

RESEARCH REPORT

**The Role of Civil Society Organizations as
Peacemakers during Civil Unrest in South Africa**



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The role of CSOs as Peacemakers during the Civil Unrest in South Africa

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Abbreviations

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
COGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDG	Deputy Director General
DMA	Disaster Management Act, 2002
DSD	Department of Social Development
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
MSA	Municipal Systems Act, 1998
NDP	National Development Plan 2030
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
RGA	Regulation of Gatherings Act, 1993
SANGOCO	South African NGO Coalition
SANGONet	Southern African Non-Governmental Organisation Network
ToR	Terms of Reference

1 Introduction

The research report on the *Role of Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) as Peacemaker during the Social Unrest* experienced across South Africa in July 2021 has been drafted based on the study's qualitative and quantitative findings, and analysis. The purpose of the report is to provide a comprehensive documentation of the relevant and applicable legislation, policies, scholarly literature surrounding the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) as peacemakers in South Africa, the broader role of CSOs in preventing and reducing civil unrest, safeguarding national assets, and supporting the country's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, as well as primary data collection through stakeholder consultations, an electronic survey, and focus group discussions. The study examined the challenges and benefits faced by CSOs in promoting peace and explored the mechanisms that enable them to act as mediators between the State and communities, and the nature of unrest in South African society.

The report is organized into the following sections:

Section 2: Legislative and policy environment.

Section 3: Literature review, which analyses protest action trends, triggers of protest action in South Africa, case studies of successful prevention, and the State's alignment with CSOs.

Section 4: Methodology, outlines the research methodology including the data collection tools used in the fieldwork phase, the analysis approach, and the limitations

Section 5: Findings, guides you through a narrative on the July 2021 unrest, the work of CSOs as peacemakers and the institutional realities they need to navigate as CSOs

Section 6: Recommendations, based on the findings, this section includes recommendations for providing an enabling environment for CSOs active in peace-making.

Section 7: Conclusion, provides a synthesis of the findings and recommendations.

2 Legislative and policy environment

The following legislative and policy review will focus on what Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are as well as the role they are legally allowed to play during times of unrest. It will do so by reviewing the role of CSOs as is captured in the Regulation of Gatherings Act (RGA), the Non-Profit Organisation Act (NPOA), the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) and the Disaster Management Act (DMA). The review will then continue by discussing the growing prominence of the role of CSOs as is exemplified by the National Development Plan (NDP), the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan as well as the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy. The review will conclude by synthesising the role of CSOs as is captured in the national legislation, policies, guidelines and strategic plans.

2.1 Regulation of Gatherings Act (RGA), 1993

During the apartheid era, CSOs were typically characterized by either serving the interests of the white majority and being aligned with the government or opposing it (National Development Agency, 2008). Before the Constitution of 1996, the Regulation of Gatherings Act is the first piece of legislation where we see reference to an 'organisation', which is described as "any association, group or body of persons, whether or not such association, group or body has been incorporated, established or registered in accordance with any law" (Regulation of Gatherings Act, 1993). Rather than clarifying the different types of organisations, the RGA focuses more on ensuring that these organisations follow the correct processes and procedures when engaging in gatherings so as to avoid clashes with the law as its purpose is to regulate the holding of public gatherings and demonstrations at certain places. This regulation was especially relevant in apartheid South Africa, where civil society played a crucial role in the transition to democracy.

Chapter 2, section 1 of the Act provides the requirements for organisations or branches of organisations intending to hold a gathering, noting that they must appoint a person to be responsible for the arrangements of the gathering and to act on its behalf at any consultations or negotiations. The responsible officer concerned must be notified of the appointment. If the presence of the convener or authorized member is required at any consultations, negotiations, or proceedings and they are not available, the organisation or police may conduct these in their absence, and the organisation will be bound by the results regardless of attendance. Additionally, if riot damage occurs as a result of a gathering, the organisation on behalf of which the gathering was held, or the convener, will be liable (Regulation of Gatherings Act, 1993).

2.2 Non-profit Organisation Act (NPOA), 1997

Adopted a year after the Constitution of 1996, the Non-profit Organisation Act (NPOA) was formulated to “provide an environment in which non-profit organisations can flourish, as well as establish an administrative and regulatory framework within which they can conduct their affairs” (Non-profit Organisations Act, 1998). This Act is where non-profit organisations are explicitly referred to as such, and the legal space begins to see these organisations as prominent parts of democratic governance.

Section 1 of the NPOA defines a NPO as “a trust, company or other association of persons established for a public purpose and of which its income and property are not distributable to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered. Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) are collectively known as non-profit organisations (NPOs). In some instances, NPOs are also referred to as Civil Society Organisations (CSO).”

In addition to defining NPOs, the Act provides a legal framework for the formal registration of an NPO. It begins by putting forward the requirements for registration as well as the application and goes forth to provide measures for unsuccessful applicants to follow should they wish to query their rejection. The effects of registering an NPO or CSO is that the organisation receives a certificate confirming its formal status, and it also gets included into the register of non-profit organisations as per s24 of the Act.

2.3 Municipal Systems Act (1998) & Disaster Management Act (2002)

Becoming a registered CSO and being placed on the register enables the organisation to have a wider reach in the spaces they wish to serve, as is exemplified by the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) and the Disaster Management Act (DMA). Starting with the MSA, s76(b)(iv) notes that “a municipality may provide a municipal service in its area or a part of its area through (b) an external mechanism by entering into a service delivery agreement with (iv) a community-based organisation or other non-governmental organisations legally competent to enter into such an agreement”. Similarly with the DMA, s16 notes that non-governmental organisations involved in disaster management must be included in the provincial directory of institutional role-players for disaster management. Section 17(2)(i) further requires that the directory contains information on the overall capacity of these organisations to handle disasters likely to occur in their areas.

With the NPO Act noting that the term CSO is interchangeable with the terms CBO, NGO and NPO, various strategic government plans begin to refer to the multitude of terms in different

capacities. As part of a status quo review of CSOs within a democratic South Africa, the National Development Agency (NDA) conducted an appraisal of CSOs in the country in 2008. In that review, it provided the definition of CSOs as being “independent, voluntary associations or groups that operate between the family, state, government, and economic system, with a focus on public interest and the protection or enhancement of their members' interests and values” (National Development Agency, 2008). The review further noted that discussions of CSOs often focus on formalized components such as NGOs and CBOs, but it is important to recognize the many informal gatherings and associations that take place at a grassroots level (National Development Agency, 2008). This suggests that there are multiple forms of CSOs that are not recognised in legislation but play just as important a role in the spaces they navigate.

2.4 Government Strategic Plans

In recognition of the multiplicity of the types of CSOs as well as the avenues they each access, national government has increasingly included CSOs in their strategic plans as key role-players in engaging, improving and empowering society. Interestingly, this has not led to any significant legislative amendments to give any heavier weight to CSOs.

This is exemplified by the **National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030**, which notes that the vision for CSOs is for them to assist the police in determining the causes of crime and to use effective crime combating strategies (National Planning Commission, 2012: 386). With safety and security being directly related to socioeconomic development and equality, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, the plan overall notes that the safety of communities should be measured by the extent to which the most vulnerable in society feel and are safe from crime. In this, CSOs have a significant role to play through effective partnerships with government and the private sector which will then become key components of a sustainable strategy for citizen safety (National Planning Commission, 2012).

Further bolstered in the **Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy** of 2021, CSOs are identified as key role players in achieving the objectives of Pillars 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8 of the strategy (Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy, 2021). CSOs are envisioned to be involved in implementing an effective criminal justice system, including improving access to services and restorative justice programs. In early intervention to prevent crime and violence, CSOs are anticipated to be involved in detecting vulnerable children and families, providing interventions for at-risk learners, and addressing substance addiction. CSOs are also planned to be involved in victim support, including providing integrated services and developing partnerships with other organisations. The strategy promotes public and

community participation, including developing sustainable partnerships with CSOs and the private sector. Finally, the **Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan** identifies CSOs as key role players in the strategy, noting that they along with trade unions have “committed to acting against corruption in their organisations, or against officials and office-bearers who facilitate corruption, including state capture” (South African Government, 2020: 27).

2.5 Synthesis

Given the *modus operandi* of CSOs, the relationship they have with government has evolved, and continues to evolve based on the national status quo. During the apartheid era, it was necessary to heavily regulate CSOs that were opposing the government so as to ensure that they do not gain enough momentum to overthrow the National Party. With the dawn of a new democracy and its continued growth, the relationship between CSOs and government has now shifted to one of cooperation as is evidenced by the provisions of the MSA, DMA and the strategic plans reviewed above. This cooperation can of course only be leveraged to a certain extent and does not give any legislative mandate to CSOs beyond what is agreed upon with local or national government, or other entities of state. CSOs can therefore play a role as peacemakers during times of unrest insofar as local or national government permit.

3 Literature review

In the midst of the COVID pandemic, July 2021 saw a wave of unprecedented protest action and collective looting and violence (Mongale, 2022; Vhumbunu, 2021). However, a review of the scholarly work on protest action in South Africa, demonstrates that due to the high levels of inequality and unemployment, large-scale popular unrest was a predicted outcome (Karamoko and Jain, 2011; Lancaster and Mulaudzi, 2020; Makonye, 2022; Maserumule, 2016; Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021). Considering the popular assertion that it is not a matter of 'if, but when' the next waves of unrest will occur, there is a need to stem the tide of discontent (Makonye, 2022; Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021; Visagie et al., 2021).

Concerns about the negative effects that violent protest action have on social cohesion and risk to human life may be enough for some to pursue change; however, what is heavily emphasized is the economic impacts of these instances of collective action. The economy lost an estimated R50 billion to the days of looting, destruction of property and disruption to economic activity (Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021). Further, post the unrest there were rising concerns regarding the loss in investor confidence in South Africa (Makonye, 2022; Mongale, 2022; Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021). This is concerning in a country that is experiencing low economic growth levels, continuing to face credit rating downgrades and high levels of unemployment. Since it is evident that when a country is unable to maintain accountable, stable democratic governance, risk-averse investors prefer to take their money elsewhere.

To a lesser degree, scholars note the effect that such turbulence has on the greater SADC region. Kali (2023) describes a ping-pong effect between 2020 to 2021, where one after the other Lesotho, Eswatini and South Africa experienced well-covered (by the media), large-scale protest action. Whilst the protest action in Lesotho and Eswatini had limited impact on South Africa, the inverse is not the case as the July 2021 unrests impact had significant impacts on our neighbouring countries. Besides the fact that many in Lesotho and Eswatini rely on the incomes of their families who work in South Africa, whom such protest action impacted, the coastal region of Kwa-Zulu Natal acts as a port for much of landlocked Southern Africa. Destruction to roads, trucks, and blockades limited the transport of goods from the ports to inland areas (Kali, 2023; Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021; Vhumbunu, 2021).

At the more localised level, the unrest affected small, medium, and large businesses alike. For example, Vhumbunu (2021: 7) and Mongale (2022: 16) describe the reported impact on the large supermarket group, Shoprite Group, which saw over 200 of its stores looted, vandalised,

and burnt. Further, Vhumbunu (2021: 7) writes, “In total, an estimated 40 000 businesses and 50 000 informal traders were affected, with 150 000 jobs put at risk, mostly due to business closures and the possibilities of delayed re-stocking and re-opening.”

The above is a concise look at the initial, and perhaps, lasting economic effects of the July 2021 unrest. Equally disturbing is the destabilizing effect of the unrest in the affected communities and South African psyche. A GroundUp article from February 2023 notes that Phoenix, Kwa-Zulu Natal – a community that saw the death of 36 people and the injury of many others during July 2021 – is ‘still unsettled’ by the happenings in 2021 (Enoch, 2023). During the unrest, residents responded to the violence, destruction of property and looting with violence in return, in hope of protecting their lives and livelihoods. In some instances, including in the case of Phoenix, this exacerbated ethnic and racial tensions - the frustrations of the black population colliding with the fears (and prejudices) of the minority Indian and white populations. In their interrogation of the unrest, Makonye (2021) recounts the ordeal of a nurse in Pietermaritzburg in search of a petrol station to fill up her car. She describes the obstacles and barricades set up by white people preventing her from entering their community, in the aim of preventing her ‘kind’ from damaging their community. These instances of vigilantism added to the already high levels of tension and violence and is credited for the large number of deaths that occurred in Phoenix. In airing their frustrations, the disadvantaged black population unearthed poorly buried seeds of division.

These events not only showed the rift in the social fabric of South Africa, it also exposed the distrust that citizens had in the police service. Rather than trusting that the state would provide adequate safety and security and calm the unrest, the above shows how many chose to take the law into their own hands. Much critique has been thrown at the police in their failure to act on early intelligence appropriately prepare for the unrest (Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021). The investigation into the unrest further notes that, “The police are not always embedded in the communities they serve and the lack of trust between them and the communities resulted in their failing to pick up vital signals and information and losing the opportunity to defuse and disrupt the planned violence” (Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021: 133).

This review of the July 2021 unrest highlighted the deep social and economic impacts of the unrest. It demonstrates the relationship between collective action and reaction/retaliation. It highlights the importance of social cohesion as essential to predicting and mitigating against such unrest. However, most importantly it shows the failure of government before, during and after the protest action. Inequality continues and frustrations remain, so how can one conceive to bridge these gaps and create a healthy society? There is awareness of the limitations of the

state; and therefore, civil society is seen as a necessary partner in preventing a repeat of such an event. It is clear that a strong civil society fosters social cohesion, which is important in preventing such events, but before seeking a specific answer, the sections below provide an analysis of the literature on the trends and triggers of protest action in South Africa. With a holistic understanding of what causes such protest action, we hope to find areas of focus that the state could partner and unite with civil society in.

3.1 Trends in protest action in South Africa

The rising levels of protests and concurrent rise in violence during protests, has been a topic of research in South Africa for over a decade (see: Karamoko & Jain, 2011; Powell, O'Donovan & De Visser, 2015; Lancaster, 2016, 2018). Alexander et al.(2013) noted that, "Ourselves and other analysts have been reporting on rising levels of protests since 2009, but the government has failed to respond to the underlying socio-economic problems." While apartheid ushered in an era of hope, the realities of continuing inequality have led to consistent levels of community protests (Alexander et al., 2013; Lancaster, 2016). Even though the impetus of this study was the 2021 July unrest, it is equally concerning that the rate of protest action in South Africa is indicative of an endemic level of discontent within environments that allow and are disposed for incidents of unrest (The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2021; Visagie et al., 2021).

Thus, before delving into the triggers and reasons for the levels of discontent and ensuing violent protests, this section will provide an overview of the trends of protest action in the country. Before going further, it is worth noting that it is difficult to provide a definitive set of statistics on protests. The literature reviewed covers different years, focuses on different definitions or types of protests, and has limitations to data collection. Regardless, it is worth looking at the data, which provides useful insights into the scale of the issue around protests and unrest.

3.1.1 Where are protests taking place

Provincial level

It may be unsurprising that the most highly populated provinces experience higher levels of protest. Across the various literature, reports and statistics, it is clear that protests in the Gauteng province constitute a significant (and the highest) percentage of protests in South Africa (Alexander et al., 2015; Karamoko and Jain, 2011; Lancaster, 2016, 2018; Municipal IQ, 2023; Powell et al., 2015). As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** below, across

the types of protests and over the time period assessed, Gauteng experiences a share of 22% - 38% of protests in South Africa.

When looking at the other provinces, the picture is a bit more unclear. As mentioned above, the data focuses on distinct types of protest/unrest. The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) provides a more holistic view on the protest action in South Africa (Lancaster, 2016, 2018). Based on their data from 2013-2017, following Gauteng (31%), the Western Cape (20%), KwaZulu Natal (16%), and Eastern Cape (14%) have the highest levels of protest. However, as will be further outlined below, local level/civic and service delivery protests constitute a bigger portion of protests that turn violent. The following points are worth noting:

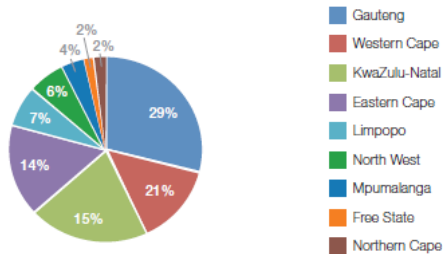
- MunicipallQ's statistics on service delivery protests in 2022 shown that KwaZulu Natal (22%), Eastern Cape (16%), Mpumalanga (10%) and the Western Cape (9%), have a significant level of service delivery protests.
- The South African Police Data on crowd incidents, noting that incidents of unrest¹ shows that Western Cape (16%), North West (13%), KwaZulu Natal (12%), Eastern Cape (12%), and the Free State (10%) experience high levels of unrest.
- The Civic Protest Barometer statistics over the period of 2007 to 2014 shows that (following Gauteng) the Western Cape, North West, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu Natal experience a significant level of civic protest.

Based on the above, we can conclude that Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape are areas of particular concern when it comes to mitigating periods of unrest. There may be a need to look at Mpumalanga and the North West in further detail, but it is clear that Limpopo and the Northern Cape are not areas of particular concern.

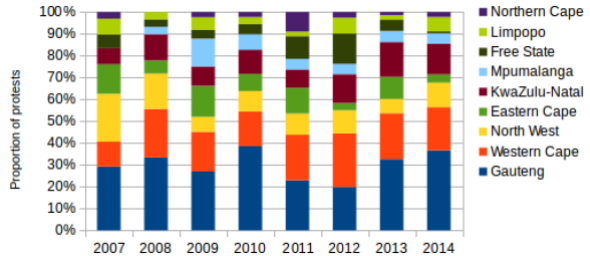
¹ For this statistic, unrest is defined by the SAPS as instances of crowd incidents that require police intervention (rubber bullets, arrests, tear gas etc). Worth noting is that crowd incidents include communal gatherings such as sports events, so these incidents of unrest are not exclusively due to protests.

