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Title: INvisible GOvernors? INGOs and the identity of social work in Lebanon

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Abstract

This chapter explores how non-governmental actors have shaped the identity of social work in Lebanon by tracing its historical evolution and highlighting broader implications on the current structure and function of the Lebanese welfare state. Drawing on poststructuralist discourse theory, we argue that the articulation of two core logics - a logic of emergency in welfare policy and governance, and a logic of (g)localisation (via aid localisation policies) in the design and provision of services - have expanded the range and reach of INGOs. While originally conceived as humanitarian and development initiatives, these practices have fundamentally shaped and redefined the local welfare system and the organisation of social services. We show how the 'welfare system problem' in Lebanon has been framed by a certain understanding of welfare as humanitarian aid in a state of permanent emergency. This understanding, we argue, is informed by a dominant (g)localisation agenda, that generates very specific responses about 'how welfare policy and services are designed', 'who holds power in deciding priorities', 'what services are available' and 'what expectations and predispositions about welfare services are promoted and generated'.

Introduction

In many parts of the world, social welfare provision, including social work services, is increasingly organised and delivered by international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). This is particularly the case in countries that have been identified as the

epicentre of crisis, war or disaster. It is within such 'emergency' contexts that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) adopt the role of organising aid and relief, substituting for the various welfare services that in otherwise 'stable' conditions may have been the domain of state action and social policy to ensure the civil and political rights of the people living in its territory (Barnett and Weiss, 2008).

Since the advent of the welfare state, there have been debates about the divide between state and non-governmental domains (welfare as a social right on the one hand, market and charity models on the other) and the extent to which the engagement of non-state actors in the provision of welfare might affect equality of access, as well as the character and quality of services, including concerns about overconcentration of services in certain areas that might be more profitable or convenient for the private and the third sector. Moreover, the long history of humanitarianism and the more recent rise of humanitarian aid as a global phenomenon since the 1990s have added considerably to the above debates, tracing the origins of humanitarianism from liberal values and the enlightenment, through religious and moral traditions, to imperialism, colonialism and the emergence of capitalism and neoliberalism (O'Sullivan et.al. 2015).

Within the latter debates, particularly relevant for this chapter is also the discussion about the role and impact of 'international' non-state actors within 'local' settings and the provision of welfare. Often unfolding on the ground of Western political interventions, INGOs seem to complement or substitute the provisions and actions of a 'weak' state that in the first instance is identified as unable to address the *urgent* character of any given crisis. It is the framing of an emergency and the subsequent call for immediate action that "justifies the global management of domestic issues in

nation-states” (Capri, 2014, p. 406), and enables non-state actors to determine welfare policy and services with powerful effects in the organisation of welfare and everyday life of people within a nation-state (Aretxaga, 2003).

Using Lebanon as a case study, this chapter explores the interplay between global influences and the local identity and practice realities of welfare service provision. The reliance of the Lebanese welfare system on international and local non-governmental actors can be traced to periods prior to the 1975 Lebanese Civil War (Carpi, 2023). However, the role of local and international organisations has grown significantly following the influx of refugees from neighbouring Syria since 2011, and more recently due to the social and economic crises facing the country. In this context of state dysfunction and declining civil society capacity, aid provided by international non-state actors is increasingly relied upon by families and individuals.

While the establishment, development and service provision by non-state actors has been studied, its influence and interplay with the realities and practices of people who work in such social services has not. These organisations have an international humanitarian-based approach and have contributed to the protocols that shape the landscape of social welfare, including social work. As the primary employers of social service workers and social workers in Lebanon (United Nations Children’s Fund, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, and Maestral International, 2019), these NGOs play a significant role in shaping the identity and approach of social work in Lebanon. For example, the Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon guiding child protection pathways in Lebanon were produced through collaboration between Lebanon’s Ministry of Social Affairs and UNICEF, with funding from the European Union (The Ministry of Social Affairs, United Nations

Children's Fund and University of Saint Joseph Lebanese School for Social Work, 2015). The impact of the profession's entwinement with global issues and practices, and particularly the influence of international - as opposed to locally developed - models of social work practice, reflect a complex and evolving profession.

