



A crisis of legitimacy for humanitarianism:

In conflict situations how does the close relationship between Western power and humanitarian aid affect emergency response capacity and access for aid organisations?

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by

Jonathan Whittall

January 2015

Keywords

Humanitarian aid; emergency response; aid effectiveness; identity; access; power

Abstract

Title: *A crisis of legitimacy for humanitarianism: In conflict situations how does the close relationship between Western power and humanitarian aid affect emergency response capacity and access for aid organisations?*

Humanitarian aid faces a crisis of legitimacy in many conflicts as a result of a close relationship with Western power, which can result in both its failure and rejection. The rise of institutional humanitarian aid has been a part of the rise of Western power. Humanitarian aid has been used as a tool to advance hegemonic power and as rhetoric to justify intervention. However, power is changing. Western norms and institutions are being contested in an emerging global multi-polarity and diffusion of power, often misconceived as shrinking humanitarian space. Institutional humanitarian aid has been so intertwined with Western power that as the West declines humanitarian organisations are either retreating with the tide or being left exposed. The relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power means humanitarian space is actually a Western space. In the places where aid can be deployed – within the realms of the West's influence - its effectiveness is in question due to its incorporation into longer-term processes of liberal democratic state-building that overlooks the basics of emergency response. This is demonstrated in the findings of this qualitative doctoral thesis. Case-study research took place in South Sudan and Syria. In South Sudan, a breakdown of emergency-response capacity as a result of the incorporation of aid into a state-building agenda is demonstrated. In Syria, the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power is a key justification for the Syrian government to limit emergency-response access. However, changing global power is challenging the conceptualisation and practice of humanitarian aid. If liberal democracy underpins current approaches to humanitarian aid, in emerging states like Brazil and South Africa – where interviews were conducted – the politics of aid are linked more to counter-hegemony, both from the state and diffused forms of power. Changes in global power may not present solutions to the challenges of humanitarian effectiveness and access, but the ongoing affiliation between humanitarian aid and Western power hampers its ability to negotiate a dynamic landscape. This research demonstrates that institutional humanitarianism must disentangle itself from Western power to remain effective and to access the most vulnerable.

Word-count: 99,276

Table of Contents

List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
Statement of Original Authorship	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Overview	1
Background	2
Mapping the territory	3
Current practices in humanitarianism.....	3
Semantic issues.....	4
Context of this research.....	5
Significance and scope.....	7
Thesis chapter outline.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	10
Introduction	10
Critical method	11
Part 1: Hegemonic power and humanitarian aid.....	11
Core and periphery politics	11
Diffuse power and non-state actors	13
Bio-politics	14
A historical perspective of humanitarianism and hegemony	15
Imperial humanitarianism.....	16
Neo-humanitarianism	17
Liberal humanitarianism.....	19
A fourth era in the making?.....	20
Humanitarianism as a justification for dominant-state foreign policy.....	21
Libya: the return of humanitarian intervention.....	24
Humanitarianism as a tool to advance dominant political ideology	26
Linking relief to development and security	27
Post 9/11 and stabilisation	32
Afghanistan: humanitarian aid and soft power.....	35
The denial of aid.....	38
Somalia: the rise of humanitarian criminals	39
Humanitarianism as a full circle.....	42
Implications for humanitarian effectiveness and access	42
Effectiveness.....	43
Resilience as the final merging of relief and development	44
Dangerous aid.....	46
Access.....	46

The politics of humanitarian space	47
Is humanitarian space shrinking?	48
The (non-existent) golden age of humanitarianism	49
What determines the ability of humanitarian organisations to operate?	51
Security	52
Gaps in the literature	55
Part 2: Humanitarianism and changing power	57
The future of the empire – three theories	57
Decline of the West?	57
Capital unleashed	57
Outcomes of the Arab Spring	58
Possible-world polarities	58
Rising powers	60
BRIC(S)	60
How the rest will rise	61
The diffusion of power	61
Civil society	62
The end of a Western monopoly on humanitarian aid	64
New donors in humanitarian aid	65
Mutual respect and South–South solidarity	67
Best practices	68
The central role of the state and sovereignty	69
Part 3: Humanitarianism and counter-hegemonic resistance	70
Changing power dynamics and the increased assertion of sovereignty	70
A humanitarian frontline	72
Diffusion of power in the humanitarian system	73
What next?	75
Joining the dots and unanswered questions	77
Chapter 3: Research Design	80
Introduction	80
Approach to the literature review	81
Research paradigm	82
Research methodology	83
Strategies of enquiry	83
Phase 1: Grounded-theory-informed research	83
Phase 2: Case-study approach	86
Why choose the case-study approach?	86
Rationale for the choice of case studies	89
Phase 3: Action-oriented research	90
Research design	91
Host organisation	92
Data-collection tools	94

Documentary sources	95
Institutional documents	95
Limitations and questions of possible bias	96
Media clippings and social-media sites	96
Semi-structured interviews	97
Limitations of the interview data collection	102
Field notes	103
Personal communication	103
Data analysis	104
Interview data	104
Case-study data	104
Explanation-building strategies	104
Content and thematic analysis	105
Quality control	106
Revisiting the data	106
Ethical considerations	106
Limitations	107
Internal limitations	107
External limitations	108
Presentation of findings	108
Chapter 4: Research findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity	110
Humanitarian shortcomings: is less more?	110
Setting the scene: the birth of a nation into crisis	113
Post-conflict peace dividends: 2005–2011	116
State-building: 2011–2013	121
How was this approach to state-building reflected in the conceptualisation of the aid response?	122
2014: the phase of humanitarian paralysis?	127
The set-up	128
A politically exposed UN Mission	128
"Our access is dependent on their acceptance"	131
Risks versus benefit	132
NGOs and the quasi-development approach in emergencies	133
The impact	134
Justifying failure	137
Difficult-to-reach areas	137
Lack of funding	138
Conclusion to Research Findings I	140
Chapter 5: Research Findings II – Humanitarian identity and access	141
Aid practitioners' understanding of the Western identity of humanitarian action	142
The polarised politics of humanitarian aid and the constraints in the delivery of aid in Syria	147
Setting the stage: geopolitical chaos	147
No limits? An exploration of the conduct of hostilities in the Syria war	151

An equally fragmented aid response?.....	155
Sovereignty and access: an exploration of MSF negotiations with Syrian authorities	160
Discussions with Russia	160
Engagement with the BRICS.....	161
Military tactics take priority	163
Maintaining state legitimacy	165
Managing perceived risk	166
Abduction and the link to the Western face of humanitarian aid.....	167
Do Western allies respect Western humanitarian organisations?.....	168
European states and abduction risks.....	171
MSF exposed	172
Conclusion to Research Findings II	173
Chapter 6: Research Findings III – Humanitarianism rethought?.....	176
The BRICS effect: an emerging multi-polarity?	177
How does this BRICS effect affect humanitarian action?.....	181
Humanitarian crossroads	183
The non-state diffusion of power	188
South Africa: a post-liberation-movement-driven humanitarian response	190
Bahrain: social-media humanitarianism.....	194
A return to the <i>sans frontières</i> moment?.....	199
Preserving the capacity for agitation	202
Conclusion to Research Findings III – Humanitarianism rethought.....	204
Chapter 7: Discussion – A crisis of identity and capacity	206
Humanitarianism failed.....	207
Building resilience by deconstructing humanitarian aid	209
Compromised aid architecture.....	213
Humanitarianism rejected.....	216
Syria as geopolitical chaos	217
Humanitarian space as a Western space.....	218
The shrinking core and its effect on humanitarian access.....	219
Humanitarianism at the outer limits of empire.....	224
Changing political paradigms.....	227
Trapped in a post-Cold War paradigm: the ongoing hangover of historical periodisation	228
Civil-society power	230
A new narrative	234
Chapter 8: Conclusion – Humanitarianism is dead. Long live humanitarianism	241
Research phase 1	242
Research phase 2	242
South Sudan.....	242
Syria.....	243
Research phase 3	244
Bibliography	248

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Estimated foreign assistance contributions from BRICS 2005–2009	65
Figure 2.2: Top three recipients of non-DAC-donor humanitarian aid (2000–2010) as a proportion of total humanitarian aid (US\$)	66
Figure 3.1: Phases of the data collection and strategies of enquiry.....	81
Figure 4.1: Contribution of humanitarian action to NDC goals.....	123
Figure 4.2: Percentage of the target population reached in South Sudan disaggregated according to cluster.....	136

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Initial research objectives.....	84
Table 3.2: Research themes and objectives	85
Table 3.3: Case studies chosen and their corresponding issue questions, study propositions and data sources.....	88
Table 3.4: Final research design	92
Table 3.5: Phase 1 research participants	99
Table 3.6: Phase 2 research participants	100
Table 3.7: Phase 3 research participants	101
Table 3.8: Number of participants by type.....	101

List of Abbreviations

ACU	Assistance Coordination Unit
AFP	Agence France-Presse
ALBA-TCP	Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America– Peoples' Trade Agreement
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India and China
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CAR	Central African Republic
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
CO-IN	Counter-insurgency
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DFID	Department for International Development
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
ERF	Emergency Relief Fund
EU	European Union
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GHSI	Global Health Security Initiative
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IBSA	India, Brazil and South Africa
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDC	New Deal Compact

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPR	Operational Peer Review
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army (<i>cf.</i> SPLM)
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement (<i>cf.</i> SPLA)
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Acknowledgements

This doctoral thesis is dedicated to the memory of Evans Kuntonda. Evans was a friend and comrade who embodied humanitarian solidarity and whose absence is felt by so many.

Words cannot describe how grateful I am to have had Professor Barry Munslow as a supervisor for this thesis and as an intellectual mentor over the past 10 years. His guidance and support has not only shaped my mind, but also my work and life in general. I have such huge respect for him and have learnt an immeasurable amount from him. I am also so grateful to Pauline, his partner, for the amazing meals, generous hospitality and invaluable support on research methodology. Barry and Pauline truly are a power couple.

None of this would have been possible if Dr Tim O'Dempsey had not taken a risk in accepting me into the Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance in 2005. I am eternally grateful for his vote of confidence. Tim and his partner, Teresa, showed immense generosity in opening their home to me for an incredibly productive first month thesis writing. Thank you.

Writing this PhD has not been easy and entailed many ups and downs. I could not have done it without the most incredible group of friends. I would like to especially thank Rola Yasmine, Jeffrey Webster, Adir Levi, Raneem Mourad, Fernanda Falero, Jehan Bseiso, Lesley Odendal, Richard Kahwagi, Saleem Haddad, Carlo Massoud, Ahmed Shihab-Eldin, Indira Govender, Dalli Weyers, Katharine Hilderbrand, Eric Goemaere, Nathan Ford, Sharon Ekambaram, Bridget Steffan, Jared Musiker, Prinitha Pillay and Jens Pederson.

My parents have given me unwavering support in all of the (sometimes unconventional) decisions I have taken in my life. As a child, they nurtured and cared for me through some difficult and traumatic times and never stopped believing in me. I would not be where I am but for their unconditional love and support. I lack the words to adequately express my gratitude to them.

Nancy Gordon, a friend and adopted grandmother, has been a confidant and inspiration. The hours I have spent conversing with her in Cape Town have given me a valuable sense of perspective.

Merle Stoltz deserves special acknowledgement for teaching me to analyse and question the status quo. Her teaching gave me the best possible foundation for conducting this research.

I have had the privilege of working with an organisation that both infuriates and inspires me daily. MSF has the capacity to reflect, evolve and accommodate outliers. The organisation

has become family to me and I have been lucky enough to work alongside some of the most determined people with the most inspiring minds. I would especially like to thank Christopher Stokes and Meinie Nicoli for their willingness to invest in me, for challenging me and for giving me the space to do things differently. I have also had the privilege of working with the most amazing team. Thank you to Michiel Hofman, Aurelie Ponthieu, Jehan Bseiso, Anna Bertmar-Khan and Jens Pederson. I would not have been able to write this thesis were it not for the understanding of the team and the willingness of Michiel to cover for me as co-ordinator. I would also like to thank Lorena Bilbao for her support.

Others in the organisation have inspired me and taught me so much. They include, Eric Goemaere, Jerome Oberreit, Helene Lorinquer, Marie Christine Ferir, Michiel Hofman, Christopher Stokes, Meinie Nicoli, Rachel Cohen, Sharon Ekambaram, Brice de le Vingne, David Michalski and Tom Quinn.

Finally, I would like to especially thank Michiel Hofman and Eric Goemaere for taking the time to read and provide feedback on initial drafts of this thesis.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Humanitarian action has been implicated in the rise and maintenance of Western power and influence (Barnett, 2011; Bricmont, 2006; Forsythe, 2005; Davey, Borton & Foley, 2013). That power is shifting (Nye, 2011; Kupchan, 2013). The West's post-Cold war honeymoon period of liberal democracy – where authors such as Fukuyama (1992) proclaimed the "end of history" – has come to an end. The tide of Western expansion – first through colonialism and then a Gramscian hegemony of ideas – is starting to turn, battered back by a global financial crisis and, in the post-9/11 era, an overreach in military intervention (Munslow & O'Dempsey, 2009). The dominance of the Western model of global governance has not collapsed, but it is no longer uncontested (Kupchan, 2013). My central questions in this thesis are: What do these changes mean for the delivery of humanitarian aid and how does the evolving relationship between humanitarianism and Western power affect access for, and the effectiveness of, humanitarian aid in contemporary conflict zones? In investigating these questions, this doctoral research explores whether humanitarian action is failing due to its links with the West and whether, at the outermost reaches of empire, it is left exposed by retreating Western power.

These questions must be explored in order for humanitarian workers to be able to navigate a present and future political landscape characterised by growing multi-polarity and diffusion of power.

This research is rooted in both academic reflection and practitioner experience. As an aid practitioner, and having worked in Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Palestine, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ukraine, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Sudan and South Sudan, there are problems I have faced that, I will argue, are linked to a failure of aid-system actors to be aware of how the system is perceived, how that identity is shaped by history and how it may affect both the effectiveness of aid delivery and the chances of accessing people in great need of assistance.

I demonstrate through this research how humanitarian aid and its identity have been shaped by relationships between states at the core and the periphery, between coloniser and colonised, between an interconnected capitalist elite and its labour force, between imperialist designs and those who resist them. For a researcher reflecting on these challenges, the existing literature falls short of fully accounting for the implications of links between humanitarian aid and Western power, particularly in the context of a changing world order.

Background

This research makes use of privileged access to conflicts, key informants and primary sources through the medical humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors without Borders (MSF), where I have worked in various capacities – most recently as Head of Humanitarian Analysis.

In 2012, MSF alone treated 8,316,000 outpatients; admitted 472,900 inpatient to wards; treated 1,642,800 for malaria; admitted 276,300 severely malnourished children to inpatient or outpatient feeding programmes; conducted 36,400 medical and surgical interventions in response to direct violence; helped 185,400 deliveries, including by caesarean section, at MSF facilities; in response to outbreaks, vaccinated 690,700 and 496,000 children against measles and meningitis, respectively; and admitted 57,400 to cholera-treatment centres or provided oral rehydration solution (Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF], 2012:9).

Without these services, lives would have been lost. This research intends to defend and enlarge what capacity there is to provide these services. It is therefore taken as a given that the delivery of such life-saving services is an endeavour worth defending in the face of constant challenges.

In 2011, MSF was working in some of the most difficult places in the Middle East and North Africa, including Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Bahrain. In 2013, MSF announced the "closure of all its programmes in Somalia, the result of extreme attacks on its staff in an environment where armed groups and civilian leaders increasingly support, tolerate, or condone the killing, assaulting, and abducting of humanitarian aid workers." (MSF, 2013d:online). By 2014, MSF had been forced to withdraw from Libya due to growing insecurity. Following the kidnapping of five staff members in Syria in January 2014, the organisation had to suspend most of its Syria activities. In government-controlled parts of Syria, the organisation continued to be denied access. In Iraq, MSF faced extraordinary obstacles in delivering assistance. In Bahrain, MSF was banned from operating and staff members were arrested. In Sudan, the section responsible for access to South Darfur and Blue Nile withdrew its team due to unresolvable obstacles to its access and ability to operate in areas most in need. Simultaneously, there was growing talk in MSF of the failures of the overall humanitarian-aid system (Tiller & Healy, 2014). Field teams were increasingly frustrated at the feeling of being alone where aid delivery was possible, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan.

This research is therefore rooted in both an understanding of the value of humanitarian aid but also the acute challenges actors face in operating in conflicts.

Mapping the territory

Current practices in humanitarianism

'Humanitarianism', for this research, is defined as acting to save lives and alleviate suffering during conflicts, social unrest, disasters and social exclusion (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2012).

Institutional humanitarian action – represented primarily by large Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) from Europe and North America, and United Nations (UN) humanitarian agencies – has become distinguished by three principles: impartiality, neutrality and independence. According to the Good Humanitarian Donor Principles, 'neutrality' can be defined as "the provision of humanitarian assistance without engaging in hostilities or taking sides in controversies of a political, religious or ideological nature" (Featherstone, 2012:4), 'impartiality' as "the provision of humanitarian assistance without discrimination among recipients and guided solely by needs, with priority given to the most urgent cases of distress" (ibid.) and 'independence' as "the provision of humanitarian assistance based on policies formulated and implemented independently from parties involved in the conflict or parties that have a stake in the outcome" (ibid.). These principles have become a kind of moral code for humanitarian actors.

However, there is also an element of defiance inherent in the core act of humanitarianism. Humanitarianism, as Bouchet-Saulnier et al. put it, is "the deed of individuals protesting the established order" (2007:xxii). This thesis regards as axiomatic the idea that the value of human life and well-being surpasses any political or religious considerations about who is more worthy of saving.

I therefore take it as a given that humanitarianism is inherently political. As Donini (2012a) points out, this is not to say that humanitarian aid enacts partisan politics but rather that it has, at its core, a politics of resistance to intolerable suffering. This perspective on humanitarian aid is heavily influenced by MSF. Redfield points out that in MSF:

... action responds to outrage and derives from indignation as much as pity. Unequivocal and antagonistic, such action rejects any justification for either cruelty or neglect. Its adherents view it as an exceptional undertaking, a rejoinder to political failure that resists both the assumptions of charity and the temptations of rule. (2013:18–19)

According to Redfield, this approach echoes a "classic appeal of humanitarianism rooted in war: responding to a moment of suffering that appears both exceptional and gratuitous" (2013:19). It is an approach to aid provision distinctly focused on the immediate.

The lives in question are those currently in danger, not the legacy of ancestors or the prospects of future generations. The present thus expands to fill time forward and backward. (Redfield, 2013:19)

This defiant humanitarianism is my baseline against which to judge any evolution in the practices of humanitarian-aid provision. Indeed, this is by no means the only way in which the word 'humanitarianism' is used. There is no monopoly on the terminology of humanitarianism. As David Rieff points out:

There is the humanitarian as noble caregiver, as dupe of power, as designated conscience, as revolutionary, as colonialist, as businessman, and perhaps even as mirror. There is humanitarianism as caring, as in Rwanda; humanitarianism as emancipation, as in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban; humanitarianism as liberation, as in the case of humanitarian support for the rebels of Southern Sudan; and humanitarianism as counterinsurgency, as it was in Vietnam and may yet be again in Afghanistan. All are possible; all have been true at times over the course of the past four decades. (2002:88)

This difficulty in providing a single definition for 'humanitarianism' is a symptom of the wider problem of terminology of humanitarianism being used to justify acts better regarded as advancing political, military or commercial interests. While this research is not semantic, semantic issues are, nevertheless, significant. Part of what this research explores is how different uses – which reflect practices – of 'humanitarianism' represent an impediment to the more humble act of saving lives and alleviating suffering by providing grounds for the contestation of humanitarianism as a Trojan horse of political interests.

