

LEBANESE LNGOS AND THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS: MAPPING A SUB-NETWORK OF REFUGEE MANAGEMENT

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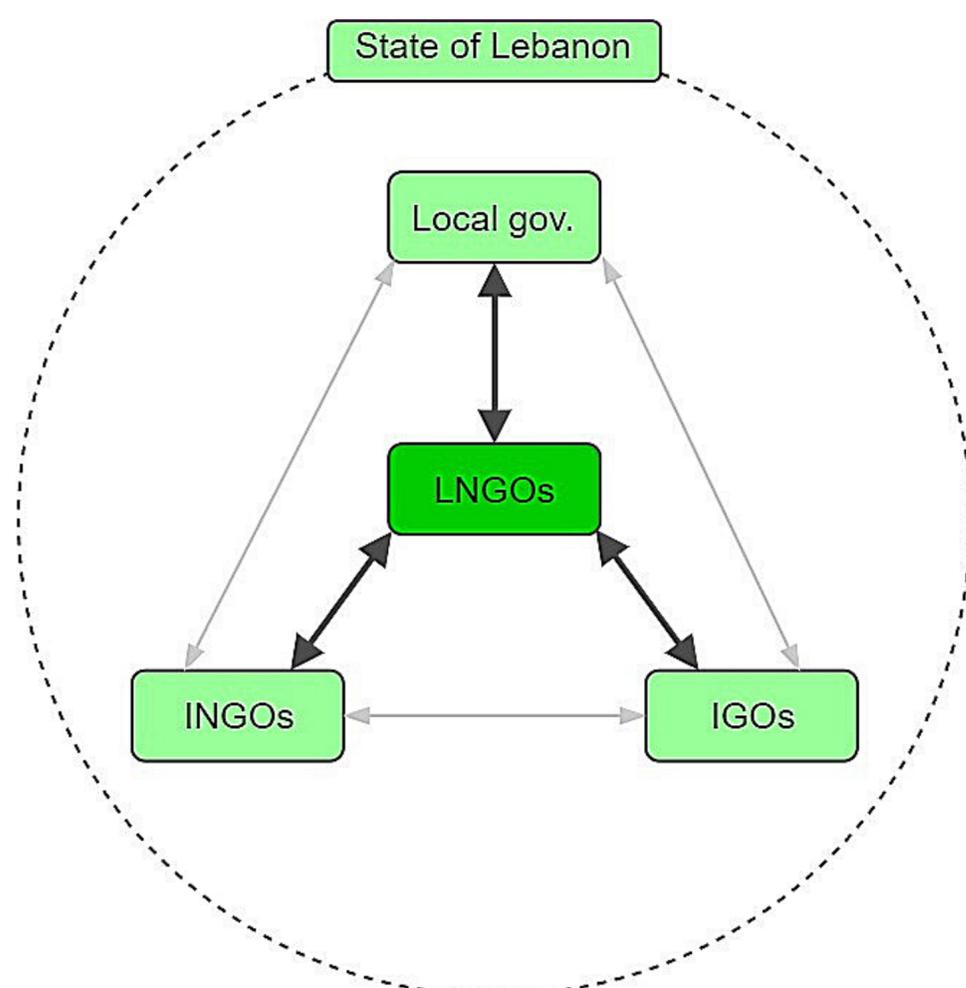
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BACKGROUND

In Lebanon, five key actors have emerged to be those most involved in the management of the Syrian refugee crisis. However, it is important to appreciate that none of the key actors involved in refugee management in Lebanon work independently from each other but are all part of a social network. Since 2011, Lebanese LNGOs have become an imperative and central figure within this network.

SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Social network analysis (SNA) maps out an actors relationship to other actors within a social network. Often SNA takes a quantitative approach to looking at the role of many actors involved in one main issue, such as poverty (Oxfam International, 2016). In political science research, it has been argued that taking a qualitative approach to exploring relationships may yield a deeper understanding of informal networks and the nature of relationships (Ahrens, 2018).



LNGO'S AT THE CENTRE?

Despite the sectarian nature of the Lebanese State, LNGOs often act in non-partisan, non-sectarian ways in their delivery of aid, including local faith based NGOs (Kraft and Smith, 2019; Dagher, 2019). This is a significant contrast to other actors, who are influenced and restricted by political, geographical and financial obstacles in the decision making process.

The informal nature of aid delivery in Lebanon towards Syrian refugees has been beneficial; informal social networks and local NGO flexibility has been cited as a key reason as to why Lebanon was able to absorb the initial shock of the influx of refugees (Fawaz, 2017; Trombetta, 2017).

All actors within refugee management are bound to conditions set by the governing body (the **State of Lebanon**). In Lebanon, the municipalities act as the **local governance**, who place rules and restrictions on Syrian refugees. The United Nations (**IGO**) deliver some aid through assistance and by working with local partners, but mostly provide legislative guidance and take an administrative role. International charities (**INGOs**) often work on small-scaled aid delivery projects. Ultimately, however, day to day aid delivery is carried out by local Lebanese organisations (**LNGOs**). All partners have established relationships with one another, but LNGOs are at the centre of navigating and managing the Syrian refugee crisis, and carry out their activities based on the strains and strengths within their relationships with the other key actors.



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