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Policing reforms and economic development in African states

Understanding the linkages: empowering change

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Abstract

The notion that economic development in African states requires minimal levels of security has become widely accepted in the international development community. Reforming non-functioning policing systems is an important step toward achieving security, yet the experience of changing policing systems in Africa is disappointing. Only South Africa and a few post-conflict states (Sierra Leone, Liberia) have achieved some measure of success. Many of the political, social, and economic contextual conditions that would support reforms of policing are absent. Recommendations on what policies could work, drawn from the general policing reform literature and African case studies, are suggested.

Keywords: Africa, policing, economic development, policing reforms
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1 Introduction

The success and failure of international aid programmes promoting economic development in poor and underdeveloped states depends, in addition to the validity of economic aid programmes, on the levels of security, stability, and integrity of the political and societal environment in recipient countries. Even the best planned, implemented, and evaluated economic aid programmes will be undermined and frustrated if the necessary societal foundations are missing. International economic assistance, hence, should be structured to assist in promoting conditions which protect and sustain such economic development as might be achieved by helping create the necessary societal underpinnings—a legitimate social order; widely distributed social capital; capacity building for an effective, accountable and democratic political life within the state and society; political stability; good governance; adherence to the rule of law; absence of large scale corruption; and competent and accountable security institutions and policies (Cilliers et al. 2011: 70-71). The paper will seek to answer three basic sets of questions. The geographic focus is Africa.¹

First, how can international assistance and local efforts create domestic security systems that provide the minimal levels of security and safety essential for economic development to thrive? Associated questions deal with these topics: What are the (in)security conditions in African states? Who provides security now and how effective are formal (state-linked police) and informal security actors? What obstacles to successful security reform exist?

The second set of questions center on the issue of success. What can be learned from both African and global examples about the factors which lead to success of policing and security reforms? What are the various meanings and measures of success? What lessons exist as to why reforms fail? Conversely, what lessons exist which, if integrated into the planning and implementation of policing and security reforms in Africa, could enhance the chances of success? What stages of the reform process—theorizing, planning, implementation, evaluation—are the most important entry points to assure success? How can the main obstacles to success be approached and overcome?

The third set of questions is: how important are reforms that seek to establish democratic and effective policing systems to economic development? Related to this: what are the fundamental security obstacles to economic development and can these be changed by democratic policing? It is widely accepted that police reform will support economic

¹ The label ‘African police forces’ is somewhat misleading. The paper deals mainly with police assistance programmes in former British colonies in sub-Saharan Africa. Most of the existing literature on police reforms is in English on English-speaking states. The relative lack of discussion on how non-English speaking states have experienced police reforms does pose a generalization problem. The policing systems which are in need of reform, have broken down, or have collapsed completely in African countries, differ as each colonizing power imported its own police systems, ideologies, and practices as adapted to local conditions and the colonizers’ colonial needs. Yet in practice there were strong similarities. The British imported the constabulary model tested in Ireland to suppress opposition to British rule, as colonial populations were considered incapable of properly using and enjoying the British model employed in England (Brogden 1987). The French and Portuguese exported the para-military gendarmerie model which had developed in France to suppress opposition to the expansion of royal authority in outer areas of what became France, and in Portugal to entrench an authoritarian government. In effect all colonial powers, despite their difference in policing systems at home, exported similar repressive, para-militarized policing to rule their colonial subjects. Colonial police were never intended to serve indigenous populations but to protect the lives, property, and commercial activities of the colonizers, suppress local resistance, and extract labour and taxes from local people. Colonial policing was political policing in all colonies.

development programmes. The idea makes sense in theory, but there exists little research that actually shows how, when, and by what linkages successful police reforms and consequent improved security conditions will enable, support, and sustain economic development.

I will argue that the impact of international assistance for policing and security reforms, in Africa and elsewhere, has been limited. At best, only partial successes can be found, largely because the conditions of insecurity are so pervasive and because the capacity of international and local reformers is effectively constrained by numerous international and local impediments. I also argue that policing reforms that focus on creating democratic, citizen-oriented policing are not as important as other reforms in supporting economic development. Several reforms that more directly address obstacles to economic development are discussed at the end of this paper.

The analysis presented here is based on an extensive review of the scholarly and policy literature as well as on the author's own research and publications on police in Africa and international assistance programmes to support police reforms, and on the author's experience in living and doing research for extended periods in Africa (mainly Nigeria), and participation in numerous workshops and discussions with high-ranking police officials, policy analysts in international organizations and NGOs, together with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations officials.

The paper will outline essential elements in the security reforms cycle which have to be addressed; describe the (in)security conditions of African states; analyse the work and effectiveness of formal and informal security providers as much as the existing research and data allow; assess widely used measures of success and failure of policing reforms; categorize lessons learned from the history of past reform programmes; suggest ways and methods which could work (theoretically and by past examples) in supporting successful reforms in African policing and security systems using case studies from Africa and beyond; and assess whether even successful policing reforms will strengthen and support economic development programmes.

2 Theorizing policing reform policies and programmes

2.1 Policy cycles

The notion of a four step, reiterative policy cycle provides an entry point into understanding why policies, programmes, and innovations succeed or fail, fully or partially. The cycle starts with developing reasons or justifications why a proposed policy will work, and will achieve the goals and activities which are delineated in the second step—reform plans. The third step, implementing plans, converts goals and objectives from paper targets into real activities. Lastly, the assessment of what programmes have achieved, or not, feeds back into further theorizing, planning, implementation, and evaluations in a reiterative cycle. Policies are never successful or fail one time only. Effective policies are sustained and become legitimated when their reiteration leads to robust information feedback (or lessons learned) into the next programmatic effort. The implications of a policy cycle for international actors are that reform requires long-term commitments, efforts, and the consistent circulation of knowledge.

Assessing and improving police reform programmes in Africa needs to draw on the experiences of programmes in Africa but also elsewhere. Any policing reform efforts will

include universal and particularistic lessons. Universal goals, approaches, and policies, will and should reflect and incorporate lessons learned from anywhere, while particularistic approaches arise from the need to adjust and adapt general principles to local conditions. Reformers need to understand both policing reforms in general and the specific nature of local conditions to which universal lessons have to be adapted. Policies, institutions, values, and goals cannot be directly borrowed and imported unchanged into new settings. What can be imported are principles of good policing, but how to institutionalize them varies across contexts.

The ultimate goals of any international efforts to reform and democratize the domestic security sector of a country are sustainability and legitimation. External support will wane and disappear and local actors must take over. The goal of donors is to make themselves irrelevant (Mancini 2011). Reform, hence, cannot be conceived of as a one time outcome but has to be conceptualized as a process; as the creation of local capacity to respond to the inevitable, unforeseen but not unexpected changes in the internal and external security environment and political conditions of a country. Initial successful outcomes will be temporary successes unless they are replicated by a local reiterative process. The essential task for planners and implementers is identifying stakeholders who can be trained and trusted to continue the process of reform.² Sustainable success of reforms started by international aid requires finding the right local take-holders who will buy-in and carry reforms forward.