We take social work practices as a paradigmatic case (Flyvbjerg, 2006) in navigating the complex entanglements of international and local norms and ideals in the organisation and provision of social welfare services, this chapter critically examines the environment in which social workers operate in Lebanon. Tracing the historical evolution of social welfare in this country, we explore how non-governmental actors have shaped the identity of the Lebanese social work context, by also highlighting broader implications on the current structure and function of the Lebanese welfare state. In the case of the Lebanese welfare system discussed here, our argument suggests that the articulation of two core logics - a logic of emergency in welfare policy and governance and a logic of (g)localisation (via aid localisation policies) in the design and provision of services - have expanded the range and reach of INGOs. While originally conceived as humanitarian and development initiatives, these practices have fundamentally shaped and redefined the local welfare system and the organisation of social services.

Our aim is to show how the 'welfare system problem' in Lebanon has been framed by a certain understanding of welfare as humanitarian aid in a state of permanent emergency. This understanding, we argue, is informed by a dominant (g)localisation agenda, that generates specific responses about 'how welfare policy and services are designed', 'who holds power in deciding priorities', 'what services are available' and 'what expectations and predispositions about welfare services are promoted and

generated'. In the following section, we offer an appreciation of the development of social welfare in Lebanon tracing key moments to understand the role of INGOs in the local context. In addressing our objects of research, in our theory and methods section, we draw upon the resources of poststructuralist discourse theory with an emphasis on the logics of critical explanation and method of problematisation. We then turn to explore how the logic of emergency in welfare policy and governance intersects with the logic of (g)localisation in creating very specific realities on the ground of social services and particularly social work practices.

Context

Lebanon's complex welfare provision precede the establishment of the modern Lebanese state (Haddad, 2017). Lebanon has a long-standing tradition of receiving support from non-state actors, whether local, regional, or international. Under the Ottoman Empire, non-state actors such as churches, missionary groups, and Muslim associations, some of foreign origins, provided for the needs of local populations (Cammett, 2011; Carpi, 2023). This pattern continued into the French mandate and the post-independence era, leading to a lack of centralised state welfare which is argued to be the official state policy (Cammett, 2011; Carpi, 2023).

However, the country has also had continuous states of emergency caused by warfare and regional refugee influxes (Carpi, 2017). One of the first of these emergencies was the 1948 exodus (*Nakba*) of Palestinians. This led to the establishment of United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) and the involvement of local NGOs and INGOs in providing services to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (Carpi, 2023).

Another major crisis was the Lebanese civil war from 1975 to 1990 which resulted in the breakdown of the limited public social welfare provisions, allowing for sectarian

politically affiliated organisations to provide relief during and after the war (Haddad, 2017). International organisations also established or intensified their presence during the civil war (Carpi, 2023). The post-war reconstruction saw greater cooperation between international institutions, civil society organisations, and governmental bodies (Haddad, 2017). The increased presence of INGOs in the whole of the country continued throughout the Israeli occupation of the South of Lebanon until 2000. Lebanon has also hosted Iraqi and Sudanese refugees supported by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) through a Memorandum of Understanding with the government as Lebanon has not signed or ratified the 1951 Convention on the Right of Refugees (Janmyr, 2018). However, with the emergence of new crises including the July War, these refugees became “refugees from longer ago” and ceased to be part of the new emergency responses (Carpi, 2017). The July 2006 war with Israel came with an important, yet criticised role, for international organisations who were unprepared for the devastation caused by the 34-day war, and failed to adequately coordinate with local organisations, further exacerbating competition over funds (Abdel Samad and Moschini, 2016). After this war, long-term provisions were mostly provided by local initiatives (Carpi, 2017).

Following the start of the conflict in neighbouring Syria, Lebanon has hosted the highest number of displaced persons per capita estimated at 1.5 million Syrians and 31,400 Palestinian refugees from Syria (LCRP, 2023). In response to the Syrian refugee crisis, existing local and international organisations had to adjust their services and criteria while new organisations proliferated in response to donor priorities and the urgent nature of the situation (Carpi, 2017). To coordinate efforts between government agencies, United Nations (UN) bodies, INGOs, and local NGOs, the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) was established starting in 2015, however, it has been

criticised for not fully meeting its intended purpose and for lacking monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Abdel Samad and Moschini, 2016; BouChabke and Haddad, 2021). More recently, in 2020, the Beirut port explosion constituted another crisis moment, when a large amount of sodium nitrate exploded killing more than 200 people, injuring 7000 and causing US\$ 15 billion property damage allegedly because of mismanagement and corruption (Fakih and Majzoub, 2021). This transpired as the country was experiencing the effects of the 2019 economic crisis and the COVID-19 Pandemic which further strained the social welfare system and increased the need for support from INGOs and NGOs (Fawaz and Harb, 2020).

