RESOLVE NETWORK

Approaching Community-Based Armed Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa

Lessons Learned & Measures of Success

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CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was written and researched by Dr. Moritz Schuberth. Several members of the RESOLVE Network Secretariat contributed to this report's development, including Ms. Bethany McGann, Research & Project Manager; Ms. Boglarka Bozsogi, Research and Communicatons Coordinator; Ms. Kateira Aryaeinejad, Research and Project Manager; and Ms. Leanne Erdberg, Interim Executive Director. RESOLVE would like to thank the reviewers of this report and the members of the RESOLVE Network Research Advisory Council who lent their support and guidance. Finally, RESOLVE would like to thank the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Africa Bureau for its generous support for this report and RESOLVE's research initiative on Community-Based Armed Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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Approaching Community-Based Armed Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa is part of the RESOLVE Network's Community-Based Armed Groups research series, an initiative investigating the dynamics of community-based armed groups and the contexts in which they operate to identify potential approaches to engage, manage, and transform them.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of This Study

A surge in the prevalence of community-based armed groups (CBAGs) in sub-Saharan Africa has led to concerns that they pose a growing challenge to governments and citizens across the region. This paper maps how different intervening actors—communities, governments, civil society organizations, humanitarian and development agencies, and security providers—have approached the challenges posed by CBAGs and how to best measure the success of these interventions. The mapping of approaches, analysis of lessons learned, and identification of success factors will contribute to a deeper empirical understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of current responses to CBAGs, which will inform the development of more effective and appropriate practices and policies.

EMT Approaches to CBAGs

CBAGs typically fulfill security, political, and economic functions simultaneously. However, three main ideal types of CBAGs can be discerned. Depending on the main function that they fulfill at a given point, they can be classified as (1) vigilantes providing security for their communities, (2) militias working at the behest of political sponsors, or (3) criminal gangs pursuing the economic self-interest of their members. Approaches to CBAGs can be categorized as following three different logics: engagement, management, and transformation (EMT).

- Engagement follows a short-term logic; actors pursuing this approach do so for instrumental reasons, that is, because they want to ensure the safety of their own staff members while implementing their projects or because they want to promote mediation and reduce violence within communities.

- Management approaches follow a mid-term logic as actors envision a substantive change in the targeted groups. Coercive management approaches include the use of force to defeat CBAGs or incarcerate their members. Cooperative management approaches strive to alter the behavior and roles of CBAGs through co-optation, negotiation, or mediation.

- Transformation follows a long-term logic and refers to a set of approaches to replace the functions that CBAGs provide to their members, sponsors, and the communities they are nested in with a modern and accountable state bound by the rule of law. Transformation addresses the root causes and structural conditions that led to the emergence of the CBAG ecosystem. This goal is difficult to achieve because it requires lengthy commitments and buy-in from multiple actors.

KEY FINDINGS

Metrics to Measure the Success of EMT Approaches

Given the multiple confounding factors and overlapping interventions, it is difficult to measure results of EMT approaches, attribute them to specific interventions, and evaluate their impacts. This report proposes a set of specific indicators that intervening actors and interested third parties could use to measure the progress of EMT interventions in meeting their objectives. For instance, a program seems to be on the right track to achieve improved community security if data show an increase in the percentage of the population perceiving increased security and decreased violent incidents in their communities.

CBAGs and the Legitimacy of the State

Current literature proposes that state fragility is a key cause for the emergence of CBAGs. However, the concept of state fragility does not offer a universal explanation for the proliferation of such groups, notably in the case of relatively strong states characterized by a high degree of inequality, including South Africa. In such settings, those living in the most affluent parts of the main cities often enjoy or leverage functioning protection by police and private security firms; however, those living in neglected areas are denied access to formal security systems and so turn to CBAGs, which act as informal security providers. Accordingly, it is important for intervening actors not to focus exclusively on state-building efforts, because these might not address the root causes that lead to the emergence of CBAGs.

From CBAGs to Community Security Providers?

Although vigilantes have regularly turned into political militias or predatory criminals, there are also examples of CBAGs with a strong security function that have averted such a devolution. This report identifies potential success factors—including the presence of oversight procedures, a binding legal framework, and accountability mechanisms—that intervening actors may consider when designing strategies to alter the internal and external characteristics of CBAGs to reinforce their constructive potential and limit their destructive potential. These success factors can help to turn multidimensional CBAGs into more accountable, capable, and rule-abiding providers of community security.

Challenge of Coordinating EMT Interventions

The coordination of EMT interventions can be challenging due to a lack of policy coherence and because various intervening actors pursue conflicting strategies toward CBAGs. Moreover, different intervening actors, such as armed forces and humanitarian agencies, show diverging attitudes to coordinating EMT approaches. Coherence and coordination between the multitude of actors involved in the EMT of CBAGs is important for the overall outcome of interventions and for the security of intervening actors and beneficiary communities. Moreover, improved interagency coordination can help pool existing resources and use them in a more efficient and sustainable way by streamlining efforts and diversifying funding sources.

INTRODUCTION

A surge in the emergence and operations of community-based armed groups (CBAGs) in sub-Saharan Africa has led to concerns that they pose a growing challenge to governments and citizens across the region.[1] Communities, governments, civil society organizations, humanitarian and development agencies, and security providers in these and other settings have developed a wide variety of approaches to deal with them. CBAGs are defined as armed groups that are embedded within communities and whose delineation can be defined by territory, blood ties, or shared identities; this definition includes vigilantes, militias, and criminal gangs.

How have local, national, and international actors approached the challenge posed by CBAGs and how successful have these approaches been? This study seeks to provide an overview of policy-relevant findings from the vast literature on approaches to CBAGs and to offer metrics to assess the success of completed or ongoing initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. The mapping of approaches, analysis of lessons learned, and identification of success factors will contribute to a deeper empirical understanding of responses to the proliferation of CBAGs, which will inform the development of more effective and appropriate practices and policies. The core research questions pursued by this mapping paper are as follows:

- What approaches have states, civil society, and international actors pursued to engage, manage, and transform CBAGs in sub-Saharan Africa?

- What lessons learned and success factors can be identified from the literature on approaches to engage, manage, and transform CBAGs in sub-Saharan Africa?

- What metrics can help measure the success of approaches to engage, manage, and transform CBAGs in sub-Saharan Africa?

The primary data collection instrument used was an in-depth desk review of the academic and gray literature on approaches to CBAGs. In addition to academic articles, we consulted documents produced by governments, civil society organizations, think tanks, and international agencies, including terms of reference, guidelines, lessons learned or best practices, evaluations and audits of projects, factsheets, and internal reports. We used keyword searches to identify initial source material and subsequently employed snowball sampling by looking up citations from the initial sources. The academic and gray literature on the topics and approaches covered by this mapping paper was too extensive to be elaborated in its entirety. However, an in-depth review of the most relevant publications by the foremost experts and institutions in this field pointed to the most pertinent literature.

1 Clionadh Raleigh, "Pragmatic and Promiscuous: Explaining the Rise of Competitive Political Militias across Africa," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60, no. 2 (2016): 283–310.

Functions and Ideal Types of CBAGs

In contrast to many non-state armed groups (NSAGs), CBAGs are by definition embedded within their communities, whose delineation can be defined by territory, blood ties, or shared identities. The concept of CBAGs excludes formal security providers, such as private security and military companies. Politically motivated NSAGs like insurgents and terrorists are also excluded from the concept of CBAGs because NSAGs are ideologically or religiously driven and aspire to take over the state to establish another political system. CBAGs do not primarily pursue a political mission; if they are pulled into the political sphere, they act on behalf of political entrepreneurs whose political aims are parochial in nature.[2]

Although CBAGs typically fill multiple functions simultaneously, three ideal types can be discerned, depending on their predominant function. As table 1 shows, depending on the main function that CBAGs fulfill at a given point, they can be classified as vigilantes providing security for their community, as militias working on behest of political sponsors, or as criminal gangs pursuing the economic self-interest of their members.[3] Each ideal type can be subdivided into two subtypes. It is important to note that the distinctions among different ideal types and subtypes of CBAGs can be blurred, and the functions are constantly shifting, depending on external factors and internal motivations.

Table 1: Functions and Ideal Types of CBAGs

FUNCTION	SECURITY		POLITICS		ECONOMIC/CRIME	
IDEAL TYPES	VIGILANTES		MILITIAS		GANGS	
SUBTYPES	CRIME-CONTROL GROUPS	SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS	ETHNIC MILITIAS	POPULAR MILITIAS	YOUTH GANGS	CRIMINAL GANGS
EXAMPLES	BAKASSI BOYS (NIGERIA)	MAI MAI (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO)	WHITE ARMY (SOUTH SUDAN)	ZANU PF YOUTH (ZIMBABWE)	MICROBES (IVORY COAST)	GANGS IN CAPE FLATS (SOUTH AFRICA)

Source: Author.

