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Abstract

Despite long-standing restrictive state policies and a lack of opportunities, Turkmenistan's citizenry possess a capacity for intellectual growth and social development that has gone unrecognized in academic literature. This study argues that hidden beneath the layers of thick state control, there is civic engagement and volunteerism with the potential to mature into "civil society". Examining private initiatives in education and local participation in NGO/GONGOs, this study aims to provide US policymakers and regional analysts with a coherent understanding of private educational initiatives in Turkmenistan as precursors to a more fully established civil society.