CHAPTER IV

Case Studies

This chapter focuses on actual case studies of CSOs engaged in promoting SSG/R. This case study approach was chosen to highlight the dynamics behind the various roles played by civil society as an agent of civilian oversight, space for security discourse, and an alternative provider of security. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the rationale behind purposive selection of the Philippines, Tunisia, and several fragile and conflict-affected states is to emphasize the endogenous and exogenous factors that contribute to which roles civil society played in SSG/R activities. It must be noted that these countries are not all fully fledged cases of successful or purely positive SSG/R outcomes. For the most part, the cases are complex experiences of mixed results. SSG/R gains from civil society engagements often present new challenges, while structural impediments and obstacles are identified that hinder the ability of civil society to effectively advocate reforms for good security sector governance and in turn, help achieve SDG-16. Finally, this paper utilizes the case studies to shed light on how CSOs could fulfill a specific role. In particular, the Philippines highlights the ability of civil society to be an agent of democratic accountability and oversight, while Tunisia shows how CSOs could use their sphere as a space for security discourses. Finally, the cases of some fragile and conflict-affected states call into attention the ways in which some societal actors are providing people-oriented security as a service to their communities, and the challenges such situations present for SSG at large.

The case of the Philippines (2010–2020) represents a mixed outcome of success then rollback of SSR. Prior to 2015, there were some major strides in implementing reforms for good SSG with the help of civil society as an agent of democratic accountability and oversight. However, the flaws in the country's democracy led to a regression in terms of good SSG. The momentum for further reforms did not last as the deficits in civil society participation accentuated the security challenges in the Philippines from 2016 onwards, a post-transition country still beset with international security threats emanating from a communist insurgency and secessionist movements (Arugay

et al. 2021). Under the administration of populist leader Rodrigo Duterte, the country underwent democratic erosion and the heightened presence of the military as a security provider in aspects of civilian governance (Arugay 2021). This had a significant impact in how the Philippines trailed in meeting the targets set by SDG-16 (Reyes et al. 2019).

In Tunisia, there was a mixed record of success and failure as the country rebuilt its security sector after the 2011 revolution that toppled dictatorial rule. As a transitioning country, Tunisia showed the many challenges of democratizing the relations between civilian politicians and the security sector. This was where its emergent civil society became active. Through its efforts, civil society pushed for a more democratic constitution that enshrined SSR principles as well as civil society participation in governance. In other words, where no space existed before, civil society became a catalyst for the creation of the conditions necessary for their involvement in security governance. However, the challenges of violent extremism, limited pluralism, economic stagnation, and intra-civil society tensions all indicated that the pursuit of SSG/R in Tunisia was still a work in progress.

Finally, the third case focuses on conflict-torn states such as Somalia where there was the relatively novel phenomenon of groups affiliated with civil society undertaking service provision, particularly people-oriented security. This might confound the conventional expectations about the appropriate roles that civil society performs in SSG. In Somalia, as the state ceased to function in providing security, it became incumbent for CSOs to help their communities by attending to their security needs or acting as brokers between them and non-state armed groups. This set-up could be viewed as nowhere near the ideal situation where the state provides for the security needs of its people with civil society acting as a source of support and provider of civilian oversight; this was because the failure of governance and huge gaps in security provision in these conflict-ridden states pushed CSOs to perform unorthodox roles to serve and protect their constituents. This set of cases also examines the risks of heavily relying on CSOs as security providers and the far-reaching implications on SSG and realizing SDG-16.

a. Civil society in the Philippines: providing oversight and accountability

The case of the Philippines showed that its civil society could have a positive role in SSR through its ability to provide informal oversight and accountability. This was due to its robust set of CSOs that were bounded by democratic principles, cordial relations with the security forces, and its democratic government. The pursuit of SSR had an impact in meeting several of the targets of SDG-16. However, the Philippines also revealed that such gains could be undermined by populist governments bent on militarizing governance by mobilizing security forces to perform nontraditional political roles without civilian oversight and accountability.

a.1. Endogenous factors

The Philippines has one of the most vibrant, robust, dynamic, and politically active civil societies in the world. Several cases proved its efficacy in providing policy inputs, delivering social services, pursuing socioeconomic development, and generating accountability. CSOs exercised considerable power vis-à-vis the Philippine state in pressing demands for popular causes such as good governance, social justice, and sustainable development. With its deep affinity with democracy, Filipino civil society became a reliable bulwark against abuses of state power and endemic corruption in government (Cariño 2002; Clarke 2000. As Asia's oldest

democracy, the Philippines maintained a dense civil society engaged at the top echelons of governance, while still very much grounded from below as its many organizations retained their grassroots character.

Philippine civil society was a product of the country's struggle against Marcos' constitutional authoritarian regime from 1972 to 1986. Civil society was significantly shaped by the 'dangerous, heady experience of organizing oppressed people under martial law' (Racelis 2000). Despite these repressive conditions, CSOs steadily flourished, extending their networks and incrementally building an infrastructure of political contention against the government. A glaring display of civil society's power was demonstrated in a grand display of nonviolent collective action, known as the 1986 People Power revolt, which ended Marcos' dictatorial regime (Thompson 1995). The 1987 Constitution and subsequent legal instruments provided civil society with access to important policy processes. Therefore, in terms of civil society's endogenous factors, the Philippine case is an example of a robust, dynamic, and plural civil society.

a.2. Exogenous factors

Coexisting with a vibrant civil society is a problematic domestic security environment. The Philippines is no stranger to internal conflict. For centuries, the country experienced significant security issues within its domestic borders, from insurgencies and terror attacks to outright military occupation. The twin internal challenges of a nationwide resilient communist insurgency and a Muslim separatist movement in the southern island of Mindanao led to instability throughout the archipelago. The conflicts had deep-seated causes going back to the colonial era which continued under post-independence governments and perpetuated unequal access to social services and economic development, as well as aggressive counter-insurgency policies. Such state abuses, combined with poor and unequal social service delivery, glaring economic inequality, and widespread political exclusion, fed the grievances of minority religious and ethnic groups, as well as people living in rural poverty. To date, these internal conflicts constitute the most serious domestic security challenge in the Philippines (Arugay et. al. 2021).

Prior to 2010, the relationship between civil society and security providers such as the military was fraught with challenges. Much of this had something to do with the country's experience of martial law. The country's armed forces became the partner of the Marcos dictatorship in the implementation of autocratic rule. This resulted in rampant violations of the human rights of activists and members of civil society (Arugay 2008).