Reforms of policing will always change the distribution of power, authority, valued goods, resources, benefits, and disadvantages in a society. There will be winners and losers, or groups and individuals who perceive themselves that way. Policing is the exercise of sanctioned power justified by hegemonic ideologies and power structures, hence, the legitimacy of police actions is always challenged by some groups in society who see themselves as discriminated against. In short, police reform programmes are ‘fundamental political operations supporting transitions to peace in highly unequal and divided societies’ (Cilliers et al. 2011: 78; also see Punch 2000).

Based on assessment of reforms in Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands, Goldsmith and Dinnen (2007: 1106-07) argue that police-building and reform are inherently political processes. Reforms can only succeed by:

1. Learning about the foreign setting in considerable detail before active engagement, in part through consultation with local groups as well as through better utilization of area expertise.
2. Displaying a degree of flexibility and humility about the objectives behind police-building and how these might be received or responded to locally.
3. Adopting a methodology of practice that is flexible and adaptive to local circumstances, including the ability to defer to local knowledge and methods in developing appropriate measures.
4. Practicing a kind of institutional reform that is not limited in the short-term technical aspects of police service delivery but rather is grounded in the broader set of political relations, informal as well as formal, that constitute the terrain of police-building.

² E.g., Cornwall and Bock (2005); Donais (2008); Hansen et al. (2007a, 2007b); Scheye and Peake (2005).

External reformers who neglect the political aspects of policing will merely cast their advice and money into the wind. The implications for international implementers are that they have to become politically involved in local affairs as reforms of policing are not merely technical processes.

2.2 The importance of contexts

Policing exists within larger domestic and international contexts which will limit what can be achieved for the policing system itself. Police reforms which are purely focused on the police, even when reforms are successful in improving the operational performance of the police (suppressing crime, catching criminals), will not be sustainable unless reforms address the surrounding criminal justice system (courts, penal institutions) which process arrested criminals (Durch et al. 2012; Stodiek forthcoming); analyse the linkages of the formal state police to other security agencies in the country (the military, intelligence, border police, para-military forces);³ reach beyond the criminal justice system and the security sector to plan and implement a ‘whole of government approach’ (Marenin 2011); and, the largest circle, approach reform from a whole of society perspective which includes all local formal and informal security providers (Cartwright and Shearing 2012). The implication for international aid is that policing reforms have to be located within larger societal context and that implementers have to be, at the very least, aware of the need to look beyond the police even when they are only doing policing reforms.

Local (in)security contexts vary widely among African states and societies, from total collapse into civil war and destruction to changing patterns of normal crime. In some states (e.g., Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Guinea-Bissau) policing has simply collapsed and disappeared; in others (Liberia, Sierra Leone) collapsed security systems have been resurrected following political agreements; in others still (e.g., South Africa) existing systems had to be fundamentally transformed following the peaceful overthrow of old regimes. In some states, existing systems need to be dramatically reformed (e.g., Kenya, Nigeria), while elsewhere (e.g., Botswana, Ghana), piecemeal policy reforms may suffice. In consequence, the goals of police reforms range from re-establishing collapsed security systems, to transformation of illegitimate systems, to reforms of badly functioning systems, to tinkering with details of policies. There is no one way to reform policing as specific reform projects have to be based on an accurate picture of the history and current dynamics of insecurity conditions.

The basic international context for police assistance programmes, which can derail reforms, is the multiplicity of interveners, each having their own reasons for engaging in assistance programmes and insisting on diverse goals and measures of success. External assistance, advice, and support for police reforms in Africa have flowed through multiple and diverse channels.

International interventions have occurred in collapsed, dysfunctional states beset by organized, massive, and often quite barbaric violence, such as by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations (UN) in West Africa; the African Union (AU) in Somalia; the European Union (EU) in the DRC. The list of such interventions

³ Bryden and Hänggi (2004); Call (2007, 2009); Cawthra and Luckham (2003); Fayemi (2003); Mobekk (2003); OECD (2004, 2007); Peake et al. (2006).

is quite lengthy, and sometimes had to be repeated in one state as earlier interventions failed to create minimal levels of social order and security.

Bi-lateral aid offered by states has tended toward more limited goals as minimal levels of social order have still existed in recipient states. The extent of such aid is massive, totally unco-ordinated, and has tended to overwhelm recipient states. In South Africa, the government had to create a new agency (the Office of Donor Assistance Coordination of the South African Police Service) to meet with prospective donors to review the suitability of offers of aid and to assess local capacity to implement proposed programmes (Bayley 2006: 102).

Another type of assistance comes through international NGOs, private groups, and individuals (consultants, scholars). A somewhat different form of NGO assistance is provided by local NGOs, such as the Centre for Law Enforcement Education Network (CLEEN Foundation) in Nigeria, African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR) in Ghana, and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa which are supported by financial contributions from foreign aid offices and private foundations in the developed countries. Much of the knowledge on policing that exists is created by research done by these NGOs.

Lastly, there are private corporations which offer their expertise and service, and shop for contracts and sales. Equipment, computers and software, as well as surveillance technology are offered for sale, and sometimes given free as a prelude to creating a need for replacement and sales by corporations looking for profit, a foot in the door, and good relations with potential buyers.

The multiplicity of donors highlights the need by the state-based and privately organized international donor community to work together toward a unity of goals and policies, to co-ordinate each donor's programmes to assure minimal congruence with the programmes offered by all donors and with local security actors. Unless there is some co-ordination, aid will be stovepiped, incompatible programmes will be introduced, conflict over who will lead reforms will be exacerbated, and the need to address all actors and security issues in some integrated fashion will be lost.

2.3 Implementation: the crucial step in the policy cycle

Success in reforming policing will not be achieved by writing plans or establishing benchmarks and goals, but by effective implementation. Policy implementation is where ideals, intentions, plans, and hopes become real, or not. Implementation requires both political process and technical process knowledge and skills. While 'technical skills are necessary to manage and implement policy, analytical, synthetic, consensus-building, conflict-resolution, compromise, contingency planning, and stakeholder-dialogue skills are equally important' (Ball and Fayemi 2004: 85).

Most studies conclude that successes occurred because the 'right people, with the right skills, the right attitudes, the right resources, in the right place, at the right time' were employed.⁴ Implementers need to be 'pragmatic realists' (Scheye 2009) who are willing to experiment, alter plans when they are not working, look for creative solutions rather than stick to the word

⁴ Discussion with Keith Biddle in 2009.

handed down by donors, have the people skills to persuade local and donor personnel to participate, have no pat answers to issues which inevitably arise, and are willing to take risks. Finding the right implementers is crucial to any success.