Semantic issues

This research is particularly interested in the relationship between humanitarian action and power. In much of this research I make reference to "the West" or "Western power". In all cases, it is primarily intended to denote North American and European power – however, it also includes Australia and New Zealand. Another way in which these countries are referred to is the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) donors.¹

Similarly, when referring to 'liberal democracy' or 'liberalist' politics, I use the term within the following 'messianic' historical context:

¹ For more about the OECD see <http://www.oecd.org/about/>

In the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Soviet communism precipitated the ascendancy of the "liberal moment" and the euphoria of its advocates. Inexorably, it seemed, Western-type democracies were taking roots throughout the world, displacing outmoded and brutal dictatorships. The human rights revolution was under way and it expressed what many took to be the universal aspirations of Jeffersonian and Madisonian constitutionalism. Not surprisingly, the liberal moment embodied for some the "end of history" and the definitive triumph of the United States. In this vision, America had become the lone superpower whose interests and ideology were ultimately congruent with those of the rest of the world. Thus, America was distinctively unique because it exercised its "hyper-imperialism" benignly, promoting individual rights, multiparty systems, and market economies. These attributes were deemed universally desirable and applicable to all nations irrespective of geographical location, cultural traditions or historical legacies. Democratization and human rights were therefore on the global agenda; the United States was merely leading the world to its inevitable destiny. (Ramazani & Fatton, 2004:1)

By understanding this messianic advancement of liberal democracy, this doctoral thesis explores how humanitarian assistance became cemented into Western power.

To understand this relationship, I make use of the concept of 'legitimacy'. When referring to the 'legitimacy' of humanitarian aid, this is to denote popular acceptance. The acceptance that I am most interested in is acceptance from communities who receive assistance, and armed groups and governments who control territory. One of the key ways in which I consider humanitarian aid to be accepted is through its effectiveness, which I also refer to as its 'benefit' or 'added value'.

However, there is also an ideological element to accepting aid, as Donini (2014a) has pointed out: the identity of the giver matters over time. Identity therefore impacts on the ability of aid organisations to be accepted and to therefore access a population in need. When referring to 'identity', I mean both what humanitarian aid is and what it is perceived to be. Identity, according to Lawler (2008), is constructed through social interactions. From this perspective, I consider the identity of humanitarian aid to be an indicator of how humanitarian action interacts with its external environment. By using the notion of a 'humanitarian identity', I do not intend to personify humanitarianism but rather to characterise its collective interaction with its surroundings in a changing political context.

Context of this research

The historical relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power is well documented (Barnett, 2011; Bricmont, 2006; Forsythe, 2005; Davey et al., 2013). Research conducted by

the Feinstein centre found that, although humanitarianism remains a universal ethos, its apparatus of delivery is perceived as Western and is, as a result, divisive (Donini, 2014a:41).

The modern humanitarian system has operated at the fringes, in the borderlands or peripheries, of Western power (Barnett, 2011; Duffield, 2014). Since the Cold War, humanitarian actors have been increasingly drawn into securitisation and coherence agendas, meaning that actors are active participants in – or seen as part of – Western-donor-government foreign policy (Harmer & Macrae, 2004; Duffield, 2014). This has resulted in the emergence of multi-mandated organisations that combine humanitarian relief and development activities (Duffield, 2014; Slim & Bradley, 2013). There is, however, a fundamental contradiction in this combination. Humanitarian aid (as defined above; see – "*Mapping the territory – Semantic issues*") operates regardless of the political considerations that are deeper than the immediate goal of responding to needs. Modern development agendas are, at their core, liberalist, meaning most multi-mandate organisations promote a political model through their development work that is aligned with Western hegemony (Slim & Bradley, 2013).

On a political level, humanitarianism has been comprehensively integrated into Western power through the instrumental use of humanitarian concerns – first through the discourse of intervention and then through the use of humanitarian aid as a tool in military stabilisation (Barakat, Deely & Zyck, 2010; Collinson, Elhawary & Muggah, 2010; Gordon, 2011). Humanitarian aid has been also used by donors to further state-building agendas (Fenton & Phillips, 2009; Harvey, 2014; Bennett, Pantuliano, Fenton, Vaux, Barnett, Brusset, 2010; Maxwell & Santschi; 2014).

There is a growing consensus that humanitarian actors have never had a golden age of ability to access and operate in crisis zones (Donini, 2012b; Acuto, 2014; Magone, Weissman & Nueman, 2012). Humanitarian actions have always been contested and the ability to operate in conflict is based more on negotiated compromises than pure assertions of independence, impartiality and neutrality (Minear, 2012; Smillie, 2012; Magone et al., 2012).

Another aspect of this consensus is that the challenges faced by humanitarian organisations today are nothing new (Donini, 2012a; Smillie, 2012; Minear, 2012; Magone et al., 2012). From this perspective, a valuable literature on humanitarian history has been produced, providing a way to address the short memories of actors in the aid sector. This history asserts

that humanitarianism has been instrumentalised from day one (Smillie, 2012; Minear, 2012; Davey, 2012).²

While acknowledging this body of literature through an extensive review in Chapter 2, this research approaches the challenges facing humanitarian actors from a different perspective and aims to interrogate how the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power affects the effectiveness of aid delivery in conflict zones. Further, it aims to explore whether the real or perceived links between humanitarian aid and Western power result in access constraints. Access and effectiveness of aid delivery in conflict are, therefore, the foci of this research. What makes this approach timely is that power is changing (Nye, 2011; Kupchan, 2013), requiring humanitarians to position themselves for a new era of political power.³

As such, the significance of this thesis is less about whether, and under whose watch, humanitarian space is shrinking and more about how humanitarian aid interacts with power generally to be accepted and effective. This research looks at how changing global power dynamics are affecting approaches to aid delivery and moulding and remoulding the concept of humanitarian aid.

Significance and scope

The research in this thesis is significant in two main respects: it is the first time that certain data have been made available to the public; and it contributes to the, unfortunately sparse, literature on systemic issues in aid delivery.

For the first time, data has been gathered from primary source documentation from the largest medical humanitarian organisation (MSF) and combined with interviews – with actors both professionally involved with, and affected by, humanitarian aid in Lebanon, South Sudan, Brazil and South Africa. These data have then been analysed with the aim of investigating the affect that the relationship between humanitarian action and Western power has on the access and effectiveness of aid organisations.

The data presented in this thesis are significant in two ways. First, because the data offer a new body of information that was obtainable as a result of my access to MSF internal

² I only consider the instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid problematic where it hampers aid delivery. For example, there is extensive literature on how humanitarian aid provided by military actors can 'blur the line' between independent aid actors –who should not be targeted – and the military, who are a legitimate target in war (Ferreiro, 2012).

³ The specific component of power that will be explored is dominant, hegemonic or Western power, as this research question is specifically concerned with the implications of humanitarianism's relationship with Western hegemonic power in the era Zakaria (2008) has called the "post-American world".

documents – including meeting minutes between senior government representatives and MSF staff. Secondly, because of the quality and rarity of the data. This quality is gained from extensive interviews conducted in multiple countries with a wide range of participants – from senior aid practitioners to relief activists in the borderlands between Lebanon and Syria. Data were gathered in extremely difficult and dangerous environments and include extensive direct observations by the researcher in high-intensity conflict zones, such as Syria.

This thesis both challenges the practice of humanitarianism but also offers insight on how the core functions of humanitarian aid might be defended. Whereas much of the literature either narrowly critiques humanitarian assistance or naively focuses on improving aid-delivery techniques, this research aims to offer both an uncensored critique of the macro-political environment in which humanitarian aid is provided and an explanation of how it affects aid delivery.

This thesis is intentionally not based on the detail gained in the exploration of a single theme or country case study, but rather has a broader scope of linking multiple themes and country experiences to create analytic generalisations on the macro-political challenges facing contemporary humanitarian assistance.

Thesis chapter outline

Chapter 2 of this thesis, "*Literature Review*", critically evaluates the literature relevant to the research question. In so doing, it builds an analysis of the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power. It explores in detail how humanitarian aid has been used in the rhetoric, and as a tool, of hegemonic power, often facilitated by linking it with relief and development. This is necessary to understand how emerging powers are approaching humanitarian aid and how humanitarian assistance interacts with the politics of counter-hegemonic resistance. This literature review is the base upon which the core research questions are addressed.

Chapter 3, "*Research Design*", outlines how this research has been designed and the three-phase approach by which data were collected. Briefly, the first phase was informed by a grounded-theory approach and involved data collection by interview with senior aid practitioners and public intellectuals in London, Brussels, Paris and South Africa. The second phase involved field research – using a case-study approach – in Syria and South Sudan. The final phase was influenced by an action-oriented methodology and was designed

to identify how changing power is influencing the aid landscape; data collection for this phase took place in Brazil and South Africa.

Chapters 4–6 present the findings of the field research. Chapter 4, "*State-building and emergency-response capacity*", discusses the research findings on whether the incorporation of humanitarian aid within the state-building project in South Sudan affected emergency-response capacity. Chapter 5, "*Humanitarian identity and access*", presents the findings of the research on whether changing power dynamics and the Western identity of humanitarian aid affected access in Syria. Chapter 6, "*Humanitarianism rethought?*", presents the findings of the research on whether humanitarian aid is being reconceptualised in the context of shifting power dynamics.

Chapter 7, "*Discussion*", analyses the findings by relating them to the theory explored in the literature review. Ultimately, what this research will demonstrate is that humanitarian aid is facing a crisis of legitimacy – evidenced in its failures and rejection. This crisis is rooted in the relationship of humanitarian aid with Western power.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Institutional humanitarian aid and Western political power have a complex relationship. The current forms of institutional humanitarian aid – seen in the largest NGOs and the UN system – have their roots in enlightenment values, colonialism, imperialism and the Cold War (Barnett, 2011; Bricmont, 2006; Forsythe, 2005; Davey et al., 2013). In the post-Cold War era of uni-polar power, with its dominant political ideology of liberal democracy, the funding available for humanitarian aid and the number of organisations delivering assistance has significantly grown (Duffield, 2014).

Institutional humanitarian action is underpinned by the politics of liberal democracy and a securitisation agenda (Duffield, 2014). Not all organisations within the diverse humanitarian sector seek to play this role. However, this literature review will demonstrate how those organisations who have taken on a multi-mandated agenda of combining relief and development work are more inclined to provide aid that aligns with donor government interests (Slim & Bradley, 2013).

This literature review examines this relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power, and seeks to identify the implications of this relationship on access for, and effectiveness of, humanitarian assistance. However, what this review finds is that much of the literature focuses either on technical solutions to improving the effectiveness of humanitarian aid or on the fact that humanitarian access has always been contested and is not more difficult today than it was in the past. What the literature therefore overlooks is how the political choices and the identities of aid actors influence their access and effectiveness and what impact changing global power dynamics might have on the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Indeed, global power structures are beginning to change (Nye, 2011; Kupchan, 2013). What is clear from the literature reviewed is that a new era of multi-polarity and a diffusion of power will be based on the reassertion of state sovereignty and an emboldened contestation of the political objectives of hegemony (Kahn & Cunningham, 2011; Kent, 2011; McGoldrick, 2011; Zakaria, 2008; Nye, 2011). The literature suggests that this will have direct consequences for humanitarian actors that are considered a component of the West's interaction with the 'borderlands'. This leaves a discomfiting question to be asked: if

humanitarian aid is part of Western hegemony, does counter-hegemony include counter-humanitarianism?

Critical method

This literature review is informed by a Foucauldian perspective – a Foucauldian genealogy is used to investigate past discourses and how they evoke actions to better understand the identity of humanitarian aid and to demonstrate how present constructs of power maintain certain discourses (Fadyl, Nicholls & McPherson, 2013).

Foucault's genealogies investigate history to provide clues as to why our present discourses are as they are (and not otherwise); how we come to know ourselves and others as subjects of our present discourses (e.g. the roles and identities that we take on) and the relations of power that produce and maintain our present discourses. (Fadyl et al., 2013:481)

A Foucauldian approach allows for a review of the history of humanitarian aid to be followed by an examination of how the notion of humanitarian aid is currently used in the discourse of hegemonic power and as a tool of dominant power. Attention is given to the interaction of humanitarian aid and hegemonic power – and how power is evolving – and its effect on the concept of 'humanitarian aid'.

This literature review is, *inter alia*, an attempt to unpack the nature of both the historical and contemporary relationships between humanitarian aid and Western power and contrast these to the approach to humanitarian aid adopted by emerging powers. This is done to assess what the literature already has to offer in terms of an understanding of the implications of the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power. To do this, the notions of 'hegemony', 'empire' and 'power' –and the historical relationship between Western hegemony and institutional humanitarianism – must be explored in detail.

Part 1: Hegemonic power and humanitarian aid

Core and periphery politics

States interact with each other based on the power dynamics of what World Systems Theory refers to as the 'core' and 'periphery' (Shannon, 1996). Freeman and Kagarlitsky (2004:25) argue that there is a "sovereignty of the rich nations and a sovereignty of the poor nations". Some states are "dominating", the others "dominated":

This is not the same as saying that the world is unjust, or that it is divided into rich and poor, North and South; it says much more. It is a statement about power. It says that the rich nations *rule* the poor nations. Moreover, this is *why* they are rich. The sovereignty of the rich and the

sovereignty of the poor are not, therefore, identical. The first is *unconditional* and *absolute* and the second is *conditional* and *relative*. (ibid.)

The United States (US) is currently the most dominant state. "In Marxist terms the US presents itself as the Director General of a super imperialist world order" (Freeman & Kagarlitsky, 2004:30). Indeed, in a uni-polar world dominated by the West:

The power of the strong may deter the weak from asserting their claims, not because the weak recognise a kind of rightfulness of rule on the part of the strong, but simply because it is not sensible to tangle with them. (Waltz, 2008:24)

Historically, imperialism relied on territorial conquest whereas neo-imperialism has relied on Gramscian hegemony, which is rule generally by consent and exceptionally by force (Muhr, 2012).

The notion of hegemony, introduced into the Marxist literature by Antonio Gramsci, presents political power and class domination as a dialectic of coercion and consent and offers a sense of class antagonisms and political struggles that goes beyond both realist cynicism and idealistic legalism. (Sakellariopoulos & Sotiris, 2008:212)

Hegemony, therefore, consists of:

... political and military repression, ideological misrecognition, and material concessions, and offers a better description both of social antagonism and of the hierarchies arising in the international plane. (Sakellariopoulos & Sotiris, 2008:212)

The division of nation states – with North America and Europe as the 'dominant powers', referred to in shorthand here as 'the West' (see "*Chapter 1: Introduction – Mapping the territory – Semantic issues*" for a full explanation of the use of terms) – often results in a natural resistance from the periphery states to the core states and their apparatuses. Such states are often referred to as 'strong states' by aid practitioners (Khan & Cunningham, 2013). The strong-state dilemma for humanitarianism is that humanitarian action is delivered most often in states reacting to the hegemonic assertion of power by the West; and yet, humanitarian organisations are often associated with the West due to their funding and locations of their headquarters.

In other words, humanitarian organisations work within the periphery but are associated with the core.

In considering the relationship between humanitarianism and the West, a point made by Rajagopal stands out:

... great power interests are sought to be justified by the language [of] 'humanitarian intervention' and containment of mass resistance is justified through 'poverty alleviation'. As such, the 'consent' given by the international society of states to the general direction imposed on world affairs is a function of the domination of the force and ideas of the [W]est. (2003:18)

For this reason, the term 'hegemony' fits the relationship between humanitarianism and power, as humanitarianism falls under, and is a tool in advancing, the "domination of the force of ideas of the West" (ibid.). On this account, dominant states can bully states into accepting their ideas and institutions – of which the conceptual machinery and enabling organisations of humanitarian aid are a part.

Diffuse power and non-state actors

However, it is also necessary to acknowledge that the imposition of Western dominance – or the exercise of hegemony – is often facilitated by non-state actors, or a global capitalist elite, many of whom reside in the peripheries.

Marxist thinking begins to provide a link between the entirely state-centric notion of domination and that of a more decentralised network of power, which could be based on what some argue is a rising global capitalist class:

... the need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere ... it creates a world after its own image. (Marx & Engels, [1848] 2008:12)

Obviously these are not mutually exclusive – the hegemony of the US has, to a large extent, given rise to, or at a minimum helped to advance, the global capitalist class. It might even be argued that the advancement of the global capitalist class has been a core driver of exercise of American hegemonic power. As Sakellariopoulos and Sotiris argue:

... current American foreign policy can be described as hegemonic in two ways: First, it offers a possible arrangement of international affairs and problems based on the use of force, military export of the 'market economy' and Western 'democratic' institutions, and the crackdown on any movement that challenges the internationalization of capital and international 'police' interventions on a global scale. Second, it also offers a domestic hegemonic project that combines even greater market and trade liberalization with authoritarian statism, police repression and social conservatism. In a way these two aspects coincide: Aggressive military interventionism serves not only as a foreign policy tool, but also as a powerful ideological representation of capital's power—the U. S. Marine as an allegory for the aggression of global capital. (2008:227)

Hardt and Negri are possibly the most prolific thinkers on this issue. In their work entitled *Empire*, they unpack decentralised forms of power that are outside of the remit of state power:

Empire is emerging today as the center that supports the globalization of productive networks and casts its widely inclusive net to try and envelop all power relations within its world order—and yet at the same time it deploys a powerful police function against the new barbarians and the rebellious slaves who threaten its order. The power of empire appears to be subordinated to the fluctuations of local power dynamics and to the shifting, partial juridical orderings that attempt, but never fully succeed to lead back to a state of normalcy in the name of the exceptionality of the administrative procedures. (2000:20)

Hardt and Negri's (2000) analysis fits well with Mary Kaldor's (2006), who argues that the evidence of a move away from state-centric world orders is evidenced by 'new wars', which are no longer between states but between other holders of power.

Political violence at the beginning of the twenty-first century is more omnipresent, more directed at civilians, involving a blurring of the distinctions between war and crime, and is based on and serves to ferment divisive identity politics. (Kaldor, 2006:ix)

Indeed, as Kaldor goes on to argue, "[t]he goals of the new wars are about identity politics in contrast to the geo-political or ideological goals of earlier wars" (2006:7). Identity politics, in this case, are the claim to power on the basis of labels. "In so far as there are ideas about political or social change, they tend to relate to an idealized, nostalgic representation of the past" (ibid.). Therefore, identity plays a key role in the interaction between various forms of power.

Importantly, hegemony needs to be understood both as the exertion of power by the states at the core *and* as a web of power largely aligned to a global capitalist elite, in both cases exerted to protect their interests.

Bio-politics

At this point, it is useful to turn to Redfield (2013) who situates humanitarianism within the theoretical framework of Foucault's 'biopower'. The term 'biopower' is "used to describe the manner in which facts of existence became the focus of specific operations of government in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe" (Redfield, 2013:18). Under biopower, Redfield argues, the basic services provided by a humanitarian organisation like MSF (which was the focus of his sociological study) constitute a form of governing.

Žižek argues that there are two forms of politics: an emancipatory politics and a politics of the status quo. The politics of the status quo, for Žižek, is defined as a "post-political bio-politics" (2008:40), meaning that it claims to have left behind old ideological struggles while instead focusing on governing based on the efficient administration of life. Žižek argues that "bio-politics is ultimately a politics of fear" (2008:41). The difference between this and emancipatory politics is:

"the difference between politics based on a set of universal axioms and a politics which renounces the very constitutive dimension of the political, since it resorts to fear as its ultimate mobilizing principle: fear of immigrants, fear of crime, fear of godless sexual depravity, fear of the excessive state itself, with its burden of high taxation, fear of ecological catastrophe, fear of harassment". (ibid.)

As Žižek points out, bio-politics reduces humans to a "bare life" that becomes the "object of expert caretaking knowledge" (2008:42). I would however argue that this administration of life is better compared to attempts by humanitarian actors to go beyond the basics and to instead support the hegemonic state in its administration of life beyond its borders. In this way, humanitarian actors have moved beyond the emancipatory politics of immediate aid delivery in defiance of exclusion and have instead involved themselves with a bio-politics of administering life in collaboration with a 'post-politics' state.