On the other hand, the country's security providers were suspicious of the motives and actions of civil society. They were seen as front organizations of leftist groups that had alleged links with the armed communist movement. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) would often scorn CSOs because of their socialist tendencies and strategies of contentious politics, often construed as sources of security threats. This perception of the security forces significantly eroded civil society-military relations (Tyner 2005; Hedman 2006; Arugay 2021).

A reform-oriented government led by President Benigno Simeon Aquino from 2010 to 2016 provided an opportunity for improved relations between civil society and the military. His presidency focused on curbing corruption and implementing governance reforms, with the help of leaders from civil society assuming important cabinet portfolios in social development, peace processes, and even security policy. Transparency and accountability became the operating principles of the administration, and this was diffused throughout the country's security sector (Chambers 2014).

Since 2010, the Philippine government embarked on SSR initiatives to improve the military's effectiveness and accountability. SSR is a major principle stated in the country's National Security Policy since the Benigno Aquino III Administration (2010–2016). This push for professionalism and democratic accountability by the country's civilian leadership coupled with the military's voluntary cooperation increased public trust and confidence in the military. A December 2019 poll revealed that the AFP enjoyed its highest trust ratings since public opinion polling began. An astounding 79% of Filipinos trusted the military (Arugay 2021).

The steady improvement of the military's image among Filipinos was a by-product of its openness to embrace reform and substantive professionalism. Among others, this included setting up human rights offices across the military establishment; the adoption of a transformation roadmap with the guidance of reputable members of the civilian bureaucracy, academe, media, and civil society; and cooperating with politicians to deal with peace and development challenges at the local level. When the military formulated its anti-insurgency program named the Internal Peace and Security Plan-*Bayanihan*[1] (IPSP-*Bayanihan*), it included strong participation from civil society groups. CSOs worked with security providers in implementing these changes. For example, leaders of NGOs, academics, and other reputable members of civil society became part of the AFP's Multi-Sectoral Advisory Board which has counterparts in all the major services of the Philippine military. The critical inputs of civil society were stressed by President Aquino's peace process adviser, Teresita Quintos-Deles, who herself was a longtime civil society leader and SSR advocate when she said:

> As far as the security sector reforms instituted by the AFP are concerned, partnerships and multi-stakeholder cooperation on a shared vision are at work. This is a huge transformation and a milestone for Philippine democracy…Especially since our focus is on developing democratic control of armed forces, the call is to make ordinary citizens understand that what happens in the security sector will have an effect on their lives (Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines 2012: 1).

a.3. CSO roles

An example of an SSG/R initiative where civil society played the role as an agent of democratic accountability and oversight was *Bantay Bayanihan* (BB) [*Bayanihan* Watch]. Launched in 2011, the BB established a permanent forum for civil society-military-police coordination and civil society oversight of the security sector. BB engaged the security sector in critical and constructive collaboration by serving as an independent oversight body in the implementation of the AFP IPSP-*Bayanihan*. Like SSR principles, it adopted a 'Whole of Nation Approach' involving many diverse stakeholders as well as local ownership. Its 15 clusters nationwide included 150 CSOs—including human rights, religious, environmental, academic, and labor groups—together with civilian government units and leaders from the main executive agencies of the government. An independent think tank, the Security Reform Initiative (SRI), served as the BB's national secretariat (Schirch and Macini-Griffoli 2015).

BB aimed for dialogue partners to jointly implement the IPSP-*Bayanihan* to ensure and advance human rights, international humanitarian law, rule of law, accountability, civilian

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[1] *Bayanihan* is a Filipino term that roughly translates to a spirit of civic unity and cooperation. It is a core part of the Filipino cultural value-system.

engagement, and democratization of the armed forces. Specifically, BB included the following tasks:

1. Serving as a venue or direct channel to raise issues regarding the IPSP-*Bayanihan*, including peace and security concerns of local communities.
2. Conducting and validating periodic evaluations of IPSP-*Bayanihan*.
3. Providing recommendations to the Chief of Staff (national level) and Commanding General (unified command/division/brigade level) on IPSP-*Bayanihan*.
4. Generating concise policy recommendations on security reforms together with peace and conflict dynamics, to be submitted and presented to respective peace and order councils (local executive) and *sanggunian* (local legislative), all the way to national-level Cabinet security cluster (executive) and Congress (legislative).
5. Promoting BB to other potential partner stakeholders.
6. Institutionalizing the active partnership of government and civil society (Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli 2015: 103).

As a pioneering project, this locally based civil society initiative changed the relationship between societal actors and security providers. As shared by a civil society member,

> Military now plays a vital role as protector of the civilians. This lessened human rights violations because the military has learned that they have to connect with the community. Before, they were hard to get or they were very sensitive and defensive especially when we brought cases of rape [against soldiers] to the [meeting] sessions (Schirch and Macini-Griffoli 2015: 103).

a.4. Impact on SDG-16

There are no rigorous studies on the impact of civil society-led SSR initiatives on meeting the targets set by SDG-16. However, one could make the connection between projects such as BB which increases non-state civilian oversight to further inculcating principles of accountability, transparency, and participation that lie at the core of SDG-16. However, it could be surmised that the gains for SSR were largely due to several endogenous and exogenous factors of civil society such as its value-alignments with a democratic government, cordial relations with security forces, and the presence of a pro-liberal democracy government.

However, civil society's SSG/R achievements from 2010 to 2015 were disrupted with the rise to power of populist president Rodrigo Duterte in 2016. No president in the country's post-martial law history favored the military more than Duterte. It was not coincidental that once the firebrand leader decided to put his unconditional trust and confidence in the armed forces, this negatively affected Philippine democracy. As more and more members of the military (active or retired) fused themselves with the administration, it became more difficult to balance civil-military relations democratically. Some ex-generals in top cabinet posts even replaced left-leaning officials endorsed by the country's communist movement, a complete reversal of the more accommodating stance of the populist leader at the beginning of his presidency (Arugay 2021).

By 2017, the Duterte administration had the greatest number of retired generals in any presidential cabinet in the post-dictatorship period. Duterte appointed generals to head department portfolios that dealt with the environment and social welfare, the peace process and indigenous people's concerns, and several other smaller offices. This created an imbalance

in civil-military relations and led to a slip toward securitized military-first policies on several fronts (Arugay 2023).

In the Philippines, this militarization of governance deprived policymaking of the plurality of perspectives necessary to contribute to addressing the complexity behind the country's security threats. Militarization pervaded bureaucracy as retired generals tapped into their existing military networks to lead their respective government agencies. It has been argued that this led to decision-makers prioritizing a very narrow range of responses. The lack of diverse perspectives in peace and security policy circles and an absence of debate on policy direction led to decision-makers favoring and actively seeking kinetic measures to respond to security challenges (Arugay et al. 2021).

