

**Institutional Weakness and National Security in Developing Nations**

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**ABSTRACT**

*One of the most impactful but analytically unspecified variables in the comparative study of national security is institutional weakness. This article constructs a systemic model of the manner in which the absence of governance in developing federal states is converted into actual security weaknesses. Based on comparative case study in Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Brazil, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, we are able to identify four main mechanisms of institutional instability to breakdown of security which include: hallow of legitimate use of monopoly of force by the state, fragmentation of inter-governmental coordination, expansion of ungoverned spaces where non-state armed actors could operate and delegitimization of the state by the peripheral populations. We state that federalism, which aims at diversity management and decentralization of power, may under weak central institutions conditions, backfire and increase these channels, as well as by diffusing responsibility and establishing jurisdictional cracks. The article represents a diagnostic taxonomy of institutional feebleness and security associates, and offers an analysis plan on comprehending when and how federal framework can be restructured to strengthen as opposed to disintegrate state security capacity.*

**Keywords:** *institutional weakness, national security, federalism, state fragility, governance, non-state armed actors, sovereignty, ungoverned spaces, inter-governmental coordination*

**INTRODUCTION**

The interaction between the institutions of state and national security is the cornerstone of the political science, but it is under theorized at the crossroads of federalism and development. Leviathan by Hobbes gave the foundation of the argument that the state should take security as its main responsibility and that institutional inability generated the state of war of all and all. Modern research has significantly improved this observation by establishing the empirical relations between the quality of governance and political violence, the onset of civil wars, and insurgent organization (Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Besley and Persson, 2011; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). However, the distinctly federal aspect of institutional frailty, in terms of the impact of the array of vertical allocation of authority across several levels of government upon security outcomes, has been comparatively little systematically examined.

There is a practical implication to this lacuna. Most of the largest and most ethnically diverse developing states in the world, including Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, India, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Indonesia are structured as federal or quasi-federal states. Most of these states also face endemic security problems: insurgency, separatist movement, communal violence, structured criminality, and terrorism. The common policy reaction, which is reinforcing the security agencies of the central state, usually succeeds due to misdiagnosis. Federal developing states often fail to provide security because of failures in the institutional architecture in which security can be provided: the legitimacy of the state, the coordination capacity of its institutions, the concentration of its administrative presence, and accountability mechanisms to link state action to popular approval.

In this article, the authors make three main arguments. First, institutional weakness is not a unitary phenomenon but a multidimensional phenomenon, which consists of unique lack of capacity, legitimacy, authority, and accountability, each of which produces unique security channels. Second, federalism combines with such deficits neither consistently in a negative nor consistently in a positive direction: federalism can cushion or compound security threats depending on the institutional form of its specific combinations as well as on the incentives it produces. Third, the prevailing policy instrumentation in dealing with the security in weak federal states, based on military capacity-building and counter-insurgency, needs to be supplemented, and in certain instances substituted by a governance-oriented policy that targets the institutional basis of security.

The article is divided into seven sections. Part 2 is a literature review of institutions and security. The framework of our analysis is found in Section 3. In section 4, five comparative cases are investigated. Section 5 examines the particular dynamics of the federal provision of security. In Section 6, there is an attempt at a comparative typology. The section 7 provides policy implications and conclusions.

### **Theoretical Principles: Institutions, Federalism and Security**

#### **The Institutions and Political Order**

The new institutionalism, which includes rational choices, historical and sociological versions, is brought to a point of convergence on the idea that institutions are the formal rules, informal norms and mechanisms of enforcement that make a difference in virtually all areas of political life (March and Olsen, 1989; North, 1990; Hall and Taylor, 1996). In the case of national security, the most important institutional qualities are state ability to draw resources, administrative presence, the capacity to deliver public goods, solution of problems by legitimate means, as well as legitimate monopoly of the use of force within its borders (Weber, 1919; Tilly, 1990).