To further unpack this critique it is necessary to examine in detail the historical relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power.

A historical perspective of humanitarianism and hegemony

To what extent has the rise of institutional humanitarian aid been tied to the rise of Western hegemony? Although humanitarian action is a global practice that transcends culture, the emergence of the institutional form of humanitarian assistance is rooted in the West (Davey et al., 2013). Some literature points to the post-9/11 era as the point in which humanitarian aid became perceived as being linked to Western imperialism. For example, Terry points out that the radicalisation that the US caused through its 'War on Terror':

... has, in turn, transformed the image of mainstream aid organizations – deeply embedded culturally, politically, and financially in the Western sphere – from that of benign infidels to agents of Western imperialism. . . . (2011:176)

However, through a review of the key literature on the history of humanitarianism, it is clear that the tendency for humanitarianism to be defined by dominant political discourses and to even serve as an agent of Western imperialism has existed for a while.

Barnett, in his comprehensive work *Empire of Humanity*, divides the history of humanitarianism into three distinct eras:

... an age of imperial humanitarianism from the late eighteenth century to World War II, an age of neo-humanitarianism from the end of World War II to the end of the Cold War, and an age of liberal humanitarianism from the end of the Cold War to the present. (2011:7)

These same eras are used by Chandler (2014) in his review of the historical relationships between development and Western power. Barnett argues that these ages of humanitarianism have each carried specific political baggage:

For Imperial Humanitarianism it was colonialism, commerce and civilising missions; for Neo-Humanitarianism the cold war and nationalism, development, and sovereignty; and for Liberal Humanitarianism the liberal peace, globalisation and human rights. (2011:9)

For Davey, her phases of humanitarian history include:

... from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the First World War in 1918, when nineteenth-century conceptions drove humanitarian action; the 'Wilsonian' period of the interwar years and the Second World War, when international government was born and then reasserted; the Cold War period, when humanitarian actors turned more concertedly towards the non-Western world and the development paradigm emerged; and the post-Cold War period, when geopolitical changes again reshaped the terrain within which humanitarians worked. (Davey et al. 2013:5)

Imperial humanitarianism

The first era of humanitarianism was marked by civilising missions of the West that sought to end suffering by exporting Christian values (Barnett, 2011). It was out of this era of humanitarianism that, for example, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was formed – the history of which is well documented by Forsythe (2005). It was during the mid-nineteenth century that the idea of limiting the effect of war on soldiers gained ground (Forsythe, 2005).

From the start, the ICRC's brand of humanitarianism displayed patriarchal power that, at the time of its creation, was intended to "save Christianity" (Barnett, 2011:13).

They believed that rapid modernization was causing a moral crisis in Europe and that the formation of Red Cross societies would strengthen what they believed were uniquely Christian values such as humanity, charity, and compassion. And, because non-Christian peoples were incapable of honouring the laws of war but might be able to do so after a colonisation that

produced civilisation, the ICRC possessed the ethnocentric, if not outright racist, views that were endemic to the era. (ibid.)

Imperial expansion posed new opportunities for humanitarian aid by providing:

a context for efforts to ameliorate the suffering of others, through public works, epidemiology and other 'improvements' in the colonies. Although territorial conquest began in the sixteenth century and imperialist ambition arguably peaked in the nineteenth, colonial structures of power continued until decolonisation in the second half of the twentieth century. Colonial practices represent a point of overlap between state, secular and religious versions of humanitarian action, with missionaries forming an integral part of the colonial project. (Davey et al., 2013:6)

Many of the practices of humanitarian aid were developed during the colonial period (ibid.).

The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 instigated the creation of international organisations to address humanitarian issues (Davey et al., 2013). New kinds of humanitarian organisations and positions were formed in the aftermath of World War I – such as the High Commissioner for Refugees – and Barnett (2011) sees this as an acknowledgement from dominant powers of their responsibilities to the vulnerable. Save the Children was also created during this period and the organisation "perpetuated British imperial attitudes and rule through its promotion of 'enlightened relief' in the colonial world" (Davey et al., 2013:8).

Neo-humanitarianism

World War II, decolonisation and, most significantly, the Cold War saw the dominant powers try to harness humanitarian actors to serve their interests.

While the infantilising civilising ideology was no longer acceptable, the arrival of new forms of global governance alongside ideologies that proclaimed that the rich and powerful had an obligation to 'teach' the rest of the world altered the tone more than the workings of paternalism. (Barnett, 2011:31)

Following World War II, institutional humanitarianism was consolidated in Europe but continued to claim a "universal jurisdiction" (ibid.). The end of colonialism saw a growing demand on humanitarian and development actors to fill the gaps in service delivery in newly independent states (Davey et al., 2013).

The post-colonial Cold War period saw Western states interacting with newly independent states through a prism of extreme polarisation (Kahn & Cunningham, 2013). Humanitarian

action extended to the 'third world' but not to communist states. Davey et al. allude to the fact that this was due to humanitarian action's association with the West.

People living under communist rule in China, the Soviet Union and Cuba were largely off-limits to international agencies more closely identified with the Western (capitalist) 'first world' than the Eastern (communist) 'second world'. It was the people of the so-called 'third world' that, in the post-colonial period, became the main focus of the humanitarian system. (2013:10)

Indeed, Redfield points out that humanitarian actors emerged "between superpower tensions and around the edges of ebbing empires" (2013:39).

Davey goes on to explain that the turn toward the South by dominant powers was reflective of Western interests.

The emergence of development frameworks in the 1950s and 1960s was related to the desire to retain influence in colonial territories as they moved towards independence, as well as a sense that 'development' would promote strategic alliances and foster international stability in the context of heightened tension during the Cold War. Cold War tensions also encouraged the insertion of Western NGOs into international affairs, with private organisations able to exploit the space created by the standoff between the Communist and capitalist superpowers. (2012:3)

It was during this period that the strong state was promoted as a way to counter uprisings sympathetic to the Soviet Union (Chandler, 2014). Development was:

... presented as necessitating a centralizing state role as [W]estern governments sought to bargain with post-colonial elites, facilitating a strong state to prevent rebellion led by movements sympathetic to the soviet cause. (Chandler, 2014:235)

During this period, "[a]id was less needs-based and more of a tool driven by political necessity" (Kahn & Cunningham, 2013:S141).

The Cold War dynamics also resulted in humanitarian paralysis.

From Afghanistan to Angola and Ethiopia to Cambodia, the governments of the time put up radical opposition to any form of negotiation between humanitarian organisations and rebel groups and *a fortiori* to the deployment of aid outside government-controlled areas. The ICRC was paralysed and most aid was delivered to refugees on the periphery of the conflict. (Weissman, 2014:180).

In the early years of the Cold War, as Forsythe points out, "most communist governments gave [the ICRC] little or no cooperation . . . seeing the organisation – not entirely incorrectly

– as a bourgeois organisation of the liberal [W]est" (2005:53). Indeed, this was not so much a perception as a reality.

It is largely a result of the prohibitions on aid and the perceived and real ineffectiveness of the ICRC in this geopolitical environment that gave rise to the *sans frontières* (without borders) movement that was born out of the Biafra war.

MSF decided to sidestep government prohibitions to assist "hostile populations" by clandestinely crossing the borders of Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Angola, and later Sudan and Burma. (Weissman, 2014:180)

This was operationally possible when rebel groups held territory close to a border. However, on closer examination, the experiences of MSF violating state sovereignty in the pursuit of the delivery of aid most often occurred in areas that were controlled by rebel groups receiving support from Western governments in the fight against communism.

In most cases, Western governments and their public opinion backed what was in fact a breach of state sovereignty for the sake of humanitarianism. Governments saw the 'without borders' movement as an influential ally in the ideological battle against communism, insofar as the states that criminalised humanitarian assistance all happened to be allies of the Soviet Union (the MPLA in Angola, the DERG in Ethiopia and the pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan). (Weissman, 2014:181)

Liberal humanitarianism

The fall of the Wall gave humanitarians access to regions that were formerly off limits. (Minear, 2012). The post-Cold War period allowed some increased space for the UN to operate in. During the East–West conflict, the Security Council was blocked 212 times but was only vetoed 38 times during the post-Cold War era (to 2006) (Weiss, 2007:38). In this period, humanitarian operations changed from primarily refugee-based assistance to assistance within national borders and sovereignty became infused with more widely accepted obligations, such as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) (ibid.).

In this era, concern with the dangers posed by terrorism, failed states, poverty and despotism provided the justification for dominant states' support for humanitarianism (Barnett, 2011). Humanitarian assistance, therefore, served the interests of the core by addressing the root causes of the threats posed by actors in the periphery, an activity viewed as falling under established humanitarian- and development-agency expertise.

Humanitarian intervention, once dismissed as illegitimate, was now in play, and humanitarian organisations that once sought to use states for humanitarian action now found themselves

being explicitly used by states as a tool for their political and strategic objective. (Barnett, 2011:32)

It is with this post-Cold War period of uni-polarity that Barnett (2011) and Davey et al. (2013) conclude their respective classifications of the eras of humanitarian aid.

A fourth era in the making?

What is missing from the above analysis is how the global War on Terror and changing power dynamics may have ushered in a new era in humanitarian aid.

Weissman (2014) observes a return of elements of the Cold War era insofar as there is once again a need to gain clandestine access to populations classified as terrorist. There is, however, a key difference from that era:

Militants have little inclination to open their territory to international organisations, whose head offices are based in countries that are waging war on them. Furthermore there is generally open hostility from Western public opinion and governments for such clandestine missions seen nowadays as supporting terrorists (as opposed to "freedom fighters" during the cold war (Weissman, 2014:182)

Weissman concludes that it is through "negotiation and building political leverage – and less and less through clandestine action – that humanitarian organisations must resist the trend that criminalises their activities" (2014:182). Crucially, the ability to build political leverage is linked to the geopolitics of the moment, as was seen during the Cold War. This is a critical observation in exploring the question set for this thesis on the implications of the relationship between Western power and humanitarian aid.

Munslow and O'Dempsey point to the war in Iraq as a turning point for US power:

Whilst the defeat in Vietnam did little, in the medium term, to halt the collapse of communism – indeed, it heralded the rise of the US to single superpower status – the defeat in Iraq has hastened the demise of US power and the rise of its contenders, notably, China as a global power and Iran as a regional power broker. (2009:4)

Significantly, Munslow and O'Dempsey (2009) link the challenges facing humanitarian assistance to the fact that humanitarian aid is tied to Western power in decline. Further, Munslow and O'Dempsey argue that, referring to the fallout from the Iraq war:

The US foreign policy in the first decade of the twenty-first century has deeply undermined not just American power but the enlightenment values that underlie the creation of humanitarian space. (2009:4)

On this account, the means used to fight the war in Iraq "defeated the very principles and humanitarian values that the West has developed and propounded over time, undermining the credibility of the [humanitarian] project" (ibid.).

However, none of the literature reviewed took a definitive position on how this potential fourth era of humanitarian aid could be characterised, nor whether the possible decline of Western power could impact on the ability of humanitarian organisations to operate effectively and gain access to conflicts.

The examination of this history of the relationship of humanitarianism with Western power has also not definitively demonstrated whether humanitarian aid has become a part of biopower (Redfield, 2013) and, therefore, whether its relationship with the West has resulted in it having less emancipatory politics and more of what Žižek (2008) refers to as a post-political bio-politics: a politics of the status quo.

Therefore, the following part of the literature review turns to exploring the contemporary relationship between Western power and humanitarian aid from the perspective of how such aid is used both in the rhetoric of intervention and as a tool to achieve political and military objectives. It is through this exploration that I hope to paint a picture of how the fourth phase of humanitarian aid could be characterised in terms of its relationship with Western power – and, therefore, its political baggage. It will then be possible to contrast this with an exploration of changing political power and what that means for humanitarian access and effectiveness.

Humanitarianism as a justification for dominant-state foreign policy

Humanitarian intervention is:

... the threat or use of force across state borders by a state (or group of states) aimed at preventing or ending widespread and grave violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals other than its own citizens, without the permission of the state within whose territory force is applied. (Holzgrefe, 2003:18)

The most commonly given examples of humanitarian intervention following the Cold War are those in the Balkans, Somalia and Sierra Leone (Jamison, 2011), with Rwanda cited as a failure in humanitarian intervention (Dallaire, 2012). Although most scholars look at humanitarian intervention in the light of post-Cold War developments, there are those that explore humanitarian intervention further into the past (Jamison, 2011; Seymour, 2008; Barnett, 2011; Bricmont, 2006).

Hardt and Negri identify two characteristics of 'just war', which is the ideological framework for humanitarian intervention: "On the one hand, war is reduced to the status of police action, and on the other, the new power that can legitimately exercise ethical functions through war is sacralised" (2000:12). Hehir (2010) traces the rise of humanitarian intervention to the internationalisation of human rights, spread of liberalism, and increase in access to information and rise of NGOs in the post-Cold War period. As the end of the Cold War brought with it a rise in intra-state conflicts, it was the *Wall Street Journal* that asked the question: "[A]t what point do so called sovereign governments forfeit their sovereignty through their own despicable acts?" (quoted in Hehir, 2010:51).

The use of humanitarian interventions is considered as a possible outcome of the triumph of liberal democracy that has at its disposal a military that, in the absence of an enemy, can be put to use as an altruistic saviour in the name of now universal human rights. As Western and Goldstein argue:

The triumph of liberal democracy over communism made Western leaders optimistic that they could solve the world's problems as never before. Military force that had long been held in check by superpower rivalry could now be unleashed to protect poor countries from aggression, repression, and hunger. At the same time, the shifting global landscape created new problems that cried out for action. (2011:online)

The R2P doctrine is the latest evolution of the idea of humanitarian intervention; however, it does not only emphasise military means. For Weiss, R2P is a "new middle ground in international relations" (2007:4). Humanitarian intervention becomes the military component of the R2P (Amnéus, 2012). Gareth Evans (2007), in his introduction to *Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas in Action* (Weiss, 2007), comments that R2P is not about any state having the "right of humanitarian intervention" (Evans, 2007:x) but rather "the right of every man, woman, and child threatened by the horror of mass violence to be protected and ultimately rescued by a responsible international community" (ibid.).

The report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) changed the conceptual framework and language from a right of humanitarian intervention to a R2P in an attempt to shift the focus from prospective interveners to populations in need of protection. (Abiew, 2010:93)

The proponents of R2P stress that military intervention is only one possibility in a range of ways a state could react. As pointed out by Rieff:

. . . [whereas] humanitarian intervention was exclusively coercive, and most often militarized, the R2P is different because its fundamental emphasis is on preventive action, preferably as

early as possible, and on using every possible non-military means. Resorting to force is a last recourse. And it is certainly true that it was by de-emphasizing the military aspect of the new norm, and instead focusing on early warning and preventive action, that Edward Luck, current Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's special adviser for R2P, succeeded in securing the General Assembly's endorsement in 2009 over the objections of at least some representatives of the Global South who feared it would provide a legal pretext and a moral warrant for a revival of a neocolonial world order. (2011:11)

However, the notion of the R2P has come under severe criticism. The best critical opposition to the notion of 'humanitarian' intervention and the R2P can be found in the works of realist and Marxist thinkers such as Chandler (2000), Chomsky (1999) and Orford (2003). For Marxist theorists "humanitarian justifications for intervention hide ulterior motives" (Hehir, 2010:65). The overall aim of humanitarian intervention is to be able to punish and reward states that go against the interests of the hegemonic state (Hehir, 2010).

For Marxists, the motivation behind humanitarian intervention is the consolidation of the core-periphery dichotomy. In that sense, Marxist and realist perspectives take a structural issue with the system that intervention perpetuates, whereas the proponents of R2P are more concerned with the immediate task of preventing atrocities.

Although the proposed principle of R2P goes some way to overcoming the ethical issues of the challenge to state sovereignty posed by the notion of a humanitarian intervention, it does not overcome the worry that states' self-interest will be the determining factor in intervening nor the concerns over the historical double standards that make having doubts over the principled nature of possible preventative action reasonable. The Prindle Institute for Ethics asks the difficult questions:

But just what kinds of measures are Western powers prepared to consider under the preventive rubric? To what degree will the structural conditions and the root causes that give rise to complex humanitarian emergencies that necessitate intervention be on the table? Will [W]estern involvement in conflict-promoting arms trades, for example, or its history of supporting friendly, but corrupt, governments enjoy a place on the agenda alongside the well-founded concerns about promoting transparency and good governance in Third World countries? (2008:4)

Vladimir Putin has launched one of the most scathing documented attacks on the notion of humanitarian intervention. Putin's main critique is founded on the principle of protection of sovereignty – and is, in this sense, a reaction to the assertion of hegemony by the West:

The recent series of armed conflicts started under the pretext of humanitarian aims is undermining the time-honored principle of state sovereignty, creating a moral and legal void in the practice of international relations. (*The Moscow News*, 2012:online)

To make his point even clearer, Putin argues that it is these humanitarian interventions that have expedited nuclear proliferation.

If I have the A-bomb in my pocket, nobody will touch me because it's more trouble than it is worth. And those who don't have the bomb might have to sit and wait for 'humanitarian intervention'. (*The Moscow News*, 2012:online)

Murray and Hehir (2012) argue that R2P needs to be situated in the uni-polar-moment of post-Cold War dominance of liberal democracy. Indeed, actors in the new multi-polar politics – of which Putin is clearly a key member – will increasingly reject selective application of humanitarian concerns in justifying hegemonic state intervention. The question, therefore, is to what extent humanitarian action carried out by NGOs and UN agencies is bundled up with the Western power against which an emerging multi-polarity may resist? Libya offers a useful example of this dynamic.

Libya: the return of humanitarian intervention

Libya is a clear post-9/11-era case of humanitarian concerns being recruited into the rhetoric of intervention. Further, the intervention is fresh in the minds of emerging-power leaders, who feel tricked by the West's talk of R2P, and it plays a major role in such leaders' view of Western motives. In many ways, Libya marks the peak and decline of the concept of R2P and, therefore, I will argue, is a turning point in the exposure of the relationship between humanitarianism and Western power.

The uprisings in Libya began in Benghazi, the historical rival city of Tripoli. Benghazi is significant in the minds of Libyans for a number of reasons – not least its reputation for being Libya's most conservative region and the area that supplied "hundreds of fighters for Iraq [and] Afghanistan and producing several senior and influential members of Al Qaeda" (Noueihed & Warren, 2012:178). The uprisings quickly turned into armed insurrections and Benghazi became the capital of the uprising (Bellamy & Williams, 2011). The response by Ghadaffi's forces was brutal.

The Security Council reacted with Resolution 1970, which condemned the violence and established, *inter alia*, an arms embargo on Libya (*ibid.*). Further action was opposed by Russia, in particular, who insisted on the necessity of finding a political solution. However, a turning point occurred when Benghazi fell under imminent threat of attack and regional

bodies – most prominently the League of Arab States – called for a no-fly zone to be implemented over Libya (ibid.). Security Council Resolution 1973 was subsequently passed. According to Pommier (2011), the resulting military intervention in Libya revived the concept of a humanitarian war.

Although the notion of the R2P had been used in previous Security Council Resolutions (Glanville, 2012), Resolution 1973 marked the first time the R2P was used "within the institutional framework set up by paragraph 139 of the World Summit Outcome" (Domestic-Met, 2011:874). More specifically, it was the first time the Council had authorised force to protect a population against the wishes of a functioning state (Bellamy & Williams, 2011:825).

The Resolution was approved with the implicit backing – either through abstention or a positive vote – of all the non-permanent members to the Security Council (Domestic-Met, 2011; Pommier, 2011).

Among the non-permanent members of the Council were the most famous "emerging States", with the result that the Council encompassed the four members of BRIC – Brazil, Russia, India and China – reinforced by the presence of the two bigger powers in Africa: South Africa, the GDP of which is half of whole Sub-Saharan Africa, and Nigeria, the most populated African State. (Domestic-Met, 2011:875)

That the vote passed uncontested in the presence of the most prominent emerging states was seen as proof of its legitimacy (ibid.). According to Bellamy and Williams, "those Council members that remained sceptical about the use of force abstained because they believed that they could not legitimize inaction in the face of mass atrocities" (2011:844).

