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Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in South Sudan: The Case of Western Equatoria's Arrow Boys

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ABOUT THE NON-STATE SECURITY PROVIDERS PROJECT

This is the second of four papers produced as part of the CSG's project on Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Conflict-Affected States. The project was made possible by generous financial support from the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

The project considers new aspects of the relationship between security and development by examining how the presence of non-state security providers affects political development in conflict-affected societies. The established "security-development nexus" maintains that security and development are mutually reinforcing, and conversely that insecurity and underdevelopment are mutually reinforcing. While these links are of obvious importance, more recent work suggests two other relationships of equal significance: between insecurity and development insofar as violent conflict may fuel political formation; and between underdevelopment and security insofar as supposedly "underdeveloped" and conflict-affected areas may feature unique and unconventional security structures. The project has explored these largely uncharted relationships by examining processes of political formation in societies that host a diverse array of non-state security providers and assessing the effects of the latter on processes of state formation, deliberate state-building interventions and the emergence of unconventional governance structures. Drawing on three case studies—Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan—the project's main research questions are: how does the presence of diverse non-state security providers affect the process of state formation and state building, and how should this shape donor state building approaches? The overarching goal of the project is to stimulate a discourse and make initial policy recommendations on how donors can better engage non-state security structures in the context of state building and security sector reform programs.

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GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The arrow boys, a militia in South Sudan's south-western region were established as a civilian protection mechanism. The arrow boys are active in an area that has in recent years seen a resurgence of support for reinstating a particular position of traditional leadership, the Zande King. The arrow boys and the Zande King could be regarded a non-state answer to the official government. However, this paper argues that the dividing line in how citizens relate to the arrow boys and the Zande King does not correspond to the state and non-state dichotomy. Using empirical quantitative and qualitative data, the paper shows that support for an actor seems is divided along models of governance-- military and civilian– that actors represent. The paper concludes with implications of this finding for understanding state formation processes and security sector reform (SSR), suggesting that SSR requires a focus on the civilian modes of governance first.

INTRODUCTION

In a remote village near South Sudan's border with the Central African Republic (CAR), a group of young men, interviewed in 2013, had a clear plan for their future. They were members of the "arrow boys," a loosely organized local militia born out of the need to protect civilians from attacks by the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which was very active in this area until 2010. The arrow boys had achieved fame by controlling LRA attacks on the community – by many accounts more successfully than South Sudan's military force, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA); the African Union, primarily represented by Uganda's army, the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF); the UN peacekeeping mission or, indeed, US military advisers who had been sent to the region in 2011 to assist in the military operations against the LRA. With the arrow boys patrolling through the bush that covers this border, LRA activity died down. Although some areas of the community were still paying a special tax to support the arrow boys, or providing food items for the patrols, it was not clear how long the current set-up was going to continue.

Given the uncertainty of their own situation, the assembled arrow boys made an intriguing suggestion: since there was also a movement in their part of Western Equatoria State (WES) to reinstall the Zande king – a traditional authority – could the two not work together? The last of the Zande kings, King Gbudue, was killed in a British skirmish in 1905; his death concluded the attempts of the British colonial administrators to turn what were formerly known as the Zande kings into government chiefs that better fit the model of indirect rule they were pursuing. Asked about the future of the arrow boys, one young man from the group said: "In case [the] LRA is no longer there and there is no government support, we will keep the group. And if the king is crowned, we will turn into the militia of the king to protect the community." Another further explained "the king used to have *basingere* [king's guards]. The king is a big position and he can have guards and protect the people. Because the arrow boys already have the experience of protecting the community."[1]

The Context of Peace, State Building and Security Sector Reform in South Sudan

Community protection and security are prominent issues in the world's newest state – in this sense, the arrow boys' concern is not surprising. South Sudan was created through a military conflict; today, the political wing of the SPLA forms the government through its party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). However, in reality, army and political party have not been separated. The civil war that, in the end, achieved the referendum that led to South Sudan's independence in 2011, was fought at the expense of civilians; in turn, aggrieved groups often created their own forces to protect themselves against their own liberators. The history of this messy conflict continues to shape a diverse and ever-shifting landscape of armed groups, with the lines between state and non-state

actors often as hazily drawn as those between the army and the government. Political developments continue to be driven by armed activity; in turn, armed activity determines how different parts of the country develop and which particular challenges they face (Thomas, 2015). Out of these, as the case of the arrow boys shows, unconventional security and governance arrangements occur that defy categorization along a continuum of state and non-state actors, instead offering possible prototypes for the concept of hybridity.

State and non-state actors are often presented as a dichotomy, although much scholarship on the nature of hybrid governance and hybrid authority has contributed to a more fine-tuned understanding of the strong or delicate links that actually exist between the two. The literature broadly argues that hybridization means that what can simplistically be termed state and non-state actors undergo mutually reinforcing adaptation toward a hybrid structure, which renders the state/non-state distinction meaningless. Crucially, it also argues that hybridity means that both types of actors are changing to fit into the hybrid system (Beall, Mkhize and Vawda, 2005; Logan, 2009) or into how the relationship between the two types plays out procedurally (Bratton, 2007; Goodfellow and Lindemann, 2013). A hallmark of African society is the integration of what seem to be institutional structures at odds with each other, which is how hybridity has increasingly come to be understood (Logan, 2008), although the concept remains contested.

The arrow boys, who are organized as non-state actors, and yet at times act on their ties to the state, fit the description of hybrid actors. Thus, for the purpose of this paper, we use the finding that the arrow boys defy categorization along the state/non-state actor continuum to suggest that there are further unexplored relationships in the broader conceptualization of the security-development nexus. To assure both security and development, notions of state building have prominently encompassed both concepts.

State building, as an approach to primarily post-conflict societies, is now closely linked to stabilization and peace building; in fact, it is generally assumed that building a state is conducive to maintaining peace (Call, 2008). State building generally encompasses broader institutional, infrastructure and economic development beyond the security sector (Norris, 2008; Schwarz, 2005). Yet the aim to stabilize and politically develop post-conflict societies has created an emphasis on security concerns as part of state-building approaches (Rubin, 2008). These state-building-for-security/security-for-state-building approaches range from concrete work to demobilize combatants in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs to broader reforms of the security sector. These broadly focus on professionalizing, downsizing and legitimizing the post-conflict security sector, and shifting war command structures of security toward rule of law. In South Sudan, some of these tasks were anchored in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which in 2005 officially ended the long-running war between the government in Khartoum and the rebels of the SPLA in the south.

Even though state building draws on grand overarching ideologies of democracy and administrative functions, in practice, supporting state building has meant that international actors provide technical assistance for rule of law programs and security sector reform (SSR), along with support for infrastructure, administration and institution building. Yet in South Sudan's brief postwar history since the CPA, state building has been a term used to mean a number of things beyond the broadly accepted template of institution and legitimacy building. In the South Sudanese context, state building has, for example, been proposed as a step toward better resource management (Shankleman, 2011), as acting in a complementary way to the less institution-focused nation building (Jok, 2011), as being key to establishing egalitarian structures (Ali, 2011) and — as part of the CPA — as a way of managing north-south relations (Belloni, 2011).

Crucially, state building also encompasses, at times, the provision of basic services in health and education under the infrastructure-building label, creating or enhancing what has been identified as one of South Sudan's primary challenges along the way. With basic services covered through donor funds, the government was free to use its considerable funds — drawn from oil — for clientelism administered through military structures (Lacher, 2012: 6). In practice, support for state building as infrastructure or institution building has allowed the government to spend one-third of its budget from 2006 to 2011 on the military (ibid., 22). Decentralization, a key element of building government legitimacy in the state-building template, has, Lacher argues, further contributed to clientelism by adding additional structures through which patronage could be dispersed in a situation of dominance of specific networks within an army that was not impartial (Rolandsen, 2009).