In 2018, President Duterte signed an executive decree to 'end local communist armed conflict' by the end of his term in 2022. This unconditional order is believed to have been strongly influenced by the military establishment's enduring interest in taking advantage of the current administration's subservience to their goals. Euphemistically described as a 'whole of nation' approach, the heavily funded counter-insurgency strategy was largely dictated by elements of the military establishment. The Duterte administration's inability to impose democratic civilian control put the military 'in the driver's seat' in this anti-communist drive. With both retired and active generals leading on implementation, the military was determined to put a violent—rather than negotiated—end to one of the world's longest-running Maoist-inspired insurgencies. In recent months, President Duterte's administration accelerated a McCarthy-esque campaign against an insurgency that it saw as having penetrated all sectors of society. Historically viewed as rebels or political opposition, the communist movement is now labeled as a 'terrorist group' (Arugay 2023). Thus, under Duterte, not only was civil society's input missing, but there was a total reversal of how his government viewed civil society's role in SSG, from partners to enemies.

The gap left by civil society in security governance became an indication of the overall regression of democratic quality in the Philippines. In all metrics of democratic governance, the Philippines has been downgraded since 2016 as seen in Figure 1 below.

According to the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), the democratic status of the Philippines were downgraded from a 'defective democracy' in 2014 (left side of the figure) to a 'highly defective democracy' in 2022 (right side of the figure). One can also notice that the scores of the Philippines were reduced in all five indicators with the rule of law and stability of democratic institutions receiving the highest reduction in scores. This is empirical evidence of the existing accountability deficit in the country under the Duterte administration.[2]

It is therefore not surprising that the Philippines is not making steady progress in meeting SDG-16 targets. As seen in Figure 2, there are some indicators where the country has lagged and even stagnated. It can be noticed that two indicators—the Corruption Perception Index and the Press Freedom Index—indicated a downward trend for the Philippines. These are proxies for the state of transparency and accountability in each country. A 2021 study of Transparency International also found that the Philippines has a moderate risk for corruption:

> Institutional resilience to corruption is modest across the Philippines' defense institutions. Oversight of policymaking and procurement by parliament is particularly weak and transparency remains limited throughout the sector, including with regards to financial management.[3]

Civil society could have positively contributed to addressing these SSG deficits, but these negative assessments are consistent with the Philippines' state of civil society freedom and space. According to CIVICUS, the country currently has a repressed civil society under the Duterte administration,

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[2] More details about this assessment can be found at: https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/PHL.
[3] A more detailed report can be accessed here: https://ti-defence.org/gdi/countries/philippines/.

Philippines ⟳ Democracy Status 6.8

The Democracy Status describes where a country stands on its way to democracy. It is composed of 5 criteria evaluated on a 1-10 scale.
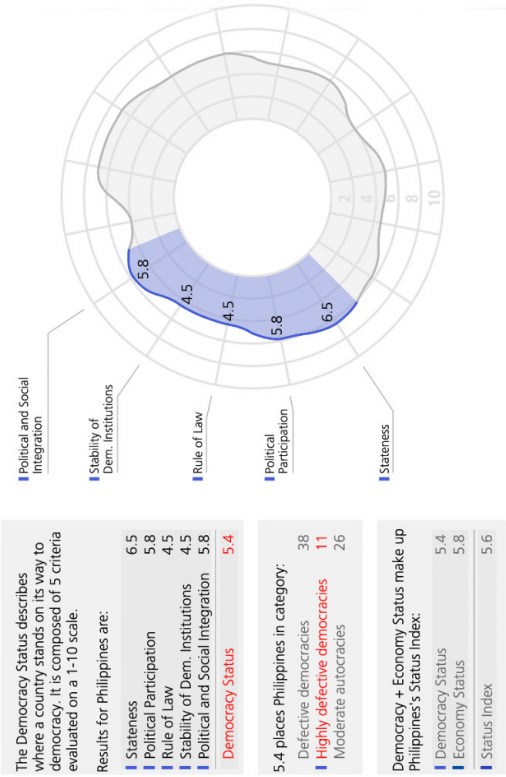
Results for Philippines are:

Stateness	7.0
Political Participation	7.0
Rule of Law	6.5
Stability of Dem. Institutions	7.5
Political and Social Integration	6.0
Democracy Status	6.8

6.8 places Philippines in category:

Democracies in consolidation	20
Defective democracies	41
Highly defective democracies	14

Democracy + Market Economy Status make up Philippines's Status Index:

Democracy Status	6.8
Market Economy Status	6.4
Status Index	6.6

Political and Social Integration

Stability of Dem. Institutions

Rule of Law

Political Participation

Stateness

Philippines ⟳ Democracy Status 5.4

The Democracy Status describes where a country stands on its way to democracy. It is composed of 5 criteria evaluated on a 1-10 scale.

Results for Philippines are:

Stateness	6.5
Political Participation	5.8
Rule of Law	4.5
Stability of Dem. Institutions	4.5
Political and Social Integration	5.8
Democracy Status	5.4

5.4 places Philippines in category:

Defective democracies	38
Highly defective democracies	11
Moderate autocracies	26

Democracy + Economy Status make up Philippines's Status Index:

Democracy Status	5.4
Economy Status	5.8
Status Index	5.6

Political and Social Integration

Stability of Dem. Institutions

Rule of Law

Political Participation

Stateness

Figure 1: Democratic Regime Quality in the Philippines.
Source: Bertelsmann Transformation Index.

SDG16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Homicides (per 100,000 population)	4.4	2019	🔴	⬆
Unsentenced detainees (% of prison population)	59.2	2019	🔴	↗
Population who feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live (%)	68	2021	🟡	⬆
Property Rights (worst 1–7 best)	4.4	2020	🟡	⬆
Birth registrations with civil authority (% of children under age 5)	91.8	2020	🟡	⚪
Corruption Perception Index (worst 0–100 best)	33	2021	🔴	⬇
Children involved in child labor (% of population aged 5 to 14)	NA	NA	⚪	⚪
Exports of major conventional weapons (TIV constant million USD per 100,000 population)	0.0	2020	🟢	⚪
Press Freedom Index (best 0–100 worst)	45.6	2021	🟠	⬇
Access to and affordability of justice (worst 0–1 best)	0.5	2020	🟠	⬆

Figure 2: Philippine Performance in SDG-16 Indicators in 2021.[4]

given the shrinking civic space, targeted harassment of dissidents and journalists, a draconian anti-terror law, and digital repression of dissent.[5]

The Philippine case study reveals several points. Civil society's diversity, robustness and democratic character made it a powerful actor that could primarily promote accountability in governance, particularly in SSG. This endogenous condition was complemented by external factors such as a democratic regime an openness of security forces to partner with CSOs. The case of BB was illustrative of the ability of civil society to contribute to enhancing SSG by implementing SSR. This, in turn, had an important contribution in fostering accountability within Philippine political institutions mandated to provide peace and security.

