



NGOs and Governance in the Arab World

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Most non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Arab world have traditionally been active in the areas of social work and charity, often within a religious or communal framework. But recently, many of these organizations have become the forum for conflicts between different political trends, while others tackle political problems such as human rights or democratic issues. Facing the rejuvenated NGO scene in the Arab world, public authorities remain torn-between support for the concerns of civil society and the traditional mode of management, which does not delegate, consult, or decentralize. Can NGOs in the Arab world be considered full-fledged actors of governance and of national and local development? is the relationship between NGOs and public authorities at the national and local level one of partnership or opposition and competition? Are NGOs perceived to be palliatives to the shortcomings of the public authorities? How is the relationship between NGOs and society to be defined? Do Arab NGOs highlight the issues that remain undetected by the classical methods of action of the public authorities? The studies in this collection, arising out of the Conference on NGOs and Governance in the Arab World held in Cairo in March 2003, attempt to answer these and other areas of concern.

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