Trust-Building in Security and Rule of Law Partnerships

Risks, Biases and Knowledge Gaps

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WHAT is the policy brief about?

In this policy brief, we investigate underlying assumptions at the policy level on how trust comes about in Security and Rule of Law (SRoL) partnerships. Drawing on a policy review and interviews, we identify two prevalent 'Theories of Change' as causal pathways for SRoL programmes towards enhancing citizens' trust in security-related state institutions. We then critically reflect on these causal assumptions, considering recent advancements in trust research from various disciplines. Based on our analysis, we provide recommendations on how to better reflect trust and trust-building in SRoL policies and programming.

WHY is the topic relevant?

As part of the 'social fabric', trust extends into all fields of social cooperation. People's trust in their government is considered pertinent for effective and legitimate governance provision. The behaviour of state security institutions, like the police and the military, is pivotal for citizens' views on the trustworthiness of their governments. Trust-building between citizens and security-related state institutions therefore often features in SRoL programming in societies affected by political instability and violent conflict. However, policy assumptions on how this trust comes about often remain implicit or causally opaque. At the same time, research suggests that trust is a highly complex, context-specific and, at times, ambivalent social phenomenon. Which theoretical controversies around trust are the most relevant for SRoL policymakers and practitioners? We highlight pertinent research insights to stimulate a debate on risks, biases and knowledge gaps around trust-building and to improve SRoL programming.

For WHOM is it important?

This policy brief contributes to the ongoing critical discussions on underlying paradigms of foreign engagement with security institutions. Policymakers who wish to effectively and meaningfully engage in SRoL programming and peacebuilding, as well as project agencies and practitioners on the ground, may find it useful to engage with practical challenges and opportunities when implementing abstract policy guidelines around trust and trust-building.

Key findings and recommendations

❖ **Make causal assumptions of trust-building in SRoL programming more explicit**: Trust dynamics in many SRoL contexts are likely to divert from trust-building theories derived from studies conducted in the EU and the US. Trust-building approaches need to be developed in light of research on and from the contexts where they are applied.

❖ **Consider hybrid governance arrangements in SRoL trust-building programmes**: Most SRoL programmes focus on strengthening the capacities of state institutions to decrease public demand for non-state security and justice services. Instead, SRoL programming should consider working with hybrid governance arrangements, comprising state and non-state elements, as one pathway towards trust-based state-society relations that better reflect the lived realities of many citizens around the globe.

❖ **Emphasise aspects of fairness in SRoL programmes focusing on state behaviour**: Effective service provision is pertinent for citizens' trust in the state. However, for trust in security institutions to emerge, citizens also need to feel that security providers treat them fairly, with respect, and uphold social standards in the community.

❖ **Account for unintended effects of trust-building in SRoL programmes focusing on personal encounters**: SRoL policymakers should (1) engage with the potentially polarising effects of dialogue initiatives in societies characterised by group-based trust, as well as with the risks of entrenching inequalities or power asymmetries, and (2) develop policy approaches for managing distrust in the context of SRoL programming.

❖ **Expand trust-building policies to include internal dynamics of SRoL partnerships**: Theories of Change mostly focus on trust between citizens and the state. For SRoL programmes to become more effective, however, policymakers should also engage with trust-building needs within SRoL partnerships, including between donors and implementing organisations, and between external partners and local counterparts.

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1 Introduction

Would you go to your local police station to return a wallet you found in the street? When you go on holiday, would you leave your keys with the neighbours so they can water your plants in your absence? Would you make a direct cash transaction to another country via an informal network of money brokers? And when you do your grocery shopping, would you leave your baby in the stroller parked outside the shop?

> **Interpersonal trust** is experience-based, generated through interactions between two or more parties. **Institution-based trust** is derived from a person's expectation that another party's future behaviour is guided by certain institutional frameworks (i.e. laws, organisational guidelines, and professional codes of conduct).[3] **Generalised trust**, on the other hand, is a "rather abstract attitude toward people in general".[4] Generalised trust does not depend on personal experiences, has a wider radius and encompasses trust in fellow citizens and strangers.

