POLITICS & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Comparative study of local ownership and democratic governance of security sector reform: The case of Liberia and Sierra Leone

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Abstract: This article provided a comparative study of Liberia and Sierra Leone military reform and tried to understand the relationship and bridge the literature gap by interpreting the relationship between democratic governance and local ownership of (SSR). It adopts a comparative analysis and historical documentation as a research methodology to investigate the relevance of local ownership in democratic military governance during the SSR process. These nations have common backgrounds and experienced close-knit conflicts. Foreign-supported initiatives to reform the security sector were conducted in both countries after the civil conflict. These reforms viewed Liberia as an example showing inadequate local ownership, while more extensive ownership was seen in Sierra Leone compared to her neighbor. This article argues that outcomes that will establish democratic control and military oversight can result from activities where ownership is present or absent. As such, local ownership of SSR is relevant but not required for the development and consolidation of democratic control of the military. Hence, the study recommends that SSR should not be built on a rejection of local ownership realities because it leads to a non-consultative approach of reform and finally, this study concludes that local ownership may not be necessary for democratic

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study examined local ownership and democratic governance of security sector reform (SSR) and paid close attention to Liberia and Sierra Leone's case study. The study informs local actors, policy-makers, security experts, and readers interested in improving (SSR) in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and elsewhere. The author argued that SSR should not be built on a rejection of local ownership realities because it leads to a non-consultative approach to security reform. The institutionalization of political values, such as democracy as part of the strategy for (SSR), is always followed by local involvement in the post-conflict reform structure. In answer to this top-down interpretation, the underlying principle is that a peacekeeping mission cannot be only a foreign endeavor with international players as its main agents; an effective peacekeeping mission should include the active presence and participation of local stakeholders on all levels of security reform. This study adds to SSR literature.

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governance in the military; however, it is necessary for sustainable democratic governance.

**Subjects:** Public Administration & Management; Security Studies - Pol & Intl Relns; Military & Strategic Studies; Government; Politics & Development; Development Policy

**Keywords:** local ownership; democratic governance; security sector reform; military reform; peacekeeping

1. Introduction
How relevant is local ownership in democratic military governance during the security sector reform (SSR) process? Liberia and Sierra Leone are neighboring countries in West Africa’s Mano River Basin with a common historical background as nations established by free slaves, Liberia from the United States (U.S), and Sierra Leone from the United Kingdom. Both countries were ravaged by conflicts inextricably intertwined, with the Liberian civil war, which began in late 1989 and spread over into Sierra Leone in 1991. As both countries’ wars concluded, the United States State Department and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) and Ministry of Defense (MOD) spent considerable time and money in restructuring the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and, subsequently, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone (AFRSL) (Gbla, 2006). Both nation’s armies have played a significant negative part in their respective countries’ conflicts. These reforms viewed Liberia as an example showing inadequate local ownership, while more extensive ownership was seen in Sierra Leone than her neighbor. The AFL’s restructuring has a more tumultuous past. By early 2014, the AFL had not yet assumed supreme control over the state’s defense against foreign invasion, which remained the responsibility of a United Nations peacekeeping group, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In comparison, the restructuring of the AFRSL, which was renamed the RSLAF in 2002, proceeded reasonably smoothly, with the new military assuming supreme responsibility for defending the nation from foreign aggression in 2004 (Ebo, 2006).

This article argues that the current peacekeeping dynamics in which foreign actors possess a dominant position in a post-conflict environment when conducting reform is not the way forward because the inclusiveness and reliance on participatory mechanisms implied in the idea of ownership often enable one to recognize that democratic governance is being established or not. This study aimed to fill the gaps by finding proof of a buy-in, complete ownership, or comprehensive consultation with local stakeholders and explore the effect on the development of the military’s democratic power by the presence or lack of ownership. Therefore, the absence of local ownership has been a fundamental critique of the liberal concept of (SSR). The institutionalization of political values, such as democracy as part of the strategy for (SSR), is always followed by local involvement and local voice promotion into the post-conflict reform structure. In answer to this top-down interpretation, the underlying principle is that a peacekeeping mission can not be only a foreign endeavor with international players as its main agents; an effective peacekeeping mission should include the active presence and participation of local stakeholders on all levels of security reform.

1.1. Methodology of the study
This article adopts a comparative analysis and review of historical documentation (secondary data from agency reports, scholarly articles, and newspaper stories) and searches of keywords on local ownership and democratic governance of SSR in both countries as a research methodology to investigate the relevance of local ownership in democratic military governance during the SSR process. As stated by (Burnham et al., 2008), qualitative analyses produce a wide range of knowledge from different sources and provide an in-depth study of a phenomenon. It offers a more thorough and accurate description of the case under review. The research did not use any primary data points but carefully analyzed the literature and secondary evidence on both countries'
military reform. This article focuses on the connection between democratic governance and local ownership of SSR in post-conflict settings.

Yin (1984) and Creswell (2009) both suggested that qualitative data collection should be

an efficient method of data preparation, updating, and cleaning, in addition to identifying relevant

subjects, information, and observations. Stig (2009) promoted the definition by suggesting that qualitative data analysis is how the qualitative data collected is transformed by understanding and describing the research being done.

In comparison to the above opinions, Huberman and Miles (1994) concluded that qualitative data analysis would require the coding of all data collected to identify consistent patterns and topics in the collected data. The authors have referred to systematic and reliable collection procedures, analysis, and recording results. It was also recognized as a data processing spiral in Creswell (2009), a system that combines data collection and data analysis. In comparison to the perspective of Patton (2002) and the above principles were used to understand the gathered approved data from the data collection before using the data to form the complete answer to the question. Yin (1984) states that a researcher will carefully and regularly compile and retain many data sources. The details must be organized to reveal converging question lines and patterns. During the analysis, this method was used to code the literature and identify specific terms for analysis and understanding.

