



## Civil society of Tajikistan: Systematic literature review



Civil Society Initiative (CSI)  
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Presenter: Nargis Kuchakshoeva  
Local Research Fellow CSI UCA



### Goals of systematic review:



Identify

Previous studies on civil society in Tajikistan



Examine

Various forms of self-organization in the associational life of Tajik society



Evaluate

Roles and practices of CS actors, such as NGOs, CSOs, nonprofit organizations (focused on solving diverse issues in community)

## Methodologies

PRISMA 2020 guidelines (step-by-step selection, screening and review of relevant literature sources):

### *Criteria for inclusion and exclusion of literature*



**Sources - Electronic databases** - Google Scholar, Cyberleninka, JSTOR, and a database of international organizations (ADB, AKDN, INTRAC, IWPR, CABAR asia) having relevant empirical research on CS of Tajikistan



**32 years from 1990 to this year** - primary and secondary sources (Eng./Russ - abstracts)



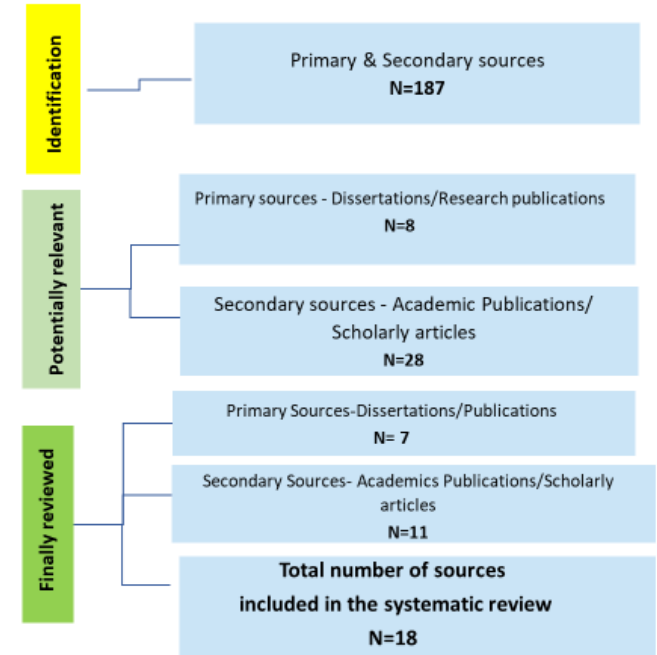
**Keywords** in literature titles (Boolean Strategy): “civil society” and Tajikistan, “associational life” and Tajikistan, “AND NGO”, “or NGO” and Tajikistan “non-profit organization” and Tajikistan, “communal life” and Tajikistan “non-governmental” and Tajikistan.



Titles without keywords words; duplicates, news highlights; quotes on CS; CS policy papers; letters to editors; studies not relevant to CS of Tajikistan