It was when NATO began bombing the retreating columns of Ghadaffi's military (Evans, 2012) that many of those who had initially supported the Resolution became wary, including South Africa, who began publically criticising NATO for overstepping the Security Council Resolution and conducting a campaign of regime change (Hasan, 2011).

While the international community mobilised quickly to invoke the R2P in Libya, similar mobilisation has not been possible for the crisis in Syria, among others. One reason has been the resistance from non-Western states to any intervention following what is considered to have been an overly enthusiastic intervention in Libya (Johnson & Mueen, 2012). In October 2011, Russia and China vetoed a Security Council Resolution on Syria that again made explicit reference to the R2P (Domestic-Met, 2011).

For advocates of the R2P, the worry should be that there is indeed a legacy of the Libya conflict: China and Russia will presume that the model in future operations is rather regime change under the cloak of R2P, and will be more forthcoming with vetoes. We have already seen this over Syria. (Johnson & Mueen, 2012:4)

Indeed:

While, the Security Council may have acted reasonably quickly and authorised the use of 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians from the threat of mass atrocities in Libya, there are little grounds for thinking that member states will feel legally compelled to respond with the same determination to a similar crisis in the near future if they do not wish to do so. (Glanville, 2012:32)

This has resulted in what Bellamy and Williams refer to as the "new politics of protection" (2011:847). In essence, the experiences of Libya and the manner the R2P mandate was fulfilled will inform the future willingness of states to accept the R2P as a justification for intervention:

The NATO intervention in Libya – portrayed as a 'humanitarian war' and supported by the concept of the 'Responsibility to Protect' – has contributed to casting doubts about the true nature of the humanitarian endeavour. (Bernard, 2011:894)

Therefore, the example of Libya shows us how the use of the R2P logic to justify a humanitarian intervention has exposed the relationship between humanitarianism and Western power.

Humanitarianism as a tool to advance dominant political ideology

It is not only the terminology of humanitarianism that has been used by hegemonic power as a justification for intervention; the very acts of saving lives and alleviating suffering have also been used as military and political tools of hegemonic power.

The starkest demonstration of this use was in the assassination of Osama Bin Laden. In 2011, a group of Navy SEALs stormed a large compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan and assassinated Bin Laden. The CIA had been monitoring the house for some time but had only received confirmation that Bin Laden was inside the compound through a vaccination campaign that was able to gain a DNA sample from the children in the house (Shah, 2011). This wasn't merely the use of data acquired in the ordinary course of NGO operations, though this would still have been a breach of trust. Astonishingly, Dr Shakil Afridi had been hired by the CIA to travel to Abbottabad and to establish a Hepatitis B vaccination programme. Following the

release of this information, Dr Afridi was arrested and charged by the government of Pakistan for conspiring with foreign intelligence agencies (Shah, 2011).

However, there have also been more subtle uses of humanitarian aid as a tool of Western foreign policy. Donini points out that:

... humanitarian action works as a powerful vector for [W]estern ideas and modes of behaviour. It is a powerful mechanism for shaping the relationships between the 'modernised' outsiders and the multitude of the insiders. Technical knowledge and expertise – the nutritionist, the camp manager, the protection officer – are never neutral. Try as they may, aid workers carry baggage, practice and ideology that shape the relationship. And power. (2014a:43)

Terry (2002) has pointed out that humanitarian assistance can contribute to the legitimisation of political actors by contributing toward the fulfilment of their political duties. This can apply to both state and non-state actors. Further, groups gain legitimacy and recognition when they engage in co-operative relationships with hegemonic powers. They gain power of their own by becoming the channel by which the power of the hegemon is enacted. It is the building of legitimacy or the attempt to deny legitimacy that I will argue forms the core of the how humanitarian aid is used in the post-9/11 era by Western power.

To explore this in more detail, it is possible to divide how humanitarian aid is used by Western power into the following themes: linking relief to development and security; post-9/11 stabilisation; and, finally, the denial of aid.

Linking relief to development and security

The post-Cold War era saw the ascent of the dominant liberal model of governance that was reinvigorated in the West following the fall of the Berlin Wall (Khan & Cunningham, 2013). Instruments of development were transformed after the Cold War from being instruments of political necessity (Chandler, 2014) into tools to advance the agenda of the liberal model (Duffield, 2014; Donini, 2014a; Chandler, 2014).

This shift to seeing development aid as a way to advance liberal democracy coincided with – or drove – a policy evolution for aid practitioners. Conflict started to be viewed as a development problem (Slim & Bradley, 2013). At the same time, practitioners, more often working in protracted crises, questioned the effectiveness of repeatedly providing the same kind of relief (Harmer & Macrae 2004). Harmer and Macrae (2004) point out how, in the 1990s, there was a willingness among practitioners to link relief and development – the logic

being, especially in conflict-affected states, that development could prevent conflict by tackling the economic and governance root causes of discontent.

During the 1990s, most thinking about the need to link relief and development focused on managerial issues with the aim of improving the effectiveness of aid delivery. These technical discussions took place in a political context of "technocratic politicization and militarization of development that serve[d] to incorporate the restive peripheries into the globalised web of liberal peace" (Donini, 2014b:xv).

In 1997, the UN system introduced the term 'integration', which later evolved into a formal policy of maximising the impact of the UN by creating coherence between the different elements of its response. "The policy is now applicable to all conflict and post-conflict settings where the UN has a Country Team and a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation or country-specific political mission/office" (Metcalf, Giffen & Elhawary, 2011:1). Practically, integration in the UN means:

closely aligned or integrated planning; a set of agreed results, timelines and responsibility for the delivery of tasks critical to consolidating peace; and agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation among UN actors. (ibid.)

Derderian et al. (2007) point out that integration aims to align political, military and aid objectives. This process of integration aligns with the approach of aid organisations to bridge the gap between relief and development.

Duffield (2014) describes this trend of linking relief to development as the emergence of 'new humanitarianism'. Duffield first wrote about this concept in 2001⁴, before the era of the global War on Terror. Duffield makes the point that "new humanitarianism reflects a willingness to include the actions and presence of aid agencies within an analytical framework of causal and consequential relations" (2014:75). Duffield demonstrates how humanitarian action was being incorporated into a development logic due to a core belief in the "'moral' cause of [W]estern governance" (2014:79). According to Duffield, new humanitarianism became about complementing development, which:

... now sees the role of aid as altering the balance of power between social groups in the interests of peace and stability. From saving lives, the shift in humanitarian policy has been towards analyzing consequences and supporting social processes. (2014:80)

⁴ "*Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security*" was first published in 2001 and then re-published in 2014. See Duffield (2014) in bibliography

Duffield argues that it is the aim of development – and the linking of relief and development – to secure "liberal self[-]management" (2014:102). For Duffield, the linking of relief and development had at its core a "moral panic" from within liberal circles that the provision of relief in protracted emergencies would result in dependence "since the distribution of free goods creates economic disincentives that are antithetical to self[-]sufficiency and the workings of a market economy" (ibid.). This may be the case, although Duffield (2014) probably overplays the capitalist critique. Providing the same free goods each year also means that people are experiencing the same crisis each year, which is logically something that should be avoided.

However, at the core of Duffield's (2014) critique is the link between development and Western security policy. For Harmer and Macrae (2004), the events of 9/11 reinforced the links between aid and security through a continuation of the previous logic, which saw conflict as a development problem. For Harmer and Macrae, this allowed the War on Terror to be bundled up with the human-security agenda. Human security has three core elements:

... a concern with the security of people, rather than states; an international and multi-disciplinary response; and a conditional, rather than absolute, respect for sovereignty. (Harmer & Macrae, 2004:2)

The question then becomes whether humanitarian aid and development work can co-exist and work toward a unified objective. It seems obvious at this point that a unified objective would suggest a bias toward liberal democracy, which would be problematic for humanitarian action that relies on navigating often competing forms of power in an era when liberal democracy is contested.

However, for Harvey, there should be no reason why development and humanitarian work cannot exist side by side:

... it is possible to remain committed both to humanitarian and to developmental principles. Doing so requires humanitarian actors to realise that commitments to neutrality and independence are compatible with principled engagement with states to encourage and support them to fulfil their responsibilities to protect and assist their citizens. Humanitarian actors also need to give greater attention to respecting state sovereignty and ownership over humanitarian as well as development strategies, and to view substitution for the state as more of a last resort. Equally, development actors working in humanitarian crises should themselves be committed to humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality. (2009:3)

However, for Slim and Bradley there is a core tension in linking relief and development.

The essential liberalism of development ideology today greatly complicates the traditional relief-development tension in humanitarian work because liberalism is itself contested in several conflicts and still read as [W]estern imperialism by Islamist and socialist states, various armed groups, or states wary of [W]estern hegemony. (2013:9)

Regardless of this seeming tension, there has been an expansion in the number of organisations claiming to be both humanitarian and development oriented. These multi-mandated organisations follow the demands of a liberal political-aid policy:

International aid policy consistently implies that states have armed conflicts because they are not liberal enough. Framed as failures of development, both disaster and conflict now logically demand multi-mandate responses that combine humanitarian, development, security and good governance. The whole emphasis of international aid funding is now built around an 'integrated approach' that is essentially a multi-mandate driven strategy of political change. This framing tends automatically to subsume humanitarian ethics within liberal development ethics. This makes liberal sense but not humanitarian sense. (Slim & Bradley, 2013:11)

Under this approach, the advancement of development implies a bias toward either a relationship with the state or, in extreme circumstances, a relationship with those opposed to the state that are advancing liberal democracy.

However, supporting the state in fulfilling its responsibilities is not necessarily a bad thing. As Harvey points out:

One of the goals of international humanitarian actors should always be to encourage and support states to fulfil their responsibilities to assist and protect their own citizens in times of disaster. Too often, aid agencies have neglected the central role of the state, and neutrality and independence have been taken as shorthand for disengagement from state structures, rather than as necessitating principled engagement with them. (2009:1)

This concern is also mirrored in the debate between 'Dunantist' and 'Wilsonian' humanitarian actors. Dunantist organisations "seek to position themselves outside of state interests" (Stoddard, 2003:2).

'Wilsonian' humanitarianism characterizes most US NGOs. Named for President Woodrow Wilson, who hoped to project US values and influence as a force for good in the world, the Wilsonian tradition sees a basic compatibility with humanitarian aims and US foreign policy objectives. (ibid.)

It is, therefore, not only governments that use humanitarian aid as a tool but also humanitarian actors that see Western government interests as aligning with humanitarian

objectives. Ignatieff (2003) and Rieff (2002) have been some of the most outspoken critics of a humanitarian endeavour that has been derailed by political interests of Wilsonianism and facilitated through the linking of relief and development.

It is, therefore, through the linking of relief and development that we can see the drift toward supporting the administration of life in the form of bio-politics. Thus, the identity of humanitarian aid increasingly resembles what Žižek (2008) referred to as post-political biopolitics – or politics of the status quo. Both terms situate humanitarian aid directly within the uni-polar era of Western dominance.

However, this raises critical questions central to this doctoral thesis. Can an organisation be efficient at dealing with the basics of humanitarian aid when they are aligned to Western foreign policy? Does Western foreign policy always see the effective delivery of aid for the purposes of saving lives as the ultimate objective? The question, therefore, is whether the longer-term objectives set by Western foreign policy, and to which Wilsonian NGOs are more inclined to align themselves, are compatible with effective emergency response.

There are authors such as Vaux (2006) who – though he points out the perils of a humanitarian system drifting toward aligning with political interests, and despite identifying that aid actors are increasingly wanting to do more and, therefore, are willing to involve themselves in development – still argues passionately for a longer-term role for humanitarian aid. In making this argument, however, he offers nothing but an anecdotal and ideological preference for aid to contribute to peace-building. He does not ask whether or how having goals that go beyond minimal provision of aid and are driven by political considerations affect the effectiveness of aid delivery. In fact, Vaux takes his argument further by arguing that the minimalist approach to aid delivery – focusing only on saving lives – increases the chance of aid being co-opted:

As a result the allocation of resources for humanitarian needs is highly biased toward areas that pose security-related concerns for the West. The minimalist approach of focusing simply on saving lives makes this easy. (2006:20)

This is contrary to the rest of the literature, which regards the linking of relief and development as making humanitarian actors more likely to align with Western security agendas. Even Vaux believes that "[a]gencies accept the focus given to them by Western powers and then ask in relation to specific cases how lives can be saved." (2006:20).

For development and humanitarian practitioners, the merging of relief and development makes practical sense as it permits harnessing all available resources both to address

suffering immediately and prevent it from happening again. This is distinctly different from the goals of those who see the merging of relief and development as important for promoting liberal democracy and stability. This has resulted in what McGoldrick terms an "unholy alliance" (2011:972). McGoldrick points out that, since 2001, humanitarian organisations have often found themselves in an "unholy alliance between development and counter-terrorism, upholding the view that poverty is a contributing cause of terrorism" (2011:972).

Post 9/11 and stabilisation

In the arenas of the War on Terror, the idea of stabilisation has gained prominence. (Zyck, Barakat & Deely, 2014; Collinson et al., 2010) As pointed out by Kahn and Cunningham:

The countermeasure adopted by the international community to address fragile states often is referred to as 'stabilisation' or a 'whole-of-government' or 'whole-of-society' approach. These initiatives frequently combine a number of different elements, including 'departments responsible for security, and political and economic affairs, as well as those responsible for development aid and humanitarian assistance. (2013:S141)

The Humanitarian Policy Group has conducted the most comprehensive work on the topic of stabilisation and its interaction with humanitarian aid. Case-study research was undertaken on Afghanistan (Gordon, 2010), Somalia (Menkhaus, 2010), Colombia (Elhawary, 2010), Haiti (Muggah, 2010), Pakistan (Wilder, 2010), Timor-Leste (Lothe & Peake, 2010) and Sri Lanka (Goodhand, 2010). A more recent collection of work has been edited by Muggah (2014). Although the concept is most often associated with the arenas of the War on Terror, what this broad-ranging research demonstrates is that:

... if stabilisation is understood to mean a combination of military, humanitarian, political and economic instruments to bring 'stability' to areas affected by armed conflict and complex emergencies, it can be seen to have a far broader transformative, geographical and historical scope. (Collinson et al., 2010:3)

However, Zyck et al. (2014) point out that the conduct of stabilisation was something previously carried out by the military alone. However, the space that the military occupies has become more populated. In making this point, the authors allude to the fact that the incorporation of humanitarian and development aid into stabilisation is a product of these actors sharing the same arena as the military.

This may be the case, but the definitions of 'stabilisation' offer insight into a more purposeful incorporation of humanitarian and development aid into stabilisation rather than that of a kind of organic mission creep among actors who occupy the same terrain. The United

Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) Stabilisation Unit has defined stabilisation as:

... the process of establishing peace and security in countries affected by conflict and instability ... [and] ... the promotion of peaceful political settlement to produce a legitimate indigenous government, which can better serve its people. (Barakat et al., 2010:S298)

Once again, definitions are contentious. By contrast, Barakat et al. quote the US definition of the same concept:

... the process by which underlying tensions that might lead to resurgence in violence and a breakdown in law and order are managed and reduced, while efforts are made to support preconditions for successful long-term development'. (Department of the Army, 2008:1–12, quoted in Barakat et al., 2010:S299)

Barakat et al. (2010), however, create their own definition that seems far more reflective of the various approaches. Stabilisation is:

... a process combining combat, including CO[-]IN [counter-insurgency] and irregular warfare, with humanitarian, reconstruction and/or development support during or in the immediate aftermath of a violent conflict in order to prevent the continuation or recurrence of conflict and destabilizing levels of non-conflict violence. Such a definition prioritises the means involved (that is, civil and military) but remains neutral on the range of actors involved—which has fluctuated over time and in various contexts—and abstains from objectives beyond the attainment of broad physical security (such as state-building and social or economic development). (Barakat et al., 2010:299)

Both the UK and US definitions seek to address the root causes of violence, and create environments for service delivery; however it is the definition of Barakat et al. above that identifies the various means for attaining such an ambitious objective. What is clear is that the humanitarian reconstruction and development means identified by Barakat et al. (2010) can all, in theory, be carried out by a variety of actors, including the military, non-governmental organisations and private contractors. Zyck et al. point out that, when stabilisation activities moved away from being understood as purely mid-conflict activities and became linked to counterinsurgency, the toolkit for stabilisation expanded and "came to encapsulate peace enforcement, diplomacy and development" (2014:15).

It is based on this definition that stabilisation in the post-9/11 era can be considered an evolution in the way humanitarian aid is used by hegemonic power.

How this merging of the activities of relief, development and military actors happens in practice is directly linked to the seemingly unified goal of wanting to build the capacity of local institutions (although the ultimate objectives may be different). For the military, successful stabilisation requires there to be a legitimate government, as articulated in the DFID definition, which can carry out service delivery in the pursuit of stability.

More recent interventions have been rooted in the belief that stability can be best assured by tackling structural sources of conflict through the promotion of responsive institutions, human rights, rule of law, accountable security services and broad-based social and economic development. (Zyck et al., 2014:15)

It is within this context that the actions of multi-mandated organisations in the post-9/11 era have become problematic. Slim and Bradley (2013) point out that multi-mandated organisations are often susceptible to manipulation in contexts of counter-insurgency where their development aims promote a liberal democratic model that is aligned with the objectives of a stabilisation campaign. "[M]ulti-mandate agencies can be 'instrumentalised' to consolidate liberal development" (Slim & Bradley, 2013:3).

Humanitarian actors that conduct development – which is naturally about increasing the capacity of the state – inevitably involve themselves in a state-building process. Chandler (2006) defines 'state-building' as the construction or reconstruction of the institutions of state capable of providing citizens with economic and physical security.

As Streets, Reichhold and Sagmeister point out:

At the heart of the state[-]building agenda lies the idea that external aid should not only increase the technical capacity of a government; the aid should also increase the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the civilian population. In this context, some Western governments have come to see humanitarian actors as part of the social service branch of newly established governments. Moreover, foreign governments often seek to co-opt humanitarian agendas for military and political purposes. Unfortunately, humanitarian actors have often failed to distance themselves enough from such efforts. (2012:8)

The consequences of this trend for humanitarian actors are clear:

Subordination of international aid to Western foreign policy goals. Rather than operational neutrality, a donor-led new humanitarianism, involving taking sides in ongoing conflict to enforce liberal peace, had moved to the political foreground. (Duffield, 2014:xx)

More broadly, Collinson et al. (2010) state that the stabilisation agenda has led to the politicisation and securitisation of North–South relations.

Collinson et al. (2010) argue that this has occurred with the acceptance of aid actors. "Any coherence between humanitarianism and these other spheres will be contingent on whether humanitarians trust the positive intent, impacts and outcomes of stabilisation efforts" (Collinson et al., 2010:4). As humanitarian workers have moved closer to the state, the assertion of being a 'non-governmental' organisation is seen as being anti-governmental (M. Thompson, 1996:327).

This trend can most clearly be illustrated in the case of Afghanistan. Two MSF writers point out that many aid groups welcomed the integrated approach in Afghanistan.

In June 2003, more than 80 organisations – including major U.S. aid agencies – called on the international community to expand NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and provide the resources needed 'so that democracy can flourish' . . . [and] . . . improve the prospect for peace and stability for the Afghan people and the world'. (Hofman & Delaunay, 2010:online)

Indeed, Afghanistan offers a useful example of how humanitarian aid has been incorporated into Western military strategies.

Afghanistan: humanitarian aid and soft power

Obama's Afghanistan/Pakistan (AfPak) strategy had two core features. The one was the attempt to divide Taliban actors into the good and bad, with the good elements being the ones with which to broker a deal (Sheikh, 2009). Linked to this attempt was the increased prominence given to soft power as a core element of hegemonic power (Woodward, 2010). If the Bush presidency was marked by an overreliance on hard power, taking soft power to the extreme has marked Obama's presidency.

