

**The Role of Civil  
Society in Promoting  
Social Protection  
Reforms:  
A Comparative  
analysis between  
Jordan and Tunisia**

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# Introduction

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- In order for social protection policies to be most effective, the consultative process is essential.
- However, historically, Civil Society organizations across the region have faced significant limitations on their ability to engage in the social dialogue.
- This study utilized a qualitative interview-based approach to examining the current political economy of the social dialogue in both Jordan and Tunisia, with particular focus on the role that Civil Society has played in the development and implementation of social protection.

**Background**



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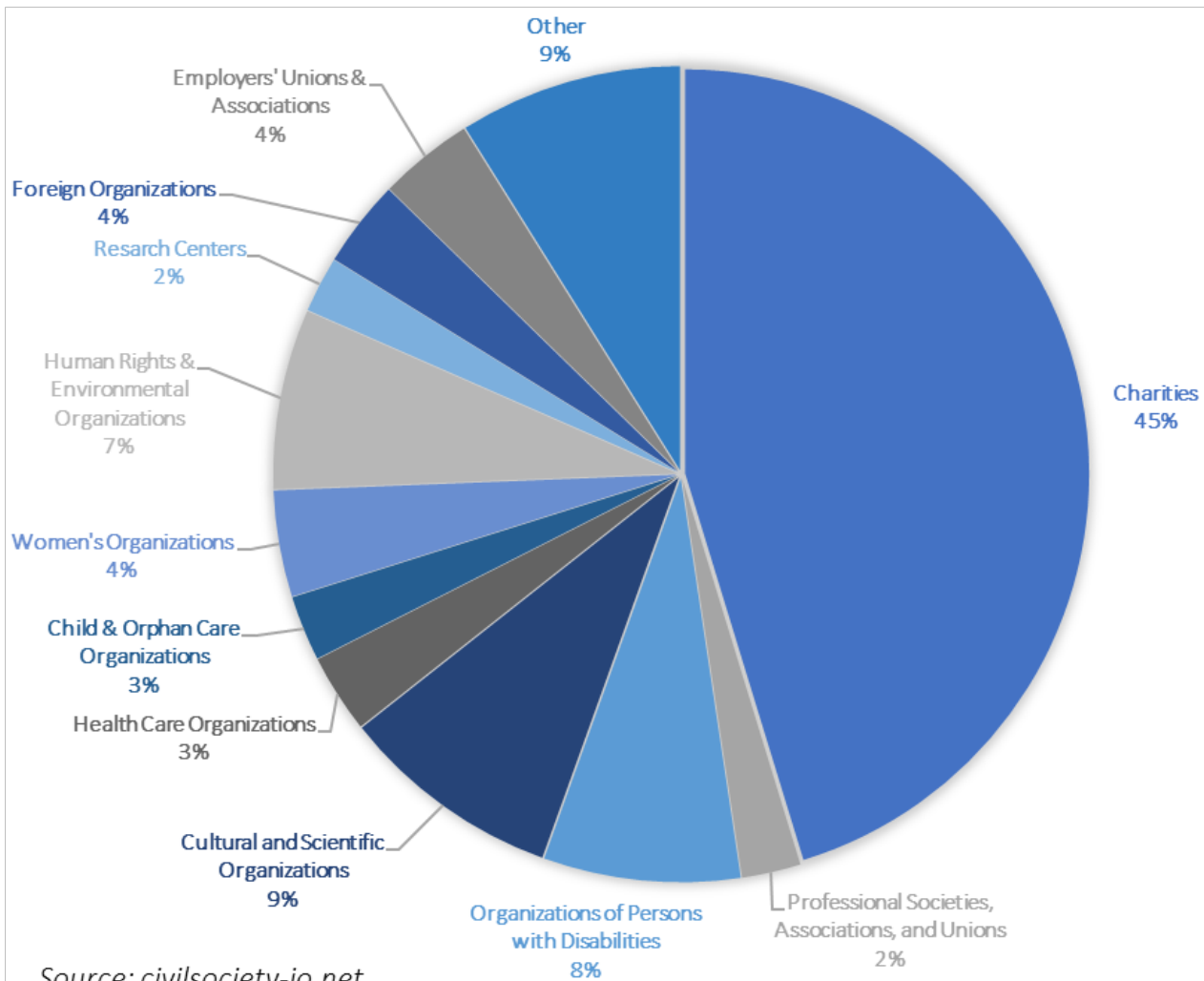
JORDAN