2 Moritz Schuberth, "The Challenge of Community-based Armed Groups: Towards a Conceptualization of Militias, Gangs, and Vigilantes," *Contemporary Security Policy* 36, no. 2 (2015): 296–320.

3 Ibid.

- **Vigilantes** can be further subdivided into crime control groups directed internally at members of their own communities,[4] such as the Bakassi Boys in Nigeria,[5] and self-defense groups protecting communities against external threats,[6] such as the Mai Mai and Raia Mutomboki in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.[7]

- **Militias** can base their claims to legitimacy on notions of ethnicity and kin- or clan-based identity, such as the Nuer White Army in South Sudan,[8] or on an ideology that evokes the image of a common enemy of the masses, such as the popular militias made up of the youth wing of ZANU PF, Zimbabwe's ruling party since independence.[9]

- **Gangs** have two subtypes. First, youth gangs such as the so-called "microbes" in the Ivorian capital of Abidjan are conventionally associated with petty crime and a subculture of juvenile delinquency rather than with organized criminality. [10] Second, the more organized and institutionalized criminal gangs, such as the "Americans" or the "Hard Livings" in South Africa's Cape Town, include members of various age cohorts and are committed to profit-generating criminal activities, including drug trafficking.[11]

QUESTIONING COMMON ASSUMPTIONS

Challenging the Centrality of State Fragility

The emergence of CBAGs is a common theme that runs through the literature on state failure, state weakness, state collapse, and state fragility. Studies in this tradition commonly frame the proliferation of CBAGs within the context of war-torn, conflict-prone, or post-conflict societies, where basic state responsibilities, such as the provision of security, "fall into the hands of those who will fight for it—warlords and gang leaders."[12] From this point of view, the failure or collapse of the Westphalian state system since the

4 Les Johnston, "What is Vigilantism?" *British Journal of Criminology* 36, no. 2 (1996): 232.

5 Kate Meagher, "Hijacking Civil Society: The Inside Story of the Bakassi Boys Vigilante Group of South-eastern Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 45, no. 1 (2007): 89–115.

6 Raphael Garvin Abrahams. *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State* (Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 1998); Bruce Baker, "Nonstate Providers of Everyday Security in Fragile African States," in *Fragile States and Insecure People?*, ed. Louise Andersen, Bjørn Møller, and Finn Stepputat (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) , 123–47.

7 Kasper Hoffmann and Koen Vlassenroot, "Armed Groups and the Exercise of Public Authority: The Cases of the Mayi-Mayi and Raya Mutomboki in Kalehe, South Kivu," *Peacebuilding* 2, no. 2 (2014): 202–20..

8 John Young, *Popular Struggles and Elite Co-optation: The Nuer White Army in South Sudan's Civil War* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2016).

9 Norma Kriger, "ZANU PF politics under Zimbabwe's 'Power-Sharing' Government," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 30, no. 1 (2012): 11–26.

10 Séverin Kouamé Yao, "Nouchis, Ziguéhis et Microbes d'Abidjan: Déclassement et Distinction Sociale par la Violence de Rue en Côte d'Ivoire," *Politique Africaine* 148, no. 4 (2017): 89–107..

11 Theodore Petrus and Irvin Kinnes, "New Social Bandits? A Comparative Analysis of Gangsterism in the Western and Eastern Cape Provinces of South Africa," *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 19, no. 2 (2018): 179–96.

12 I. William Zartman, "Introduction: Posing the Problem of State Collapse," in *Collapsed States: The Disin-tegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority,* ed. by I. William Zartman (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 1-11.

end of the Cold War has resulted in the state's loss of the monopoly on the legitimate means of violence.[13] However, an emerging pool of scholars contest the very concept of state failure as conceptually flawed, historically ill-informed, and culturally biased; they argue that it presents contemporary liberal Western democracies as the universal role model, even for countries where such an archetype never existed and is unlikely to take root.[14]

CBAGS are also present in a number of relatively strong, viable, and modern states.[15] South Africa, for instance, ranks in the upper-middle range in the Fragile States Index[16] and in the State Fragility Index[17], but it is frequently listed among the ten most unequal in the world.[18] In the context of such strong but unequal states, not all citizens are equally affected by the state's inability or unwillingness to provide security. Those living in the most affluent parts of the main cities often enjoy or leverage functioning protection by police and private security firms, while those living in neglected areas are denied access to formal security systems and turn to CBAGs as informal security providers.[19] In both fragile and strong states, the marginalized populations living in areas of limited statehood turn to alternative systems of justice and security.[20]

From State Security to Hybrid Security Governance

The focus on state fragility is also reflected in traditional notions of national security or state security that see military security as contingent on the capability of governments to fend off internal and external threats to the nation-state. However, a growing number of non-traditional issues has also been securitized as existential threats, such as migration flows or climate change.[21] The broadening of the security framework to encompass referent objects other than national or state security has ushered in a shift in the dominant security paradigm.[22] This shift has been captured most prominently in the concept of

13 Edward Newman, "Failed States and International Order: Constructing a Post-Westphalian World," *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 3 (2009): 421–43; Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology,* eds. Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 77–128. .

14 Charles T. Call, "The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'," *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 8 (2008): 1491–1507; Mark Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)..

15 Moritz Schuberth, "Challenging the Weak States Hypothesis: Vigilantism in South Africa and Bra-zil," *Journal of Peace, Conflict & Developmen*t 20 (2013): 38–51.

16 South Africa was ranked 86th out of 178 countries. See The Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index 2018. http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/.

17 South Africa achieved 8 out of 25 fragility points. See Monty G. Marshall and Gabrielle C. Elzinga-Marshall, *Global Report 2017: Conflict, Governance and State Fragility* (Vienna, VA: Center for Systemic Peace, 2017), 48.

18 See The World Bank, GINI Index. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?page. The GINI Index looks at the distribution of a country's income or wealth, where 0 represents complete equality and 100 total inequality. South Africa has a high Gini coefficient of 63.

19 David Pratten and Atreyee Sen, *Global Vigilantes: Perspectives on Justice and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

20 Thomas Risse, "Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood: Introduction and Overview," in *Governance without a State? Policies and Politics in Areas of Limited Statehood*, ed.Thomas Risse (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 1-35.

21 Nana Poku and David T. Graham, eds. *Redefining Security: Population Movements and National Security* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998); Oli Brown, Anne Hammill, and Robert McLeman, "Climate Change as the 'New' Security Threat: Implications for Africa," *International Affairs* 83, no. 6 (2007): 1141–54. .

22 Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

human security, which includes both "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want."[23] However, the all-encompassing definition of human security, including positive and negative rights and freedoms, has been criticized as too vague, which makes it difficult for policy makers to prioritize certain threats over others.[24]

In the context of CBAGs, the concept of community security might be more useful because it bridges the gap between initiatives focusing on the state-level and those focusing on the individual as a starting point.[25] Community security can be conceptualized both as an end state and as the process leading to this end state. When seen as an end state, community security "is the situation in which communities feel secure from threats exerted by violent conflict […], crime, and a lack of protection […] by the state."[26] When understood as a process, community security "means that communities participate in identifying and prioritizing their security needs, as well as in the development and implementation of appropriate responses for their security needs." In other words, community members are both the beneficiaries and agents of human security. From this perspective, improved community security as an end state can be seen as the overall goal of EMT approaches to CBAG; EMT approaches can be considered as community security in its conception as a process.[27]

From Security Providers to Sources of Insecurity

Following justified critiques of failed states and national security paradigms, the focus of attention has shifted to community security arrangements that provide security "from below" or "from the perspective of end users."[28] Although acknowledging that such hybrid security arrangements include militias and organized crime groups, advocates stress the relatively effective provision of security by CBAGs, compared to state security actors and the higher local legitimacy these groups enjoy.[29] From this perspective, CBAGs might offer the best available option for effective justice and security provision in the short term.[30] At the same time, CBAGs might be seen as more legitimate due to their strong links to local cultural practices and their greater alignment with the social attitudes and norms of their communities.[31] In the absence of strong oversight and accountability mechanisms, however, CBAGs might transform from security providers into sources of insecurity.

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23 UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 1994), 22.

24 Edward Newman, "Human Security and Constructivism," *International Studies Perspectives* 2, no. 3 (2001): 243.

25 Andrew McLean, *Community Security and Social Cohesion: Towards a UNDP Approach* (Geneva: United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

26 Willemijn Verkoren, Rens Willems, Jesper Kleingeld, and Hans Rouw, "From DDR to Security Promotion: Connecting National Programs to Community Initiatives," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 15, no. 2 (2010): 4.