Characteristic of this approach was the 2009 civilian surge in Afghanistan designed to increase government legitimacy and support the troops in winning hearts and minds – at the same time as pouring massive sums of money into Pakistan in the form of development aid (Woodward, 2010). This approach was in line with NATO's "comprehensive approach", which saw increasing emphasis on soft power, including the co-option of NGOs as vital elements of this power (NATO, n.d.).

In Afghanistan, following the fall of the Taliban regime, the US moved quickly to create a government that would fill the power vacuum.

It soon became clear to all sides that there was a desperate need for an intra-elite settlement between various non-Taliban Afghan groups, for four main purposes. One was to establish an Afghan interim authority to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of the Taliban regime.

Another was to set up a number of benchmarks for launching the processes of transformation of Afghanistan into a 'stable democracy'. The third was to legitimise the position of the UN to play a 'central role' in Afghanistan's transition—a role that UN Security Council resolution 1378 had already authorised on 14 November 2001. The fourth was to sanction the military role of the USA and its allies in Afghanistan and to create a multinational security force to help secure Kabul in support of starting the processes of transition. These were all enshrined in the Bonn Agreement Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions, signed on 5 December 2001. The Agreement was hammered out under the auspices of the UN and the USA and some of its European allies, especially Germany, but with Washington playing a critical role. (Saikal, 2006:526–527)

It was this government, created through an inter-elite agreement, which formed the basis of the US and NATO's stabilisation project in Afghanistan. The expansion in coverage of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from Kabul into other areas was initially seen as a way for the Karzai government to extend its writ to the rest of the country (Saikal, 2006). The Karzai government was, therefore, an elite formation willing to "forego the use of violence in the pursuit of power" (Barakat et al., 2010:299)

As the NATO troop presence expanded into the more remote parts of Afghanistan, so too did the activities carried out by the provincial reconstruction teams and the Afghan military. Historically, the core of modern humanitarian assistance has been the provision of medical assistance. It is, therefore, useful to look specifically at the emergence of healthcare as a stabilisation tool in the context of Afghanistan.

Gordon points out that that the health literature written during the global War on Terror has undergone two changes in its view of the links between health and stability:

The first is in defining poor mortality and morbidity rates as forces that are sufficient to destabilize states. The second is the increasing portrayal of health interventions as factors that have the potential to serve as foreign policy instruments – particularly ones that have utility in stabilizing fragile and conflict-affected states. (2011:43)

Awareness of this is not restricted to academia. Hilary Clinton has stated that:

... we understand that addressing global health challenges is not just a humanitarian imperative – it will also bolster global security, foster political stability and promote economic growth and development. (Hilary Clinton, quoted by Gordon, 2011:44)

Indeed, in the context of Afghanistan, "international support for the rapid roll out of the Afghan Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) was partly intended to ensure the programme was seen to provide a peace dividend" (Gordon, 2011:50).

This securitisation of healthcare can be seen in the military literature. According to D. Thompson, who was a surgeon with ISAF and author of an article entitled "The Role of Medical Diplomacy in Stabilizing Afghanistan":

An effective counterinsurgency campaign against the Taliban requires a combination of offensive, defensive, and stability operations, where stability operations include civil security, civil control, essential services, good governance, economic development, and infrastructure development. Essential services include water, electricity, healthcare, and education—all of which support economic growth and progress toward self-sufficiency. (2008:3)

D. Thompson also frames the absence of these services as the sources of "discontent and societal tensions", concluding that "[p]roviding access to these services is the crucial counterinsurgency step that goes hand in hand with security" (2008:3).

Gordon (2011:51) breaks down the logic of the inclusion of basic services into stabilisation and counterinsurgency strategy into three points: first, that the provision of public services enhances government legitimacy; secondly, that carefully targeted services help to reduce grievances; and, thirdly, by encouraging co-operation in healthcare, it can be possible to also encourage co-operation on other issues.

The enactment of this incorporation of health into stabilisation can be seen directly in military carrying out medical activities themselves and more indirectly in the building of state legitimacy as a way to undermine support for opposition. The latter has gained prominence more recently as counter-insurgency thinking has evolved away from a pure focus on winning hearts and minds.

Indeed, there has been a change in thinking from that which had the military conducting service delivery on their own to thinking that prefers a strategy "that centres on supporting the legitimacy and the development of the core capabilities of the host state" (Gordon, 2010:S370). In the health sector, this thinking was supported by authors like D. Thompson, who believe that this is a positive shift from direct delivery of medical services by the military which resulted in "undercutting the confidence of the local population in their own government's ability to provide essential services" (2008:4).

The literature on Afghanistan is particularly concerned with the way aid was channelled, in that channelling was not based on need but based on the need to build the legitimacy of the state as part of a stabilisation plan. What is particularly interesting is how this was facilitated by the multi-mandated approach – the aim of which is to engage in longer-term state-building processes – the methods of which converged with those used in pursuit of the

military's stabilisation objectives. Afghanistan, therefore, demonstrates how humanitarian aid was blatantly incorporated into military strategies.

However, a similar logic as that applied to the provision of aid for the purposes of boosting legitimacy has also been applied to the denial of aid as a way to reduce legitimacy.

The denial of aid

The denial of aid can be considered a tactic to prevent certain groups from gaining legitimacy. While the tactic saw reduced use in the post-Cold War period, the period following 9/11 and the War on Terror has seen a revival in its use alongside a renewed effort to categorise enemies as 'criminal' and 'terrorist' (Weissman, 2014). Further criminalisation of humanitarian assistance to 'enemies' has been most recently formalised in counter-terror legislation. What is surprising is that none of the literature reviewed directly acknowledges that the denial of assistance though the criminalisation of aid is directly linked to the process by which humanitarian aid is used to advance or, in this case, deny the legitimacy of a state or group that does or does not serve the interests of Western power, respectively.

Counter-terror legislation seeks to sanction any form of support to 'designated terrorists' (Mackintosh, 2011). This has implications for humanitarian aid in that it makes humanitarian objectives subordinate to political stipulations of who constitutes a terrorist.

Counter-terror legislation has come to regulate how humanitarians are allowed to operate in conflict settings. The UN's current counter-terrorism legal framework is founded in Security Council Resolution 1373 passed on 28 September 2001 (Mackintosh, 2011). This Resolution restricts UN member states from providing any:

... material support ... [to] ... terrorist groups and individuals, and to implement a number of counterterrorism measures. Among these, states must ensure that none of their funds are used to support terrorist activities. They must also criminalise a range of acts connected with terrorism, including not only carrying out terrorist acts, but providing resources or material support to terrorist groups. (Mackintosh, 2011:510)

Alongside this Resolution are sanctions regimes that place additional restrictions on targeted individuals or groups (ibid.).

The relevance of this for humanitarians is that "organizations have to consider whether their humanitarian activities could qualify as material support to terrorist groups and thereby expose them to criminal liability" (ibid.). The outcomes of this are often contrary to International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

While IHL balances the principle of military necessity with that of humanity, and places limits on the waging of war, counter-terrorism laws threaten to erode these limits, and make it more difficult for people affected by conflict to receive humanitarian protection and assistance. (Pantuliano & Metcalfe, 2012:21)

Limiting the ability to negotiate with opposition groups is a significant barrier imposed by these laws.

Although anti-terrorism laws do not prohibit discussions with designated terrorists, and IHL clearly provides for humanitarian actors to offer their services to all conflict parties, some humanitarian actors have been instructed not to engage with certain armed groups, even though this limits their ability to reach populations under their control. (ibid.)

Whether enforced or not, this legislation means humanitarian impartiality has become conditional on the considerations of hegemonic power. This strikes at the very core of what humanitarian aid is about – provision of assistance based on need alone. The question, therefore, is not whether aid workers will be prosecuted but how the threat of prosecution forces humanitarian actors to act in the arenas desired by hegemonic powers, if they are to act at all. In this way, the criminalisation of aid sets the outer limits of humanitarian reach and aligns it with the outer limits of the empire's influence.

Somalia: the rise of humanitarian criminals

Somalia represents an environment where overstepping the limits on humanitarian aid provision set by dominant state power has resulted in sanctions that criminalise and undermine neutral and independent aid delivery. More generally, counter-terror legislation has given rise to the phenomena I term 'humanitarian criminals'. Humanitarian criminals are those willing to operate in defence of the impartial delivery of assistance – regardless of the legal consequences.

In 1992, the UN sought to sanction individuals who broke an arms embargo on Somalia or those who hampered the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In 2010, a list of such individuals and entities in Somalia was drawn up by a sanctions committee. This came immediately after what Menkhaus (2010) refers to as the "most dramatic policy shifts affecting humanitarian access" – which was in September 2009 – when the US government:

. . . withheld new food aid deliveries to aid agencies subject to a policy review to determine if the food aid it was providing via humanitarian agencies was being diverted in areas of Somalia controlled by shabaab. (Menkhaus, 2010:S337)

Indeed, according to anti-terror legislation:

. . . any resources introduced into Somalia that benefit a designated terrorist organisation risk violation of the Patriot Act and the US Executive Order on Terrorism Financing of February 2002, contraventions that carry serious legal penalties for organisations receiving US funding and for the US personnel of those organisations. (Menkhaus, 2010:S337)

However, with the terrorist-designated group known as al-Shabaab (The Youth) in control of more than 60 per cent. of Somalia at the time, the risk of assistance being 'diverted' was extremely high. In 2010, the UN revised the terms of the above sanctions regime by passing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1916. The main purpose of UN SCR 1916 was to extend the mandate of the UN Monitoring Group set down in paragraph 3 of Resolution 1558 by an additional 12 months to continue its monitoring of compliance with the arms embargo and economic sanctions originally imposed by Resolution 733 (UN Security Council Resolution [UNSCR], 2010).

The Resolution was not intended to be applied to humanitarian organisations. Paragraph 5, in fact, provides an exemption for UN agencies and programmes engaged in humanitarian assistance, humanitarian organisations having observer status with the General Assembly and UN 'implementing partners', from the obligations in paragraph 3 of Resolution 1844 (UNSCR, 2010). In effect, this created an exception for certain humanitarian-assistance programmes to operate in Somalia without concern for their assets being frozen if their aid programmes inadvertently benefited terrorist organisations, as long as some due diligence to avoid such benefit was undertaken (Mackintosh, 2011).

The Security Council publicly stated that:

Through the resolution . . . the Council decided to ease some restrictions and obligations under the sanctions regime to enable the delivery of supplies and technical assistance by international, regional and subregional organizations and to ensure the timely delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance by the United Nations. (UNSCR, 2010)

However, the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Somalia was required to brief the Security Council on the implementation of this provision and efforts taken to mitigate the misuse of humanitarian aid (ibid.). Relevant UN agencies and humanitarian organisations having observer status in the UN General Assembly, as well as implementing partners, were requested to assist the Humanitarian Co-ordinator in preparing the report by providing him with the requested relevant information. In brief, this created a non-binding duty on humanitarian organisations to co-operate with the Humanitarian Co-ordinator and provide him with the necessary information for compiling his report to the UN Security Council.

According to Mackintosh, in her article about the implications of this for an organisation like MSF:

While MSF would consider it part of normal accountability to report on any diversion of our aid that might occur, reporting on diversion by one party only (in this case, Al-Shabab) to a U.N. mechanism that is implementing sanctions against that party would place MSF symbolically on one side of the conflict. In the eyes of the armed opposition group controlling most of the territory, MSF would lose its claim to neutrality. (2011:516)

Indeed, the UN can claim little neutrality in Somalia and I would argue that complying with such measures would do more than just "symbolically" place MSF on one side of the conflict.

The story of support for the Western-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia follows a similar logic as the support provided to the Karzai government in Afghanistan – a similarity that is overlooked in the literature. Building legitimacy was the objective and aid became a tool. One of the international communities' projects was direct financial support to the institutions of the TFG.

This translated into an array of state-building programmes, including direct financial support of TFG police. However, the TFG police were complicit in the humanitarian crisis that NGOs were trying to respond to, "preying on and driving away local populations in the capital and then blocking humanitarian aid, preventing it from reaching them. The contradiction was readily apparent: one hand of the 'international community' was strengthening the capacity of the TFG security forces while the other was trying to alleviate the humanitarian disaster those very forces helped to perpetrate. A showdown between humanitarian and state-building agendas was unavoidable. (Menkhaus, 2010:S334)

The subjugation of humanitarianism to the political objectives of state-building became clearest with the announcement of the 2011 'famine'. Hilary Clinton claimed that the famine was due to the "relentless terrorism" by al-Shabaab (Clinton, 2011) – a statement that failed to acknowledge the role of US-backed regional powers in creating instability in Somalia. The African Development Bank claimed that a response to the famine should take into account the need for "a solution for peace" (Agence France-Presse [AFP], 2011a), while Christina Amaral, head of emergency operations in Africa for the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), stated that "without democracy and peace it will not be possible to end hunger" (AFP, 2011b), introducing the idea of a political pre-condition for the ability to address immediate needs.

The logic of these statements was mirrored in the practices of the major donors providing aid to Somalia. The strong arm of the US government and its European allies had sought to bring humanitarian assistance in line with its counter-terrorism thinking by controlling who received assistance and criminalising the material support provided to whoever was not considered an ally at the time, making assistance less about need and more about whose legitimacy needed to be boosted. Therefore, the Somalia example represents the other side of the stabilisation rhetoric – instead of using aid to boost legitimacy, denying aid to certain groups was used to deny legitimacy.

Humanitarianism as a full circle

What is clear from the literature on the relationship between humanitarianism and hegemonic power is that the ideological underpinnings of humanitarianism have travelled a full circle from its early civilising mission to the promotion of liberal democracy. Currently:

... development discourse focuses on empowering post-colonial states and societies in similar ways to the earlier discourses of the colonial and post-colonial periods. Once again post-colonial states and societies are held to be the owners of their own development, but in the very different context of [W]estern regulation and intervention in the twenty-first century. (Chandler, 2014:236)

What the literature successfully demonstrates is that humanitarianism has had its course set by the dominant Western political narrative. The challenges facing well-intentioned aid workers have been thought about and addressed from a perspective that takes working towards the attainment of a liberal democratic state that is able to meet the population's most basic needs as an obvious good. This may have been practical – especially considering the failures of the alternative models – but the question it poses is whether the resulting exclusive relationship between Western power and humanitarian aid is compatible with the impartial delivery of assistance. It also calls into question whether this monogamous relationship will affect the identity of humanitarian aid and therefore its access. Finally, it raises questions about the effectiveness of such an approach.

Implications for humanitarian effectiveness and access

Having understood how humanitarian aid is tied to Western power, it is possible to turn our attention to exploring the implications of this relationship for the effectiveness of humanitarian aid and its ability to access conflicts.

Effectiveness

Evidence has emerged that calls into question the effectiveness of humanitarian aid for "winning hearts and minds" (Williamson, 2011; Beath, Christia & Enikolopov, 2012). The direct role of the military in conducting assistance has come under extensive criticism – mostly based on arguments emphasising the aspect of the quality of assistance. Bulstrode, referenced in Gordon, raises a range of health concerns:

. . . the risk of being seen to compete with and irritating local health practitioners; raising and failing to meet surprisingly demanding and sophisticated beneficiary expectations; the limited facilities and time available, leading to errors in (or an inability to make a) diagnosis; poor-quality treatment; and a lack of follow-up care, resulting in discontent. The inadequacies of the facilities also raised the potential of medical officers providing unethical treatments such as placebos in place of appropriate care. Bulstrode also suggests that the Helmand population was too sophisticated to accept these shortcomings. (2010:S380)

The merging of relief and development into a state-building or stabilisation effort is often practically represented by the existence of an integrated UN mission – with a single UN official responsible for humanitarian aid, development, political affairs and peacekeeping. The implications of this integration can be seen in the concerns raised by Derderian et al.:

As the reforms introduce coordination and funding tools aimed at increasing coherence, the imperative to arrive at joint analysis and response stands in tension with the inherent diversity and complementarity of humanitarian action, based on independence of analysis and intervention. Within integrated UN missions, the reinforced role of the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator/Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General in both coordination (clusters) and funding (the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)) risks further conflating political and humanitarian aims. In this highly politicised atmosphere, serious questions arise about how the reforms impact on perception of humanitarians in the field, and on their ability to provide timely and appropriate assistance to those most in need. (2007:online)

Tiller and Healy (2014) found in a review of case studies in Jordan, DRC and South Sudan that the triple-hatted UN Co-ordinator often created confusion and slowed down emergency response, while NGOs often found it difficult to shift from development to emergency programming.

Although alluded to, neither Tiller and Healy (2014) nor any of the other authors in this review considers whether the approach to humanitarian aid as being more than about saving lives and alleviating suffering contributes to the failures in emergency response. Therefore, questions still remain about whether the incorporation of humanitarian aid into Western

power affects the effectiveness of aid and, therefore, on the perceived and real benefit of such aid for belligerents who are in a position to grant or deny access.

What the literature does reveal is that there are concepts and approaches being developed as a way to improve the approach to aid delivery – and therefore its effectiveness. One of the most dominant concepts identified in the literature is in the concept of building resilience.

Resilience as the final merging of relief and development

The concept of 'resilience' as a goal of humanitarian aid was first articulated outside environmental sustainability and disaster-risk-reduction circles by the UK DFID in the release of their Humanitarian Emergency Response Review in 2011 (DFID, 2011). Slim and Bradley point out that the theory of resilience "intends to integrate humanitarian and development values into a unified ethical goal" (2013:9). ALNAP points out that "the concept of resilience may offer a basis for increasing coherence" ([Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action] ALNAP, 2012:13).

There are a number of broad debates that have emerged about building resilience. One perspective is that building resilience is the other side of the 'vulnerability' coin (Manyena, O'Brien, O'Keefe & Rose, 2011). The authors of this perspective focus on structure and agency, and promote an idea that, in response to disasters, victims should be supported in "bounc[ing] forward" (Manyena et al., 2011:423). "The notion of bounce forward is to see disaster as an opportunity for local livelihood enhancement rather than as a simple return to *status quo ante*" (ibid.). Much of this argument is based on the applicability of resilience to contexts of environmental disaster. However, as Slim and Bradley point out:

While strategies of resilience work logically and uncontroversially in many natural disasters, they create potential problems for the neutrality of humanitarian action in certain armed conflict where improving political and economic structures can be perceived as giving unfair advantage to one side or another. (2013:9)

Indeed, choices about what social structures to imbue with resilience are not ideologically neutral.

Chandler (2012) takes another perspective, in particular that the resilience narrative has become an extension of international interventionism. However, Chandler (2012) argues that, by emphasising individual agency, the resilience discourse has managed to avoid the trappings of the liberal framing of intervention.

By contrast, Duffield (2014) argues that the linking of relief and development is based on a consequentialism that places the longer-term goal of development above the immediate goal

of saving lives. A similar critique has been made of the resilience discourse, which seeks to erase the distinction between development and humanitarian aid (Whittall, Philips & Hofman, 2014:online). "Development is about the system, the long term, and the greater good for the whole, humanitarian aid is about the individual, the short term, and the immediate good for the few" (ibid.).

According to Duffield:

. . . the wholesale embrace of disaster resilience has completed this process "of blurring the distinctions between relief and development that emerged in the 1990s. . . . While self[-]reliance has been a long-standing aim of liberal development, in fulfilling the politics of austerity, resilience brings a new emphasis: self[-]reliance through constant adaptation to permanent emergency within post-security landscapes where state and corporate social responsibility has effectively absconded itself. (2014:xxii)

Lastly, a pragmatic perspective on resilience has emerged that takes less of Duffield's (2014) hysterical post-modern view. Resilience, argue Levine and Mosel, is not something new.