Following the data's clean-up, each sequence of data notes was transcribed. The Micro Excel system has been used to code the data under the belief that it is one of the most reliable tools for qualitative data coding. The results were validated separately based on the central themes captured in the literature (Stake, 2010). The information was compiled and authenticated as per viewpoints and components. Besides, descriptions of the findings were written based on the coding knowledge. Each literature text was authenticated and checked independently (Stake, 2010). The notes were written on a single sheet of paper and sessions cut and pasted. These notes were labeled and arranged based on the main themes centered on literature, and the answers to the research question in the results chapter described the critical problems gathered and coded from the data collected. The researcher maintained a high degree of knowledge and use of triangulation to satisfy the ambition and had other security experts who helped the researcher come up with the conclusion and interpretation of data. The idea for analyzing the data has been condensed into issues related to the primary and secondary research questions. Therefore, the primary research question motivating this study is:

1.1.1. How relevant is local ownership in democratic military governance during the SSR process?
Both countries' preference was inspired by the complexity of the discrepancy between the military reform and local ownership outcomes. Liberia and Sierra Leone have common backgrounds or settlers. Liberia and Sierra Leone are colonies for free slaves and also established strong relations, respectively, with the British and U.S.; both power eventually leads their SSR initiatives (Loden, 2007). Historically, the reformers have been strongly connected with the two (2) selected case studies in all instances, removing a source of possible variables that may have clarified the disparity in the outcomes of the reform and local ownership.

In general, some scholars consider the SSR in Sierra Leone to have demonstrated the principle of local ownership, while Liberia is regarded as stripped of ownership of military reform and, more generally, international security (Başş & Stig, 2010). It is primarily attributed to two significant procurement policy cases. First, Liberia's Government turned over the accountability for the military's reform to the U.S. Government. Secondly, the U.S. Government then turned over the
duty and responsibility to private military enterprises that were only accountable to the U.S Government, not the Liberian Government.

2. Theoretical link between local ownership and SSR
Local ownership has evolved as an indisputable fact in recent international reform initiatives and serves as a standard practice for reconstructing the security sector after conflict. It is, therefore, essential for scholarly and political literature to emphasize its significance. Nevertheless, several researchers acknowledge that local ownership remains more common in policy than practice. Donais (2012) argued that in recent international peacekeeping operations, “have tended to more closely resemble externally driven exercises in state-building and social engineering than patient, eliciting processes of peace nurturing” (p. 1).

Throughout the context of international economic development, the concept of local ownership has its roots in the argument for a collaborative strategy to sustainable development and is a contemporary cornerstone in current security reform discourse independently (Saxby, 2003; Stiglitz, 1998). S. B. Von Billebeck (2015) suggests that its persistence is necessitated by transitions away from swift and unpleasant solutions to stability and reconstruction after a conflict, primarily based almost solely on polls. Local ownership is a direct result and response to increasing peacekeeping mandates to ensure lasting peace. These comprehensive laws and regulations show that local ownership is emerging because of its intrusiveness to raise territorial integrity issues. There is a cautious effort to resolve contradictions between sovereignty and international security and can be interpreted as rooted in the universal principle of sovereignty, as this also reflects sometimes invasive foreign interference (S. B. Von Billebeck, 2015). Local stakeholders sometimes utilize a broad authorization as peacebuilders, and it is thus possible that structures established by foreign powers are eventually considered unconstitutional, undemocratic, and unstable.

Theoretically, the principle of local ownership is essential for SSR in peacebuilding, as local actors essentially lead the reform process and their feeding about leading the creation of social foundations for lasting peace (Shinoda, 2002). For instance, with a general emphasis on military reform, SSR arose in Indonesia due to a national consensus on democratization within a broader total reform agenda. In other to create a modern democratic Indonesia, comprehensive reforms in the sociopolitical, justice, education, and economic fields have been implemented concurrently. Indonesian SSR started concurrently with the broader democratization process, which began in 1997–1998 with the student-led national reform movement. This reform effort served as the umbrella for the larger initiative of complete reform, which aimed to transition Indonesia out of the New Order’s totalitarian period, which ruled the world for three decades. Under this sense, reforms were driven by an Indonesian policy in response to the populace’s call for democracy after 30 years of authoritarianism (Mietzner, 2006).

Additionally, in the absence of local ownership, if such comprehensive agendas evolve, there is a danger that post-conflict communities may become dependent on international security reform actors (S. Von Billebeck, 2011). Therefore, peacekeeping missions and their escalating requirements include interaction with local actors to reform the security sector, improving the credibility and sustainability of future security reform. Thus, local ownership is viewed as a remedy to the problems connected with the dependency, dictatorship, and illegitimacy in the peacekeeping mission (S. Von Billebeck, 2011). It is at least formally accepted among scholars and practitioners that local ownership is necessary for the peacekeeping mission and security reform achievement. The fostering of local ownership is also claimed to support any reform initiative’s legitimacy and sustainability.

While there are different reform practices, it should be noticed that local ownership has a propensity to gain more academic focus in the sequence of practices defined as an (SSR) program. One potential explanation may be the need for stability as the foundation for any eventual long-term security reform. The effectiveness in other peacebuilding initiatives, such as
legal reform and economic development, can be claimed dependent both on short-term and long-term stability benefits.

Several tasks are involved in the literature on local ownership of the SSR. The problem is how the definition is explained and what it takes to work and anchor it in the actual world. Therefore, as there is a recognized difference between policy and practice, researchers have considered these operations’ barriers worth contemplating. Finally, there are a variety of arguments that support local ownership. As such, the present academic contribution to local ownership is a continuing project of identifying and running the concept and considering its hurdles and benefits.

3. Democratic security sector governance
Within a modern consensus on international assistance, the importance of democratic governance has risen. The core hypothesis consists of the argument that democracy and good governance are necessary for security development. Therefore, the democratic paradigm of good governance combines liberal democratic principles and good governance principles. Accurately speaking, this incorporates efficient public reform with practical governance management elements such as anti-corruption, transparency, and accountability. Leftwich (1993) differentiates between three aspects in which democratically elected Government is employed. They are political, systemic, and administrative.

A politically democratic government applies to a political system under which power and validity are extracted from a people's mandate. This mandate is defined by democratic norms, such as the balance of powers and public sovereignty, which are enforced by respect for public engagement, civil rights, transparency, and fair elections. At the systemic phase, a particular structure is a democratically elected government. It relates to how political and socio-economic relations regulate the relationships between states, state entities, and organizations. The model of democratic governance refers to a democratic capitalist system that emphasizes a minimalistic state. Finally, democratic governance can be viewed at an administrative level, emphasizing public institutions' efficiency and transparency.