Figure 1 Compilation of Provincial Protest Figures

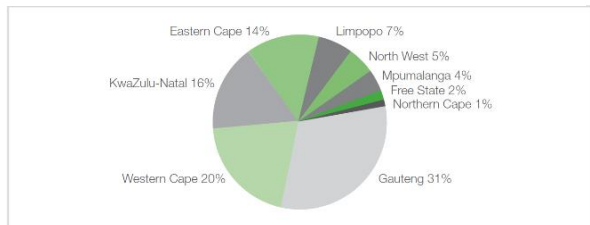
ISS: Provincial spread of events, 2013 to 2015



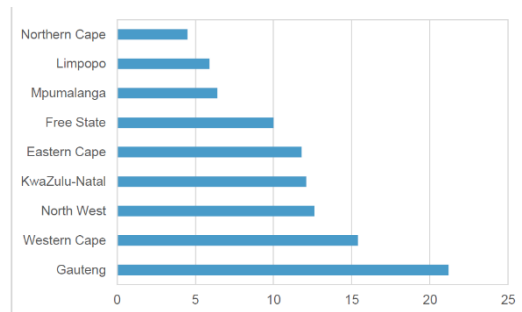
Civic Protest Barometer: Provincial protest share over time



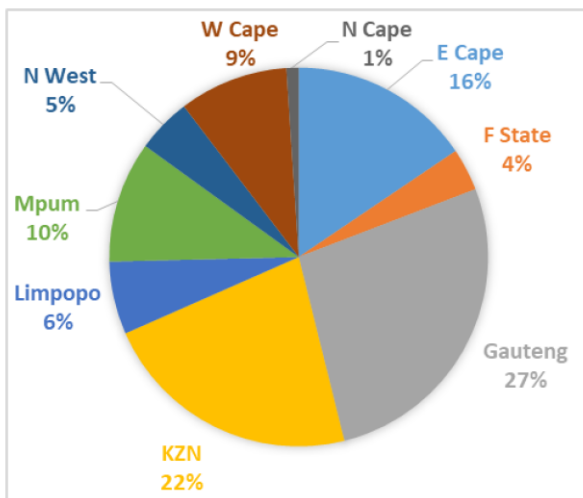
ISS: Provincial spread of PPVM events, 2013 to 2017 (n=4391)



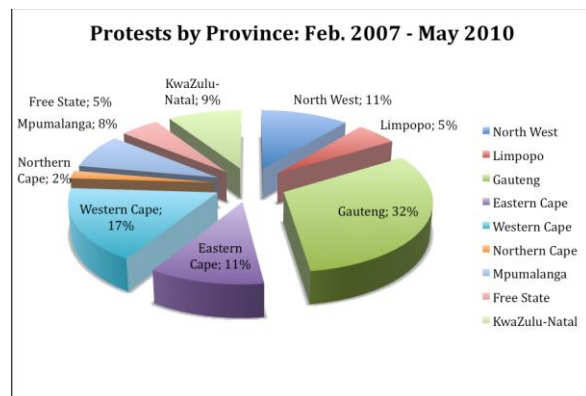
SAPS Data on Crowd Incidents: Percentage distribution of unrest incidents by province, 1997-2013



Municipal IQ: Service delivery protests by province, 2022



Jain and Karamoko: Protest by Province: Feb 2007 – May 2010



Urban versus Rural

Across the literature there is consensus that protest action had a significant urban orientation. Rationale for this is provided in the section below. Whilst there is a need to acknowledge that the literature that uses the media reports on protest action as a data source would be biased towards urban areas, it is still evident across the sources that the urban centres, particularly the metropolitan areas, experience the highest level of protest action. Lancaster (2018) asserts that between 2013 to 2017, 67% of protests occurred in metros, followed by 17% in urban

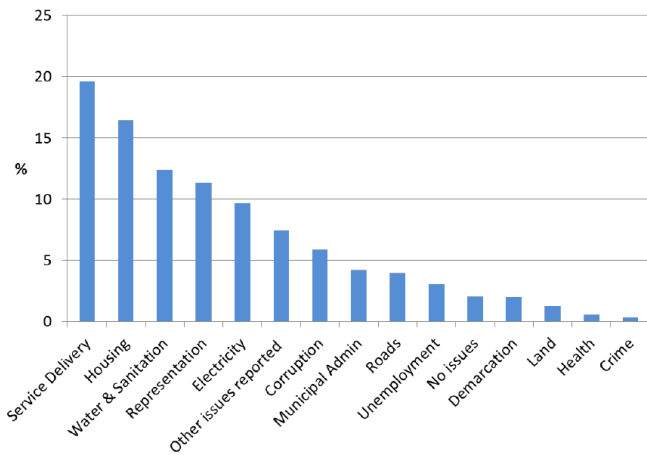
areas and 16% in rural areas. Looking at civic protests specifically, Powell et al. (2015) provide a breakdown across areas demonstrating that 55% of civic protests occur in metros. They further disaggregate the percentages across metros, and it is evident that the larger metros – Johannesburg, Cape Town, eThekweni and Tshwane – have significantly high levels of protest action, collectively constituting 46% of civic protests in South Africa. As discussed below, this may be due to the heightened expectations of metropolitan municipalities, particularly the larger, more capacitated metros. Mitigating discontent and unrest in the larger metros would go a long way to promoting peace across the nation, especially when considering the significant share of the State’s economy these metros hold.

3.1.2 What are people protesting

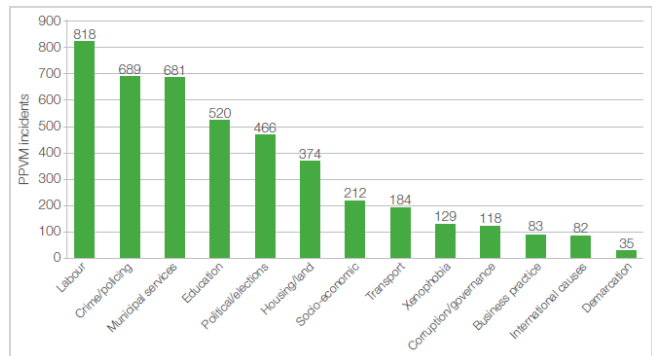
As shown in the **Error! Reference source not found.** below, when looking at types of protests across the literature, labour disputes make up the bulk of protests (Alexander et al., 2013, 2015; Lancaster, 2018). However, it is also evident that municipalities and service provision/delivery or a combination of both consists of a significant portion of the protest types. With this in mind, the table in **Error! Reference source not found.** (ISS: Types of peaceful and violent events, 2013 to 2015) brings further rationale to focus on municipal level and service delivery concerns. It shows that while labour related action constitutes the largest number of protests, service delivery (including housing-, election-, electricity-, water-, and sanitation-related) protests and demarcation have the highest numbers of violence compared to the other forms of protest action. Thus, whilst mitigating for violence occurring during labour disputes is important, the data shows that a particular focus on service delivery is necessary. We should also note that according to MunicipallQ (2023) data, service delivery protest are on the rise, with 2022 nearing pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 2: Compilation of statistics on protest types in South Africa

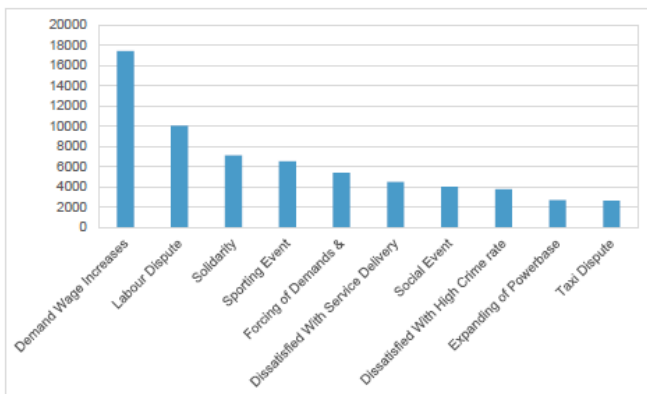
Social Change Research Unit: Grievances cited by protesters 2004-2013



ISS: Protest types between 2013 and 2017 (n=4391)



SAPS Data on Crowd Incidents: Most commonly assigned motive options, 1997-2013



ISS: Types of peaceful and violent events, 2013 to 2015

Main motivation	Number	Percentage	% peaceful	% violent
Labour-related strikes and marches	641	22%	70%	30%
Anti-crime/policing-related protests	342	12%	71%	29%
Education-related protests	265	9%	47%	53%
Unspecified 'service delivery' protests	262	9%	22%	78%
Vigilantism	196	7%	3%	97%
Housing-related protests	181	6%	30%	70%
Election-related protests	146	5%	29%	71%
Transport-related protests	129	4%	54%	46%
Foreigner/xenophobic incidents	120	4%	16%	84%
Party-political protests/attacks	118	4%	35%	65%
Electricity-related protests	65	2%	29%	71%
International causes	57	2%	93%	7%
Water-related protests	46	2%	28%	72%
Business practice (private sector)	44	2%	68%	32%
National causes (e.g. rights issues)	41	1%	90%	10%
Land issues	37	1%	35%	65%
Corruption-related protests	32	1%	47%	53%
Sanitation/refuse-related protests	31	1%	32%	68%
Environmental-related protests	29	1%	90%	10%
Healthcare	26	1%	73%	27%
Demarcation	23	1%	13%	87%
Other	49	2%	31%	69%
Total	2 880	100%	47%	53%

3.1.3 When are people protesting?

Whilst not of the utmost importance, there is a substantial difference in the number of protests depending on the time of year (Karamoko and Jain, 2011; Lancaster, 2016, 2018; Powell et al., 2015). As Lancaster (2018: 35) explains:

Traditionally, [protests] peak around May to September each year and start dropping after October. December typically has the fewest incidents [...] May is widely regarded as the start of 'strike season', as new salary negotiation processes commence across the country, during which wage disputes are declared between employers and their workers [...] The data shows that all types of protest peak during this period, not only labour-related industrial strike action. The winter months, which bring with them cold

weather and increased vulnerability for many South Africans, seem to amplify the urgency for the delivery of services such as electricity and housing.

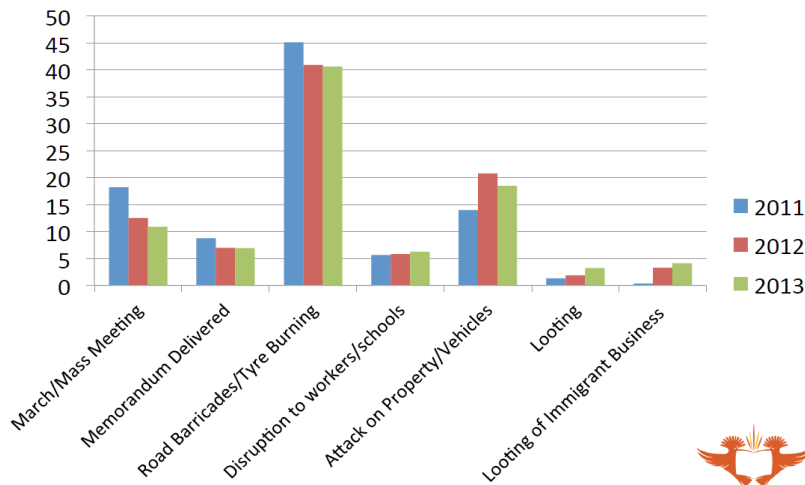
Corroborated later, service delivery, failure of services, and uneven provision of services instigate feelings of frustration, which lead to instances of unrest.

3.1.4 How are people protesting

When trying to mitigate for violence during protests, understanding how people choose to air their grievances is important. Although the right to engage in peaceful protests is safeguarded in South Africa, it is crucial to acknowledge the alarming escalation of disruptive behaviour and violence associated with these demonstrations. While there may be varying interpretations of what qualifies as a violent protest, it is widely accepted that acts such as looting, loss of life, physical harm, and damage to property are all indicative of violent behaviour. Debates on what has become the norm, practices such as tyre burning, and road blockades are featured in the literature with some academics considering these activities as disruptive rather than violent. The experts consulted from ISS consulted take hold the view of the Regulation of Gatherings Act, which requires that all gatherings (including protests), are not to infringe on public safety and must prevention of damage to property. This includes trying to coerce non-participants into joining the protests, acts of intimidation, and preventing the movement of non-participants. Thus, the repertoire of various blockades are considered violent (*ISS Stakeholder Engagement 1, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 3, 2023*). Considering the focus on the economic impacts of protest action, it may be necessary to include disruptive protests as a form of protest that should be mitigated. As noted earlier, the destruction and blockades of transit corridors have significant impacts on the economy of South Africa as well as the region.

As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, ISS provides statistics on the percentage of violent protests versus peaceful protests. A further breakdown is shown in Figure 3 below. The data in Figure 3 focuses on community protests in particular and shows that disruptive and violent forms of protest are the *go-to* methods used by people participating in community protests. While community protests only make up a portion of the kinds of protests in South Africa, they have a significant effect on the functioning of the country at the local level.

Figure 3: Selected Protest Methods 2011-2013



Source: (Alexander et al., 2013)

3.2 Triggers of protest action in South Africa

To understand the ways in which CSOs can be collaborated with to mitigate populist, mob-like unrest, it is important to comprehend the underlying factors that contribute to these events. Our research has examined these factors and divided them into distinct categories for analysis. By doing so, we aim to identify potential areas for mitigation and prevention. It should be noted that the available literature primarily focuses on urban areas, yet still provides valuable insights into protest actions throughout the country.

3.2.1 State/Politics

Lack of accountability

Although a significant portion of violent protests/unrest are targeted towards the state, simply having demands of government does not necessarily produce violent civil unrest. Instead, the literature clarifies that such activity happens in the face of visible and accountable government. Citizens resort to protesting in order to draw attention to their grievances when they perceive that government is dismissive of their concerns, their grievances (Alexander et al., 2015; Botes, 2018; Lancaster, 2016; Mongale, 2022). As Mongale (2022: 2) states, “lack of accountability by local councillors and municipal officials tend to strengthen these riots.” Von Holdt et al. (2011) review 8 case studies of protests in South Africa, and highlight the example of Voortrekker, where a peaceful protest turned violent after government officials failed to attend multiple community meetings. When confronted with an unresponsive government, frustration can and tends to escalate to violence.

This is reiterated by the stakeholder engagements with 3 ISS experts. O Further, one expert noted that in rural areas, violence is often a tool used when considering the absence of state and civil society organisations. They acknowledged that there seems to be a lack of interest in ameliorating the discontent experienced by rural dwellers. In the case of urban areas, there is a greater concern for the economic impacts of violent protest, whereas rural areas are ignored. The result of which has been some relying, opportunistically, on the destruction of property and other collateral damage to garner attention. Which it often does, achieves, as shown in the case of Voortrekker, Mpumalanga where citizens relied on a “repertoire of protest” which that included violence, which and led to the Premier of the province addressing the community (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 3, 2023; Von Holdt et al., 2011).

The concept of a repertoire of protest is consistent with the assertion of another expert, that the historical context informs the likelihood of violence during protest. By looking at reviewing and reflecting on the history of protest in a said the area, it may demonstrate that overtime violence is a go-to resort, as it may be seen as the only means of getting government attention (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 1, 2023).

Mongale (2022: 2) writes, “[...] riots in South Africa have been used as a means of political expression toward the new ANC-led democratic government.” Once again, this links and aligns with a perceived lack of accountability, so in order to ensure change, many communities rely on protest action to gain popular attention to their cause. Further, in rural areas where there is a lack political and state presence, disruptive protests are seemingly the only means to air their grievances (Maserumule, 2016).

Protests are often viewed as a response to a lack of leadership and shortcomings in formal public engagement channels, such as ward committees that may only represent select interests and needs (Langa and Kiguwa, 2013; Von Holdt et al., 2011). Additionally, protests can be a way to assert a form of insurgent citizenship, reclaiming dignity in the face of differentiated citizenship, where certain groups of citizens are treated differently based on factors such as class, education, and income, contradicting the principles, rights and values enshrined in the South African Constitution (Lancaster, 2016; Langa and Kiguwa, 2013; Von Holdt et al., 2011).

Party politics

Despite assertions by President Cyril Ramaphosa that the July 2021 unrest was a concerted plan to destabilize the country, many (Damons, 2022; Makonye, 2022; Mongale, 2022; Municipal IQ, 2021; Vhumbunu, 2021) determined that the political dynamics at the time acted as a trigger rather than as a cause of the protest action. However, it is clear that the political

sphere can contribute to the intensity and the scale of the protest action. On the other hand, 2 of our key stakeholders consulted considered July 2021 as an instance of deliberate sabotage and political instigation. They cite specific instances of sabotage in the forms of burning of sugar cane fields and or the destruction of firefighting equipment in targeted properties, that leads one to conclude that there was a particular intent to do harm. However, as will be later demonstrated, the literature and our engagements make it clear that multiple dynamics affect the strength and turbulence of participation in protests (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 1, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023). Despite the conflicting perspectives, it is clear that the political sphere can contribute to the intensity and the scale of the protest action.

Von Holdt et al. (2011) note how local politicians leverage existing grievances and encourage collective action in order to remove opponents or gain patronage. The July 2021 unrest was partially seen as an instance where political factionalism acted as a cover for greater discontent. The experts engaged highlighted that in their communities they have seen instances of political manipulation and animosity to increase anger amongst community members resulting in violence and looting (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 1, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023). However, Von Holdt et al (2011) continue by explaining that communities are often aware of this and may use the participation of politicians as a means to bring their concerns forward. A change in dispensation can also act as a trigger for protest, as it can affect the provision of services, for example, leading to heightened dissatisfaction in the community.

The sense of weak or lack of accountability in the face of high levels of corruption and collusion fuels the frustrations within communities. Botes (2018: 249–250) mentions how ward councillors function as the most direct form of government for many communities, the fact that they earn a salary that is “more than 25 times as much as the older person’s grant” creates an income differential between them and the poor communities they often steward. This ultimately removes the ward councillor from the lived experiences of their constituents. Langa and Kiguwa (2013) note the frustrations felt by young people in communities who are jobless and witness the acts of patronage that allow politicians to give jobs and tenders to their social circles, regardless of the required experience. This is further emphasized by the fact that politicians are able to flaunt their salaries in the community through their material possessions (cars and clothes) and thus gain a greater social standing. It is the frustrations over being excluded from this social access that deeply affects the aforementioned young people.

Policing

Whilst policing is relied on to mitigate and quell violence during protests, some academics note how police presence and involvement can often instigate violence (Alexander et al., 2015; Langa and Kiguwa, 2013; Rebello et al., 2021; Von Holdt et al., 2011). In many of the cases reviewed, communities mention that previously peaceful protests turn violent in retaliation to police violence. One ISS expert shared the perspective that, police presence arrives after the discontent has escalated, which highlights the importance of addressing issues at an earlier stage to prevent violence.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) and communities have a trust deficit, with high levels of dissatisfaction in the SAPS's ability to create safe and secure communities due to the high levels of crime in South Africa. Additionally, there is a perception that the police are used to suppress the right to protest rather than address the issues that protesters are raising (Alexander et al., 2015; Langa and Kiguwa, 2013; Maserumule, 2016; Rebello et al., 2021; Von Holdt et al., 2011). This aggressive and distrustful relationship often leads to violent retaliation.

Moreover, research suggests that SAPS officers who work in overworked, overwhelmed, and undervalued environments may resort to using violence and excessive force to gain respect or a sense of legitimacy (Rebello et al., 2021: 8). One stakeholder noted that the effectiveness of the police varies across different localities, depending on factors such as: the presence of functional police stations; the presence (or lack thereof) of conflict resolution-oriented leadership; the training of public order police, including their negotiation skills, debriefing and support systems; and the working conditions under which they operate (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023). This is particularly concerning considering environments that are underserved also tend to be more impoverished which (as described in the sections below) tends to increase the likeliness of discontent leading to protest action.

Whilst the existence of Community Policing Forums allows for citizens to engage and hold the police accountable. Like the police, their effectiveness varies and depends highly on the activeness of forum members, the availability of resources, the extent of the area they cover, and the relationship with their local SAPS. However, one stakeholder suggested that the role and responsibility of Community Policing Forums (CPFs) and the South African Police Service (SAPS) during times of unrest needs to be strengthened and reevaluated. As noted earlier, historically, CPFs have faced challenges in being seen and accepted as representative of communities, and thus, taken seriously. They have often been viewed as an extension of the SAPS rather than fostering genuine community relationships (ISS Stakeholder Engagement

1, 2023). This is a critical concern because as outlined in the report into the July 2021 civil unrest, “[SAPS and CPFs] emphasised the role of strong partnerships between the police and communities if the rule of law is to be maintained.” (Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021)

3.2.2 Social

Poverty and inequality

With stark poverty and inequality, it is inevitable that South Africa has elevated levels of discontent that leads to protest action. However, according to the literature, poverty alone is not a predictor for the likeliness of protest in an area. With a poverty rate of 80,3% in rural areas and 40,1% in urban areas, one would expect that rural areas would experience higher levels of protests, but (as shown above) the inverse is true (Kali, 2023). Scholars consider inequality, more than poverty, as a major contributor to the high levels of protests (Kali, 2023; Lancaster, 2016; Makonye, 2022; Mongale, 2022; Powell et al., 2015; Vhumbunu, 2021; Von Holdt et al., 2011). It is the comparative in the social and economic standing that leads to feelings of unfairness and marginalisation. Issues like differential access to basic services, inadequate housing, un/under-employment, and low incomes create a distinction between the ‘underclass and the elite’. As Mongale (2022: 7) writes, “In the context of the July 2021 riots in Gauteng and KZN provinces, it is believed that the riots were instigated by a sense of unfairness (inequality) and not just the levels of service provision.” This helps to explain the differential between protest action in urban areas versus rural areas. Inequality in terms of access, acquisition and the distribution of resources is higher in the urban areas.