Within this historic overview of key moments for humanitarian intervention, we can trace the gradual dominance of non-state actors in the Lebanese welfare system. The dominant role assumed by non-governmental actors became entrenched in Lebanon's social welfare policy, as evidenced in the National Social Development Strategy [2011-2015] that limits the government's role to regulation and monitoring rather than implementation of social services (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2011). The 2016-2020 strategy also reaffirms that the Ministry of Social Affairs is to rely on its existing resources and on the cooperation and partnership with NGOs and donors (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2016).

In such a context, social work and social service workers are significantly influenced by the country's ongoing humanitarian crises and the response of international and local organisations, as the main employers of social workers. INGOs and UN agencies hire professionals to work as field workers, case workers, case managers, social animators, and field coordinators. Many of these are referred to social workers in their job description (Mansour, 2021). However, as social work is not a protected title in the

Lebanese context, social service workers is often the term used to refer to both those qualified in social work, in other related fields, and those of unrelated fields. Before we move to further analyse the effects and complexities of such interventions on the Lebanese welfare system, in the next section we provide some reflections on our theoretical approach.

Poststructuralist Discourse Theory and the method of problematisation

The category of discourse in Poststructuralist Discourse Theory (PDT) goes beyond patterns of meaning, texts, or symbolic representations. It encompasses what is termed articulatory practices that bring together and signify physical and cultural elements into specific ways of being, doing, and thinking (Glynos and Howarth, 2007). These articulations construct relational and partially fixed systems of practice. Their partial fixity is established through the exercise of power, defining the inclusion of certain elements and the exclusion of others. As a result, such objects can be signified and organised differently by competing forces (hegemonic or otherwise) with their specific political and social agendas. Importantly, however, these discourses are never fully complete, as they are influenced by and defined against other discourses and practices that can challenge their meanings.

In operationalising PDT, we make use of the Logics of Critical Explanation developed by Glynos and Howarth (2007). This approach allows us to critically interrogate the emergence, reproduction, and transformation of practices, or constellations of practices. Having established that discourses in PDT are concrete social practices embodying specific logics, we can now add that the logic of a discourse, and its practices, therefore, is determined by the rules that govern it and the ontological conditions that enable these rules. In this chapter we focus on social logics to capture

the rules that structure certain practices in the organisation and provision of welfare services in Lebanon and the norms that make such practices work, and condition what can be done in this context.

Working within this framework, we adopt a problem-driven approach to offer a critical explanation of the welfare system in Lebanon. Drawing from Foucault, problematisation involves the construction of an object of study into a problem that always results in the transformation of our initial understandings (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, pp.34). To problematise then is a process of critical interrogation, in which the analyst attempts to see how the different solutions to a problem have been constructed, 'but also how these different solutions result from a specific form of problematisation' (Foucault, 1997, pp. 115–119). Problematisation synthesises the archaeological and genealogical methods of Foucault's analysis:

'It was a matter of analysing, not behaviors or ideas, nor societies and their "ideologies," but the problematisations through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought - and the practices on the basis of which these problematisations are formed' (Foucault, 1985, pp.111-112).

In this sense the method of problematisation involves two interconnected moments; first, as researchers, we turn the given or the familiar into a question (problem), and second, we attempt to render more intelligible those power mechanisms, norms, rules and practices that allow for its constitution, maintenance or contestation.

Discussion

Problematizing the INGOs interventions in the Lebanese welfare system: social welfare, humanitarianism and the logic of emergency

Our task to analyse the evolution of the social welfare system in Lebanon starts by problematising the dominant ways it has been problematised by key social actors. In 2006, in the aftermath of the July war in Lebanon, the Emerging and Conflict Related Issues (ECRI) Unit was established as part of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as a response to political conflicts in 'weak state' institutions in this region (Kosmatopoulos, 2011, p.125). Lebanon (alongside Iraq, Palestine, Sudan and Yemen) in ECRI reports and publications was identified as a conflict-afflicted country that faces numerous challenges, including suffering from a deficit of good governance and the lack of essential social services (Kosmatopoulos, 2011).¹ The chronic representation of Lebanon as a weak or failed state in international organisations' discourses, as Carpi (2014) contends, have led to the construction of the Lebanese social welfare system *problem*. This dominant problematisation sees Lebanon's welfare system as an outcome of constant crisis that create new needs and areas of priority, dominated by sectarian politics that exclude parts of the population, and regional conflicts that demand international intervention. Accordingly, humanitarian action has been identified as the 'solution' to deal with the complexity and intensity of such issues, justified by INGOs' immediate action in offering services to broader populations. This has also enabled the development of an international humanitarian agenda in cooperation with the state to allegedly increase accountability and effectiveness of service provision in the face of multiple crises.