For the security sector, the state-building approach in South Sudan has concretely meant that external support focused on first creating one army by integrating (often hostile) militias into the SPLA (SPLA and SSDF, 2006; Young, 2006). The next step was to reduce the size of the military apparatus through DDR and professionalization of the army, as well as establishing civilian control over it — a reform premise that was not shared by the government (Lacher, 2012: 6). Various flagship programs in South Sudan focused on state building through SSR, for example, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) DDR program, which has largely been considered ineffective (ibid., 23). The UK Department for International Development (DfID) was one of the main donors focused specifically on SSR through its Security Sector Development and Defence Transformation program. Phase two of the program ran from February 2013 to September 2014 and was budgeted at £12 million, of which about a quarter was funded by Denmark. In light of the recent civil war, the program has been halted, although DfID has reiterated its commitment to retaining, "strong political engagement on the security sector," with the condition "that any potential substantial new programming would depend on a sustained ceasefire agreement, supported by monitoring and verification arrangements; and an inclusive strategic defence review" (DfID, 2015). Other donor programs had complemented

DfID's efforts, although none of the programs aimed at reforming the security sector managed to achieve even remotely what they had set out to do (Lacher, 2012: 26).

With state-building efforts and institutions that seem to move toward the development of hybrid structures, rather than those envisioned by the template state-building approach, it is important to understand how the people of South Sudan relate to security actors and modes of governance. The case of Western Equatoria's arrow boys provides a unique case study, while – in epitomizing certain unexpected contradictions between expected ways of relating to security actors and our findings – helping to point toward some of the bigger questions outlined above.

Argument

This paper argues that a dichotomy between state and non-state actors – even when nuanced – is not the defining factor of the arrow boys in South Sudan's Western Equatoria. Instead, the paper shows that perceptions and loyalties of citizens toward state and non-state actors, such as the arrow boys and the Zande king, are not demarcated across those lines, nor do they simply merge into one hybrid structure. Rather, based on qualitative and quantitative findings, support for an actor seems to be divided along different models of governance that actors represent. This suggests that separating lines might be drawn between military and civilian types of governance, rather than between state and non-state actors. The paper concludes with implications of this finding for understanding state formation processes and SSR. The division of support for either civilian or military models of governance highlights that pursuits of political power might be separated along those same lines. This would explain a lack of political will to implement SSR, but also shows that the template approach to SSR, which includes DDR, professionalization and civilian oversight, might be focusing on the wrong aspect of change. We propose that SSR should instead come through a reform of the civilian modes of governance first, which requires clarification of how civilian state and non-state actors divide or negotiate power.

The paper first gives an overview of methods and data used, followed by a background section on South Sudan, WES, the Zande kingdom and the emergence and functions of the arrow boys. The history of the arrow boys is then contextualized in local relationships to the official forces and the national government, including the relationship between the army and the arrow boys. The paper then examines the imagined role of the Zande king as a model of governance and compares how support for the Zande king relates to support for the government, the army and the arrow boys.

METHODS

Data

This paper is primarily based on data from 70 semi-structured interviews conducted during two visits to WES, in December of 2012 and in April and May of 2013. Not all interviews are directly quoted in this paper, but they have all informed the conclusions. Interviewees were selected because they held a position of authority — for example, as a chief, administrator, spiritual leader or arrow boy — because they represented a particular group — such as displaced persons, women or people affected by illness — or because they were encountered in day-to-day interactions. Often, interviews were carried out in a community meeting setting, with dozens of people gathering for several hours. Interviews were conducted in English, Pazande (the local language) and French. A translator translated interviews in Pazande on the spot.

In addition, this paper is based on quantitative data gathered through a survey of individuals in Ezo County and parts of Tambura County in April and May 2013 (see Rigterink, Kenyi and Schomerus, 2014). In South Sudan, the county is the next administrative level down from the state; two lower levels of administration exist: the *payam* (roughly a cluster of villages) and the *boma* (roughly a village). Our area of research was Ezo County, which consists of six *payams* and 26 *bomas*, and Tambura County's two southern-most *payams* that border Ezo (two *payams*, nine *bomas*). We randomly sampled seven *bomas* in Ezo (27 percent) and three *bomas* in Tambura (33 percent).

Within these *bomas*, households were randomly selected from a list of households in the *boma*, which either had already been drawn up, or was drawn up on the spot by the *boma* head men. As we had no reliable information on the number of households in any *boma* prior to going there, a fixed number of 44 households was sampled in each *boma*, except in two cases, where the total number of households did not exceed 44. Within the sampled households, one respondent was selected randomly from a list of individuals aged 18 years or above living in the household, drawn up in collaboration with the household head or another readily available household member if the household head was not available. The total sample consisted of 433 respondents, an estimated 4.3 percent of the total adult population in sampled *bomas*. This sampling scheme implies we oversampled households in smaller *bomas*, and individuals in smaller households; any descriptive statistics presented are weighted accordingly.

All questionnaires were administered in the local language, Pazande, by two teams of enumerators made up of residents of Ezo or Tambura County. The questionnaire included sections on demographics, willingness to contribute to public goods in the *boma*, attitudes toward various forms of public authority, security, experiences of violence, attitudes toward central government and access to information.[2]

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Interview transcripts, meeting notes and field observations were coded using MaxQDA according to themes that emerged during conversations. These were: support for the arrow boys, support for the king, imagined role of the king, opinions of government (including experience with trying to connect to government authorities) and experiences with the SPLA. The broader themes were broken down again into more detailed analysis of how the themes were addressed during interviews.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

Our analysis of the quantitative data consists of two parts. First, we examine whether various demographic variables can explain support for the arrow boys, the SPLA, the Zande king and central government, respectively. The demographic factors used are gender, age, years of education, three indicators for household wealth (number of houses in the compound, number of chickens owned, number of goats owned), household composition (number of children and adults in the household) and an indicator for whether the respondent had lived in the current *boma* for all his/her life to examine whether displacement or residency shape attitudes. In general, only a few demographic variables systematically explain support for any of the four authorities.

In the second part of our analysis, we explore whether attitudes toward the arrow boys, the SPLA, Zande king and government are related to each other. For example, if we expect that some respondents have turned away from the formal political authorities and instead rely on informal ones, we may expect attitudes toward the arrow boys to be positively correlated to attitudes toward the Zande king, but negatively correlated to attitudes toward the SPLA and government. To investigate this, we condense the indicators of support for the four authorities into four single variables. We do this using factor analysis. This technique explains variation among observed variables (in this case, the answers to the survey questions) with a number of unobserved variables, the factors (in this case, one or more dimensions of respondents' attitudes toward the authority in question). Each factor has an eigenvalue, indicating how much of the variation in original variables is explained by the factor. The higher the eigenvalue, the more variation the factor explains. Intuitively, the factors represent variation that answers to the questions on each authority have in common. We investigate whether the factors for the four authorities correlate to each other through simple (Pearson) correlations.

As a robustness check, we also run the above analysis on normalized data, the residuals obtained from a regression with an indicator for support as the dependent and all demographic variables as independent variables. Intuitively, this analysis uses only that variation in support for the arrow boys, SPLA, Zande king or government that is not

explained by these demographic variables. In addition, we use a second normalization, including all previous variables and the current *boma* of residence. Results obtained with normalized data are generally very similar to those obtained in the original analysis.

BACKGROUND

South Sudan became the world's youngest country in 2011. This momentous declaration of independence followed almost six decades of internal turbulence between the central government in Khartoum and the various rebellions in the southern part of the country. The first of these rebellions started before Sudan became independent from its British-Egyptian colonial administrators in 1956; Sudan's first civil war officially ended in 1972. Yet between 1955 and 1972, there were also long periods of relative quiet (see Rolandsen, 2011). It was perhaps this time that entrenched the country's state of no-war-no-peace, including the different security actors that such a limbo state produces. A state of no-war-no-peace and an array of security actors would remain southern Sudan's main characteristic for decades to come. The 1972 Addis Ababa Peace Agreement marked a period of semi-autonomous administration in the south. The period of official peace ended in 1983 with the start of the second civil war in the shape of a rebellion led by Dr. John Garang de Mabior. This resurgence of war has been widely attributed to what in today's terminology could be termed a failure of SSR and DDR, with many combatants left in limbo after the first war. But foremost, resurgence is argued to have been somewhat inevitable, as the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement did not comprehensively address grievances that sparked the war in the first place (see de Waal, 1996; Johnson, 2003; Woodward, 2004).