Institutional weakness developed as a continuum of the concepts of weak, failing, and failed states by Zartman (1995), Rotberg (2004), and codified by the Failed States Index (since rebranded as the Fragile States Index) has been conceptualized as institutional weakness. The weak state will continue to have the formal sovereignty but will be having difficulties in executing its basic functions of the state; the failing state will have its power actively challenged by non-state actors; the failed state will be the state that cannot deliver its important functions of security, basic services and legitimate authority over most parts of its territory. This is a useful continuum that obscures much critical heterogeneity: states may be strong in some functions, and weak in others, strong in some territories, and non-existent in others.

Later scholarship has shifted to disaggregated state capacity. Hanson and Sigman (2021) draw a distinction between extractive, coercive, and administrative capacity; Mann (1984) makes a distinction between despotic and infrastructural power; Soifer (2012) introduces the notion of state capacity as capability to take decisions when they are opposed or resisted. These refinements are crucial to conceptualizing the results of security: a state that is able to generate revenues effectively and transform them into public services creates a variety of security risks to that of a state that is able to police its capital but is unable to extend its power into peripheral areas.

#### **Federalism as a Double-Edged Security Architecture**

Theorized in the normative literature as little more than a system of authority that places power in a central government and its units, federalism is theorized to accommodate and be efficient (Riker, 1964; Stepan, 1999; Watts, 2008). Since ethnically, linguistically, or geographically diverse states cannot easily provide the mechanisms of managing diversity that are offered by federal arrangements, unitary states cannot easily do so: sub-national self-government, institutionalizing group identities, and safeguarding them against central majoritarian domination.

The security consequences of federalism are, though, very ambivalent. On the one hand, federalism may decrease a security threat by making secessionist or autonomist demands fit in the constitutional order, offering institutional avenues to the expression of grievance, and allowing sub-nationally based units to administrate themselves better than a remote central government may do. The success of federations such as Switzerland, Canada, Germany, India proves that properly designed federal institutions are able to deal with a significant amount of diversity in a peaceful manner.

Conversely, with circumstances of institutional feebleness, federal arrangements tend to create novel security failures. Riker (1964), noted that the distributive politics of federalism are more likely to empower local elites who can be inclined to interfere with national security policy whenever it is in conflict with their patronization interests. In a type of federalism, Stepan (1999) found that majorities at sub-national level can prevent democratic reforms on the national level, which he termed as democ-onstraining. Weak federal institutions in the context of developing countries lead to jurisdictional vacuities, areas of territories and policy where the central and the sub-national government does not have an effective authority, that are easily exploited by non-state armed actors.

**The Security Dilemma of Weak Federal States**

The main reason is that a core security dilemma in weak federal states has been identified: the central government is incentivized to centralize security competencies so that it can respond to national security threats, but this centralization will be seen by sub-national units, especially in federally diverse ethnically-based federations, as a threat to their independence and identity, which is the source of the separatist or communal tensions that initially motivated federal arrangements. This is a relationship where institutional change to enhance security sets up a recursive trap whereby the political compact upon which the federation is formed is destabilized by the same institutional change that has intended to enhance security (Suberu, 2001, Vaughan, 2003, and Jalal, 1995).

The dilemma on this issue is the keys to resolving the governance challenges of developing federal states. Our proposed analytical framework in the next section will serve to chart the particular mechanisms the dilemma in question is working and will help discover the institutional circumstances in which the dilemma in question can be addressed without resorting to compromising either the effectiveness of security or the very existence of a federal government.

**An Analytical Framework: Four Dimensions of Institutional Weakness**

Institutional weakness in federal states is conceptualized in four analytically different dimensions that produce certain and identifiable security pathways. These dimensions are empirically related and can be conceptually distinguished, and in different cases have different saliences.

