



The conundrum of local ownership in developing a security sector: the case of Kosovo

Dennis Blease

Researcher and Doctoral Candidate, Cranfield University, UK
d.blease@cranfield.ac.uk

Florian Qehaja

Executive Director, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies
Doctoral Candidate, University of Ljubljana
florian.qehaja@qkss.org

Abstract

The concept of 'local ownership' has been an article of faith within the development community for a number of years. It is therefore not surprising to see it being applied more recently to the normative process of Security Sector Reform (SSR). Empirical evidence would suggest, however, that local ownership has been more evident in the theory of SSR than in its practice, where short-term expediency often tends to trump long-term sustainability. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of Kosovo. The security sector in Kosovo has been built from scratch with the support of the international community and thus offers a unique post-communist and post-conflict example. Whilst the declaration of independence in 2008 has changed the context, the international community's role in developing the local security sector is still manifestly evident. The multitude of both international and local actors on the ground still creates a confusing picture of who, in reality, leads and owns the process.

This article will apply the evolving concept of 'local ownership' to the development of the security sector in Kosovo and more specifically will analyse the case study of the development of the National Security Strategy of Kosovo in 2009-2010. It will argue that in many cases the international community's approach has taken little notice of the local context and the needs of the country. It has driven forward an international agenda rather than supporting the legitimate efforts of local actors to undertake their own SSR. Although the impasse that resulted from the UN Future Status process in 2007 continues to complicate the political situation for all concerned, insufficient effort has been made by the international community to hand over responsibility for all aspects of the security sector and their development to the Kosovo Government and its people, in line with the principles of local ownership.

Key words: local ownership, security sector reform (SSR), development, national security strategy (NSS), Kosovo

Introduction

The concept of 'local ownership' has been an article of faith within the development community for a number of years. It is therefore not surprising to see it being applied more recently to the normative process of Security Sector Reform (SSR). Empirical evidence would suggest, however, that local ownership has been more evident in the theory of SSR than in its practice, where short-term expediency often tends to trump long-term sustainability. In order to examine the concept of 'local ownership' in more detail, this article will test the concept during the development of the security sector in Kosovo. The security sector in Kosovo has been built from scratch with the support of the international community and thus offers a unique post-communist and post-conflict example. Whilst the declaration of independence in 2008 has changed the context, the international community's role in developing the local security sector is still manifestly evident. This state of affairs raises a classic conundrum between local involvement and international 'assistance' in the process of security sector development.

It is therefore intended first to provide a theoretical treatment of the concept of 'local ownership'. Then it is proposed to set the scene for a case study on Kosovo by examining the context of security sector development and reform in the country. The final section will investigate events surrounding the development of a National Security Strategy (NSS) in Kosovo during the period of 2009-2010 and assess how much local ownership was evident in the process. Methodologically the authors will collect data through various means but mainly by applying qualitative methods. The theoretical part and context will be written on the basis of open source information. Some interviews were conducted with key stakeholders and these will be included. The paper will also reflect insights brought by the authors of this paper based on their direct involvement in the processes of security sector development in Kosovo.

The concept of 'Local ownership'

In order to understand the concept of 'local ownership', it would be worth briefly charting its Genesis and its link to SSR. The concept gained salience in the lexicon of the development community from the mid-1990s. The end of the Cold War had prompted a renewed focus by both bilateral and multilateral donors on development aid and its

effectiveness. The World Bank was highly influential in this debate and, as a result of its empirical research, extolled the benefits of local ownership for both donor governments and local stakeholders in making programmes and projects successful. (World Bank 1995: ix-x) The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) codified this idea when its Development Assistance Committee (DAC) recommended a change in the development paradigm with shared commitment between donors and aid recipients, and with "... local ownership of the development process." (OECD 1996: 9) In turn this led to donor governments such as the UK incorporating commitments to 'local ownership' in policy documents on sustainable development. (DfID 1997: 54) Over time the concept became central to the model of development assistance.