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# Historical Context

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- In Jordan's early period until 1946, civil society organizations were **community-based** and focused on provision of Zakat.
- Postindependence and the 1948 war: **political liberalisation** diversified the civil society landscape resulting in **a new constitution** in 1952
- During the martial law period (1970-1989), **restrictions and dissolutions** led to a **stagnation** of CSO activity but **an increase in social protection policies**
- The post-liberalization period (1989-present): **mass protests and IMF austerity** measures led to a **re-emergence of CSOs** in order to alleviate the pressure IMF measures placed on social protection services.



Source: [civilsocietv-io.net](http://civilsocietv-io.net)

# Civil Society and Its Role In Social Protection

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- Historically, restrictions placed on CSOs have **limited consultative capacity** in generation of social protection policy.
- Jordan does host mechanisms for civil society input into social protection such as
  - Institutions which **facilitate dialogue** about social protection (e.g. ESC)
  - Process of **posting draft laws & feedback** on PMs website
  - *However* feedback may be disregarded and mechanisms are reactive
- CSOs face many challenges involving their relationship with government and authority including **restrictions on mobilising administrative and lobbying** barriers, and **weak consultation procedures**.
- In Jordan, CSOs fill many of the gaps caused by the downscaling of the welfare state and the legal barriers to accessing social protection for **non-Jordanians**

Table 2: Sources of Aid for Households with an Annual Income Less than 2500 JD in Jordan

| Aid Source                     | % of Households Receiving Aid |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Individuals                    | 11.9                          |
| Religious Associations         | 2.6                           |
| UNHCR                          | 9.8                           |
| World Food Programme           | 1.3                           |
| UNRWA                          | 1.8                           |
| Zakat Fund                     | 1.0                           |
| Royal Court                    | 2.2                           |
| Ministry of Health             | 1.7                           |
| National Aid Fund              | 4.9                           |
| Ministry of Social Development | 10.6                          |
| Other sources                  | 21.0                          |
| None                           | 50.4                          |

Source: Department of Statistics, Household Expenditures and Income Survey (2017)





02

Tunisia

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Findings



03

Co mpar ative  
An alysis

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# CONTEXT: Social Protection Rates of Coverage

Table 1: Rates of Coverage

| <i>Rates of Coverage</i>  | Jordan | Tunisia |
|---|--------|---------|
| <i>Population Covered by at least one social protection benefit</i> | 35%    | 50%     |
| <i>Persons of Retirement Age receiving pensions</i>                 | 57%    | 85%     |
| <i>Persons with severe disabilities collecting benefits</i>         | 14%    | 5%      |
| <i>Employed Covered in the event of work injury</i>                 | 58%    | 29%     |
| <i>Children/households receiving cash benefits</i>                  | 9%     | 29%     |
| <i>Poor persons covered by some form of social protection</i>       | N/A    | 66%     |
| <i>Vulnerable persons covered by social assistance</i>              | 17%    | 21%     |

*Source: ILO, Social Protection Data Dashboards*

Table 3: Enabling Environment Comparative Analysis

|  | Jordan  | Tunisia                                  |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Formation of CSOs and Regulation of Activities</i>                    | 2008 Societies Law, MOSD<br>MOL (Labor Unions)            | Decree-Law on Associations (No. 2011-88) |
| <i>Ability to form CSOs</i>  | Somewhat limited  | Yes                                      |
| <i>Access to foreign funding for CSOs</i>                                | Very limited  | Yes (due diligence is required)          |
| <i>Freedom of assembly</i>   | Somewhat Limited  | Yes                                      |
| <i>Ability to host board meetings without supervision / interference</i> | No  | Yes                                      |
| <i>Ability to host and organize activities without permission</i>        | No  | Yes                                      |
| <i>Freedom of protest</i>  | Very limited  | Yes                                      |
| <i>Formalized Mechanism for Social Dialogue</i>                          | The Economic and Social Council; The Tripartite Committee | National Council for Social Dialogue     |
| <i>Regular meetings</i>  | Somewhat  | Somewhat                                 |
| <i>Independent</i>   | Somewhat  | Yes                                      |
| <i>Obligatory consultation</i>   | No  | Yes                                      |
| <i>Diverse representation of CSOs</i>                                    | Somewhat  | No                                       |