**Table 1: Four Dimensions of Institutional Weakness and Their Security Pathways**

| <b>Dimension of Weakness</b>  | <b>Primary Security Pathways</b>  |
|---|---|
| Capacity Deficit (inability to perform core state functions)                          | Ungoverned spaces; infrastructure for insurgency; collapse of border security; inability to deliver post-conflict stabilization |
| Legitimacy Deficit (withdrawal of popular consent and compliance)                     | Resistance to taxation and conscription; civilian support for non-state armed actors; state-society alienation in peripheries   |
| Authority Fragmentation (contested monopoly on force within federal tiers)            | Parallel security forces; militia proliferation; inter-agency conflict; politicized military recruitment                        |
| Accountability Deficit (absence of mechanisms linking state behavior to consequences) | Impunity for security force abuses; corruption in defense procurement; radicalization driven by state violence                  |

### **The Capacity Dimension**

The concept of state capacity is defined as the capacity of the governmental institutions to design and execute policies within their area of territorial jurisdiction. To be safe, the most essential elements of capacity are: fiscal extraction (capacity to finance security forces and infrastructure); administrative penetration (the number of state institutions that exist in the national territory); coercive capacity (size, training and equipment of security forces); and information capacity (capacity to collect and process intelligence on security threats).

In weak federal states, the capacity deficits are often geographically uneven, with the national capitals and central provinces having high levels of them and the peripheral regions being constantly under-governed. Such spatial non-homogeneity of state presence simultaneously causes and is caused by security issues: the lack of control over the peripheries of states offers breeding ground to insurgent groups who, in turn, undermine the state capacities further by extracting resources and establishing parallel systems of governance. This can be observed in the Sahel corridor, eastern DRC, the tribal belt of Pakistan, and its states in the northeastern part of Nigeria.

### **The Legitimacy Dimension**

The fact that citizens believe that the authority of the state is legitimate and deserves to be followed is a particular and independent aspect of institutional weakness called state legitimacy. A state might be formally competent, having enough military power and administration, and at the same time be illegitimate, especially within certain ethnic, regional, or religious groups. Lack of legitimacy is particularly widespread in post-colonial federal states in which the state boundaries were not determined in connection with identities and preferences of the populations, and historical experiences of state violence, exclusion, and resource grabbing have developed deep pools of grievance.

The security effects of the lack of legitimacy are manifested mainly in the form of civilian assistance to non-state military forces. In the case where the state is viewed as predatory, exclusionary, or corrupt, citizens tend to be more tolerant, protectionist, funder, or even members of an insurgent group, not necessarily because the insurgent is sincerely committed ideologically, but because of the preference of the insurgent as a source of order in the community compared to an absent (or abusive) state. This rationale is recorded by the pioneer work of Kalyvas (2006) on irregular warfare, and can be observed in such divergent situations as southern Nigeria, eastern Ethiopia, and Balochistan in Pakistan.

### **The Authority Fragmentation Dimension**

Authority fragmentation can be defined as the spreading of coercive capacity by various institutional actors such as federal security forces, state or provincial police, local militias, ethnic defense organizations, private security firms, and non-state armed groups with their overlapping jurisdictional mandate, competing or unclear jurisdictional mandate. Formally, constitutional separation of security roles in a federation is such a form of a structured division of power, in reality, in the conditions of institutional frailty, it often becomes an uncontrolled confrontation of armed forces which is an obstacle to the provision of the coherent assurance of the safety of the population.

The case of Nigeria exemplifies it: when policing is constitutionally assigned to the federal government, and the states retain their own security agencies and governors finance and influence vigilante groups of informants, it has provided an environment of overlapping and competing security actors, whose failure to coordinate is systematically abused by Boko Haram in the north and criminal gangs in the southeast. The 2020-2022 Tigray war in Ethiopia has shown how the decentralization of military forces to regional states within the context of ethnic federalism of the Federal Democratic Republic could produce intra-state armed conflict of near-conventional levels.