More recently, the 2005 *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* by both donor countries and partner countries outlined five commitments to improve the management of aid. 'Local ownership' was top of that particular list (OECD 2005b). This commitment has continued through regular high-level meetings (OECD 2008; OECD 2012a) that have sought to embrace hard-won lessons through constant reference to experience from the field. Nonetheless, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that there is still a mismatch between policy and practice, and none more so than in the field of Security Sector Reform (SSR). (Sedra 2006; Jackson, 2011)

The concept of SSR has had a relatively short history and, as Sedra explains, "... is hardly fixed or static, but rather still growing and evolving." (2009: 2) The UK's DfID championed the concept in the late 1990s, as it became apparent that there was a need for a broader approach to security and development assistance. (Ball 2010: 29-35) Even today, however, there remains a lack of precise consensus between policymakers, academics and practitioners over both the constituent elements of the security sector as well as the term SSR itself. The OECD *Security System Reform and Governance* provides the most authoritative definition of SSR:

"Security system reform is another term to describe the transformation of the security system - which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions - working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance and this contributes to a well-functioning security framework." (2005a: 20)

Although the OECD prefers to use the term Security System Reform, there is a general acceptance that various other permutations, such as Security Sector Reform, Security and Justice Reform, often under the banner of 'SSR', embrace the same basic ideas. (OECD 2007a: 4) There is also a recognition of the linkage between security and development (Edmunds 2002: 1), which became known as the security-development nexus. (Fitz-Gerald 2010: 155). Given this nexus, it is hardly surprising to see the concept of 'local ownership' being applied to the concept of SSR as well as to sustainable development. Indeed, OECD policy and guidance documents on SSR have embraced 'local ownership' as a core principle of SSR (OECD 2005a; OECD 2007a; OECD 2012b). However, there still remains an intellectual and practical gap in the delivery of SSR. Ball (2012: 38) makes the point that there are different perspectives on what constitutes security and where the priorities should lie depending on whether one is a donor or a recipient of assistance. Similarly, Bendix and Stanley (2008: 94) argue that there is "... a contradiction to speak of local ownership in the context of SSR that is funded by external donors." It is a conundrum that the UN has suggested needs addressing in a recent report on strengthening support to SSR (UN 2013: 18).

In order to understand this conundrum, there is perhaps a need to establish a clearer perspective of what 'local ownership' might mean in terms of SSR, and, as Martin and Wilson (2008: 83-103) demand so pointedly: what locals, and ownership of what? What follows is an attempt to provide that perspective.

In his discussion on defining 'local ownership', Donais suggests that, "[f]ormal dictionary definitions are of limited utility in the SSR context, since a notion of ownership as a 'legal right of possession' suggests that what is owned is a fixed, ontologically stable object, which SSR is clearly not." (2008b: 6) Laurie Nathan, who has been at the forefront of the 'local ownership' debate for a number of years, clearly articulates the view that 'ownership' pertains to the control and influence over the design, management and implementation of an SSR intervention. (2007: 4) There are other practitioners, who have supported SSR interventions in recent conflict and post-conflict situations (so-called stabilisation or stability operations), where 'ownership' is regarded as a much more fluid concept, as well as being less normative in its objective. (Hansen 2008: 42-54; Giustozzi 2008: 220-226) The experience in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan has led to a more nuanced understanding of 'ownership' that seems to be at odds with experience in more stable parts of the world. In

simple terms, it is the dilemma between establishing stability in the short-term and creating sustainability over the longer-term. Notwithstanding this apparent discord, it is worth considering two points. First, Chesterman argues that usage of the term 'ownership' in post-conflict reconstruction and statebuilding tends to be along the lines of local actors 'buying-in' to an SSR intervention, not necessarily handing authority to those whose actions created the need for the SSR intervention in the first place. He summarised this understanding by stating: "Ownership is certainly the [*eventual*] intended end of such operations, but almost by definition it is not the means." (2007: 7-10). Second, this usage of the term in stability operations seems to reinforce the importance of understanding the context in any SSR intervention and building its constituent parts accordingly.

