

CHAPTER III

Analytical Framework: Civil Society as an Oversight Agent, Space for Discourse, and Alternative Security Provider

This chapter discusses the paper's analytical framework that will be utilized to analyze the various empirical case studies. This framework is composed of three interconnected parts: (1) the endogenous and exogenous factors to civil society that affect its ability to influence SSG/R processes; (2) the three primary roles played by civil society in promoting SSG/R; and (3) the three main consequences of civil society's SSG/R roles to the realization of SDG-16.

a. Civil society's endogenous and exogenous factors

This paper adopts a broader view of civil society as it is open-ended to the actual goals and behavioral dispositions of civil society, but at the same time distinguishes it from the state and political society (political parties, insurgents, and elites) whose aim is to capture state power. Empirically, these types of CSOs are usually social movements, trade unions, advocacy NGOs, peasant federations, and associations of students, intellectuals, and laborers etc. They represent sectors within society, engage in political activities, and resort to collective action such as protests to express collective demands. In practice, however, these organizations form coalitions with or engage state and armed actors (White 2004).

As mentioned in this paper's introductory chapter, the extant scholarly literature often attributed civil society's power to influence governance processes as resting on the interplay of factors within civil society as well as those found outside its sphere. These endogenous or internal factors refer to the *structural composition and values* shared by members of civil society. Civil

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society's structural composition refers to the size, plurality, and robustness of its member organizations. It could be argued that a large civil society composed of diverse organizations which are autonomous from the state could potentially make positive contributions to SSG/R. However, one cannot make a linear and direct causal connection between civil society's sheer size with its ability to influence policy reform processes, as there are other factors that should be considered in determining causality.

The second endogenous factor refers to the values represented and advocated by CSOs engaged in SSG/R advocacy. This refers to civil society's normative and cultural orientation, particularly whether it seeks to pursue the principles of SSG/R as discussed in Chapter 2. The more that civil society actors imbibe and put into practice these principles such as accountability, responsiveness, inclusivity, and transparency, the more they are in a better position to advocate SSG/R (Caparini and Fluri 2006).

To be effective advocates, the internal factors within civil society must work together with its political environment which must likewise be conducive to SSG/R. There are three exogenous factors relevant for civil society: (1) *regime type*; (2) level of *state capacity*; and (3) civil society's *relations with security providers*. The regime type refers to the nature of the political regime of a given country, whether it is more or less democratic. State capacity concerns the ability of the political institutions, particularly the government, to impose legitimate order and control in society. Countries with lingering internal conflict or insurgencies therefore reflect lower levels of state capacity. Finally, relations with security providers such as the military are an important contextual factor since it pertains to whether CSOs have a working partnership with these security sector institutions to be able to work on SSR. The overall expectation for a conducive exogenous environment for potentially successful SSG/R outcomes depends on whether the civil society lies within a more democratic regime that has a higher level of state capacity and has good working relationships with security providers (Forman 2006; Caparini in Sedra 2010).

b. Three primary roles of CSOs in SSG/R

Civil society's endogenous and exogenous factors serve as the background and environment that determine the specific role/s they will play in promoting SSG/R processes. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these three main roles are: (1) *an agent of democratic accountability and civilian oversight*; (2) *a space for new discourses on security and development*; and (3) *an alternative provider of people-oriented security*. This paper does not specifically advocate for an exclusive emphasis on any of the three roles above; rather, its goal is to empirically unpack these different conceptions of civil society that are reflected in how SDG-16 and SSR programs are designed. Each role has its own merits and risks. Additionally, relational aspects in the configuration of these different concepts—such as the emphasis of one over the other—also create their own *sui generis* challenges. For example, as noted in the literature review, an emphasis on civil society being managers of development projects or support groups for the government's plans without a concomitant voice in the formulation of policy action plans can lead to the instrumentalization of civil society in an otherwise state-centric agenda that fosters human insecurity.

