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OPEN PEER REVIEW

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Shaping Public Security Policies in Iraq from 2003 to 2023

Sabah mraz. Owayez al Byamyah[1], Mohammad Reza. Agarbarest[2*], Majid Mohi Abdul Abbas. Mahdi Al-Fatlawi[3], Bahram. Montazeri[4]

[1] PhD student, Public Policy Department, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran
[2] Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Shahrreza Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahrreza, Iran
[3] Assistant Professor, Al-Alameen Institute of Postgraduate Education, Department of Political Science, Najaf
[4] Assistant Professor, Public Policy Department, Shahreza Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: aghareb@iaush.acir

1.   Round 1

1.1.   Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

Consider contextualizing the post-2003 period by briefly referencing the specific U.S. invasion and the Coalition Provisional Authority, which are central to the trajectory of civil society development. Without this framing, the narrative lacks historical anchoring.

The definition is conceptually broad. Consider distinguishing between organized civil society (formal NGOs) and informal grassroots movements. This will help clarify which actors are the subject of your analysis.

The distinction between nation-building and state-building is essential but under-theorized here. It would be helpful to include a comparative framework or table that summarizes key differences as discussed in Stevenson (2005) and Lukitz (1995).

Please elaborate on the methodology: How was data collected (interviews, observations, surveys)? What is the sample size? Clarifying this would enhance transparency and replicability.

This section would benefit from at least one concrete example or case study of an NGO in Dhi Qar that has demonstrably achieved economic empowerment objectives. This would substantiate the claims.

This is an impressive figure that needs citation or methodological clarification. Is this based on membership rolls, Facebook engagement, or interviews?

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

This claim requires clearer operational definitions of "expanding" and "contributing." Consider integrating indicators of expansion (e.g., number of registered NGOs) and measurable contributions (e.g., policies influenced, populations served).

The sentence structure is overly compressed. Consider breaking it into two distinct aims: 1) conceptual clarification and 2) empirical investigation. This would improve clarity for the reader.

This section synthesizes secondary literature well but lacks critical engagement. What theoretical or methodological gaps do these studies leave that your article intends to address?

The assertion that research on civil society's role is limited could be better supported by referencing a recent systematic review or empirical gap in regional studies on NGOs.

Consider evaluating the effectiveness of these courses. Are there metrics on completion rates, skill acquisition, or professional advancement?

The claim of exclusivity should be substantiated. It would be useful to discuss how the organization measures impact, especially in areas like peacebuilding and political inclusion.

This is a novel contribution. Please expand on whether these workshops were designed in collaboration with psychologists or legal experts. Methodological rigor in program design would strengthen the argument.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2.   Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.