This last point is particularly germane when considering the question of 'what locals'. Scheye and Peake (2005: 3-5) contend that it is important to ascertain first who are the individual customers of the SSR intervention, as each customer has different needs and thus requires an individually tailored approach. In essence this is a demand-led perspective, rather than a supply-led one. If one can divine who the customer is, there is then the difficulty of establishing the 'local' who might be willing and capable enough to 'own' the task. Those security organs that might be deemed to be in need of reform will often be reluctant to change the status quo and thus are more likely to be spoilers with respect to the SSR intervention rather than owners. (Bendix & Stanley 2008: 97-98) In these circumstances taking ownership might be with the intention of subverting or neutralising the intervention rather than building a democratically accountable security sector. Creating a security structure from scratch also poses its own unique challenges, not least in finding a local body to take 'ownership' when local capacity is thin or non-existent. In this example, donors often take the lead in the intervention, to the exclusion of local actors. Although there might be short-term benefits to be achieved, they tend to be transitory and will only "... undermine consolidation and sustainability in the long run." (Hansen 2008: 39). There is also a half-way house approach, where local partners initially participate in the intervention under a donor lead. Welch describes this as 'local inclusion' but something which still "... falls short of ownership." (2011: 121-122). The focus of interventions here should probably be on capacity building in order that the local actors can eventually take responsibility and ownership of the reform process.

At this stage it is also worth highlighting the impact of the differing perspectives of donors and recipients to SSR interventions. These differences might be as a result of *Weltanschauung*, language, culture, perceived impact, or a combination of all four. Welch (2011:123) commented that often in building capacity "... an environment is created where the local population sees the international community as imposing its norms with little regard to the wishes, aspirations and culture of civil society and its leaders." This is clearly not a good example of 'local ownership' and can lead to tensions between internationals who perhaps have technical expertise and locals who have contextual expertise. A similar tension could also be evident between those locals in central government, who view SSR interventions from a national or state-centric perspective, and those at community level whose perceptions of security (and insecurity) are much more personal in nature.

Given these challenges of varying perceptions, what do the various local actors actually own? Generalising always presents difficulties, not least with SSR, due to the highly contextual nature of the concept (Donais 2009: 124). The simple answer, however, might just be the process, but that would then ignore responsibility both for the delivery as well as the outcome of the SSR intervention. Furthermore, Martin and Wilson argue that whilst a top-down process can change the institutional structures within a security sector, it might not impact upon the "... underlying incentives, power politics and culture." (2008: 85) Without taking these into account, long-term sustainability of the reform or developmental process begins to look unlikely. One of the most important steps that a country can take in shaping its own destiny is to develop and then own a shared vision for its security sector. Often this would be created through the development of a strategic and doctrinal framework for the security sector, such as a National Security Strategy. The resultant document could not only offer a national consensus on a range of security issues, but it could also provide a set of priorities to inform both host nation and donor decisions (Panarelli 2010: 3). Paradoxically, this is a particularly important step when there is a lack of capacity or a lack of domestic political will (Donais 2008: 288). It is in these circumstances that donors need to step back from an SSR intervention, whilst assisting and mentoring the local actors, in order for them to take ownership and build commitment to their reforms. As Nathan (2007) states in the title of his seminal work on local ownership in SSR: *No Ownership, No Commitment*.

Context of security sector development and reform in Kosovo

With the end of conflict in Kosovo and the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 on 10 June 1999, the primary task of the international missions was to restore peace and order in a fragile post-conflict environment. (UNSCR1244 1999) Neither the nascent UN mission nor NATO were well poised to deal with the resultant security vacuum (Blease 2010: 7). The uncertain security situation reinforced the need for the immediate build-up of Kosovo institutions under the strict supervision of the international administration, but with some reserved powers being retained by the UN, especially in the security sector. A combination of a robust international presence and a different socio-political environment meant that the development of the security sector in Kosovo was fundamentally different from that of other countries in the Western Balkans. Not least this was due to the complete withdrawal from Kosovo of the state security structures of the former Yugoslavia following the 'Kumanovo Agreement' (NATO, 1999). Thus the institutions in Kosovo were predominantly built from scratch with no institutional correlation between former Yugoslav security structures and the post-conflict security institutions. The formative context of the security institutions in Kosovo can best be divided into three phases: the first phase (1999-2005) marked the establishment of first Kosovo security institutions, notably the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and civil emergency structures in the form of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), where the international community retained an executive role; the second phase (2005-2008) saw the initial handover of responsibilities from the international community to the Kosovo Government; the third phase (2008-2013) marked the creation of a new security sector architecture that reflected Kosovo's statehood with the establishment of security structures such as the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) and Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA) (Qehaja and Vrajolli 2011).