### **The Accountability Dimension**

Weaknesses in accountability: the inability of mechanisms to correlate the behavior of states with the punishments to the actors of the state create vulnerabilities to security in different ways. When the members of the security forces are allowed to abuse them without legal repercussions, the conduct begins to systematically marginalize them, whose collaboration is needed most of all in intelligence-collection and conflict-prevention. In the event that the systemic corruption in the defense procurement occurs, the combat preparedness is lowered and the morale of the troops is destroyed. Once the security institutions are controlled by political leaders who can be used to achieve partisan or ethnic advantage with no electoral consequences, security policy turns into an elite power source, but not a protection of the population.

The lack of accountability in federal states has strictly federal component: the spread of responsibility of the security responsibilities across the governmental levels and the fact that an accountability institution, such as a court, legislature, and civil society, is a weak institution itself lead to the situation when it becomes incredibly hard to hold people accountable to security failures. Such jurisdictional blame-shifting, recorded in the relationships between Brazilian states and federal security agencies, in Nigerian gubernatorial escapism of communal violence and in Pakistani civil-military ambivalence concerning counter-terrorism power are a hallmark of institutional weakness in a federal setting.

### **COMPARATIVE CASE ANALYSIS**

#### **Nigeria: The Paradox of Resource Abundance and Security Failure**

Nigeria is one of the most widely examined instances of institutional weakness and security failure on a federal state. Civil war (1967-1970), misunderstood multiple military coups, unremitting communal violence, a catastrophic insurgency (Boko Haram, ongoing since 2009), separatist agitations (IPOB in the southeast), massive criminal violence (kidnapping, banditry), and the Niger Delta armed conflict have plagued Nigeria since independence in 1960. This coexisting security predicament plays out in a state that is both the largest economy in Africa and most populated country on the continent with a substantial fiscal capacity and a formal federal government of 36 states and 774 local government units.

The resource abundance and security failure that is rife in Nigeria can only be explained by the security paradox, where institutional weakness is manifested in a federal government. No strong public service delivery, and poor state legitimacy in the peripheral areas have historically characterized fiscal transfers at the Federation Account that have been consumed by the political elites at the federal and state levels. The resulting effect of the constitutional concentration of police power at the federal level has been one of under-invested, under-inspired, and often-corrupted Nigeria Police Force which is unable to provide security at the level of the community. Ethnic militias (Oyopadua People Congress in Yorubaland, Amotekun in the southwest, Ebube Agu in the southeast) funded and controlled by the state governors and being not accountable to any constitutional frameworks, exist. The outcome is exactly the landscape of authority fragmentation according to our theoretical framework.

The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria northeast depicts all four aspects of institutional weakness at the same time. The capacity shortfall is indicated by the fact that the region is underdeveloped in terms of infrastructures with some of the lowest literacy levels, health access and rates of economic activity in Nigeria, which the group used as a recruitment and operation space. The deficit on legitimacy can be observed through the narratives of historical marginalization used by the Boko Haram against the Nigerian state to its advantage. The concept of full fragmentation of authority can be demonstrated with references to the inability of the federal military and state-level security actors to coordinate their actions over the span of several years. And lack of accountability- such as military documented abuse of civilians and impunity of extra-judicial killings of the security forces-enhanced the alienation of civilians and undermined intelligence cooperation.

**Pakistan: Civil-Military Imbalance and Federal Security Dysfunction**

The federal security design in Pakistan is arranged in the framework of a long-standing civil-military imbalance where the Pakistan Army is a quasi-autonomous entity in the state, retaining independent foreign policy authority, corporate economic interests, and strategic preferences, which often are not in line with the priorities of the civil government. This civil-military asymmetry overlaps with a weak democratic federal system four provinces with differentiated interests, a Federally Administered Tribal Area (incorporated into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018), and Gilgit-Baltistan and Azar Kashmir with a grey constitutional status, to form a security governance structure of unusual complexity and weakness.