The case of the Philippines revealed the important role of civil society in pushing for SSR and challenging the orthodox notion that security policy is simply the domain of the government and service providers. It also underscored the importance of local ownership, the political will of the leadership to undertake SSR, and the willingness to include civil society. In the end, the 'whole of nation' approach benefitted the government, military, and the communities. But the Philippine case also has a cautionary caveat. It showed that the momentum for SSG/R initiatives could be easily undermined if political leaders lack the appreciation of the importance of SSG/R principles as well as the vital role of civil society as an agent of democratic accountability and oversight. In the end, SSR was not the only casualty under Duterte's populist-authoritarian government, as the country's democracy and steady progress toward meeting SDGs, particularly SDG-16, were also negatively affected.

b. Civil society in Tunisia: toward becoming a space for security discourse

The case of Tunisia demonstrated the limitations of the impact of SSR to meeting the targets of SDG-16, given the precarious nature of its transition toward democracy, the diversity of its civil society, particularly with the presence of semi-democratic or undemocratic social organizations,

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4   Source: https://sdg-tracker.org/peace-justice.
5   See https://monitor.civicus.org/country/philippines/ for more details.

and the continued tutelary powers of the military and the police as leftovers from the previous authoritarian regime. Given these factors, SSR efforts in Tunisia remain a challenge, though some CSOs are maintaining the course of reform.

b.1. Exogenous factors

On 17 December 2011 in the town of Sidi Bouzid, a fruit vendor harassed by local police immolated himself out of despair. The incident catalyzed a spontaneous wave of demonstrations against the dire economic situation in Tunisia, marked by high youth unemployment and economic stagnation. Despite his initial defiance, the military refused to crack down on demonstrators and within a month, the protest movement forced Ben Ali—ruler of Tunisia for 23 years—to flee the country.

Amnesty International explained: 'President Ben Ali's two decades in office have been marred by a continuing pattern of human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and other ill-treatment, unfair trials, harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders and curbs on freedom of expression and association' (Amnesty International 2007: 1). During this time, Tunisia was also very active in combatting terrorism and radical extremism, with the regime historically being antagonistic to religious expressions and influence in political life under a secular Arab nationalist ideology (Koplow 2011) The United States Department of State (2008) assessed the country to have been generally successful in stemming terrorist activity, although the Interior Ministry and internal security forces were a notorious power center that presided over the curtailment of many civil liberties.

The event—which came to be known as the Jasmine Revolution—ignited a broader series of uprisings throughout the Middle East and North Africa, sometimes referred to as the 'Arab Spring.' In 2012, Tunisia 'became the first Arab country in more than three decades to receive a ranking of 3 or better for political rights on the 7-point Freedom House scale (in which 1 is most free)' (Stepan and Linz 2013: 18). In the years that followed, the Arab Spring's promise of political transformation toward more liberal political environments failed to live up to its promises in places like Egypt, Syria, and Libya, but persisted in Tunisia despite some public dissatisfaction and deficits in attaining transitional justice for the previous regime's rights violations (Robbins 2015). In a national assessment of the state of civil society in Tunisia, Mnasri (2016: 63) noted that civil society in the country successfully negotiated for more participatory decision-making:

> Gaining expertise in the associative field has allowed civil society components to shift from a force of protest whose only concern was to stand in opposition to the ruling authorities into a force of pressure and suggestion that is actively involved in national issues of public concern. It has thus managed to transcend the classical role it used to play before the revolution as a counter-power that monitored and exerted pressure on the authorities, to assume, after the revolution, a new participatory role that involves taking initiatives and making suggestions.

b.2. Endogenous factors

Although Tunisia underwent democratic backsliding since 2019, the window of political liberalization between 2012 and 2018 provided the conducive exogenous environment for CSO participation in the SSR and SDG-16 implementation. Specifically, prior to 2019 Tunisia's level of state capacity was not dramatically shattered by the democratic transition unlike other countries in the Middle East, which allowed for normalized relations between civil society and the country's transitional government. The shift in 2012 from outright authoritarian rule to emerging democratic practices provided a favorable opportunity structure for groups to advance claims on the

state, as well as for the state to proactively solicit civil society input as part of what was then a thrust to increase transparency and participation. Today, Tunisian politics has been overtaken by authoritarian rule, including the dissolution of its parliament, the repression of civil society, and executive attacks against the judiciary (Roht-Arriaza 2022). It is important to note, however, that the Tunisian case embodied not only the failure of civil society to exercise a watchdog role on the state, but also the infighting inherent within civil society.

The past decade has displayed many illustrative facets of civil society's nature as an arena of discourse rather than an unqualified mechanism for accountability and inclusivity. One the one hand, strong CSOs—local activists, unions, non-governmental organizations, media, and the broader public—have undoubtedly shifted security discourse to responsible SSG and peacebuilding approaches, at least in terms of ideal goals by the state. On the other hand, Tunisia also illustrated the highly contested dynamics within civil society. The Tunisian revolution also opened space for more radical groups to advocate for public policies that shrink rather than defend democratic space, while many former state employees formed civic associations that blocked security sector reform (SSR) in a way that made associative life reflect variegated private interests rather than public good per se. Both developments in support of and detrimental to conventional SSG/R and SDG-16 principles prompted serious discussion of the ontology of civil society as a space for alternative discourses—an arena which allowed for alternatives to state-centric concepts of security and peace, but also one where anti-democratic thoughts could percolate and be hijacked by social actors whose interests were tied to authoritarian legacies.

b.3. CSO roles

Civil society in Tunisia became an important space wherein the contours of security and development discourse in Tunisia were defined. CSOs in Tunisia continued to exert direct political pressure after the fall of Ben Ali, but one important development was the sudden explosion of levels of direct influence on policymaking by non-state actors during the transitional period from 2011 to 2014. When there was distrust that early transitional leaders and former affiliates of the Ali regime were tempering the revolutionary nature of the planned transition, civil society actors such as the Tunisian League for Human Rights, Tunisian General Labor Union, key jurists, and the Islamist Ennahda Movement were able to exact a concession which led to the creation of the 'Higher Authority for the Realization of the Objectives of the Revolution, Political Reform, and Democratic Transition', an 'ad hoc body… that served as a kind of consultative assembly, debating and approving legislation during a period when Tunisia's parliament has been dissolved' and included CSOs, professionals, experts, and unionists in its ranks (Human Rights Watch 2011: 1).

