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NGOs and civil society: navigating a hostile and impoverished world

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This panel explores advances in research on NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) working in fragile, conflict-affected, politically hostile and/or low-income contexts, particularly in terms of their internal dynamics and local impact. Acikyildiz seeks to explain differences in policies and field practices among humanitarian organizations with regard to biometrics technology, focusing on their principles and traditions, origins, institutional structure, and mandates and scope of action. Walton and Aslam offer a comparative analysis of how CSO roles are shaped by service delivery and social protection in conflict-affected environments; using the case studies of Tunisia, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Bradley focuses on humanitarian action in the context of organised criminal violence in Mexico. She argues that the particular dynamics of criminal violence, and the fact that international humanitarian law does not apply, generate a unique set of challenges, limiting the work of humanitarian agencies, and leading to compromises on humanitarian principles. Sovner examines how CSOs responded to reduced funding and a hostile political atmosphere in Central and Eastern Europe, arguing that organizational theory provides insight into the strategic responses of organizations and processes of resiliency in the context of democratic backsliding. Crack and Chasukwa share a methodological innovation for tackling the issue of linguistic exclusion in international development work – a problem which is rarely considered by academics, policy-makers and NGO practitioners, but that has significant implications for the SDG ambition of 'leaving no one behind'.

Track Classification: Non-Governmental Organisations Working Group