The security threats facing Pakistan such as TTP (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan) insurgency, sectarian conflict, Baloch separatism and the bigger menace of jihadist radicalization have been widely reported. The institutional angle of these problems is less analyzed in a systematic manner. The capacity deficit of the Pakistani state is geographically localised: the historical FATA, reconstituted as KPK, has been under the Frontier Crimes Regulations the former colonial legal structure, which shielded it under the constitution, effectively establishing a legal and administrative enclave, to which armed groups could escape. In Balochistan, the lack of legitimacy is most pronounced, having centuries of extraction without commensurate provincial expenditure led to the extensive separatist feeling that has endured four military measures.

Of particular interest is the civil-military aspect of the authority fragmentation in Pakistan. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has been working in parallel security structure with civilian intelligence agencies (Intelligence Bureau, Intelligence Directorate) to be coordinated by means that are opaque and unconstitutional. The historic recorded associations of the military with some of the jihadist organizations, which serves as a strategic depth in relation to India and Afghanistan, became grounds of what Hussain (2008) describes as selective counter-terrorism whereby the counter-insurgency operation of the state is carefully undermined by the personal interests of the state apparatus. This is likely the most extreme case of a lack of accountability in our relative sample of accountability gaps producing a direct security vulnerability.

**Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Centrifugal Security Dynamic**

The decision of Ethiopia to adopt the model of ethnic federalism in the 1995 Constitution that defined the state in ethnically defined regional states (killil) with significant autonomy was aimed at supporting a history of Amhara centralized domination and the requirements of various nationalities. The model of EPRDF (Ethiopian People revolution democratic front) attempted to institutionalize ethnic recognition as the foundation of political order, decentralizing large amounts of administrative and fiscal power to the regional states without disintegrating the national unity by a strong ruling organization.

The security implications of the model were originally handled by the EPRDF organizational infiltration of regional state institutions, which was soon revealed by the liberalization of 2018 under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed that showed the latent centrifugal nature of the ethnic federal structure. The Tigray war (2020-2022) presented in its extreme manifestation the idea of how ethnic federalism with weakened central institutional capacity and opposed power could create armed conflict of annihilating proportions. This fragmentation of authority of the most dangerous type, the sub-national military strength that can confront the central state in conventional warfare, is represented by the possession of the Northern Command weapons by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) a direct result of the ability of the ethnic regional state to amass military resources over the past thirty years.

In addition to Tigray, Ethiopia is confronting a major conflict of Oromia, Amhara, Somali, and Afar regions, all of which are fuelled by a mix of ethnic grievance, land and water resources competition, and control over the office of state security agencies and federal ones. The institutional morale is clear, ethnic federal structures that are not supported by effective central institutional capacity, cross-cutting national identity and the presence of credible federal enforcement institutions can in conditions of

political polarization, and elite competition, transform the federal structure itself into the means of mobilizing communal violence.

### **Brazil: Organized Crime, State Capacity, and the Federalism Trap**

The security crisis of Brazil is not like that of Africa in nature, but not institutional causes. Organized criminal violence, focused on drug trafficking cartels (First Capital Command, Red Command), urban peripheries militias, and rural land warfare has since the 1990s become a catastrophe in the fourth-largest federal democracy in the world. Having a homicide rate of about 30 per 100,000 each year in the 2010s, before increasing only slightly, Brazil was rated as one of the most violent countries in the world, with absolute annual fatalities surpassing most known armed conflicts.

The structure of the security of Brazil is shared between federal institutions (Federal Police, Federal Highway Police, National Force) and state ones (Military Police, Civil Police). In this allocation, when coordination mechanisms are weak and interstate inequalities in the capacity to govern are deep, the result is the existence of extreme gaps in governance. The Military Police of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are accorded minimal federal supervision and have been reported by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights as carrying out systematic extra-judicial homicides in the favela communities a textbook example of lack of accountability leading to security breakdown. The municipal governments, charged with planning and social services of urban areas, have no constitutional mandates regarding security, effectively becoming the direct victims of the crime and this has caused jurisdictional confusion which criminal organizations are actively taking advantage of.