Depending on cultural background and social experiences, people will have starkly different reactions to these scenarios. The level of trust we extend towards fellow citizens, business actors and public institutions influences many of our daily decisions. Trust is commonly understood as an optimistic attitude towards other people that enables social cooperation.[1] Thus, it is widely considered a central part of the social fabric. If citizens trust each other, so the assumption goes, they will work together to overcome their daily problems. If citizens deem office holders, politicians and government institutions sufficiently trustworthy to come up with reasonable legislation and enforce it proportionately, they will abide by these rules.[2]

Trust-building, both among citizens and between citizens and state institutions, has thus become paramount to international efforts to support security and rule of law (SRoL) in countries affected by political instability and violent conflict. Trust in security forces is seen as intricately linked to trust in the government and therefore as pertinent for state legitimacy.[5] Projects aiming to strengthen public trust in the state's institutions of public order can include supporting security sector reforms (SSR), providing training for security forces, community policing, and dialogue projects on safety and security at the community level, as well as large-scale, multilateral peacebuilding initiatives. Despite the myriad of approaches and projects, increasing trust between people and institutions of public order remains a challenge for the SRoL community. Simultaneously, recent advancements in trust

research in various disciplines suggest that trust works in significantly more dynamic and often fundamentally more paradoxical ways than previously assumed.[6] Research remains divided as to how trust in people and institutions comes about. For example, the interrelation between interpersonal and generalised forms of trust remains insufficiently understood.[7]

In this policy brief, we discuss mainstreamed trust-building approaches in SRoL policies in the light of recent research on trust. To this end, we interviewed 15 German and Dutch policymakers working on SSR, DDR, peacebuilding and stabilisation. Drawing on our analysis, we provide recommendations to improve the knowledge base and address risks and biases regarding trust in SRoL programming.

Photo 1: Paul Saad/Shutterstock. Protests in Beirut, 2020.

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[1] Gambetta 1988; Baier 1986.
[2] Levi and Stoker 2000.
[3] Bachmann and Inkpen 2007.
[4] Freitag and Traunmüller 2009, 782.
[5] Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 28 June 2021; Policy officer, DSH, Dutch MFA. Interview, 9 July 2021.
[6] Li 2017.
[7] Freitag and Traunmüller 2009.

2 Trust in SRoL policies: Prevalent types of causal assumptions

Trust features prominently in policy thinking on SRoL support. Policymakers deem relationships based on trust crucial for SRoL partnerships to thrive. Our respondents considered trust pertinent in societies in which SRoL programmes are implemented, as well as in relations between external actors, such as donors or implementing organisations, and national counterparts, such as governments and host communities.[8] That said, SRoL policies mostly focus on fostering trust between stakeholders in the host country.[9] They pay less attention to the level of trust between external parties and national counterparts. At the policy level, external parties are largely characterised as neutral, upholding international human rights standards and providing safe spaces for conflicting parties to engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation.

> **Horizontal trust** refers to trust between people, while **vertical or hierarchical trust** pertains to people's trust in their leaders or political institutions.[11]

To contribute to stable and legitimate governance arrangements in the host country, most SRoL programmes aim, in one form or another, to increase trust between citizens and state authorities. Many of these programmes focus on relations between communities and state security personnel.[10] By fostering citizens' trust in institutions like the police and the armed forces, they aim at a form of 'vertical trust', which differs from 'horizontal trust', among citizens.

The objective of such programmes is that citizens in the host country perceive members of the police and the armed forces as reliable and trustworthy, even if they have never had personal interactions with a member of these services. This form of trust is expected to gradually extend not only towards institutions but also towards fellow citizens, as the behaviour of representatives of the state is closely linked to behavioural standards in communities or society at large.[12] Depending on the level of ambition, the final objective of these programmes is either a form of 'institution-based trust' in representatives of the state or even a form of 'generalised trust', which enables citizens to extend a certain level of upfront trust towards fellow citizens in their communities, even if they are strangers. This level of trust within societies is widely considered the most desirable, and is seen as a potent enabler of collective action.