The first role of civil society as an oversight actor draws heavily from the liberal tradition of acting as a bulwark against the overwhelming power of the state as discussed in Chapter 2. In this conceptualization, civil society is often seen as a monolithic actor with shared values and norms acting as a check on the government's exercise of its mandate. This can also be viewed as the mainstream view in looking at civil society in security and development. Its autonomy from the state, outsider status, and ability to collectively organize make it the default ballast against political authority (Edwards and Foley 1998).

Among the three roles, civil society's oversight function has received the most attention from scholars and practitioners of SSG/R. Under this role, CSOs serve as a mobilizer of popular support and opposition to serve as a guardrail against non-responsive and non-inclusive policymaking. They are in a unique position to implement projects that require community trust, voice the concerns of local communities and drive effective campaigns toward the state and society (Rauch 2011). The necessity for this is highlighted by the lack of transparency in government behavior in conflict zones (Malik 2009).

Though many in the security sector and the donor community view most civil societies as an informal source of civilian oversight, CSOs have not limited themselves to this role. Over time, civil society began to also perform the role of a space for alternative security discourses. This stemmed from the increasing diversity of CSOs participating in SSG/R, as well as the realities that they faced in societies that do not normally conform to the conventional expectations on state capacity, regime stability, and hybridity of security conditions (Schroeder et al. 2014).

This role advances the idea that CSOs could be a catalyst for alternative thinking on achieving SSG/R. For example, framings about how peacebuilding ought to be conducted could be formed from a genuinely human security perspective rather than traditional elite-focused security (Ibezim-Ohaeri, n.d.). This is deeply related to knowledge production, although separates from it since the function relates more to an autonomous sphere of agenda-setting from the state, rather than the precursor knowledge-production per se. Saferworld observes that one problem in recent years at least for P/CVE projects has been the trend to see civil society and locals as objects for reform and targets of programs, diminishing their meaningful input to the process (Saferworld 2019).

Civil society's discursive role can be seen in two ways: (a) generation of *research and publications* that shape alternative security discourse and substantive content of SSR, and (b) the *training* of independent experts and practitioners who have backgrounds in novel, non-traditional, and participatory security approaches. For example, SSG/R projects often involve monitoring and evaluation components. At the programmatic level, the demand for the collection of data necessitates that civil society acquire the skills and resources for research and information dissemination, which are institutional precursors to holding the government accountable.

The third role is relatively the most novel of the ways in which civil society pursues SSG/R. Civil society becomes an *alternative provider of people-oriented security* itself. Rather than work with the security forces and other actors within the security sector, CSOs are providing this public good themselves. The key contexts for this role to emerge can range from fragile and conflict-affected states and the destruction of the entire security sector to the existence of gaps in the provision of security. CIVICUS reports that citizen-generated data for SDG-16 indicate that most CSOs were engaged in standing up against civilian harm, as well as in community-based development projects that address symptoms and causes of conflict (CIVICUS 2019). Local actors often fill in security vacuums in weak state contexts and become security co-providers with the state through local mediation mechanisms, community security groups, and early response arrangements. The extent to which this reality clashes with often Weberian notions of the state as the primary security provider in SSR and SDG literature, and the theoretical relegation of civil society for input or interest articulation functions, has been noted in the previous two subsections. Some have argued that the use of civil society as a participant in unconventional security arrangements is valuable not just because it enhances participation, but also that it reduces the load on formal institutions to handle variegated social demands and enable the provision of public goods without necessarily relying on state initiative (Ghimire 2019). However, this emergent role calls into question the civil and nonviolent nature of CSOs. If social organizations possess the means of violence, then how can they remain within the sphere of civil society? Given that this nascent role has been observed by this paper, it needs more information on how this role is actually realized. As a 'first stab' at

Table 4: Civil Society Roles in SSG/R.