¹ Of course, while many scholars and analysts frame the Lebanese state as weak, this is contested. For example, Geha and Talhouk (2019) ascertain that the description of the Lebanese state as weak is inaccurate basing their argument on the formal and informal mechanisms that the government uses to influence policies and programmes set by the UN especially relating to Syrian refugees.

The effects of such problematisation have led humanitarianism to be consolidated as Lebanon's dominant welfare discourse. This discourse and its practices are sustained by and centred around a social logic of emergency, where local NGOs and INGOs exist between everyday and emergency welfare (Carpi, 2017), in which aid does not differ from welfare. In this sense, services are often designed as short-term and funding-dependent interventions to respond to any (specific) "sudden" event and the needs it prescribes. Therefore, humanitarian assistance in Lebanon's history of cyclical displacement has led to the transformation and fragmentation of the welfare social space into a constellation of humanitarian transnational spaces (Carpi, 2019). This is illustrated by how the establishment of NGOs tend to peak after each crisis, with the presence of large numbers of organisations attesting to the fragmentation of services, limited cooperation, and increased competition (AbiYaghi, Yammine and Jagarnathsingh, 2019).

Critically, however, while multiple crises have added to the weaknesses in Lebanon's social policy system, some progress has been made through financial and technical support partnerships between the government and international actors (Bastagli, Holmes and Jawad, 2019). Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Lebanon, for example, have formed coalitions with other local NGOs and with international organisations to improve their chances of securing funding, to cover larger scales, and to improve their capacities (Saade, 2020). Some work is also being done with governmental institutions, mainly the Social Development Centres affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and different municipalities.

Nonetheless, local organisations do tend to see international organisations as short term "emergency tourists" (Saade, 2020). Within the construction of such 'emergency

contexts', INGOs are often registered as local organisations. It is here that the logic of emergency starts to intersect with the logic of (g)localisation, allowing us to examine how the localisation agenda of humanitarian response turns on its head, increasing the influence of INGOs at the expense of local responses and creating competition between these organisations (Saade, 2020). Moghnieh et al. (2016) found that many community-based organisations viewed INGOs as competitors rather than allies when it comes to facilitating preparedness and response to crises. These are the complex interactions that we will now turn to flesh out in the next subsection starting with a reflection on the global and local character of the social work profession.

Problematizing aid localisation in the Lebanese welfare system: Glocalisation in Social Work and the logic of glocalisation in aid

Contemporary discussions on 'glocalisation' in social work have their antecedent in questions and debates about social work identity that have endured since its establishment as a named profession within the Global North in the late 19th Century. In one sense, glocalisation reflects a constellation of the perpetual and fundamental question of who, or what, has the authority to determine what constitutes the practice of 'social work' or the identity of a 'social worker' across time and place (Gibelman 1999; Hugman 2009).

Social work in Lebanon has had to contest with such questions in attempting to formulate their identity and status in the country. The Social Workers Syndicate in Lebanon, which aims to contribute to the development of the Lebanese social work professional identity, adopts the international definition of social work established by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) (2014; Social Workers' Syndicate in Lebanon, 2018). This universal acceptance of the international definition becomes questionable in the

realistic implementation of social work in the Lebanese context especially when the attempt at finding a global definition for social work by IFSW and IASSW has raised questions around indigenisation and the imperialisation of social work (Gray, 2005). In their attempt to create an identity for the profession, the Syndicate also proposed, in 2012, for a mandatory permission to practise social work in Lebanon (Social Workers' Syndicate in Lebanon, 2018). While this has not progressed, the Code of Ethics produced by the Syndicate has set a responsibility on social workers to inform the concerned association of any person practising social work without any social work diploma or permit. This will only be applicable if the syndicate gains the official license to deliver work permits to social workers (Social Workers' Syndicate in Lebanon, 2018). Therefore, the Syndicate has attempted, albeit with limited success, to take ownership of the social work profession in Lebanon by trying to define who can practice social work and articulating an ethical framework for practice.