> In SRoL programming, **Theories of Change (ToCs)** make the underlying rationale of interventions explicit. They define desired long-term visions for change in a particular context and describe what needs to happen for these changes to come about. ToCs may be narratives or schematic 'logframes', displaying desired outcomes and activities.[17]

Related concepts, such as social cohesion, social capital or confidence, entail multiple layers and levels of trust. According to our policy discussions, trust may be conceived of as a precondition, a building block, or the final state of those state-society relations SRoL programmes seek to foster at the local, regional and national level. While this comprehensive picture highlights the pivotal role of trust in SRoL programming, it also complicates the task of pinpointing trust-related causal mechanisms. In fact, policy assumptions on how trust comes about often remain implicit.[13] This is especially the case for stabilisation projects, which often work with macro-assumptions.[14] Trust also rarely features in Monitoring and Evaluation

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[8] German BMZ Desk officer. Interview, 1 July 2021; Policy officer, DSH, Dutch MFA. Interview, 5 July 2021; Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 23 June 2021.

[9] Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 28 June 2021.

[10] *ibid.*

[11] Draude *et al.* 2018.

[12] Hecker and Starcke 2017.

[13] IOB 2019, 13.

[14] Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 28 June 2021.

(M&E).[15] Thus, evidence on the effects of different types of trust-building interventions is limited, especially regarding long-term effects at the societal level.[16]

Despite the multitude of project designs subsumed under SRoL, we found two prevalent, overarching approaches to trust-building that Theories of Change (ToCs) rest upon: (1) strengthening citizens' trust in the state through improving public service delivery and (2) enhancing citizens' trust in state authorities through fostering interactions with state security actors. The majority of SRoL projects draw on both approaches and combine capacity-building activities with fostering social encounters to varying degrees. In the following section, we will present the theoretical foundation of these policy approaches and discuss them in the light of recent research insights.

2.1 Trust through effective service delivery

The policy approach

Causal assumption: If state security providers deliver services effectively, according to principles of fairness and transparency, people will extend trust not only to those representatives of the state they interact with but also to state institutions and fellow citizens at a more general level.

SRoL programmes generally put a premium on strengthening institutions with a formal security and justice mandate, such as the military, the police and ministries with roles related to security matters. Related policies aim to strike a balance between making these state security services more efficient ('enabling measures'), while also subjecting them to democratic control and civilian oversight ('restraining measures'). To this end, capacity-building activities for various stakeholders are part and parcel of many SRoL programmes, especially in the German foreign and security policy context. Capacity-building interventions draw on an instrumental understanding of trust, in which citizens agree to relinquish freedoms to the state in return for state security institutions protecting them against crime.[18]

Photo 2: Nuk2013/Shutterstock. Soldiers running.

In projects that **strengthen state actors' service delivery capacities**, for example, police officers undergo professional training in various fields, such as crime scene investigation, counterterrorism, organised crime and border management. Members of the armed forces receive military education and training in special operations. Trainings are often accompanied by the provision of equipment, such as protective gear and vehicles (see: E2I).[19] By making state security services more accessible and efficient, capacity-building activities and related policies suggest a direct link to increased trust, state legitimacy and citizens' readiness to cooperate with state institutions.[20] It is assumed that if state

Enable & Enhance Initiative (E2I): German security policy that aims to enable partner states, through training and the provision of equipment, to provide security in conflict-affected regions.[22]

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[15] Dutch MFA Policy Researcher. Interview, 21 June 2021; Policy officer, DSH, Dutch MFA. Interview, 30 June 2021; Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 8 July 2021.

[16] Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 23 June 2021; Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 28 June 2021; German BMZ Desk officer. Interview, 1 July 2021.

[17] Woodrow and Oatley 2013.

[18] Hecker and Starcke 2017, 226.

[19] German Federal Government 2019, 14.