Sudan's second civil war experienced its bloodiest period when the southern rebels of the SPLA under Garang's command broke into factions in the famous 1991 SPLA split. Riek Machar, who later became vice-president of southern Sudan and has since December 2013 been the leader of the armed opposition in South Sudan's first civil war, commanded the breakaway faction that garnered support from the government in Khartoum. Large numbers of southern Sudanese fought on the side of the Khartoum government, most prominently the SSDF under Paulino Matiep and the Equatorian Defense Forces under Martin Kenyi.

The 2005 CPA between the government of Khartoum and the SPLA, along with its more recently established political wing, the SPLM, marked the official end of the war. It also started the complex process of transforming a society governed by the rules of the gun. Whether the SPLA/M would be able to manage the transition from armed rebellion to government was doubtful from the beginning (Kalpakian, 2008), despite some early successes in formally integrating the former militias and, in particular the SSDF into the SPLA (Young, 2005; 2006).

The internal breakdown of the SPLA/M resulted in brutal violence in December 2013 and led to civil war in South Sudan less than three years after its declaration of independence. This has highlighted that SPLA transformation and larger SSR efforts have failed. Even during South Sudan's well-funded SSR programs, it was always clear that the political will to tackle the army was as limited as the genuine pursuit of separating the government from the military (Rands 2010). The violent disintegration of the SPLA and the civilian suffering caused by the civil war has naturally focused attention on the inner workings of the SPLA. However, it is worth looking beyond the impact of the army as an active actor to focus on the gaps it left. One such obvious gap is that even during times when the SPLA seemed to manage its transition, at least without entrenching its internal divisions, the army was never in control of its entire territory, due to a number of possible factors: lack of capacity; the nature of the post-CPA SPLA as a disparate military force that included many different groups and former enemies; and reluctance to engage in communities that had been alienated from the SPLA through wartime atrocities, but also lack of will to genuinely become a force that represented the peace endeavour for everyone (Branch and Mampilly, 2005). Another interpretation has been that the SPLA/M also ruled parts of the country through strategic neglect, with the result being a different kind of state building emerging through alternative security provision (Schomerus and De Vries, 2014).

Western Equatoria State

WES occupies the southwestern corner of South Sudan. It is an area of dense forests and fertile farms; this topography extends beyond South Sudan's borders into neighbouring CAR and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The road network into WES remains poor, meaning that the long and heavy rainy season makes accessibility to many areas difficult. The state has a diverse population, yet the largest ethnic group living in WES are the Azande (or Zande). In the Western imagination, E. E. Evans-Pritchard's accounts of the Azande rank among the best-known works of anthropology. For the British colonial administrators, the Azande were a people of great interest; their organization into kingdoms seemed to conveniently fit the British imagination of authority and hierarchy (Johnson, 1991). Due to their recognizable societal structures and fertile land, the Azande became the target of one of the colonial administrators' most ambitious development projects for the Sudan — the Zande cotton scheme. Aimed at transforming Azande society economically and socially, including monetization of the economy, the Zande cotton scheme ran over several decades until finally closing in the 1970s. The goal of the scheme was to turn the Azande into either cotton-growing farmers or cotton-processing factory workers; implicit in the scheme was that a hierarchical society of salaried workers would fulfill expectations of governability (Reining, 1966).

Support for the Zande King

Discussions about the possibility of reinstalling a Zande king emerged after the CPA was signed, as part of different interpretations of what the CPA's clause on self-determination could mean for locally specific forms of customary governance. Reference to the greatness of King Gbudue, memorialized as the last king of the Azande people, is common, coupled with an acknowledgement of his power and ability to unite his people. Historical facts and reshaped history are, as is often the case, somewhat out of sync, since Gbudue was not the sole ruler of the Azande people, even though he was the last of his kind.

Anthropologists working in Zandeland in the early days of the discipline are partially responsible for perpetuating the notion of the Azande as a homogenous group (see Seligman and Seligman, 1932: ix), rather than as the union of several kingdoms made up of many diverse small groups that came to be governed by one of several Zande kings who were members of the Avongara clan and who conquered others (Evans-Pritchard, 1957). Today, the notion of a strong Azande culture in WES has overpowered both the memory that the Azande were once a diverse and multilingual society, as well as the fact that during British colonial rule, the different Zande kings became government chiefs after the British model, with Gbudue's powers limited, despite being the last to be called king.

The discussion on reinstating the Zande king gained prominence leading up to and immediately after the referendum on South Sudan's independence, as different groups in South Sudan sought ways to assert their presence in the difficult landscape that emerges when a rebel army becomes the government and when both rebel movement and government are seen as being primarily dominated by one group (Kalpakian, 2008; Branch and Mampilly, 2005).[3] Talk — and gathering contributions for a coronation — were driven by the idea that the Azande needed to revive and reassert their cultural — and with that possibly political — authority.[4] Since the start of South Sudan's civil war in December 2013, the debate on the Zande king has become subdued, possibly because a focus on establishing such an authority figure is too sensitive in an environment in which real and perceived threats to the central government's authority are at the heart of the current civil war. However, while senior leaders and political figures are now more reluctant to talk about the Zande king, in 2015 ordinary people still regularly referenced the sense of authority, unification and culture that they hoped a king would bring.

Even at the height of enthusiasm for the king, it was not clear how exactly the king would rule and interact with government. This tension highlights the central shortcoming of South Sudan's Local Government Act of 2009, which allows for customary governance and traditional authorities, but fails to clarify how exactly these would function as part of the broader system of governance. Respondents, while highlighting the need to strengthen Zande culture, also often pointed out that many parts of Zande culture were not worth reviving, such as methods of punishing people or early marriages.

What such attitudes highlight – and what is of significance to this paper – is that multiple systems of authority and different beliefs comfortably co-exist in people's notions of governance. What is striking is that people who support the Zande king usually do so because they envision him as a unifier and proponent of Zande culture, with less emphasis on the history that the Zande kings traditionally ruled people who were not Azande and who were allowed to keep their own governance systems and language. Residents of WES who are not Zande often expressed doubt about the unifying power of the king today and stated that they did not see how the king could hold a position of office that was representative of the entire state.

ALTERNATIVE SECURITY PROVISION: THE CASE OF WESTERN EQUATORIA'S ARROW BOYS

During Sudan's civil wars, the Azande participated in the fighting, although not as prominently as other tribes (Rolandsen, 2011). WES was one of the first areas under SPLA control; the rebels needed the reliable food supply from what could be South Sudan's bread basket if the fertility of the land could be translated into agricultural production and marketing of the produce. Remembering this, WES's population today argues that it was the backbone of the liberation struggle. One often-mentioned grievance against the central government of the SPLM/A is that the contribution of the people of WES to the military achievements of the SPLA has not been properly recognized.[5] While little direct fighting happened in Zandeland, the area was much affected by internal displacement and refugees pushed out of DRC by volatile situations there. Internal displacement has also been an ongoing challenge for the Azande host population: when the second civil war raged further north and east, cattle was driven from the northern cattle-keeping tribes into the green pastures of Zandeland. In 2005, after the signing of the CPA, there was little sense that unwelcome cattle keepers would leave. Tensions came to a violent head, with several cattle keepers killed by the local population. The issue has recently flared up again: in January 2015, the governor of WES and neighbouring Lakes State (which is home to the cattle keepers) ordered a 21-day period in which the cattle keepers were to withdraw. The local population doubted whether this would sovle the problem (and by the time of writing it had not) and were quick to point out that today's cattle keepers are heavily armed (rocket-propelled grenades are common) and that much of the cattle is owned by military men in politics in the capital Juba. However, such assertions are often difficult to substantiate.

In early 2015, in particular because South Sudan's current civil war began with a political crisis that soon turned violent, with political divisions sharpened along ethnic lines, the three Equatorian states (Eastern, Central and Western Equatoria) were considered as having an important role to play in finding ways to resolve the crisis. Notably, the Equatorian states have repeatedly refused to take sides in the fighting between the SPLM/

Juba and the SPLM in Opposition, instead arguing that their role must be to break down the dichotomy of South Sudan that the two major ethnic groups present.