27 Will Bennett, *Community Security Handbook* (London: Saferworld, 2014).

28 Alexandra Abello Colak and Jenny Pearce, "'Security from Below' in Contexts of Chronic Violence," IDS Bulletin 40, no. 2 (2009): 11–19; Robin Luckham and Tom Kirk, "The Two Faces of Security in Hybrid Political Orders: A Framework for Analysis and Research," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 2, no. 2 (2013).

29 Volker Boege, M. Anne Brown, and Kevin P. Clements, "Hybrid Political Orders, not Fragile States," *Peace Review* 21, no. 1 (2009): 13-21.

30 Bruce Baker and Eric Scheye, "Multi-Layered Justice and Security Delivery in Post-Conflict and Fragile States: Analysis," *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 4 (2007): 503–28.

31 Lisa Denney, "Overcoming the State/Non-State Divide: An End User Approach to Security and Justice Reform," *International Peacekeeping* 21, no. 2 (2014): 254.

The literature on vigilantism portrays a general shift in motivation that turns conscientious vigilantes providing security for their communities into self-interested criminal gangs or state-sponsored militias.[32] In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, studies have warned that "most of the time, they turn criminals, besides the mandate given to them by the community to keep vigil in the neighborhood"[33] and that in Kenya, among other places, [v]igilantes can turn into gangs, and gangs can turn into armed militia."[34] However, this paper identifies cases of CBAGs, including Arrow Boys in Uganda, that did not turn into predatory gangs or militias due to external factors, such as strong state oversight or a conducive legal framework. The transformation of vigilantes into sources of community insecurity is, therefore, not the inevitable trajectory of CBAGs.

Standard Tools as the Universal Panacea

Over recent decades, numerous national and international actors have developed a set of standard tools to engage, manage, and transform CBAGs.[35] The use of such "one-size-fits-all" tools has practical advantages, but it can also be ill-suited when applied to new settings and across circumstances.[36] Important differences exist, for instance, between urban and rural-based armed groups, or between CBAGs that emerged in response to petty criminals compared to those that formed to combat violent extremist groups.[37] Yet, national and international actors have been slow to adapt to the new operational environment of cities where CBAGs are present, such as Nairobi, Kenya, or Beni, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.[38]

In Haiti's capital city of Port-au-Prince, a United Nations Stabilization Mission (MINUSTAH) attempted to deal with urban CBAGs in the same way as rural rebels in Central Africa. Due to poor understanding of the context and nature of CBAGs in Haiti, MINUSTAH was initially tasked with implementing a traditional disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program despite the fact that the conflict environment was not conducive to such an endeavor. When the failure of this initial strategy became clear, MINUSTAH changed its approach to a more adapted Community Violence Reduction (CVR) program. The CVR program focused on disincentivizing at-risk sections of the population from joining Haiti's CBAGs, which have more in common with street gangs than with rural rebel forces—the conventional targets

32 H. Jon Rosenbaum and Peter C. Sederberg, "Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence," *Comparative Politics* 6, no. 4 (1974): 541–570; Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens*, 22.

33 Gani Joses Yoroms, "Militias as a Social Phenomenon: Towards a Theoretical Construction," in *Civil Militia: Africa's Intractable Security Menace?,* ed. David J. Francis (New York: Routledge, 2005), 40.

34 Mikewa Ogada and Njonjo Mue, *Security Sector Reform and Transitional Justice in Kenya* (Nairobi: International Center for Transitional Justice, 2010): 3.

35 Robert Muggah and Chris O'Donnell, "Next Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 4, no. 1 (2015).

36 Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999): 699–732.

37 Stina Torjesen, "New Avenues for Research in the Study of DDR," *Conflict, Security & Development* 9, no. 4 (2009): 411.

38 Marion Harroff-Tavel, "Violence and Humanitarian Action in Urban Areas: New Challenges, New Approaches," *International Review of the Red Cross* 92, no. 878 (2010): 329-50.

of DDR.[39] Even though the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations viewed CVRs as a role model for DDR efforts in UN stabilization missions in Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, and South Sudan, others questioned how an approach tailored to urban gangs could be applied to rural armed groups.[40]

MAPPING EMT APPROACHES TO CBAGS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Logic behind Approaches to CBAGs

Over the past decade, policy circles have increasingly debated how international agencies working in post-conflict countries should deal with NSAGs,[41] especially in fragile and conflict-affected states.[42] For instance, Stedman counted three strategies employed by intervening actors vis-à-vis "spoilers"—groups who use violence to undermine peace for their own interest. The three strategies are inducement, coercion, and socialization. Inducement involves "giving the spoiler what it wants," and coercive strategies rely on the "use or threat of punishment to deter or alter unacceptable spoiler behavior."[43] Socialization combines carrots and sticks by constructing norms and values that define what behavior is acceptable and what demands are legitimate, thereby altering the ecosystem in which spoilers operate.[44]

Although the concept of spoilers had initially been limited to contexts in which a peace agreement between two warring factions had been signed, it has since been applied more liberally to a range of NSAGs[45] and even to organized crime groups.[46] As an example, Hofmann and Schneckener categorized strategies toward NSAGs as bargaining, force/leverage, and persuasion, which can be seen as representing Stedman's inducement, coercion, and socialization, as depicted in table 2.[47] In contrast to Stedman's

39 Moritz Schuberth, "A Transformation from Political to Criminal Violence? Politics, Organised Crime and the Shifting Functions of Haiti's Urban Armed Groups," *Conflict, Security & Development* 15, no. 2 (2015): 169–96.

40 Moritz Schuberth, "Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration in Unconventional Settings: The Case of MINUSTAH's Community Violence Reduction," *International Peacekeeping* 24, no. 3 (2017): 427; Hugo De Vries, *The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo* (London/Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2016): 3.

41 Claudia Hofmann and Ulrich Schneckener, *NGOs and Nonstate Armed Actors: Improving Compliance with International Norms* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2011).

42 Sukanya Podder, *From Spoilers to Statebuilders: Constructive Approaches to Engagement with Non-state Armed Groups in Fragile States* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2012).

43 Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security* 22, no. 2 (1997): 13.

44 Ibid.

45 Matthew Hoddie and Caroline A. Hartzell, *Strengthening Peace in Post-Civil War States: Transforming Spoilers into Stakeholders* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

46 Mark Shaw and Walter Kemp, *Spotting the Spoilers: A Guide to Analyzing Organized Crime* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2012).

47 Ulrich Schneckener, *Spoilers or Governance Actors? Engaging Armed Non-State Groups in Areas of Limited Statehood*, SFB- Governance Working Paper Series, No. 21 (Berlin: DFG Research Center (SFB) 700, 2009).

typology, however, Hofmann and Schneckener propose that force/leverage "involve a mixture of sticks and carrots," thereby classifying bribery and talks with moderate elements within NSAGs as coercive.[48]

Table 2: Timeframes, Objectives, and Examples of EMT Approaches

APPROACH	ENGAGEMENT	MANAGEMENT	TRANSFORMATION
TIMEFRAME	SHORT-TERM	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM
OBJECTIVES	SAFE ACCESS; IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND CBAGS	CHANGE IN ROLE, REACH, AND BEHAVIOR OF CBAGS	CHANGE ROOT CAUSES AND STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS OF THE CBAG ECOSYSTEM
EXAMPLES	BARAZA COMMUNAUTAIRES AND ACCESS NEGOTIATIONS BY ICRC AND MSF IN EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	TALKS WITH GRANDS TRAFIQUANTS IN MALI; CO-OPTATION OF CJTF BY NIGERIAN STATE	DDR, SSR, AND CVR IN UN STABILIZATION MISSIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, AND MALI
LITERATURE ON SPOILERS (STEDMAN, 1997)	INDUCEMENT	COERCION	SOCIALIZATION
LITERATURE ON NSAGS (SCHNECKENER, 2009)	BARGAINING	FORCE/LEVERAGE	PERSUASION

Source: Author.

It may seem logical to include both cooperative and coercive aspects under the banner of force/leverage, but we propose to use the overall term management for these two approaches to alter the behavior of CBAGs. We use engagement instead of bargaining or inducement for approaches that do not attempt to change the behavior of CBAGs, and transformation instead of socialization or persuasion for approaches that try to alter the structural conditions of the CBAG ecosystem. The terminology of engagement, management, and transformation (EMT) acknowledges the spectrum of available responses to CBAGs beyond

48 Claudia Hofmann and Ulrich Schneckener, "Engaging Non-State Armed Actors in State- and Peace-Building: Options and Strategies," *International Review of the Red Cross* 93, no. 883 (2011): 610.

standard tools such as DDR and SSR, as well as the different timeframes during which intervening actors can reasonably be expected to focus their EMT efforts on specific CBAGs. These timeframes range from short-term engagement to long-term transformation.