It is important to remember that the banner of resilience has created important political momentum behind old problems (reshaping the emergency development separation, finding a new aid paradigm, retargeting aid on those most prone to crisis, etc.). This must be welcomed and the opportunity must be exploited to the fullest extent possible. If a new jargon is useful for achieving this, then there is no problem in using it as long as it does not create confusion or the belief that a brand new idea has been created. (2014:21)

Given the previous quote, if resilience can be thought of as a continuation of the trend of incorporating humanitarian aid into development programming – something acknowledged by both its proponents and critics, it should be subject to the same issues described above, namely of being subordinated to the political objectives of the hegemonic state. In short, building resilience is not an impartial act.

Do you build the resilience of the Taliban shadow health system, or do you build the government health system in a Taliban controlled area? At the end of the day, building the resilience of systems is also building the legitimacy of the groups that control that system. It is not by mistake that the US government has chosen to invest billions in to boosting the Afghanistan government's credibility through the provision of state services, which those 'building system resilience' have happily contributed too. (Whittall, 2014:online)

In summary, the act of building resilience is not objectionable. What is problematic is the erasure of a distinction between development activities designed to support a state – which necessitates choosing sides in a conflict – and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In this

sense, if resilience represents the next phase of the multi-mandated evolution from relief to linking relief and development, it risks any claim to impartiality held by humanitarian actors. However, the literature does not identify what implication this approach could have for the effectiveness of emergency response.

Dangerous aid

The literature does however identify one other consequence of relationships between humanitarian aid and any power that can be considered a party to a conflict. Hofman points out the implications of accepting compromised aid for the receiver of the assistance:

For sick or wounded Afghans, going to a NATO-run clinic or receiving assistance from groups affiliated with the NATO counterinsurgency (CO-IN) strategy risks retaliation from the opposition, be they Taliban or other militant groups. Civilians face the same risks from international and Afghan forces if they turn to the opposition for assistance. In this environment, seeking help amounts to choosing sides in the war. The result is a tragically absurd catch-22: People put off seeking assistance because doing so can endanger their lives. (2011:online)

Therefore we can conclude from this literature that the implications of the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power could be that it results in a politically partisan delivery of assistance that could be dangerous for those who receive it. However, this literature does not answer whether this approach also reduces the emergency-response capacity of humanitarian actors.

Access

How does the relationship between Western power and humanitarian aid impact on access? In understanding the ability of humanitarian organisations to access those most in need, it is useful to explore in detail the concept of 'humanitarian space'. The term 'humanitarian space' was first defined by former president of MSF Rony Brauman to mean "[a] space for humanitarian action in which aid agencies are free to evaluate needs, free to monitor the delivery and use of assistance, free to have a dialogue with the people" (quoted in Elhawary & Collinson, 2012:1).

Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau (2014) review each definition of humanitarian space and conclude that the ICRC focus has been largely on deploring the erosion of humanitarian space, which for them is based on IHL and depends on proactivity from humanitarian actors for the creation and maintenance of the space to operate. By contrast, for Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau (2014), the MSF focus is largely on a space for humanitarian action that

is respected by the belligerents – with a focus on needs and an ability to respond rather than on a respect for principles.

Oxfam places greater emphasis on the rights of beneficiary populations (ibid.). By contrast, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) adopts a more instrumental view. Like Oxfam, OCHA refers to humanitarian space as an operating environment. However, OCHA omits the principle of independence from its definition and focuses on the need to maintain a clear distinction between humanitarian actors and the military as a determining factor of the respect for humanitarian aid (ibid.).

Hilhorst and Jansen define humanitarian space as "the physical or symbolic space which humanitarian agents need to deliver their services according to the principles they uphold" (2010:1117). The authors acknowledge that this concept separates humanitarians from their "politicised environment" (ibid.). In this sense, the authors consider the concept to be aspirational rather than referring to some reality. "The notion of humanitarian space as the site of principled aid remains widely accepted as the expression and aspiration of humanitarian assistance" (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010:1118).

Hilhorst and Jansen (2010) argue that humanitarian space therefore has physical as well as metaphorical dimensions, and humanitarian space is an arena in which there are a multitude of actors. It is the interaction between these actors that shape the realities of humanitarian action.

The politics of humanitarian space

A critique that can be made of the humanitarian space discourse in general is that it promotes the idea that the principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality is the holy trinity of humanitarian action, which have the power to cleanse humanitarianism of its political contamination and form a protective bubble within which humanitarian actors can get on with saving lives. Kleinfeld argues that humanitarian space is "undergirded by the taken-for-granted assumption that humanitarian spaces and relations can and must be separated from politics" (2007:174).

The purported ability of humanitarians to claim what Collinson (2014) refers to as a 'petty sovereignty' underpins the notion of a humanitarian space.

By 'humanitarianising' space – representing it as a space for ethical and humane interaction – humanitarian agencies present themselves as actors void of the territorial or political context in which they operate. (Dechaine, 2002:363)

However, the very act of humanitarianism is political – making the notion of a sanctified space within which to operate free from political contamination an absurdity. Therefore, the very notion of a humanitarian space is not only contested in terms of its definition – but it also indicates an approach to the delivery of humanitarian assistance that assumes a universal acceptance based on a state of exception. It is, therefore, useful to explore the literature on whether this privileged space of humanitarian action is diminishing or if it has ever existed.

Is humanitarian space shrinking?

For practitioners on the ground, humanitarian space certainly seems to be increasingly constrained (Feller, 2009; Shannon, 2009). Some make reference to a time when constraints were not as pronounced. "The days of assuming security as a result of benevolent and apolitical intentions are long past and are unlikely to return as competition to influence crises grows" (Armstrong, 2013:3). Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau (2014) note that the size of humanitarian space depends on three factors: respect for humanitarian law; attacks on humanitarian workers; and access to populations at risk. How the global War on Terror was fought with a reliance on hard power and the rhetoric used to justify it has been indicated by some authors as a constraining feature on humanitarian space (Munslow & O'Dempsey, 2009; Bernard, 2011).

The rhetoric of this [global War on Terror] confrontation has excluded neutral humanitarian space between the coalition of states involved, and the armed groups and terrorist organizations. (Bernard, 2011:893)

This suggests that the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power – or at least the actions of Western power in relation to humanitarian aid – has had an impact on access. However, Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau (2014) take on the discourse of a shrinking humanitarian space. They demonstrate that the number of conflicts are declining, not increasing, and that the civilian toll of such conflicts is not higher than in previous eras. They argue that there is no evidence for the claim that there has been a proliferation in the number of non-state armed actors, nor that there is a decline in the respect for IHL. They further take on the claim that insecurity of aid workers is growing:

It is commonly acknowledged that efforts to more consistently respond to humanitarian crises have led to aid workers operating in more dangerous situations. International humanitarian workers did not operate in many of the greatest crises of the cold war. (Hubert & Brassard-Boudreau, 2014:18)

In addition to this, Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau discredit the "growing tendency to attribute the bulk of attacks against aid workers to militarization or politicization of

humanitarian action" (2014:19). Rather, the authors suggest that the majority of aid-worker security incidents are not politically motivated but rather due to the fact that many aid workers are ill-adapted to working in highly insecure environments, while at the same time being more exposed to highly insecure contexts.

Collinson (2014) supports the view that the perceived challenges facing the aid industry are linked to the expansion of the sector.

Many of the difficulties faced today in delivering relief or providing protection in these complex environments can be seen as a consequence of a rapid expansion of the reach and ambitions of the international humanitarian sector into the types of conflict and crisis situations that, in the past, were politically off limits and operationally way beyond what could be conceived of in terms of the overall resources and capabilities available. (Collinson, 2014:24)

The (non-existent) golden age of humanitarianism

A criticism of the 'humanitarian space' discourse is that humanitarian aid has always been contested and that the current challenges are not new (Donini, 2012a; Smillie, 2012; Minear, 2012). Donini argues that there was never a golden age where "core humanitarian values took precedence over political or other considerations" (2012a:3). As Hugo Slim points out:

Outright rejection, politicization, co-option, belligerent funding and blurring are not new. Neither are they necessarily catastrophic problems for humanitarianism. Instead, they are our perennial problems as humanitarians. They are always with us. For what other reasons have humanitarians not always been able to save every life that they have wanted to save? (2004:6)

Indeed, Donini asserts that:

Today's humanitarian angst may not, in fact, be caused by new threats to its core principles. It may simply result from an increase in the number and severity of concurrent crises; the vast growth of the humanitarian apparatus; the increased ability of governments to dictate the shape of agency programming; more intense real[-]time scrutiny made possible by improved communication technologies; and the conditions, restrictions, and expectations that this increased scrutiny has generated in the funding environment. (2012a:3)

To counter the shrinking-humanitarian-space discourse, much of the literature has turned to history to show that the challenges facing humanitarian actors are nothing new (Donini, 2012a; Smillie, 2012; Minear, 2012; Magone et al., 2012).

The ability to operate in conflict is based more on negotiating compromises (Magone et al., 2012) than pure assertions of principles. As Smillie points out:

Humanitarians have been used from that day to this as fig leaves to veil government action and inaction in the face of war crimes and genocide. Humanitarians have been paid, manipulated and 'embedded' with singular disregard for humanitarian principles. They have been routinely ignored, even in cases of obvious humanitarian need and enormous public outcry. They have been silent when they should have spoken out, and they have spoken out – taking sides – when they should have remained silent. Then as now, they have called for military intervention to end the worst atrocities, and on the few occasions when they got their wish, they mostly lived to regret it. None of this began with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It did not begin with the post-cold war return of Western armies to distant lands. The struggle to give meaning to the basic tenets of 'classical humanitarianism' was as real on the day they were first enunciated as it is today. (2012:19–20)

For Weissman:

Access to populations in danger is not solely rooted in the legal and moral authority of humanitarian principles. It is the product of repeated transactions with local and international political and military forces. Its scope depends largely on the relief agencies' ambitions, the diplomatic and political support it can rely on and the interests taken in its operations by those in power. In other words, the political exploitation of aid is not a misuse of its vocation, but its principal condition of existence. (2014:182)

A problem with this growing academic consensus is that it has a tendency to delegitimise current concerns of practitioners and overlooks the possibility that something really is different about the current era of humanitarianism. In other words, it overlooks the possible fourth phase of humanitarian aid identified in the literature reviewed above. As Kent points out, "[e]xtrapolating lessons from the past will increasingly provide less guidance on how to deal with humanitarian futures" (2011:940).

Munslow & O'Dempsey directly tackle the challenges facing humanitarian aid post-9/11 – and therefore come closest to acknowledging the implications of the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power:

In the post-9/11 world of internationally politicized complex humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, humanitarian organizations are increasingly distrusted, viewed as aligned with political stakeholders, perceived as competing against local organizations and national ministries for disaster and development assistance and regarded by opposing political and ideological factions as legitimate targets for violent attack and kidnapping. (2009:1)

This perspective indicates an acknowledgement that humanitarian space is in fact diminishing and that this is linked to the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power.

One way this has been examined is through the 'perceptions' lens, which has explored how humanitarian aid is perceived (Abu-Sada, 2012). However, Donini points out that:

. . . the perception issue is a minor aspect of a much more serious problem: the essential lop-sided nature of the relationship between outsiders and insiders that breeds disempowerment, and sometimes victimization. (2014a:43)

The problem with the perception discourse, as well as the nothing-new argument, is that the humanitarian aid community is spared from questions of how it can do better. Understanding perception becomes about understanding how others misunderstand the humanitarian project, rather than how the humanitarian project has made missteps in a world it didn't correctly understand. The issue of perception is regularly raised without the question of whether the perception is accurate.

What determines the ability of humanitarian organisations to operate?

Elhawary and Collinson (2012) argue that a golden age of humanitarianism has never existed. However, they acknowledge that many of the challenges facing humanitarian actors today are linked to the increased areas of engagement for humanitarian actors as well as the present nature of the humanitarian system. Interestingly, Elhawary and Collinson touch on perception of humanitarian action as a major determinant of the challenges for humanitarians seeking access to conflicts:

As currently constituted, the humanitarian 'system' can appear a predominantly Western construct, representing Western interests, values and behaviours that may be distrusted, challenged or rejected by local populations. (2012:1–2)

The authors go on to point out how:

The bulk of the largest NGOs are from North America and Western Europe, and 16 of the largest donors (providing over 90% of official humanitarian assistance) are all Western, with the exception of Japan. (ibid.)

Collinson argues that the concrete and perceived barriers caused by the "oligopoly" of aid organisations and its rules and procedures:

. . . may reinforce the impressions (if not the reality) of the sectors predominantly Western identity, and as such, as a system representing interests, values and modes of behaviour that may be strongly distrusted, contested or rejected by local populations. (2014:28)

Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau, by contrast, use the example of the expulsion of NGOs from Sudan to illustrate their argument of how humanitarian space is not shrinking.

The expulsion of aid workers following the ICC [International Criminal Court] indictment of President Bashir has been widely cited as an example of declining humanitarian space. But the fact that there were massive humanitarian operations taking place within the sovereign territory of an Islamic state in the midst of the US-led war on terror is an indication of how far the normative goal posts have shifted in favour of humanitarian access. (2014:20)

The problem with this analysis is that just because the goal posts have shifted doesn't mean we should be less concerned about the real challenges facing those aiming to provide humanitarian aid. What is implicit in the line of argument from Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau, and to a certain extent from Donini, Smillie, Minear and Weiss, is that aid workers should not complain about a shrinking space because 20 years ago that space didn't even exist. But this overlooks that, in contemporary challenges of humanitarian aid delivery, organisations are working in difficult places and facing massive challenges that are not as easy to dismiss as when reflecting on humanitarian space from the safe distance of an academic institution.

Elhawary and Collinson argue that the focus by humanitarian actors on external factors that affect humanitarian space is an alibi for not grappling with more difficult questions on the internal structures of the humanitarian system and how those impact on interaction with external actors:

To arrest the perceived decline in humanitarian space, there is a tendency to appeal to the principles of humanitarian action. Yet, principles do not in themselves automatically guarantee access; rather, access is a product of the dynamic interplay between competing interests, institutions and processes in a particular context, and the ability of humanitarian actors to exert positive influence over humanitarian conditions and the operating environment. (2012:3)

Elhawary and Collinson propose that:

... humanitarian space must be understood as a complex political, military and legal arena of civilians protection and assistance, determined by the interplay of a range of actors' interests and actions. (2012:4)

Security

A key indicator of the existence of a space to operate is whether or not security is acceptable and manageable.

Gordon points out that the incorporation of healthcare, in particular, into the military's range of activities can lead to the "rejection of humanitarian agencies by insurgents" (2010:S381).

Gordon evidences this claim with a reference to the "steep rise in deaths among humanitarian workers that occurred in 2003" (ibid.).

Indeed, as a result of the proximity of NGOs to US objectives – and the protection that they received from such a privileged relationship – one can argue that many organisations could be left exposed following the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan.

. . . the humanitarian impacts of the transitions in Afghanistan in 2014 are also likely to be compounded by their direct effects on the ability of the humanitarian community to respond. First, humanitarian access is likely to decrease. (Koser, 2014)

The report goes on to say that:

. . . security for humanitarian workers is likely to be jeopardised. According to OCHA, during the first quarter of 2013 there was a 63 per cent. increase in security-related incidents associated with humanitarians over the same period in 2012; and in the last few months [in 2013], there have been attacks on health facilities managed by NGOs, the Kabul office of the International Organization for Migration and the Jalalabad office of the International Committee of the Red Cross. (ibid.)

According to OCHA Afghanistan:

Given the increasingly challenging security situation, it will be essential for humanitarian actors to act in accordance with humanitarian principles, and to engage in consistent outreach, advocacy and action to build and develop acceptance among local communities and traditional leaders. (2012)

Stoddard, Harmer and Ryou find in their aid-worker security report that "[t]he year 2013 set a new record for violence against civilian aid operations, with 251 separate attacks affecting 460 aid workers" (2014:1). Slim and Bradley point out that:

The recent increase in violence against aid workers has arisen mainly in places where liberal counter-insurgency is confronting Islamist insurgency. In these contexts, there is evidence that 49% of the targeting of aid workers was for political reasons in 2008. (2013:16)

Duffield agrees that "the overt politicization of aid has resulted in increasing attacks on aid workers by armed actors that no longer recognize the neutrality of the UN or ICRC" (2014:xxi).

This blanket conclusion is misleading. The Feinstein Centre has done extensive research on the perception of humanitarian actors and has found, as pointed out by Donini, that:

Even the Taliban, which has often targeted aid workers, has developed a more nuanced position. They are able to distinguish between the ICRC, and other Dunantist actors, with whose principles they have no quarrel, and the "corrupt agencies" that have taken the side of the government and the US-led coalition forces. (2014a:40)

Although in life-or-death situations aid will often be accepted in whatever form it is given, over time, the "nature of the giver begins to matter" (ibid.).

There are those who find the statistics on aid-worker security to be misleading (Hubert & Brassard-Boudreau, 2014) and, in response, they emphasise the biases present in the gathering of such data and the expansion in the aid system resulting in more exposure to risk. Much of the literature refuting the presence of growing insecurity for humanitarian workers follows the same pattern as the literature on humanitarian space.

Dandoy and de Montclos argue that there is no significant departure from the past in terms of the security incidents facing humanitarian workers because:

Overall, the multiplication of aid worker security incidents, in absolute figures, reflects first and foremost the massive growth in staff numbers operating in the field over the past two decades, rather than the greater probability of being killed. (2013:346)

Dandoy and de Montclos (2013) point out the historical precedence of humanitarian workers being directly targeted. The authors also dismiss the notion that humanitarian workers are operating in more chaotic environments.

The authors offer a convincing argument about how humanitarian workers have always been targeted but offer little in terms of understanding what the current challenges facing humanitarian workers are (or whether they are more or less severe than in the past). In addition to this, these arguments fail once again to take into consideration a defining feature of the aid environment: Humanitarian aid rose with Western power and, as Western power declines, there are good reasons to think that humanitarian actors will have more limited access to conflicts and be more exposed when they do have access.

In line with this absence, the literature also does not tackle head on how the bundling up of humanitarianism with Western power has affected the risk–benefit calculations carried out by those in control of a given territory when deciding on whether to grant access to humanitarian actors or how the costs, risks and benefits input into these calculations may change with a new global power configuration.

The perceived benefit of allowing humanitarian actors access is based on an assessment of the value that aid will bring. This value is tied to the ability of aid actors to be effective when they are given access. There is suggestion in the literature that the incorporation of humanitarian action into the state-building and development agendas of donors – often through the work of multi-mandated organisations – may not affect the security of humanitarian actors (Slim & Bradley, 2013) but may still reduce the effectiveness of emergency response (Tiller & Healy, 2014).

The defence of this view states that quality of services might be better tailored to real needs when humanitarian action is incorporated into state-building and development and, therefore, such services may gain greater acceptance. However, this perspective cannot be reconciled with the findings of the Feinstein study (Donini, 2014a) that the identity of the giver matters.

Acceptance of humanitarian actors is based on an ability to build trust (Jansen, 2013). Considering the extent to which humanitarian actors are incorporated into Western power, the ability to build trust is, at least in part, linked to the trustworthiness of the West.

In terms of the risk posed by the acceptance of humanitarian actors, there is no literature identified that investigates this from the perspective of the belligerents themselves. However, it can be deduced from the example of the use of a vaccination campaign to gather intelligence and the resultant crackdown on vaccination campaigns in Pakistan that there is a direct link between the real and perceived risk of accepting humanitarian actors and how humanitarian actors are used by Western power.⁵

Gaps in the literature

The literature on the effectiveness of humanitarian aid in conflict does not directly tackle nor acknowledge whether the links between humanitarian aid and Western power have implications for the effectiveness of aid delivery. Instead, the literature focuses on the technical fixes that could improve the delivery of assistance. However, the technical fix of building resilience is a step that will further entrench the relationship between humanitarian and development actors by removing the distinction altogether. This, in turn, will more closely align humanitarian actors to Western power. The implicit assumption in the literature is that this would be a positive step to ensuring coherence. However, there is no question as to whether coherence with a Western state-building or stabilisation agenda would be beneficial for a core tenant of humanitarian action: emergency response.