## Number of extracted sources for systematic review



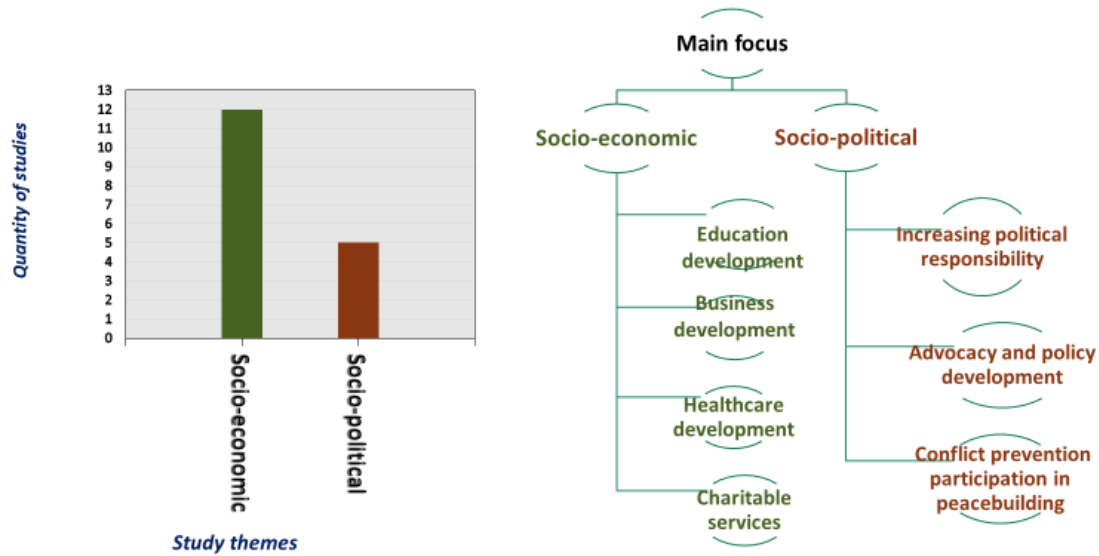
## List of primary sources

- Freizer, S. (2004) What civil society after civil war? A study of civil society organizations' affect on peace consolidation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Tajikistan – ProQuest.
- Buxton, Ch., Giffen, J., Earle, L. (2005) *Civil Society Development in Central Asia*. INTRAC Publication p.143
- Aga Khan Development Network (2007) *Development of Civil Society in Tajikistan*. Dushanbe: AKDN. Allavida Publication.
- Zharkevich, I. (2010) The Role of Civil Society in Promoting Political Accountability in Fragile States: The Case of Tajikistan. INTRAC Publications. p 53.
- Goziev, S. (2015) *Mahalla – A traditional Institution in Tajikistan and Civil Society in the West*. Peter Lang D.
- Institute for War and Peace Reporting (2018) *The situation of civil society in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan*. Bishkek: IWPR Publication.
- Levi-Sanchez, S. (2021) *Bridging State and Civil Society: Informal Organizations in Tajik/Afghan Badakhshan*. Uni Michigan Press.