Engagement

Engagement follows a short-term logic; actors pursue this approach for instrumental reasons, because they want to ensure the safety of their own staff members while implementing their projects or to promote dialogue between CBAGs and their respective communities. Engagement refers, for instance, to traditional community conflict resolution systems, such as barazas communautaires in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.[49] Another example of engagement is provided by humanitarian and development actors, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or Médecins sans Frontières (MSF); these groups implement projects in CBAG-controlled areas of Democratic Republic of Congo and need to engage members of such groups to gain safe access for their staff members.[50] Although this approach does not seek to alter the behavior or structural environment of CBAGs, it can inadvertently strengthen their autonomy vis-à-vis the state or the communities in which they are based if intervening actors provide financial or in-kind compensation in exchange for safe access.

Management

Management approaches follow a mid-term logic, envisaging a substantive change of the targeted groups; they aim to directly impact the role, reach, and behavior of CBAGs, by either coercive or cooperative means.

Coercive management approaches involve security forces and include the use of force to defeat CBAGs or incarcerate their members, such as militarized police raids against gangs in South Africa.[51] If coercive approaches indiscriminately target the communities in which CBAGs are based, they can unintentionally weaken the legitimacy of the state and strengthen the links between CBAGs and their communities, as happened with organized gangs in Cape Town.[52]

Cooperative management approaches strive to alter the behavior and roles of CBAGs by way of co-optation, negotiation, or mediation. In Mali, for instance, local leaders involved in illicit economies (grands trafiquants) were invited to take part in the negotiations between the government and Tuareg rebel

49 Phil Clark, "Ethnicity, Leadership and Conflict Mediation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo: The Case of the Barza Inter-Communautaire," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 1 (2008): 8.

50 Johan Pottier, "Roadblock Ethnography: Negotiating Humanitarian Access in Ituri, Eastern DR Congo, 1999-2004," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 76, no. 2 (2006): 151–79.

51 Guy Lamb, "Police Militarisation and the 'War on Crime' in South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 44, no. 5 (2018): 933–49.

52 Petrus and Kinnes, "New Social Bandits?", 189.

groups.[53] In the Central African Republic, local mediation between ex-Séléka rebels and anti-Balaka self-defense groups was more successful than international and regional mediation efforts.[54] Negotiation and mediation can improve the positive behavior of CBAGs, but they can also strengthen their legitimacy. Co-optation, by contrast, can strengthen the legitimacy of both the state and CBAGs; it can also lead to the uprooting of CBAGs and to more abusive behavior vis-à-vis their communities, as happened with the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) as a result of co-optation by the Nigerian state.[55]

Transformation

Transformation refers to a set of approaches that aim to replace the functions that CBAGs fulfill for their members, their sponsors, and the communities they are nested in with a modern and accountable state bound by the rule of law. According to the logic of transformation, this can be achieved by breaking the patronage between CBAGs and their politico-criminal sponsors through demobilization, disengagement, and reintegration (DDR), by strengthening state security forces through security sector reform (SSR), and by using community violence reduction (CVR) to cut the ties between CBAGs and their communities. As an example, the UN stabilization missions in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mali all employed a combination of DDR, SSR, and CVR, with varying degrees of success.[56] Following a long-term logic, transformation seeks to address the root causes and structural conditions that led to the emergence of the CBAG ecosystem. This approach requires lengthy commitment timeframes and the buy-in of local, national, and international actors.

By crossing the EMT framework with the three functions of CBAGs, we developed an intervention matrix of standard approaches to CBAGs. As table 3 shows, the intervention matrix lists the standard tools routinely employed to deal with CBAGs. The matrix is derived from theoretical conceptualization based on an extensive review of the literature. It is feasible and important to coordinate strategies along the y-axis to ensure that the E, M, or T approach tackles all three functions of CBAGs, for instance, by combining SSR, DDR, and CVR. By contrast, coordination along the x-axis—for instance, between coercive and cooperative approaches to manage CBAGs—is difficult because the different approaches follow conflicting institutional logics.

53 Katrin Planta and Véronique Dudouet, *Fit for Negotiation? Options and Risks in the Political Transformation of Non-conventional Armed Groups* (Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF), 2015), 5.

54 Marie-Joëlle Zahar and Delphine Mechoulan, *Peace by Pieces? Local Mediation and Sustainable Peace in the Central African Republic* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2017).

55 Kyle Dietrich, *'When We Can't See the Enemy, Civilians Become the Enemy': Living Through Nigeria's Six-Year Insurgency* (Washington, DC: Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2015).

56 Arthur Boutellis, "Can the UN Stabilize Mali? Towards a UN Stabilization Doctrine?," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4, no. 1 (2015); Muggah and O'Donnell, "Next Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration"; De Vries, "The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo."

Table 3: Standard Tools Employed by Intervening Actors to Deal with CBAGs

		APPROACHES TO CBAGS			
		ENGAGEMENT	MANAGEMENT		TRANSFORMATION
			COERCIVE	COOPERATIVE	
FUNCTION OF CBAGS	SECURITY	HIRE CBAGS AS SECURITY PROVIDERS	DEFEAT CBAGS (PACIFICATION)	CO-OPT CBAGS (HYBRID SECURITY GOVERNANCE)	REPLACE CBAGS WITH POLICE (SSR)
	POLITICS	ENTER CBAG-CONTROLLED AREAS WITH CSOS	GAIN LOCAL SUPPORT (COUNTER-INSURGENCY)	NEGOTIATE WITH CBAGS (POWER SHARING)	REPLACE PATRONAGE NETWORK (DDR)
	ECONOMICS/ CRIME	SIDELINE CBAGS IN COMMUNITY PLATFORMS	INCARCERATE CBAG MEMBERS (WAR ON GANGS)	MEDIATE BETWEEN CBAGS (GANG TRUCES)	REDUCE APPEAL TO JOIN CBAGS (CVR)

Source: Author.

Measures of Success of EMT Interventions

Among the desired results of EMT approaches are a protective rather than predatory behavior vis-à-vis local communities; a sustainable approach; identification of all key stakeholders and coordination among implementing partners; respect for the principles of conflict sensitivity; and adherence of CBAGs to good governance standards and norms, such as human rights and the rule of law. Given multiple confounding factors and overlapping interventions, it is difficult to measure results, attribute them to specific interventions, and evaluate their impacts.[57] Table 4 provides an example of potential indicators that intervening actors and interested third parties could use to measure the impact of EMT interventions.

Although the overall goal of EMT approaches is an improvement in community security for the populations living in areas where CBAGs are present, each EMT approach has its specific objective. Engagement focuses on ensuring safe access for intervening actors to areas with CBAGs; coercive management aims to reduce the reach and legitimacy of CBAGs; cooperative management strives to improve the treatment of local populations by CBAGs; and transformation aspires to render CBAGs obsolete for their members, sponsors, and communities. Table 4 proposes two specific indicators each to measure the progress in achieving the overall goal and the four objectives. For instance, a program seems to be on the right track to achieve improved community security if data show an increase in the percentage of the population

57 Tariro Mutongwizo, Lezanne Leoschut, and Patrick Burton, "Co-ownership and Collaboration: Insights into the Measurement of Impact and Change from Evidence-based Community and State Violence Prevention Partnerships," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 4, no. 1 (2015).

perceiving security in their communities and a decrease in the number of violent incidents reported in the communities.

Table 4: Indicators to Measure Results of Different Approaches to CBAGs

RESULTS	INDICATORS
GOAL: IMPROVED COMMUNITY SECURITY FOR POPULATION LIVING IN AREAS WITH CBAGS	**INDICATOR 1:** PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION PERCEIVING (IN)SECURITY IN THEIR COMMUNITY
	INDICATOR 2: NUMBER OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS REPORTED
OBJECTIVE 1 (ENGAGEMENT): SAFE ACCESS FOR INTERVENING ACTORS TO AREAS WITH CBAGS	**INDICATOR 1.1:** PERCENTAGE OF STAFF OF HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ACTORS PERCEIVING SAFE ACCESS TO AREAS WITH CBAGS
	INDICATOR 1.2: NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF ATTACKS ON STAFF MEMBERS OF HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ACTORS
OBJECTIVE 2 (COERCIVE MANAGEMENT): REDUCED REACH AND LEGITIMACY OF CBAGS	**INDICATOR 2.1:** NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN COMMUNITIES WITH CBAGS
	INDICATOR 2.2: PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION PERCEIVING CBAGS AS LEGITIMATE
OBJECTIVE 3 (COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT): BETTER TREATMENT OF POPULATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES BY CBAGS	**INDICATOR 3.1:** PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION PERCEIVING CBAGS AS POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE FORCES IN COMMUNITIES
	INDICATOR 3.2: NUMBER OF REPORTED INCIDENTS OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR BY CBAGS TO COMMUNITIES
OBJECTIVE 4 (TRANSFORMATION): OBSOLESCENCE OF CBAGS FOR MEMBERS, SPONSORS, AND COMMUNITIES	**INDICATOR 4.1:** NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF CBAGS
	INDICATOR 4.2: PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION PERCEIVING STATE SECURITY PROVISION AS SUFFICIENT WITHIN COMMUNITIES

Source: Author.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM EMT APPROACHES

Intervening actors should not export standard templates, such as DDR, from one setting to another. Interventions should reflect contextual variation and focus on the predominant functions of the targeted CBAGs, following a thorough context analysis and actor mapping. Yet, keeping in mind the limitations of blueprints, the findings of this report entail a number of implications for the engagement, management, and transformation of CBAGs, precisely because of the high probability that past experiences will be influential.