Tunisian authorities also prioritized the drafting of the country's post-authoritarian constitution rather than having general elections. Elections were held to constitute the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) which drafted the constitution, and representatives were again drawn from civil society such as Moncef Marzouki who became the NCA's placeholder president-founder of the National Committee for the Defense of Prisoners of Conscience, and Mustapha Ben Jafar who founded the Tunisian Human Rights League. The composition of Tunisia's political institutions at the time was ideologically disparate groups united by Ali's oppression, such as Islamist groups previously persecuted, as well as secular CSOs focusing on civil-political rights. Gluck and Brandt observed that 'inclusion, transparency, and consultation were lacking during the early stages of Tunisia's constitutional review but picked up after the NCA presented its first draft to the public in August 2012. Following publication of a second draft, the NCA launched a two-month outreach campaign that included public meetings in the NCA representatives' constituencies, hearings with interest groups, and television broadcasts of most NCA debates and proceedings' (Gluck and Brandt 2015).

The most critical reform was the broader political commitment of Tunisia toward political pluralism. The first was the relaxation of authoritarian restrictions on freedom of association formerly done through administrative control over the grant of authorization for civic associations. A 2011 Decree-Law ended this and only required notification to appropriate authorities, paving the road for the proliferation of some 18,000 civic associations and organizations in Tunisia which expanded not just in service-delivery functions in education, health, and community development, but were also seen in new frontiers such as government accountability and SSR (Mnasri 2016). Freedom House's (2022) country report on Tunisia noted that groups of various political philosophies were generally free to form and operate, although there were acute deficiencies with respect to media freedom, exemptions to government transparency under security-related issues, and a 2018 law that effectively equated NGOs with businesses along with concomitant registration requirements.

First, with respect to SDG-16, Tunisian civil society was able to lobby the government for three things: (a) the specific usage of human rights discourse in national SDG16 targets and indicators; (b) developed specific targets for participatory decision-making (vaguely defined by UN itself) including targets to incorporate civil society in government decision-making; and (c) a 'right to information' target under SDG 16.10 to concretize how institutions could be made accountable (Laberge and Touihri 2019). More critically, CSOs in Tunisia successfully pushed for public perception surveys in measuring governance success that led to the government's 2017 Citizen Perceptions Towards Security, Freedom, and Local Governance. As argued in the framework of this paper, these successes were attributable to the favorable exogenous environment for civil society in Tunisia, which prior to 2019 was caught up in initial efforts by the post-Ben Ali governments to democratize. At the same time, as discussed above, Tunisian civil society had strained relations with the country's security providers, most notably because internal security forces mobilized sympathetic civil society groups to shield the police from transitional justice. In terms of the endogenous factors affecting civil society's overall strength, Tunisia had a fragmented civil society where pro-democratic forces did not have preponderance over non-democratic elements, which also naturally led to a split in values among CSOs.

Second, however, is that CSOs kept the democratization process going despite initial roadblocks, not least of which was the infighting between political parties who disagreed over the content of the constitution. Salafists advocated Sharia-inspired constitutionalism, while secular groups pushed for provisions generally in line with liberal democracy. CSOs in Tunisia actively brokered the conclusion of the drafting of the new constitution in 2014, after an impasse in the first three years due to disagreements among political parties.

After an impasse in those first three years of the drafting of the new constitution, the Dialogue Quartet brokered political forces under a roadmap which included a caretaker technocratic government and a temporary step-down of the Islamist Ennahda party which had come to power as a potent political force after the Jasmine Revolution. Amid polarized public rhetoric pertaining to competing secular and faith-based visions for the constitution, the National Dialogue Quartet stepped in to ensure progress toward a pluralistic-liberal political system. The Quartet was composed of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade, and Handicrafts (UTICA), Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015.

Other broad political changes included an effort to introduce SSR in Tunisia at the request of the Ministry of the Interior, as well as the constitutional provision for participatory democracy and open governance in the implementation of development programs. While reality often fell short of these expectations, the discursive shift toward greater political role by civil society was undeniable. Chaker writes that civil society 'successfully pushed consecutive governments to adopt the laws necessary to advance human rights, such as the 2013 Law on Transitional Justice, the 2017 Law for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the 2018 Law Against Racial

Discrimination', although conservatism and entrenched practices remain strong in Tunisian society (Chaker 2021: 1).

This, in effect, set a baseline and approximate direction from which reforms would take place and crowded out other ideas also present in civil society at the time, such as a restoration of the status quo. It is worth underscoring that some civil society actors at the time actively frustrated movements toward liberal-democratic aspirations. In the case of Tunisia's SSR, former members of the police forces—many of whom were dismissed or resigned from security forces after the revolution—formed security professionals' associations such as the National Union of Internal Security forces and the Federation of Unions of Internal Security Forces. Both advocated to shield security personnel from accountability in the multi-sectoral stakeholder meetings undertaken to reform the internal security apparatus from its authoritarian legacy of extensive human rights violations, as well as being a deliberate strategy to dilute the SSR agenda to focus on training, internal oversight, and capability-building (Kartas 2014). Unions sympathetic to security forces came to commission meetings and openly confronted former victims and tried to explain a defense discourse to the public. This strategy had substantial gains primarily because high levels of transitional political instability and public anxiety stemmed from the behavior of non-state groups, especially armed Salafists, and the many self-proclaimed leagues to 'protect the revolution.'

b.4. Impact on SDG-16

Tunisia's SSR agenda focused on three broad areas—professionalization and readiness, counterterrorism, and border security—although assessments agree that there was a mixed record, especially on the more political nature of transitional justice issues and human rights accountability; these were diluted by pro-security unions in favor of the 'train and equip' style of international security sector assistance, mostly because the post-2014 global strategic environment was then confronting the Islamic State and rise in radical extremism (Shah and Dalton 2020).

This is not to say that SSR was a failure in Tunisia, as there were remarkable gains especially from the baseline of open authoritarianism. SSR programs also included soft projects, including among these dialogue, community policy, and local security council arrangements. The balance between both hard and soft approaches, which were unevenly supported by non-state groups with different interests, reflects both the heterogeneity of voices and balance of forces within civil society. The case of Tunisia shows the nature of civil society as an arena of contending visions. For this reason, there were also major efforts at the programming level to reconcile various social interests, particularly around Local Security Councils, which were spaces where 'often-opposed actors … can sit together, talk, and identify problems,' recognizing that many groups were in fact themselves concerned about the effective provision of security, due to rising urban everyday violence rather than just institutional reforms on the police and security forces (Haugbølle and Chemlali 2019: 1).