It is the prevailing view in Kosovo that all three phases of security sector development relied heavily upon the guidance (and in many cases direction) provided by the international community based on a top-down approach, where the Kosovo governmental representatives and civil society had a limited to non-existent role. In essence this raises the whole question of whether there was any 'say' from locals in the entire development process. From a conceptual point of view, this cuts to the heart of the concept of local ownership as elaborated in the first part of this article. Indeed, the Kosovan security sector serves as crucial example

in scientifically testing the concept of local ownership, which this article will now address. In so doing, we have adopted Nathan's concept of local ownership, which refers to the extent to which local actors exercise control or influence over the initiation, design and implementation of institutional building or reform processes. (2007: 4)

As discussed earlier in this paper, there is often limited opportunity for true local involvement in an immediate post-conflict period with all its attendant security problems and instability, and hence the presence of international missions and actors is deemed to be important at this stage. Most of the sources in the field provide examples of locally driven security sector only where there is an increased maturity among the post-conflict communities, reflecting in particular, a stable political and security environment. Therefore in the example of Kosovo it would seem most appropriate to test the concept of local ownership concept after the declaration of independence in 2008, since there was then an acknowledged increase in maturity among the Kosovo institutions and society. This period reflects the security sector architecture of post-independence Kosovo derived from the 'Comprehensive Proposals for the Future Status of Kosovo', better known as the 'Ahtisaari Plan' (UNOSEK 2007).

It would be wrong, however, to ignore some influential context prior to the declaration. Notwithstanding the political sensitivities of discussing the Kosovo security sector in advance of any agreed decision on Kosovo's future status, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in Kosovo, Søren Jessen-Petersen, agreed to a fundamental review of the security sector. It began its work in 2006. Petersen stipulated that this was "... essentially a review by Kosovans for Kosovo.." (UNMIK 2005: 1) The Internal Security Sector Review (ISSR)ⁱ was considered one of the most "... ambitious and holistic effort[s] at SSR undertaken in recent years ..." (OECD 2007a: 249) as they reached out to ordinary citizens via a 'have your say' bus, TV debates and a raft of other innovative measures designed to increase local ownership. Notwithstanding the excellence of their research and final report (ISSR 2006), there was still some criticism of a lack of direct Kosovan involvement in the ISSR Secretariat and a lack of local ownership (Saferworld 2007; Foord 2007: 54-59). The reasons for this criticism are too numerous to rehearse here, suffice it to say that a lack of local capacity, some unedifying political manoeuvring by both UNMIK officials and members of the Kosovo Government, reduced the level of legitimacy the ISSR should have had within the country.

One of the most important, but under-stated successes of the ISSR Secretariat, however, was its close and productive liaison with the United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for the Future Status of Kosovo (UNOSEK) led by President Ahtisaari. The team was based in Vienna and had anticipated that all matters pertaining to Kosovo's future status would be on the table for discussion but it soon became apparent that progress was only going to be made on those issues that were status-neutral. Clearly, development of the security sector was completely dependent on a decision on that status and, as a result, there was no formal discussion with Kosovo governmental representatives on most of the security sector until February 2007, when the draft proposals were being discussed with all interested parties. UNOSEK therefore used the link to the ISSR Secretariat to ask the Kosovan people in a Clausewitzian manner for their views on a range of security issues that could not be asked directly. Similarly, given the parallel track of the ISSR and the UNOSEK process, it would have been politically disastrous if the two organisations had produced diametrically opposed recommendations. In the event, the final ISSR report and the Ahtisaari 'Comprehensive Proposals' proved to be mutually reinforcing (Welch 2011: 196-198). Thus, whilst it would be true to aver that Ahtisaari's proposals were produced top-down, it would also be true to suggest that many elements of the proposals flowed bottom-up via indirect contributions from local society and local actors, mainly through the ISSR process.