[20] Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 29 June 2021; Policy officer, DSH, Dutch MFA. Interview, 9 July 2021.

institutions provide security effectively, the demand for alternative (non-state) security provision will decrease.[21]

Research has shown that SRoL projects in practice regularly focus on strengthening the effectiveness of security forces in crime control, border management and counterterrorism operations, while aspects of accountability, procedural justice and oversight remain underdeveloped.[23] Policymakers also underlined that working on governance matters, and thus restraining executive powers remains a practical challenge.[24] In the following section, we therefore discuss policy approaches to trust-building that primarily focus on strengthening the effectiveness of state security forces.

Discussion

Models of social regulation and trusted authority vary across contexts. SRoL interventions which are aimed at effective state security provision as a foundation of vertical trust are based on a specific vision of citizens' trust in state authority. This vision largely reflects European experiences with law and political order in the context of a Westphalian statehood model. However, a growing body of research suggests that citizens have different expectations of their governments, depending, for example, on traditional regulating structures of society, experiences with state authority, historical legacies of conflict, legal socialisation and cultural perspectives on trustworthiness.[25] What is more, non-state actors such as neighbourhood watches, commercial security companies, traditional chiefs or restorative justice committees may be heavily involved in everyday security and justice provision.[26] These encounters with non-state actors that have a say in social regulation can be expected to have consequences for the level of trust that people extend towards state institutions, which perception polls find to vary greatly across countries.[27] For instance, a recent Afrobarometer poll found that Ethiopians trust religious and traditional leaders more than elected officials, security forces and courts of law and would like to see the influence of traditional leaders increase.[28] Thus, trust and its surrounding conceptions, such as citizens' perceptions towards the legitimacy and law and order capabilities of state security actors, can be expected to vary depending on the context.[29]

Nevertheless, causal assumptions on trust and trustworthiness underlying ToCs are mostly derived from surveys and research conducted in the EU and the US.[30] Moreover, most perception polls focus on trust in the state and public institutions. Significantly less is known about the type of trust that different political institutional arrangements, such as customary governance bodies, enjoy in the eyes of the citizens.[31] Accordingly, knowledge on the implications of different governance models for strengthening citizens' trust in the state, which could inform SRoL programming in contexts in which state capacities in the fields of security and justice provision are limited, remains scarce.

Citizens' trust in security institutions requires experiences of fair treatment. Effective public safety provision by security forces is an important source of citizens' trust. However, surveys conducted in the US and the UK showed that experiences of fairness in interactions with the police have a stronger influence on citizens' trust than perceptions of effectiveness.[32] Referring to the US Black Lives Matter movement, Tracey Meares has argued that a "sense of counting matters much more to people than how effective police are at reducing crime or whether the decisions that police make actually benefit them personally".[33] For Iraq, a recent study found that "the importance of equipping the police to deal sympathetically with the public remains paramount".[34] Research drawing on cross-national data also highlights the importance of procedural fairness in police reforms for the emergence of trust at a generalised level.[35] While people's priorities are likely to depend on the conflict's context (effective security provision or fair treatment), strengthening the security forces' presence and powers of

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[21] OECD 2007, 169.
[22] Bundesministerium der Verteidigung and Auswärtiges Amt 2018.
[23] Sedra 2010, 108; Donais and Barbak 2021, 208; Schröder and Chappuis 2014, 134; Richmond and Mitchell 2011, 326.
[24] Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 28 June 2021.
[25] Kappmeier *et al.* 2021; Chang *et al.* 2016; Li 2017.
[26] Baker 2010; Laurence 2012; Draude 2008.
[27] Bratton and Gyimah-Boadi 2016.
[28] Afrobarometer 2021.
[29] Bottoms and Tankebe 2017, 51.
[30] Draude *et al.* 2018.
[31] Rothstein and Stolle 2008.
[32] Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Reisig *et al.* 2007 . For an in-depth discussion of public trust in the police, ref. Hecker, Meike: Procedural Justice, forthcoming.
[33] Yale Viewpoints 2017.
[34] Watkins *et al.* 2021.
[35] Rothstein and Stolle 2008.

intervention alone creates a risk that citizens will have negative experiences with security personnel, if this professionalisation does not include elements of procedural fairness and respectful treatment to a sufficient extent. These negative experiences can have detrimental effects on citizens' trust in state institutions, and potentially on state legitimacy in the long run.