Further, Maserumule (2016) explains how the failure of service provision affects the poor more harshly than the rich. Often those with higher economic standing can use their financial position to make up for the gaps in service provision, but people living in poverty do not have that capability. As they endure most of the negative effects of poorly capacitated and ineffective local government, one of the consequences is that their frustrations tip and boil over. (Maserumule, 2016; Mongale, 2022). This enhances feelings of “powerless due to their economic positions as compared to the local black elite,” which leads to the struggle for power between the majority poor populus and the minority, economically and politically powerful elite (Langa and Kiguwa, 2013: 23).

Relative Deprivation

Relative deprivation is a phenomenon that contributes to feelings of dissatisfaction among South Africans (Mongale, 2022). This refers to the frustration that arises from unfulfilled expectations fuelled by promises after the end of apartheid, where people expected a shift in the unequal economic and social foundations of the country. Despite considerable progress in access to basic services like water, sanitation, and housing, inequality has worsened, and citizens expect not only access to services, but also a certain quality of provision and job opportunities.

In the case of relative deprivation there is a sense of injustice, i.e., one's expectations are not being met, because there is a perpetrator (an institution/person) that is preventing one achieving the goal they desire. The failure of the government to meet these expectations has led to a sense of injustice and the perception of the government as a perpetrator standing in the way of citizens' rights. An example given is the occurrence of rural dwellers going to urban areas seeking a better life. Due to spatial realities in the country's urban areas, these people end up living in informal settlements. These settlements have particularly poor levels of service provision, and as these people remain in inadequate housing without basic services, and likely still without employment, their expectations for a better life are thwarted. Where they thought the city would fulfil their hopes, they are disappointed. Thus, as Jain and Karamoko (2011: 26) note, "informal settlements on the outskirts of urban areas are disproportionately likely to engage in protests." The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (2021) describe this as "the country's fractured social contract."

Mongale (2022) credits relative deprivation for fuelling acts of greed – looting – during times of protest and unrest. These disenfranchised individuals attempt to ease their economic disadvantages by looting. Kali (2023) describes a "snowball effect" that occurs when there are massive levels of participants in protests. They describe how there is protection in numbers, and thus more people join the protest as they are shielded from harm or repercussion due to the number of participants. These people may use protest as a cover for their actions, as Mongale (2022: 7) explains, "using political contest to ameliorate their economic situation."

Group formation

The snowball effect may explain the participation of people on the outskirts of a protest, but there are other phenomena that explain how people converge behind a shared dissatisfaction. Alternatively, some take advantage under the cover of the chaos caused by protest to

participate in general, indiscriminate looting. A group identity can form when communities experience similar levels of inequality and poverty, particularly when closely located to others who are in better standing. This group identity fuels ethnophobia and xenophobia in communities, as foreign nationals or non-black South Africans are viewed as having greater access to resources, 'unfairly', and thus become the target of violence and looting. This intergroup hate has foundations in previous tensions within the communities, but in times of unrest, these boil over into violence. The negative and unfortunate impact is damage to social cohesion - there are those that condemn and retaliate against those participating in violence. Whilst many in the community might have similar frustrations with the inequality experienced, they may see the acts of violence as counterintuitive or incredibly harmful to the community, thus fostering social fragmentation in the community (Arde, 2021; Enoch, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 1, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023; Langa and Kiguwa, 2013; Mongale, 2022).

3.2.3 Ecological aspects

Whilst the previous sections touched on multiple factors that are triggers for protest action, looking at the ecological aspects that reproduce cycles of violence is helpful, as ultimately a sustainable means of ending violent unrest is targeting the root cause. Lancaster (2016) looks at the ecological framework as a helpful lens for determining "risk factors for collective violence." In Figure 4, we see Lancaster's (2016) adaptation of the WHO's (n.d.) ecological framework. It shows 4 levels of risk factors: individual, relationship, community and societal. Many of the community and societal risk factors have been noted above namely: poverty, inequality, poor rule of law and high unemployment. This section provides further insight into the environmental and spatial aspects that fuel collective violence.

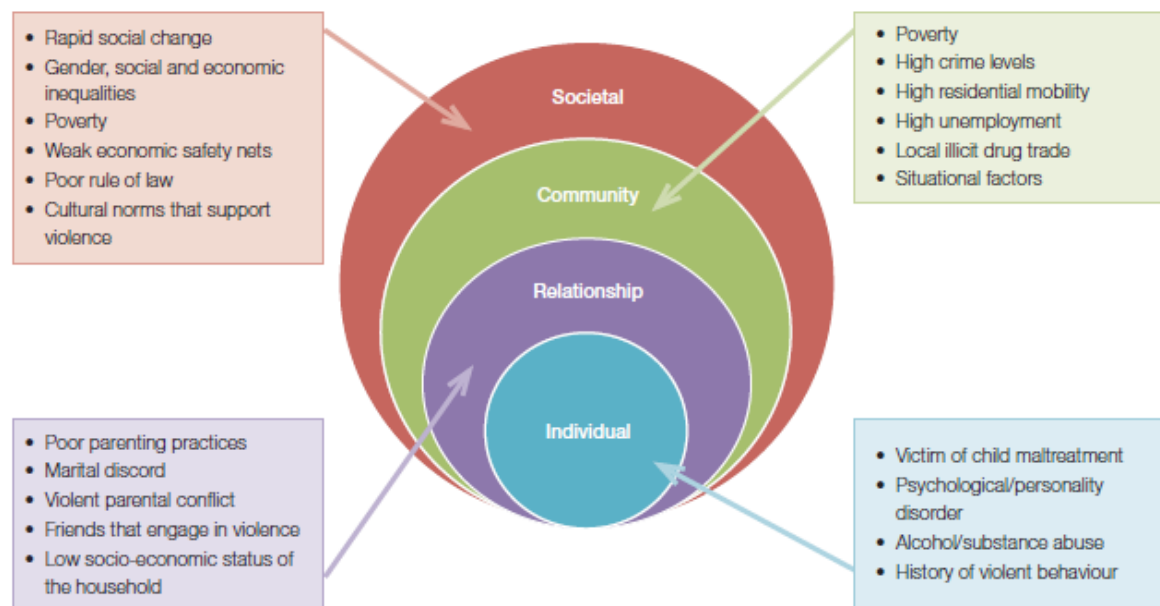


Figure 4: The World Health Organisation's ecological framework - example of multi-level risk factors

Source: (Lancaster, 2016; World Health Organisation, n.d.)

It is widely acknowledged that the legacy of apartheid has influenced and shaped our spatial environments, i.e., where people are located and their ability and inability to have equitable access to resources. As noted, urban areas, tend to experience higher rates of protests, with informal settlements experiencing higher levels of violent protests. Rapid urbanization is a significant contributor to the formation and increasing size of informal settlements. Rapid urbanization stretches the boundaries of the cities, locating people further from the resources they desire, emphasising the inequalities in service provision, access to accountable government, and jobs. Further, the increased scale puts further strain on limited resources, for example health clinics that have remained unchanged since apartheid and are too small for the communities they serve (Damons, 2022; Lancaster, 2016; Von Holdt et al., 2011).

It is evident that South Africa has a society that is consistent with the risk factor of “cultural norms that support violence.” The high-levels of crime and abuse, particularly gender-based violence and child abuse, point to this. The review (2021: 83–84) of the July 2021 unrest observes that, “The culture of violence and criminality within the ruling party was having a negative impact on communities and has to be brought under control”, thus even at the public and state levels, a culture of violence is evident. The review speaks to physical violence, but Makonye (2022: 60) discusses the structural violence that, “is exploitation and injustice, much of which is institutionalised and also culturally and psychologically internalised” and notes 1(2022: 60) that this applies to individuals or groups that cannot develop to their full potential, “as they have differential access to social, political and economic resources”. The previous

sections touch on many instances of differential access that provoke frustrations leading to violent unrest, but it is important to note that the “direct violence” that is unrest, is a product of the “structural violence” experienced by many South Africans.

This structural/institutional violence is more obviously seen in the acts of corruption and patronage that occur within government. Corruption is an ongoing problem that will continue to fuel unrest if not mitigated. The NDP (National Planning Commission, 2012: 37) proposes that CSOs can play the role of watch dogs, and whistle-blowers with regards to corruption, but an opaque, unaccountable state may make this difficult. Therefore, it is important that if the state wishes to engage with CSOs meaningfully as a mechanism to mitigate and curb violent unrest, it should operate transparently with CSOs.

The factors mentioned previously (apartheid and a shift to democratic governance) point to the rapid social change South Africa has undergone. As the country approaches 30 years of democracy, it is a maturing, but still a young nation. The post-apartheid years have been filled with a great deal of social, political and economic upheaval, i.e., from the extension of rights to marginalized groups to consecutive recessions. South Africa in its democratic infancy has had to adapt to a globalized economy, while simultaneously extending rights and services to previously excluded and systemically disadvantaged constituencies. Additionally, an ever-changing technological landscape allows citizens to access a global community. Now, citizens can see not only what they lack compared to others in the country, but also compared to others across the globe. Whether it is rights, services, housing etc., communities are able to compare and contrast. They can see how other popular movements mobilize across the globe and can be empowered (or emboldened) to do the same in their communities (the Arab Spring Revolution in North Africa and the Middle East – albeit 2010-2011 - is an example of citizen-based protest and uprising).

This reality of rapid social change explains the rise in collective violence nationally and internationally. Particularly in the context of the July 2021 unrest which - in a similar fashion to the Arab Spring – saw social media being used as a tool to mobilize community. This change in how communication takes place, and the rapid pace within which it happens, enabled protestors/instigators to disseminate information regarding the protest action immediately. This created an environment where an already strained SAPS had to adapt quickly with minimal intelligence. Despite this, it is evident in some instances CSOs acted as informants, trying to alert the police to the happenings in their communities. Whilst this did not necessarily help to temper the extent of unrest, with the police failing to acknowledge and act on these reports, it shows the role CSOs can play in the midst of unrest (Makonye, 2022; Mongale, 2022; Office of the Presidency of South Africa, 2021; Vhumbunu, 2021).

However, what might be the most helpful arena where CSOs can work in, is in the Relationship and Individual categories as described in Figure 4: The World Health Organisation's ecological framework - example of multi-level risk factors. Fostering communities that are non-violent and supportive increases the potential in mitigating against the patterns of violence within individual households. Where violence is the norm, it is difficult to mitigate against, but fostering a peaceful, aware, and informed citizenry can quell notions of and the impetus to resort to violence. CSOs that provide help for abuse victims, rehabilitate drug and alcohol users, create support systems for children and young people, provide counselling and mental health services; this could go a long way to building non-violent communities and enhancing community cohesion.

Another factor which CSOs can aid in is the empowerment of citizens to participate in their own communal development. The NDP (National Planning Commission, 2012: 37) iterates that the communal mindset of “sit back and the state will deliver” needs to be eradicated. Instead, it hopes to foster an active citizenry, which includes a strong civil society. As noted in previous sections, it is often a sense of disempowerment that encourages communities to resort to violence. Empowering these communities, and actively engaging with them, may create the social cohesion necessary to prevent future violence.

3.3 Case studies of successful prevention of collective violence

Whilst limited information was garnered on how to directly mitigate against and reduce the extent of protests, there are a few cases. Kali (2023) in their comparison of protest action in South Africa, Eswatini and Lesotho highlights that while all three countries had similar instances of mass protest, Lesotho's protest did not descend into violence. Kali (2023: 15–16) writes:

While many protests in Lesotho resulted in looting [...], the recent one did not due to two factors. Firstly, despite the demonstrations lacking police authorization, a parliamentarian listened to the protesters' demands before the police quelled the protest. Secondly, the media gave platforms to the protesters until the authorities decided to listen and respond to the petition the youth wanted to submit to Prime Minister.

Therefore, as government dismissiveness can fuel discontent, it can be assumed that acknowledgement will have the opposite effect. The above-mentioned quote recognises the importance of engagement before police intervention, which is particularly relevant as noted in the section above how police enforcement can often serve as a catalyst / trigger for violent retaliation.

Another case that demonstrates the importance of government openness, and communication is the Eden District in the Western Cape. Gould (2021) writes about an instance where water was cut off in the communities of Hoekwil and Touwsrante. Mentioned above, lack of access to basic services is one of the reasons cited as fuelling protests; however, in this case, not only was there no violence, but there were no protests at all. Gould (2021: 3–4) mentions four key factors that prevented violence:

- “[G]ood communication on multiple platforms” via word of mouth, WhatsApp and Facebook, updating residents on the cause of, proposed solution to, and expected duration of the water cut-off;
- “[T]he deployment of effective, non-threatening law enforcement” who were not SAPS, who were available to answer questions about the availability of water tankers;
- “[T]hose affected were treated with respect.” The water tankers were distributed in acknowledgement of people’s resources. People in poorer areas without access to private transport were allocated more tankers as they would have to carry water on foot. Further they ensured a mobile tanker went around informal settlements for ease of access,
- “[T]he problem that caused the water to be cut off was fixed by installing new pipes.”

Gould (2021: 5), concludes that, “Quick, respectful responses by local government can offset the damage of failed service delivery.”

Therefore, the pragmatic measures described in this section, in addition to the triggers and patterns (trends) noted in the preceding sections, provide a good foundation for understanding how violence occurs and can be alleviated. However, to establish how CSOs can support and strengthen such efforts, this review will shift its focus towards providing an overview of CSOs.

3.4 Understanding CSOs

3.4.1 Defining CSOs

The research study is prefaced within the nexus of civilian unrest and civil society organisations (CSOs). To enable an understanding of the role of CSOs in mitigating or moderating unrest, there is a need to understand the broader role of CSOs within the South African context, as well as to understand the nature of unrest in our society. Whilst the section on the Legislative and policy environment provided some of the context, this section will elaborate on the relevance of CSOs, and the perceptions associated with CSOs. Much of the work on civil society is conceived as part of a societal “third sector”, the nature of which is broadly

characterized as being outside of the State, and the market. While CSOs are considered to be part of the third sector, further differentiation is required, specifically since the third sector includes organisations that may be considered antithetical to the goals of CSOs.

To begin with, it may be useful to establish a working definition of civil society and civil society organisations. Anheier and Carlson's (2001: 3) definition of civil society provides, "Civil society is the sphere of institutions, organisations and individuals located between the family, the state, and the market, in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests."

Thus, in relation to organisations within this space, there is a focus on their voluntary nature as well as their concern for common interests. Salamon and Sokolowski (2016: 1518-1523) note, when researching third sector organisations (which include CSOs), an understanding/definition that goes beyond "abstract concepts" is necessary.

Contemplating the focus of the study, which is CSOs' contribution to peace-making in times of civil unrest, one can begin to elicit further clarity into the definition of CSOs. Salamon and Sokolowski (2016: 1523) have provided a helpful framework for solidifying this definition, consisting of five essential criteria: Sufficient Breadth and Sensitivity, Sufficient Clarity, Comparability, Operationalizability, and Institutionalizability. More detailed explanations of these criteria can be found in Salamon and Sokolowski's work (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016: 1523).

The concern of Salamon and Sokolowski was to produce a definition of third sector organisations that would accommodate the differences across the globe, while providing a clear enough definition to enable comparability. Considering that the focus of this research is South Africa, it allows us to narrow down further than Salamon and Sokolowski.

Such a narrowing down can be found in "The Review of the State of Civil Society Organisation in South Africa", which provides specific criteria that align with the general mandate of the NDA. The requirement for CSOs is that they-

- Operate for public benefit;
- Have a common purpose, usually (but not exclusively) around service delivery, social watch, advocacy, research, or education;
- Are private (occupying the space outside of the state or market) entities;
- Are self-governing; and
- Do not distribute profit. (Community Agency for Social Enquiry et al., 2008: 7)

It is important to note that the aforementioned criteria were developed for the purpose of conducting a CSO audit, whereas the current research project aims to examine the role of

CSOs in the context of collective violence and unrest. Given the multiple factors that contribute to the likelihood of collective violence, the role of CSOs in supporting government is varied and complex. Therefore, it is important and relevant to consider the involvement of CSOs beyond issues of violence and peace-making. It would be applicable to regard and appraise CSOs in their engagement and work with issues and factors of economic inequality, social inequality, and political inequality, which underlie and contribute to unrest in the South African context. Evaluating CSOs in these areas would be appropriate and valuable.

3.4.2 The State and CSOs

The Review of CSOs in South Africa (2008), and the section on the Legislative and policy environment (Section 2 above), notes the ever-shifting nature of the CSO sector. In particular, they describe the transition period after the end of Apartheid that saw a *hollowing out* of human resources in the CSO sector. The Review provides a helpful context, in that it mentions how, during apartheid, the ANC and other anti-apartheid organisations were key among CSOs, but in the dawn of democracy, the relationship between CSOs and the (now ANC run) State needed to be reassessed. In many cases, those that worked in and for these CSOs “moved into government [into technocratic positions within State entities] or business.” However, the continued disenfranchisement experienced by many South Africans has continued to sustain the need for social movements and the CSOs that govern them (Community Agency for Social Enquiry et al., 2008).

Appreciating that South Africa has a rich history of civic engagement, but in line with the NDP, it is important and relevant to question the effectiveness of this engagement and involvement in mitigating popular unrest. However, if the emphasis of this report is to explore how the state can support CSOs, it is important to understand the State perspective on these organisations. Stakeholder consultations and a survey of CSOs can provide insights into the reality of the state-CSO relationship, but it is evident that there may be work that needs to be done, as per the GroundUp (Human, 2022) article on the Presidential Summit on the Social Sector:

About 3,500 civil society organisations say they were excluded from the Presidential Social Sector Summit in August, where important decisions were made for them and about them [...]. One outcome from the summit was a decision to establish a central fund for civil society. But Lisa Vetten, who helped draft the letter to the presidency, said this decision was taken without proper consultation with civil society organisations. She described it as “very concerning” and “undemocratic” [...]. Vetten said the state was also disproportionately represented. The only civil society body on the summit’s oversight committee was the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC).

The rest were: the presidency, the departments of social development, planning, monitoring and evaluation, employment and labour, and the National Development Agency, and the NLC.

This points to the top-down approach often taken by the State when it comes to most matters, including engaging with CSOs. It is important that in capacitating CSOs and citizens in general, a bottom-up approach is adopted (Anheier and Carlson, 2001; Podger et al., 2013; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016). In contrast, one of the ISS experts noted that it is important that CSOs are active in their engagement with government. Often, the state may engage with CSOs in a ceremonial sense – extending a relationship with CSOs to appear engaged with the community – and it may be up to CSOs that these engagements are transformed into more meaningful relationships with the state. The expert suggests that to foster effective collaboration, both the government and civil society need to reach out to each other. (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 3, 2023)

The experts emphasize that collaboration between NGOs/CSOs and government is necessary across almost every sector. However, NGOs often find themselves in a survival mode, filling a small piece of the extensive needs of communities. This dynamic can contribute to an antagonistic relationship with the state. Ideally, if the government could provide empathetic, respectful, and caring services to communities in sufficient quantities, rendering NGOs unnecessary as service providers, it would be highly beneficial (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023).

As CSOs can be looked to as community liaisons, bridging the relationship between the state and the communities, it is important that the state has a robust – trusting and working - relationship with relevant CSOs. The experts from the ISS note that their convening power enables them to bring various parties – state, business, communities and other CSOs – to the table. Further, their expertise, research and relationships are utilized by government entities, as they are often referred to for their advisory expertise. Alternatively, one expert says that for government to capacitate CSOs they need to provide predictable, adequate, and reliable support. (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 1, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 3, 2023)

Additionally, the sphere of government – national, local, and provincial – may affect the effectiveness of the relationships and initiatives between CSOs and the state. The ISS experts state that CSOs engaging with the state need to be guided by the root of the protest action to determine which sphere of government it is appropriate to partner with. Where discontent stems from an issue that relates to the competency areas of local municipalities, a

localized focus is necessary. However, when issues are applicable to the other spheres, it is more productive to engage with provincial or national government directly. An expert gave further insight by noting that in the case of the SAPS, whilst much of their work is done locally, their structure is highly hierarchical, where national gives guidance and direction, thus engagement with the SAPS is more effective at the national level (ISS Stakeholder Engagement 1, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 2, 2023; ISS Stakeholder Engagement 3, 2023).