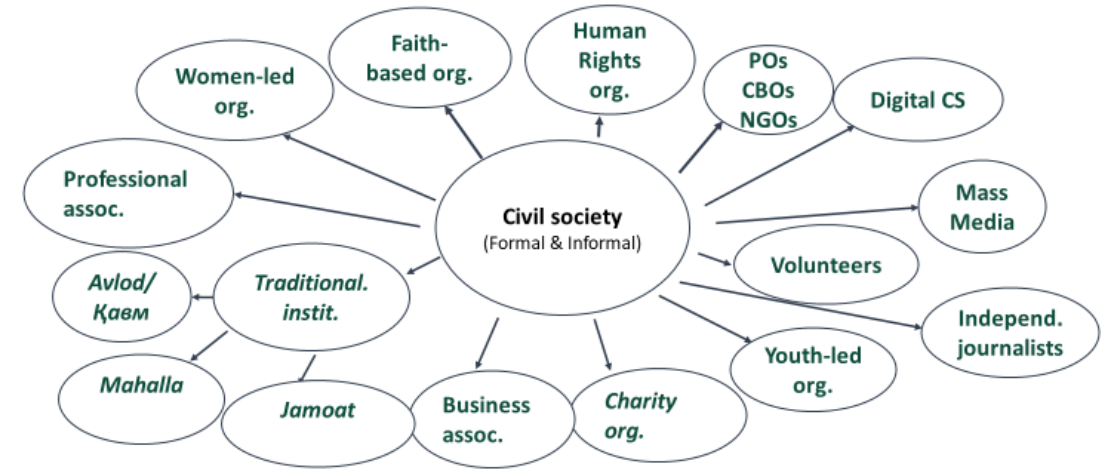
## Summary of secondary sources

Author/ov	Year of publication	Publication name	Sources
Freizer, S.	2004	Tajikistan local self-governance: a potential bridge between government and civil society - Tajikistan at a crossroad.	Google Scholar
Freizer, S.	2005	Neo-liberal and communal civil society in Tajikistan: merging or dividing in the post war period?	Google Scholar
Karimov, Sh.	2006	Dialectics of the emergence of a civil society and state support of NGOs in Tajikistan.	Cyberleninka
Asian Development Bank (ABD).	2011	Civil Society Briefs: Tajikistan. Asian Development Bank.	adb.org
Ewoh, Andrew, I.E., Nazarova, F., Hill, R. N.	2012	Civil Society Organizations and Policy Process in Tajikistan.	Google Scholar
Dar, F., Firdous, T.	2015	The role of NGOs in the socio-political development of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan: A comparative study.	Google Scholar
Weber & Fisher, M.	2015	Importing Democracy: The Role of NGOs in South Africa, Tajikistan, and Argentina.	Google Scholar
Soliev, Sh.	2017	The role of civil society in anticorruption policy of Tajikistan: conditions and perspectives.	Cyberleninka
Dar, F.	2018	Reassessing the relevance and role of traditional communal societies in post-independent Tajikistan.	Google Scholar
CABAR.asia (Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Report)	2020	'Silver Lining of Pandemic: Redefining Civil Society in Tajikistan', Steppes Borderland Project.	Google Scholar
Fisher, M. J.	2023	Democratization from below. Civil Society in Tajikistan.	Google Scholar

## Findings: Key research themes



## Findings: Forms of civil society (Heterogeneous forms)

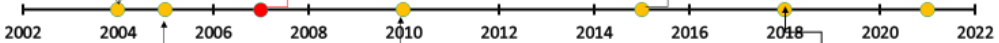


The term "civil society" is ambiguous.

**2004. Freizer S.** (CSOs) and (NGOs) can have a positive impact on peace consolidation in BG and Tajikistan; comparative analysis of case studies of two NGOs and two CSOs in each country.

**2007 . AKDN - Yusufbekov, Babajanov, Kuntuvdiy.** Large-scale empir. research on CS development in Tajikistan. CSOs play active role in country development – especially in sectors of economy, education, and culture. Knowledge on CS activities is limited in all sectors, which makes it difficult to build trust and relationships between government and CS.

**2015. Goziev S.** Equivalence *Mahalla* to-concepts of CS in the West. Traditional institution, such as *mahalla*, is inadequately involved in the development process. *Mahalla* is open to economic and political transformation, and plays a key role in various political and economic processes. while protecting core values. However, it resists changes during social transformation.



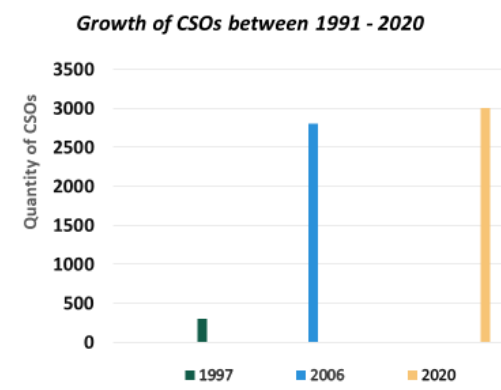
**2005. INTRAC – Buxton Ch., Giffen J., Earle L.** CS development in Central Asia - Comparative analysis of case studies of NGOs and CSOs in each country. The approach and position of each state was crucial for how CS developed in CA countries. Unlike other CA countries, Tajikistan's CS sector is largely dependent on donor assistance.

**2010. Zharkevich I. ITRAC and SIDA.** Investigates role of CS in unstable states. The state works to strengthen trust and cooperation between state institutions and CSOs. CS ( in TJ) takes more neutral or positive approach to current regime, in contrast to those states where CS takes confrontational position in relation to the state.

**2018. IWPR.** Comparative analytical study on CS of CA - Identify the potential of CS – (online activists), CSO's ability of using media as a tool for changes!. Public relations in media play less effective role in advocating for human rights policies. Media outlets in Tajikistan work closely with state agencies and public authorities, however, passively works with CSOs.

For decades, there has been a huge gap in in-depth research on Tajikistan's civil society in the academic field.