2.2 Trust through personal encounters

Causal assumption: Through interpersonal contact, individuals will, on the one hand, (1) learn about each other, empathise and develop a higher level of understanding of each other and, on the other hand, (2) create positive experiences of cooperation with each other. Both factors are expected to increase mutual reliability of expectations, which is the basis for cooperative future behaviour. In SRoL programming, these encounters encompass horizontal and vertical relations (citizen-citizen; citizen-security personnel).

The policy approach

Projects that aim to promote encounters between citizens and the state are gaining prominence in the SRoL field, especially in Dutch foreign and security policies. These programmes work with a normative understanding of trust, drawing on insights from procedural justice theory.[36] Related projects seek to foster positive experiences of state service delivery as a starting point for future cooperative encounters. Below, we discuss policy approaches to trust-building that primarily focus on personal encounters between communities and security personnel.

Related SRoL programmes aim to foster dialogues among citizens, among communities and with state authorities as a step towards trust-building between citizens and the state.[37] Measures may include the creation of community safety working groups and local peace committees.[38] Community-policing is also a measure frequently applied to induce positive experiences of cooperation between security forces and citizens, as the police service is the organisation of public order that citizens interact with most on a day-to-day basis.[39] Community-policing projects often aim to increase public awareness of the security forces' roles and responsibilities and to enable citizens to express their needs in the officers' presence.[40] Such measures are seen as particularly important in contexts in which state institutions have not historically engaged with the public or certain societal groups on security

Photo 3: Jenaly Photography/Shutterstock. Community march in support of Black Lives Matter movement, Harrisburg 2020.

issues. Next to procedural justice theory, this widely applied policy approach is rooted in the contact hypothesis, which aims to reduce intergroup prejudice.[41] The contact hypothesis was established in the 1950s

Community-policing is aimed at local crime prevention and relationship-building. It entails various forms of police-community interactions in which the police engage with citizens to address local safety and security needs.[44] Community policing formats differ significantly between countries with different policing cultures.

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[36] Hecker and Starcke 2017, 227.
[37] Policy officer, Embassy, Dutch MFA. Interview, 15 July 2021.
[38] IOB 2019, 46; Policy officer, DSH, Dutch MFA. Interview, 30 June 2021.
[39] Policy officer, stabilisation unit, German FFO. Interview, 23 June 2021.
[40] OECD 2007, 106.
[41] IOB 2019, 46.

for encounters between majority and minority groups in conflict.[42] Previous research has pointed out that interpersonal contact, if certain preconditions are met, is a valid approach to reducing intergroup biases.[43]

SRoL projects that aim to facilitate cooperative state-society relations apply a similar logic. While trust may be more oriented towards short-term cost-benefit calculations at the outset of cooperation, parties are expected to value the benefits they gain from engaging and remaining in the relationship.[45] Creating consensus on local issues is expected to potentially generate spillover effects for addressing wider or more controversial topics at a later point, such as national security sector reform.[46]

Discussion

Trust in individuals does not equal trust in institutions. The contact theory has been established for interpersonal relations, not for encounters between individuals and state representatives. A key precondition for contact theory to apply is that groups involved in an encounter have an equal status within a situation, meaning that they can engage equally in the relationship.[47] State-society relations are hierarchical in nature, as opposed to horizontal relations between individuals. Against this backdrop, it is questionable how far assumptions on horizontal trust are applicable to cases of vertical trust in security institutions. In the aftermath of a community-policing dialogue, participants may have increased knowledge of a specific police task and the individual officer's responsibilities. This change in attitude towards a specific individual may not transfer to the institution of the police. Rather than during the 'safe space' of the project context, we can expect citizens' attitudes towards the state to be shaped, by and large, by socialisation and their experiences of interaction with state representatives from childhood throughout adulthood. Absence of or misconduct by the state security forces plays a crucial role in shaping citizens' trust in the state. A UNDP study on violent extremism in Africa highlighted how negative experience with state security forces including the police and the military is strongly connected to low levels of trust in government authorities and is a key accelerator of recruitment into violent extremist groups.[48] These findings call into question the impact of short-term dialogue projects with selected individuals on behavioural attitudes towards state institutions.