Even in the period of post-independence Kosovo of 2008, there were still a multitude of international actors involved in the development of the security sector, be it in the form of the representatives of international missions or international donors. Analysis reveals a confused environment with a variety of different actors, many with overlapping projects, in part due to a lack of coordination. The international development practice showed limited coherence and coordination among the diverse international actors and difficulties were compounded by, *inter alia*, inter-agency rivalry and duplication of efforts (Friis and Jamyr 2008). Furthermore, a key area of concern was that the various actors offered multiple models of state-building which caused confusion among the locals. In many instances a donor would bring the experience of its own country to bear and argue that its model was the most democratic. However, as Nathan remarked, donors should avoid confusing democracy with Western models (2008). Although offering solutions under the so-called 'Western Best Practices' are difficult to argue against, at least in the security sector, the question still needs to be asked, what is the value of 'Western Best Practice' if it is incompatible with local

needs? The Scandinavian model of rule of law might be the best defined in theory but that is solely in the Scandinavian context: a context which is distinctly different from Kosovo and the Western Balkans. The Western European countries reflect the experience of individual countries based on the legacy of their own process of state-building. Thus Western models of security governance are highly varied, each of them a product of historical and constitutional developments (Donais 2008: 277). Such models do not necessarily reflect a developing country's needs for its own security sector, which must be determined by local actors and local conditions.

Another example of a discrepancy between the agenda of the donors and the needs of Kosovo is in the area of equipment donations. Some donations to Kosovo have been so inappropriate as to affect the performance of one of their best functioning institutions – the Kosovo Police. These shortcomings were articulated by a former senior Kosovar police officer at a conference in Prague. He stated that "... the police received a huge donation of South Korean vehicles, [but] its maintenance was so expensive that even after 10 years we could not replace it. The budget has been exhausted [... as a result of...] maintaining [...] the vehicles".ⁱⁱ This statement illustrates the absence of proper local ownership in the process of institution-building and the provision of external support to Kosovo. The key is that external donation or support should not be automatically accepted. The ability to say 'no' is a crucial test of local ownership.

It is not just in the donation of equipment that there are shortcomings but also in the building of institutions, the most notable in Kosovo being the large number of the community safety mechanisms in the country. Most municipalities have established a Municipal Community Safety Council (MCSC) with the primary role of bringing local governmental and non-governmental actors into one place to discuss and offer solutions for public safety. This model is based on the US community safety mechanisms. In addition, there is the Community Safety Action Teams (CSAT) which also exists in most municipalities and has the same model as the MCSC. Furthermore, the police are entitled to establish local councils to consult with a specific community group and discuss their needs. All of these models have been externally driven and have been initiated by donors based on specific projects. A brief analysis of the situation demonstrates how this approach in the development of local safety mechanisms impairs the situation on the ground (KCSS 2010). Despite the good intentions of the donors, the establishment of several local safety mechanisms does not serve as a platform

for viable long-term solutions and, in practice, these mechanisms fall into disrepair following the withdrawal of the donor agencies.

Overall, it is of crucial importance that institution-building should derive from circumstances on the ground and reflect the local social dimension. The tendency by donors to perceive the SSR enterprise in a developing country as making ‘their’ security institutions look like ‘our’ security institutions (Donais 2009: 119) is ultimately counter-productive. It only creates negative connotations, both financially and socially, because of the absence of local ‘buy in’ and puts at risk long-term sustainability (Donais 2008: 277). It is a major problem in developing countries like Kosovo. Donors need to concentrate on locally driven initiatives and especially on those institutional mechanisms that already exist.

Case study: development of Kosovo Security strategy 2009-2010

The Kosovo Government decided to develop a National Security Strategy (NSS) in 2009 in accordance with the statutes of its new constitution. The process took about a year and, after some bitter in-fighting with elements of the international community, led to a document that satisfied nobody. In order to understand what happened, it is worth setting out the background and legal underpinning of the NSS, the process that actually took place with particular regard to the concept of ‘local ownership’, what went wrong, and why.

One of the most important steps that a country can take in shaping its own destiny is to develop, and then own, a shared vision for its security sector. Often this would be created through the development of a NSS or similar framework. The resultant document could not only offer a national consensus on a range of security issues, but it could also provide a set of priorities to inform both host nation and donor decisions (Panarelli 2010: 3). This was certainly part of the rationale behind Ahtisaari's decision to include the recommendation for such a strategy to be produced by the Kosovars in his 2007 ‘Comprehensive Proposals’ (UN, 2007). It was also partly, however, to allow the Kosovar Government and its people an opportunity to build a sense of 'local ownership' for the security sector (Blease, 2013).