This is a partnership between systems and individuals both inside and without organizations. Organizations work independently and by relations with other organizations according to democratic procedures and principles. Such principles include political pluralism, transparency, active administrative structures, engaged civil society, human rights, law rule, and free elections (Ball, 2014). Equally, the U.N. adheres to the same interpretation of the concept. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is the lead agency on democratic governance. It stresses the rule of law, public involvement in decision-making, democratic accountability of state bodies, anti-corruption, human rights, and the delivery of essential services (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2016).

The issue concerning this article is the determination of the relationship between democratic governance and security reform. In other phrases, what does a democratic security sector governance look like in real life? Notwithstanding, some controversy in recent research on SSR often underlines the strategic and institutional purposes of democratic governance. These are usually the commitment of the security sector to democratic power.

A democratic security sector management is a state of affairs in which political structures control the security system. These include the establishment and implementation of a legal system compatible with international law and democratic practice; the formation of professional civil administration and oversight institutions, the production of effective, responsible, and sustainable security forces; the assurance of a legislative structure, international law, and excellent public practice for the internal culture of security forces (Ball, 2005).

Nathan (2007) describes the elements of democratic oversight in the security sector, subject to administrative regulation, law and protection for human rights, and civilian oversight through the
parliament, civil society, the judiciary, and media institutions. The concept of democratic control of the military is commonly understood to delegate the armed forces to those legitimately elected to take over the Government’s affairs. In its entirety, it implies, through political leadership and the legislature to ensure public consensus and credibility, all decisions related to the security of the land, organization, deployment, and usage of army powers, the establishment of the military objectives and requirements, and allocation of required resources are made.

3.1. Civilian oversight and control
Democratic military governance is interpreted in this article regarding civilian control and oversight. In a democracy, oversight functions to maintain transparency. It is also founded on accountability, transparency, engagement, and responsiveness to citizens. Oversight structures include checks and a balance against the unlawful abuse of authority, thus ensuring that security forces are kept accountable for their behavior according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Government, legislature, judiciary, and broader civil society structures where this reform is ongoing will include civilian oversight.

Civilian control is a civil-military dimension that defines a beneficial relationship between military and civil authorities in a democracy. Civilian control is also essentially a normative concept, as it presumes that civilian-military control is appropriate for state control of the military (Burk, 2002). Civilian control can enhance transparency, provided that elected leaders exercise such control.

Civilian control can be accomplished empirically by civilianization of the ministry of defense. Therefore, oversight structures themselves are also a means of civilian control. Civilian officials are a vehicle for transparency since their position is focused on the people’s will. Therefore, evaluating civilian influence involves determining to what degree the military compliant with civilian guidance. Whether the policy is driven by people or guided by the military is essential to civilian oversight and control.

3.2. Defining SSR and its concept
The SSR can be defined as reforming the security system, which includes all actors, their roles, their duties, and their actions so that it is complied with and operated more closely in line with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance (Wulf, 2004). Consequently, it aims and can be measured by ensuring effective and efficient security delivery and consistency in civilian security sector oversight. According to the U.N., they are supporting states with SSR aim “to help states and communities in the creation of reliable, inclusive and accountable security institutions in order to contribute to international peace and security, sustainable development and the enjoyment of human rights by all” (Secretary-General, 2008, p. 13).

Generally, SSR discusses security aspects in political, cultural, social, and institutional terms. Politically, reform is seen as a means of consolidating democratic governance. These include the effective distribution and use of scarce resources in an economic context. Socially, this requires the specific provision of support to SSR beneficiaries. Systemically, reform involves explicitly separate and specified positions of different security actors to avoid overlaps, which could otherwise undermine civil-military ties (Wulf, 2004).

It is evident from the concepts above that the SSR law brings normative consequences. These imply that appropriateness standards concerning the security infrastructure design are implied within SSR. Within a democratic security reform context, SSR is pursued, which is also defined as the liberal theory of peace. The route to stability is through democratization to transform nations’ conflicting ideologies, including democratic governance, the rule of law, and regard for human rights.

Consequently, SSR is not merely a technological initiative. It is correct that phases of reform typically require capacity-building to establish active structures and preparation to ensure security
continuity under a defined framework. At the same time, this change has an apparent normative prejudice against the notion of democratic Government mentioned previously (Wulf, 2004). SSR inevitably reorder power relations in communities where it is conducted by emphasizing norms such as civilian regulation of the military, thus augmenting its technological aspect with a political one. In this context, it is not unusual to hear SSR being identified as a liberalizing initiative (Nathan, 2007).

Besides, comprehensive SSR concepts go beyond merely promoting holistic approaches to SSR, which encompass, in an integrated manner, the several domestic and foreign security sector components. Comprehensive SSR entails improving the security sector’s governance, where the security complies with democratic governance norms and appreciates a people-centered perception of security (Bendix & Stanley, 2008).

Security implies various things to various individuals, similar to other democratic principles. Various emphases have been put on who or what to secure while considering security. The concern is of paramount significance, but it nevertheless defines the endorsed security policy’s essence. The centrality of the state has dominated mainstream thought on security. This ensures insecurity when security is interpreted developed in a state-centric manner with the nation as the security beneficiary. State centrism has thus maintained that security is presented in increasingly militaristic terms. It is reasonable to assume that this exclusive emphasis on the state has shifted. A testimony to this is the parallel acceptance of an awareness of uncertainty focused on individuals. The above includes expanding the scope of security concerns to non-military issues such as human rights, environmental destruction, and economic disparity (Schroeder, 2009). Bendix and Stanley (2008, p. 10) describe a people-centered understanding of security as a critical tenet of comprehensive (SSR).

Broad knowledge of the security sector is essential for a comprehensive SSR approach. An inadequate security view will contribute to poor reform as an exclusive military emphasis (Wulf, 2004). Therefore, the security sector is also regarded as the “state bodies and agencies who have the legal authority to use force, order force, or impede the use of force” (Fluri & Born, 2003, p. 16). Therefore, it encompasses a state’s main administrative security actors and the civil authority accountable for their government’s supervision and regulation. These would comprise, for instance, the security services, military, paramilitaries, defense minister, legislative and advisory commissions, and civil society organizations.