Reform plans can and will limit the authority of implementers to be flexible as goals change and evolve, unforeseen and unforeseeable problems arise, and new actors and voices emerge, as they always will. The tendency to overplan (with extremely detailed timelines, benchmarks, Gantt charts, etc.) will hamper implementers and successful implementation. Plans should be treated as guidelines, not set in stone, once actual reforms are undertaken (Martin and Wilson 2008). There 'needs to be a balance struck between advance preparation and flexibility to adapt to realities in the field, as even the best predeployment plans cannot predict changes in the mission context' (Mobekk 2005: 13).

2.4 Necessary local knowledge

Reform needs and desirable goals have to be based on existing conditions. If little knowledge exists on insecurity dynamics, the causes of political instability, the nature of identity groups, the levels and prevalence of corruption, the economic distribution of resources, the history of conflicts and violence, security and justice needs, actors and available local resources, reform policies will be conducted in the dark shadow of ignorance. The assessment of local conditions should include the conventional needs assessments as well as a resource assessment of the local resources (people, values, practices) that can be utilized in supporting reform projects (Marenin 2010).

Serious knowledge work is needed before planning reforms, and a robust feedback loop of information from past reforms to current reforms is essential (Marenin 2010). Knowledge created and collected by donors, implementers, local stakeholders, concerned citizens, and scholars has to be shared, circulated, and institutionalized as organizational memory. The minimal essential knowledge should be developed through dialogues among donors, implementers, international and local police, and community as well as political participants (Goldsmith 2009). There are different methods for gathering and distributing information, including opinion surveys of local participants (for instance, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), spearheaded by Australia, conducts such surveys annually); debriefing of implementers (often done by researchers and think tanks); assessments of what worked and what did not found in end-of-tour and assessment reports which can be integrated into teaching modules; summaries of research conducted and lessons learned that can be made required readings for the next set of planners and implementers; biographies and reminiscences by past participants in reforms (e.g., Vila 2010); or embedded experts, as has been done through the inclusion of anthropologists with policing expertise in Australian programmes in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere (McLeod 2009). Indeed, much information has been gathered about various programmes already, but it is generally not distributed in usable forms to other programmes.

Reforms cannot be based on optimistic and unrealistic assumptions, such as the rationality of a plan will be perceived as such by others; political will and buy-in will not be problems; spoilers will disappear and slink away; implementers do not have to play political games; the public will support reforms; or the local conditions which produce insecurity and conflict have been subdued. None of these conditions may exist. Reformers have to have sufficient knowledge to predict, or guess fairly accurately, what will happen when they are trying to

implement reforms. Without that knowledge they will be blindsided. Their advice and resources will not fall on fertile ground but be as chaff cast upon evil winds.

The practical question is what type of knowledge is essential and how much knowledge is enough. Donors, planners, and implementers cannot become anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists, criminologists, economists, or historians who are intimately familiar with the nuances of local conditions. At a minimum, what do implementers need to know to be effective in navigating the treacherous shoals of local politics, communal identities conflicts, and security needs?

Clearly, detailed information about the security sector (relevant formal and informal actors, the history and dynamics of security conditions) is an obvious choice. There will have to be information on stakeholders, on who would be likely candidates to take over, and conversely, who would be spoilers. Information about the police and other security actors, their recent history and behaviour, is essential. Lastly, some basic information on the country, specifically its political dynamics and actors, is useful. In addition, implementers should have a good grasp of local needs and resources and of donor priorities and hesitations.

Rausch et al. (2006: 150) argues that ‘international personnel’ should have three different sorts of skills and knowledge: ‘substantive expertise related to their specific function; knowledge of the host state, including its legal framework, judicial system, history, politics and, ideally, the language(s), [and the dynamics of security and insecurity existing on the ground]; and knowledge and interpersonal skills that will enable them to function effectively in what may well be a stressful and chaotic environment.’ Yet it is unlikely that planners and implementers will learn a new language, even at minimal levels, for what are basically short-term deployments. Another criterion should be managerial skills in institutionalizing organizational change, which is what reform seeks to create.

Implementers need to have that knowledge before they arrive at their new place of work by formal pre-deployment training, and talks with experts on the country, participants in earlier reform projects, and, if at all possible, local people knowledgeable and available for discussions (members of NGOs, members of informal security groups).

2.5 The multiple meanings of success

Success has to be measured by multiple indicators, given the expanding contexts which surround and enable policing reforms to be sustained. Judging successes and failures requires information and prior decisions on four issues:

1. What benchmarks or criteria will be used to assess or measure success in all areas of reforms relevant to policing?
2. What level of changes in the security conditions of the country as a result of reforms will justify the expenditure of resources, time and work to argue that reforms were successful, even though not optimal or complete?
3. Who will make those decisions—donors, local leaders, intellectuals, communities, general population or the police themselves?
4. There is the technical problem of accurately measuring changes in variables and benchmarks, and linking those changes causally to reform programmes by conventional social science techniques.

Each issue has its own complications.

Success can be measured by two fundamentally different approaches. One focuses on how much security has improved from the insecurity conditions which existed at the time reforms began. By that criterion, practically all interventions are successful to some degree. But success can also be measured by how close reforms approach desired goals or internationally accepted conceptions of an end state, such as political stability or democratic policing. By that criterion, practically all interventions are failures, as it can be taken as a given, at the outset, that no reform programme will achieve overall success—a democratic, functioning policing system which is institutionally linked to the promotion of political and economic development—and that all successes are partial and temporary. So what will count as success?

The most realistic assessment of success or non-success has to start with security conditions on the ground. Have existing security conditions improved sufficiently to call the intervention a success? Success will be influenced by the a correct assessment of the dynamics of insecurity which now exist, the policies and resources advocated and offered by aid donors, the absorption capacity of local governments and civic groups, and the political wills, skills, and legitimacy of co-opted local stakeholders, including the police. Given the multiplicity of factors which will influence the implementation and outcomes of a reform effort, expectations by interveners and local leaders that security and the activities of security providers will change as a result of an intervention should be modest.

One widely used measure of success can be dispensed with right away. Insecurity in African states is not measured by official crime statistics, as these are completely inaccurate and unreliable (Marenin 1997; van Dijk 2008). Rather, insecurity is a pervasive sense by people that their property, routines of life, and life itself are persistently at risk; that violence is endemic, can flare up almost randomly and unexpectedly against individuals and groups; that tensions among identity groups, the activities of organized crime, and corruption and extortion by state security agents undermine any sense of safety; that security is never guaranteed by either state or community efforts; and that routines of living and social order are unstable and unpredictable.