Overall, the above suggests that the relationship between CSOs and the government in South Africa involves a balance between accountability and support, with CSOs playing a critical role in promoting transparency and assisting in capacity building efforts within state institutions. However, to ensure the longevity of CSOs in South Africa, the state must acknowledge and support them in-kind.

4 Methodology

A mixed-method research approach was utilised for this study. With this approach, particular importance was placed on stakeholder engagements taking place concurrently with the literature review. Both provided guidance on the structuring of the data collection instruments, i.e., the guiding interview questions that will be applied in engaging the CSOs as well as the online survey. Further, an online survey of CSOs was used to provide the breadth of quantitative data for the report. Finally, four provincial focus groups offered data on regional specific realities.

4.1 Inception Phase

An inception meeting² was held with the NDA client where the research approach and methodology was presented. The methodology was refined based on the inputs received from the client. It was noted that the presence and engagement of a steering committee would be instrumental to the research. The steering committee would have the opportunity to supplement what was presented in the Terms of Reference in relation to the study, by flagging issues, processes, concerns, and considerations that the research team should take into account.

4.2 Review Phase

Preliminary stakeholder engagements were used as a means of informing the content of the data tools used in the fieldwork phase and well as validating the information gathered via the literature review. The literature review focussed on a legislative and policy review as well as trend analysis of public protests carried out to identify and understand the cause and location of public protests across the country. During this phase, the research team collected published and unpublished research in order to produce a comprehensive and coherent synthesis of leading conceptual, methodological, and empirical literature to map the civil unrests. Furthermore, the review phase allowed the research team to identify the key provinces for the online focus groups.

4.3 Fieldwork Phase

The following data collection methods will be used:

² The inception meeting was held on the 14th of December 2022.

- (1) An online survey
- (2) Focus groups; and
- (3) Key informant interviews

4.3.1 Online Survey

The aim of the fieldwork phase was to ensure that a range of CSOs from across all nine provinces were represented. The online survey created via SurveyMonkey was the primary means for gaining data from a wider sample of CSOs. The research team relied on various internet databases, directories, and CSO networks to populate the database for the survey. The survey was distributed via email and WhatsApp Messenger. The figures below provide a breakdown of the distribution of the survey. SurveyMonkey provides more data on email responses and invitations, than WhatsApp invitations. A total of 467 email invitations were sent out. Refer to Figure 5 for the breakdown of the email invitations.

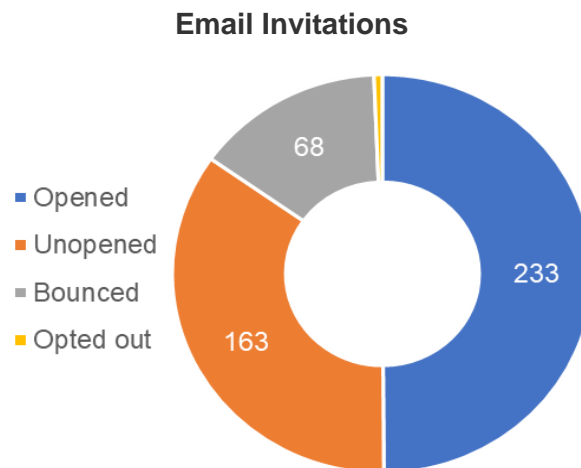


Figure 5 Survey Email Invitations

A total of about 200 WhatsApp invitations were sent out. Out of 600+ invitations, only 75 responses were received, and only 45 respondents completed the survey in full, refer to Figure 6 for the breakdown.

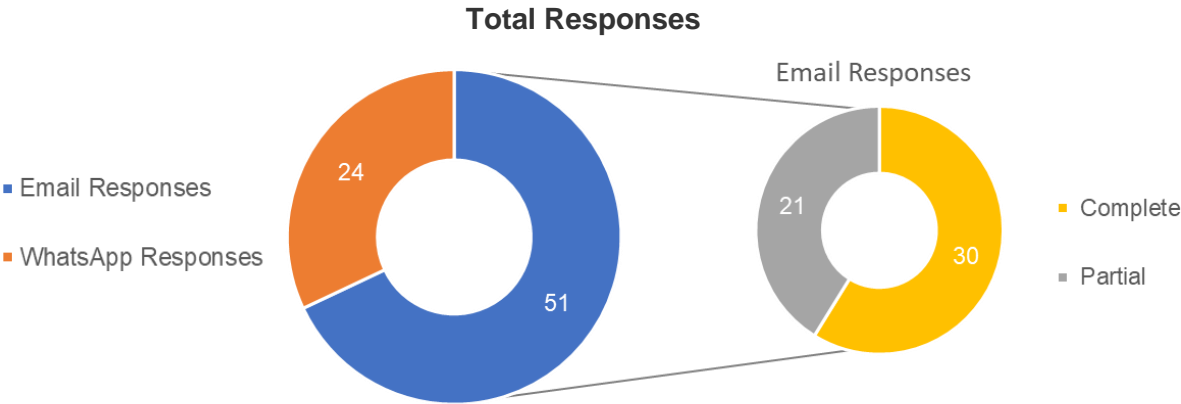


Figure 6 Survey Responses

The geographic distribution of the survey respondents³ is as follows:

- 20 respondents were from the Western Cape
- 15 were from the Eastern Cape
- 15 were from Gauteng
- 6 were from KwaZulu-Natal
- 3 were from Limpopo, and
- 1 was from the Northern Cape

** Organisations from the North West Province, Mpumalanga and Free State were not represented in the survey responses.

The fFigure 6 Survey Responsesigure below maps the location of the respondents:

³ Please note only 61 of the respondents indicated the geographic location of their organisation

National Distribution of Survey Respondents

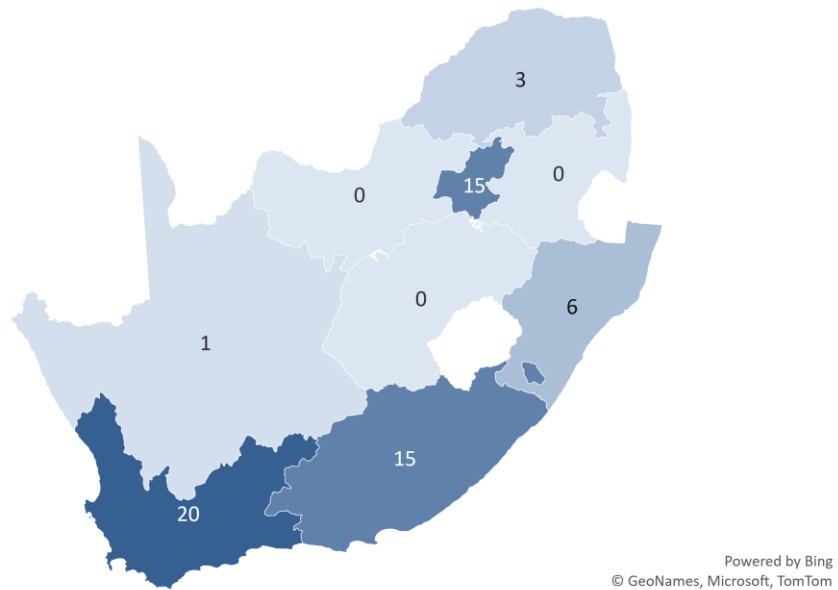


Figure 7 National Distribution of Survey Respondents

Additionally, the geographic focus of the survey respondents⁴ is as follows:

- 22 respondents noted that they were a national organisation
- 13 respondents noted that they were a provincial organisation, and
- 27 respondents noted that they were a local organisation.

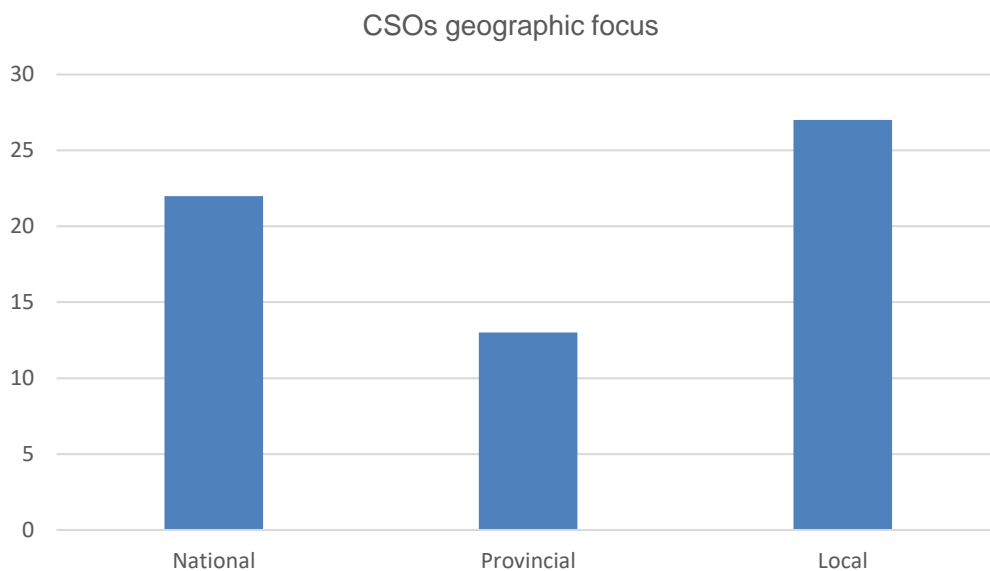


Figure 8 Distribution of the geographic focus of the respondents

⁴ Please note only 62 of the respondents indicated the geographic focus of their organisation

The survey respondents included organisations with a range of objectives. Many organisations aim to promote peace, create conscious and supportive communities, and address issues such as poverty, violence, and inequality. Some organisations, specifically, focus on empowering youth, providing them with skills and opportunities for personal and academic development. Others have a strong emphasis on human rights, particularly the rights of women, girls, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with disabilities. Several organisations prioritize community engagement, self-reliance, and sustainable livelihoods through capacity building, farming, and entrepreneurship. Advocacy for social security, education, health, and the eradication of gender-based violence are also common goals.

Additionally, many organisations express their mission to provide direct services and support to victims of violence, abuse, and crime through counselling, therapeutic work, and shelter provisions. Some organisations focus on promoting citizen participation, political education, and mobilization. The empowerment of individuals through sports, education, mental health support, and skills development is a recurring theme. Furthermore, there are organisations that prioritize environmental awareness, agriculture, and sustainable development. The overarching aim among these visions and goals is to uplift and empower individuals, address social challenges, and create a more equitable and prosperous society.

4.3.2 Focus Group

As noted earlier, there were four provincial focus groups. Based on the analysis in Section 3.1.1, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, and Eastern Cape were the provinces that experienced the highest levels of protest. The other provinces, in comparison, have less significant levels of protest. The focus groups provided a more regional specific perspective on the research study. Each provincial focus group was held separately over a period of 2 weeks. The table below provides a description of the organisations involved in the focus groups.

Table 1 Description of Focus Group Participants

Location of Participants	Description of Participants
Western Cape	Social Services Organisation
	Violence Prevention Organisation
	Development Organisation
Eastern Cape	Faith Based health and behavioural change organisation
	Rural Development Organisation
	Community Development Organisation

Location of Participants	Description of Participants
	Faith Based Rural Development Organisation
KwaZulu-Natal	Community-based organisation
	Violence Prevention Organisation
	Environmental Justice Organisation
	Spatial Justice Organisation
	Community Development Organisation
Gauteng	Social Services Organisation
	Environmental Justice Organisation

4.3.3 Key informant interviews

The research team engaged in semi-structured interviews with a few key informants to supplement the qualitative data collection: 1) An engagement with the lead of a national violence prevention programme being rolled out across 16 locations; and 2) An engagement was with two Gauteng Province COGTA officials who have piloted area-based community development in a few municipalities in the province.

Ethical considerations

In any research, it is important for participants to understand what kind of research they are participating in, what the potential benefits are, and what the risks of participation are. An information sheet and informed consent statement was developed in clear and direct language. The key informants were sent information statements via email, and at the start of their engagements - interviews and/or focus groups, they also had the opportunity to ask questions. The informants were informed that their participation in any engagement would remain anonymous.

4.4 Analysis and Reporting phase

4.4.1 Qualitative data

Data from all semi-structured interviews and focus groups were recorded for reference purposes and subjected to a thematic analysis as informed by the research questions. Interview data (anonymised) was utilised to provide direct quotations selected to exemplify key findings aligned to emerging thematic trends.

4.4.2 Quantitative data

The quantitative data drawn from the survey is important for complementing and triangulating the data collected from the interviews and focus groups. The analysis of the quantitative data illustrates how the CSOs are performing in their role in facilitating related civic participation, democratisation and governance, advocacy, as mediators between the state and communities, and advancing social cohesion and compacting. The quantitative data was analysed descriptively using Microsoft Excel, in relation to the research considerations and questions.

The Findings Chapter contains a synthesis of the data sources in relation to the core research considerations and questions, producing nuanced answers to these questions supported and substantiated by multiple sources of evidence.

4.5 Limitations

In light of the methodology and data collection processes, the following limitations are noted. Where challenges were identified in advance, active steps were taken to mitigate these, including appeals for updated information, documentation, and revised monitoring data.

Stakeholder engagements. The main limitation identified during the data collection stage was the inability to access a range of key stakeholders. The research team could only secure engagements with stakeholders from the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). Other stakeholders were unresponsive. As a result, the initial perspectives we sought on the findings from the literature review were limited to members of one organisation. The intention was to also interview the Deputy Director General (DDG) for the NPO Directorate in the National Department of Social Development (DSD), but the team was unable to secure an engagement due to the DDG's tight schedule.

Absence of comprehensive NPO/NGO contact database. Though the NDA has carried out research on CSOs, including a Review of the State of CSOs in 2008 (Community Agency for Social Enquiry et al., 2008), and a report on the building of capacity in CSOs (Kanyane et al., 2020). The NDA was unable to provide an up-to-date contact database. The NDA noted that, upon review, the contacts they had collected for these previous research projects were outdated with up to 90% of the organisations no longer in existence.

Another avenue the research team pursued was accessing the database of the National and Provincial NGO Coalitions. Unfortunately, despite an extensive search and multiple contact attempts, the research team were only able to reach the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition. The South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) were unresponsive to emails. In the case of the

other Provincial NGO Coalitions, some were no longer operational, and others did not reply to emails or were not contactable via phone.

Other NGO networks/databases were also contacted. Contact were found for the Southern African Non-Governmental Organisation Network (SANGONet) and the Alliance of NPO Networks but access was not provided to the databases of these networks. The Alliance of NPO Networks agreed to distribute the survey to their members, but unfortunately, no response was received from SANGONet.

Limited response to survey. Despite distributing the survey to more than 500+ organisations, only 51 complete responses were received. Further, three provinces are not represented in the survey. Thus, the findings drawn from the survey are limited.

5 Findings

The findings in this section draw on the data from the focus groups, the stakeholder engagements, and the online survey. The findings are structured into three sections:

- i. **Understanding Unrest:** Provides feedback on the CSOs perspective on the recent Civil Unrest, as well as providing insight into what characterizes unrest and how CSOs cope in the midst of the tumultuous events.
- ii. **The Work of CSOs:** Aims to illuminate the process and approaches CSOs undertake to work with and engage communities. It includes the struggles and strategies necessary for CSOs to meet their mandates/vision.
- iii. **Institutional Realities:** Speaks to the state, and how CSOs operate in and around the structures formed by government. This section provides insights into the perceptions that play into how CSOs engage with government, as well as the failings in the State's attempt to reach out to CSOs.

5.1 Understanding Unrest

5.1.1 Looking back to July 2021 Unrest

As a pivotal event in recent history, the July 2021 Civil Unrest, has transformed the collective awareness of the social instability in South Africa. As noted in Section 3, there are varied opinions on the causes/triggers of the unrest. The survey found that CSOs credit the following triggers for the civil unrest:

- **Political factors:** This includes political influences, factions within the ruling party, political motives, and infighting.
- **Socioeconomic factors:** This encompasses poverty, unemployment, inequality, poor economic standing of community members, and lack of access to basic needs.
- **Corruption and mismanagement:** Respondents mentioned corruption, poor leadership in government, lack of government intervention, and poor service delivery.
- **Arrest and incarceration of former President Jacob Zuma:** Some respondents attributed the unrest to the imprisonment of Jacob Zuma for contempt of court.
- **Frustration and disillusionment:** These lend to frustrations, anger, misplaced anger, frustration at not receiving quality services, lack of understanding and communication, lack of interest in the people (communities), and lack of unity.
- **COVID-19 pandemic:** The handling of the pandemic, including lockdown measures and the impact on the economy, was mentioned as a contributing factor.

- Other factors: These include social imbalance, deprivation, slow turnaround of service delivery, racial tensions, lack of government accountability, and negative political influence.

The perceived triggers for unrest, as indicated by the responses, can be summarized as a combination of socio-economic, political, and governance-related factors. Poverty, unemployment, inequality, and poor economic standing were identified as underlying causes of frustration and anger within communities. Negative political influence, factionalism, corruption, and poor leadership were mentioned as contributing factors that incite unrest and disillusionment. Communities expressed frustration with poor service delivery, a perceived lack of government intervention, and miscommunication between the government and the population. The arrest and imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma, opportunistic looting, and attempts to destabilize the country were also mentioned as triggers. Overall, a complex interplay of socio-economic challenges, political factors, and governance issues appear to have fueled the unrest experienced.

Speculations of sabotage were considered in the research media reports on the unrest, as well as brought up in our key stakeholder engagements. The survey found that majority of the CSOs thought that external influences did indeed induce the unrest. Of the 43 responses:

- 31 respondents noted that there are external influences that induce unrest;
- 7 respondents noted that there are no external influences that induce unrest; and
- 5 respondents noted that they were not sure whether there were external influences that induce unrest.

Are there exteneral influences that induce unrest?

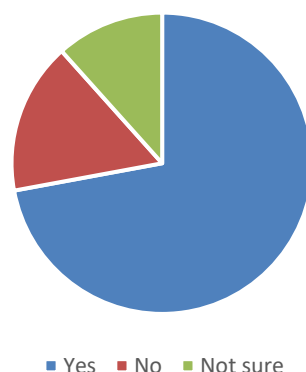


Figure 9 External Influences on Civil Unrest

Much of the media reporting and research during and after noted the failure of the government to gather adequate intel on and control the civil unrest. In light of the events of the July 2021 Unrest, the survey found that CSOs considered the following as the gaps in peacebuilding:

- Lack of open and honest dialogue: Government is seen as the most influential stakeholder in fostering and maintaining social cohesion, but there is a perceived lack of open and honest dialogue led by government. This contributes to a lack of trust and a gap in communication.
- Lack of trust and accountability: There is a lack of trust in the government's ability to build peace and a perception of a lack of accountability for their actions. This includes the militaristic response by the government during the unrest and a lack of transparency and accountability in general.
- Insufficient community engagement and involvement: There is a need for proper community engagements, community mediation, and community dialogue. The involvement of community governance structures and grassroots-level action is desired for effective peacebuilding.
- Financial constraints: Organizations that play a role in peacebuilding have suffered financially, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lack of funds and resources hinder their ability to address peacebuilding effectively.
- Lack of leadership and communication: There is a perceived lack of leadership from both the government and communities. Effective communication, dialogue, and education are seen as essential for peacebuilding. There is a need for bridging the gap between the people and the government.

- Disconnect between police and community: The gap between the police and the community, with limited community dialogue and trust-building initiatives, hampers peacebuilding efforts.
- Political factors: Political differences, corruption, and self-serving agendas among political leaders contribute to the gaps in peacebuilding. The focus on race issues and the neglect of service delivery failures also impacts peacebuilding.
- Lack of peace education: The absence of peace education and proactive information about violence and its consequences contributes to gaps in peacebuilding. There is a need to address this lack of knowledge and challenge authority through non-violent means.
- Ineffective intervention: There is a perception of poor intervention from the government and law enforcement agencies during the unrest, which creates a gap in peacebuilding.
- Lack of sustained change: Many respondents feel that despite the impact of the unrest, there has been little meaningful change in addressing the underlying issues and building lasting peace.