Lessons Learned from Short-Term Engagement

Although CBAGs rarely control territory in a comprehensive manner or operate in the total absence of government services, the civilian populations living in areas where CBAGs operate often suffer from limited access to basic services, such as security provision, health care, or education. Under these circumstances, national or international actors whose mandate is to provide basic services need to engage

members of CBAGs to gain safe access for their staff members to the areas of operation. Some intervening actors choose to provide CBAGs with financial or in-kind rewards in exchange for safe access to their areas of operation. In Somalia, for instance, aid agencies hired armed clan-based militias to provide protection or to transport food to insecure areas.[58] Research has shown that this can have adverse effects, however, because it might reinforce the destructive tendencies of CBAGs.[59]

To ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable sectors of the population, national or international actors could try to enter the strongholds of CBAGs with civil society representatives, since these actors frequently command considerable authority, even vis-à-vis armed groups. Yet, there is often no clear-cut distinction between peaceful civil society organizations and armed criminals, as exemplified by district water committees in Somalia acting on behalf of warlords rather than representing their communities.[60] Some intervening actors have decided to work only with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) registered with the ministries in charge of their authorization; however, this approach can be problematic because it might exclude credible civil society organizations that have been banned for political reasons.[61]

Another approach is to include CBAGs in community platforms as representatives of one sector among others, such as business, education, health, culture, and religion. Doing so can give CBAG leaders the impression that their rule over their territory and the functions they fulfill are respected; actually, however, these leaders are sidelined by the other actors that dominate the decision-making within the platforms. In the same vein, actors with existing relations with CBAGs can facilitate safe access so that other actors are able to implement development projects and deliver humanitarian aid. As an example, the international NGO Medair used well-connected intermediaries, such as medical professionals and traditional leaders, to gather security information and negotiate with military and armed groups to gain access for their staff members to deliver aid in conflict-affected zones of the Democratic Republic of Congo's Ituri province.[62]

Apart from humanitarian or development actors establishing platforms, communities regularly use or revive traditional conflict mediation institutions to engage CBAGs and enhance community cohesion, often with the support of state authorities.[63] Such traditional structures of community conflict mediation aim to promote reconciliation, reinforce reciprocal trust among communities, and prevent local conflicts between CBAGs. In the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, a government initiative reinstalled large meetings called baraza communautaires to discuss issues among representatives from different communities and elect local peace committees. However, while the baraza and peace

58 Joakim Gundel, *Humanitarian Action in the New Security Environment: Policy and Operational Implications in Somalia and Somaliland* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2006).

59 Moritz Schuberth, "Growing the Grassroots or Backing Bandits? Dilemmas of Donor Support for Haiti's (Un)Civil Society," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 11, no. 1 (2016): 93–98.

60 Gundel, "Humanitarian Action in the New Security Environment," 46.

61 Moritz Schuberth, "To Engage or Not to Engage Haiti's Urban Armed Groups? Safe Access in Disaster-Stricken and Conflict-affected Cities," *Environment and Urbanization* 29, no. 2 (2017): 425–42.

62 Pottier, "Roadblock Ethnography," 166.

63 Verkore, Willems, Kleingeld, and Rouw, "From DDR to Security Promotion," 5.

committees initially succeeded in resolving ethnic disputes and reducing cases of ethnic violence, they broke down due to internal conflicts and community perceptions that they were under the influence of armed groups.[64] Accordingly, it is important for community-level institutions engaging CBAGs not to be perceived as too close to such groups lest they lose their legitimacy among the population.

Lessons Learned from Mid-Term Management

Compared to the short-term engagement of CBAGs, management approaches vis-à-vis CBAGs follow a mid-term logic and envisage a substantive change in the behavior or nature of the targeted groups. Coercive management approaches involve security forces and heavy-handed measures to defeat CBAGs or incarcerate their members, for instance, militarized police raids against gangs in South Africa.[65] Actors pursuing cooperative management approaches, by contrast, strive to alter the behavior and roles of CBAGs. Such changes can be achieved by negotiating with CBAGs, as happened with *grands trafiquants* in Mali; mediating between them, as occurred the Central African Republic between ex-Séléka rebels and anti-Balaka self-defense groups; or co-opting them, as done in the Nigerian state with the CJTF.[66]

Coercive Approaches

When CBAGs are perceived as threats to the state, coercive management approaches by state security forces include forceful raids, as well as the mass incarceration of presumed CBAG members. Security forces using pacification or counterinsurgency (COIN) methods—sometimes applied coercively to target the political function of CBAGs—aim to win "hearts and minds" by "competing with the insurgent for influence and control at the grassroots level."[67] COIN utilized in this manner is seen primarily as a "political strategy" that needs to focus on building "the political legitimacy and effectiveness—in the eyes of its people and the international community—of a government affected by an insurgency."[68]

CBAGs with a less antagonistic relationship with state authority can also face coercion, however. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, traditional hunters from the North called dozo underwent a state-sanctioned transition to a nationwide private security force, but they were later banned when they became caught up in power struggles at the national level.[69]

Coercive approaches to CBAGs, such as COIN operations or mass incarcerations, have important limitations. Local communities will feel further alienated if their experiences with state agencies are limited to military raids that result in civilian casualties due to stray bullets. This result can have the unintended effect of driving local people to support or join CBAGs "because they are alienated by heavy-handed

64 Clark, "Ethnicity, Leadership and Conflict Mediation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo," 8.

65 Lamb, "Police Militarisation and the 'War on Crime' in South Africa."

66 Oluwaseun Bamidele, "Civilian Joint Task Force'(CJTF)–A Community Security Option: A Comprehensive and Proactive Approach of Reducing Terrorism," *Journal for Deradicalization* 7 (2016): 124–44.

67 David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xv..

68 Ibid, 265.

69 Lauren Van Metre, *From Self-Defense to Vigilantism: A Typology Framework of Community-Based Armed Groups* (Washington, DC: RESOLVE Network, 2019).

actions of the intervening force."[70] Thus, coercive approaches might inadvertently contribute to further alienation of marginalized communities from an already delegitimized state, thereby allowing CBAGs to position themselves as legitimate defenders of the communities against abusive state security forces. For instance, organized gangs in the Cape Flats section in South Africa's Cape Town provide protection for residents against rival gangs. Many perceive these gangs as more legitimate than law enforcement agencies, associated with violent raids that lead to the deaths of local youths.[71]

Refocusing the efforts of the security and judicial sectors to combat high-scale organized crime and corrupted sections of the political elite that instrumentalize CBAGs for their own benefit has been found to be more effective in the long term than simply containing the marginalized sections of society.[72] Moreover, a key feature of COIN is the building of effective and legitimate local security forces that are able to provide "population-centric security."[73] In practice, doing this involves the "creation of self-defending populations through community-based security measures, such as local neighborhood watch and guard forces."[74] Yet, the use of CBAGs as a stop-gap form of law enforcement or as informal defense forces against other NSAGs can unintentionally contribute to the delegitimization of the state and the legitimization of abusive actors that lack oversight, accountability, or internal control mechanisms and are therefore prone to turn on their own communities.

Cooperative Approaches

The collaboration of CBAGs and the state as part of COIN interventions is but one example of the multiple types of connections between CBAGs and state actors. Government officials from Kenya to Zimbabwe regularly hire CBAGs to attack or intimidate the opposition or to advance a vested political agenda by spreading insecurity. Governments might also tolerate or even encourage CBAGs as cost-effective crime-control mechanisms in areas of limited statehood, as happened with Sungusungu in Tanzania.[75] In some conflict-affected states, the state co-opted CBAGs or CBAGs acted as self-anointed defenders of the state against other types of NSAGs, including violent extremist groups such as Boko Haram. To boost their legitimacy, CBAGs might hide connections to the state or proclaim a degree of proximity to the state that goes beyond what the state would officially acknowledge.