Another widely used measure is more accurate but also flawed, namely the enumeration of outputs delivered by programmes, e.g., number of training courses delivered to so many attendees or equipment donated. Of course, outputs are necessary but not sufficient to indicate outcomes which are the real goal (but can be used to justify to donors that available resources had been invested wisely).

The best practical proxies for unavailable and flawed statistics are the judgments and opinions of local and international experts on how well the police are doing and what reforms sponsored by international donors have produced positive changes.⁵ Expert opinions are, at this time, the best available information on levels of insecurity and security and the

⁵ The most widely used and trusted surveys of corruption are conducted by Transparency International which uses that method in its various surveys. There is no good measure of corruption anywhere (the corrupters and the corrupted tend to go to great lengths to hide their crimes), but people who know a country or have done business in a foreign country tend to gain pretty good insights into how prevalent corruption really is. Transparency International and other useful websites for information on reforms of policing and security, see Appendix.

performance of the police and other security actors, even though personal judgments lack the precision of conventional policy evaluations using good data, nor can they be replicated.

3 The conditions of security and policing in African states

As noted earlier, the insecurity conditions in African states vary from total collapse and chaos to functioning state systems (Adebajo and Rashid 2004; Hills 2000; Marenin 2009). The same generalization applies to policing systems. In collapsed states, the police do not exist at all and often are targets of revolutionary and gang violence themselves. People survive as best as they can by falling back on traditional and informal conflict resolution mechanisms, or fleeing conflict zones for other regions of the state or neighboring states. In functioning states, policing systems exist but are criticized for ineffectiveness, inefficiency, corruption, and ethnic and political bias in the manner in which the police do their jobs.

All policing systems in African states are colonial creations. No African state changed its policing system in major ways after independence, except for indigenizing leadership positions. Occupational cultures and institutional practices which enshrine colonial norms, despite formal rhetoric to the contrary, continued past independence. Given its colonial origins, policing in Africa is heavily politicized, or more accurately, employed for partisan or particularistic goals rather than the common good (Hills 2007).

The public image of the state police in African states is terrible as are police-community relations. Baker (2010: 21) summarizes public perceptions and scholarly findings that the police are ‘brutal, corrupt, inefficient, unresponsive and unaccountable to the majority of the population’. The police are widely distrusted, avoided, and provide little that is of service to the general population. There is little effort to hold them accountable for misdeeds.⁶ Luckham (2003: 15) concludes that ‘despite the trend toward more open government, the military, police, and security agencies remain by far the least publicly accountable of all the state’s bureaucracies.’

4 Cases studies of (partially) successful reforms in Africa and beyond

4.1 Northern Ireland

It is widely acknowledged that Northern Ireland represents the most successful police reform in recent years, moving from conditions similar to those found in many developing countries—decade-long violence and deep distrust among the two dominant identity groups; vicious para-military units associated with both sides; a police force completely distrusted by Catholics/Republicans for its oppressive and discriminatory policies, often in association with the military; and pervasive political resentment and opposition to the British rule (Ellison and Smyth 2000; Weitzer 1995). The 1998 peace agreement mandated the reform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) based on the recommendations by a commission staffed by local and international police, legal experts, and scholars. The Patten Commission (Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland 1999), after extensive meetings with diverse

⁶ Indicators of this distrust and negative image are the colloquial names by which people refer to the police. In Nigeria, police manning roadblocks are called ‘twenty naira men’, the normal bribe or fee one has to pay to get past; and the well-armed riot control police are the ‘kill and go’ police—they show up, forcefully suppress demonstrations and riots, and disappear.

segments of the population, issued a report which stressed basic principles for a reformed police as well as 175 specific recommendations. Basic principles in the Report included the following: human rights had to be at the center of police ideology and practices; participation and consultation by the police with community groups was essential; extensive oversight by numerous government and community agencies of the new police was required; and a shift in recruitment to bring the new police closer to congruence with the demographics of the two dominant identity groups on an incremental basis had to be implemented. A major innovation proposed by the commission was the appointment of an eminent person, not from the involved parties (Northern Ireland, Ireland, and the United Kingdom (UK)) to oversee the implementation of all recommendations.

Participants in the Commission and the change process generally agreed that the transformation of the RUC into the Police Service of Northern Ireland was on pace and successful, with only limited opposition by the police themselves (Doyle 2010). Bayley (2008) argues that the ‘fundamental lesson about post-conflict reconstruction, namely, a political settlement, especially one that foresees the centrality of policing, is a pre-condition for successful reform’ (ibid.: 7). In addition, Northern Ireland benefitted from three other prerequisites: ‘shared values of governance, administrative capacity, and an energetic civil society.’ In short, Northern Ireland ‘had the essential components for modern governance.’ The chances that other countries have similar conditions needed for success ‘are bleak’ (ibid.: 8).

Bayley’s argument for why reform in Northern Ireland succeeded does not provide much assurance to interveners in Africa. Although conflicts necessitating reforms may be similar, the factors that made success possible in Northern Ireland are not apparent in most African states. Good governance, administrative capacity, and an energetic civil society are precisely the conditions that need to be established in most countries. The one possibility among Bayley’s factors that could be strengthened and harnessed in Africa is a vibrant civil society. That does exist in some countries (e.g., Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Botswana), despite frequent government attempts to subdue and discipline it.

4.2 South Africa⁷

South Africa is the only example of close to successful policing and security sector reforms in Africa over the last twenty years. Once it became clear that the days of the apartheid system were numbered, the laws that protected apartheid and the security systems that enforced those laws had to be transformed. The political settlement made the transformation of the police mandatory and possible. After the concept of one person, one vote, regardless of race and color had been enshrined as the fundamental democratic political norm, the outcome of elections and the shift in power which followed was preordained. There was some conflict between the two major black political groupings—the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha (the political arm of the Zulu community) about who should be the dominating group, but the days of white rule were over.

⁷ E.g., Brogden and Shearing (1993); Bruce and Neild (2005); Cartwright and Shearing (2012); Dixon and van der Spuy (2004); Gordon (2006); ISS (2010); Ivković and Sauerma (2012); Marks (2005); Marks and Goldsmith (2006); Minaar and Mistry (2004); Rauch and van der Spuy (2006); van der Spuy (2009); van Zyl Smit and van der Spuy (2004).

The mythology that black South Africans were citizens of their homelands (Bantustans) and only temporary visitors in South Africa could not be maintained. Under apartheid, townships where black South Africans lived were considered temporary settlements not entitled to government services, including policing. The South African Police (SAP) only invaded townships to find suspected terrorists, political opponents of the regime, or organizers of resistance to apartheid rule. Townships thus had to develop their own informal systems of maintaining security, including brutal vigilante killings of suspected sympathizers and informants for the apartheid government and the police.