Between the brief democratic opening from 2012 to 2018, DCAF (2017) assessed that:

- There was improvement in transparency in Tunisia's security and justice sectors. There was a systematic effort to publish laws, decree-laws, decrees, and circulars which picked up in 2016–2017.
- In addition to this, there were indicators of the dividends of these reforms. For one thing, the first youth organization working specifically on SSR—Le Réseau Alternatif des Jeunes or RAJ—was the only youth organization that publicly came out against a controversial draft law on offenses against armed forces.

- Also, the Ministry of Interior's communication channels toward media, which was previously neglected and used only as an extension of propaganda work, gradually improved toward more professional and transparent relations with journalists. However, progress has not been symmetrical: there had been progress relating to rule of law, gender equality, human rights, and media freedom but there was less success in terms of improve the weak regulations on the use of force, the structure of the police and intelligence services, and a general minimal movement for oversight and accountability in the security sector.

There are several observations worth noting in Tunisia's civil society as a space for discourse. First, civil society was not an unconditional supporter of democracy and SSR. This is consistent with prior literature that warns of the 'uncivil' elements in the non-state sector. Part of the reason for this is that the usual orientations of CSOs normally tapped as development partners for SSG/R or peacebuilding projects did not necessarily represent the majority opinion or hegemonic ideas in a society. Hitherto undiscussed differences in interests and values in civil society came to the fore when they started participating in national politics, as was evident in counter-demonstrations relating to human rights and legislation specifically on women empowerment, particularly when some Ennahda representatives even proposed using Sharia as the source of Tunisian law in 2012 (Deane 2013).

The country continuously experienced Islamist-secular political polarization concomitant with the liberalized political space, including social groups that had anti-democratic, anti-liberal orientations. It is worth noting that the dominant civil society groups in Tunisia—such as those that formed the Quartet—existed even during the authoritarian regime and were highly focused on sectoral concerns and service-delivery to constituents rather than a broader political transformation agenda. This was partly the reason that network creation was so utilized by CSOs under the SDGs, as it could provide a means to move CSOs beyond sectoral concerns and to advance broader agendas. The critical differences in the composition and nature of organizations in civil society determined its ability to effectively aggregate social demands for civil political action and influence.

Second, some even credit the success of brokerage by these CSOs in preventing a downward spiral of conflict during constitutional discussions to their perceived political mediation. This is consistent with case studies in Afghanistan that in weak-state contexts, civil society positions itself as neutral, simultaneously both reducing collaboration with government and local armed actors, while still dealing with both (CIVIC 2017a; Schmeidl 2009). There is a gap in the literature on the extent to which mainstream SSG/R and SDG efforts integrate this perspective at the programmatic level, but it is also typical to find international development support for inherently pro-state projects relating to PCVE, for example.

Third, because SDG-16 contains various concepts on good governance and security which have different operational end goals—such as those in SDG-16A on combatting crime and terrorism and those relating to targets on participatory decision-making (16.7) and creating accountable institutions (16.6)—these principles sometimes conflict in a way that tests civil society, but also sometimes allows them to shape the local discourse around CSOs and their relevance to the broader peacebuilding efforts in a country. Tunisia was under great pressure to bring local AML/CFT regulations in line with global standards after being put into both FATF and EU blacklists. CSOs in Tunisia 'felt the squeeze' in terms of operational space. The response of civil society was to convene CSOs to participate in developing the Risk Assessment of the sector and relay findings and secure buy-in from the Financial Intelligence Unit of Tunisia (the Commission Tunisienne des Analyses Financières). They successfully proposed a new methodology for the assessment, as well as securing their participation in the process. In 2019, Tunisia was one of only six countries rated to be compliant with FATF's new Recommendation 8 to protect civil society and mitigate downstream harms of AML/TF regulations, namely bank

de-risking, CSO registration, and transactions of due diligence that imposed substantial administrative costs to operate an organization.

Finally, it is also worth noting that the BTI country report on Tunisia reported that most Tunisians remained unlikely to volunteer their time for CSOs, reflecting low social capital (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2022). The BTI report also notes that Afrobarometer data from 2018 indicate that four in five Tunisians do did not feel affinity to a major political party, complicating coalition-building in society. The conflict between the Islamist Ennahda party and the secularist Free Destourian Party (PDL), formed by many pre-revolution authoritarian elites, reflected broader disagreements and norm contestations that permeated both civil and political spheres. A paramount practical consideration in this regard was how to push SDG-16 and SSR—which are theoretically informed by liberal-democratic values—in highly polarized contexts where the precepts of those reforms are under debate. The question then is to what extent can reform ideals truly be locally owned? Are CSOs relegated to service-delivery and project-implementer roles in SDG-16 and SSR projects precisely because their values are already assumed a priori as universally desirable and necessary? In foreign donor-driven contexts, are there downstream political consequences when the impulse is to immediately roll out SSR and SDG-16 development projects, regardless of the actual acceptability and level of support for these ideas, or the hope that buy-in can be secured during project implementation and not before it? These are important questions to ask moving forward. Torres (2021: 14) observes that there must be more attention to the struggle of ideas within civil society descriptions that no longer fit the 'heroic narrative' of civil society, to better address the issue of growing political polarization and the practical problems that ensue from it:

> While civil society historically has often been an engine of democratic change, in each of these struggles there was a sector of civil society that stood on the other side of the same issues. In an era of increased mobilization, but also of dubious commitments to democracy and human rights, it is important not to make blanket assumptions about the character of civil society. All protests are also not necessarily promoting progressive or pro-democratic goals, but nativists, chauvinists, supremacists, and others with exclusionary agendas are just as able to use civil disobedience to advance their aims. Polarization is growing in civil society, as in politics. With growing polarization, people are more likely to cling to their sense of group identity and to regard their own group as under siege, compelling them to rise collectively.

c. Civil society in Somalia: the pursuit of alternative security provision

The case of Somalia exposes the hybridity of security provision which is a reality in most fragile or conflict-ridden societies. In this country, regime and state capacity was at its weakest which made it difficult for state security forces to assert control over the land. Certain organizations from civil society filled this gap by providing security as a public good in their community. This veered away from the conventional roles accorded to civil society in SSG, and it is still not certain how they impact meeting SDG targets, given that Somalia has a poor record in SDG implementation. At best, this role of civil society does not fulfill the usual expectations toward their positive contributions and should be seen as a temporary stop-gap function while state-building is ongoing.