The lack of open and honest dialogue led by the government results in a deficit of trust and a perceived lack of political will to address the underlying issues. Community engagement and involvement at the grassroots level, as well as community mediation and accountability, are seen as essential for building peace. There is a need for proper communication, community dialogue, and transparency to bridge the gap between government and the people. Financial constraints and the focus on other priorities, such as COVID-19, have hindered the capacity of peacebuilding organizations. Additionally, there is a disconnect between political leaders and the community, a lack of leadership, and a sense of frustration and anger that has eroded peace and trust. The absence of appropriate procedures, poor intervention from government and law enforcement agencies, and a lack of peace education contribute to the gaps in peacebuilding efforts.

As will be reiterated in the following section, preventative measures are important to consider. There are ecological risk factors resulting in unrest. Despite being unplanned or not purely spontaneous, these risk factors make unrest a likely outcome. The survey found that CSOs identified the following issues in response to discontent, which results in unrest:

- Lack of consistency and preparedness: There is a perceived lack of consistency in social cohesion programming and contracting, and a lack of preparation for unforeseen circumstances. This prevents proactive and effective responses to discontent.

- Poverty, unemployment, and lack of service delivery: Discontent is fueled by the failure of government to alleviate poverty, create jobs, and deliver basic municipal services. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and poor infrastructure contribute to growing dissatisfaction.
- Weak intelligence and resource allocation: There is a lack of effective intelligence gathering and timely resource allocation by the government. This hinders proactive intervention and exacerbates discontent.
- Lack of identification of underlying causes: A gap exists in addressing the root causes of the discontent. Failure to identify and address the underlying issues renders response efforts ineffective.
- Lack of responsiveness and slow response-rates: The response to discontent is sometimes minimal or policy-heavy, resulting in slow-moving actions. This lack of responsiveness and the slow rate of response undermines the effectiveness of addressing the concerns of communities.
- Corruption and lack of accountability: The continuous presence of corruption and a perceived lack of accountability within the government create a gap between the government and citizens. This erodes trust and exacerbates discontent.
- Communication and engagement gaps: There is a lack of effective communication and engagement between government and the population. Participatory consultations, community involvement, and transparent communication are lacking, hindering effective response.
- Lack of leadership and responsibility: There is a perception of a lack of leadership and responsibility, both from the government and the communities. Effective leadership skills and taking responsibility for actions and decisions are seen as essential to address discontent.
- Insufficient resources and funding: There is a need for more resources (capacity and financial) to address the underlying issues contributing to discontent. Insufficient funds limit the ability to implement effective solutions.
- Failure to listen and understand the people: There is a gap in listening to and understanding the voices on the ground. Failure to acknowledge and respond to the concerns and expectations of the people adds to the discontent.
- Lack of education and awareness: The lack of education and awareness contribute to discontent, as people may resort to violence when they feel unheard or desperate. Providing education and raising awareness on non-violent means of addressing concerns is crucial.

- Lack of consequences for wrongdoing: There is a perception that there are no consequences for those involved in corruption and mismanagement. This lack of accountability further fuels discontent.
- Absence of community participation: Lack of community participation and engagement in decision-making processes contribute to the gap in response to discontent. Facilitating meaningful community-led solutions is seen as important.
- Inadequate security apparatus and governance: There is a call for improved security apparatus, accountable governance, and improved service delivery to address discontent effectively.
- Empty promises and lack of trust: Empty promises from officials and a lack of trust in the government contribute to the gap in response to discontent. Building trust through transparency, consistency, and taking responsibility is crucial.

There is a lack of consistency in social cohesion programming and a loss of moral regeneration, resulting in a failure to address the underlying causes of discontent. Stakeholders are called upon to collaborate and develop multi-sector proactive responses. Secondly, there is a deep sense of hunger, desperation, and hopelessness among the population, coupled with a lack of awareness of the root causes of their discontent. Dissatisfaction with the delivery of basic municipal services, high levels of poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructure, and unfulfilled political promises further contribute to the growing frustration. The failure of the government to alleviate poverty, create jobs, address corruption, and be accountable to the people widens the gap between the government and the citizens. There is a need for proactive intervention, improved intelligence, and timely allocation of resources. Leaders are urged to consider the consequences of their actions, as the conditions of hunger and deprivation create a ticking time bomb. Moreover, the lack of proper identification of the problems and a policy-heavy, slow-moving response hinders effective solutions. Improved communication, participatory consultations, accountable governance, and inclusive decision-making processes are essential for bridging the gap and addressing the discontent.

Whilst solutions to the issues of unrest and promoting peace cannot be left solely to CSOs, they do provide crucial insight into what is important to prioritize. The survey found that CSOs think *possible resolution of the gaps in peace keeping efforts are:*

- Funding and supporting competent civil society organizations.
- Engaging in dialogues, consultations, and community engagement.
- Implementing feeding schemes and expanding educational opportunities.

- Honoring promises made by political parties and focusing on job creation.
- Eliminating exploitative systems like tenders and labor brokers.
- Providing government support for rebuilding and creating job opportunities.
- Utilizing community first responders and mediators.
- Emphasizing sustainable job creation, particularly for the youth.
- Implementing transparent and participatory processes for service delivery.
- Addressing inequality and providing economic opportunities.
- Creating platforms for understanding, dialogue, and participatory governance.
- Collaborating with and empowering existing community structures.
- Holding individuals accountable for wrongdoing and ensuring consequences.
- Improving governance practices and increasing transparency.
- Promoting ethical leadership and prioritizing service to the people.
- Fostering collaborations between government and civil society organizations.
- Enhancing communication channels and increasing visibility of government sectors.
- Opening platforms for inclusive dialogues and equitable distribution of resources.
- Empowering youth through education and leadership initiatives.
- Collaborating on service delivery actions to meet community needs.

To address the identified gaps, a multifaceted approach is necessary. Firstly, it is crucial to provide funding to competent CSOs and empower existing community structures to foster community engagement and collaboration. This should be accompanied by the establishment of platforms for understanding, public consultation, and inclusive decision-making processes. Simultaneously, dialogue, education, and prompt on-the-ground action from the government are crucial. Political parties must honour their electoral promises and prioritise job creation while expanding economic opportunities with a focus on reducing inequality and fostering sustainable employment. Building an Early Warning System and a Rapid Response Mechanism at the local level involving communities can effectively address discontent. Restoring confidence in political processes, enhancing governance, and holding authorities accountable are vital steps towards bridging the gaps. Ultimately, achieving meaningful progress requires a shift towards improved government ethics, selflessness among those in power, and a steadfast commitment to serving the interests of the people. Collaboration, equitable distribution of resources, and a prioritization of service delivery actions are indispensable components of a comprehensive solution.

5.1.2 Realities of Unrest

Unrest or Protest

Having dissected the trends and triggers of protest (in the literature review) and the July 2021 Civil Unrest (in the section above), this section aims to discern the difference (if there is one) between unrest and protest. In the literature review, disruptive and violent protests were described as resulting in levels of economic disruption and strain to social cohesion, similar to civil unrest. The participants in the focus groups provided their perspective on the distinction. The perspectives may support thinking with regards to policy focussed on peace-making during unrest and protest.

For some, the distinction between protest and unrest is clear: civil unrest describes a group event/protest that is unplanned formation and is untargeted, whereas protests are planned and directed to a specific entity or authority. Yet, as outlined in the literature review, and corroborated by some members of the focus groups, protests can often be co-opted by different parties, with alternative agendas, resulting in a level of disruption akin to civil unrest (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Field worker at an Eastern Cape Rural Development Organisation, 2023).

Understandably the complexities of the motivations behind and methods of protest result in some taking a more convoluted view on the line between protest and unrest. Considering the level of disruption that protests cause, the resulting impacts are viewed as a form of civil unrest by some organisations. Particularly important is that in some contexts, protests (particularly service delivery protests and taxi strikes) are consistently volatile, and susceptible to violence. When communities regularly experience their movements being impeded due to blockades, or experience harassment – which include the threat and act of violence – at the hands of protestors, this results in the same community-wide distrust and social fragmentation typified by civil unrest. This division is further stoked when some community members do not understand the goals and reason for protests. These members simply see protestors destroying property, creating disruption, and acting violently (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

These communities do not face the same levels of vigilantism and retaliation (against protestors) that occurred during the July 2021 unrest, but many of the focus group participants noted that there is a level of frustration that is still equally concerning (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Examples in Western Cape

The discussion on the distinction between unrest and protest raised other disruptive and violent conversations. In the case of the Western Cape, gang violence was highlighted as a particular concern. This consistent level of violence creates a level of distress that mimics unrest, and similar to civil unrest, communities become divided, and trust is eroded (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Notably, in 2019 President Ramaphosa deployed the SANDF to support the anti-gang violence efforts of the Cape Town police force (Felix, 2019; Hendricks, 2020), which was the same tactic relied on by the President during the July 2021 Civil Unrest (Erasmus, 2021). In the case of Cape Town, the magnitude of violence and murder had reached levels that garnered national attention. Whilst the efficacy of the SANDF in deterring gangsterism is under question, their deployment aligns to one participant's perspective that in the Western Cape, "gangsterism is a much bigger reality than protests."

Further, the participant determined that, "gang violence should not be separated [from protest] because many times the gangsters stepped in as a form of protest," and, "just because it's not tyres and burning, and blocking of roads, visibly, doesn't mean it's safe." Thus, as long as their communities and livelihoods are negatively affected, impacted civilians do not differentiate between the impacts of gang-related violence or political issues (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Additionally, some participants drew a link between the root cause of unrest and gang violence – the deeper-rooted socioeconomic challenges within communities. Despite these perspectives, one participant held the view that instances of violent protest and gang violence should be differentiated and remain as separate concerns to be dealt with:

"We cannot dispute the fact that these two aspects are interrelated, but my view, my opinion is based on the fact of context. So, the context in which both of these aspects manifest. So, when we talk about protests and service delivery protests, for instance, we could say that it's really targeted at a government, body or institution, it's really targeted at decision-makers. Whereas when we talk about gang violence, it's organized activities where it would be towards others. If you talk about killings, or maybe organized crime where it would maybe be trying to commit a crime so that they can gain monetary aspects as a result of that [...] Although the outcomes or the impact of both these aspects are the same and cannot be separated. It still creates unrest, it still results in trauma and harm to others and results, even with the protests as much as it might be targeted at a governmental body." (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

Thus, when considering the aftermath of violent protest and gang violence, despite differentiating between the two, all agree that the impact is the same. Therefore, providing support in the aftermath of these events may look the same. As will be noted later, some organisations rely on providing the same trauma and victim support for those who have been affected by gang violence and violent protest (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Opportunistic and Disruptive

Ocean View and Masipumelele are two townships about 8 kilometres apart from each other. These townships, like many across the country, experienced a number of disruptive and violent protests (Chiguvare et al., 2015; GroundUp, 2015; GroundUp Staff, 2015; Isaacs, 2023; Mtyala et al., 2005; Nombembe, 2020; Ntongana, 2017; Swingler, 2017). A social service organisation working in the area noted that when one township experiences a shutdown due to protest, the other is likely to be impacted. Additionally, the organisation questions the route of some of the protests:

“We often hear the government saying, ‘Oh, but there were opportunists who were taking advantage of a legitimate civil unrest.’ It’s all orchestrated gangs and randomly suddenly appear. Gangs are orchestrated organized structures, they organizations[...] they are bodies so let’s call them a collective body. So gangs are collective body, in our society. And when there is a protest, the gangs are used to fuel that and often it’s a diversion for their nefarious things that they want to do and we see this in Ocean View. There will be a service delivery protests stop uttered at the entrance of Ocean View. And meanwhile, we know that to divert police resources so that a gang activity or a gang killing can take place in another part of the suburb. So there’s a definite symbiosis between unrest and the gangs. The gangs are often used as foot soldiers. The children are often used as foot soldiers because of the Child Justice Act and criminal capacity and all those things. So children are often used by the gangsters. We’ve got to look at all of this within the socio economic realities of our country. And to separate it anything that causes harm or disruption to society should be we feel should be classified and targeted by the government, not as their separate civil unrest. Look at civil service delivery protests, let’s look at this. It’s all orchestrated for a specific reason. And there’s reasons are legitimate and because of the history of our country, we are not heard, unless we resort to violence. We are not heard in general, there’s no accountability from the top we’re seeing people getting away literally with murder. So when does your average person have a chance of being heard other than through violence and the gangs are very much used. In this, as often termed by Minister Cele, there is the third force or opportunistic. I think that’s

disingenuous, because the government actually lives in the same country we live in. And if we can all figure out that this isn't an opportunistic or third force, it is just people in our country who are desperate, frustrated, not heard. I think we need to lump it all under one thing. It results in trauma, danger, damage, economically, and emotionally to people, I think it's disingenuous to try and put it as separate entities, it's all organized.” (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

Thus, the interrelatedness of violence in our society whether it be GBV, gang violence, corruption, protest, or unrest, is clear. In trying to see where CSOs operate in this realm, there needs to be room to acknowledge that the solutions do not sit in one specific social or developmental sphere and may involve investing in multiple strategies, even if they seem unrelated to unrest.

Examples in Eastern Cape

In the case of the Eastern Cape, which is largely rural, the nature of unrest differs somewhat from what was experienced in July 2021. One participant from a community development organisation emphasized that there is a dichotomy between rural versus urban protests:

“In the city, just from our own experience living in the city, it [protest] does always, inevitably become violent, and completely out of order. And yes, there are multiple agendas. So, what may start off as something peaceful, you then obviously get the criminal element into that. Whereas Rural protest would be very specific, very targeted. And by and large, peaceful, those are the reports that we usually get.” (Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023)

However, one Faith-based rural organisation described the major disruptions that occurred in the small town (<7000 people) of Port St John’s when taxi owners and community members blockaded the road for a number of days. Their grievances were targeted at the local mayoral council, which had a history of only appointing people from a magisterial district outside of the town. The reality for rural dwellers is that they have to travel to regional service centres – larger towns/cities that provide them access to health services, social services etc – in order to get their essential services. By blockading the road, they prevented people from travelling to Mthatha (the nearest regional service centre) to access this essential services. There is a significant impact on rural citizens who may need to travel to access life-preserving/saving healthcare and other essential services. When thinking about protest and unrest, a broader perspective that acknowledges these associated and/or resultant challenges is necessary (Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023).

While many of the participating organisations in the Eastern Cape focus group described the rural areas as peaceful, another example of violent unrest in the province was described. Majola, a village in Port St Johns, has heightened levels of violence (Cakata, 2022; eNCA, 2023; *Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023*; Jubase, 2023; Mehlwana, 2023). One participant described the string of killings that have left people displaced. In order to escape the violence, many have sought refuge in neighbouring villages. In this instance, the CSO tries to track these displaced community members to ensure that they have clothes, food and are being welcomed in their safe havens. The participant described the root of the violence is a stock theft, one source notes that this “war” has been going on for 50 years (Carte Blanche, 2022). The participant noted that they have joined forces with other organisations in the area to host a youth day soccer event this year. This is the first instance of what is likely to be along journey of building social cohesion in the area (*Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023*).

The example of Majola demonstrates how persistent and escalated forms of violence can be classified as a manifestation of unrest. This highlights the importance of carefully considering historical patterns of violence when trying to engage peace-keeping efforts in a particular area.

Fighting for resources

“There's a lack of these different role players and stakeholders working together. So, when I mentioned these different role players and stakeholders, I mentioned your political parties. I mentioned your ward forums, your street committee, ward committees, your business sector, all of these different players, there's a lack of working together.” (*Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023*).

The preceding demonstrates the prevalence of fragmentation as a formidable obstacle across various sectors. The analysis by the participant reveals that the underlying cause of the lack of unity among the mentioned stakeholders lies in conflicting and competing interests. These stakeholders derive advantages from the current state of affairs (discontent, lack of service delivery etc.), as it is within this framework that they wield power and gain access to resources. Collaborating towards a transformed and more peaceful community could potentially impact their livelihoods (*Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023*; Lead at Eastern Cape Spatial Justice Organisation, 2023).

Taking a pessimistic view, another participant holds the belief that the pursuit of resources and power will prevent the transformation of communities into non-violent entities, even if fundamental grievances such as service delivery, poverty, and unemployment are effectively addressed. When individuals' means of subsistence are tied to violent activities, those who benefit from such actions will prioritize their self-interest over the attainment of peace.

Considering this perspective, the focus on youth development becomes crucial, as it will be further examined in this chapter (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Lead at Eastern Cape Spatial Justice Organisation, 2023).

The toll on workers in CSOs

Being involved in or nearby a protest has undue harm on the members of a CSO. This can make it difficult for them to do their work and provide support in the midst of violent protest.

“Almost everyone on our team has been in a service delivery protest where they've had to escape through back windows or busses, or one colleague was on a bus that was set on fire. And what that does is the impact then is when we come into work, we are in a state of trauma ourselves, and we are supposed to help other people deal with their trauma. Because we are also citizens, besides being professionals, the Western Cape in itself is a hotspot. In fact, the whole country is a hotspot because we all are living in a constant state of okay, when is the next one going to happen?” (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Similar to community members, these workers can become demoralized and demotivated when constantly experiencing upheaval as a result of protest. In trying to provide aid they are at risk and may end up in harm's way. One participant from a social justice organization in Durban noted that even when they are at protests simply to act as observers, they have been boxed with the protest members, attacked, and arrested by police. The literature review noted the importance of having CSOs monitor the happenings in and around protests, but even doing this might result in harm to CSO workers/members (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023).

5.2 The Work of CSOs

5.2.1 Bringing people together

As noted above, in the aftermath of unrest, the unsettling events that result in physical and psychological harm unsettle and break down the cohesion in already fragmented communities. One participant in the focus group, a social service organisation in the Western Cape, asserted that they work in the aftermath of unrest by helping their clients to process and reflect their feelings. Whether directly or indirectly, the impact of unrest produces multiple victims, and this organisation aims to mitigate the emotional after-effects experienced by the victims.

One tool this organisation uses to facilitate the processing are small group sessions:

“And the only role we could play in that [protest] was we held small groups of people at our office up to six or seven people at a time, neutral venue in the middle, where people could just talk through the trauma response and just express themselves.” (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Other participating CSOs confirmed that bringing together community members, whether through community dialogues, or cultural events, is a key tactic toward facilitating violence prevention and communal understanding. Additionally, the survey found that most CSOs believe they play a role in facilitating peacebuilding before and during unrest. These peacebuilding efforts include the community activities described above along with other initiatives. Of the 44 responses:

- 40 respondents noted that their organisations can play a role in facilitating peacebuilding during and/or before unrest.
 - Some organisations have developed programs and are ready to execute them pending funding, showcasing their proactive approach. Others have members with expertise in social cohesion who can facilitate peacebuilding efforts. Several organizations focus on providing sensitization training, health services, and support to marginalized communities, such as the LGBTQI+ community, which contributes to building understanding and reducing conflicts. Capacity building, community mobilization, and creating safer spaces for youth and children are also identified as means to reduce potential future conflicts. Grassroots organizations emphasize their role in facilitating dialogue, education, addressing discontent, and being a trusted and accountable voice within their communities. Additionally, some CSOs participate in building Early Warning Systems and Rapid Response mechanisms involving community leaders and engaging in crime prevention dialogues. Overall, CSOs contribute to peacebuilding through awareness campaigns, dialogue with stakeholders, civic education, and creating agency for communities to have their voices heard.
- 2 respondents noted that their organisations cannot play a role in facilitating peacebuilding during and/or before unrest.

- 2 respondents noted that their organisations could potentially play a role in peacebuilding during and/or before unrest.