The transformation from the apartheid-era SAP to the post-apartheid South African Police Service (SAPS) focused on three issues: first, changes in the personnel composition and management of the SAPS had priority. Positions at the top and mid-level, which had previously been reserved for white police, were opened up to black officers. Police who had committed atrocities while in the SAP were vetted through a truth and reconciliation process. If they admitted what they had done and apologized, they were forgiven, unless their transgressions were too severe for forgiveness alone. The truth process served an important function. It reassured non-black officers in the SAP, who still were needed to staff the new SAPS, that there was a role for them to play in the new police as long as they accepted the changed circumstances.

Second was a shift in the underlying ideology of policing from protecting white rule to a community policing approach. Associated with this shift in ideology was the creation of community-based forums to partner with the police and to increase the flow of resources provided to black communities.

Third, institutional changes had to follow. The Bantustan police were dissolved as were the repressive units within the SAP, and control over the new police was centralized in the new government. New national policing and security plans enshrined the changes in policy and law.

The South African government received much external support for these changes. Foreign governments, private consultants, and NGOs eagerly sought to show that they had been on the right side of history and in favor of overturning the apartheid regime all along (van Zyl Smit and van der Spuy 2004). The creation of a vetting committee for proposed aid projects arose from the country's need to determine for itself what it needed rather than to simply accept any offers from donors.

The community policing ideology came under severe criticism as domestic and transnational crime exploded in the country. The public, the politicians, and the police wanted more effective protection than soft community policing, and an emphasis on civic rights as well as due process provided. Private corporate security systems and informal community institutions were developed to do what the state police could not do, stem the growth in crimes. That tension between safety and rights (which is a false one but believed and fostered by the police and hardliners) continued to exist. Politics began to creep into the security and policing systems as political leaders appointed cronies to high-level positions in the ministry and management positions in the police.

What made reforms possible and successful? First, there was strong political support from all sides for the reform of the security system. Second, South Africa had a functioning state and security system, even though it was devoted to the protection of white rule. Much of the

machinery of government was in place and only had to be staffed and guided differently. Third, a vibrant civil society and informal justice system had developed and it could not be ignored. It had to be accommodated. Communal policing boards and forums at the local level became that mechanism.

Fourth, South Africa has a flourishing scholarly community which can be called upon to research claims made on what works, how much crime really happens, who become victims and for what reasons, or what reforms would help improve safety and security for communities and the state. There now exists a community of scholars, research institutes (such as ISS), and departments at universities which specialize in criminology and criminal justice. They offer undergraduate and graduate curricula and attract students who are taught proper methodical research skills and information about comparative policing and security systems. In addition, an ability to conduct research, transparency, and access to security institutions is a must. In contrast, in most other African countries, conducting research on the police or other security agencies is practically impossible and considered close to treason.

Research exists, for example, on the culture of integrity in the SAPS (Ivković and Sauerma 2012); the occupational culture of riot control units (Marks 2005); democratic changes in management styles adopted by the SAPS (Marks and Goldsmith 2006); and how local police commanders describe their relationships with community groups (van der Spuy 2009).

In Africa, South Africa is the closest approximation to Northern Ireland in terms of having the four prerequisites to successful reform identified by Bayley (2008): a political settlement, shared values of governance, administrative capacity, and a vibrant civil society. The fact that these factors are missing in most other parts of Africa, however, suggests that lessons from the South African case may have only limited applicability in other countries.

4.3 Sierra Leone⁸

Sierra Leone suffered a debilitating civil war which destroyed the economy of the country, led to the collapse of the elected government and the security system, and destroyed practically all police facilities in rural areas. The president elected in 1996, was overthrown in 1997, leading to the intervention by ECOWAS member states to restore him to office and two subsequent UN interventions, which lasted from 1999 to 2005. From 1999 to 2002, a civil war raged between the government and a revolutionary movement, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), over the control of the diamond and gold fields. About 50,000 people killed, and thousands more mutilated in barbaric ways. The capital Freetown was basically destroyed in fighting in 1999-2000.

In 1997, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah invited an experienced British police officer, Keith Biddle, and support personnel to rebuild and transform the police. Biddle accepted and was appointed as the Inspector General of the Sierra Leone police (SLP), with significant authority to implement changes. Biddle's reforms were extensive: he convinced the president to publish a national police reform plan which emphasized community policing as the core work of the police; he created a high-level policing management board staffed by international advisors which vetted SLP officers; implemented senior level management training by sending the selected to Bramshill Command College in England; organized

⁸ E.g., Baker (2005); Ero (2003); Friedman (2011); Hirsch (2001); Horn (2004); Horn et al. (2006); Olonisakin (2007); Robins (2009).

midlevel management and lower ranks training in Sierra Leone; instituted an internal investigation unit; sought to improve the percentage of females in the police; focused on community relations and the creation of family support units at local police stations; created links with existing informal security groups; and significantly improved the available communications and transportation capacity of the SLP through aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). All of these reforms were undertaken while the fighting raged on.

The most interesting innovation was the development of a basic needs strategy for policing at the local level (Horn 2004). British and Commonwealth advisors found that the existing SLP lacked even the most basic knowledge of policing and had to be trained as new recruits.⁹ The basic needs approach stressed the most essential and simple work the police were expected to do: go to work on time, be available and accessible, and respond to citizen requests for assistance without asking for bribes. Academy training was revamped to stress decision-making in typical problematic areas—use of force, corruption, maintenance of facilities and equipment, orientation to service to the public, and compliance with the law. Training for more advanced skills and commitments had to wait until the necessary foundation for professional policing had been laid. In short, Biddle did everything by the book; his reforms closely mirrored the recommendations provided by the latest research on policing and security sector reform.

How could Biddle do this? He understood policing. He had buy-in from the local leaders. His appointment had been approved by the national legislature. External support came mainly from British foreign aid with few other participants, so that there was a clear line of authority and responsibility with little conflicting advice to local police from multiple donors. Unity of command and authority existed.

Nevertheless, a study of changes in the SLP published in 2009, eight years after Biddle began his reforms, concludes that the SLP is still heavily politicized and considered by the public to be ‘corrupt and ineffective... Resource management, financial sustainability and viability of the SLP are major areas of concern’ (Robins 2009: 2). Even the family support units which functioned for some time to deal with the victimization of women and children, seems to have fallen victim to a lack of commitment and resources. In short, Sierra Leone is an example of a collapsed state in which police reforms started out well but were overtaken by a return to the former styles of politics and policing. Once external support was withdrawn, local political and social contexts reasserted themselves.

4.4 Liberia¹⁰

Liberia suffered an even worse fate than Sierra Leone during 1980-2005: two devastating civil wars in a country with a small population of about 3 million people, a history of coups and countercoups, massive violence and fighting (it is estimated that about 250,000 people died during the wars), a decline in GDP of 90 per cent between 1987 and 1995, and a capital city completely destroyed.¹¹ Charles Taylor, the leader of the rebel forces in both wars,

⁹ Discussion with Adrian Horn in 2005.