⁵ See the letter sent by 12 Deans of prominent US health faculties in the US to President Obama on effects of the fake vaccination campaign on access to health:
<http://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2013/Klag%20letter%20to%20President%20Obama.pdf>

The extent to which Western power impacts on humanitarian aid was not directly addressed by the literature. Instead, the focus of the literature on humanitarian access is centred on the notion of humanitarian space, and questioning whether or not it ever existed. Thinking about the ability to deliver aid as being about having a space to do so implies that humanitarianism can be extracted from political and military interference and can be left to carry out its activities within a protected realm – or a zone of exclusion. This removes the responsibility from humanitarians to navigate the complex factors that Elhawary and Collinson (2012) point out. This is of particular concern if we accept the arguments made by Elhawary and Collinson (2012) about humanitarian action being understood as a Northern project. It is even more problematic when we consider this view in light of the literature in the first part of this Chapter 2, which explored how humanitarianism has been historically tied to hegemony. This provokes the following question: How does the Western identity of humanitarian action affect access in a context of changing global power dynamics? None of the literature reviewed on humanitarian space tackles this question.

The literature on humanitarian space is right about one thing: deciding whether humanitarian space is shrinking or not does little to help in understanding the real trends because the exercise is based on the wrong premise: that humanitarians can, and have in the past, work independently from politics. However, the literature that discredits the diminishing-space discourse also misses the point. Knowing that something has happened before or that it is not comparatively worse to previous eras is of little comfort to practitioners who are under fire in a multitude of dangerous environments. Aid work in conflict is dangerous. Access is difficult. The focus on humanitarian space – by both proponents and critics – contributes to the removal of agency from humanitarian workers trying to improve their ability to work in difficult environments, either by presuming that there was a golden age (and thereby ignoring and failing to learn from the cumulative history of humanitarian actors) or by discrediting the discourse at the expense of acknowledging the real current challenges facing those delivering aid. It is hardly useful to offer comforting context when the reality is so very far from ideal.

Most worryingly lacking in the literature on humanitarian access is reflection on how a changing global power configuration will affect a humanitarian system tied to Western power. This literature review will, therefore, turn to exploring how power might be changing and whether this might have implications for how humanitarian aid is delivered.

Part 2: Humanitarianism and changing power

Considering the role of the rise of the West in the emergence of the humanitarian system, it is important to examine what the future of the empire could be and how power is changing.

The future of the empire – three theories

There are three schools of thought in the literature in understanding the state (and/or decline) of the empire. One – outlined by Ferguson (2010) – is a theory of sudden US collapse; another – suggested by Kennedy (1988) – is a theory of gradual US decline; the third – defended by Huntington (1988) – is a theory that the US is able to 'renew' itself.

Decline of the West?

Paul Kennedy (1988) – in his renowned 'Imperial Overstretch' hypothesis – argues that overextension occurs geographically, economically or militarily and leads to gradual collapse. Samuel P. Huntington (1988) countered Kennedy, hinging much of his thesis of American renewal on what he referred to as the self-renewing genius of American politics. Huntington offers this assessment of the ability of America to maintain power:

The ultimate test of a great power is its ability to renew its power. The competition, mobility, and immigration characteristic of American society enable the United States to meet this test to a far greater extent than any other great power, past or present. They are the central sources of American strength. (1988:online)

Capital unleashed

Mann (2003) argues that the relationship between Washington and Wall Street is at the core of empire. Indeed, what is often missing from the literature on empire, and its possible overstretch, is an analysis of the market. Huntington (1988) and Kennedy's (1988) arguments both fall short in this crucial respect, and it is the anti-globalisation literature, which fills in this gap.

As Freeman and Kagarlitsky (2004) point out, the organising forces of the market are no longer nation states. This fact may see the unravelling of the US Empire – the point at which Wall Street overtakes Washington in influence may be the point at which the empire is unable to renew and reinvent, as the market undermines the notion of the nation state:

The primary factors of production and exchange – money, technology, people, and goods – move with increasing ease across national boundaries; hence the nation-state has less and less power to regulate these flows and impose its authority over the economy. Even the most

dominant nation states should no longer be thought of as supreme and sovereign authorities, either outside or even within their own borders. (Hardt & Negri, 2000:xi)

One could argue that domination remains a problem under capitalism but that it is enacted not by states but by transnational capitalist elites, including those within the periphery. Understanding this is important if one is to avoid the mistake of thinking that Western hegemony is imposed by the West without receptiveness from national elites. Indeed, the 2008 financial crisis, in which the interests of the global capitalist class are commonly seen to have been given preference over those of the more national middle and working classes, is seen by some to have had a major effect on the hegemonic status of the US.

Global power is, above all, dominance over ideas, agendas, and models. The revelation that much of the financial innovation that occurred in the last decade created little more than a house of cards erodes American power. Developing countries will pick and choose the economic policies that best suit them, and with growing confidence. (Zakaria, 2008:xxiv)

Outcomes of the Arab Spring

The so-called Arab Spring was one of the starkest indicators of the loss of Western power. Noueihed and Warren argue that what happens in the Middle East cannot be separated from shifting global power.

Staggering from the fog of two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that propelled its debt to stratospheric levels and undermined what moral authority it claimed in the eyes of Arabs, the United States lacks the means or credibility to maintain its old influence in the Arab world. (2012:305)

Noueihed and Warren (2012) argue that the stage is set for regional powers to assert themselves in a context of the US loss of credibility. However, Zakaria (2008) argues that, although the world is changing, it is changing in favour of the US. Zakaria (2008) argues that this is because emerging states are adopting American ideas and ideals.

This view is opposed by Kupchan who argues that "[t]he West is losing not only its material primacy as new powers rise, but also its ideological dominance" (2013:2). Kupchan goes on to argue that "[t]he emerging landscape is one in which power is diffusing and politics diversifying, not one in which all countries are converging toward the [W]estern way" (2013:3).

Possible-world polarities

Stathis points out that the more likely outcome of the current power changes is a non-polar world order dominated by several sources of power.

This later scenario would likely include a gradual decline in American power to a level roughly comparable with a number of other states and a world where compromise and accommodation would be increasingly necessary. (2010:309)

Stathis (2010) is in line with Kupchan (2013), who argues for an era of 'no one's world'. Kupchan argues that no country, region or model will dominate the future world.

The twenty-first century will not be America's, China's, Asia's, or anyone else's; it will belong to no one. The emergent international system will be populated by numerous power centers as well as multiple versions of modernity A global order, if it emerges, will be an amalgam of diverse political cultures and competing conceptions of domestic and international order. (2012:3)

Zakaria (2008) comes out in support of Huntington's term 'uni-multipolarity' which suggests a world with many large powers but one superpower. In a uni-multipolar world, the US will see its role challenged and others will see their influence grow.

It is Nye, in my view, who offers the most sensible conclusion to this debate when he likens the context of political power to a three-dimensional chessboard.

Interstate military power is highly concentrated in the United States; interstate economic power is distributed in a multipolar manner among the United States, the EU [European Union], Japan and the BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa]; and power over transnational issues such as climate change, crime, terror, and pandemics is highly diffused. The world is neither unipolar, multipolar, nor chaotic – it is all three at the same time. Thus, a smart grand strategy must be able to handle very different distributions of power in different domains and understand the trade[-]offs among them. It makes no more sense to see the world through a purely realist lens that focuses only on the top chessboard or a liberal institutional lens that looks primarily at the other boards. Contextual intelligence today requires a new synthesis of 'liberal realism' that looks at all three boards at the same time. (2011:213)

The US empire may not collapse immediately but it seems set to decline to a point where its unrivalled superpower status is no longer guaranteed. The chaotic world order predicted by Nye (2011) is supported by Kupchan:

The world is barreling toward not just multipolarity, but also multiple versions of modernity – a politically diverse landscape in which the Western model will offer only one of many competing conceptions of domestic and international order. Not only will well[-]run autocracies hold their own against liberal democracies, but rising powers that are democratic will also regularly part company with the West. Perhaps the defining challenge for the West and the rising rest is managing this global turn and peacefully arriving at the next world by

design. The alternative is a competitive anarchy arrived at by default as multiple centers of power and the differing conceptions of order they represent vie for primacy. (2013:5)

Rising powers

The rising powers of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa are the most significant new counterweights to US hegemony. The shorthand term, 'BRIC', was coined by Jim O'Neill (2011) the Chairman of Goldman Sachs asset management. In 2011, 'BRIC' expanded to 'BRICS' with the inclusion of South Africa. Although South Africa does not make the cut on economic grounds, according to O'Neill (2011), the political logic for including Africa's largest economy is clear.

Zakaria points out that the past 500 years have been marked by three "tectonic power shifts" (2008:1). The first is the rise of the West in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, the second is the rise of the US in the nineteenth century and the third is what Zakaria terms the "rise of the rest" (2008:2).

BRIC(S)

Together, BRICS countries accounted for 42 per cent. of the world's population and 33 per cent. of world growth in the first decade of the century (Nye, 2011). That said, the rise of the rest is significant for more than demographic and economic factors, as impressive as these are.

It has political, military and cultural consequences. As countries become stronger and richer, and as the United States struggles to earn back the world's faith, we're likely to see more challenges and greater assertiveness from rising nations. (Zakaria, 2008:xxv)

However, the BRICS group remains a largely disparate and arbitrary grouping (Ferdinand, 2014). There is little in common between many of the members. Still, there is co-ordination on key foreign-policy issues and, although there is divergence on, for example, nuclear proliferation and human rights, the BRICS have voted (in the UN) similarly on issues on which the global North and global South are divided (ibid.).

In an analysis of the BRICS voting patterns at the UN, Ferdinand (2014) confirmed that the most prominent divide between the global North and South is over issues of development. Ferdinand notes that the BRICS never take opposing positions on such issues, though there is greater cohesion within the India/Brazil/South Africa (IBSA) group.

Ferdinand concludes that "their growing self[-]confidence, will heighten the travails of an already diplomatically embattled US at the UN" (2014:387) and "this grouping is both

emblematic of wider global change as well as a significant factor in bringing it about. It points to an enhanced role for middle powers in the post-unipolar world." (2014:388).

These new sources of power go beyond the BRICS. Jim O'Neill (2011) has also coined the term 'Next 11' (N-11). The Next 11 include Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, (South) Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Turkey and Vietnam. O'Neill, fond of his catchy classifications, went on to call the four BRIC countries (excluding South Africa), as well as Indonesia, Korea, Mexico and Turkey, 'Growth Markets' rather than 'emerging markets' (2011:7).

How the rest will rise

However, the rise of the rest will not necessarily follow a linear trajectory that mirrors the rise of previous dominant powers. Kupchan (2013) argues that rising powers will follow developmental paths distinct from the Western model.

The emergence of these new economic powers is something reflected in the political leverage of the respective countries. Zakaria (2008) points out how this played out when Turkey and Qatar played key mediation roles in the Middle East without the US. Multipolarity – as it is currently conceived of by states such as Russia – is a form of resistance to Western liberal hegemony (Kurowska, 2014).

Bolstered by a sense of betrayal by the West, Russia's evolving discourse of multipolarity provides an alternative vision of the world order that contests the imposition of liberal values and bestows upon the authorities an actual responsibility to contain the West's dominance. (Kurowska, 2014:489)

Therefore, an effect of the emergence of rising powers can be understood as a macro form of counter-hegemony.

Kupchan (2013) points out that, in the rise of the West, it was the middle classes who were the main agents of change but, in the rise of the rest, in particular in China, the middle classes are playing the role of defenders of the status quo.

Not only are autocratic states neutralizing the political threat posed by the bourgeoisie, but they are cultivating a professional class invested in preserving the status quo. As a consequence, autocracies are enjoying considerable stability and legitimacy. (Kupchan, 2013:92)

The diffusion of power

Not only are new powers rising, power is also being diffused (Nye, 2011). Nye, in his work *The Future of Power*, argues that two main power shifts are occurring this century, "power

transition and power diffusion" (2011:113). Power transition has already been explored above in the shifts in power from one dominant state to another dominant state or states. By contrast, power diffusion is a novel dynamic outside the control of the most powerful states (Nye, 2011). Nye quotes a British analyst who points out that, in the information age, we are facing as much a multi-polar world as we are a no-pole world.

Nye dismisses as "fanciful" those who believe that the "information revolution will flatten bureaucratic hierarchies and replace them with network organisations" (2011:114). However, Nye does believe that:

... a new information revolution is changing the nature of power and increasing its diffusion. States will remain the dominant actor on the world stage, but they will find the stage far more crowded and difficult to control. (2011:114)

As a result of this information revolution, world politics, Nye argues, is no longer the sole province of governments: "Political leaders will enjoy fewer degrees of freedom before they must respond to events, and then they will have to share the stage with more actors" (2011:116).

Nye warns against technological determinism. States still matter, and economies of scale still mean that large states benefit more from the information revolution.

What is distinctive about power in the cyber domain is not that governments are out of the picture, as the early cyber libertarians predicted, but that different actors possess different power resources and that the gap between state and non-state actors is narrowing in many instances. But relative reduction of power differentials is not the same as equalisation. Large governments still have more resources. (2011:132)

Civil society

What exactly are these new centres of power? Other than a global capitalist elite, they also emerge in the form of civil society.

... social movements ... reject the state as the main agent of socio[-]political transformation and do not seek state power as an end in itself. Instead they seek to recover their own political space in which they can set the pace and direction of economic change. (Rajagopal, 2003:242)

In Ronnie Lipschutz's (2007) article on the transformative potential of global civil society, it is noted that the context of power within which global civil society operates is a state-like transnational capitalist social formation.

The resistance to this domination is often in the form of civil-society activism.

Global resistances are understood better as local responses to the uneven development of neoliberalism linked to class struggle over the exploitation of the natural and social substratum, which has to be grasped in terms of novel and purposeful forms of subaltern agency. (Morton, 2007:172)

It is within this context that Gramsci's theory of civil society being either "terrain for consolidation of the ruling apparatus, or (and) the site of its contestation" is relevant (Carapico, 2014:174). This mirrors Žižek's (2008) distinction between the politics of the status quo and emancipatory politics.

In understanding how civil society navigates this dichotomy, we can better understand how development aid has become so closely intertwined with Western power. Carapico (2014) meticulously documents the neo-liberal model of civil-society building in the Middle East and how it promoted a certain bureaucratized brand of civil organisation that eschewed more radical forms of civil action. For Rajagopal, social movements should redefine "what is properly political" (2003:243).

Politics is much more than a set of actions taken in formal political arenas . . . ; rather it is a decentered phenomenon that encompasses power struggles, which are enacted in the private, social, economic and cultural arenas in addition to the formal arenas. By challenging and resignifying what counts as political and who gets to define what's political, social movements foster alternative conceptions of the political itself. (Rajagopal, 2003:244)

As a result, conflicts in these arenas are not between nation states but between sectors of society and its classes.

Instead of the universal categories of sovereignty and rights, social movement offers a pluriversal defense of local communities. In doing that they reveal the limitations of a Kantian liberal world order based primarily on individual autonomy and rights and a realist world order based primarily on state sovereignty. (Rajagopal, 2003:245)

The conclusion that can be drawn from this literature is that both civil society and emerging states exercise a form of emancipatory politics in relation to Western power. From the previous part of this literature review, we could conclude that humanitarian aid has been largely incorporated into development assistance for the purposes of liberal democratic state-building to the point that it more closely resembles a politics of the status quo. The question that therefore arises is: If power is indeed shifting – including through the diffusion of power – how will the humanitarian community, with its status quo politics, interact with these emerging forms of power?

To contribute toward answering this question we can now turn to an exploration of the literature on how these changing forms of power will impact on how humanitarian aid is delivered.

The end of a Western monopoly on humanitarian aid

The days of Western governments and organisations maintaining a monopoly on humanitarian aid are over.

From the days of Solferino in 1859 to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, humanitarianism has been dominated by the norms and interests of governments and organizations from the West – despite its claim for universality. Those days are now over. (Binder & Meier, 2011:1135)

What Kent points out is that this changing power dynamic:

... challenges the semblance of relative stability under Western-designed, if not Western driven, institutions, traditions, principles, economic structures, and ultimately overwhelming military strength. (2011:949)

Kent argues that "some of the most transformative factors affecting humanitarian action will be the result of new political structures in the post-Western hegemonic world" (2011:939). The future of humanitarianism, Kent argues, will be influenced by the decline of the West, the political centrality of humanitarian crises and the assertion of sovereignty. This will "make localism – or the preference for one's own customs, culture, and language – not only a preferred option but also a political necessity" (Kent, 2011:954). This localism will reflect a "political individuality and assertion that in turn is mirrored in sovereignty, unilateralism, and fluid multipolarity" (ibid.).

For Vaux, the emergence of a "new world order" (2006:3) is not necessarily a promising development for the resolution of conflict:

The continuing killings in the Darfur region of Sudan have demonstrated that the 'new world order' will not solve every problem and may indeed create new ones. Cold War politics continues to block humanitarian responses—not through the single US[–]Russian confrontation of the past, but in the form of a complex web of trade-offs played out in the UN Security Council. (ibid.)

However, emerging states are playing an increasingly important role in the provision of international humanitarian aid and development outside of their borders. What this role will look like in the coming era and how these agents will affect access for and the effectiveness of humanitarian actors should be considered.

New donors in humanitarian aid

Ferris points out that:

The changing shifts in power should mean that rising countries, such as Brazil, Turkey, and South Africa, will play a much more important role not only in financing international humanitarian work but also in shaping and supporting the future work of multilateral agencies. (2011:929)

Considering the links between current multi-lateral agencies and structures of dominant state power, Ferris points out that we may see new forms of global governance emerge.

It is also likely that the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) could devote more energy and effort to building up regional mechanisms designed to respond to regional humanitarian emergencies. (2011:929)

What is surprising, however, is the failure by Ferris (2011) to recognise that there is already a role being played by emerging states in the traditional humanitarian arena. Thirty-six per cent. of non-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) funding came from the BRICS in 2007 and 2009 (Smith, 2011). Figure 2.1 below shows the estimated contribution towards foreign aid from the BRICS.

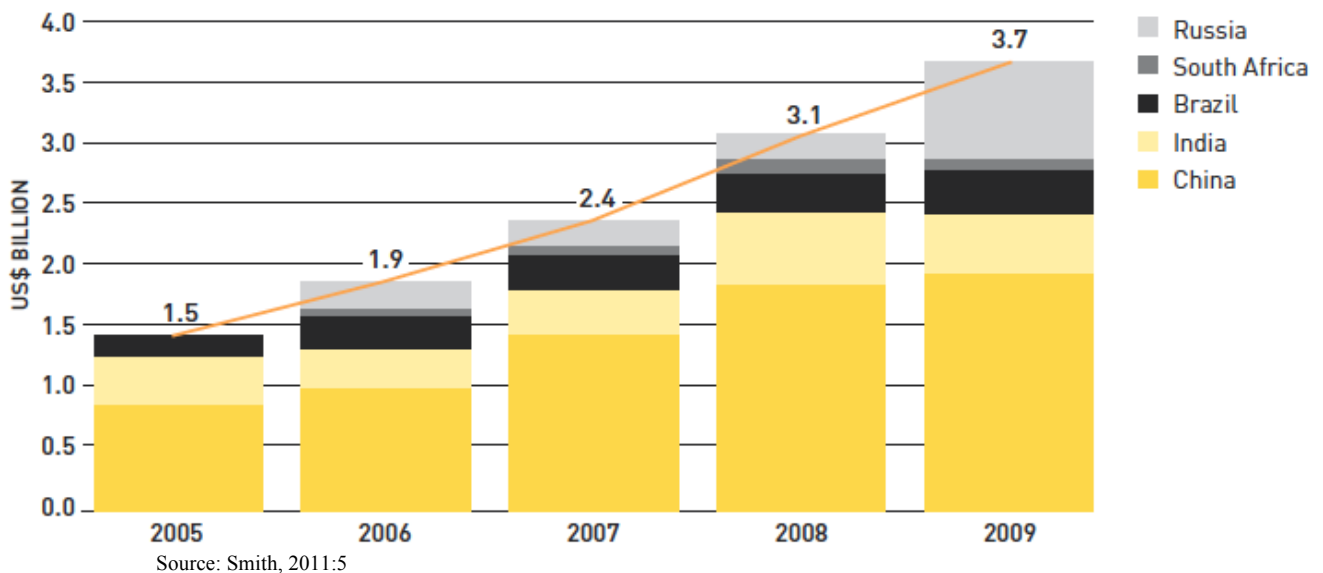


Figure 2.1: Estimated foreign assistance contributions from BRICS 2005–2009

What Figure 2.1 demonstrates is a growing role being played by BRICS nations in humanitarian assistance. Further, this role is not confined to the BRICS. Saudi Arabia is currently the largest aid-contributing non-DAC donor.

