draws attention to structural deficits in the area of Turkey's (as well as others') Security Sector Reform process and highlights the need to find appropriate responses to them. In its assessment of the

Turkish development outcomes, even the UNDP evaluation declares the need for "new gender-related initiatives." In view of "Turkey's generally poor gender performance," the evaluation report not only recommends "additional assistance to strengthen mainstreaming coordination capacities, including on gender equality and women's empowerment" but it also advises Turkey to strengthen its South-South cooperation with comparable economies that have demonstrated better performance (UNDP Evaluation Office 2010, 46-47).

Finally, we have reason to believe that anthropological perspectives on SSR can help us better make sense of the complex interactions between the involved actors, especially the actors who are too often neglected in top-down approaches and policy briefs. While the fact that reforms must be "locally owned" in order to be sustainable is generally a recognized condition, too little is as yet known about practical forms of implementation that may actually work in favor of this normative condition. In order to discover how societies might best be supported in developing or improving their human security conditions, the interactions between regional and local actors as well as the global arena of norm entrepreneurs deserve to be studied both with empirical depth and, to a larger extent, from the "bottom up." Existing knowledge gaps demand in-depth analyses of the concrete micro-processes that constitute the relational categories of "the local" and "the global" and that allocate power together with the division of labor.

For one thing, the conceptual shift from general norms and externally ascribed reform steps to subjective, culturally bound perceptions and claims requires recognition of the local contexts of agency in their own right. Likewise, the study of actually existing divergences and convergences between the involved actors and their concepts can assist us in developing criteria for as well as operationalizing an approach to local ownership that works.

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