¹⁰ E.g., Bacon (2012); Ebo (2005); Friedman and MacAulay (2011).

¹¹ A high-level official from the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) office in the United States Department of Justice, who has extensive experience in many countries of the world

resigned the presidency in 2003, following a peace treaty and an UN intervention, and fled to Nigeria. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected in 2006 as the President, and was re-elected in 2011. She was also one of the three female recipients of the Nobel Peace prize that year.

Johnson Sirleaf, a strong advocate for women and children, adopted two major strategies in terms of policing. The first involved getting more women into the police force and into decision-making positions, and has been relatively successful. Through extensive publicity and recruitment campaigns and changes in training requirements and methods, the percentage of female officers in the police increased from two per cent in 2005 to 17 per cent in 2011. In 2008, Johnson Sirleaf appointed the first female Inspector General of the police. Under Liberian law, the president has the power to appoint the eight highest ranking police officers in the force, an opportunity President Johnson Sirleaf has used to staff those positions with people she could trust rather than with experienced police leaders.

Second, Johnson Sirleaf has appointed female officers to lead reforms beneficial to women, especially victims of rape (a massive occurrence during the civil wars)—rape against women and children had been used as a weapon of war. A Women and Children Protection Service, a special court to fast track cases, and a Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Crimes Unit were established. All units were soon overloaded with case work and a lack of information systems to track work done. Attempts to recruit more women led to a lowering of entrance qualifications.

A third prong of Johnson Sirleaf's reform strategy focused on changes in training, recruitment, creating specialized units (crowd control, drug enforcement), internal to the police accountability units.

Overall, policing is in much better shape than it used to be which is not that surprising given its starting point. Still, capacity is extremely limited, bribery remains a big issue, salaries are insufficient, resources are scarce, and political appointees continue to occupy the top positions.

The main lesson to be drawn from the Liberian example is the importance of local buy-in by the top leadership. With the successful passage of two peaceful elections, political stability also seems stronger. However, one has to wonder how deeply changes have sunk into the thinking and practices of the police and what will happen when another president takes over in 2017?

4.5 Nigeria¹²

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. It is a federal country, now comprised of 36 states. It has one national police force which includes about 320,000 members controlled from the center. Having one national police force in a federal system creates numerous potential for conflicts between the center and the states, especially if the winning political parties at the center and states differ. Mass violence erupts periodically along ethnic and religious fault lines. Run-ups to elections, which have alternated with military coups, are

where ICITAP has programmes, once told me that Monrovia was the most destroyed city he had ever seen. Nothing worked. Also, see Hills (2009).

¹² E.g., Alemika and Agugua (2001); Alemika and Chukwuma (2004); Asiwaju-Okenyodo and Marenin (2009); del Buono and Davis (2007); Ehindero (2006); Olurode and Jega (2011); Onyeozili (2005).

practically guaranteed to lead to violence among party followers, militias, and thugs employed by local politicians to disrupt the electoral process or to protest the results if on the losing side; criminal gangs taking advantage of the general turmoil and insecurity for personal gains; and the police become both the victims of violence and also the perpetrators. Ironically, elections, the hallmarks of democracy in the abstract and in justifications, are harmful to security in deeply divided societies. The police do not look forward to maintaining security during the run-up to elections (Ehinderro 2006; Olurode and Jega 2011).

Nigeria has experienced a civil war, multiple coups and assassinations of political leaders, rebel movements in some states, and fundamentalist Islamic groups rejecting western law, cultures, and religions. But it has been stable enough since the failed attempt by Biafra to secede to not to have had an international intervention. Externally supported reform efforts have been mainly via bilateral aid projects largely, as behoves a former British colony, offered by the British government.

Bilateral projects tend to focus on selected aspects of policing, not overall reform. Many reform projects have focussed on improving control of transnational crime, as Nigeria has become a major transit country for illegal drugs; on the control of Nigerian fraud, mainly '419' scam letters; and on developing more professional skills in management. Because so little information about these projects is made public by donors and the Nigerian government, however, it is difficult to know precisely what projects have been undertaken and what their outcomes have been. What is known, through research done by academics and by local NGOs, is that the general performance and image of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has not changed in any major way since 1960, the year of the independence. Whatever changes have happened in the internal workings of the police have not translated into noticeable changes in its performance on the street level.

There are a couple of reasons for this. For one, politics still dominates the strategic and operational priorities of the NPF, especially in responses to communal violence. The wishes of the political leadership, whether that leadership is the military or an elected civilian regime, still dominate. There is very little external capacity for oversight of the police, by civil society or established government oversight institutions, and the police enjoy widespread impunity.

The second problem is the sheer size of the force and the country which creates tremendous management and oversight problems for the police (Clapham et al. 2006).¹³ The Inspector General sitting in Abuja has little capacity to know how the police behave at the state and local levels. Even the police commissioners who have operational control at the state level have to depend on mid-level managers further down the hierarchy for information and the exercise of control. As far as one can tell, there is a very limited internal information system that systematically channels relevant information up the chain of command for decisions and passes decisions down to local levels. An example is roadblocks. In 2006, the Inspector General issued a rule that all roadblocks had to be disbanded unless authorized by higher

¹³ The basic solution to the size problem, especially in a federal country, is to grant policing autonomy to the states and federal subunits, as Spain has done. In non-federal states, the typical solution is tiering—locating operational control which fit local, regional, and central governments' policy foci and resources (such as done in Japan) or devolving operational authority to lower levels in the central organization (as in the UK).

police officials, but also acknowledged that he knew that the regulation would be ignored and not enforced.¹⁴

Sheer size also vitiates good and well-intended reforms. In 2006, the British Council promoted community policing by selecting and sending seven senior Nigerian police officers to England to study community policing. Upon their return to Nigeria, these officers were tasked with developing an implementation plan for community policing. The plan centered on developing Community Development Officers (CDOs) who would be seeded into local police units, train the next trainers, and become catalysts for change. By 2007, about a thousand CDOs had been trained; about 600 officers had been trained as liaisons to vigilante groups, the Nigerian label for informal security actors; about 400 mid-level commanders had been trained via management and leadership seminars; and 40,000 police had attended one day sensitization workshops (cited in Asiawaju Okenyodo and Marenin 2009: 292). These are impressive numbers by themselves, but when compared to the size of the NPF, they appear tiny. It is also doubtful that a one day sensitization session will have much of an impact on the culture of the police.

One also has to consider what will happen when newly trained CDOs arrive at the regional or precinct level to talk about community policing values and practices to fellow police who are used to operating by very different standards. As one CDO noted, the CDOs, as committed and hardworking as they be, can only reach a few officers.¹⁵ By what theory of human motivation and management would one expect the police to change their attitudes, occupational cultures, and work habits that they have become used to and from which they profit? All the pressure from peers, from above, and from below is against doing that. The CDOs' seeds will be overwhelmed by the barren soil in which they are planted.