Nevertheless, there is a growing understanding that the security sector goes outside the military in post-conflict settings. The prevalence of non-state entities offering security services results from an inadequate regulatory context and the absence of the state’s fundamental ability to meet these obligations. It is also unsurprising that part of the SSR network problem entails involving informal security contractors inside the state architecture (Scheye, 2008).

4. Local ownership and SSR in Liberia and Sierra Leone

4.1. The civil war and reference for SSR in Liberia
Liberia is exceptional among African nations because the American Colonization was the consequence of its creation in 1822. During the start of the 19th century, the American Colonization Society (ACS) claimed that the freed black slaves and white Americans could not co-exist, prompting the organization to find the best land for resettlement of black Americans in Africa. More than thousands of African Americans moved to Liberia with the help of the U.S. government in secured towns that shielded them from the local tribal communities (Burin, 2008).

For two decades, Liberia’s political culture was governed by an authoritarian and nepotist True Whig Party (TWP). The Americo-Liberian bourgeoisie controlled the nation from 1878 to 1980. (Sesay et al., 2009). In April 1980, former President Samuel Doe’s brutal repression, riots erupted in
Monrovia, Liberia's capital, and a violent coup that assassinated President Tolbert, an Americo-Liberian descent. It effectively ended the Americo-Liberian long existed rule of the land of Liberia. Following Tolbert's death, Samuel Doe became the President of the People's Redemption Council and the de facto Head of State, leading the country in various levels of protests for a decade. His rule was profoundly authoritarian, and he lost the opportunity to unify Liberia's people, thereby compounded by attempts to topple him and his administration by Charles McArthur Ghankay Taylor.

About a little over a hundred (100) of the formerly volatile National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), headed by Taylor, moved from Cote d'Ivoire into Liberia to topple the Doe regime on 24 December 1989, which marked the beginning of the First Liberian Civil War and the cause of Doe's death. Many forces, driven by the tyranny's bitterness, entered and pushed toward Monrovia's capital. A group of fighters controlled by Taylor's NPFL apprehended Doe, abused him openly, stripped him, and decapitated him on 9 September 1990 (Ellis, 1999). The battle of the eventual NPFL, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO), with support from Sierra Leone in mixed exile, continued fighting Taylor and his groups until 1994. The conflict destroyed over 150,000 civilians out of a notion of only about two and a half million at the time (Ellis, 1999) and concluded with an election that Taylor comfortably secured victory in 1997.

The Second Liberian Civil War began less than two years later after Charles Taylor was elected President of Liberia. The war originated with the armed assaults by LURD in the northern part of Liberia called Lofa on 21 April 1999, and the Taylor administration initiated counterattacks, and fighting reopens in Liberia again (Kieh, 2009). The war subsequently enters Liberia's neighboring countries like Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Cote d'Ivoire or included violence. In 2002, the MODEL was established in Ivory Coast, entered into the country, and occupied a southern Liberia region. The LURD and MODEL joint forces held about 70% of Liberian territories by 2003 (Waugh, 2011). Taylor's final moments in office included a war crimes charge against him by an UN-sponsored special court for Sierra Leone, LURD's June 2003 invasion of Monrovia, the conclusion of the peace agreements in Ghana, and renewed pressure to stop Taylor from the U.S. President George Bush Jr. Eventually, Taylor embraced leaving the country for exile on 11 August 2003 and fled to Nigeria (Waugh, 2011).

Throughout the conflict, both the AFL and the LNP punished Liberia's citizens. At the end of the war, there was no confidence between the Liberian citizens and the institutions entrusted with civil defense. Therefore, the security sector's reform was crucial and was demonstrated by the 2003 CPA, which ended the Liberian war.

4.1.1. Reforming the Armed Forces of Liberia
As reported, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) envisaged an armed forces reconstruction and called on the U.S. to “play a leading role” in the organization of the transition process (Desirée Nilsson, 2009). The United Nations (U.N.), the African Union (A.U.), ECOWAS, and the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) were all asked to assist during the reform period. Nevertheless, the U.S. claimed full accountability for executing the AFL reform process, an event that Liberian and foreign representatives have extensively discussed. The U.S. status as the primary donor accountable for restructuring the AFL did not illustrate the mandates issued by the CPA or the U.N. Regulations 1509.

The CPA was straightforward on the U.S.’s critical position in army restructuring, although at the same time, it asks for the help of ECOWAS, the U.N., the African Union, and the ICGL to “provide advisory staff, supplies, logistics, and skilled instructors.” Resolution 1509 of the U.N was precise regarding the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) position in training the police but applied only to “Interested States” regarding the army’s restructuring. Therefore the U.S. was given no particular role in the reform (Jaye, 2006). Besides, according to the terms and conditions of the
CPA, which required a structural effort to balance faction leaders’ position in the AFL, the U.S. decided to dismantle the army and fully rebuild it from scratch.

The U.S. involvement was promulgated by entering a cooperation agreement with the provisional Liberian transitional government. The agreement was that the U.S would help demobilize the army, the vetting and recruitment of the new AFL, and the training and equipment needed for the SSR Program. In 2004, two U.S—based private military companies (PMCs) were hired to restructure the AFL. DynCorp International and Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE) Inc. were the two private military companies contracted by the U.S. Government to restructure the AFL. In aggregation with DynCorp, the U.S. State Department agreed that the current AFL should have 2000 soldiers.

DynCorp was contracted to provide essential services and training, while PAE was responsible for developing those foundations, structuring the AFL, specialist and professional preparation, and mentoring inexperienced and non-commissioned officers. As a result, DynCorp was paid to recruit and develop soldiers, while PAE was responsible for mentoring and training them. In Liberia, three SSR military bases were established, and they included the Barclay Training Camp, Sandee S. Ware Military Barracks, and Edward B. Kessey Military Kaserne. The “first two were handled by DynCorp and the last by the PAE”

Contrary to Sierra Leone, which strongly supported a more holistic approach to army reform, one can argue that AFL reform was carried out from scratch. Thus, SSR in Liberia, in terms of the armed forces, involved more of a radical reconstitution than reform. Some AFL members and civil society disputed this and saw it as a misunderstanding of the CPA (Loden, 2007). “DynCorp’s restructuring operations were subject to documentation and disengagement from those serving the old AFLs” (Ebo, 2005, p. 18).