While the Syndicate works towards its aspired understanding of social work, a country group that was formed during the review of the state of social service workers in Lebanon defined social service workers more pragmatically as “governmental and nongovernmental professionals and paraprofessionals whose primary function is to engage people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing of individuals and communities” (UN Children's Fund, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, and Maestral International, 2019, p. 62). This definition, focusing on Lebanon's welfare context, highlights two important factors in Lebanon's social work profession; the major role played by non-governmental bodies in social work and the major role played by paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals, in this sense, refers to those who do not hold the relevant degree but have completed some recognised training, certificate courses, or short-term pre-service or in-service training (UN

Children's Fund, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, and Maestral International, 2019). Local and International NGOs are the main employers of social service workers in Lebanon with 66% working for NGOs, 21.2% employed by international organisations, and 12.8% serving in the government (United Nations Children's Fund, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, and Maestral International, 2019). As for their qualifications, 44.1% of social service workers hold qualifications in social work, 16.9% are qualified in related fields like psychology or special education, and 39% lack formal academic qualifications for providing skilled services to vulnerable individuals (United Nations Children's Fund, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, and Maestral International, 2019). Further, Social work as an academic discipline in Lebanon emerged in the 1950s (Sleem, 2013), by which stage INGOs and NGOs were already established as core providers of welfare services, and the academic programmes were developed with their support and input. For example, it was an investment by Save the Children at the Lebanese American University in 1983 that designated international and national social workers to further develop the division, eventually leading to an accredited undergraduate programme in social work (Sleem, 2013). Consequently, to understand further the glocalisation agenda in social work, we turn, next, to consider aid localisation practices through INGOs and NGO as a manifestation of a particular logic of glocalisation and interrogate how their underlying norms and ideals have shaped social welfare provision in Lebanon, and the role and identity of social welfare professionals.

Within the context of international development, the logic of glocalisation is embodied in the practices of 'aid localisation', broadly defined as a "collective process involving different stakeholders that aims to return local actors, whether civil society organisations or local public institutions, to the centre of the humanitarian system with

a greater role in humanitarian response” (de Geoffroy, Grunewald & Ni Cheilleachair 2017, p.1). Most recently, localisation practices emerged as a priority following their inclusion as a central tenet of the ‘Grand Bargain’, an agreement between 67 global signatories, including nation states, NGOs, UN agencies, and INGOs, aimed at improving the “effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action” (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2024, n.p). However, the roots of localisation can be found in much earlier critiques of Western-led humanitarian interventions, which highlight an aspect of the colonial fantasy that ‘experts’ in the Global North possess both the knowledge and resources to ‘solve’ the problems of the Global South (masking that those ‘problems’, almost invariably, emerge from these same forces of colonialism and neoliberal capitalism) (Escobar 2011; Kothari 2005; Roepstorff 2020).

Central to aid localisation is a recognition of the inherent asymmetry in power between ‘donor’ and ‘recipient’ at all levels of the humanitarian aid relationship – from framing the scale and scope of need(s), to determining the type and extent of resources available, as well as the structures and mechanisms through which humanitarian activity is delivered. This proves to be the case in Lebanon where there is significant dependency on INGOs and their funding. For instance, in their mapping of CSOs in Lebanon, Beyond Reform and Development (2015) found that 74.2% of respondents receive funds from international organisations and donors. This dependency ties local organisations to donor expectations and global agendas which leaves no room for local specificities (Moghnieh *et al.*, 2016). Equally, this dependency on aid leads to a focus on emergency work (short-term and funding-dependent services and interventions), which results in some local organisations struggling to maintain their own principles, goals and services (Moghnieh *et al.*, 2016). Local welfare organisations might even abandon their initial purposes and target the new

emergency-affected vulnerable populations (Carpi, 2017). Further, the unequal power dynamics between donors and their respective implementation partners further push towards professionalisation through result-based reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and financial management among other set requirements (key functions of Western governmentality). This professionalisation increases the dependency on donors and leads to a reliance on technical performance, expertise, and indicators for project-based interventions (AbiYaghi and Yammine, 2019). While this is intended to increase transparency, it can also result in organisations shifting their practice in such a way that leaves them less able to respond to contextual factors (AbiYaghi, Yammine and Jagarnathsingh, 2019).