The legal basis for launching the process of NSS derived from the Kosovo Constitution which explicitly states that “the Security Council of the Republic of Kosovo in cooperation with the President of the Republic of Kosovo and the Government are to develop

a security strategy for the Republic of Kosovo.” (Constitution 2008) The next level of the NSS process was further regulated by the Law on the Establishment of Kosovo Security Council (Law on KSC 2008). These laws did not necessarily set out the entire generic cycle of NSS, but relied upon the existing legal basis in Kosovo which called upon the Kosovo institutions to lead the process.ⁱⁱⁱ A workshop on the theoretical and practical implications of creating an NSS was held in Geneva in September 2008, and was attended by a number of officials and politicians.^{iv}

The entire process of developing the strategy was led by the Kosovo Security Council (KSC) and began with a general invitation in May 2009 to both local and international actors for written contributions (Saferworld 2009: 1). At this stage the International Civilian Office (ICO)^v would seem to have had a role in support of the KSC. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOI) was the lead ministry and various working groups were then set up to carry the work forward. From the outset attempts were made to ensure that all the working groups were inclusive of Kosovo society, and comprised both key governmental officials as well as civil society organisations. A working group was established with a mandate to examine all the legal aspects in order to ensure that there was no contradiction between the prospective NSS and the Kosovo legal framework. Other working groups focused on defining the vision, as well as measuring risks and threats, based on the input of all the security institutions. In order to ensure that the views of the citizens were considered, there was a wide ranging survey conducted by an outsourced company. It took the working groups some six months to provide their inputs to the initial draft of the NSS. One of the key drafters and coordinators was an experienced Kosovar consultant, who suggested that:

“The idea was that from the very beginning [...] it should be owned as a process and in terms of content by the Kosovo institutions. Kosovo had recently declared independence and the enthusiasm was that now we will have a Kosovo Security Strategy, genuine Kosovo documents with contents and also [... a genuine Kosovo ...] process.”^{vi}

Indeed all the working groups seemed to be entirely comfortable with the approach and did not appear to require any assistance from the international community. Nonetheless, the process was closely monitored by the security affairs officials of the ICO and some of these internationals regularly took part in key meetings. Although the ICO’s mandate was relatively limited and in general it did not use its executive powers, the involvement of its Security Affairs Unit (SAU) was far more interventionist in its approach. This began first

with some of their officials attempting to dictate to their local colleagues the vision and concept of the NSS. Then the SAU began to pressurise members of the groups to finalise the draft within a very short time period, although again no rationale was offered for such a requirement. An international consultant was then contracted towards the end of 2009 to work with the local consultant and main coordinator in order to speed up the delivery of a draft product to the KSC. Fortunately the two consultants worked together extremely harmoniously but the international was also unable to ascertain why there was a sudden rush. Other unconfirmed sources have indicated, however, that there was direct pressure being applied from one country in the international community. As the international consultant said: "... the whole idea was that this thing should be done and dusted in a very short timeframe and then would be put to the Assembly for agreement and be published." ^{vii}

A key foundation of any NSS is an environmental analysis including security risks and threats. The SAU officials suggested to working group members (and particularly the drafters) that they should exclude the real risks and threats, as discussion of these would be 'detrimental to security and stability.' In addition they insisted that the strategy should not highlight the real security dilemmas present in the northern part of Kosovo but, instead, focus on aspects of general 'human security.' In effect this meant ignoring the risk and threat assessment identified on the basis of a qualitative analysis provided by the security institutions, as well as the quantitative data on public perception towards risks and threats.^{viii} The international consultant offered a more nuanced explanation for this in an interview earlier this year when he suggested that:

"... we could not talk about the threat from the North and [... from Serbia...], because that was not going to get us anywhere. The whole thing had to be watered down and couched in more diplomatic ways." ^{ix}