Despite having experienced little fighting during the civil war, Western Equatoria's exposure to foreign conflicts has been crucial in creating one of South Sudan's most effective militias. The history of the Western Equatorian arrow boys starts with the arrival of the Ugandan LRA in the area in late 2005. Western Equatorians were put on high alert by the first sightings of the infamous Ugandan rebels — who had had military bases for many years in Eastern Equatoria State on the other side of the Nile (Prunier, 2004; Johnson, 2003; Schomerus, 2007). The situation for civilians was precarious, and there was no indication that the SPLA would come to protect them if the LRA launched attacks (Gordon, Vandewint and Lehmeier, 2007). Thus, the local youth started to organize itself for protection duties; older members of the community, including women, soon joined.

From 2006 to 2008, there were few LRA attacks in WES, as the LRA was engaged in peace talks held in the capital Juba. These ended after repeated refusals by LRA leader Joseph Kony to sign a final peace agreement and after Uganda's army, with support from US forces, launched the ill-fated Operation Lightning Thunder on the LRA base in Garamba Park in the DRC in mid-December 2008 (Atkinson, 2009; Schomerus and Tumutegyereize, 2009). This marked the next stage of the conflict involving the LRA. The result was that the LRA scattered across DRC, CAR and WES, with devastating consequences for civilians, as the LRA launched revenge attacks (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

Having had a somewhat dormant protection militia due to concerns about the LRA presence since 2006, members of the community in Maridi — a non-Zande county east of the state capital Yambio — then properly mobilized as a protection militia under the name arrow boys. The arrow boys are well-organized in the sense that local groups have clear structures with a head of the arrow boys and with connections across different local groups that exchange information. The position of the head of the arrow boys is fixed in the sense that in some areas, the same person has headed the arrow boys for years. There is no central command, however, that unites all heads of arrow boys under one hierarchy, with groups staying relatively independent of each other and negotiating individual relationships with authorities in their area. The militia went through various name incarnations — at times being referred to as the Home Guard — and also quickly expanded into Zande communities west of Maridi where the LRA was being spotted. As early as late December 2008, an increased number of these groups of civilians started patrolling the roads and the bush for LRA movement.[6]

Since the number of arrow boys swells and subsides depending on security information, the at times ad hoc nature of the various groups in different locations makes it difficult to put a number on membership. The name arrow boys obscures the fact that women also join this protective force, as do grown men. However, one respondent estimated

that with the fluid volunteer structure of the arrow boys, "arrow boys and girls are more than 40 percent of the population."[7] Our survey results suggest that this is not an outlandish estimation; 209 out of 425 respondents indicated that they themselves or at least one member of their household had been a member of the arrow boys in the previous 12 months. Given an average adult household size of three, this would put arrow boy membership anywhere between 16 and 50 percent of the population in the surveyed areas.

As a result of the transplanted LRA conflict and increased international interest in the LRA, WES has become a state with an extraordinary presence of military forces. Ugandan forces have been there since Operation Lightning Thunder through a bilateral agreement with South Sudan. In the past few years, the UPDF's mandate has shifted as the Ugandan troops became part of an African Union military response force against the LRA, which also includes the SPLA, soldiers from CAR and, at least initially on paper, also Congolese forces. In addition, 100 US military advisers have been present in South Sudan to support the Ugandan forces since 2011 as part of US legislation against the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009, 2010; Schomerus, Allen and Vlassenroot, 2011). UN peacekeepers are also based in the area, although their presence has been reduced since the start of South Sudan's civil war, as WES is not part of the more recent fighting.

How the arrow boys are perceived is partially shaped by the fact that there is fighting in other parts of the country. With fighting concentrated in the Greater Upper Nile region, UN peacekeeping forces have largely been withdrawn, with the base in Tambura abandoned and the base in Ezo turned over to Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. While locally this might have again elevated the arrow boys position as the sole protector, some arrow boys remarked that it expressed lack of interest in the security of these quarters and demotivated them to engage more broadly in the politics of the crisis. While there is a general fear that fighting might reach WES, a number of arrow boys explicitly stated their disconnect from the political underpinnings of the crisis and lack of interest in engaging with it. However, in the eastern part of the state, the situation has been different, due to clashes between cattle keepers and locals and vague rumours of a WES-born rebellion which has allowed the government to use the army to crack down on a population suspected of planning to rebel (see de Vries and Schomerus, 2015). In interviews, even arrow boys in *payams* that had experienced tensions with cattle keepers kept the task of community protection from the LRA – which they identified as their task – and the task of taking on cattle keepers – which they saw as directly connected to central government – distinct, expressing little interest in the latter, although there was some revenge and counter-revenge violence in June 2015.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ARROW BOYS

The arrow boys are a non-state actor that emerged out of the need to provide protection in a complex situation in which the state army was not coming to the rescue. Today, they remain as both a real and imaginary force that might help in enforcing Western Equatoria's interests with the central government. Using the framework of this project, the arrow boys can be characterized as follows.

Function

The arrow boys' main function was to protect the community from attacks by the LRA. Contrary to previous experiences with such protection militias, they did not turn predatory against their own community – or at least not as widely and consistently as other similar forces have – and instead were successful in keeping LRA attacks to a minimum, although this capacity was initially doubted (Lokuji, Abatneh, Wani, 2009: 11).

Arrow boys act not only as a protection force for the community, but also as an information hub, both of which contributed to making them a highly regarded group in the community.

Respondents talked about a number of different activities of the arrow boys. In one area, for example, the arrow boys were representing the community along with other authorities: "When there is any decision to be taken, the *payam* administrator call[s] the chief, the youth, the arrow boys. And actually in security the major part has been played by the arrow boys."[8] This role has been occupied by the arrow boys despite trickle-down effects of South Sudan-wide SSR activities, such as the presence of at least formally better-trained policemen. At times, often based on the quality of personal relationships, the arrow boys have worked closely with other security forces, primarily the US special advisers and the SPLA. Along the border, the arrow boys have also taken on border management duties – in the absence of official state border controls – and have expanded their territory of activity into the CAR. There are no other South Sudanese forces working to explicitly protect this part of the border, yet the extent to which the arrow boys officially communicate or indeed have been officially mandated to secure the border is not clear.

What is obvious to the international neighbours is that the border management through the arrow boys is haphazard. The CAR forces stationed on one of the border crossings explained that the arrow boy's management of the border was disruptive: "The arrow boys, because they have never gone to school, they always close the border," one commander of the CAR forces argued, implying that the duties taken on by the arrow boys were beyond their level of competency. The arrow boys' foray into CAR territory also concerned him: "Arrow boys like to cross the border to attack Ambororo [nomadic cattle keepers who were expelled from WES in 2009]. The most recent one was six months ago

from Bariguna, five miles from here. The arrow boys entered from Bariguna and killed a person. The arrow boys followed footsteps of cattle but found a person, killed that person and went back. It was between 10 and 30 arrow boys. I am wondering where the hatred comes from. Why are [the Ambororo] still being followed after they have left the place?"[9]

Interests

Although some members of the arrow boys have guns, their name accurately describes their main weapon. In addition to arrows, the protection militia uses self-made guns that shoot a locally available bullet as ammunition. Although in the early days of the protection offensive against the LRA, the arrow boys were promised substantial funding by the southern Sudanese parliament (Ruati, 2010), such payment seems to never have materialized. However, some respondents reported that various county commissioners had provided the arrow boys with the ammunition needed to build their guns and had at various times worked closely or even acted as official liaison to the arrow boys, although most arrow boys interviewed were adamant that they were not subject to official command lines that involved local government officials. Interactions with the state were regularly described as somewhat haphazard and dependent on situations and personalities. Western Equatoria's governor openly supported the arrow boys after his election in 2010; he continues to be an outspoken advocate of them in his interactions with the central government in Juba. The arrow boys, however, did not seem to see much tangible support coming from the governor toward them. Small bits and pieces of material support were given by the US advisers, who reportedly handed over a few satellite phones to the arrow boys– but to their great concern, did not provide any calling credit. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) have engaged with the arrow boys as an interest group, but there are no reports of further material support.

