The role of civil society in the Security Sector Reform process in post-conflict Democratic Republic of Congo (2003-2011)

Guilain Mathe

Visiting Researcher at the Institute of Political and International Studies (IEPI/ UNIL)

Centre de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur l'International (CRII)

Email:Guilain.mathe@unil.ch. Web: www.glpic.org

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Supervisor : Prof. *Jean-Christophe Graz*

1. Introduction

On December 17, 2002 the Pretoria Agreement ended litterally the « deadliest conflict after the second world war » that teared the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from 1996 to 2003. Since, the peacekeeping operations deployed by the **community of donors** (UN, UE) support the **Security Sector Reform (SSR)** process, notably the army and police reform, in order to promote **Democratic governance** through the respect of **Human Rights** and the **rule of law**.
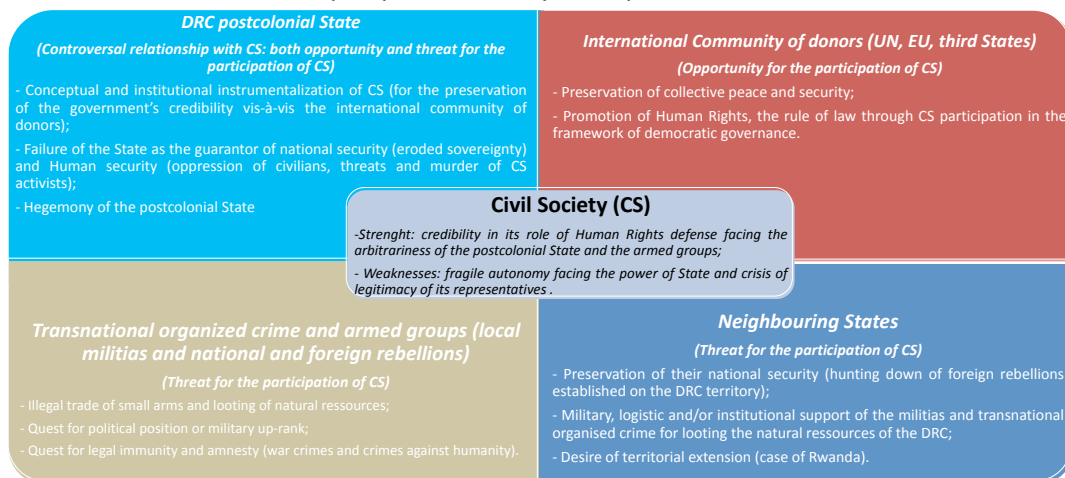
Democratic governance implies a significant participation of **civil society (CS)**, supposing the involvement of non-state actors in the management of traditionnally public affairs (Macleod, 2008).

• **What is the relevance of the concept of civil society, of Western origin, to analyze the SSR process in the DRC?**
• **How did the articulation of the relationship between civil society and donors (UN, EU and third countries) influence the democratic governance of security sector in the DRC?**
• **Did the approach priviledged by donors favor the participation of civil society in the implementation of SSR in DRC?**
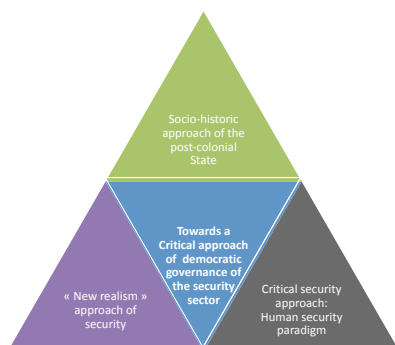
2. Definition of the concepts

SSR encompasses all activities aimed to ensure effectively and efficiently **national security** and **human Security** in the framework of democratic governance (Hänggi, 2009).
In post-conflict DRC, the SSR issues are related specifically to the disarmament of the militias and their integration into the army, the control of small arms and light weapons traffic and the preservation of Human Rights through transitional justice.

Civil society refers to the scene of collective voluntary and non-restricting actions conducted within institutional frameworks around common interests, goals and values different from those of the State, the family and the market (Paffenholz, 2009).

3. Sketch of the actors and factors within the security environment influencing the participation of civil society in SSR in post-conflict DRC

DRC postcolonial State
(Controversal relationship with CS: both opportunity and threat for the participation of CS)

- Conceptual and institutional instrumentalization of CS (for the preservation of the government's credibility vis-à-vis the international community of donors);
- Failure of the State as the guarantor of national security (eroded sovereignty) and Human security (oppression of civilians, threats and murder of CS activists);
- Hegemony of the postcolonial State

International Community of donors (UN, EU, third States)
(Opportunity for the participation of CS)

- Preservation of collective peace and security;
- Promotion of Human Rights, the rule of law through CS participation in the framework of democratic governance.

Civil Society (CS)
-*Strenght: credibility in its role of Human Rights defense facing the arbitrariness of the postcolonial State and the armed groups;*
- *Weaknesses: fragile autonomy facing the power of State and crisis of legitimacy of its representatives .*

Transnational organized crime and armed groups (local militias and national and foreign rebellions)
(Threat for the participation of CS)
- Illegal trade of small arms and looting of natural ressources;
- Quest for political position or military up-rank;
- Quest for legal immunity and amnesty (war crimes and crimes against humanity).

Neighbouring States
(Threat for the participation of CS)
- Preservation of their national security (hunting down of foreign rebellions established on the DRC territory);
- Military, logistic and/or institutional support of the militias and transnational organised crime for looting the natural ressources of the DRC;
- Desire of territorial extension (case of Rwanda).

4. Theoretical framework

Socio-historic approach of the post-colonial State

Towards a Critical approach of democratic governance of the security sector

« New realism » approach of security

Critical security approach: Human security paradigm

5. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 : The concept of CS in the analysis of SSR in the DRC is relevant to understand how mobilization of CS for **Human Rights** defense in a post-conflict context can lead to significant reforms based on the **human security** concept contrasting with the **hegemony of the postcolonial State** (founded on the **national security** concept).

Hypothesis 2: The effectiveness of the reforms brought about by the mobilisation of CS in the security sector (army and police) remains thwarted by the **failure of State** in the processes of the **desarmament** of armed groups, the **small arms control** and the **transitional justice** that constantly threaten **human security**.

Hypothesis 3 : Attempting to substitute political power in order to compensate for the failure of State in the preservation of human security, the CS has broken its **autonomy** facing the power of State (political manipulation of its representatives) and limited the donors' efforts to bring about the **democratic governance of security sector** through significant participation of CS in the SSR process.

Hypothesis 4 : The **state-centric approach** priviledged by donors (UN, EU) and the **deficit of coordination** among them have perpetuated the **hegemony of the postcolonial State** and led more to the conceptual **instrumentalization of CS** than to its effective **participation** in the SSR process.

Références
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