Projects drawing on contact theory tend to favour the status quo. Socioeconomic conditions have a strong influence on the level of trust within societies. Research has shown that the more equitably resources are distributed within a society, the more likely it is that the society is characterised by a high level of generalised trust.[49] In turn, economic inequalities between groups are particularly detrimental to the emergence of intergroup – or generalised – trust.[50] However, conflicts between groups often arise in contexts in which one or more communities or members of communities feel structurally disadvantaged as compared to other groups. Perceptions of structural disadvantage may well involve governance arrangements and treatment by state security forces. In societies characterised by structural inequality, research has found that dialogue initiatives may tend to preserve the status quo and strengthen the position of the majority group, while neglecting a minority group's ambitions for structural changes.[51] In protracted asymmetric conflicts, research has highlighted the dangers of dialogue measures taking the form of 'advantage-building measures', instead of building trust among participants.[52] Under such conditions, measures fostering contact between state authorities and communities may risk providing political elites with a platform to reinforce their model of law and political order, as well as with a certain level of validation. This risk emerged as a core concern among policymakers as well.

Less is known about the potentially negative sides of trust. In view of the substantial evidence highlighting the benefits of social trust, most ToCs assume that trust is a desirable characteristic in societies. Often, these ToCs implicitly assume that trust will spread beyond the interpersonal level, involving wider parts of society. However, research has shown that trust

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[42] Allport 1954.
[43] Pettigrew and Tropp 2006.
[44] OECD 2007.
[45] Smolnik 2019.
[46] OECD 2007, 167.
[47] Pettigrew 1998.
[48] UNDP 2017.
[49] Rothstein and Uslaner 2005.
[50] Hodler *et al.* 2018.
[51] Amir 1969; Forbes 2004; Maoz 2011.
[52] Smolnik 2019, 23.

can have negative effects as well, especially when it comes to group-based trust.[53] As interpersonal trust is mostly experience-based, it can come with exclusionary effects towards other members of society. Conflict-affected societies are often characterised by particularised trust, for example among ethnic groups.[54] This has implications for SRoL programmes that aim to foster encounters between members of groups in conflict, including their public servants. For instance, a survey conducted among participants in a dialogue programme at the Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia in 2009-2010 found that the programme, which built on the principles of contact theory, was moderately successful in decreasing mistrust between participants of different ethnic origins, through a series of meetings aimed at addressing the underlying causes of conflict. However, the survey found that the programme also partly increased ethnic awareness and self-identification among participants, as well as their perception of being discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity.[55] Such perceptions can be detrimental to citizens' trust in the state and wider society.

What is more, research has shown that **trust and distrust are separate and distinct phenomena** which individuals can experience at the same time.[56] While trust makes recourse to confidence in the other party, distrust is rooted in incongruent values, resulting in vigilance, scepticism and suspicion. Although research on distrust is in a more nascent stage than research on trust, it suggests that parties can trust each other in one field of cooperation (for example, on a non-controversial topic) and distrust each other in other areas, instead of developing deeper levels of trust that transcend different fields. The desired spillover into other fields of cooperation may thus fail to materialise.

3 Summary and Policy Recommendations

In this policy brief, we have contrasted mainstreamed assumptions on trust-building in SRoL partnerships at the policy level with insights from research dealing with trust and trust-building. We found that research across disciplines discusses trust as a highly complex, context-specific and, at times, ambivalent social mechanism. However, insights into trust and trustworthiness are mostly derived from studies conducted in the US and the EU, leaving many questions around trust-building mechanisms across contexts unanswered.