### **DRC: Security Baseline as the Absence of the State**

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the converse extreme of the institutional weakness scale, virtually approximates the state failure in the large part of its expansive state. Having a territory of 2.3 million square kilometers, bigger than Western Europe, and the administrative presence of the state in regions other than Kinshasa and provincial capitals being low or absent, the DRC provides a vivid example of the security impact of capacity deficit in a compressed form. Since the 1990s, the eastern provinces, North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri and Maniema, have been affected by almost unremitting armed conflict, encompassing dozens of armed groups, regional proxy forces, MONUSCO (the largest peacekeeping mission of the UN) and Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC).

The federal government of the DRC is based on 26 provinces and 2006 Constitution with this structure existing mostly on paper in eastern parts. Provincial governments do not have the fiscal base, administrative personnel and legitimacy needed to offer fundamental governance services. The FARDC is regularly underfunded, the soldiers are usually unpaid and the officers are involved in predator acts on civilian population within the areas that they are supposed to be controlling. The outcome is a vicious cycle of insecurity where weakness by the state creates room to armed groups, armed activity destroys the little state infrastructure the state has, and the security vacuum created by the former leads to the creation of more armed actors such as internationally recognized terrorist organizations (ADF, Allied Democratic Forces). The DRC scenario is an example of the state of affairs when our theoretical framework refers to the compound institutional trap: when each of the four dimensions of weakness is critical at the same time, then security is almost ungovernable without the transformative external intervention.

## **THE FEDERAL DYNAMICS OF SECURITY PROVISION**

### **Jurisdictional Vacuums and Non-State Armed Actors**

Another common issue that arises throughout our comparative cases is the misuse of the jurisdictional vacuum by non-state armed forces. Jurisdictional vacuums come into being when the constitutional allocation of federal-level security capabilities among the various levels is unclear, disputed, or where

neither of the two levels holds the ability to assert effective governance over any given area or policy solution. The lack of clarity in the constitutional roles of federal and state in the middle belt of Nigeria was the governance vacuum that allowed the Fulani herder-farmer violence to experience decades of rapid growth without the state intervening in the situation. The FCR legal gap in the former FATA in Pakistan allowed Taliban parallel government to consolidate over a period of almost a decade before the state developed a sustained military response.

The rationale of jurisdictional vacuum exploitation is sequential and is recorded in our cases and the larger literature on the topic of territorial control (Kalyvas, 2006; Arjona, 2016). Non-state armed players, be it insurgent groups, organized crime, or communal militias, must not be able to build a military superiority over the state to be effective, they only have to create a relative governance advantage of certain territories. In the case of the state being non-existent or predatory, armed forces that deliver some kind of local order, such as enforcing contracts, resolving disputes, or offering primitive security against other threats, can gain attainments of legitimacy that makes their removal by state security forces very expensive politically and militarily.

### **Inter-Governmental Coordination Failures**

The structurally challenging conditions of institutional weakness require coordination of national security in federal states at all the levels of government. Sharing of intelligence between the federal and provincial agencies needs trust, technical interoperability and compatible legal frameworks; none of the three is usually present in feeble institutional settings. Responding to security crises and implementing immediate decisions and directing command depends on fast authority and clear commands; federal structures (where powers are shared among a variety of actors with potentially conflicting interests) are structurally more sluggish and more disputable in their responses to crisis.

Our cases are consistent: the failure of federal coordination at critical points of security are linked to disastrous results. The civil-military tension, competition among agencies, and unwillingness of the Nigerian Army to share control of the operation with the state level participants significantly contributed to Nigeria being unable to organize a timely federal-state military response to the 2014 territorial expansion of Boko Haram (the group was able to control an area the size of Belgium at its zenith). The fact that the federal government of Ethiopia took too long to react to the seizure of the Northern Command by the TPLF in November 2020 was indicative of institutional inability as well as failure of the inter-governmental lines of communication.