The localisation agenda emerged with a promise of ‘shifting’ power at both strategic and practical levels of the relationship, through seeking to strengthen local actors and to prioritise engagement with local knowledge and expertise (Mac Ginty & Williams 2016; Roepstorff 2020). While there appears a general consensus and agreement on the ‘problems’ localisation seeks to address – the domination of the Global North within the humanitarian system and its decision-making structures – the merits and practicalities of ‘localisation’ as a set of practices for achieving this are contested (Koch & Rooden 2024; Reopstroff 2020). In its early manifestations from the 1980s through to early 2000s, the lenses of ‘resiliency’ and ‘self-reliance’ saw the localisation agenda drive what Joseph (2016, p. 370) refers to as a “governance through denial that further shifts responsibility onto the governed”, without unsettling the overarching authority of Global North donors.

While there has been a deliberate shift towards recognising and engaging with local knowledge and resources, rather than simply transferring responsibility for

implementation, the meaning and significance of 'local' within a humanitarian context has been criticised as simplistic and remains largely undertheorised (Koch & Rooden 2024; Roepstorff 2020). In Lebanon's context, the long-standing presence of local NGOs in the country positions them as possessing vital and varying expertise and resources from working in different crises and conflicts. As suggested by Moghnieh et al. (2016), preserving the presence and principles of existing community-based organisations during periods of crisis is critical for retaining the trust they have built with the communities that they serve.

Carpi (2016) notes how the language of 'partnership working' with INGOs infers an *exchange* of information or skills, when it is the local organisations who are expected to adopt the language and practices of their counterparts. Another example is found in Carpi and Diana's (2019) analysis of INGOs discourse, practices, and construction of children's vulnerability by looking at the use of play and sports activities with Lebanese and Syrian children in a context where political violence is widespread. Although the INGO examined is increasingly working with local partners, the understandings around children's vulnerabilities and the strategies employed for promoting social cohesion were internationally standardised on the assumption of universal conceptions of childhood and do not, therefore, depend on the local organisations' work. Such discourses framed the 'Middle Eastern family model' as a negative example where the interventions assumed 'violence' as inherent to the culture (Carpi and Diana, 2019). In this sense, the intervention is constructed as targeting cultural norms to end what western discourses often frame as a culture that tolerates violence. In such situations, INGOs in Lebanon become perceived locally as promoting a "western" model of childhood where children become apolitical subjects, irrespective of whether the interventions were provided by local social welfare practitioners.

A shift towards 'coordination' is a further mechanism through which commitments to a re-configuration of power between 'global' and 'local' actors are said to be pursued within the localisation agenda of humanitarian aid. Here, the role of the INGO is re-configured as a 'facilitator' and 'enabler' of local expertise, systems and processes, rather than imposing or directing any of its own roles or presence (Haldrup & Rosén 2013). However, coordination mechanisms can be seen to have enabled a 'stitch[ing] together' (Dinger 2022, p. 221) of the state and non-governmental sovereignty in Lebanon, resulting in a weakened and more fragmented social and political infrastructure. Consequently, as Aoun, Andre and Sander (2023) note, 'localization remains structurally embedded in a paradigm that somehow negates it ... [and] consequently, power relations persist when the discourse translates into practice' (p. 84). An example of this is the LCRP that provides a formal structure for coordination (Geha and Talhouk, 2019) and has become one of the primary channels for humanitarian funding for many UN agencies and INGOs operating in Lebanon (Abdel Samad and Moschini, 2016). The LCRP remains a plan without proper monitoring and evaluation as coordination is seen in checklists, data gathering, and reporting without proper follow-up (BouChabke and Haddad, 2021). This is exacerbated by the governmental incapability to monitor different organisations' initiatives causing a disconnect between the government's response and the politics of NGOs (Fakhoury, 2017).

Such roles for INGOs as facilitators of local experts can be also found in the Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon (SOPs) which set out to unify the stages within the child protection system in its judicial and non-judicial aspects. One of its claimed achievements is setting a common practice framework and assessment tools for assessing and managing child protection cases, thus providing