At the policy level, causal assumptions on trust often remain implicit or convey a linear perspective on trust-building. We mostly found two causal assumptions: (1) trust-building through effective service delivery and (2) trust-building through personal encounters. Both approaches have theoretical roots in social science and are validated to a certain extent by empirical research. However, the literature also highlights risks and biases associated with these approaches, which we have discussed above. Against this backdrop, the following policy measures can help in making SRoL programming more sensitive and responsive to trust-building dynamics in societies affected by political instability and violent conflict:

Make causal assumptions of trust-building in SRoL programming more explicit: Many trust relationships that are vital for upholding social order are mutually dependent. For example, trust in the police is closely related to trust in other people within a community.[57] However, little is known so far about the causal dynamics – Which trust relation comes first, and which one is positively or negatively affected by the other? And to what extent? With these questions proving controversial in the literature, policymakers need to provide a sound rationale for which 'screw to turn' to set the complex dynamics of trust-building in motion. In view of the all-encompassing nature of trust, SRoL projects will have an impact, either intended or unintended, on various levels of trust in host societies. These trust relationships should be further investigated vis-à-vis prevalent ToCs in SRoL programming.

Consider hybrid governance arrangements in SRoL trust-building programmes: While research has provided pertinent insights into trust-building mechanisms between citizens and state institutions, significantly less is known about the level of trust between citizens and non-state or customary security and justice providers, which characterise the lived realities of many citizens across the globe. While mainstream SRoL programming remains state-centric, and policymakers continue to

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[53] Draude *et al.* 2018.
[54] *ibid.*
[55] Svensson and Brounéus 2013.
[56] Kostis and Näsholm 2020.
[57] Hecker and Starcke 2017.

grapple with the normative questions around working with non-state SRoL actors, there is no evidence base that suggests that increasing trust in non-state actors as governance providers comes with a corresponding loss of trust in state institutions. Emerging research on hybridity and 'second-generation SSR' can inform policy-thinking in this direction, providing conceptual impetus to better reflect the realities of non-state governance provision in SRoL programming.

Emphasise aspects of fairness in SRoL programmes focusing on state security provision: For trust in security institutions to emerge, effective security provision is only one side of the coin. Citizens equally need to feel that security providers treat them fairly, with respect, and uphold social standards in the community. Emphasising security institutions' public accountability is especially critical where external security policy interests impact the design of SRoL programmes. Under these conditions, SRoL projects focusing on security forces' effectiveness should thoroughly evaluate all options to incorporate elements of procedural fairness. Those options may include easily accessible entry points for citizen complaints, publication of recruitment and promotion criteria for security officers, public payrolls and review structures.

Account for unintended effects of trust-building in projects focusing on personal encounters: Dialogue projects often operate on the assumption that interpersonal encounters will foster social trust among people beyond those individuals involved. However, in societies characterised by protracted conflict, trauma, impunity, ethnic division and widespread violence, trust dynamics are likely to be group-based. Under these conditions, projects focusing on social encounters may be at risk of generating polarising effects. Conflict sensitivity assessments should thus focus on the potentially exclusionary effects of particularised trust and on risks associated with entrenching inequalities and power asymmetries. Moreover, policies should focus not only on how trust is expected to be repaired but also on how distrust is managed, to create a certain level of reliability of expectations amongst parties. Project evaluations could address these open issues, providing pertinent near-term insights for more comprehensive research endeavours.

Expand trust-building policies to include internal dynamics of SRoL partnerships: Lastly, next to vertical and horizontal trust relations in host societies, perceptions of trustworthiness among the various actors involved in SRoL programming should receive more policy attention, including the role of external parties. In SRoL contexts where donors pursue own foreign and security policies, external parties are not necessarily perceived as the neutral 'repositories of trust' that trust-building approaches envisage. Research can support such policy debates by providing more comprehensive assessments of the intricate interplay of trust between external and national actors in SRoL programmes. Such insights might in turn contribute to reflections on alternative, more encompassing approaches to trust-building beyond the two prevalent mechanisms.

This is the first publication of the Trust-building in Security and Rule of Law Partnerships research project, conducted in cooperation between the **Berghof Foundation** and the **Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy** at the University of Hamburg (IFSH). We will further investigate what works and what doesn't in terms of trust-building in SRoL partnerships in a subsequent research report.

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