Analytical Framework	DCAF Version	Main Activities
Agent of democratic accountability and oversight	Monitoring and public oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Oversee performance of the security sector – Raise alarms over possible abuse or wrongdoing ('watchdog' function) – Collaborate with media and other non-state actors with oversight functions
Space for security discourse	Awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct information dissemination/campaigns about the security sector – Promote new ideas about security provision – Update security sector on the latest developments in SSG/R
	Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Train security sector in SSG/R concepts and principles – Represent marginalized voices in security dialogues and conversations – Promote more inclusive SSG/R activities
	Fact-finding, research, and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct research and publications – Collaborate with media to investigate and study SSG/R processes – Monitor and evaluate state of SSG
Provider of people-oriented security	Service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide services that support security provision – Conduct training to improve security provision in accordance with SSG/R principles – Help safeguard communities in precarious security situations

analyzing this role, this paper is limited in evaluating whether this role could be legitimately accepted, as more research is required.

These three roles also fit quite well with DCAF's own conceptualization of the main civil society activities that seek to improve SSG/R (see Table 4). The table below integrates the paper's own formulation of CSO roles with DCAF's conceptualization.¹

c. Impact of civil society's SSG/R roles on SDG-16

The last component of this paper's analytical framework concerns the linkages between civil society's roles in promoting SSG/R as a contribution to meeting some of the targets set by SDG-16. As there are ten specific targets, this paper argues that civil society's SSG/R efforts have the most impact in improving the implementation of the principles of accountability, transparency, and participation (See Table 5). In fact, these three principles have direct connections with specific SDG-16 targets:

1. *Accountability*: Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels (16.6)

¹ The author thanks the reviewers from DCAF for this suggestion.

Table 5: Civil Society Roles in SSG/R and SDG-16 Targets.

Role of Civil Society	SDG-16 Target		
	<i>Accountability (16.6)</i>	<i>Transparency (16.10)</i>	<i>Participation (16.7)</i>
Agent of democratic oversight and accountability	Primary	Primary	Secondary
Space for security discourse	Secondary	Secondary	Primary
Provider of people-oriented security	Secondary	Primary	Primary

2. *Transparency*: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements (16.10); and
3. *Participation*: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels (16.7).

The juxtaposition of the role of civil society in SSG/R and SDG-16 targets is analyzed using an approach that emphasizes whether each role has a primary or secondary contribution to a specific principle behind an SDG-16 target. If a CSO becomes an agent of democratic oversight and accountability, it has a primary contribution to accountability and transparency. This is done because of the sheer size of the security sector, as well as the mandate of security institutions to provide peace and security. Secondarily, it can also fulfill the target of participation if this role is performed with democratic consultation and involvement of other social and political actors. By implementing people-centric participation, civil society efforts to promote SSG/R could strengthen political institutions which is critical to realizing SDG-16.

On the other hand, if civil society becomes a space for security discourse, it has a greater impact in meeting the participation target (16.7). This is due to the ability of civil society to invite other stakeholders and convene them in a space where discussions could take place on issues, problems, and solutions to insecurity. This role could also help provide alternative or human security frameworks and achieve sustainable peace and security. By acting as a forum for deliberation, civil society could encourage innovative solutions to problems of insecurity that depart from state-centric or traditional militarized approaches.

Finally, if it acts as a provider of people-oriented security, it could primarily contribute toward transparency since this initiative is a marked departure from conventional and state-centric approaches to security provision. Such conventional approaches could then be centralized and not customized to the needs and problems of communities. Civil society actors and their partners are in a better position to provide security not only anchored to the actual needs of citizens but ensuring that this is in keeping with human rights standards.

It could be argued that civil society also has a prominent role to play in meeting other SDG-16 targets, but for the purposes of this paper it chose to focus on these three main targets, given their good fit with SSG/R principles. This notion is also supported by a seminal study that made explicit linkage between SSG/R and SDG-16 such as:

through promoting greater institutionalization and good governance principles, as well as its focus on reforming the security and justice institutions, by forming a closer connection between states and their populations. It may also help with its emphasis on good governance and capacity development (Dursun-Özkanca 2021: 55).

This paper's analytical framework will be used in presenting the case studies in the next chapter.