Source: Author's Compilation

# Key actors comparative analysis

| Organizations                              | Jordan   | Tunisia  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>International Organisations</b>         | UN organizations and other large international organizations play a significant role in the <u>technical guidance of policy development</u> . For example, UNICEF has been an active partner in expanding the National Aid Fund's services. <u>UN Organizations were also consulted during the development of the National Social Protection Strategy.</u> | UN organizations ( ILO, UNPD, UNICEF, OIM..)are important development partners in several sectors including social protection and inclusion. Provide policy support and institutional capacity development, Strong engagement with civil society organizations. ILO ( social contract)<br><br>Advocacy efforts ( Oxfam.) |
| <b>Communitybased Organizations (CBOs)</b> | <u>Community organizations, RNGOs, and charities</u> offer cash assistance, food parcel distribution, legal assistance and psychosocial support. <u>Their ability to contribute to social dialogue varies considerably.</u>  | <u>Community organizations, youth associations,</u> diversified and big outreach play a role in provision of services to vulnerable people ( food distribution, facilitate access to health, psychological support,  |
| <b>Advocacy and human rights</b>           | The advocacy abilities of these organizations largely depends on their own internal capacities and proactiveness. Have had significant successes in the past, but also significant challenges.   | Multiple organizations advocating for HR and social and economic rights especially after the revolution. Strong capacity to implement initiatives and advocacy LTDH, IADH, FTDES, AFDT...  |
| <b>Trade Unions</b>                        | Very weak bargaining position. Officially recognized trade unions are incorporated into Ministry of Labor and are not independent. Independent trade unions regarded as illegal by gov.  | Monopolize the social dialogue, strong role in negotiating social reforms, don't recognize small trade unions, don't cover informal workers in their negotiation with the gov.   |

# Challenges comparative analysis

| Challenges                                   | Jordan   | Tunisia  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Limited Capacity of CSOs</b>              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial and administrative spheres</li> <li>2. Funding challenges worsened during pandemic as private sector also affected</li> <li>3. CSOs require higher level of technical ability, MEAL services and improved targeting of population</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Main weaknesses were sustainability and technical capacity</li> <li>2. Funding challenges, unavailability of funds</li> <li>3. CSOs unable to adapt to beneficiaries</li> <li>4. CSOs insufficient and inconsistent to meet needs of informal workers</li> </ol> |
| <b>Relationship with Governmental Bodies</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permission required for mobilisation/events</li> <li>2. Restrictions tightened during pandemic</li> <li>3. Worse for those relying on MOSD for funding</li> <li>4. Poor coordination/communication</li> </ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unclear communication between government and civil society, highlighted by the pandemic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government ignored information shared with them during Pandemic</li> </ul> </li> </ol>  |
| <b>Wasta, Nepotism and Corruption</b>        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preferential treatment of certain CSOs by state, which would then have more freedom</li> <li>2. Eased approval for those with connection</li> <li>3. Preferential treatment in policy arena</li> <li>4. Nepotism within own CSOs bodies</li> </ol>     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Beneficiaries of CSOs routinely noted that wasta was a factor in determining service provision.</li> <li>2. Those with good connections and favouritism could access health services more quickly</li> </ol>   |

# Policy recommendations

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## JORDAN

- Institution of formalized and independent mechanisms for social dialogue, with obligatory consultation
- Amendment of the 2008 Societies Law and improved freedom of association

## TUNISIA

- More diverse representation of CSOs within social dialogue

## JORDAN AND TUNISIA

- Improved support for CSOs
- Improved communication with governmental bodies



Discussion