Values and communitarianism

The arrow boys are a community-driven protection force, which, although not directly commanded by county or state officials, is to a certain extent administered by them. For example, the commissioner of a county will act as a liaison to the arrow boys or alert them to movements they should be aware of. Attempts to contact the arrow boys without consulting the commissioner results in intense scrutiny by local intelligence and security forces. In some parts, the connection between the commissioner and the arrow boys is further moderated by the local chief; chiefs themselves occupy a hybrid function between being a government authority – with a government salary – and a traditional authority, although mandated as such by South Sudan's Local Government Act of 2009.[10]

From their inception, the arrow boys enjoyed support from the community, which provided them with food for their patrols and payed regular tax specifically for the arrow boys– beyond that they do not receive regular payments. In one area, the unofficial community tax was reported to be five South Sudanese pounds per household as additional tax for the arrow boys.[11] Since being an arrow boy is not a fulltime occupation, most continue to tend to their fields when there are no reported reasons to patrol; in some cases, local communities reported helping to tend to the fields of arrow boys if they were going on longer patrols. Without fail, interviewed arrow boys who were interviewed felt that their effort was not sufficiently rewarded, but insisted that their purpose was to support the community and hence financial rewards was not the primary driver for their work.

Table 1: Support for the Arrow Boys

Indicators of support	Weighted % of respondents
Respondent's household has given food to the arrow boys in the past year	80.7
A household member has been a member of the arrow boys in the past year	55.9
Respondent would go to the arrow boys when they are afraid of being physically harmed by a person outside their family	34.6
Has reported an issue or concern to the arrow boys in the past year	8.4
Trusts arrow boys "always" or "most of the time"	85.1

From the answers to the survey questions, summarized in Table 1, community support for the arrow boys appears strong. More than 80 percent of households have supported the arrow boys with a gift of food in the past year, and in over half of the households surveyed at least one member was a member of the arrow boys. The arrow boys are also a relevant actual and hypothetical point of call: 8.4 percent of respondents have called on the arrow boys with an issue or concern in the past year, making them the fifth-most-referred-to authority (after the police, the elders, the *boma* administrator and the executive chief). For more than a third of respondents, the arrow boys would be a hypothetical point of call if they are afraid for their security. Trust in the arrow boys is also high.

Few demographic variables systematically explain support for the arrow boys. Women are significantly more likely to trust the arrow boys and have a member of the arrow boys in

their household. Older respondents are less likely to have an arrow boy in their household and less likely to have reported an issue or concern to them. Gender or age is unrelated to any of the other indicators of support for the arrow boys. Unsurprisingly, larger households in terms of number of adults are more likely to have given the arrow boys food and contain a member. Permanent residents of the *boma* are more likely to trust the arrow boys and to have given them food.

A striking factor is that the arrow boys also seem to act as a bridge between ethnic groups: the first groups of arrow boys were founded in a non-Zande area of WES, with groups now stretching the length of the border. Their contribution and role in society, however, differs from area to area, and we found a few factors that contribute to these differences. In some areas, respondents expressed concerns about whether the arrow boys were a sustainable entity, or would at some point turn into a burden for the community. In other areas, the arrow boys are seen as taking on functions beyond the provision of protection, for example by working closely with the courts to arrest people that are to appear in court. No official arrangement exists regarding either payment or authority to do such work. Rather, it is based on personal relationships between individual chiefs or administrators and the arrow boys. Yet, the somewhat haphazard nature of the arrow boys' use for law enforcement activities required by official government actors points toward the fluidity of how law is enforced — or, at times, abused. We have heard isolated reports of arrow boys exploiting their power by arresting and intimidating people or extracting resources. A recent complaint was that the arrow boys had stopped working for and sharing information with the community and had instead made themselves part of the government by only dealing directly with the commissioner.

The degree of fear of the LRA, which in turn is influenced by access to information about the LRA broadcasted on the radio, is related to the imagined role of the arrow boys (Rigterink and Schomerus, forthcoming). In areas with less exposure to radio information and commensurate lower fear of the LRA, for example, the role of the arrow boys is imagined in much more permanent ways. In areas where people had better access to information on the radio and a higher level of fear of the LRA, the arrow boys were mostly seen as a temporary protection force that was offering a huge personal sacrifice by putting their lives on hold to patrol the bush under very difficult conditions.

In sum, the arrow boys are, although organized, a group of fluid membership drawn from affected communities that provide direct protection from attacks by patrolling the bush and road, stationing themselves in villages that are under threat of attack, reporting information to the community, following tracks in the bush and liaising with government authorities and, to a certain extent, international authorities, such as the Ugandan forces, US military advisers, UN staff and INGOs. The direct beneficiaries are community members — often individuals who live in particularly remote areas.

LOCAL RELATIONS WITH THE SUDAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

Residents of WES have a complicated history with the SPLA for a number of reasons. First, as the largest tribe in WES, the Azande at times claim to be the third- or even the second-largest tribe in South Sudan. In the past, both before and after Sudan's independence from colonial rule, the Zande areas became a focal point for primarily Catholic missions; the knock-on effect in independent Sudan was that literacy rates among the Azande were disproportionately high, with educated Zande seeking employment in southern government positions, in particular during the Addis Ababa agreement. There is a strong narrative in the Azande community that opportunities, however, had been denied to them to the advantage of the Dinka people, who are often seen as being synonymous with the SPLA, as well as being one of the major cattle-keeping groups in South Sudan.

Second, there has been ongoing tension between the farmers of lush WES and the cattle keepers, whose traditional home is in the more topographically hostile area further north. During dry season, cattle are often driven down south to take advantage of the better grazing conditions; this means that farmland is often destroyed and crops are eaten by the cattle. This has in the past created tension that at times has resulted in violence. An added complication is that high-ranking SPLA generals – who have often moved into government positions – are reported to have close ties to the cattle keepers, who tend to migrate to WES from Jonglei or Lakes States for grazing and to escape conflict or cattle disease, and are thus seen not only as not helping the people of Western Equatoria defend their farmland, but as actively encouraging cattle keepers to take advantage of the better pastures. A respondent described how the reality of an uncontrolled army, the merging of army and political party and the tight connection between the SPLA and cattle keepers had played out in the lives of the people of Western Equatoria: "When the SPLA/M comes to places like here, they feel like people want to outsmart them. Most people have a lot of horrible tales from our own soldiers, rape, beating, young girls raped with bottles and opened their organs with a razor blade to penetrate. Also, people do not differentiate between SPLA and SPLM. In November 2005, people stood up against the SPLA. Some of the Dinkas were burnt and the hatred really went higher."[12]

After a 2005 peace conference between Dinka cattle keepers and residents of Western Equatoria, it at first seemed the issue had been addressed. As a result, many of those who had been displaced (even without cattle) left the state again. But there is now an understanding that such peace efforts have not worked. In 2015, the same issue had again come to the forefront. A resolution was passed with the support of the national government stating that cattle keepers were to leave the state after an escalation of violence in the area in 2014 had brought about government-supported negotiations.[13]

The events surrounding the peace talks with the LRA served as the catalyst for many developments still crucial in WES. When the LRA was based in the borderlands between

DRC and Ibba County in WES from 2006 to 2008, the community was angered that their concerns for protection went unheard. In the early days of the Juba Peace Talks, when the community started setting up their own protection mechanisms against the LRA, they were ordered to stay away from interfering with the LRA by the vice-president, who was also mediating the talks. One respondent described the situation:

> When the community retaliated against the LRA before, the LRA complained that they cannot go to [their designated assembly area]. So the top leadership told the community that anybody who fights the LRA will be arrested. This annoyed the community so much because Riek Machar [mediator of the talks during his time as vice-president, now leader of the armed opposition] talked publicly about this and the community thinks that [the government] is taking no initiative to protect people. In most cases, when the army was on the ground, they did not interfere…People are not only angry with Riek, but also angry with [President] Salva. They are angry with the leadership.[14]

The pattern of the army not interfering continued long after the peace talks with the LRA failed, and is a prominent theme today. The disillusionment with the army as a protective force is not exclusive to one respondent's views on the SPLA; it stretches also to opinions on the UPDF, the US soldiers and UN forces: "Why bring more soldiers if they don't protect us? If they bring more they can even kill us. So we can protect ourselves. Our boys are there."[15]

The notion of the "boys" — the arrow boys— being the better protection force is strong. Their superiority is not based on equipment; in fact, it is regularly stressed that their weapons are primarily bows and arrows as well as *panga* knives. What makes the arrow boys a superior force in the borderlands of South Sudan with DRC and CAR is their local knowledge of the bush. In the past, they regularly followed foot tracks of suspected LRA, at times engaging in fighting with the LRA. However, it is also this strong position of local knowledge and community support that creates further tension between the community and the SPLA.