Can your organisation play a role in facilitating peacebuilding

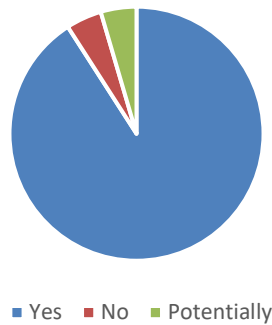


Figure 10 CSOs Facilitating Peacebuilding

CSOs have played a crucial role in supporting their communities in the aftermath of civil unrest. Along with the trauma support services mentioned above, CSOs have hosted intergenerational dialogues and community townhall debriefing sessions to promote healing and understanding. Many organizations have provided relief through the distribution of food parcels, supplies packs, and food vouchers, addressing immediate needs and ensuring food security. CSOs have focused on empowering youth through skills training and promoting physical education to improve mental health and well-being. Additionally, they have engaged in community clean-up initiatives, established food gardens, and provided livelihood support to mitigate the economic impact of the unrest. CSOs have acted as mediators, working to address dissatisfaction with local governance and promoting transparent leadership. They have advocated for change and effective dialogue between communities and law enforcement, and have collaborated with community structures, such as CPFs, in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Overall, CSOs have demonstrated their commitment to supporting their communities and fostering resilience in the face of civil unrest (Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023; Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Another interesting approach to facilitation described by one CSO is working to ensure that the protests are coherent. As noted in Section 5.1.2 (Examples in Eastern Cape), discord in agendas can lead to violence during protest. One rural development organisation uses the approach of bringing the relevant leaders and stakeholders together before the protest. In these engagements the goals/purpose of the protest is discussed to ensure that the relevant authority can be presented with a coherent list of grievances. They emphasize that protest is

a right of citizens in a democratic society and encourage citizens to present their grievances strategically. The approach of educating citizens in strategic civic engagement is further explored in the section below (Field worker at an Eastern Cape Rural Development Organisation, 2023; Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023).

There are some complexities that need to be considered when engaging different parties within a community. A Western Cape organisation (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023) describes these complexities through the example of the suburb of Hout Bay, Cape Town. Hout Bay includes Imizamo Yethu, a mostly black informal settlement; Hangberg, a mostly coloured area; as well as affluent 'white' areas. Like much of the Western Cape, Hout Bay is divided along racial lines, which is indicative in what the participant mentioned: "Often in the Western Cape, [...] our service delivery protests are along racial lines and political lines." therefore, particular care is taken in strategizing how to navigate these rifts, as indicated by the participant, "so for us to be seen as neutral we cannot be seen to be aligning with one particular side or other side."

The participant continues:

"Every time there's protests, it results in our whole valley [of Hout Bay] being cut off: we can't leave, we can't move, we are all kind of stuck [...] And I think it was in 2020, we [Hout Bay] were shut off from the rest of Cape Town for four days due to civil unrest."

It is in this context the participants established small groups, but it is also because of this context that the participant had to take particular care:

"[During the small groups] we in no way could say, 'Okay, well, we disagree, or we agree.' We create a space for people to try and make sense of the violence. And that we found helped because generally people were just like, angry and resorted to: 'Well, why do they always burn schools? Why do they always burn libraries', you know, that kind of constant rhetoric. And it created a space for people from all three communities to actually come together? And we just facilitated those conversations. We cannot do anything further. Because in the past, and we have, it has resulted in threats on our own lives."

This serves as an illustration of the intricate position occupied by CSOs as both peacemakers and peacekeepers. Taking sides in conflicts not only runs the risk of being ostracized from communities but also exposes the organization to potential harassment. Consequently, fostering unity and reconciliation among community members necessitates a profound comprehension of the contextual dynamics. It is this comprehensive understanding that the

state can leverage as they strive to engage effectively within communities (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Preventative measures

Prevention is a crucial means to ensure that communities do not engage in activities leading to civil unrest. As one interviewee notes:

“Everyone keeps shouting, oh, we need more police. We need more police. We don't need more police. The police are a reactionary response to an event that has already happened. We need more prevention programs,”. In one organisation which deals with victims of violence, of the 20+ people working there, only one person is focussed specifically on prevention, as the realities of high-levels of violence and resulting trauma make it harder to shift the already limited resources to prevention programmes (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Childhood Development and Education

There is consensus regarding the importance of education. Concerns regarding the basic education curriculum were stated by multiple interviewees. The need for reform of the subject of Life Orientation was particularly emphasized, “we need the teachers who are being asked to teach life orientation to actually be trained to teach life orientation [...] the people who are being asked to teach this are so out of touch with the realities”. In the programme mentioned above, the organisation when so far as to take over the teaching of Life Orientation to ensure they addressed issues relevant to the students, and deal with the intergenerational trauma and cycles of violence (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

The family

The ecological framework makes clear that familial relationships are a crucial factor in the likelihood of collective violence. One interviewee corroborated this perspective, highlighting that the breakdown of our families leads to the lawlessness that inevitably leads to acts of collective violence (Focus Group with Gauteng CSOs, 2023). Another notes that parents may reinforce negative views of the government, stating that, “The government does nothing for you”, emphasizing that the state does not care. Further, the case of collective violence, like gangsterism, is described as a result of broken family relationships, perpetuating a cycle of violence, and this violence in the home is increasing (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Additionally, there is the element of intergenerational trauma – trauma being passed from one generation to the next. It is necessary to deal with this trauma, as it leads to the collective

violence that plagues our communities. But one interviewee deems it important to provide preventative services to all communities, and not just communities that show a history of high levels of collective violence and unrest, as the mindset is transferred to everyone (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Civic Education

A crucial role that CSOs play is providing citizens with civic education. Whilst having and maintaining free and democratic elections is important for ensuring socio-political stability, a lack of understanding of how government operates can still lead to community dissatisfaction. Civic education allows communities to develop tactics that divert them from violent protests to using the formal structures and procedures to have their voices heard (Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with Gauteng Focus Group CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023).

Thus, some CSOs emphasize the importance of clarifying the roles and mandates of the three spheres of government (local, provincial, and national) and various government departments; ensuring that communities address their grievances with the correct authorities. An interviewee from a community development organisation in Durban noted:

“[...] in some instances, the community has lacked the capacity to engage the government effectively. Sometimes an issue will happen, that is actually being targeted to the wrong sector of the government. So, we try to really engage this peacebuilding, we have put up in place peacebuilding teams that can immediately come in to be able to indicate the door to which this grievance should be addressed. It is not that we are preventing anything, but we are educating them on how to hold the government to account.” (Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023)

Further, having citizens understand how the spheres of government interact and the ways in which power is challenged when one may reside in a ward run by one party, a province run by another party, and the country governed by another party. This results in some delays in the transfer of resources across the spheres of government, due to political differences. With citizens knowing this, they can understand the political causes for delays in service delivery (Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023).

Civic education is also seen as a means to empower communities to get their voices heard in a peaceful manner. Understanding the planning and budgeting processes is of utmost importance in terms of educating communities. These crucial tools determine the content and timing of development and infrastructural projects, which is often the focus of concerns of

communities. This education also includes training and equipping communities to understand their rights, their responsibilities as citizens, understanding how local government operates, and being able to speak the language of government officials, which one interviewee described as getting communities to be “boardroom ready” –

“Another key strategy of ours [is] making communities boardroom-ready. So, they can protest, [...] but once you get into the boardroom, if you've been fighting to get into a meeting, [...] you can't shout ANC, Viva DA in the meeting, you have to have a different tactic. You have to have different information. And you need to be able to engage government in a way that makes them understand what the issues are that you're bringing to the table.” (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

However, there are limitations to the extent that capacity building can ease communities' frustrations: “The realities of the communities are, yes, we are capacitated, but local government is still not working. So, we rather burn because that's what they understand,” (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Social audits, a process which some CSOs engaged in with the communities, were highlighted as a means for the community to understand the capabilities they have and what they lack in the community. Further, one organisation strengthens community knowledge by engaging them in asset mapping, household enumeration and other data collection methods, so that they have a strong numerical case in order to back up their grievances with local government (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

As a means to emphasize continuous civic education and engagement one CSO even engages the communities and relevant stakeholders on relevant bills. For example, the CSO has brought parties together to discuss the electoral amendment bill (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

Community Visioning

Community visioning is seen as a tool for creating a consensus across different groups within the community. Furthermore, some people note how taking the time to do a social inquiry/audit followed by a community visioning activity, allows communities to see that their communities do have positive attributes and opportunities, as well encouraging the community to be self-sustaining. Encouraging communities to be self-sustaining and not government reliant is a perspective that many of the organisations interviewed hold (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023).

For one organisation, the process of community visioning includes: “Unpack[ing] the causes of violence, the causes of crime – hunger, poverty, having nothing to do, concentration, densely populated communities. So now let’s start looking at the solutions: What do you think should happen? What kind of vision or community do you want to have now we are doing community visioning”. This is all done ensuring that various stakeholders are engaged: religious and interfaith groups, taxi associations, informal traders, and so on (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

5.2.2 Community Entry

A CSO entering a community can be a tricky endeavour. Political tensions and gatekeeping require CSOs to be strategic when engaging communities. However, affiliating the organisation with a political party or other types of organisations and influential parties is not a desired route. Rather, the CSOs look for other means of entry like connecting with ward councillors, CSOs and CBOs, social activists and community forums within the community (Field worker at an Eastern Cape Rural Development Organisation, 2023; Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs; 2023).

More established organisations often circumvent this process, where, in many cases, members/leaders of the community approach them. Thus, any sense of distrust, and potential gatekeeping can be overcome by the collaborative contracting between/among community leaders. Ultimately, many of the organisations emphasized working with and not for community leaders/members (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023).

5.2.3 Identifying community leaders and stakeholders

For those looking to enter a community, a crucial step for CSOs that do not reside in the respective communities they engage with, is identifying formal or informal community leaders. The approach of one Eastern Cape community development organisation is to see who the “actual champions and ambassadors” in the community are (Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023). They highlight the importance of recognizing that the key figure who can foster peace within a community may not necessarily be a traditional leader or politician. Instead, it could be an individual(s) from the community who commands respect and admiration, whose words carry weight, and who possesses the ability to unite people through peaceful dialogue (Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023). Alternately, as mentioned earlier, certain organizations are approached by community leaders seeking collaboration. To ensure the credibility and legitimacy of these leaders, organizations undertake a vetting process as part of their due diligence to verify the authority they claim to hold (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023). Additionally, identifying the stakeholders in the community is essential in ensuring deliberate and meaningful public participation. As one interviewee from a violence prevention organisation described:

Firstly, we've done a social inquire. We are gathering all peacemakers in the community, your neighbourhood watch, community police forum, your police services [...]. We are gathering all the stakeholders with Department of Community Safety, and we are asking them, what seems to be the issue because resources and money is put into peace building. But what seems to be the problem? Let's unpack this. (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

5.2.4 Community engagement

The survey found that locally focused organisations engage with their communities through various means to foster collaboration and address community needs. They prioritize face-to-face interactions, community mobilization, and training to raise awareness on issues like GBV and general public education with the aim to be catalysts for positive change, encouraging community members to uplift and develop themselves. They actively engage with beneficiaries through platforms such as sports activities, dialogues, seminars, community outreach, and workshops. They also utilize community health workers and door-to-door interventions to reach individuals and provide assistance.

These organisations establish connections through street committees, parent meetings, and community awareness events. They actively participate in clinic committees, community forums, and local communication channels like WhatsApp groups. By engaging with traditional

leaders, operational managers, and local clinics, they gain access to the community and build relationships. They employ various communication channels, including electronic mail, public forums, and civic assemblies. Home visits, home-based care, and awareness campaigns are also employed to provide care, support, and education to victims of crime and violence. Additionally, organisations utilize local media, social media, and word-of-mouth interactions to connect with community members and disseminate information about their services.

Overall, locally focused organisations employ a multi-faceted approach to engage with their relevant communities, utilizing both traditional and innovative methods to establish relationships, raise awareness, and provide support.

5.2.5 Resource Constraints

It is evident that CSOs need resources to provide services and support to communities. The survey found that CSOs are lacking in various resources. Of the 48 that responded about their resource constraints:

- 35 respondents noted that they were lacking in funding;
- 17 respondents noted that they were short on staff and/or required more human resources; and
- 13 respondents noted that they require an office space or buildings to operate out of
 - **NB: The number of responses above does not equal to the total of 48 noted at the beginning; most organisations identified more than one resource requirement.**

While, these were the most referenced resources, there were other things noted, such as access to the internet and (to a lesser extent) transport.

Many of the survey respondents further clarified that they are struggling to secure sufficient financial resources to support their operations, programs, and staff. Limited 'spinal' funding affects the ability to execute planned objectives, meet monthly obligations, pay staff, and maintain stable offices. Some organisations rely on government funding, which is often limited or inadequate. In addition to funding, human resources is another significant obstacle. Organisations mentioned difficulties in affording proper staff, limited personnel in funded programs, the need for more qualified personnel, and the reliance on volunteers to supplement the workforce. Additionally, they identified transportation challenges, lack of office space, equipment limitations, and the need for administrative training.

5.2.6 Achieving their mandate

Despite the resource limitations, the survey found that many organisations are still able to achieve their mandate/vision, albeit at times, in part. Some organisations have faced challenges in securing funding but have still managed to reach a significant number of individuals and communities. For example, one organisation had part-time funding years ago for a year-long project, but despite zero funding, they were able to reach over 2,000 youth in different schools and wards. Another organisation has been continually focused on funding for core operations and has made progress in training communities, ward committees, community influencers, members of the police force, and healthcare professionals. They have also provided support to women in sexual violence and gender-based violence cases, working with community-based organisations to strengthen advocacy for women's rights.

On the other hand, there are organisations that have made exceptional progress and achieved their annual targets. These organisations have been successful in raising funds, implementing community development programs, and making significant strides in various areas. For instance, one organisation has achieved remarkable success in empowering youth through computer training, life skills development, vocational training, and other programs. They have facilitated visits by government officials to international institutions and made inroads in addressing social issues such as violence, xenophobia, and racism. Similarly, another organisation has achieved substantial progress over the past 20 years in areas like water and sanitation, health improvement, agriculture, job creation, and capacity building.

Some organisations have, however, faced significant challenges related to funding and operating optimally. Despite having good reputations and track records, they struggle to secure sufficient resources to support their initiatives fully. The lack of funding has affected their ability to accomplish their vision, and they have had to reduce targets or operate on a smaller scale. These organisations recognize the importance of fundraising, community support, and partnerships to overcome these challenges.

Overall, the survey responses indicate a range of success levels in achieving organisational visions. While some organisations have made significant progress, reached their targets, and established strong partnerships, others have faced funding difficulties and operated on a smaller scale. The ability to secure funding, engage with the community, build partnerships, and adapt to external challenges plays a crucial role in the level of success achieved by these organisations.

5.2.7 Knowledge dissemination

Knowledge dissemination is a way in which larger, more established organisations can provide support to other organisations and the community leaders identified. Community engagement, asset based community development/management, action-based research tools, re-blocking, sustainable livelihoods analysis and social auditing are the skills the organisations mentioned training leaders in (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023). One interviewee described their organisation's approach as follows:

“So, we start off, essentially, with knowing yourself. And the reason I'm describing the content to you, is because this underpins our developmental approach. Throughout our work, our work is really focused on leaders getting to know their own strengths, getting to know their own challenges, getting to understand the concept of value driven leadership because they in for us lies the huge challenge facing South Africa at the moment, we don't have a value driven leadership leading this country.” (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

This organisation also noted the complexity in training identified leaders:

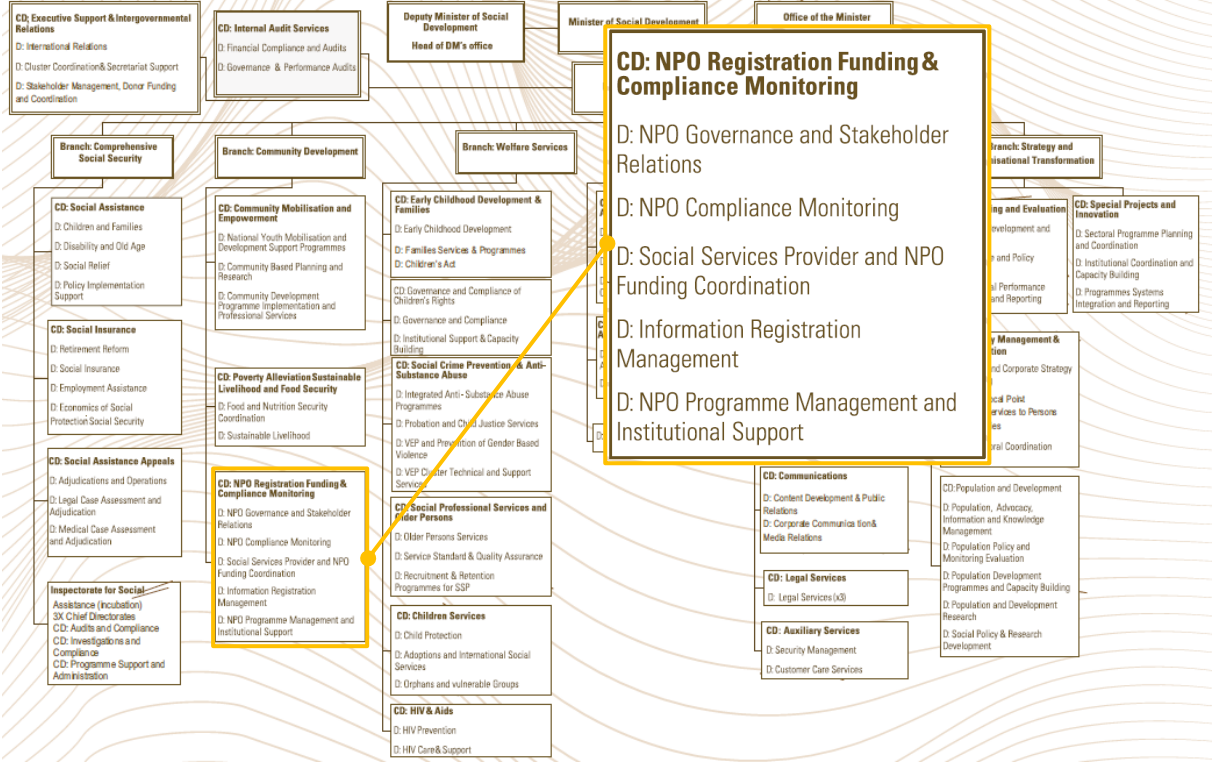
“people just put up their hands, they've been identified by fellow community residents to say – can you lead us, can you represent us – and people haven't had prior opportunities to engage in understanding: what is an organisation, what are the different forms, the legal entities and so on.” (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

In their aim to capacitate communities and community based organisations, the CSOs have to provide leaders with a “toolbox” for developing their community; they can “advocate from an informed opinion”. Further, the organisation interviewed acknowledges that the leaders and organisations trained are then “information hubs in the community” (Focus Group Session 2 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

5.3 Institutional Realities

The first point of entry for non-profit CSOs that choose to formalize is the NPO Directorate, located under the Community Development Branch in the Department of Social Development (DSD), as shown in *Source: DSD Annual Report 2022* Figure 11. As noted in Section 2.2, these organizations are required to register with the Department, and currently there are 276 000 organisations registered on the NPO directorate database. This is particularly important for organizations that plan to provide their community with services that are monitored by the law. In this sense, registration is a means for the

government to safeguard the public from potential harm and to hold CSOs accountable. Whilst CSOs are known for their philanthropic endeavours, they have also been used as a front for corrupt behaviour (Official in the DSD NPO Directorate, 2023). Such incidents often reflect poorly on the whole sector, as one interviewee noted, and there is a need that when DSD finds a CSO operating in an illegal and harmful manner they should not “paint the [whole sector] under the same brush” (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs)



Source: DSD Annual Report 2022

Figure 11: DSD Organizational Framework focussing in NPO Directorate

The directorate also sees this regulatory role as a means to encourage good governance in the sector, particularly amongst the smaller community based organizations which may not be aware proper practice. The directorate does consultations and campaigns across the country where they help the CSOs understand the registration process, and principles of good governance (Official in the DSD NPO Directorate, 2023).