The lessons from Nigeria are that changes in organizational arrangements and priorities are not likely to have an impact on street level policing, in the absence of a clearly expressed and continuously enforced policy by effective central and local reward and sanctioning management policies, oversight and anti-corruption efforts. Secondly, as elsewhere, police reforms have to be supported by political will, by a political environment which grants the police some operational autonomy.

5 Lessons and recommendations for successful reforms

5.1 What could work?

So far, most reforms in the area of policing have been largely unsuccessful. Reviews of lessons learned deal with reasons for failures, detailing the approaches, policies, and practices that should be avoided (rather than the factors that promote success). Baker (2010: 21) concludes that 'for all the efforts that has gone into recruiting, training, equipping and institution building in post-conflict policing forces in Africa, they still remain incompetent and predatory, and often brutal.' Bayley (2006: 113) finds that, 'based on available evaluations, ... it is unrealistic to expect that providing assistance to the police will achieve democratic government, although it may be a component in that endeavor'; that 'assistance

¹⁴ Discussion with Inspector General Sunday Ehindero in 2007.

¹⁵ Discussion with a community development officer, Abuja in 2007.

can promote reform in police practices but it may be superficial and short-lived'; and that 'the impact of assistance on local law enforcement capabilities is unknown' (ibid.: 117).

Assessments of policing reforms that focus on success tend to highlight improvements in policing relative to dismal starting points, rather than success in terms of achieving some semblance of professional policing. Police forces in Africa may be getting better, in general or in some functional areas, but they still have a long way to go. Policies that could work have to address the reasons for failures and the obstacles to successful reforms, yet knowing why a policy failed does not suggest what else could have been tried or what alternative approaches might have been more successful.

There are two issues that need to be addressed. There is the impact of police reforms that lead to a functioning and democratically oriented policing system in which the police and informal security providers balance effective law enforcement and crime control with basic human rights and rule of law protections. There is, as well, the impact of policing reforms on economic development. The reforms needed, and what might work to establish reforms, are not the same for promoting democratic policing as they are for creating policing policies that support economic development.

5.2 Policing and economic development

The conditions that hinder or subvert assistance designed to promote economic development are well-established: failed state performance, political instability, government mismanagement of resources, corruption, and police ineffectiveness in functional performance to control security threats that destroy economic resources.

There can be no development when the state has failed and chaos reigns. The police have no capacity to deal with these problems which require political or forceful solutions. The police cannot create social order when it has collapsed, but they can protect social order once a threshold of order has been established (Bayley and Perito 2010). Political instability has no policing solution, especially if the police are closely linked to partisan control, but it is essential for donor confidence that their assistance will be used for intended purposes, that investments are protected, and that economic agreements will be upheld and enforced.

Economic mismanagement, fraud, and corruption which are tightly linked, can be policing issues and would require strong investigative capacities by the police or other agencies as well as political will to allow investigations and sanctions to take their course. Corruption at high-levels which siphons off millions into private accounts perverts economic incentives, encourages currency manipulations, wastes resources, and destabilizes government, while lower level corruption by functionaries is largely an annoyance to the public and economic growth. Organized and transnational crime has emerged as a major threat to state and public security which contributes to corruption, promotes drug use in local populations, and expands the reach of human trafficking. Lastly, and most exposed to and feasible for a policing approach, are the various ways in which property is destroyed and resources are diverted: effective traffic control, protection of borders, harbor and airport security, and prevention and control of local riots.

What can effective policing achieve? In addition to the political will to take on the task, the control of high-level corruption and organized transnational crime requires sophisticated

investigative techniques, equipment, and skills. Developing that functional focus and skill set is not what democratic-oriented policing reforms are about. Controlling corruption at the top is a two-way street. One strategy that could work is eliminating external safe havens for large-scale corrupt gains. High-level politicians, big men/women, and police officials who are in the position to steal massive sums from the public treasury often cannot easily spend that money in their home countries. There is no way to hide that large resources were used to acquire ostentatious goods and benefits which confirm the existence of large-scale corruption. Plus, there is only so much one can spend in a poor country. In addition, once corrupted leaders are removed from power, they risk losing their corrupt gains if kept at home (that is, they risk being made, in a nice Nigerian phrase, to ‘vomit up’ their corruptly acquired riches). The only safe places are external to the country—bank accounts, property, and conspicuous luxury.¹⁶

Another major source of economic destruction in African states is the astronomical level of traffic accidents which destroy vehicles and goods and kill people. There is very little traffic enforcement on African roads (which typically are not well-maintained). Horrific accidents are routine events. Static roadblocks are often the only form of traffic enforcement, and these are often primary fee collection points for the police.¹⁷ Effective traffic control would go a long way toward saving essential investments in transportation resources.

Control of borders, improved harbor and airports security, and control of riots and disturbances also need to be strengthened to protect commercial import and export activities. Harbors, especially, are often controlled by armed gangs which loot ships and warehouses. At airports, gangs have been known to stop planes as they taxi and empty their cargo holds. Appropriate equipment and use of specially trained units could assist in dealing with these sorts of specific security threats to international and local economic activities. In addressing riots in particular, however, extra care needs to be taken to ensure that units operate in a way that does not encourage further riots as inept and brutal riot control tends to do.

Lastly, reformers need to learn how to play local politics. If they want to be successful, they cannot refuse to be drawn into local events. They need to play hardball with those who oppose reforms; pay off through co-optation resisters who cannot be circumvented; find likely stakeholders and promote them as much as possible. They should channel aid through such stakeholders; rain them outside and inside the country; and if training is conducted abroad, assure that they continue to receive support once they return home.

5.3 Democratic police reforms?

Democratic policing has an impact on economic development by protecting foreigners who work in the country and by dealing effectively with normal crimes that deprive people of their property and lives and encourage a generalized fear of crime and insecurity. But,

¹⁶ For example, the French government has begun to confiscate property, bank accounts, and fancy cars owned by African leaders who could not have acquired these riches by legal means. If other countries got together and started shutting down safe havens, the incentives for large scale corruption would decline dramatically. Of course, getting a general agreement by all safe haven countries would be difficult and lengthy. But, taking unearned property could be legally justified by forfeiture laws.

¹⁷ In five years of driving in Nigeria, and in some West African countries, I have never received a traffic ticket (but have been solicited frequently for bribes) nor have I met anyone who has received a traffic ticket. One learns, though, to drive extremely defensively by the knowledge that commercial trucks, long distance buses, taxis, and military vehicles obey no traffic rules.

compared to functional capacity targeted at criminal acts that undermine economic development, democratic, street level policing is a lesser factor.