The relationship between the SPLA as the official, yet inefficient, army, and the arrow boys as the unofficial, yet helpful, force has at various times been tense. A common narrative from respondents was that even when the arrow boys passed on information about the LRA movement to the SPLA, the SPLA would often not follow up or would even use the arrow boys as human shields against the LRA: "If they come close to LRA, SPLA will say these arrow boys should stand in front of them and the soldiers will [stand] back."[16] Others talked about attempts to curb the strength of the arrow boys and saw this as an expression of government distrust of the protection militia: "There were even accusations that the SPLA fought the arrow boys. But the arrow boys were brought up by the community to protect the community. [They were doing what] was the work of the SPLA. So people even

accuse the government [of intended neglect]."[17] That the arrow boys are seen as a genuine threat to the strength of the central government has been a strong narrative for some years. A prominent spiritual leader explained that "other tribes see the arrow boys, so the fiction in the mind is that Azande can be very strong militarily."[18] This is taken as the main explanation for the tense relationship between arrow boys and the SPLA.

Attitudes toward the arrow boys and the SPLA apparent from the survey confirms the above. Compared to the arrow boys, the SPLA enjoys substantially less support. Less than one percent of respondents had actually brought a concern in front of the SPLA, few characterized the SPLA as the most important authority since independence and even in the hypothetical, few respondents would turn to the SPLA in the case of a security threat. Less than half of the respondents indicated that they trust the SPLA "always" or "most of the time." Compared to the other indicators of support for the SPLA, and to the distrust expressed in qualitative interviews, the latter indicator may still appear surprisingly high. However, respondents generally appeared inclined to express trust (or reluctant to express distrust) in most actors included in the survey. Out of the 11 actors included, the SPLA scored the lowest on trust, with even the foreign UPDF scoring higher. Unfavourable attitudes toward the SPLA also contrast with attitudes toward, for example, the police. More than 81 percent of the respondents reported that they trust the police "always" or "most of the time." The police also appears to be the most common port of call: over a third of the population had reported an issue or concern to the police in the last year and more than two- thirds would go to the police in the case of a (hypothetical) security threat.

TABLE 2: SUPPORT FOR THE SPLA

Indicators of Support	Weighted % of respondents
Respondent names SPLA as most important authority since independence	7.7
Respondent would go to the SPLA when they are afraid to be physically harmed by a person outside their family	6.2
Has reported an issue or concern to the SPLA in the past year	0.56
Trusts SPLA "always" or "most of the time"	46.9

Support – or lack thereof – for the SPLA is largely independent of the demographic characteristics. None of the demographic variables is significantly related to turning to the SPLA in the case of a (hypothetical) threat, or to having reported a concern to the SPLA in the past year. Permanent residency and gender are positively related to trust in the SPLA, but not to any of the other indicators of support for this actor.

Support for National Government

Although in practice the SPLA is often seen as synonymous with government, respondents tended to make a strong theoretical distinction between being governed by soldiers and the political authority of the elected officials. Although the elections were largely experienced as pressured and flawed, the process of having voted seems to have established a separate category of government, albeit only in theory. Thus, it is useful to examine attitudes toward the national government. Survey data (summarized in Table 3) show that respondents were critical of the national government even before the crisis that started in December 2013: only a third (strongly) agree with the statement that their expectations for the government in Juba are satisfied. Less than one-fifth of respondents named the president as the single most important authority since independence. Even when including all actors related to formal government, slightly more than half the respondents named any government authority as the most important since independence. Other respondents judged the church, the UN and the local chief (and to a lesser extent NGOs or an army other than the SPLA or UN) as most important. Chiefs in South Sudan are officially part of the government system and are – at least nominally – paid a government salary. The set-up, established during colonial times (see (Leonardi, 2013), is, however, open to interpretation regarding the exact role of the chief: depending on personal relationships, a chief can be viewed as a government representative and, as such, with hostility or expectation, whereas in other situations, a chief can act as a buffer between government and people. It is not impossible that the exact role a chief fulfills in a specific situation influences the broader view of national government.

TABLE 3: SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Indicators of Support	Weighted % of respondents
Respondent (strongly) agrees with the statement: "My expectations for the government in Juba are satisfied"	33.3
Respondent plans to register to vote in the next elections	80.8
Paid any tax in the past year to *payam*, county or state	78.2
Respondent names president as most important authority since independence	18.5
Respondent names president, SPLA, governor or county commissioner as most important authority since independence	54.4

Despite – or maybe because of – the skepticism expressed by respondents about the national government, respondents seemed very willing to participate in national

politics through voting: 80 percent of respondents planned to register to vote in the next elections (at the time of research it had not been announced when these might happen). Furthermore, compliance to pay at least some tax is fairly high: close to 80 percent of respondents indicated that they have paid some tax in the past year. This appears to consist mainly of taxes levied in the market.

When it comes to support for the national government, gender seems to make a difference. Men were significantly more likely to say that their expectation for the government in Juba has been satisfied, and that they planned to vote in the next election. Contradictory to these results, men were significantly less likely to have paid tax in the past year. Gender is also not significantly related to identifying the president as the most important authority since independence. Respondents in larger households (in terms of number of adults) were less likely to be satisfied with government, yet more likely to pay tax. Other demographic variables were unrelated to more than one indicator of support for government.

The relationship of the arrow boys to the formal authorities needs to also be seen through the lens of communities' relationship with formal authorities. That there are two kinds of relationships highlights the many layers of political and military leadership that communities experience: distrust toward central government authorities is high, particularly toward the SPLA. In contrast, the trust toward state officials is much higher, even though that does not always translate into having expectations, for example of the governor, fulfilled. Yet in the tight interactions, including the governor's public pronouncements of his support of and reliance on the arrow boys, a process of political formation occurs in which the state of Western Equatoria positions itself against activities by the central government. What we may observe is thus a response by the states to attempts by the central government to disempower them, with the state relying on internal resources to act more strongly in the face of central government, rather than on processes of decentralization that are driven by the central government through distribution of resources and power. The common logic of state formation as centralization and accumulation at the central level thus does not apply. This is not surprising, and a reminder that a legitimate authority for South Sudan's central state does not exist — nor is there a history of such authority — or rather that common notions of the state and the dichotomy of state and non-state actors are not applicable to South Sudan.

DIFFERENT MODELS OF IMAGINED GOVERNANCE: THE ZANDE KING

The Zande king is at the moment an imagined cultural and political authority for the Zande people of WES; there is currently no king. The quest for a new Zande king stems from the 2005 provision in the CPA that southerners were to be allowed to govern themselves according to their own will; this clause for self-determination has now largely been

interpreted to have been focused only on the referendum on independence. Though the king remains an imagined cultural authority and whether he will be crowned is unclear, the idea of a king appears to enjoy a high level of support. Close to 95 percent of respondents supported the coronation of a Zande king. There is less unanimous agreement on the tasks of the Zande king – for example getting better outcomes for the state with the central government, and whether or not the basis of power for the Zande king lies in some kind of democratic choice. However, a considerable majority of respondents expressed favourable opinions toward the Zande king when answering these questions.

As with the arrow boys, demographic variables do not consistently explain support for the Zande king. Women were significantly more likely to agree with the statements that the king should get better outcomes for WES with the central government and that having a king is a democratic right. Furthermore, households that are poorer in terms of number of chickens owned were less likely to agree with these statements.

Table 4: Support for Zande King

Indicators of support	Weighted % of respondents
Respondent (strongly) agrees with the statement "I support the coronation of a new Zande king"	94.5
Respondent (strongly) agrees with the statement "An important task of the future Zande king will be to get better outcomes for WES with the government in Juba"	86.7
Respondent (strongly) agrees with the statement "Because we have a democracy, people in WES now have a right to have a Zande king"	88.8

State versus Non-state or Civilian versus Military?