Various peacebuilding projects in the developing world have largely ignored the notion of civil society and private groups therein as alternative security providers—this led, for example, to the exclusion of non-state security and justice providers in conversations about the security family that needed to be reformed in SSG/R (Ghimire 2019). In cases where civil society groups were enjoined to participate, some peacebuilding projects were at risk of instrumentalization or being utilized by the state as project implementers within a broader state-centric ensemble of security activities (e.g., PCVE); however, in some cases, there was a lack of profound reflection on the

potential of unintended consequences when civil society became the dominant humanitarian aid provider and human security patron in weak state contexts (Suri 2016).

c.1. Exogenous factors

In the case of Somalia, the insurgent Islamist group Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahdeen (al-Shabaab) has firmly established itself as of this writing in the southern and central parts of the country, and controls major supply routes and exercises congruent state-like functions on taxation and judicial administration. Dovetailing the global war on terror, Somalia's federal government was extensively supported by the international community to the tune of USD 1.5 billion each year; roughly 8 out of 10 federal employees were employed within the security sector (World Bank 2020). The country was an example of a fragile or weak state, having collapsed in the 1990s and compounded by continuous social conflict and violence for much of its post-independence history. Somalia's security forces were a mixture of the Somalia National Army and the international coalition under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which was given a new mandate in April 2022 to take a more offensive posture against al-Shabaab. The central issue in Somalia was that civil society was torn between abuse and corruption-prone actors:

> All parties to the conflict in Somalia committed violations of international humanitarian law, some amounting to war crimes. The Islamist armed group Al-Shabab conducted indiscriminate and targeted attacks on civilians and forcibly recruited children. Inter-clan and intra-security force violence killed, injured, and displaced civilians, as did sporadic military operations against Al-Shabab by Somali government forces, troops from the African Union Mission in Somalia, and other foreign forces (Human Rights Watch 2021: 1).

Despite years of SSR and internationally funded peacebuilding projects, there remain remained key failures at the legal-policy level on initiatives intended for the creation of a national human rights commission and the revision of the country's outdated penal code. The federal government exerts exerted only limited authority beyond the capital of Mogadishu, with (in)security in most states maintained by state-based ethnic militias and the al-Shabaab. Political violence between actors is was common, with elections being marked by fraud and street-shootings in Mogadishu, as well as a contest between the Prime Minister Mohamed Roble and President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed over control of the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA). On the ground, clans maintain maintained private security networks as well as mediate among themselves for social, economic, and legal disputes. In contrast with the federal government, al-Shabaab has made inroads in de facto controlling major swathes of territory by working through these alternative governance mechanisms.

To be sure, there was substantial progress in the Somali SSR, although this was mostly technical in nature, relating to payroll reform and force training rather than ambitious political transformation projects, primarily because the strategic situation demanded a first-order prioritization to build up state capacity (Africa Center for Strategic Studies 2018). SSG/R in Somalia followed the typical UN model of development aid wherein donor states funded the deployment of technical experts on critical peace and security functions, institutionalized international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL), and contributed a significant portion of the de facto security forces in the country under AMISOM. At the same time, there were criticisms of the apparent futility of building a centralized, Weberian state inherent in the SSG/R frameworks in fragile state contexts where the very multiplicity of security providers—state and non-state—were a fact of life and would change only once broader economic, demographic, and political factors enable state formation (Menkhaus 2016).

Relatedly, the monitoring of SDG-16 targets in Somalia was also extremely difficult given serious state weakness, with no data available on homicides, perceptions on the protection of property rights, percentage of children involved in labor, and access to justice.[6] Many CSOs operated in Somalia to advance SDG-16 goals and formed a regional SDG16+ Coalition to coordinate action. The Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis noted that, in practice, CSOs directly delivered vital public services such as social protection programs and infrastructure needed to meet societal needs, aside from the traditional role of civil society helping the government to localize SDG-16 initiatives by raising awareness, conducting research, engaging the grassroots, and putting forth recommendations for state planning (Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis 2019).

Despite these, no less than the UN Mission in Somalia prudently pointed out that such efforts 'have been met with only limited success for many reasons, including fighting an ongoing insurgency while trying to reform, a lack of capacity within the institutions, a lack of coordination by donors and partners, and the lack of a coherent government security policy.' There were notable gains though, such as the fact that 'the number of casualties attributed to the Somali National Army and Police, as well as AMISOM, was significantly smaller than those attributed to al-Shabaab militants' (UN Assistance Mission in Somalia 2017: 9).

There were also humanitarian groups operating in Somalia that operated across entire communities because of their distribution of aid, immediate security for target communities, and mediation with al-Shabaab to allow for these resources to flow into conflict zones and rebel-held areas. Saferworld observed that because of their importance in the livelihood of local people, regional actors pressured humanitarian groups to withhold aid to terrorist-controlled areas for fear that such donations fueled conflict since they ended up in the hands of armed actors (Suri 2016). On the other hand, other works on how NGOs played it safe in conflict zones also led to inefficient allocation of peace and development aid because civil society would only focus efforts on urban areas where the security situation was more manageable, rather than in rural violence-prone communities that had greater need for humanitarian aid. The dilemma in the abovementioned scenarios stemmed from the reality that in the absence of the state, civil society became a primary security provider.

c.2. Endogenous factors

Some Somali CSOs and clan-based institutions operated in areas controlled by al-Shabaab and maintained a low profile, often performing functions such as delivering social services and mediating between clan conflicts (UN Assistance Mission in Somalia 2017). In addition to this, because of the large power vacuum in the country, many of the programs on DDR, trauma healing, and transitional justice were directly provided by civil society without a concomitant official channel or centralized program from the government (Felbab-Brown 2018). One report pointed out that those few organizations that chose to continue engagement were argued to benefit from areas such as gaining more accurate assessment of key grievances from insurgents, opening space for the consideration of 'alternative views of contested issues and history,' and providing opportunities for constructive exchange that increased the overall capacity and probability of dialogue (Lederach et al. 2011: 12).

Civil society and civilians, however, were 'not merely pawns in the interaction between governments and rebel groups in civil conflicts, they have some autonomy in expressing demands for services provided by either side' of combatants (Life & Peace Institute 2014: 37). This was evident in the subject of the mediation of civil society between insurgents and governments to advance

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6   See Sustainable Development Report 2022 and Somalia's country profile at https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/.

civil protection and harm mitigation. Aside from Somalia, Afghan communities had several coping strategies to engage armed actors to increase their safety. First, they attempted to normalize relations with these armed groups if government presence was weak to reduce harm and violence to civilians. Second, they positioned themselves as neutral (e.g., reducing collaboration with government) to avoid retaliatory attacks by armed groups. Third, they crafted agreements in secret for armed groups to not operate in their areas to prevent counterattacks (CIVIC 2017b). CIVIC's research showed that CSOs and community leaders were eager to directly engage armed actors to have quick redress for everyday concerns such as indiscriminate violence and abuse by armed combatants, and to lobby for humanitarian corridors. This behavior, unsurprisingly, was motivated by the situation where civil society operated in a scenario where there was a tremendous security vacuum and thus had to operate as an actor in its own right, although security provision necessarily entailed other conventional functions such as the monitoring of combatants (watchdog) and active brokerage of security and development discourse.