In practical terms, what is the goal of democratizing police reforms? A functioning well-managed organization; recruitment and promotion policies that reward merit, skill, and performance; an organizational and occupational professional culture across all levels; effective street and specialized functional performance; and a process of reform which will be sustained by skillful building of support by police management. What stands in the way and what could work? Experience suggests some recommendations:

1. Corruption among police at the lower levels is endemic, visible, known, and reluctantly accepted by the public who understand the low salaries and dismal working conditions of the police and know they would do similar corrupt acts if they were in the position the police find themselves in. The goal of corruption control, hence, should be to minimize and manage corruption as it cannot be eliminated. Donors have to bite the bullet and accept some corruption as the inevitable price of local support. They should not be righteous in advocating reforms of corruption but instead understand why people at all levels engage in corrupt activities and address those motivations. Still, some polices could be advocated and supported, such as eliminating static roadblocks and assigning constables to regular police work. Reform the organizational culture of the police. A major step would be the elimination of bifurcated entry recruitment criteria and procedures. This will be widely resisted by those with higher levels of education who want to join a police organization. It could be done by eliminating and downgrading the importance of formal certificates and evaluating applicants on merit by fair, equitable standards and tests. This will also be widely resisted by the police, the educated and the political leaders. Foreign assistance can be made dependent upon reforming the recruitment and promotion criteria now in place.
2. Focus on financial resources for police at all levels, especially mid-level management and street police, not mainly on the top or on sophisticated equipment. Ensure that funds given to the police are distributed across all ranks (ASDR 2001, 2002). Supply basic equipment which the police at the street-level can use: cell phones with monthly allocations (in most countries lower ranked police do not have communications technology supplied by the organization, and often have to use and pay for their own); manual typewriters, not computers, in outlying police posts where electricity is a haphazard luxury; bicycles in urban areas.
3. Learn a basic lesson on how cultures change which is standard knowledge in the anthropological literature: material technology introduced from the outside is accepted before external norms and values are, but once material changes have become accepted they will begin to undermine, weaken, and change cultural values and norms. Introducing a new technology, such as computers, will enhance the status of police who know how to use them, who will become the go-to personnel in case of malfunction or new software being introduced. In short, to change the police culture to more professional attitudes and work habits introduce a technology (material change) that supports merit recruitment, promotion, and career paths.
4. Hire the right consultants and implementers. Hire consultants and implementers who have high-level police experience and have worked internationally in policing in

third world countries (Peake and Marenin 2008). Recruit implementers who are willing to go into the country and live as regular local people do, who will read the local papers every day, avoid expat hangouts, learn local languages, and take work seriously. Being a police reform implementer should not be seen as a respite from the hard work at home. Do not hire private consultants who know little about the country or the police, but have a concept, policy, or equipment to sell.

I have argued that the police are not capable of creating social order where none exists. Who or what then creates order to the threshold level that allows the police to function and enlarge and sustain social order by their work? The answer is either that social order is created by forceful imposition which then slowly transforms itself into an acceptable order which also allows force as an instrument of control to recede, or, that informal processes and civil society create social order with the police as beneficiaries.

If the second answer is accepted, civil society cannot be excluded from social control and social order maintenance, and has to be incorporated into social order maintenance, or what Brogden and Shearing (1993: 1980) have called 'policing through civil society,' using civil policing structures that have not been colonized by the state' (ibid.: 185). If a focus on reforming the state police has not made African communities and states safer and supported economic development, as most of the evidence indicates, donors should rethink whether investing in enabling communities, as well as in the state, is a more effective way to achieve security for all. Donors need to accept that informal providers of security have an important role to play in creating security and legitimacy and support practical policies to that end. They thus may seek to create linkage points in the police with informal security providers and civil society groups, establish consultative arrangements among formal and informal providers, and distribute resources, including basic communications technology, to both formal and informal policing.

6 Final comments

After all the reforms which have been attempted, research and policy analyses which have been conducted, large number of participants who have been interviewed, and judgments and wisdom of experienced observers which has been collected, three major issues remain unanswered.

First, there is little systematic information on specific changes in the management, recruitment, training, performance, internal accountability practices, career patterns, occupational perceptions of non-state actors, and dynamics of interactions with local communities during encounters before and after reform efforts. If there are changes these cannot be tracked by evidence but have to fall back on general assessments by the police and outside observers on what has changed and in what directions.

Second, fundamental questions are still unanswered. Is it possible, good policy, or a waste of resources to try to reform the police, partially or functionally, if the environmental societal contexts have not yet been reformed or begun to move toward democratic political dynamics? Do police reforms have to wait for contexts to change, or can they change simultaneously? How far can police get out in front of societal changes before reform efforts will be wasted? Can the police be an engine pulling the peacetrain of democracy or are they the caboose? What functional specializations might be levers for further change in policing and in society?

Third, for the more theoretically inclined but also important to justify specific aspects of policing, there is no theory of how changes in policing systems become legitimated and how police performance legitimates or delegitimates political changes and development (Marenin 1990). In short, there are plenty of opportunities for future research and policy evaluations.

The impact of successful police reforms on political, social, and economic development is more an assertion and expression of hope rather than a proven fact. There will be political, social, and economic changes, both positive and negative, during and after any intervention and reform effort. Contexts for policing and the provision of security do not remain static.

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Appendix

Useful websites for information on reforms of policing and security

Country police forces have their own websites, which generally are not that informative and certainly do not critically assess their own performance

www.africanpolicing.org a website run by Bruce Baker; has lots of literature references

www.theglobalobservatory.org organized by the International Peace Institute, New York

www.dcaf.ch a website for the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF); a good source for security sector literature

www.zif-berlin.org weekly peace operations updates, in German and English; current happenings

www.successfulsocieties.edu a website run by Princeton University, has 82 case studies of 'innovations for successful societies' and about 300 interviews with participants in police reforms efforts

www.peacebuildinginitiative.org a website of the International Association for Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research; has an extensive library listing

www.iss.co.za; website of the Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, South Africa; much information

www.usip.org a website for the United States Institute of Peace; numerous publications related to peacekeeping and police reforms

www.cleen.org a website for a Nigerian NGO dealing with policing issues in Nigeria and more generally; formerly the Centre for Law Enforcement Education

www.africascope.net general information and surveys on socio-political trends and events in Africa

www.crisisgroup.org a website for the International Crisis Group NGO; information on security and conflicts, including Africa

www.soros.org/about/programs/open-society-justice-intiative criminal justice and legal reform projects sponsored by the Open Society foundation

www.stimson.org a website of the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington, DC; has a lot of information on UN peacekeeping operations.

www.saferworld.org.uk information on criminal justice and policing projects conducted in Africa

www.hrw.org website of the Human Rights Watch

www.transparency.org website of Transparency International