By common accord the two consultants produced a well-balanced draft strategy but as they neared completion of the first coordinated version, the direct involvement of the SAU officials in the process became more insistent. The local consultant subsequently observed that the "... drafting[of] the strategy was heavily influenced, if not dominated, by the international advisers, [and] to a certain extent [they] also censored the contents."^x This view was echoed by the international consultant who stated that "... more and more we were fighting against the requirements and views of one particular individual in the ICO, who may

or may not have been guided by the American Embassy.”^{xi} The first draft of the NSS was completed at the end of 2009 and submitted to the Secretariat of the KSC for their consideration. This brought an end to the international consultant’s involvement in the process, although the local consultant continued to contribute to the process until, as he related:

“... in the end there were clashes or to put this softer, insurmountable differences between the local consultants and the international counterparts in the ICO which led me then to the path of resigning.”

With the local consultant’s resignation the limited ‘resistance’ towards ICO’s interference did not last long, especially as the draft NSS was taken by the representatives of ICO for ‘comment’. In the event, the product ended up being rewritten by members of the SAU. The former international consultant saw a copy of the document some time later and he suggested that it did not bear much relationship to the draft that he and the local consultant had submitted to the Secretariat of the KSC.^{xii} It is the understanding of the co-authors of this paper that the NSS was eventually approved by the Presidency of the Assembly, having completely bypassed the relevant Parliamentary Committee and the Assembly itself. The document was never subject to any public debate where the wider range of civil society representatives and political parties could have contributed to the end product and actually ‘owned’ it. Most importantly, however, is that there is no evidence of it having ever been implemented. This would seem to suggest that the Kosovo Government eventually became complicit in the ICO fiction that Kosovo had had its own security strategy. The local consultant suggests that this became a “box ticking” exercise in order to comply with the constitution but without any “... proper follow up on monitoring and evaluation to be used for an eventual reformulation of policies and strategies.”^{xiii}

Even with the benefit of hindsight, it is still difficult to know whose agenda was satisfied by the 2009-2010 NSS process. Let us first examine Kosovo. The increasingly heavy involvement of the ICO’s SAU in the process effectively removed ownership from the Kosovo Government and its people. Empirical research has shown that the role of internationals lies in providing time and space for local actors to develop an NSS and, where required, facilitate the process by fostering transparency (Hansen 2008). This was clearly not the case in Kosovo. In benchmarking against Nathan’s standard of control and influence of

the process, the picture is more mixed but still unsatisfactory. Kosovo had a measure of control of the initiation, some influence over the design, and a gradually diminishing influence over the final product, to the extent that by the end of the process they clearly did not ‘own’ the resultant NSS. It is therefore hardly surprising that the document was quietly dropped from view by the Kosovo authorities and never implemented. The frustration at this outcome has rankled within the Kosovo security community until very recently when the Kosovo Government decided to launch a new Strategic Security Sector Review – a process which is being run by the government and where, supposedly, the role of the international community is both pre-defined and limited. The output of this review is meant to be a new NSS in 2014, thus replacing the unimplemented NSS of 2010.

Let us now examine matters from the international community perspective. The post-independence period was certainly the best moment to assist Kosovan officials and civil society actors to build endogenous capacity in developing an NSS. The ICO’s mandate was specifically designed to assist and support such an activity. The fact that they took over the process would seem to indicate a failure on the part of the individuals in the SAU to understand their role in the process and the concept of ‘local ownership’. This would seem to have been compounded by their supervisors, who should have recognised that something was going awry and rectified matters. There certainly seems to be a lack of accountability for their actions in this imbroglio. This is precisely the point that Chandler has been so critical of in many Western attempts at state-building (2006: 1-8 and 191). Interesting enough, the rather self-congratulatory tone of the ICO’s *fin de siècle* tome, *State Building and Exit*, suggested that “[t]he SAU’s legacy has been the set-up of enduring security agencies that are the foundation of a well-functioning state.” Perhaps most revealing, however, was the comment that the SAU’s “... achievements were considerable, given the short time-span that they were executed.” It would seem that a decision was taken in October 2009 to close down the SAU and incorporate their residual functions in the Political Affairs Unit (PAU). The closure then took place in April 2010 (2012: 47-49). Perhaps this is why things went so wrong. It was from October 2009 that the SAU became more and more interventionist and their re-write of the NSS occurred in the early months of 2010. One could posit a theory that in their efforts to ‘clear the decks’ before the unit closed, members of the SAU committed the cardinal sin in SSR by ‘doing’ as opposed to ‘supporting’. In the co-authors’ opinion it seems the most likely explanation for their actions.