step by step guidance and paperwork for caseworkers (El-Hoss, 2020). As briefly discussed earlier in this chapter, the SOPs are produced with heavy input from international organisations (The Ministry of Social Affairs, United Nations Children's Fund and University of Saint Joseph Lebanese School for Social Work, 2015). The SOPs and the implementation of child protection provisions more generally are influenced by, and reliant upon INGOs in the first instance. In such cases, then, where the country has a weak state presence and where international donors and NGOs wield instrumental power, the child welfare agenda is directed in accordance with their external expectations (EL-Hoss, 2020). For example, a range of NGOs and developmental agencies working in Lebanon perceive children as individual right-bearers where the state has the ultimate responsibility to uphold their rights (El-Hoss, 2020). This Western construction of childhood contrasts with many Lebanese cultural understandings typified by close familial bonds between the immediate and extended family, who often play an important role in social assistance (Cammatt, 2015). Children in such a context are seen as belonging to the family who in turn belongs to the community (Universite Saint-Jospeh and Child Frontiers, 2011). Despite these differences, it was the western construction of childhood which materialised in the SOPs, which largely failed to produce a pathway to engage with local communities.

In this discussion section, we attempted to critically analyse the complexities and limitations of humanitarian welfare practices and its localisation in the Lebanese context, highlighting how the social logics of emergency and glocalisation manifest in a setting where the boundaries between 'social welfare' and 'emergency aid', and 'global' and 'local' are largely imperceptible. By failing to recognise or meaningfully engage with the tensions and complexities of 'local' contexts on the one hand, and with the contradictions and limits of service design as a response to emergencies on

the other, welfare practices (and humanitarian assistance) can have the effect of consolidating and reproducing existing inequalities and exacerbating, rather than addressing, social and political tensions (Roepstorff 2020; Mac Ginty & Williams 2016). One of the clearest examples of this in the Lebanese context is documented by Carpi (2023) in *Akkar* in the north of the country, an area with a significant population of Syrian refugees and a long history between Lebanese and Syrians in the area. Emergency interventions by international actors here were exclusively provided to the Syrian refugee population, which exacerbated resentment of the local Lebanese community in this heavily deprived area, which previously had not received services from the state or civil service organisations (Carpi 2023). While there were later attempts to address this by humanitarian organisations offering services to the community on a more universal basis, a greater awareness and understanding of the local context would have arguably prevented these tensions and avoided the need for the social cohesion-focused humanitarian programmes that followed (Carpi, 2023). Carpi (2023) suggests this is emblematic of the broader Lebanese context, in which there is a flawed and partial understanding of welfare services and their localisation. In this, we can see how the interplay of the two logics — emergency and glocalisation — work within a broader humanitarian welfare order that is sustained by Global North donors’ agendas, hierarchical functions, and unequal power relations.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Lebanon’s social welfare system and the complex interplay of global and local intersections and agendas, which have shaped it as it exists today. We have explored how a particular discourse of humanitarianism in the organisation and provision of welfare services is underpinned by two supplementary social logics; first, a logic of ‘emergency’ in which Lebanon is constructed as a weak State in

perpetual crises, and second, a logic of (g)localisation which has led to a dependency on, and domination of, international aid as the primary vehicle of welfare provision.

While emergency responses and aid localisation are ostensibly aimed at the support and 'empowerment' of local actors and the reconfiguration of power relationship between 'donors' and 'recipients', the reality of these practices in Lebanon highlights their circularity in circumstances where humanitarian organisations (international and local) have been incorporated within state structures and processes through the practices of emergencisation, and where distinctions between 'local', 'international', 'civil society' and 'state' are blurred.

The impact of aid localisation on the Lebanese social welfare provision, and the broader historical role of humanitarian emergency in shaping the identity of social welfare practitioners in Lebanon, provides a useful lens for understanding the glocalisation agenda in social work. As has been demonstrated, the profession and/or practice of social work in Lebanon has existed between 'everyday' welfare provisions and emergency aid responses.

Since their early foundations, social work and social workers (broadly defined), have continued to exist and develop between 'global' and 'local' discourses and practices. As discussed, 'local' social workers employed by INGOs and NGOs (implementing programme in partnerships with INGOs) may practice in ways which reflect and reproduce 'global' (largely western) constructions of childhood, family, and community. At the same time, 'International' social workers engaged with INGOs in Lebanon are involved in shaping the 'local' provision of welfare services, with few opportunities for the 'integration' or 'synthesis' of local and global knowledges imagined as part of glocalisation processes.

It becomes impractical in such settings to separate the 'local' and the 'global' and to view the two as having equal influence in the development of social work identity and practice. Without having had the opportunity or agency to develop separately from the influence of INGOs and the emergency humanitarian social welfare model, any moves towards supporting the development of a Lebanese social work must accept and grapple with this fragmented history and identity.

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