This strategy was quite divisive and was considered by others to be unworkable. One of its consequences, along with the highly stringent DynCorp screening method, is that it generated a void of leadership within the AFL. The leadership vacuum created by the screening phase contributed to the selection of a “Nigerian General to head the Army as Chief of Defense Staff” (Ebo, 2008, p. 157). This was unquestionably a setback to local ownership opportunities in the country’s transition process. Foreign actors guided the rebuilding, but such a vital role within the national security did not represent local ownership in the country emerging from a long civil conflict period.

4.1.2. Recruitment, vetting, and training

The following recruiting and screening program was planned and operated by DynCorp. After intensive publicity promotions, a nationwide recruiting mechanism was initiated to address the historical shortage of rural representation and establish an inclusive national army. Recruits from all 15 Liberian counties and each ethnic community were drawn. AFL’s recruiting criteria were robust, and all candidates followed the exact requirements. Participants needed to be people from Liberia between 18 and 45 years of age, free of Aids, tuberculosis, and drugs, and willing to undergo essential measures of fitness and skill tests. In a procedure recognized by the International Crisis Group as the most significant witnesses in the country, the candidates were rigorously rejected.

Thus every candidate was interviewed by Australian, Gambian, British, Ghanaian, and Liberian researchers, who visited their homes, schools, and spoke to their families and friends. Furthermore, posters with applicants’ photos were distributed to allow people to make anonymous calls to file accusations of previous abuses of human rights.

However, the goal of 20% of woman soldiers by President Johnson-Sirleaf was challenging to meet, owing to both strength testing and training requirements. The process’s overall failure rate
was about 75%, most of them in the initial testing evaluation. A 5-year term of service was then given to candidates who effectively went through the screening process, including a 1-year probation duration for firing AFL for wrongdoing. The lack of details on the present army renders it impossible to determine the process’s effects, but the process may have brought Liberians new authority to the AFL and the Defense Ministry (Jaye, 2009).

Although the screening phase was deemed highly adequate, unexpected problems frequently plagued the AFL training program, with deadlines laid down in contracts failed severely. The first batch of 110 trainees started in August 2006 and graduated three months later, but the cycle only ended in the middle of 2007. Washington’s inadequate and unpredictable funding was the fundamental cause of AFL development’s slow speed, but the Liberian Government’s funding was unreliable. The high expense of army development was often highly criticized. It primarily stems from the enormous wages of DynCorp’s instructors to expatriate U.S. employees. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army. Thus, the delays to the process were repeatedly caused by DynCorp to burn through its budget without training.

The new AFL was being trained according to U.S. Army doctrine. Every soldier was trained as an infantry rifleman during an Initial Entry Training (IET) course, irrespective of an ultimate branch. The IET continued 11 weeks after the initial induction but was met with inconsistent financing and significant necessary training expenses. The period was reduced to 8 weeks. This was achieved by cutting three (3) weeks of training devoted to human rights and education in the rule of law and civil-military relations in a democracy. According to the (ICG), this development constituted “a significant retreat from the original concept”.

The issue of civilian governance and security oversight is imperative for ensuring the Liberian peace process’s sustainability. DynCorp not only streamlined the procedure in reaction to delays by growing the rule of law and preparation relevant to human rights; it also released its Liberian workers in order to lower costs, inevitably contributing to a lack of crucial local expertise.

4.1.3. Lack of accountability and local ownership
The Governance Reform Commission (GRC) reported that the Liberian SSR mechanism was profoundly troubled by its lack of transparency and accountability. The U.S. Federal Acquisition Regulations determine that the contract specifics with the U.S. State Department and all PMCs, Architects and Engineers, DynCorp, and Pacific will not be reported Liberian legislature or otherwise made available. However, DynCorp declined to come before the Liberian parliament because it agreed with the U.S. Government and not the Liberian Government. The Liberian Parliament has been weakened since the transformative era. Because of the dubious background of individual members and allegations of corruption and other abuses, the Interim Government was seen as lacking in legitimacy. Hence, the opportunity to lay the basis for effective parliamentary oversight of the post-war security sector was missed (Ebo, 2007).

Nevertheless, the Liberian SSR method was being implemented within a democracy. Civil society organizations criticized the lack of knowledge, feedback, openness, and accountability concerning external donor SSR actions. Following a concerted effort by a variety of NGOs to create an independent advisory committee to evaluate the SSR mechanism, government officials told the organizations that “it is hard to hold to the opinions of civil society, as the international community has established its proposals and dedicated much money to the process” (Ebo, 2007, p. 82). This isolation and ambiguity caused civil society representatives to say that civil society has not taken any significant role in Liberia’s security reform reforms. In reality, there was an inadequate national discussion on such issues, and not only is civil society concerned (Ebo, 2007).

4.2. The civil war and reference for SSR in Sierra Leone
Sierra Leone was founded from a freed slave settlement developed in 1787 by British abolitionists and was quickly colonized. However, the country’s independence was given only in 1961 (Sesay
et al., 2009). Siaka Stevens’ Union of the All People’s Congress (APC) quickly became the dominant political power in charge of a corrupt one-party government, overthrown by the military in 1992 (Ebo, 2006).

The Sierra Leone Army originally comes from the Royal West African Frontier Force, primarily used to maintain British colonial dominance (Ebo, 2006). Thereby, it primarily acted as an institutional suppression agent, an incident characterizing the post-colonial period. Given this small but essential position, it was not surprising that a security sector was acquired after independence and could not meet a liberal democratic and multi-ethnic society’s protection needs. Consequently, democratic governance shortcomings were compounded by the Government, retaining ownership of authority by strengthening the defense system for oppressive purposes.

Politicizing security bodies such as police and the military played a crucial role in Sierra Leone’s repressive and coercive policies. This saw representative democracy being lost for racial nepotism. The armed services were personalized, which tended to protect the President’s rights rather than Sierra Leone’s citizens. This was particularly true of the widespread availability of security forces. This condition means that parliamentary oversight of the security sector did not occur as political opposition, be it from the parliament or broader civil society, was being persecuted regularly (Gbla, 2006).