As an alternative governance structure, it could be expected that the king might represent the non-state actor that is expected to act as checks and balances on the government. This notion of parallel structures of the non-state king versus the state governor seems enhanced by the suggestion of the arrow boys that they could act as the king's guard, thus dividing both governance and security provision along seemingly clear state and non-state lines, despite some overlap where arrow boys liaise more closely with state actors. Further, it would seem that community support rests firmly with the arrow boys for protection and military matters, whereas notions of ideal governance and cultural as well as judicial leadership are located with the office of the king. On the other side of the state/non-state spectrum would thus be the national army and central government. Yet what is the

relationship between support for the arrow boys and Zande king and support for central government and the national army?

Using the commonly assumed division between state and non-state actors, these authorities could be divided into state and non-state authorities, where the arrow boys and the Zande king are considered non-state and the government and the SPLA are considered state actors. Alternatively, we may divide them into military versus civilian authorities, using the different basis from which these actors derive power: force and hierarchy, respectively. Then, the SPLA and arrow boys would fall in the same category, as would the government and the Zande king.

Most assumptions regarding the cleavage between state and non-state actors confirm that this is the most important demarcation line between authorities and that this is how communities experience the divide. Although scholarship, particularly on justice provision, is moving toward an understanding that the dichotomy is imagined and that in fact both actors form part of one system that communities access for justice (Leonardi et al. 2010), this is still a dominant view. Thus, we would expect support for the Arrow Boys to be positively related to support for the Zande king, and negatively to support for both state actors — meaning that people trust generally either a state or a non-state authority. Likewise, we would expect support for the government and the SPLA to be positively correlated to each other, and negatively to both non-state actors. However, if we think the military versus civilian cleavage is the most relevant, we would expect support for the arrow boys to correlate positively to support for the SPLA, and negatively to both civilian forms of authority.

To examine this correlation, we first condense the indicators of support for the four authorities using factors analysis. From factor analysis, support for the arrow boys has two dimensions. Having a member of the arrow boys in the household is strongly correlated (at the one percent level) to having given the arrow boys food. Furthermore, indicators for naming the arrow boys as a hypothetical or real point of call and trusting the arrow boys are strongly correlated. However, these two sets of variables do not correlate with each other. Factor analysis similarly identifies two factors with reasonably high eigenvalues (0.58 and 0.37 respectively). The first of these factors is dominated by the answers to the questions on going to the arrow boys in the case of hypothetical trouble, actual reporting to the arrow boys and trust in the arrow boys; the second is dominated by the indicators for giving the arrow boys food and having a member in the household. We conclude that support for the arrow boys has two dimensions: reliance on the arrow boys and willingness to contribute to the arrow boys. These two dimensions do not correlate significantly. In other words, respondents who are the most willing to contribute to the arrow boys do not necessarily rely on them the most.

Factor analysis on the other three sets of indicators of support results in three single eigenvalues. Attitudes toward the Zande king are most coherent, with factor analysis resulting in one strong common factor with an eigenvalue of 1.27. Indicators of support for the SPLA only weakly cohere: the strongest common factor among indicators of support for the SPLA has an eigenvalue of 0.10, with going to the SPLA in case of insecurity and reporting to the SPLA the main contributing variables. The implication of this low eigenvalue is that the condensed indicator of support for the SPLA only captures a small percentage of the variation in the original data. Hence, results on the SPLA should be treated with caution. The eigenvalue obtained through factor analysis on the four indicators of support for national government is slightly higher (0.29). It is mainly driven by satisfaction with government and planning to vote in the next elections (carrying a positive sign) and identifying the president as a lead authority (with a negative sign).

In line with this, we include two factors for the arrow boys in the analysis: reliance on them and willingness to contribute to them. The correlation between these two factors is omitted, because two factors resulting from the same factor analysis are uncorrelated by design. We include a factor measuring support for the SPLA, Zande king and national government respectively.

Table 5 presents the correlation between the five factors. Looking first at the arrow boys, reliance on this actor is negatively correlated to support for the Zande king, and unrelated to support for the government. Similar results are obtained when using data normalized by demographic variables and by demographic variables and *boma* of residence combined. Furthermore, reliance on the arrow boys is positively correlated to support for the SPLA, although this coefficient is only significant at the 10 percent level and this result, especially combined with the concerns over the SPLA factor variable mentioned earlier, cannot be considered strong. However, the result does hold when using normalized data. Contribution to the arrow boys is unrelated to both support for the SPLA (robust to both normalizations) and the Zande king, but negatively related to support for the government. The latter two results are robust to normalizing by demographics, but not to including *boma* of residence.

Perhaps surprisingly, results regarding the arrow boys indicate that people who support this non-state actor are not more likely to support the other non-state actor under investigation, the Zande king. If anything, respondents supporting the arrow boys are less likely to support the Zande king. Nor does reliance on the arrow boys necessarily imply diminished support for the national government. Furthermore, there is some suggestive evidence that reliance on the arrow boys is positively related to support for the other army-like actor, the SPLA. Taken together, these results provide little evidence that the state versus non-state cleavage is a relevant dimension in categorizing the attitudes of people in WES versus these four actors.

Table 5: Correlation between Factors Indicating Support for Each Authority

Factor	Reliance on arrow boys	Contribution to arrow boys	SPLA	Zande King	National Government
Reliance on arrow boys					
Contribution to arrow boys	Omitted				
SPLA	+*	0			
Zande King	-**	0	0		
National Government	0	-***	0	+***	

+ : positive correlation - : negative correlation 0: no significant correlation *: p<0.1 **: p<0.05 ***: p<0.01

Other results confirm this and, furthermore, suggest that the military versus civilian dimension is more relevant. Support for the SPLA is unrelated to support for the Zande king or the national government, although these results are not robust to normalization. The correlation between support for the Zande king and support for the national government is positive and strongly significant. This result is robust to normalizing by demographics, but not to including *boma* of residence. Hence, support for the SPLA does not necessarily imply support for the national government, however closely related they might be historically. In addition, support for the national government and support for the Zande king do not, from this analysis, appear incompatible. The civilian versus military cleavage appears more relevant than the state versus non-state division. How this plays out might best be described by a soldier from CAR, stationed near the border, who observes both arrow boys and SPLA: "The SPLA works against the other forces. Arrow boys and SPLA compete."[19] This might explain the vision of the group of arrow boys who want to become the guards of the king: in their understanding as a military actor, authority could only come through access to a force. The overwhelming majority of respondents – particularly those who were not arrow boys – outright rejected the idea that the king would present himself as an alternative to the SPLA/M model, meaning he would gain authority through access to a force. This amounts, broadly, to the finding that it is generally accepted that state and non-state actors, with blurred lines between them, might be able to occupy the same space.

CONCLUSION: PROCESSES OF ALTERNATIVE STATE FORMATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN SOUTH SUDAN

We have argued that in the perception of citizens of WES, the dominant distinction between governance models is more between civilian and military than between formal and informal systems. What does the case of the arrow boys, the Zande king, the SPLA and the national government tell us about processes of state formation in South Sudan?

In this conclusion, we make a conceptual leap from the local to the national level. We argue that at the national level, the distinction between civilian and military authority is also more important. Furthermore, we look at the arrow boys through the lens of national state-building and SSR processes. Up to now, the arrow boys have been relatively untouched by these processes. However, it is clear that common visions of a modern "built" state and a "reformed" security sector are not necessarily compatible with the continued existence of groups like the arrow boys. We look at what common SSR approaches and our research imply for the future of the arrow boys and at the wider implications for SSR in South Sudan.

The readily available state-building template – that seeks to build or strengthen institutions and professionalize the security apparatus – has long been challenged and doubted in the context of South Sudan (Lacher, 2012). Instead, it has been noted that the time of the CPA brought an expansion, rather than reduction, of the security sector, and that the government was struggling – and continues to struggle – to act as a civilian authority (de Waal, 2014; Weber, 2013). The initial template for SSR in South Sudan was to integrate existing militias in the SPLA. Roughly speaking, this would mean that a militia like the arrow boys would ultimately need to be integrated into the national army – although there seems to have been little interest in this even before the current crisis challenged the sustainability of the approach altogether. A next step in the SSR template was to downsize the SPLA through DDR programs and then professionalize the remaining army. Such professionalization would require a clarification of command structures and the setting up of reliable payment systems. Crucially, it would require that clear divisions be drawn between the military forces and a civilian government. In other words, professionalization is expected to contribute to state building by splitting civilian and military lines of governance.