A secondary role the directorate has in the Department is providing policy and monitoring the funding of service providers. The Department of Social Development relies heavily on social service NPOs to provide services to citizens. Thus, the aforementioned policy provides best practices for the other directorates within DSD when they want to enlist these NPOs in rendering services. This funding is an important part of the CSO sector, as they fund 21 090 organisations. However, social service NPOs make up 35% of the organisations registered as

NPOs, coming to a total of 98 000. While significant, the funding allocated by DSD cannot cover the entire sector (Official in the DSD NPO Directorate, 2023).

The NPO Directorate employs a collaborative approach, a partnership model, in its interactions with NPOs, recognizing that these organizations are essential for delivering essential social services to communities. Nevertheless, the DSD's allocation of approximately 7 billion for funding NPOs through services procurement falls short of meeting the comprehensive requirements of the entire CSO sector. Additionally, later sections of this report elaborate on the difficulties associated with this partnership model (Official at the DSD NPO Directorate, 2023).

The figure below shows the sphere of government survey respondents engaged with. Only 4 out of 48 respondents did not engage with the government. This is indicative of the reality that many CSOs deem it necessary to engage with the government in some way. Based on feedback from the focus groups, the reasons for engagement might include trying to: access information for clients/communities, access services for communities, advocate on behalf of communities, access government resources; additionally in some instances the state reaches out to the organisations, rather than the other way around.

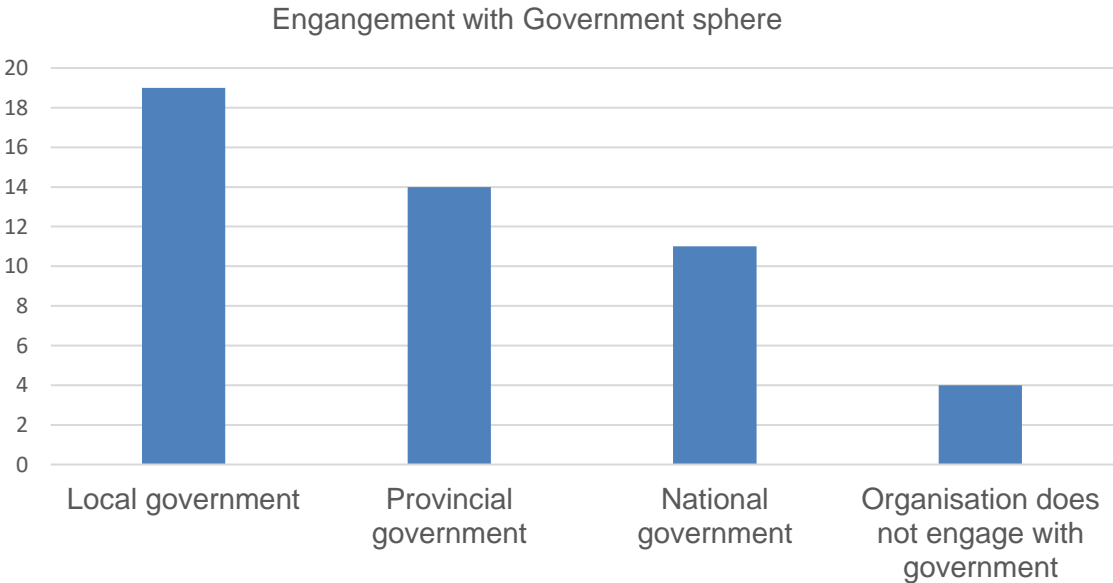


Figure 12 Engagement with Government Sphere

With regards to CSOs that receiving support from the government, more than half of the 44 organisations that responded noted that they receive no support or capacity building from the state:

- 20 respondents noted that they receive support/capacity building from the government;
- 22 respondents noted that they do not receive support/capacity building from the government; and
- 2 respondents noted that they receive limited support/capacity building from the government.

Thus, despite Figure 12 demonstrating that most CSOs engage with the government, Figure 13 demonstrates they do not necessarily receive support from the government. This corroborates the perspective of the DSD official interviewed regarding the limited funding (and support) that government can provide CSOs. Even while many departments outside of the DSD are able to engage and partner with CSOs to render services, run programmes, or any other activity they deem beneficial to their constituency, this funding stream cannot make up for the funding needs of all CSOs in South Africa.

Do you receive any support or capacity building from the government?

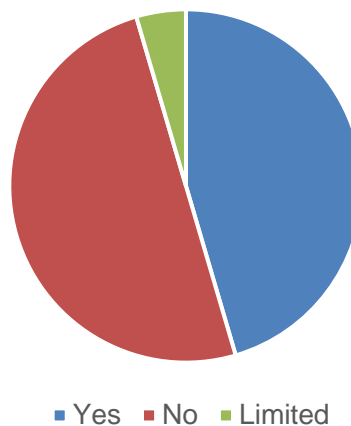


Figure 13 Government support and capacity building CSOs

When they do engage, CSOs are involved with a variety of government departments and entities. In the survey the following government departments were mentioned as collaborators:

- Department of Social Development - mentioned multiple times.
- South African Police Services (SAPS) - mentioned multiple times.
- Department of Health - mentioned multiple times.
- Department of Education - mentioned multiple times.
- Department of Justice - mentioned multiple times.
- Department of Community Safety - mentioned multiple times.
- Department of Home Affairs - mentioned multiple times.

- Department of Agriculture - mentioned multiple times.
- Office of the Premier - mentioned once.
- Department of Human Settlements - mentioned once.
- Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) - mentioned once.
- Department of Trade Industry and Competition - mentioned once.
- National Treasury - mentioned once.
- Department of Land Reform - mentioned once.
- Disaster Management - mentioned once.
- Environmental Management - mentioned once.
- Solid Waste - mentioned once.
- Department of Arts and Culture - mentioned once.
- Department of Sports - mentioned once.
- Department of Basic Education - mentioned once.
- Civilian Secretariat for Police Services - mentioned once.
- National Prosecuting Authority - mentioned once.
- Eastern Cape Department of Education - mentioned once.

In the survey and focus groups, DSD and SAPS, were noted most frequently. However, the above list might indicate that there is opportunity for CSOs to engage with a range of departments with governments.

In terms of the frequency of engagements with government, it seems that this was highly dependent on the CSOs level of prominence. In the case of the well-established or larger CSOs, their prominence means that they receive more invitations to work with the government. These well-established/larger organisations have established networks that allows them to contact relevant government stakeholder. The survey respondents reported that some organisations have quarterly meetings with relevant government stakeholders, while others meet monthly or on a regular basis. The frequency of engagement depends on the specific needs, projects, or referrals. In some cases, organisations engage with the government on a daily or weekly basis, particularly when dealing with individual cases or ongoing issues. Reporting is often done monthly or quarterly, providing updates and information to the relevant government departments. Overall, the frequency of meetings and engagement between organisations and government varies depending on the context and requirements of each situation.

Regardless, as noted in section **Error! Reference source not found.**, CSOs are cautious in engaging with the government. Of utmost important is that they remain (politically) neutral. Further, the above does not mean that all government engagements are productive. The following section will provide a greater narrative of the relationship between the State and CSO and includes the very real grievances that CSOs have with the government even while they consistently engage with the state.

5.3.1 State-CSO relationship

In understanding how the state can support civil society, it is worth acknowledging the varied experiences and perspectives of organisations. Many of the participants of our focus groups mentioned a distrust of the government and the politicians leading our nation. These participants are mirroring the citizens and communities they deal with from day to day. The reality that these participants are also citizens of the country also impacts their overview. When they see corruption, lack of services delivery and political infighting, it affects their view of the state as a structure. Furthermore, they may be drawn into engagements run by the state, where the state may appear to listen to CSOs' perspectives and ideas, but some of the interviewees note the lack of follow-through from these engagements. But they also acknowledge the work of individual officials who demonstrate their concern and commitment to working with the CSOs (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023).

The reality, though, is sometimes their preconceived notions are confirmed. One organisation in KwaZulu Natal particularly noted the disrespectful treatment they had at the hand of officials that invited them to an event. They described them as dismissive and undermining the work of the CSOs. Others note the difficulty in getting officials to attend community meetings or gatherings the CSO organized. As noted, such gatherings are a crucial tool in encouraging peace in communities. Also, considering the feelings of citizens that their concerns are unheard by the government, such gatherings provide a useful opportunity for officials to listen and talk directly to communities. However, often times there is a reluctance on the part of officials, who mention that they cannot join gatherings as they are often after-hours (in order to accommodate the community schedules) and they are not provided over time. This indicates a lack of systems in government that enable officials to engage in participatory programmes that could be helpful in mitigating discontent (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023)..

In the case when officials do attend these gatherings, or invite CSOs to their own gatherings, some interviewees note the sense that they feel taken advantage of. When they co-opt the CSOs gatherings, instead of staying within the agenda of the gathering, the officials often come with their own agenda, failing to fully listen to the concerns of the communities. On the other hand, when they invite CSOs, there is a sense that the purpose of the gathering is to make the government/officials appear to be including civil society and engaging with the community, but they do not engage in genuinely. Considering the understanding that CSOs are crucial partners to communities and can help foster relationships between communities and the state, the lack of meaningful engagement of officials in these events is concerning (Focus Group with Eastern Cape CSOs, 2023).

This call to question whether the government is invested in the work of CSOs. According to survey respondents majority (as shown in the Figure 14) believe the government is invested in the work of their organisation. Of the 43 organisations that responded to this question:

- 23 respondents noted that the government is invested in their organisational work. The few that substantiated this further noted that this is mainly because the government is doing the same kind of work that the CSO is doing, hence the 'investment'.
- 10 respondents noted that the government is not invested in their organisational work;
- 9 respondents noted that the government is somewhat invested in their organisational work; and
- 1 respondent noted that they did not know if the government was invested in their organisational work.

Is the government invested in the work of your organisation?

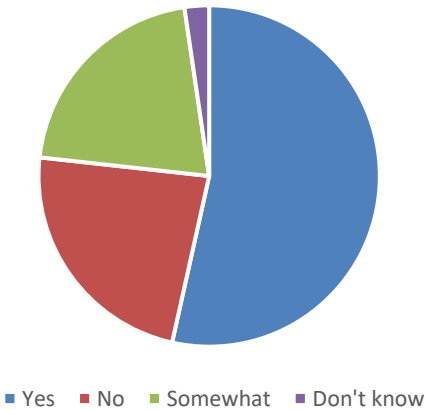


Figure 14 Government investment into CSOs

However, acknowledging that some of the organisations receive resources from the state, it becomes difficult for them to “speak truth to power.” Those that attempt to must consider the pushback they may receive, in the form of resources and access to government officials that help them support their communities. One interviewee noted how demotivating it is to consistently speak up regarding the issues within the state, but these complaints fall on deaf ears. They said: “They must be really careful when they’re most passionate people go quiet.” Considering one of the main arguments for having a robust civil society, is their ability to speak up, and ensure that our democracy remains democratic, the ability for them to speak up without retaliation is essential, particularly when the state itself has vetted and collaborated with said organisations (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

In the context where government enlists CSOs to provide services or administer programmes, the nature of government’s procurement procedures means that the departments looking for support must already specify the scope of the services and programmes. This requirement is in accordance with the Public Finance Management Act and can restrict the opportunity for collaborative programme design since CSOs are brought on board after the programme’s design and focus have been established. Consequently, it becomes even more imperative for the government to establish processes that actively involve CSOs in policy development, programme design, and strategic planning. This inclusive approach is essential to fully harness the breadth of expertise that CSOs bring to the table (Official at the DSD NPO Directorate, 2023).

The CSOs also work in the reality that the country is divided into national, provincial, district and local government. This can have a great impact on how effective the support they receive from the local officials. A relationship with the local SAPS, does not change the reality that they are under resourced, and that can only be amended by the national SAPS. Even very connected organisations cannot overcome the lack of resources within government. In the case of the communities of Ocean View and Masipumelele referred to earlier, Masipumelele does not have a police station. So, whilst their proximity means that protest in one community will affect the other, when individual issues of violence occur, 8km is a long distance for a poor community member to travel to access recourse. In this position, the CSO can provide the social support, but this does not make up for the lack of presence of a police station within Masipumelele. As an interviewee noted, “Everybody is answerable to national, everybody has a boss.” Being able to get their concerns up the ladder that is government requires a resource and a level of persistence that are beyond the scope of many of the organisations (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023).

The reality is that whilst CSOs are necessary for a robust democracy, they operate within the state structure. CSOs do not have the mandate to do much of the developmental, preventative and community work that they envision because that mandate sits with a government entity. Whilst CSOs may be closer to communities, and more appropriately placed to address their concerns, they do not have the authority to work outside of government. Thus, collaboration is essential, but being an under-resourced CSO working with an under-resourced government is a challenge.

However, these relationships with officials do prove useful when crises happen. Being able to contact a sergeant directly can shave hours on receiving a response, as the CSOs note the delayed response when calling the substation. Whilst this points to an inefficiency in government, it does point to the ability of these organisations to foster key relationships with the necessary stakeholders, including government (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with KwaZulu-Natal Focus Group CSOs, 2023; Focus Group with Gauteng Focus Group CSOs, 2023).

The detrimental factor of fostering such a relationship can result in the CSOs doing work that government officials should be doing. One organisation in the Western Cape mentioned that often despite directing citizens to the right channels within the state (i.e. social workers, the court and the National Prosecuting Authority), they return to the CSO, having been ignored by the government. This creates a dynamic for CSOs where instead of working directly with more clients, they have to put a lot of energy into “arguing with the government to get rights for [their] clients” This is not only frustrating for the organisation employee, but it can also affect the community’s trust in the CSOs, as their advice did not work. Furthermore it draws them away from doing the essential work of supporting victims in the aftermath of violence including unrest.

“So it’s constantly having to everyone being referred to us. And actually, none of our stakeholders or minimum of our stakeholders are actually doing what they’re supposed to be doing. Which is very demotivating. Because you think you actually do have stakeholders, but then you end up doing the job for them. Because at some point at the constant advocating does not really help it falls onto deaf ears. So, you just might as well just do it for yourself or your client.” (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

By doing the work of the government, these CSOs are essentially subsidizing the state. This stokes frustrations and causes the animosity that some CSOs feel towards the government. They see the lack of accountability within the departments, which they compare to the high

levels of accountability they have to their funders. Some feel that they are held to a higher standard of accountability than the government.

One interviewee gave us the following example of the frustrations of civil society boiling over:

“This is how civil society was forced into action. And it happened in Gauteng when the premier, decided overnight to stop funding certain NGOs. For the first time in the history of our country, the NGO sector in Gauteng said, ‘Fine, we’re just going to stop working.’ And the impact of that, can you imagine how far people whose sole objective in life is to serve others, close their doors and said, ‘I’m really sorry, but we are actually not taking this any more, you have abused us enough, we are not taking this anymore.’ Now, if, if child protection, NGOs can be forced, to such an extent to close their doors, to make a point of government, that even for the first time burning tires, outside Child Protection Agency. And we are talking about social workers doing this because that was the only way social workers could be heard: they had to resort to a service delivery type protest by setting tires alight, otherwise, it wouldn’t even have made the news. So we’ve all as CSOs have been driven to a point where we’re just thinking, what do we have to do to get your attention?” (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

Despite the tensions in the relationship between the state and CSOs, the survey found that most organisations do not experience any compromises to their standing when they engage with the government. Of the 43 organisations that gave their perspective:

Only 7 respondents noted that there **are compromises** to the organisation’s standing by engaging with the government

33 respondents noted that there are **no compromises** to the organisation’s standing by engaging with the government

3 respondents noted that there are **some compromises** to the organisation’s standing by engaging with the government.

Some organisations acknowledge the positive aspects of government affiliation. They believe that working directly with the government allows them to assist the communities they serve more effectively. By aligning their projects with government initiatives, they can have a meaningful impact and contribute to government objectives. These organisations see government affiliation as an opportunity to work collaboratively and make a positive difference in their communities.

On the other hand, there are organisations that express negative sentiments regarding government affiliation. They believe that working closely with the government makes it

challenging to hold them (as CSOs) accountable for their actions. There is a concern that the lines between the organisation and the government can become blurred, potentially compromising their ability to advocate for the needs of their constituency. Some organisations feel that working with the government might require compromising their values and ethics. They express frustration with the government's lack of receptiveness and a perceived lack of care.

A means for ensuring accountability for one social service organisation is the Victims Support Services Bill. They note that CSOs have contributed and supported the bill, but it continues to be debated because it would hold victim support services providers within the government alongside those outside of the government. However, this is not an opinion shared by all civil society, as some consider the bill as a means for the government to assert more control over the support they provide to communities, by requiring all service providers to register (Mdunjani, 2020). Regardless of the mixed opinions, it is clear that civil society not only wants to be heard in the creation of policies, but for the policies to apply: "We've got all these great policies, you've got the National Strategic Plan for gender-based violence, and femicide, six pillars, no funding, what's the point?" (Focus Group Session 1 with Western Cape CSOs, 2023)

Considering the critiques CSOs have for the government, the research aimed to understand how the CSOs would like to engage and collaborate with government. The online survey found that CSOs would like to:

- Co-create long-term integration programs, intergenerational dialogue, and community development projects.
- Collaborate through their own programs and becoming implementing agencies of government programs.
- Be funded for core services and receiving funding to sustain their work.
- Be involved in planning, crafting implementation plans, and being part of decision-making processes.
- Be involved in government organizing, supporting, and creating spaces for direct engagement with the constituency.
- Receive capacity building through training and ongoing support.
- Be recognized for their work, included in government benefits, and receive salaries and benefits aligned with their work and experience.
- Have broader engagements with all government departments and partnerships in service delivery projects.

- To engage consultations, assessment meetings, workshops, and empowerment of community-based organizations.
- Receive government investment in initiatives addressing social challenges and bringing peace and stability.
- See the proactive engagement of government with communities and reduced bureaucracy.
- Experience equitable partnerships, respect for recommendations, and transparent, less restrictive engagement.
- Be included in decision-making processes and National Treasury resources.
- Be collaborated with to strengthen government delivery of services and support for men to reduce violence.
- To advocate for policy changes, implementation of existing policies, and engagement without party politics interference.
- Receive opportunities for training, partnerships, and support in community projects.
- Be provided with actionable early warning signals, capacity-building initiatives, and education in communities.
- See enhancing and empowering community structures, bridging the gap between society and government.
- Have supplier relationships for specific products or services.
- Have advisory and participatory roles in developmental processes, content development, and project management.
- Have formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and financial support.

CSOs express a strong desire to collaborate with the government in various ways. They emphasize the importance of co-creating long-term integration programs and fostering intergenerational dialogues to ensure informed consent regarding service delivery. CSOs seek to work hand in hand with the government, leveraging their expertise and community engagement to design sustainable programs that address societal challenges. Additionally, CSOs highlight the need for financial support, including funding for core services and salaries for staff members. They stress the significance of the government recognizing their work and including them in government benefits. CSOs also value partnerships with the government, seeking opportunities for capacity building, training, and ongoing psycho-social support to enhance their service delivery. They aim to be actively involved in policy-making processes and decision-making, offering their expertise and recommendations. CSOs emphasize the importance of transparent, equitable partnerships and mutual respect in their collaboration with the government. They seek regular consultations, workshops, and meetings to express their

views, assess progress, and address challenges in service delivery. CSOs hope for the government to acknowledge and showcase the services they provide to the community, promoting transparency, minimizing bureaucratic processes, and adopting a ground-up approach to collaboration. Overall, CSOs aspire to work in tandem with the government, leveraging their shared goals and expertise to bridge the gap between society and the government and effectively address community needs.