### **Geography of Federal State Legitimacy**

All states experience the spatial imbalance of national security, but in the developing states this disproportion is enshrined in the federal structure. Historically marginalized federal units, that is, ethnically different to the mainstream national group, that is, economically marginalized display lower degrees of state legitimacy and demonstrate greater degrees of security challenge. It is not by coincidence that the spatial distribution of deficits in the legitimacy is based on the history of the formation of the federal state through bargaining between dominant ethnic groups, which have left peripheral populations without sufficient institutional representation or access to resources.

Governance of the legitimacy geography of security can only be managed through differentiated strategies: the same strategies of success in high-legitimacy core areas can prove counterproductive in low-legitimacy peripheries. Military operations that are of low legitimacy such as in Balochistan, eastern DRC, northeastern Nigeria, the Ogaden in Ethiopia, have always produced civilian fatalities, population movements and alienation that exacerbate the very security issues they are meant to resolve. The institutional implication is that security governing in federal states demands not a unified national security policy but a differentiated regional strategy, layered, inside, a consistent national policy, a capability which most weak federal states at present lack.

**A Comparative Typology of Federal Security Failure**

Based on our analysis of the case and theory, we suggest a four-type typology of security failure modes of federal functions. The typology is structured based on the interplay of the dominating institutional weakness dimension and the main federal mechanism of producing security outcomes.

**Table 2: Typology of Federal Security Failure Modes**

| <b>Failure Mode</b>      | <b>Dominant Weakness</b>                         | <b>Federal Mechanism</b>                                     | <b>Case Illustration</b>                                   |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Capacity Collapse        | Administrative & fiscal capacity                 | Ungoverned peripheral territories; absence of state presence | DRC (East), Pakistan (FATA/KPK)                            |
| Legitimacy Erosion       | State legitimacy in peripheral communities       | Ethnic federal architecture amplifies group grievances       | Ethiopia (Tigray/Oromia), Nigeria (Northeast)              |
| Authority Fragmentation  | Monopoly on force contested across tiers         | Multiple security actors with overlapping mandates           | Nigeria (police/militia), DRC (FARDC/armed groups)         |
| Accountability Implosion | Mechanisms of accountability for security forces | Jurisdictional blame-shifting; impunity across tiers         | Brazil (Military Police), Pakistan (ISI/civilian agencies) |

These failure modes are not exclusive to each other, the vast majority of real-world situations contain aspects of multiple or all failures at the same time, but the typology is analytically convenient in that qualitatively distinct remedial actions are needed to address qualitatively distinct failure modes. Capacity crunch requires an investment in the presence of the state and bureaucratic infrastructure, which may incorporate new forms of graduated sovereignty or empowerment in local governments. Political reforms that help to resolve the grievances at the root of the erosion of legitimacy such as fiscal redistribution, sharing of power, transitional justice etc. will be needed to help address the disillusionment of civilian lives. The division of authority must also be institutionalized: the definition and implementation of constitutional security requirements, the secondary to the security forces of the sub-national level to the authority of the federal state, and the bargaining disarmament of illegal military formations. To resolve accountability implosion, there is a need to increase the independence of the institutions of oversight: judicial review, parliamentary scrutiny, civil society monitoring, and establishment of credible enforcement systems.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**The Governance-Security Nexus: Reorienting the Policy Framework**

The prevailing international model of dealing with the security challenges in fragile and developing states is still too much of capacity-building of the security services and provision of counter-terrorism intelligence and the physical infrastructural development of security. These interventions are not a waste, but they invest institutionally in a laggardly manner in the determinants of security effectiveness. The lack of legitimacy stops military forces to collect intelligence, police who are not accountable turn into threats instead of enforcers of security, and coordination mechanisms in the federal level that exist only on paper, but in practice create the jurisdictional gaps that the insurgents utilize.