When promoted as agents of hybrid security governance, CBAGs are seen as the best available option for effective and legitimate justice and security provision in the short term; as such, they are given the space to fill the security void left by an absent state. In numerous cases across sub-Saharan Africa, efforts to co-opt CBAGs ultimately gave legitimacy to predatory and illiberal armed actors, while they delegitimized the state and other intervening actors that risked being perceived as supporting criminals. Examples range from Kenya, where anti-crime vigilantes were co-opted by the main political parties and trans-

70 Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 38.

71 Petrus and Kinnes, "New Social Bandits?," 189.

72 Moritz Schuberth, "Beyond Gang Truces and Mano Dura Policies: Towards Substitutive Security Governance in Latin America," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 5, no. 1 (2016).

73 Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla,* 265.

74 Ibid.

75 Suzette Heald, "Controlling Crime and Corruption from Below: Sungusungu in Kenya," *International Relations* 21, no. 2 (2007): 183–99.

formed into political goons and criminal gangs,[76] to Democratic Republic of Congo, where the promise of lucrative positions for Mai Mai leaders who join state security forces created incentive structures that promoted the proliferation and expansion of CBAGs and led to increased violence.[77]

There are, however, examples of CBAGs providing security without turning into sources of insecurity. The RESOLVE report on the origins of armed community mobilization shows, by means of the case of the Arrow Boys of Teso in eastern Uganda, that early oversight by the national army can limit abuses by CBAGs.[78] In Kenya, it has been found that faith-based vigilantes—for instance, Kibera's Nubian-based Al Safa or an antinarcotics vigilante group established by the Council of Imams in Mombasa—have strong religious and cultural foundations and are more resistant to being instrumentalized by drug lords than secular CBAGs.[79] Another example is the attempt by a former police officer to provide oversight of vigilantes in Nairobi's Kibera slum by employing them in a private security company. This practice provided members of these groups with regular salaries and embedded them within a framework of clear and enforceable rules by formalizing their role as security providers, thereby removing the incentive to join a CBAG, providing employment, and enforcing regulation.[80]

The common denominator across these cases is that the presence of oversight procedures, a binding legal framework, and accountability mechanisms can help to prevent CBAGs from turning into predatory sources of insecurity. These experiences are in line with findings presented in the USIP typology mapping paper on CBAGs which shows that group discipline and the acceptance of formalized norms, roles, and processes are keys to prevent CBAGs from engaging in unregulated, reactive, or opportunistic violence.[81] External interventions can reinforce the formalization of command and control structures that institutionalize and legitimize norms and rules, for instance, by the socialization provided by shared beliefs, and clearly established organizational norms and codes of conduct, or accountability and oversight mechanisms. Table 5 in the section on Current Trends and New Directions identifies success factors for accentuating the productive aspects of CBAGs and steering them in a favorable direction.

Lessons Learned from Long-Term Transformation

Security Sector Reform

Security Sector Reform (SSR) follows a transformative logic and is primarily aimed at replacing CBAGs with, or channeling their members into, functioning state security forces. Failed attempts to integrate CBAGs into state security forces, as happened with the Mai Mai in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, have shown that SSR is as much a political process as it is a technical approach; as such, it needs to take

76 David M. Anderson, "Vigilantes, Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Kenya," *African Affairs* 101, no. 405 (2002): 531–55.

77 Maria Eriksson Baaz and Judith Verweijen, "The Volatility of a Half-Cooked Bouillabaisse: Rebel–Military Integration and Conflict Dynamics in the Eastern DRC," *African Affairs* 112, no. 449 (2013): 563–82.

78 Daniel Agbiboa, *Dynamics and Drivers of Community-Based Armed Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington, DC: RESOLVE Network, 2019).

79 Moritz Schuberth, "The Impact of Drug Trafficking on Informal Security Actors in Kenya," *Africa Spectrum* 49, no. 3 (2014): 55–81.

80 Ibid.

81 Van Metre, *From Self-Defense to Vigilantism.*

local politics into account.[82] Given the long-term and wide-ranging objectives of SSR, it is not enough to train more effective police forces and curb corruption among the members of the judiciary, as difficult as these endeavors are.[83] SSR initiatives must be complemented by promotion of the rule of law; state security forces must be subjected to democratic civilian oversight and held accountable to laws that are aligned with international human rights standards.[84] Moreover, to improve their legitimacy and acceptance among different sections of the population in the host country, SSR initiatives must give special consideration to local ownership, both with respect to political elites and to the communities in which security is provided.[85]

More concretely, special courts or hybrid national and international tribunals can deal with war crimes or transnational organized crime groups and handle politically sensitive cases to tackle the patron-client relationship between CBAGs and their sponsors. For example, the Special Court for Sierra Leone convicted two former leaders of the Civil Defence Forces, a CBAG composed of traditional hunters who defended their communities during the civil war but who were also accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity.[86] Moreover, SSR can strengthen efforts to expand state security provision into areas formerly abandoned by law enforcement agencies, where CBAGs assumed the roles of informal crime control and self-defense agencies. Intervening actors can do this by enhancing the capacity and legitimacy of the police and judiciary through capacity building and training in contextually appropriate techniques, such as community policing or proximity policing.[87]

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) is another set of tools and approaches that has been discussed in an extensive academic and policy-oriented literature on technical and operational lessons learned.[88] Such guidelines offer useful guidance for disarmament, which is arguably the most straightforward and technical aspect of DDR.[89] Yet, as early DDR attempts in Angola and Mozambique showed in the 1990s, DDR is an inherently political endeavor that needs to be informed by a sound understanding of the political economy of post-conflict societies.[90] The political nature of DDR is notably visible during demobilization, which aims to replace the patron-client relationship between "entre-

82 Baaz and Verweijen, "The Volatility of a Half-Cooked Bouillabaisse."

83 Adedeji Ebo, "The Role of Security Sector Reform in Sustainable Development: Donor Policy Trends and Challenges," *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 1 (2007): 27–60.

84 Louis-Alexandre Berg, "Guns, Laws and Politics: The Political Foundations of Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform," Hague Journal on the Rule of Law 4, no. 1 (2012): 4-30.

85 Eleanor Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, Local Ownership and Community Engagement," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 3, no. 1 (2014): Art. 25.

86 Danny Hoffman, "The Meaning of a Militia: Understanding the Civil Defence Forces of Sierra Leone," *African Affairs* 106, no. 425 (2007): 639–62.

87 Schuberth, "Beyond Gang Truces."

88 United Nations, *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (New York: United Nations, 2010); Tatjana Stankovic and Stina Torjesen, *Fresh Insights on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: A Survey for Practitioners* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2010).

89 See, for example, Savannah De Tessières, *Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context: A Handbook for United Nations DDR Practitioners* (New York: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2018).

90 Mats Berdal and David Ucko, eds., *Reintegrating Armed Groups After Conflict: Politics, Violence and Transition* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

preneurs of violence" within the political elite and ex-combatants by dismantling the former command structures and breaking the bonds of hierarchy.[91]

As research in the Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone has shown, former mid-level commanders often play an important role as intermediaries between the elite and demobilized members of armed groups; their influence over their former subordinates often remains sufficiently strong that they can effectively remobilize them.[92] Moreover, the timing for DDR is crucial; premature disarmament and demobilization will not be sustainable if the external threat that led to the emergence of CBAGs remains in place. This is especially true for CBAGs protecting their communities against NSAGs, such as the CJTF fighting Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Although the successful social, economic, and political reintegration of ex-combatants is both the most crucial and the most complex aspect of DDR, programs in practice too often focus on short-term reinsertion instead of long-term reintegration. [93] Community-based reintegration programs aim to improve their sustainability by bringing together ex-CBAG members and their communities to identify and work together on projects that benefit the entire communities, such as the construction or rehabilitation of critical infrastructure.[94] In Democratic Republic of Congo's Maniema province, for example, local civil society organizations and Oxfam Novib implemented a "weapons for development" project, whereby voluntary disarmament was rewarded with agricultural assistance and the rehabilitation of schools and a health center.[95] However, studies have shown that community-centered DDR programs must be truly community-led, while being prioritized by national and international funders, to be successful.[96]

Community Violence Reduction

Although community-led DDR efforts are well suited for the reintegration of former CBAG members, they tend to overlook those in a community who have not joined, but are at risk of joining CBAGs. To overcome this limitation, national and international actors have operationalized community violence reduction (CVR) programs that can best be described as community-based DDR programs that incorporate aspects of armed violence reduction and prevention (AVRP).[97] AVRP focuses on identifying risk factors "that contribute to increasing the likelihood that an individual will commit a violent act" and resilience factors "that aid individuals in adverse circumstances to overcome adversity and avoid violence."[98] With the identification of these two sets of factors, targeted interventions can focus on alleviating risks to prevent the occurrence of armed violence.

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91 Anders Themnér, "A Leap of Faith: When and How Ex-Combatants Resort to Violence," *Security Studies* 22, no. 2 (2013): 295–329.