In drawing this section to a close, it is worth re-emphasising that it is essential for the locals to initiate an NSS process, and then draft the strategy and the legislation. This is the only way to create 'local ownership' and thus commitment to the project. The assistance and support of the international community should still be welcomed, but only where appropriate and necessary, and it should always reflect the local context and capacity. Adopting externally drafted papers, as happened in this case study, is not a solution. International actors need to build local capacity so that the domestic authorities and civil actors develop the skills to write the legislation and strategy papers that they consider appropriate to their situation (Nathan, 2008). At Kosovo's stage of state-building external investments still needs to target long-term capacity-building.

Conclusions

The results of the case study are clear. The ICO's mandate was to 'support Kosovo's European integration' and to do this 'by advising Kosovo's government and community leaders'.^{xiv} This article has shown that some members of its staff crossed the line and rather than advising on the development of the 2009-2010 NSS, they proceeded to draft it. In so doing the international community removed ownership from the Kosovo authorities. It drove forward some unknown international agenda rather than supporting the legitimate efforts of local actors to undertake development of their own NSS. As a result the document that was produced by members of the ICO was quietly dropped from view by the Kosovo authorities and never implemented. Thus members of the international community failed their host nation by ignoring a key principle of both sustainable development and SSR, that of supporting 'local ownership'. First, they did not providing the support to the local actors so that they could gain the experience of developing their own home-grown NSS. Second, by interfering with the product they have left Kosovo without a realistic and realisable security strategy for some four years. Furthermore, they have effectively denied Kosovo the opportunity over that four year period to develop a political and security system that could be used for the evolution, formulation and benchmarking of national security policies and strategies. This situation will hopefully be rectified in 2014.

- ⁱ The review had to be termed ‘Internal’ as there was still no mandate to look externally. Nonetheless, the ISSR team did push the boundaries of its terms of reference and examine the external environment as best they could.
- ⁱⁱ Notes from the Workshop ‘National Security Policy Making and Intelligence Oversight for Government Officials of Kosovo’, 2-6 December 2009, Prague.
- ⁱⁱⁱ One of the co-authors of this article, Florian Qehaja, was also a member of the technical group representing the civil society and this reflects some of his observations at the time.
- ^{iv} One of the co-authors of this article, Dennis Blease, supported the workshop and helped guide some of the exercises. It would seem, however, that very few of the participants were directly involved in the process of developing the 2009-2010 NSS.
- ^v The ICO was mandated by an International Steering Group to provide support for Kosovo’s European future and specifically in implementation of the UNOSEK ‘Comprehensive Proposals’. See: www.ico-kos.org [Last accessed 28 September 2013].
- ^{vi} Interview with Dr Robert Muharremi (K8) in Pristina, Kosovo, 20 June 2013. (Transcript held by co-author, Dennis Blease.)
- ^{vii} Interview with Dr Tony Welch (K15C) in Oxfordshire, UK, 22 July 2013. (Transcript held by co-author, Dennis Blease.)
- ^{viii} This reflects the personal observations at the time by co-author, Florian Qehaja.
- ^{ix} Interview with Dr Tony Welch (K15C) in Oxfordshire, UK, 22 July 2013. (Transcript held by co-author, Dennis Blease.)
- ^x Interview with Dr Robert Muharremi (K8) in Pristina, Kosovo, 20 June 2013. (Transcript held by co-author, Dennis Blease.)
- ^{xi} Interview with Dr Tony Welch (K15C) in Oxfordshire, UK, 22 July 2013. (Transcript held by co-author, Dennis Blease.)
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- ^{xiii} Interview with Dr Robert Muharremi (K8) in Pristina, Kosovo, 20 June 2013. (Transcript held by co-author, Dennis Blease.)
- ^{xiv} See: www.ico-kos.org (‘About Us’ tab) (last accessed 29 September 2013).

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