The situation of instability marked Sierra Leone. The nation’s administrative-territorial integrity was routinely called into question, and human rights violations were a regular attempt to preserve power. The army was predictably a significant violator of human rights, poorly trained and unmotivated to guarantee state and human welfare. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh, launched a civil war in Sierra Leone in this direct link. The conflict saw the persistence of significant human rights abuses by destroying countless lives of internally displaced people and producing refugees. The Sierra Leone army was ineffective in combating this threat; many of Sobel’s soldiers gradually became day and night soldiers (Gbla, 2006).

The RUF overran Sierra Leone, and the army was overwhelmed with the APC’s corrupt logic, which commanded the unification of nonprofessional elements to recruit new men, some of which toppled the regime in 1992 (Gbla, 2006). One of the reasons that enabled the Government to negotiate with the RUF rebels was that the Nigerian Government doubt its potential to take out its military position in the fight. Besides, the international community became hesitant to fill the current military void and thus raised leverage on the Government to try to bring about peace with the RUF. This ultimately gives rise to the ratification in July 1999 of the Lomé Peace Agreement (Thomson, 2007). The agreement was subject to massive protests because it gave Foday Sankoh leverage of Sierra Leone’s diamond mines and the vice president (Abdulllah, 2004).

The agreement was concluded, and 6,000 peacekeepers were sent to the U.N. mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). In 2001 their strength rose gradually and culminated around 17,500 (Gbla, 2006). However, the Lomé Agreement did not initially discontinue the confrontation, as the RUF reneged on its commitments. In May 2000, a RUF uprising contributed to the capturing of 500 U. N. soldiers as prisoners, which was a significant embarrassment for the U.N. In early 2001, the RUF was eventually defeated by a combination of actions by the British military, UNAMSIL, and the Guinean army, which, in particular, saw Foday Sankoh arrested. It could be said that the civil war officially ended in 2002 (Thomson, 2007). In the early 2000s, Sierra Leone required the military’s reform that worsened during the war and complicated pre-war politics towards the end of the conflicts.

4.2.1. Reforming the Military of Sierra Leone
The origins of the Sierra Leone transition can be traced back to the civil war since there was proof of a Government’s formally recognized need for SSR. The assistance to the Civil Defense Force (CDF), the military’s stabilization in expenditures, and man-power levels and agreements with the RUF were the strategic objectives. At this point, the policy proposals also recognized the need for good governance,
particularly in the security sector and government institutions in general. Eventually, in 1997 “the government launched a National Good Governance Strategy” (Thomson, 2007, p. 5). In May 1997, the military felt challenged with future reform in a restructuring context. The military coup disrupted this early attitude towards SSR in May 1997. They later founded and even welcomed the RUF to join their regime, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). In February 1998, the ECOMOG and Komajors “finally ousted this regime” (Thomson, 2007, p. 5).

Although in exile, the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) sought to establish its reform agenda in collaboration with the British Department of International Development (DFID). After 1998, more specific policy strategies gradually gained prominence. The military, for instance, was reduced to 5000, more than fifty (50%) of the original (AFRC) size before the reform. The downsizing was also combined with a robust screening procedure throughout the reform process. The conquest of Freetown by the RUF and the (AFRC) in January 1999 postponed the reform’s enforcement. Eventually, ECOMOG and Komajor defeated the aggression (Thomson, 2007).

The Lomé Agreement did not discuss the SSR in the same manner as the CPA that ended the Liberian Civil War. However, one of the main criteria was military integration as part of the military restructuring. Sections two (2) and three (3) of the agreement ending the conflict in Sierra Leone of Article XVII state that “Those ex-combatants of the RUF or S.L., CDF, and SLA who wish to be integrated into the new restructured national armed forces may do so provided they meet established criteria.” Section three (3) illustrated that “Recruitment into the armed forces shall reflect the geopolitical structure of Sierra Leone within the established strength.”

Nevertheless, another notable aspect of this agreement, as it was in other peace negotiations, including Mozambique and Burundi as disclosed by Nilsson et al. (2013) is not a formal military integration. “It did not prescribe quotas for each category, but instead allowed former combatants in both camps to gain entrance into the new army” (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2013, p. 5).

4.2.2. Military reintegration program

The British Government was Sierra Leone’s leading donor. The broader post-conflict recovery process was carried out “through the DFID by the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Program (SILSEP), which was launched in June 1999” (Ebo, 2006, p. 284). More notably, the International Monitoring and Training Team (IMATT) carried out the military’s rebuilding, headed by the British. They participated in training and equipping military forces through the MRP and restructuring the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and enormous security apparatus. Summarily, IMATT’s mission was to “assist with the transformation of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) into a self-sustaining, democratically accountable and affordable force in order that it can meet Sierra Leone’s defense missions and tasks and to facilitate the phased disengagement and withdrawal of IMATT” (Ebo, 2006, p. 487).

The fundamental goals of RSLAF reform, sponsored by the (IMATT), were to minimize the size of the military; increase its military skills and preparation; update its command structures and personnel; introduce new equipment, make it politically accountable to and strengthen civil relations and establish its functions and obligations in the post-conflict situation.

Concerning the Lomé Agreement, the Government shall conduct the rebuilding and training of the armed forces of Sierra Leone in compliance with Article XVIII of the Lomé Agreement in 1999 (Albrecht et al., 2009). Section 1 emphasizes, “The Government will carry out the restructuring, composition, and training of the new Sierra Leone armed forces to create truly national armed forces, bearing loyalty solely to the State of Sierra Leone, and able and willing to perform their constitutional role.” Section 165 lays forth the fundamental role of the Armed Forces (2) “to guard and secure the Republic of Sierra Leone and to preserve the safety and territorial integrity of the state, to participate in its development, to safeguard the peoples’ achievement and protect this constitution.”
4.2.3. Accountability and local ownership

In reality, while international communities strongly influenced SSR in Sierra Leone, local SSR ownership was evident on several counts. Sierra Leone’s Government invested in and exerted leadership in core SSR operations. Concerning buy-in, the administration, however, generally supported reform plans from the British representatives such as IMATT and MODAT, despite, in particular, the Sierra Leone Government formally called for their assistance. The buy-in degree demonstrates the simplistic definition of who is local. The 2003 Defense White Paper and the 2005 Security Assessment were instances of Sierra Leonean leadership in SSR articulated as some examples of local ownership.