The violence that broke out in South Sudan in December 2013 made it clear yet again that this approach has failed: the military permeates all governance aspects even more since the civil war began in 2013. The reason for the failure is commonly considered to be lack of political will; this is indeed likely a major issue. In particular, there is a lack of political will to downsize and professionalize the security forces. There have been attempts, although incomplete and clearly failed, to integrate various factions of armed forces into the SPLA. Donor support has mainly been for the building of state institutions and support for the

government – with more support recently going toward civil society. With the crisis bringing the intricate relationship between government and the military into sharp focus, it is fair to say that donors are reassessing this approach, with a number of governments having cut off direct work with the government of South Sudan altogether.

The case of the arrow boys and the Zande king also invites us to consider another version of the reasons for the failure SSR in South Sudan – one that highlights a more fundamental conceptual error in what SSR was aiming to achieve in South Sudan. Reforming the military governance through integration into "formal" military forces might give modes military governance more prominence, which means that it might contribute to the number of actors acting in some sort of military capacity. It also seems to be the case that the way SSR in South Sudan was framed in conjunction with an environment in which military ties determine access to resources (Pinaud, 2014) has had the effect of militarizing government, rather than civilianizing it. Militarization of government was already pervasive at the level of central government; the combination of lack of protection, blurry lines between state and non-state military actors and alienation from the central government seems to have taken this further to the local level. In a sense, military approaches to military governance – even if they aim to reform – might unavoidably create further militarization. Furthermore, integration into the formal army may undermine the arrow boys' most important power base: their (perceived) identity as protectors of the community.

We have seen that support for the arrow boys, the SPLA, the Zande king and the national government is not split along state/non-state actor lines, but rather along civilian versus military modes of governance. If this bifurcation is strongest in garnering support, the pursuit of political interests may be constructed along the same lines – that is, by using either civilian or military power to achieve authority. If so, the lack of political will for professionalization, to separate the civilian from the military, has a clear rationale. The template approach of SSR as integration, downsizing and professionalization may be pursuing the wrong change. Integrating "informal" military actors and "formal" military ones, in the absence of political will to downsize or professionalize, might contribute to an increasingly militarized process of state formation at the local level, in a country where the high degree of militarization of the central government has already become blatantly clear.

What are the alternatives? Focusing on professionalizing the army and separating military and civilian modes of governance is a logical step, yet has proven unfeasible in the face of lack of political will and perhaps capacity to think about governance without military. Instead, if the bifurcation between civilian and military modes of governance is indeed the defining element, the most poignant implication for SSR is that reform cannot start from within the security sector, but has to first happen in the civilian sector. In the case of the arrow boys, a tell-tale sign of the militarization of authority is the fact that the arrow boys

in WES often communicate directly with the SPLA or the Ugandan forces – sometimes accompanying them on ill-fated joint missions. Yet such coordination between military forces entirely bypasses much of the civilian government, who in a reformed governance model would arguably be better suited to oversee military activities. This would support SSR orthodoxy, which stresses the need for effective civilian governance of the security sector above all other aspects. Furthermore, the arrow boys are treated by many actors as a de facto state force – recent programs by the International Committee of the Red Cross to train the arrow boys in international humanitarian law highlight the murky authority that is assigned to them.

If civilian government is to be strengthened and with that increase its primacy over the military governance model on the local level, a more fine-tuned interpretation of how civilian state and non-state actors will work with each other is necessary. South Sudan's Local Government Act of 2009 explicitly provides for the authority of traditional leaders; however, how this will be employed in practice has never been clarified. Instead of inadvertently increasing the importance of the military model of governance by merging state and non-state military actors, attention might focus on increasing cooperation between state and non-state civilian modes of government and strengthening their position vis-à-vis the military mode of governments, starting at the local level.

For donors, this might require a rethinking of approaches for SSR. Genuinely engaging with the governance practice of South Sudan is a necessary first step, which requires an understanding of hybrid actors such as the arrow boys – and taking a stance on the extent to which engaging with such actors is possible or necessary. However, in this context, it is important to note that hybridity is a term used to cover a whole range of perspectives (Goodfellow and Lindemann, 2013); donors would thus need to settle on an operationally relevant understanding of the concept rather than choosing a buzzword to describe a complex situation.

For specific SSR engagement, rethinking donor engagement in a militarized environment with little political will to demilitarize might mean focusing less on military matters and more on strengthening local governance structures from the *payam* level upwards. It might mean that SSR has to happen outside the security sector. Local actors such as the arrow boys, chiefs or *payam* administrators have seen very little donor or international engagement, yet it is these actors that will determine how day-to-day governance and security matters are run in South Sudan. Local government support has at best been limited to infrastructure building – for example, county headquarters – but has engaged little with locally identified training needs, that, when met might help to contribute to a less top-down militarized development of stronger local structures, security provision and livelihood options of those who are also engaged in the governing and protection of the South Sudanese people.

NOTES

1. Author interview with a group of arrow boys, Tambura County, May 20, 2013.
2. See the appendix for a list of questions asked.
3. See also author fieldwork, 2010–2012.
4. Author interviews December 2012, April–May 2013, January–February 2015.
5. Author field notes.
6. Koos (2014) argues that the arrow boys emerged as a collective action phenomenon.
7. Author interview with prominent chief, Yambio County, December 17, 2012.
8. Author interview with spiritual leader, Tambura County, May 15, 2013.
9. Author interview with Central African Forces (FACA) commander, Bambuti, CAR, May 19, 2013.
10. For a history of merging traditional and formal government in South Sudan, see Leonardi (2013).
11. Author interview with a group of three young men, Tambura County, May 11, 2013.
12. Author interview with Yambio resident, Yambio, February 25, 2009.
13. A forthcoming series of US Agency for International Development reports provides more details about this situation.
14. Author interview with Yambio resident, Yambio, February 25, 2009.
15. Author interview with women's group, Tambura County, May 23, 2013.
16. Author notes from community meeting, Ezo County, May 6, 2013.
17. Author interview with religious sister, Tambura County, May 11, 2013.
18. Author interview with spiritual leader, Yambio County, December 17, 2012.
19. Author interview with FACA commander, Bambuti, CAR, May 19, 2013.

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APPENDIX

Structured survey questions regarding support for military and administrative authorities

The following questions were used to gauge support for the arrow boys, the SPLA, the Zande king and the national government respectively.

1. Questions on support for the arrow boys:

    1. In the past 12 months, did you or a member of your household give any food to the arrow boys?
    2. In the past 12 months, have you or a member of your household been a member of the arrow boys?
    3. In the past 12 months, have you brought an issue or concern in front of the arrow boys?
    4. How often do you trust the arrow boys? (always, most of the time, rarely, never)
    5. When you are afraid to be physically harmed by someone outside your family, who do you go to in order to get protection? (open question, but code supplied for arrow boys)

2. Questions on support for the SPLA:

    1. Since independence, which of the following authorities do you think is most important? (SPLA given as option)
    2. In the past 12 months, have you brought an issue or concern in front of the SPLA?
    3. How often do you trust the SPLA? (always, most of the time, rarely, never)
    4. When you are afraid to be physically harmed by someone outside your family, who do you go to in order to get protection? (open question, but code supplied for SPLA)

3. Questions on support for the Zande king:

    To what extent do you agree with the following statements (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree):

    1. I support the coronation of a new Zande king.
    2. A task of the new Zande king is to get better outcomes from the government in Juba.
    3. Now that South Sudan is a democracy, we have a right to have a Zande king.

4. Questions on support for the national government:

    1. Since independence, which of the following authorities do you think is most important? (president given as option, as well the state governor and county commissioner as local state authorities)
    2. In the past 12 months, did you or members of your household pay any tax to the *payam*, county or state?
    3. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: my expectations for the government in Juba are satisfied? (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree)
    4. Do you plan to register to vote in the next national elections?

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