Such a governance-based approach to the security of the development of federal states would focus on five dimensions of institutions: first, equitable allocation of fiscal resources to federal levels to minimize the spatial disadvantage of state capacity; second, constitutionalizing and actualization of clear security mandates, in which the lack of jurisdictional ambiguity between the federal and provincial level; third,

the professionalization and depoliticization of the security institutions, especially of civil-military relations and subordination of the security apparatus to civil authority; fourth, the provision of accountability mechanisms such as independent judicial agencies, parliamentary overs

### **The Sequencing Problem**

Institutional reform in weak federal states is often bedeviled by the problem of sequencing: the reforms which are the most needed to increase security are those that are most likely to be politically hard to take in the very high-insecurity situational conditions that give rise to the necessity of the reforms. Professionalization of security forces needs political room and resources; inter-governmental coordination mechanisms need a level of trust between federal and provincial players that cannot be achieved under conflict situations; accountability reforms to the security apparatus puts powerful interests in jeopardy and they have the means to block it.

We recommend that sequencing strategies need to be situation-dependent and based on the pre-eminent failure mode. In cases where capacity collapse is the main issue, extra-state resources to basic state presence, creative solutions such as community policing, local administrative growth, and international-aided delivery of public services, can lead to the short-term creation of security space to undertake more fundamental institutional change. In cases where the erosion of legitimacy is dominant, political negotiations and power sharing deals can be required to come before and not after security operations. In places where fragmentation of authority prevails, an entry point may be through the measures of building of confidence between rival security actors such as the joint operations frameworks, common intelligence platforms and standardized command structures.

### **The Role of International Actors**

The role of the international actors' bilateral donors, multi-lateral institutions, peacekeeping missions is an important and not quite sufficiently appreciated aspect of strengthening or weakening institutional weakness in federal states in the developing world. Accountability and professionalization can be enhanced through security sector reform (SSR) programs that are well-designed, or they may reinforce the status quo as seen through patronage structures and impunity through poorly-designed programs. Structures of conditionality that tie the security aid to measures at reforming government can provide incentives to institutional change; unconditional security aid can shield political elites against the domestic pressure to accountability that is the issue of major concern in motivating institutional change.

The case of the MONUSCO in DRC shows the constraints of provision of international security without institutional reformation at home. Although it has taken almost twenty years and billions of dollars of expenditure, MONUSCO has not delivered sustainable security gains in eastern DRC largely due to the fact that the operations of this mission have been not accompanied by significant reform of the FARDC, the provincial governance apparatus, or the political economy of resource extraction, foundational to armed group operations. The cases of Nigeria and Ethiopia indicate that the leverage of the external actors is the largest when these actors interact with the entire institutional complexity of the security-governance nexus and not directly orient the military strengthening.

### **CONCLUSION**

Institutional weakness is not a remained category, the lack of something, but a positive structure of governance lacks, which creates foreseeable and measurable security effects. In this article, it has been argued that to study institutional weakness in federal developing states, it is necessary to de-aggregate institutional weakness on the four dimensions: capacity, legitimacy, authority and accountability and articulate the specific interaction of each dimension with federal architecture to create security vulnerability.

We have just compared Nigeria and Pakistan, Ethiopia and Brazil, and the DRC and this shows the generalizability of this framework, but it is also heterogeneous in its applications. There are no two cases with the same configurations of weaknesses and there is no two cases that need the same remedial strategies. The common thing about them is that the offer of security in a federal state is an institutional issue per se: it is not only that the military capacity is needed, but also that the administrative structure of power, the coordinated institutions of governance, and the responsible agents to which effective and sustainable security capability must be applied.

The demands of the policy are strenuous. They demand that governments, donors and international organizations should overcome the long-standing temptation to perceive the security as a military problem capable of being solved by military means, but should approach the whole complexity of the governance security nexus in its entirety. They need to have long-term committed investment in the mundane, unsensational, politically controversial work that comes with institutional reform: the building of courts, the professionalization of police forces, the reforming of fiscal federalism and the building of the accountability mechanisms that render state power legitimate. There is no alternative avenue to sustainable security in emerging federal states in the long run.

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