The assessment mechanisms used provided comprehensive meetings with significant local stakeholders in core SSR initiatives. This ownership model reveals the maximalist interpretation of who is local. While there is a shortage of actual ownership in the normative context supported by Nathan (2008) in Sierra Leone, local ownership highlights the various understandings of the ownership explored for leadership, engagement, participation, and inclusion in the literature review.

An overview of local stakeholders’ role in the design, execution, and assessment of reforms can evaluate the existence or absence of local ownership. SSR has been orchestrated in Sierra Leone through DFID’s (SILSEP). In June 1999, DFID’s SILSEP sent a three-person team to evaluate the security needs of Sierra Leone. Two advisors were tasked to develop and implement the plans for restructuring the MOD, one military and the other civilian. The team was appointed as the Ministry of Defense Advisory Team (MODAT). The third advisor directed the National Security Advisor (NSA) on the restructuring of its office.

MODAT concluded its Defense Analysis in October 1999 and published the Potential British Military Involvement for the DFID’s (SILSEP) in November of that year. This analysis was also published. It included a defense policy summary and modern military mechanisms, and a comprehensive army organization. This also recommended that a British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) be formed and suggested that key personnel and command roles be filled to ensure efficient operation.

The British (BMATT) commander was appointed as Sierra Leone Military Advisor. The funding for (BMATT) was intended to last only three years to avoid the culture of dependency. By April 2000, (MODAT) had also developed the (MRP), which was approved by the Lomé Agreement to reintegrate former soldiers who endured the (DDR) cycle to the new armies. Per this agreement, they were invited by the Government of Sierra Leone and the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration.

The British attempted to internationalize the implementation of those systems (i.e., the reshaping of the (DOM), the army, the (MRP) concerning personnel constraints, and the social weariness of their former colonial position in Sierra Leone. They sought support from other nations and then established the International Military Assistance Team (IMATT).

5. Liberia and Sierra reform compared

This article addresses the local ownership discrepancy in the literature. The discrepancy in SSR focuses on arguments concerning internal normative perceptions of ownership and the validity of such statements on an empirical basis. Local ownership creates reform, legitimate and sustainable, and establishes democratic leadership as the post-war system’s base. The last point is the subject of the article. This study subsequently examined this literature gap: How relevant is local ownership in democratic military governance during the SSR process?

The study entertained multiple definitions of ownership in order to operationalize local ownership. This study aimed to find proof of a buy-in, complete ownership, or comprehensive
consultation with local stakeholders and explore the effect on developing the military's democratic power by the presence or lack of ownership. The concept of oversight, civilian control, executive, legislative, and civil society was operationalized.

The background of local ownership often has three main advantages that can be gained from the local participation of SSR. Local ownership is anticipated to boost the practice of democratic governance, provide the opportunity for legitimacy and sustainability (S. Von Billerbeck, 2011). The reform initiatives can be more productive and complete if local stakeholders are the designer and executor representing the beliefs, local traditions, priorities, and needs of the society. Furthermore, knowing that international reform can not continue forever after peace has been restored in a post-conflict state, it is necessary to promote local ownership because it perpetuates continuity in the understanding that local owners are those who would have to deal with any reform achievements after the departure of the international community (Nathan, 2007).

Local ownership is then the rational option for security reform because international reform directives are placed in a reasonable time frame and can eventually conclude. In this manner, it aims to establish the minimum requirements required to allow established local authorities and the general public to preserve peace (Berge, 2014). The inclusiveness and reliance on participatory mechanisms implied in the idea of ownership often enable one to recognize that democratic governance is being established.

The question, however, is that there is no comprehensive effort to prove the legitimacy of the arguments by demonstrating the fundamental processes by which these advantages are accomplished. Nevertheless, one may argue that the idea of local ownership has not been objectively regarded. Although such explanatory processes were not established, the probability can not be eliminated that local ownership can adversely impact democratic governance, legitimacy, and sustainability. Society is exalted to see if local ownership contributes to more democratic governance, sustainability, and legitimacy (S. Von Billerbeck, 2011). Therefore, this article attempts to bridge the literature gap by interpreting and clarifying the relationship between democratic governance and local ownership of (SSR).

Besides, the cultural framework under which contemporary security reform exists must be addressed. Contemporary reforms endorse the liberal theory of harmony. In this model, the post-conflict states’ conflictual nature is shaped by establishing and enforcing democratic norms and institutional values by the state-based institutions. This conviction is supported by the study regarded as the theory of democratic peace. Therefore, the current defense policy has a democratic capacity. Inclusiveness is a central attribute of democracy. It is a product of the cycle of collective shareholding. This may then be viewed as unfair if incorporation mechanisms like local participation in security reform efforts are not encouraged. Therefore, the dedication to democracy requires promoting local ownership, if anything, for continuity with the liberal paradigm (Nathan, 2008).

Nevertheless, it has not been investigated what seems to be an illustration of democratic values furthers the development of democratic governance of local ownership of SSR. A contradiction may thus be at stake here; local ownership may weaken the social-democratic institutional framework in which it exists and can be justified. Local ownership, for instance, can often dispute human rights principles of judicial reform. Therefore, the second research dilemma that requires this investigation is whether local ownership is per the liberal SSR system.

There were related factors that overlapped with Liberia and Sierra Leone’s disputes. As far as SSR is concerned, the U.S. and the British played a dominant role in both countries and encountered a high degree of participation by external actors. Nevertheless, Liberia and Sierra Leone have taken two radically different strategies of reforming the armed forces in terms of their military reform. In Liberia, a decision was taken in the absence of thoroughly consulted with local leaders, and the
military was dissolved and reconstructed from scratch. However, in Sierra Leone, the existing Sierra Leone army, which was itself rebuilt, comprised former soldiers from the various warring factions. It was not a traditional military alliance at the same time, as in Burundi and Mozambique’s case, because there were no target objectives. One possible avenue for further investigation might be to examine how either of these approaches significantly affects local ownership possibilities.

Liberia was viewed as an example showing inadequate local ownership, while more extensive ownership was seen in Sierra Leone. The short-term assessment of the effect of ownership or its absence is related to the reform process. How relevant was local ownership in democratic military governance during the SSR process in Liberia? In answering this question, the comparative analysis focused on two stages in Liberia’s SSR process.