6 Emerging recommendations

The conclusions drawn from the findings above underscore the essential need for a more transparent and communicative government to mitigate the discontent (anger) that often escalates into unrest. Moreover, while South Africa has legislation and policy that emphasizes the importance and need for robust public participation, there remains a critical need to take additional steps and measures to facilitate effective contributions from the public and CSOs towards community development.

While community development may not directly address the violence and destruction associated with unrest, it does foster community engagement and support, reducing the likelihood of such incidents. It is from these vantage points that the following recommendations are formulated.

** Note that the recommendations are not intended to be linear or bilateral between the NDA and CSOs or vice versa, but rather, to be considered in an inclusive way that involves other government entities (as applicable) across the spheres of government.

6.1 From a policy perspective

Co-create long-term integration programs, intergovernmental dialogues, and community development projects.

With their expertise in development, community engagement, and a variety of social and infrastructure services, CSOs can be crucial partners in developing long term, coordinated projects and plans. As demonstrated in the previous section, CSOs have been developing tools and methods that are useful in creating meaningful community-based projects. Furthermore, many of the CSOs demonstrate a trans-disciplinary approach in their development project. This presents an opportunity for them to play a role in facilitate intergovernmental dialogues, which could unlock potential collaboration across the spheres of government and government departments.

CSOs should be collaborated with and have broader engagements with all government departments and partnerships in service delivery projects.

Since many departments already engage in the enlistment of CSOs as service providers, broader engagements, building on these relationships, should be considered. It may be necessary for a greater number of departments to be coopted in such collaboration, for example DBE, DSD, DoH collaborating with CSOs on food nutrition in schools. Forming

interdepartmental and cross-sectoral partnerships alongside CSOs may be useful in advancing pre-existing and proposed government projects.

CSO involvement in policy planning and changes, planning for implementation of existing policies, crafting implementation plans, and being part of decision-making processes.

Recognizing the valuable role of CSOs as development and service provision partners, it becomes evident that involving them earlier in the project timeline, particularly in policy development, can yield significant benefits. Often, the CSO sector criticizes policies for not adequately consulting civil society and the public.

By ensuring CSO involvement from a project's initiation through implementation and monitoring phases, project objectives and procedures can be shaped with a comprehensive understanding of the public's perspective and to serve the public's best interests. Also by incorporating this level of involvement, it may make such processes more transparent to the public in general.

CSO involvement in government organizing, supporting, and creating spaces for direct engagement with the constituency.

Local government has strategic processes such as the Integrated Development Plan, and the District Development Model that emphasize the importance of public participation and consultation. However, during these consultations some municipalities fail to ensure that robust engagements occur. Strengthening these consultative processes allows for the opportunity to ensure that community involvement is emphasized and valued.

Establish formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and financial support.

Establishing formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and providing financial support may be useful (and crucial) steps in facilitating meaningful engagement between the state and CSOs. MOUs serve as a crucial tool to ensure that both parties share a comprehensive understanding and commitment to potential collaboration.

Equally vital is the need to allocate financial support to CSOs that actively contribute to planning and service provision. By enabling funding for CSOs beyond the traditional procurement process, it encourages the adoption of innovative methodologies and

practices. This approach empowers CSOs to engage in cutting-edge activities that have the potential to deliver more effective and impactful results.

CSOs should be recognised for their work and included in government benefits.

CSOs provide critical government services in multiple sectors. Without the work and support of such CSOs, communities would have limited to no social services, early childhood education, and healthcare amongst others. Whilst the government does acknowledge the work of CSOs in policy documents, there needs to be greater emphasis on the importance of these relationships. It is necessary that all state departments and entities have a clear understanding of the ways in which CSOs support their work, acknowledge their role in the development of the nation, and establish mechanisms to build productive relationships with the relevant organisations.

6.2 The relationship between the State and CSOs

Foster collaboration and partnerships between CSOs and the state by creating avenues for ongoing dialogue and feedback exchange between CSOs and the state.

While CSOs can *draw* substantial benefits from cross-collaboration and knowledge sharing, they may not always have the capacity to facilitate platforms for these activities. Constraints such as limited funding and insufficient human resources required to organize large-scale meetings and dialogues pose significant challenges for many organizations, especially smaller ones.

Ensure transparent, open communication channels between CSOs and government entities.

A relationship that ensures that CSOs and the state are communicating openly, especially on local level, is crucial for quick responses to events leading up to an unrest, as well as monitoring the progress and mitigating the effects of unrest.

Establish formal mechanisms for engagement, such as joint working groups or advisory committees.

Particularly in areas of concern that effect the ecological likelihood of collective violence, it is necessary to create forums focused on these areas of concern. Further intersectoral discussions are necessary as the research found that multiple circumstances coalesce and result in the mass collective action, such as the July 2021 unrest.

Recognize and value the expertise and contributions of CSOs in policy development and implementation.

As noted, many CSOs have a strong developmental focus, regardless of the area/sector their organisations fall in. Furthermore, they have local understandings and networks that are not necessarily accessible to the state due to the mistrust felt by local communities. The state should recognise this contribution and develop trusting relationships with CSOs so that they may contribute to state plans for development and the implementation of programmes.

Enhance coordination and cooperation between state entities and CSOs in addressing societal challenges.

All the recommendations above are intended to ensure that the state and CSOs work together to address the societal challenges that lead to unrest. It is important that coordination and cooperation efforts emphasize that both parties are necessary for addressing these challenges.

6.3 Community-based appreciative inquiry:

Promote the use of appreciative inquiry methodologies in community development projects.

The research has identified emerging best practices within the CSO sector concerning community development. These approaches centre around the use of appreciative inquiry to secure community engagement in projects. Prioritizing these methodologies can help ensure community buy-in, as they place emphasis on addressing the community's concerns, in contrast to the top-down approach where the state determines the issues to be tackled.

It is evident that communities with higher levels of buy-in are more inclined to engage in constructive communication with the government and address their concerns through formal channels, rather than resorting to violence.

Value and build upon the strengths and assets of the community when designing interventions.

Expanding on the exploration of appreciative inquiry methodologies in community development, the research highlights the value of the strengths and asset-based approaches. In a country where many often dwell on the deficiencies within their communities, these approaches shift the focus towards identifying and leveraging the

assets and strengths that communities already have. They highlight how communities can enhance what is already functioning relatively well.

Additionally, these approaches empower communities to clearly communicate to the government what resources and assets are available and what is lacking. This approach ensures that government initiatives are tailored to the specific needs and capacities of each community, rather than being based on generic assumptions about community needs and preferences.

Encourage CSOs to engage in participatory approaches that empower community members.

The research demonstrates examples of instances where community engagement facilitated by CSOs has given community members a greater sense of being listened to. Further, CSOs have the time and expertise in educating communities. This is important because having a knowledgeable community is more productive in a participatory process.

Emphasize the importance of involving diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes.

Diverse stakeholder engagement not only ensures that decisions are representative of the communities, it also provides an opportunity to make stakeholders aware of each other's experiences, and develop consensus of the concerns.

Foster a culture of inclusivity, respect, and active listening within community-based initiatives.

The above addresses diversity in terms of stakeholder involvement, but it is important that the community, in general, are aware of the diverse experiences and histories of their fellow members. The misunderstandings within the community can make fostering peace difficult; thus emphasizing inclusion, respect and active listening in initiatives ensures that the community builds a collective capacity and tolerance of each other.

Facilitate spaces for dialogue, reflection, and shared learning among community members and CSOs.

Important to community investment is continuous discussion. It is important to facilitate spaces of dialogue that allows for the community members and CSOs to reinforce buy-in and encourage greater participation of the community.

6.4 Building trust:

Uphold high ethical standards, transparency, and accountability in CSO and state programmes and processes. Engage in effective communication and information sharing to build trust with stakeholders.

Trust is crucial to ensuring that citizens choose formal routes to airing discontent. This involves holding both the state and CSOs accountable, being honest and open about the programmes and processes, particularly in terms of progress and delays. Furthermore, ensuring that those who engage in corrupt activities are appropriately and openly dealt with. It is important that CSOs and the state ensure stakeholders remain informed of what takes place in their government and community.

Ensure the efficient and effective use of resources to maximize trust and credibility, and demonstrate impact and results through evidence-based practices and evaluation.

Whilst the impact of government programmes are not guaranteed, it is important to demonstrate the impacts and results openly to the public. This may include challenges that occurred/occurs in implementation, but clarity on the results is important. , as This fosters trust amongst the community members, and emphasizes the importance of transparency.

Foster strong relationships and partnerships with community members, government entities, and other stakeholders.

As noted in the previous section, relationships and partnerships are important in ensuring programmes and projects that are valued by the community. Particularly in the context that public buildings and property are often targeted in violent protests, by ensuring there are strong relationships within the community, this may encourage members to protect these assets, rather than target them as a means to get government attention.

Engage in continuous dialogue, feedback loops, and responsiveness to community needs.

Expanding on the preceding point and the earlier section, the establishment of a responsive relationship is crucial. When community members perceive engagement as a mere checkbox exercise, it can erode their trust in these processes. By fostering visible and ongoing dialogue, communities are made aware of accessible channels through which they can communicate their needs. This approach not only facilitates open

communication but also encourages the state to maintain an accountable and responsive stance.

6.5 Role of the NDA:

As the primary agency responsible for facilitating discourse between the government and CSOs, the NDA is a crucial stakeholder in initiating the above-mentioned recommendations.

Collaborate with select, relevant CSOs to leverage resources and expertise for community development.

Whilst it may be difficult for other departments and state entities to develop meaningful collaboration with CSOs in the short-term, the NDA can readily do so as given that this falls within their mandate. It is important that the NDA has a comprehensive understanding of the relevant community development initiatives currently in progress within government, as well as those within the planning stages. This knowledge will enable them to identify and highlight CSOs that have the potential to be valuable partners in these programmes.

Advocate for CSOs to play a proactive role in addressing social challenges and promoting peace and stability.

Again, the NDA is a crucial partner in emphasizing the role of CSOs in addressing social challenges and promoting peace. While the state may have planned various exercises and policies, it is imperative that these activities incorporate CSOs in their processes. A crucial avenue through which the NDA can advocate for CSOs is by raising awareness within government departments and entities about the potential and necessity of active CSO involvement in their initiatives. This proactive approach helps promote collaboration and harness the collective expertise of CSOs for more effective outcomes.

Facilitate coordination and collaboration between CSOs and the NDA to maximize impact.

It is important that even while the NDA acts as an advocate for CSOs, this is advocacy should be carried out with careful coordination and collaboration with the CSOs themselves. The CSOs and NDA need to work together as they encourage the state to be more open to collaboration with CSOs. This may make it easier for those who already have relationships with state officials to pivot these relationships into more meaningful partnerships. The NDA can facilitate this transition, but the NDA themselves need to be open to the realities of the CSOs, and open to their input on the activities of the NDA.

Make available funding opportunities and support from the NDA for CSO initiatives. This should be monitored, measured, and evaluated through clear criteria, reporting, reflection, and learning.

Funding is consistently mentioned a resource essential to expanding the work and productivity of CSOs. While there is no simple fix, a concerted effort to make funding available is necessary to ensure that the sector can continue to operate sustainability.

Engage in, and enable broader multi-stakeholder, dialogue, and consultation with CSOs to shape policy priorities. Part of this should involve the provision of feedback and recommendations to government, for example, the Department of Social Development, for improved policies and programmes.

In line with the recognition of the need for intra-sectoral dialogue to enhance CSO capacity, it is equally essential to facilitate similar multi-stakeholder dialogues. While the state primarily relies on service procurement processes to leverage the skills and resources of CSOs, it is imperative to foster additional engagement to ensure that other government processes are equally receptive to input from the CSO sector. This broader involvement is vital for enhancing and refining policies and programs across various government initiatives.

7 Conclusion

Understanding the role of CSOs as peacemakers during social unrest required a thoughtful and extensive exploration of legislation, literature, media. However, it is clear that without the substantial input from the subjects of the research – CSOs – the findings would be lacking.

The research began with a Section 2: a review of the legislation and policy environment in which CSOs operate. The Regulation of Gatherings Act (RGA) is described as the first instance of legislation that seemed to directly apply to CSOs. It regulated the “organisation” as formalized, registered groupings. However, the Non-profit Organisation Act (NOA), established legislative guidance in the registration and legal obligations of NPOs (which includes many of the CSOs studied). Whilst this made the RGA of less importance to CSOs, it is still seen as a significant act within this research as it also establishes the legal requirements of those planning to protest.

The registration of CSOs through the NOA also allowed CSOs to formally access and work with the state. Through the Municipal Systems Act, and Disaster Management Act municipalities were able to obtain support from CSOs to enter into a service delivery agreement, bringing authority to these organisations.

Finally, the section described the strategic plans that note the importance of CSOs as partners to the state and to society. The National Development Plan describes the crucial role CSOs should and do play in combating crime, facilitating safety and security, and contributing to socioeconomic development. The Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy notes CSOs as key role players in violence prevention. Finally, the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, one of the latest strategic plans, notes that CSOs are crucial for encouraging integrity in government, in the face of high levels of corruption and state capture.

This section legislative and policy authority that CSOs have, which is further explored later in the research.

Section 3 provides a review on the academic understanding of protests and unrest as well as a trends analysis of protests in South Africa. It provides a brief synopsis of the of the lasting social and economic effects of the July 2021 unrest, at regional (SADC), national, and local level. However, whilst acknowledging that the July 2021 Civil Unrest was a pivotal, tumultuous event in the country’s recent history, Section 3 emphasizes the persistent and increasing levels of violence in “regular” protests. The section found that protests had a clear geographic nature, with particular provinces (Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape), and

metros/urban areas being the locations where most of the countries protests occurs. It also established that outside of labour protests, service provision/delivery related protests are the most common type of protest. A look at when and how protest was also reviewed, with the section finding that the colder months tender to have higher levels of protest, and protests in general becoming more disruptive and violent, with tyre burning and blockading being a common in protestors repertoire.

The section continues with understanding the triggers of protest action, which includes the lack of accountability, party politics, poverty, and inequality. The section also introduces the concepts of relative deprivation and group formation which explain what creates the levels of anger during protests, and the phenomenon of people on the margins who join in on violent protest action. The section describes the ecological framework, which provides an analysis of risk factors of collective violence at societal, community, relationship, and individual levels. The section further provides case studies of prevention of collective violence.

The final part of this section seeks to understand what is meant by a CSO. It defines what type of organisations are considered CSOs and the state of CSO sector in South Africa. It provides the grounding for the research approach used in the study, by emphasizing a participatory approach to doing the CSO research.

Section 4 outlines the methodology, describing the mixed-method approach used in the study. It clarifies the approaches used in the Inception, Review, Fieldwork and Analysis phases of the study. As mentioned above, particular importance was put on ensuring the research was guided by the perspectives of key stakeholders. Also, a holistic understanding on the roles of CSOs was essential to the study, thus the methodology explains the use of a country-wide online survey, complemented by province specific focus groups with CSOs in the 4 hotspot provinces (Gauteng, Western Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Eastern Cape). The section concludes the limitations of the study which all relate to a gap in data collection due to the absence of engagement with certain key stakeholders.

Section 5 draws the understanding from the legislative and literature review, alongside the fieldwork to provide a broad conceptualisation of the role of CSOs in unrest. At the beginning, the section establishes the CSOs understanding of unrest, looking at their view on the July 2021 unrest, as well as their perspective of the activities and realities that constitute unrest. This includes the CSOs' perspectives on the debate on the difference between unrest and protest and the struggles CSOs face as being mediators in the midst of unrest.

This is followed by a look at the work of CSOs. This part of the section describes their efforts to facilitate and encourage social cohesion in communities, their strategies for preventative

measures for civil unrest, the action that take to engage the community and the collaborative efforts the CSOs engage in with community leaders (formal and informal) as well as other organisations. The section concludes with a look at the institutional realities. This sub-section provides insights into how CSOs navigate the structures of government. It outlines their interactions with government departments and officials. It gives a CSO perspective on their relationship with the state, including the shortcomings of the state, possible changes the state can make, and where and how the state and CSOs can collaborate.

Finally, Section 6 includes the research teams recommendations based on the study.

As demonstrated above, the study aimed to provide a voice for CSOs, and thus the communities they represent. The study highlighted the successful strategies and approaches of CSOs, the struggles they face working in and with disadvantaged communities, as well as their grievances with the resources, and relationships they have with the state. While the study lacked the crucial perspective of the State, the insights of the smaller provinces, as well as failing to include a wider range of different types of CSOs, it provides a clear, indicative narrative for what is required of government, and the role that the NDA can and should foster, when engaging with CSOs with the aim of preventing unrest.

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Annexure

Civil Society Organisation Survey

Organisation's History and Operations Management:

1. Where is your organisation located (format: city, province)?
2. What is your organisation's vision/goal/objective?
3. Beneficiary group of the organisation:
 - a. Are you a local, provincial, or national organisation?
 - b. If you are a locally focused organisation, how do you engage with the community(ies) you interact and work with?
 - c. If you are provincial or national, do you have any initiatives/engagements that are locally focused?
4. Resources within the organisation:
 - a. For the organisation to fulfil the vision outlined in Question 2, what resources does the organisation require?
 - b. What progress has the organisation made towards achieving the vision outlined in Question 2?
 - c. What resource obstacles does the organisation have (e.g., human resources, funding etc)?

CSO / NGO-Governmental Relations:

5. If applicable, what role does your organisation play in bridging the relationship between communities and the government?
6. If applicable, how does the organisation engage with the government
 - a. Which sphere of government do you engage with (national, provincial, or local)
 - b. Which departments do you engage with?
 - c. How frequently do you engage with the government?
 - d. Is the government invested in the work of your organisation?
 - e. Do you provide any support or capacity building to the government
 - f. Do you receive any support or capacity building from the government
7. If applicable, are there any compromises to the organisation's standing by engaging with the government?
8. In what ways would you like to collaborate/engage with the government?

Peacebuilding in Times of Unrest:

9. Regarding the July 2021 unrest:
 - a. What do you think triggered the events of the July 2021 Unrest?
 - b. What were the gaps in the space of peacebuilding considering the events of the July 2021 Unrest?
 - c. What are the gaps in the response to discontent that causes unrest?
 - d. How can these gaps be resolved?
 - e. Are there external influences that induce unrest?
10. Is there a role that your organisation can play in facilitating peacebuilding before/during unrest?
11. Can you share an example of how your organisation has helped communities cope in the aftermath of unrest?

How do you promote dialogue and reconciliation among different groups or communities

Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. What is government's perspective on the role of CSOs in South Africa?
2. In what ways do CSOs contribute to the development of South Africa? Can you provide specific examples?
3. From the government's perspective, do CSOs work more effectively in collaboration with or separately from government? What should the relationship be?
4. What measures can be taken to encourage government departments and directorates to work more actively with CSOs? What are the perceived advantages of this?
5. What is government's stance on differentiating between protest action and civil unrest?
6. How do you think CSOs can best assist in mitigating factors that contribute to civil unrest? What specific role can CSOs play in preventing or reducing civil unrest, given that protests often centre on issues such as service delivery and inequality?
7. Which types of CSOs do you think are best equipped to help prevent civil unrest?
8. In what ways can CSOs promote social cohesion across different ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, genders, sexualities, and political affiliations?
9. To what extent can CSOs contribute to fixing the problems within the state, considering the history of corruption and lack of accountability that can lead to violence?
10. Which level of government do you believe is best positioned to collaborate with CSOs, taking into account the fact that urban areas tend to have more incidents of unrest than rural areas, and certain provinces have higher levels of protest?

11. Are there opportunities for community policing to help prevent civil unrest, despite the often-contentious relationship between police and communities and the risk of increased violence with police involvement?
12. Are there ways in which CSOs can work to integrate the South African Police Service (SAPS) into communities or foster better relationships between communities and the SAPS?
13. How can the SAPS be more receptive to CSOs and better engage with citizens who report planned collective violence?
14. What steps can the government take to provide more resources to CSOs and build their capacity to contribute to peacebuilding and development in South Africa?