92 Ibid.

93 Alpaslan Özerdem, "A Re-Conceptualisation of Ex-Combatant Reintegration: 'Social Reintegration' Approach," *Conflict, Security & Development* 12, no. 1 (2012): 51–73.

94 Prosper Nzekani Zena, *The Lessons and Limits of DDR in Africa* (Washington, DC: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2013), 7.

95 Verkoren, Willems, Kleingeld, and Rouw, "From DDR to Security Promotion," 19.

96 Özerdem, "A Re-conceptualisation of Ex-combatant Reintegration," 59; Julia Buxton, *Reintegration and Long-term Development: Linkages and Challenges* (Bradford: Centre for International Cooperation and Security, 2008), 23.

97 Verkoren, Willems, Kleingeld, and Rouw, "From DDR to Security Promotion."

98 Jennifer M. Hazen, "Risk and Resilience: Understanding the Potential for Violence," in *Small Arms Survey 2008* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2008), 245.

CVR efforts form part of the innovative second-generation approaches to deal with armed violence that focus on addressing the complex set of root causes of violence and insecurity at the local level.[99] To do so, CVR aims to stabilize communities in the short term by providing alternative means of income to at-risk youth while simultaneously improving community cohesion in the long term. CVR can thus be seen as a comprehensive approach to community-building that offers alternatives to youth at risk of joining CBAGs, replacing the functions that these groups fulfill for their members, such as protection and access to resources and higher status. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), for instance, provided unemployed youth with temporary employment and professional training to sway them away from economic opportunities offered by CBAGs. One key success factor was to include communities themselves in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of CVR projects.[100]

CVR's extensive focus on temporary employment through cash-for-work programs has been criticized as unsustainable and prone to corruption and exploitation.[101] Another criticism is that the thematic scope of CVR initiatives is too broad, that they are disconnected from one another, and, in many cases, that they are not clearly linked to the ultimate goal of reducing violence.[102] At the same time, the thematically broad scope of interventions in geographically well-delineated communities is precisely what sets CVR apart from traditional and often unsuccessful DDR experiments. Traditional DDR focuses on particular groups, whereas CVR has a clearly defined geographical focus. Accordingly, CVR might be more applicable in settings in which CBAGs with weak hierarchies and loose organizational structures are present, while DDR might be better suited to armed groups with strict hierarchical command.[103]

CURRENT TRENDS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

CBAGs and State Legitimacy

As discussed, the lens of state fragility does not offer a universal explanation for the proliferation of CBAGs. In some cases, a lack of state legitimacy rather than a lack of institutional capacity contributes to the formation of CBAGs. At the same time, the security, political, and economic functions that CBAGs fulfill for various stakeholders can have both legitimizing and delegitimizing effects. Research on CBAGs in Kenya shows that while the security function is legitimizing, the economic element tends to be more

99 Robert Muggah and Francis Sang, "The Enemy Within: Rethinking Arms Availability in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Conflict, Security & Development* 13, no. 4 (2013): 437; Robert Muggah and Keith Krause, "Closing the Gap Between Peace Operations and Post-Conflict Insecurity: Towards a Violence Reduction Agenda," *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 1 (2009): 136–50.

100 Robert Muggah, "The U.N. Can't Bring Peace to the Central African Republic," *Foreign Policy,* August 16, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/16/the-u-n-cant-bring-peace-to-the-central-african-republic.

101 Timothy Donais, "Bringing the Local Back In: Haiti, Local Governance and the Dynamics of Vertically Integrated Peacebuilding," J*ournal of Peacebuilding & Development* 10, no. 1 (2015): 46.

102 Ibid, 45.

103 Brian McQuinn, "DDR and the Internal Organization of Non-State Armed Groups," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 5, no. 1 (2016).

delegitimizing; the impact of the political factor on the legitimacy of CBAGs is bifurcated along ethnic lines.[104]

By providing security in areas of limited statehood that law enforcement agencies neglect, Kenyan CBAGs fill an institutional void and gain legitimacy. On the downside, however, they are known for extorting protection money from residents, which diminishes their legitimacy.[105] At the same time, CBAGs in Kenya have been found to work on the behest of organized crime groups for self-interested motives, further undermining their own legitimacy.[106] Finally, ethnic entrepreneurs manipulated and instrumentalized CBAGs as political tools to attack members of rival ethnic groups around the time of elections. This leads to their complete delegitimization among those targeted in the attacks; however, it contributes to their legitimacy among ethnic peers whom they protect against similar attacks from rival militias.[107]

From CBAGs to Providers of Community Security?

The USIP/RESOLVE Research Report on the dynamics and drivers of CBAGS has shown that hybrid security governance is a reality in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa and that plural security provision can manifest itself in more constructive or more destructive ways.[108] The USIP/RESOLVE typology mapping paper on CBAGs underlined how the trajectory of CBAGs is influenced by internal factors, such as their organizational structure, as well as by external factors, such as norms and social order.[109] This Mapping Paper identified a number of case studies in which vigilantes have not transformed into political militias or predatory criminals due to internal factors, such as enforceable rules, and external factors, such as strong state oversight or a conducive legal framework. Intervening actors can thus influence the trajectory of CBAGs and steer their behavior in the desired direction. This process is, however, far from straightforward because multiple factors can influence the behavior of CBAGs and EMT interventions can have unintended consequences, especially if they are not adequately adapted to specific contexts.

Table 5 lists the potential success factors that intervening actors may consider when designing strategies to alter the internal and external characteristics of CBAGs to reinforce their constructive potential and limit their destructive potential.

104 Moritz Schuberth, "Hybrid Security Governance, Post-election Violence and the Legitimacy of Community-based Armed Groups in Urban Kenya," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12, no. 2 (2018): 386–404.

105 Erik Henningsen and Peris Jones, "'What Kind of Hell is This!' Understanding the Mungiki Movement's Power of Mobilisation," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7, no. 3 (2013): 372.

106 Schuberth, "The Impact of Drug Trafficking on Informal Security Actors in Kenya."

107 Schuberth, "Hybrid Security Governance."

108 Agbiboa, *Dynamics and Drivers of Community-Based Armed Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

109 Van Metre, *From Self-Defense to Vigilantism.*

Table 5: Success Factors for Transforming CBAGs into Community Security Providers

	LEGAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT	ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY	ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT	FINANCIAL VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY	SECURITY PROVISION
SUCCESS FACTOR 1	THERE ARE CLEAR LAWS ON THE REGISTRATION OF CBAGS AND CBAGS REGISTER WITHOUT BARRIERS.	CBAGS HAVE AND FOLLOW CLEARLY DEFINED MISSIONS AND OBJECTIVES.	LOCAL AND/ OR CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS PROVIDE FUNDS TO CBAGS IN AN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT MANNER AND CBAGS TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO AVOID CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.	CBAGS HAVE ACCESS TO SUSTAINED SOURCES OF FUNDING TO CONTINUE THEIR OPERATIONS IN BOTH THE SHORT AND LONG TERM.	THE SECURITY SERVICES THAT CBAGS PROVIDE REFLECT THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.
SUCCESS FACTOR 2	THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON CBAGS SET OUT CLEAR AND LIMITED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, LIMITING THE SCOPE OF THEIR PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.	CBAGS HAVE CLEARLY DEFINED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND WRITTEN POLICIES OR PROCEDURES TO GUIDE ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS.	CBAGS HAVE ADOPTED AND FOLLOW A CODE OF ETHICS, OPERATE IN A TRANSPARENT MANNER, AND UNDERGO REGULAR FINANCIAL AUDITS.	CBAGS RAISE THEIR FUNDING FROM LOCAL SOURCES, INCLUDING GOVERNMENTS, BUSINESSES, AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.	CBAGS HAVE CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO DETERMINE THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.
SUCCESS FACTOR 3	THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON CBAGS ARE IMPLEMENTED CONSISTENTLY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR TERMS.	CBAGS ARE ABLE TO MAINTAIN PERMANENT, PAID STAFF.	THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS PROVIDE CLEAR GUIDANCE ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT OVER CBAGS.	CBAGS DO NOT RELY ON FOREIGN FUNDING THAT MIGHT BE INFLUENCED BY SHIFTS IN FUNDING LEVELS AND PRIORITIES OF FOREIGN DONORS.	CBAGS PROVIDE THEIR SECURITY SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS BEYOND THEIR OWN MEMBERS AND WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION WITH REGARDS TO RACE, GENDER, ETHNICITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, ETC.
SUCCESS FACTOR 4	THERE ARE LAWYERS WHO ARE TRAINED IN AND FAMILIAR WITH LAWS RELATED TO CBAGS WHO CAN PROVIDE LEGAL ADVICE.	CBAGS TRAIN THEIR STAFF IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION AS WELL AS IN GOOD GOVERNANCE, INCLUDING ANTI-CORRUPTION, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND RULE OF LAW.	THERE ARE CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT EXTERNAL OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS IN PLACE, INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS.	CBAGS HAVE SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN PLACE OR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES.	CBAGS RECOVER PARTS OF THE COSTS OF SERVICE PROVISION THROUGH VOLUNTARY FEES BUT REFRAIN FROM ENFORCING THE COLLECTION OF COMPULSORY FEES.