There were two stages involved in this inadequate ownership in Liberia. In the first instance, the U.S. was allowed to claim full accountability for executing the AFL reform process. Secondly, the U.S. then subcontracted this responsibility to private military companies. Consequently, the reform process was without adequate local oversight and adequate comprehensive consultation with local players as would otherwise be required. It combines accountability and transparency gaps that define private military and security enterprises. This was evidenced by the lack of access by the Liberian Government, the legislature, and civil society to contractual knowledge.

For instance, major security actors like the Liberian MOD complain that they did not have a copy of the contract that led to the army’s reform, especially believe that they had no control of the Armed Forces. Local ownership is relevant in democratic military governance, but there was inadequate local ownership practice in Liberia. The literature results suggest that the process severely lacked transparency and local ownership. It may also be argued that the motivation for benefit impeded the transmission of democratic control principles through military instruction. Consequently, the Liberian case analysis supports arguments made in the ownership literature. In the absence of adequate local ownership, democratic governance in the military is assumed as civilian control and oversight were challenged; this was Liberia’s case.

The case study from Sierra Leone, on the other hand, provided a real opportunity for a positive evaluation of the great significance of local ownership. How relevant was local ownership in democratic military governance during the SSR process? As shown by Military Aid to Civilian Power (MACP) from 2006, which determined the role of armed forces and regulated its use within the country, the security review process redefined the military forces’ identity and made policy progress towards civil control. In addition to creating the district and provincial security committees, the defense system’s decentralization was seen. Such committees allow for more citizen participation and monitoring in local government security consultations. In particular, there were opportunities for local involvement and leadership in the design, execution, and evaluation of security policies, encouraging more long-term ownership.

However, it was shown that interventions without ownership nevertheless led to the military’s democratic influence. A primary example is the MOD culture of Sierra Leone and the remedying of internal institutional capability deficiencies. This provides democratic control as it breaks from the paradigm in which the military-controlled military forces were restricting public oversight and accountability opportunities. This then concludes that local ownership, as part of the more comprehensive liberal state-building process, is relevant but not required to develop and consolidate democratic control of the military.

However, if local ownership is only relevant, why is it necessary? In other to answer this question, it needed careful consideration of the Sierra Leone Security White Paper and the military training of DynCorp in Liberia. The two analyses’ findings indicate the significance of ownership in the program’s implementation, which is more concrete and represents the security program receiver’s interests.
One critique of DynCorp’s training was that it has taken a danger-independent strategy and is not embedded in regional security complexities. It is not even, for instance, embedded in a consciousness of the fragile Mono River Union or the ECOWAS security framework. Therefore, even though a capable army was set up, it is not clear how well it was incorporated into Liberia’s regional needs. It is believed that local ownership would have resulted in such a contextualized reform.

The White Paper streamlined and simplified the (IMATT) and (MODAT) reformed (RSLAF) and (MOD) structures in Sierra Leone. This indicated that the article revolutionized a dynamic security mechanism instead. Therefore, this bridges the gap between security recipients and the more substantial security architecture.

5.1. Lessons learned

In addition to the research results’ outcomes, it was found that issues raised concerning absolute and legitimate ownership are strongly normative in literature. The normativity of ownership is often supported by the case study in South Africa, as Nathan (2007) illustrated. However, it is essential to remember that ownership varies from one country to another, for the most part, in most post-conflict reconstruction countries. Subsequently, ownership, often for structural reasons, is neither requested nor possible, as was otherwise observable in South Africa.

The confirmation that complete ownership is highly normative can be found in how the arguments are sometimes articulated about local actors’ collective ownership failure. The promotion of adequate ownership in Liberia is also represented as the lack of satisfactory consultation with relevant actors. It suggests something about local actors’ aspirations about their role in the process of restructuring, in the sense that they might be able to surrender more influence and power than otherwise assumed.

5.2. Conclusion

This article has effectively performed a comparative analysis of Liberia and Sierra Leone’s military reform. The goal was to understand the relationship and bridge the literature gap by interpreting and clarifying the relationship between democratic governance and local ownership of (SSR). The study followed a comparative analysis as a research methodology to define the distinctive characteristics of local ownership in both countries during the military restructuring. The question motivating this research involves determining how relevant is local ownership in democratic military governance during the SSR process?

The relation was thoroughly explored as one of the cornerstones of SSR by examining some of the relevant existing literature. This is because local ownership literature has mainly been developed in SSR. The connexion between democratic governance and SSR, especially within the military, can be understood when the military is democratically controlled. On the other hand, this article discusses the operationalization of democratic control as civilian control and oversight, executive, legislative, and broader civil society.

This article, however, starts with an overview of case studies in Liberia and Sierra Leone to analyze the question before continuing with the comparative analysis. Comparatively, Liberia was viewed as an example showing inadequate local ownership, while more extensive ownership was seen in Sierra Leone. While focusing on military reform, the article argues that the lack of adequate local ownership weakened the democratic governance of Liberia’s military reform process concerning civilian control and oversight. The opposite was valid in Sierra Leone to some degree. Nevertheless, the analysis indicates that there are indications that the outcomes that will establish democratic control and military oversight can result from activities where ownership is either present or absent. As such, local ownership of SSR is relevant but not required for the development and consolidation of democratic control of the military.
However, the result also showed that local ownership remains enormous. Its significance lies in creating more context-specific and contextually relevant policies. A reform that the developing nation will recognize and maintain promotes local ownership, an argument that the existing literature has confirmed. Local ownership, therefore, helps close the gap between the security recipients and the broader security framework. The study also found that improvements in democratic military control may be made where ownership is present or absent. The durability of these improvements is intertwined with local ownership. Finally, this article concludes that local ownership may not be necessary for democratic governance in the military. However, it is necessary for sustainable democratic governance and reform rooted in contextual realities and the country’s needs undergoing security reform.

**Funding**
The author received no direct funding for this research.

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**Citation information**
Cite this article as: Comparative study of local ownership and democratic governance of security sector reform: The case of Liberia and Sierra Leone, Prince N. Wonnawon, Cogent Social Sciences (2021), 7: 1928388.

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