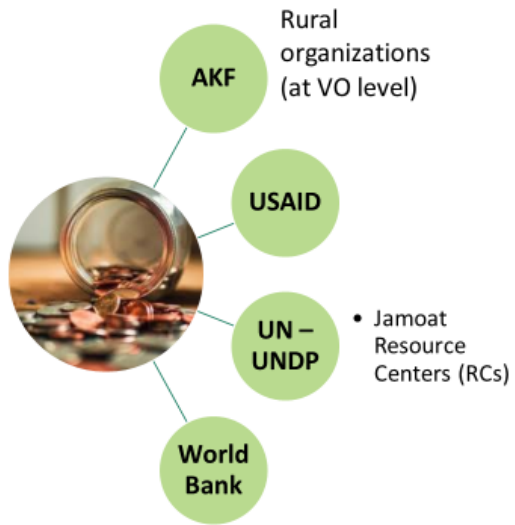
## Findings: Growth & diverse roles of civil society



Source: AKDN (2007). Development of civil society in Tajikistan. Dushanbe

Key finding of AKDN (2007) study- **CS in Tajikistan made significant contributions to state-building process** by actively participating in social services, including the delivery of humanitarian aid and increasing political accountability.

## Findings: Financial status of CSOs



Advanced partnership between CSOs and donors

Democratization of CS practiced better at grassroots level; GOs contribute to CS development

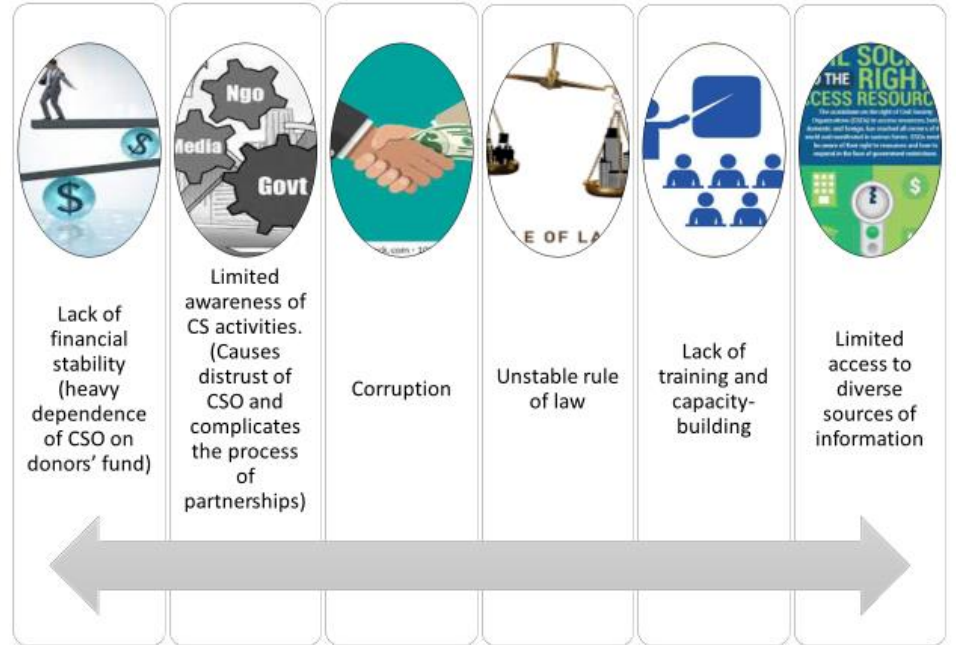
Traditional institutions actively involved in key projects focused on improving the quality of life and empowering people

Jamoat and Mahalla leaders valued for:

- abilities of resolving conflicts
- committed to supporting local communities crisis times



## Problems limiting CSO's activities



## Research Limitations & Recommendations

- Over 30 years – only 1 large-scale empirical research conducted by AKDN in 2007.
- Limited methodologies & samples used in previous research on CS in Tajikistan
- **Future empirical studies on CS should investigate:**
  - CS development & its further practices;
  - partnership between CSOs and government
  - women's role in CS sector, their participations and engagements in decision-making;
  - role of faith-based institutions in CS sector;
  - role of volunteers/youth in CS sector;
  - CS roles in addressing country's priority issues (social equity, improved education and healthcare, climate change response, employment development);



Thank you!