c.3. CSO roles

In the case of Somalia, the core of civil society was not non-government organizations, professional associations, or the media, but rather clan structures, led by elders who directly negotiated between armed actors, sought to advance community interests, and had at times competing interests that altogether muddled the notion of a singular civil society voice for major issues. These community-based or indigenous structures were organic to Somalia and, as discussed in the Literature Review, reflected inherent power asymmetries and customs that might not necessarily fit the traditional expectations of 'civil society.' According to Osman (2018:1):

> There are numerous experiences of outside supporters of Somalia CSOs becoming frustrated because local CSO partners turned out to be politically biased or unreliable, primarily serving the interests of their beneficiaries and at times favorite political groups or even being as ruthless as the governments they are supposed to counterbalance… Clan affiliations are strong in Somalia, manifesting through different institutions and even within civil society. For example, some diaspora-funded NGOs are established along clan lines and mainly run projects in areas to which certain families can trace back their lineages. This is hardly surprising. For many CSOs that attempt to cut across clan lines and bring about positive change, clan politics can get in the way. Because of this reality, many CSOs cannot escape becoming aligned with one group or another, either in reality or in perception. Somali CSOs are often seen as either supporting the state administration or the opposition party or clan, depending on who is leading the organization at the time. This is especially true when the government engages on politically sensitive topics, such as elections, boundaries, clan disputes, or resource sharing.

Based on the types of SSR approaches, (Table 1), this situation of civil society being a direct security provider such as in Somalia occurred in situations where the dominant peacebuilding and security reform approach was that of stabilization. Under the two other approaches—the 'train and build' and 'orthodox SSR' approaches—there is a functional state that acts as the center of gravity for reform efforts, which inevitably defines the role of civil society in peacebuilding in conventional Weberian state-society relations. While civilian protection mechanisms such as dialogues with government and rebel forces and the monitoring of civilian harm fall within the usual watchdog and accountability function of civil society, in practice CSOs became duty-bearers to functions traditionally performed by the state, especially in the administration of justice and provision of security services. In so doing, the expanded role for civil society and other private actors delayed or hampered the emergence of normal Weberian state-society relations.

c.4. Impact on SDG-16

Other countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Nigeria share some similarities with Somalia. Some communities in these countries responded to violent environments like banditry or insurgency by establishing parallel defense groups, which themselves became heavily armed over time and could become a source of violence against civilians; these became magnets for violence and were seen more as a necessary evil rather an unconditional guarantor of peace (Catholic Relief Services 2019). These contexts and the conceptual grayness of 'civil' society as a concept in conflict-affected environments are important in interrogating the concept in SSG/R and SDG-16 which tends to assume that civil society functions are neatly demarcated from state services and can be compartmentalized as a partner of an essentially state-based program, or that the state has a monopoly of violence or power of command vis-a-vis these non-state actors. There are no easy answers and hard-and-fast rules in developing a framework for CSO integration in SSR/G and SDG-16; as Jackson notes, the more productive issue then is not just focusing on what the goals of these programs are, but to examine 'what it means to carry [them] out' (Jackson in Sedra 2010: 21).

The centrality of civil society and private groups in steering political decisions in conflict-affected zones could be problematic especially since leadership structures could be undemocratic or merely reflect pre-existing power dynamics. For this reason, there are also arguments that civil society's place in peacebuilding and security reform as watchdogs should not be assumed, since in several instances these non-state groups are also properly the subject of what needs to be transformed. For Ghimire, building infrastructures of peace thus requires both horizontal integration between civil society actors, and vertical integration with the state (Ghimire 2019). Somalia's case indicated a strong slant for vertical integration of civil society in the SSG/R and SDG-16 initiatives, to the point that sometimes such programs risked instrumentalizing civil society as an extension of state activities. At the same time, conventional policy on global counterterrorism for example had not come to grips with the reality of security co-provision by civil society and the reality on the ground of their transactions with armed actors to avoid civilian harm (Saferworld 2019).

In fragile and conflict-affected countries such as Somalia, the weakness of the state and the centrality of non-state actors in security provision and decision-making that had significant bearing on conflict also pointed to the possibility that civil society itself was a legitimate object of SSG, although broader peacebuilding was ignored in mainstream development strategies. Issues such as ethnic discrimination and the supremacy of kinship ties over civic identity in politics were often conflict drivers, as well as barriers to an inclusive and participative security sector; these were broader issues which were not just resolved through technical capacity-building, but broader, more transformative liberal peacebuilding (Krause and Jutersonke 2005). At the same time, this outlook entailed questions relating how to achieve a civil society that had the structural preconditions to prevent intra-societal violence and animosities, and whether this should be part of the broader SSG/R and SDG-16 agenda. Nonetheless, there was no denying that highly political issues of economic distribution, culture, customs, and power relations within civil society fueled conflict patterns and prospects of attaining sustainable peace. In contrast, studies with relatively moderate or nascent effective state presence listed more generic concerns on civil-military relations, such as civilian control over instruments and organizations of lethal force, rule of law, and capacity-building of state security providers such as police or the army (Beeson et al. 2006; Sombatpoonsiri 2018). The problem, Burt (2016) argues, is that SSR and SDG-16 programs suffered from 'project-ism' or smaller-scale, easily implementable programs that were capable of quick-wins by targeting familiar state-based institutions and reform laundry lists (Burt 2016).

To an extent, there is truth in criticisms which say that security and development discourses have not adequately considered the direct role played by civil society in contexts where it had to step up to fill a security gap. At the surface level, although the case of Somalia enlarged the participation of different stakeholders in security provision, there were also limitations in this

implementation of this role in meeting SDG-16 targets. The key factors suggested that the autonomy of civil society from other coercive actors and those who held political power was severely limited. This deprived the ability of CSOs to contribute toward SDG-16 implementation.

As this section has argued, the reality is often messy at the operational level: CSOs are able to better secure the conscious effort by combatants to minimize or avoid civilian harm in ways when they act as local power brokers, but at the same time there are concerns about the potential reprisal on such groups and its members if they become perceived as supporting terrorism and insurgency. There is no denying that CSOs could be channels by which the 2030 Agenda, SDG-16, and SSG/R could be advanced and implemented; however, their embeddedness in political, economic, and social structures in their respective countries and the dilemmas posed by this also emphasize the point that they too are part of the scope of reform and not just its implementers. It also cannot be discounted that the larger the direct security role played by civil society, the less it becomes 'civil society' conventionally defined and behaving more like shadow state institutions.