Source: Author.

For these strategies to be successful, they need to strengthen and formalize the security function of CBAGs while diminishing their political and criminal functions, without weakening the legitimacy of the state. The success factors aim to turn multi-dimensional CBAGs into more accountable, capable, and rule-abiding providers of community security that function more like civil society organizations than like informal vigilantes.[110] It is important to keep in mind, however, that such a transformation is difficult to achieve in complex political emergencies because it is costly and requires long-term commitments by multiple actors.

Challenge of Coordinating EMT Interventions

Complex political emergencies, a typical context in which intervening actors employ EMT approaches to CBAGs, require a comprehensive approach because of their "multi-causal nature." However, such an approach remains a challenge given a formal division of labor among different intervening actors—such as development or humanitarian agencies and armed forces—that operate on the basis of differing institutional logics and deep-seated worldviews. In the case of the UN Mission in Sudan, for instance, attempts to pursue an integrated international approach to support national DDR efforts stalled because of tensions between UNDP and DPKO and a lack of political will on the part of the Sudanese government. Moreover, different intervening actors show diverging attitudes to coordinating EMT approaches. For instance, the military tends to seek to subordinate and instrumentalize other actors, while some humanitarian actors developed a general aversion to integration, feeling that it had "systematically compromised their organizations' core values."

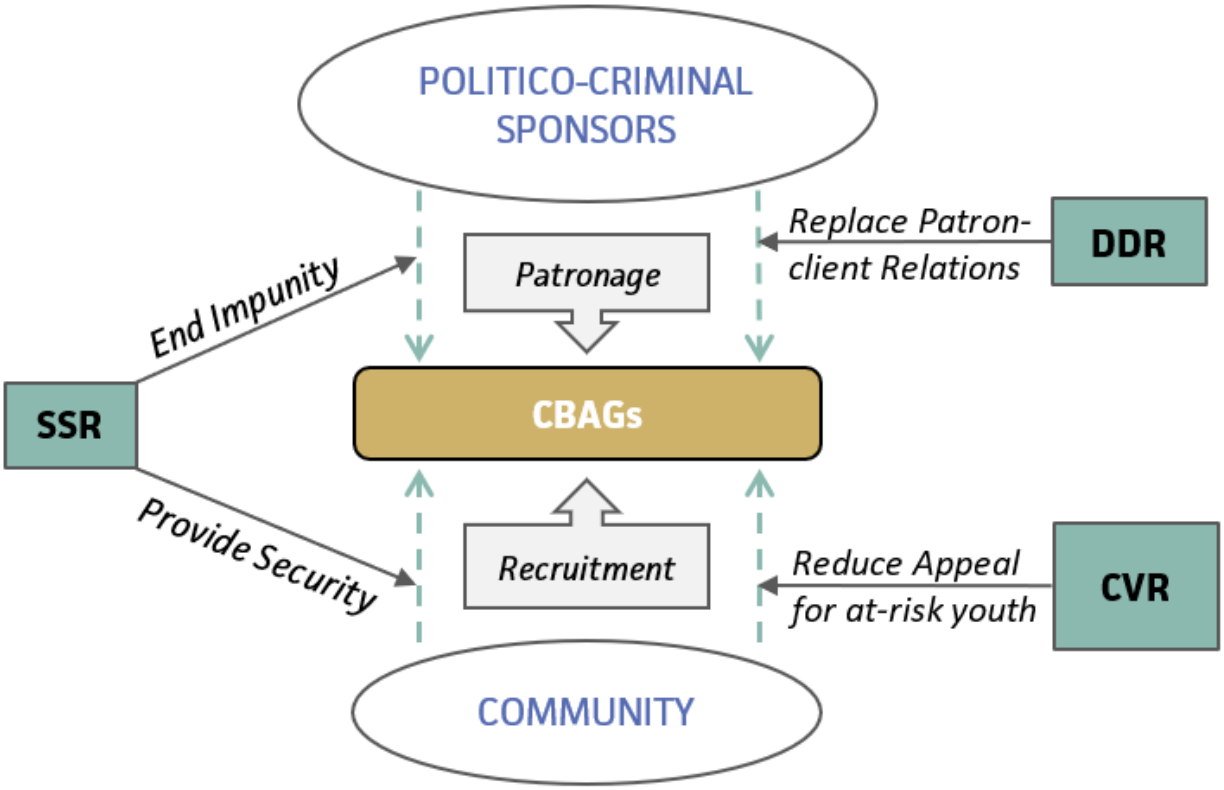
The lack of coherence and coordination among the multitude of actors involved in the EMT of CBAGs can have serious repercussions not only for the overall outcome of interventions, but also for the security of intervening actors and of supposed beneficiary communities. Although coherence and coordination across different E, M, or T approaches is difficult, the challenge of coordinating different tools within the same E, M, or T approach can potentially be overcome by an integrated and coherent framework for action aimed simultaneously at the three functions of CBAGs: security, economic, and political. An example is transformative approaches to replace CBAGs with a modern and accountable state that is bound by the rule of law and serves all sections of society in a fair and equal manner. As illustrated in Figure 1, an integrated transformative approach involves SSR to replace the security function of CBAGs, DDR to substitute their political function, and CVR to supplant their economic function.

DDR can help break the top-down patron-client relationship between CBAGs and their sponsors; CVR aims to cease the bottom-up flow of new recruits from communities to CBAGs. SSR can play a complementary role by contributing to ending the impunity for the politico-criminal elite and improving state security provision in areas of limited statehood. These transformative strategies can be usefully sup-

110 The success factors are adapted from indicators presented in the USAID Civil Society Organizations Sustainability Index (CSOSI) and USAID Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Indicator Reference Sheets.

ported by certain coercive and cooperative approaches, such as the precise targeting of CBAG leaders resisting calls to disarm and demobilize and to provide safe access to humanitarian and development actors. However, transformative approaches may be potentially overambitious, particularly when considering short implementation timeframes and budgetary limitations. Improved interagency coordination can help pool existing resources to improve efficiency and can diversify sources of funding to optimize sustainability.

Figure 1: Integrated Framework for Transformative Approaches to CBAGs



Source: Author.

CONCLUSION

CBAGs rest in a complicated space between security and development, requiring a whole-of-community and whole-of-government approaches. This paper mapped lessons learned from EMT approaches to CBAGs, identified success factors to turn CBAGs into providers of community security, and proposed indicators to measure the progress of EMT approaches against their objectives. It also showed that contrary to much of the literature on state fragility, CBAGs are also present in countries that enjoy relative economic strength and strong statehood within their respective regions but suffer from a high level of social inequality, including South Africa.

Important limitations run across all types of EMT approaches. Intervening actors frequently attempt to apply "one-size-fits-all" tools that have been developed and tested in specific contexts to seemingly similar settings, without taking into account the differences in the context and nature of CBAGs. Furthermore, lack of coherence and coordination among different intervening actors regularly leads to duplication of efforts and the use of contradictory approaches to individual CBAGs. Based on the findings of this paper, there are important additional lessons to be learned from different approaches to CBAGs in a variety of settings. Some of the questions that emerged and that should be explored more in-depth through country case studies include the following:

1. What EMT tools are most appropriate for which type of CBAGs (vigilantes, militias, gangs) and in what context (for example, urban versus rural; presence of violent extremism versus no violent extremism)?

2. What timeline is needed for different EMT tools? When is the situation ripe for different types of EMT approaches?

3. Who are the most effective intervening actors for different types of EMT approaches? Whose buy-in is crucial for the different approaches?

4. How have concrete examples of EMT approaches to CBAGs affected the legitimacy of the state?

To answer these questions, it would be beneficial to conduct in-depth research on select case studies, including from the two main regional conflict complexes in sub-Saharan Africa: the Lake Chad Basin and the African Great Lakes Region. For instance, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo would provide cross-country comparison of one state facing violent extremism and one facing other more pressing threats than violent extremism, even though ISIS has recently reclaimed its first attacks in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Both case studies would allow in-country comparisons of responses to urban and rural CBAGs. Moreover, the Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo would provide a unique opportunity to look at lessons learned from the EMT of CBAGs in the context of an epidemic or health crisis; it could lead to urgently needed policy recommendations for how national and international responders can engage them.

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