The top two donor governments contributing to the Haiti emergency response fund were non-DAC donors – Saudi Arabia, with US\$50 million, and Brazil, with US\$8 million. Secondly, eight of the ten governments making the largest contributions to this fund were non-DAC donors. Thirdly, India made the largest contribution to the Pakistan ERF [Emergency Relief Fund], with US\$20 million. (Smith, 2011:2)

The top-10 non-DAC donor countries for humanitarian aid in 2010 were: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), China, India, Brazil, Thailand, Mexico and Kuwait (ibid.). Qatar and South Africa are two other notable inclusions over the past 10 years, occasionally making significant enough contributions to see them placed in the second-highest spot for contributions from non-OECD DAC donors (ibid.). Although non-DAC donors rarely feature among the overall top-10 donors (except for Saudi Arabia), they are among the most generous donors in terms of humanitarian-aid donations per capita. "In 2009 the UAE's humanitarian aid per capita was US\$77, ranking it third, and, therefore higher than Sweden and Denmark" (Smith, 2011:10).

The primary recipients of non-DAC humanitarian aid are primarily in the Middle East and South Asia, as shown in Figure 2.2 below:

TOP RECIPIENTS	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	Pakistan 8.8	Palestine /OPT 645.4	Afghanistan 57.2	Iraq 106.1	Palestine /OPT 92.5	Lebanon 135.5	Bangladesh 172.5	China 119.6	Palestine /OPT 126.1	Pakistan 356.3
2	Mozambique 8.2	India 4.0	Tajikistan 2.6	DPRK 10.5	Sudan 33.0	Pakistan 17.9	Sudan 28.9	Yemen 105.4	Sudan 114.9	Haiti 170.5
3	Moldova 2.4	Egypt 2.1	Palestine /OPT 2.5	Angola 4.6	Iran 18.2	Indonesia 17.4	Lebanon 27.7	Palestine /OPT 93.2	Syria 82.6	Yemen 14.3
Other	15.0	11.6	8.8	29.0	46.2	60.9	71.7	517.6	219.8	76.7
Total	34.5	663.1	71.0	150.1	189.9	231.7	300.7	835.7	543.4	617.8
Concentration top 3	56%	98%	88%	81%	76%	74%	76%	38%	60%	88%

Source: Smith, 2011:19

Figure 2.2: Top three recipients of non-DAC-donor humanitarian aid (2000–2010) as a proportion of total humanitarian aid (US\$)

India has increased its foreign-assistance budget from an estimated US\$443 million in 2004 to US\$680 million in 2010 (Global Health Security Initiative [GHSI], 2012).

What is the cause of this increasing role in overseas aid for emerging states? According to Bernard, "states that are newcomers in humanitarian action, such as Brazil, China, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, are beginning to integrate international solidarity as part of their foreign policy" (2011:893). Indeed, thinking of foreign policy as being about solidarity is a key characteristic of emerging aid. By thinking of humanitarian aid in such a way:

... they define the humanitarian response in their own terms, challenging the de facto monopoly of Western organizations. Their conceptions of 'humanitarianism', their motives for supporting aid, and the terms of their support reflect a humanitarian approach different from that of established organizations and donors and more concerned with respecting the sovereignty of the state receiving the aid. (Bernard, 2011:893)

Indeed, this respect of state sovereignty is a second core component of aid provided by emerging states.

Mutual respect and South–South solidarity

'South–South' partnerships have, to a large extent, been the cornerstone of emerging-donor approaches (GHSI, 2012; Smith, 2011). This includes initiatives such as the IBSA-group initiated 2011 Poverty and Hunger Alleviation Fund (Smith, 2011). Brazil, in thinking about its aid policy, based it on mutual respect.

The Brazilian government believes that development cooperation is not limited to the interaction between donors and recipients: [and] understand[s] it as an exchange between peers, with mutual benefits and responsibilities. (Smith, 2011:4)

According to the GHSI study:

Brazil's approach to 'international cooperation' – which is how the government prefers to define its foreign assistance – is rooted in the country's belief in horizontal cooperation and is shaped in large part by policymakers' commitment to social equity. (2012:22)

Brazil openly rejects the model of donor assistance that it associates with the West, as well as the definitions used by the OECD (GHSI, 2012).

China's 2011 "White paper on Foreign Aid" also stressed South–South collaboration and distinguished it as "a model with its own characteristics" (quoted in Smith, 2011:2).

China sees itself as a leader among developing countries and prides itself on its philosophy and commitment to South–South cooperation and self-sustaining economic development. The government views this as being in direct contrast to the Western donor approach. (GHSI, 2012:60)

Much like Brazil, China is also explicit about its foreign-aid policies being a rejection of the "Western model".

China also explicitly rejects Western models of assistance that impose political and socioeconomic conditions on recipients. While China does invest heavily in countries where it has strategic economic and political interests, it maintains a policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries. (ibid.)

China is guided by a philosophy of "mutually beneficial" development that it believes builds self-sufficiency in recipient countries and does not interfere in domestic politics (GHSI, 2012:9).

India is another emerging donor that "openly rejects Western definitions and approaches, as well as the terms 'donor' and 'aid', preferring to view its efforts as a form of South–South partnership" (GHSI, 2012:46).

Best practices

South–South solidarity from emerging donors, articulated as a rejection of the Western model, also emphasises a comparative added value in the provision of assistance that is based on best practices developed locally.

Brazil's "approach to international cooperation emphasizes partnership, capacity building and health care access" (GHSI, 2012:6).

It is clear that health is a strong focus of these programs, reflecting a longstanding domestic commitment to equity. The Brazilian government is also investing substantial resources in domestic research and development (R&D), with annual public investment increasing 13.5% each year from 2000–2010. This could accelerate the country's ability to supply health technologies globally. (GHSI, 2012:8)

Most of the BRICS have tackled problems related to health and food security that other developing countries are struggling to overcome.

BRICS policymakers feel this [experience] equips them with unique perspective on improving health outcomes in developing countries. As a result, all of the BRICS except for Russia openly reject "Western" approaches to foreign assistance in favor of models anchored in domestic programs and their own political and social philosophies. (GHSI, 2012:87)

For example, Brazil draws directly on its experiences with the successful *Bolsa Familia* programme, while Russia is sharing lessons learnt about managing non-communicable

diseases (GHSI, 2012). The UN estimates that China has managed to lift 300 million of its people out of poverty. Therefore, as Smith points out:

... it is no surprise that China's approach will 'help recipient countries to strengthen their self-development capacity, enrich and improve their peoples' livelihood, and promote their economic growth and social progress'. (quoted in Smith, 2011:2)

By sharing best practices, emerging donors "see themselves as developing country partners that are sharing best practices and helping other countries build self-sustaining growth" (GHSI, 2012:87).

The central role of the state and sovereignty

At the core of the notions of South–South solidarity and the sharing of best practices through co-operation and partnership is a deep-rooted respect for sovereignty. As Binder and Meier point out:

Respect for the sovereignty of the disaster-affected state is also an important norm informing non-Western humanitarian action. Sovereignty is seen as part of a distinct South–South co-operation approach that looks to promote an equal relationship between the governments that provide aid and those that receive it. (2011:1138)

The majority of non-DAC-country funds are channelled through the public sector, meaning government to government. Of the funds that do not go through public institutions, a large portion is directed to national Red Crescent societies such as the Kuwaiti Red Crescent, the Pakistani Red Crescent, the UAE Red Crescent and the Saudi Arabia Red Crescent societies.

In 2010, non-DAC donor countries made the majority of their contributions to UN Emergency Relief Funds. Indeed:

2010 marked a significant change as the largest humanitarian contributions from governments to the Pakistan and Haiti ERFs were from non-DAC donors. Saudi Arabia was the largest government donor to the Haiti ERF with US\$50 million, followed by Brazil with US\$8 million, and India was the largest government donor to the Pakistan ERF, contributing US\$20 million. (Smith, 2011:15)

The respect for sovereignty is seen in the way funds are channelled to both Red Crescent Societies and the UN mechanisms – all of which demonstrate respect for state sovereignty by only operating under the full request and consent of the state.

What this Part 2 has demonstrated is that, although the West has not lost its dominant power, there is an emerging multi-polarity and diffusion of power that is contesting the exertion of

Western hegemony. This does not necessarily mean that the uni-polar era is over but rather that, as American power declines, there are other dimensions of power that have emerged and that are, in turn, challenging the Western approach to global governance through either counter-hegemonic resistance or emancipatory politics.

Emerging powers are playing a critical role as new donors in humanitarian assistance and are defining their approach in opposition to the Western model. However, national self-interest and respect for sovereignty remain the cornerstones of emerging-state engagement in humanitarian assistance. Power is also diffusing and civil-society actors are asserting a rejection of all forms of hegemony. The implications of this for the delivery of humanitarian assistance by a sector tied to Western power have yet to be explored.

The final part of this Chapter 2 will, therefore, aim to explore what the literature offered for understanding how humanitarian aid navigates and interacts with a changing macro-political context considering the cumulative baggage of its ties to Western power.

Part 3: Humanitarianism and counter-hegemonic resistance

A review of key literature on the consequences for humanitarian action of changing power reveal three things: first, for states in which humanitarian assistance is delivered, there is a greater assertion of sovereignty, which can either result in the rejection of aid or a desire to have a greater level of control over the delivery of aid; secondly, rising powers are becoming more active in the provision of assistance and are articulating aid delivery in a different way to the West, but are also using it as a tool to advance their foreign-policy interests; and thirdly, the diffusion of power is resulting in a changing aid landscape with the presence of new, emerging and newly noticed aid actors.

Changing power dynamics and the increased assertion of sovereignty

In the post-Cold War era, states were often bullied into accepting aid. States were pressured to accept new norms that were enforced by increasing donor leverage (Kahn & Cunningham, 2013:S142). However, in a context of changing global power structures, states are better placed to resist such pressure:

Their ability to assert their sovereignty will in part reflect the decline of Western hegemony, and also a tendency to resist change through blocs of states with shared interests. Such blocs or political alignments—be they nation-states or city-states—into groups intended to resist externally imposed change is as old as the concept of governance itself. And, in the foreseeable future, such blocs will not only continue but will also increase in number and complexity, and will enable members to resist various forms of external pressure. (Kent, 2011:952)

This ability to assert sovereignty means many states are able to resist what has been considered unwelcome interference. Indeed, "[a] number of states even consider a neutral and independent approach as an infringement of their right to manage conflicts or disasters unfolding on their territory" (McGoldrick, 2011:974).

McGoldrick points out how developing-nation governments are "increasingly resisting diktats from the international community (and finding it domestically popular to do so)" (2011:972–973). McGoldrick makes a direct link to this and to the identity of humanitarian action.

In so far as international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are sometimes perceived as 'Western' institutions, they are often the targets of this changing perspective. Their humanitarian role is no longer routinely accepted and they are placed under significant political and security scrutiny. (2011:972–973)

ICRC confirms from its experiences that:

. . . we are seeing a marked resurgence in state-based assertions of sovereignty, with increasing numbers of host states actively blocking, restricting or controlling humanitarian response on their territory. Non-Western host states increasingly want to be seen to deal with their own political and humanitarian crises – partly in line with their own responsibilities, and partly because they are sceptical about the effectiveness and intentions of the international humanitarian community. (Daccord, 2013:online)

For the previous President of MSF-France:

With their actions now equated with military, judicial and political forms of interventionism, NGOs such as MSF would be encountering increasing hostility in developing countries. They would be seemingly faced with a reaffirmation of sovereignty on the part of post-colonial states benefiting from the diplomatic and economic support of emerging powers. (Allie, 2012:2)

The result of a growing assertion of sovereignty is that states seek to take up more space formerly occupied by humanitarian actors. In this way, Armstrong argues that "states increasingly determine the focus and boundaries of humanitarian action" (2013:14). Armstrong goes on to point out that "[m]any states have demonstrated their growing confidence that they will no longer passively accept what are often viewed as the Western-oriented values and institutions of the international community, including humanitarian actors, their principles, and their notion of a right to humanitarian access" (ibid.).

Kent sees three possible outcomes for this assertive sovereignty:

... there will be even less receptivity to arguments about rights of access, that alternative providers (i.e. non-traditional actors, including the private sector) might be preferred to 'humanitarians', and that the free-wheeling nature of autonomous humanitarian agencies such as international non-governmental organizations will be less and less tolerated. (2011:952)

A humanitarian frontline

It can be argued that humanitarian organisations are most obviously on the receiving end of this push-back because, as we have explored, they work on the outer edges of the empire's realm. As Donini points out: "[the] Northern/Western humanitarian enterprise . . . [is now] . . . central to the conceptualization and management of the relations between the citadels of the [N]orth and the borderlands of the vast Third World periphery" (2014a:44).

Donini (2014a) argues that humanitarian actors have crossed the threshold of power. In understanding the implications of crossing this threshold of power, it can be useful to make use of another term. The concept of a 'humanitarian frontline' has been defined by De Cordier to be an:

... operational context where various development and relief actors are perceived by populations and authorities as being instrumental in a political agenda of both governmental and non-governmental interest groups. (2009:667)

This concept demonstrates how the humanitarian frontline exists at the crossroads between social and cultural realities, social fault lines and conflicts, and international-development and relief actors.

De Cordier focuses more on the local and describes the humanitarian frontline as being a "competition or at least an occupation of competing humanitarian spaces between different categories of development and relief actors" (2009:667). However, this misses the big picture. The concept of a humanitarian frontline can better be used to illustrate how the Western notions of humanitarianism have become so co-opted by hegemonic power that the frontline has come to represent the very outer limits of the empire's reach. The edge of the empire's influence and reach is where we find the humanitarian frontline.

The question, therefore, is whether the humanitarian frontline is, instead of being defined by the outcomes of competitions within humanitarianism, the point at which the West's advancement of its ideals and values through development and humanitarian aid are rejected by states on the periphery and their societies.

Frustratingly, the limited literature on this topic fails to join some important dots. It is possible that we will see an alignment of two factors: on the one hand, a humanitarian community continuing its increasing incorporation into the liberal development approaches of the West, which have as their primary *modus operandi* working with the state in boosting that state's legitimacy; and, on the other hand, a rise in the assertion of sovereignty will result in either the full rejection of the 'free wheeling' independent actors or an acceptance of those who work to increase the capacity of the state and, therefore, are respectful of sovereignty.

What this examination has demonstrated is that as powers emerge they will, *inter alia*, seek quickly to regain control over the instruments of humanitarian and development aid, usually: through a rejection of the Western approach to aid delivery; based on the reassertion of the centrality of state power in defining new norms for humanitarian actors; and based on principles of equal partnership, solidarity and mutual exchange of best practices. In instances where aid is provided to institutions outside the government, preference is given to those organisations that work in full respect of state sovereignty, such as national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies or UN mechanisms.

The risk not addressed in the literature is that emerging states will react to the co-option of humanitarianism into Western power by seeking to control humanitarian aid themselves. If this occurs, the cycle of humanitarian independence being subordinated to political interests will continue, merely under a different power. However, as the literature has pointed out, power is also diffusing.

Diffusion of power in the humanitarian system

One of the results of changing global power, as identified in the literature, is the emergence of what has been referred to as 'new actors'. These new actors have taken two forms: first, actors that are aligned to emerging states and are operating globally (most often seen in the form of national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies operating abroad); and, secondly, informal groupings of actors that are not aligned to the state per se but fill a gap left by the majority of organisations focused on state-based aid provision. This, however, is a misidentification, as neither of these categories are particularly new (Davey, 2012):

Among the non-traditional actors are non-Western NGOs, operating both at home and abroad, foreign and domestic militaries, private enterprises, and members of diasporas. They are all engaging in actions once thought to be the near-exclusive domain of traditional humanitarian actors. (Armstrong, 2013:6)

Bernard also discusses this emergence of new actors:

Following the rise of Western humanitarian organizations during the 1990s, there has been a new wave of humanitarian actors, this time coming from emerging countries. Donors, organizations with an international mission – including Islamic-inspired organizations – and local movements of citizens and diasporas are increasingly present and visible in crisis response. (2011:895)

For Vaux (2006), in his discussion on national NGOs, assertive local organisations are likely to take issue with Western NGOs that have reached an accommodation with their governments at the expense of humanitarian principles. Vaux argues that this results in local organisations that "feel that they have a right to question Western agencies and, because those agencies are compromised, seek a more equal balance of power" (Vaux, 2006:19). Vaux refers to how the concept of solidarity was used in South America as:

... a reaction to the perceived illegitimacy of US political interests in the region during the Cold War. Now a parallel process can be seen in the Middle East and parts of Asia. Western NGOs today are under pressure to establish a solidarity relationship. But this goes against both the Wilsonian pressure to align with Western governments and the Sphere-based pressure to pursue standards set in the West. (2006:19)

The reaction to this discourse of 'new actors' has been a body of literature that claims that these actors are not new but rather newly noticed (Shaw-Hamilton, 2012; Davey, 2012). Davey (2012) points out how the focus on new actors demonstrates a historical blind-spot in the humanitarian sector.

For Shaw-Hamilton, the discourse on new actors was stimulated by the uprising in the Middle East and North Africa:

The multiple parallel humanitarian crises of 2011–12 in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have challenged the traditional humanitarian system because of constraints of access, adaptation and funding. At the same time, 'non-traditional' actors have had a great impact in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen by being close in space and time. They have filled a gap by acting earlier than the international community and having better links into the local community and to informal governance structures. The same is true in Somalia. (2012:online)

Muhr (2012) explores how the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America–Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) approached humanitarian aid in Haiti. He makes a number of interesting findings, including that: on the one hand, ALBA-TCP members defend the notion of sovereignty and have participated in various UN missions; and, on the other hand, the normative and political demands of such missions are still seen to be "set by the liberal imperialist project" (Muhr, 2012:154). ALBA-TCP thinks of the UN-mandated missions as

"neo-conservative humanitarian militarism" and the unilateral humanitarian responses of, for example, the US as forms of disaster-capitalism exploitation (Klein, 2007).

Muhr concludes that what ALBA-TCP stands for:

... requires abandoning the limited understanding of humanitarianism as supposedly apolitical disaster relief, as embodied in international law, and building on an 'enlarged conception of humanitarianism' that confronts and seeks to transform international and global power structures—that is, global capitalism—guided by the emancipatory Right to Development and the idea of a New International Economic Order, for which the ALBA-TCP stands, to transcend the victimizing notions of rescue and protection altogether. (2012:154)

However, these new forms of humanitarian aid have been met with suspicion:

Though many traditional actors recognise this growing diversity, their version of a more inclusive humanitarian sector appears to be predicated on the reassertion of their own Western, ostensibly 'universal' values, and fails to make way for alternative models. (Armstrong, 2013:6)

Kent points out how:

... they appear to find it difficult to move beyond their traditional systems and approaches to accommodate new paradigms. The challenge for many remains that of finding ways to have traditional systems and approaches fit into new contexts, instead of seeking new systems and approaches for accommodating changing contexts. (2011:948)

This literature suggests that as power diffuses humanitarian actors will increasingly be required to engage with actors that have either gone unnoticed up until now or that are emerging alongside a rising multi-polarity. However, if humanitarian aid is limited to the zones of Western influence, as suggested by the literature of De Cordier (2009), then the question is whether humanitarian actors will only be able to engage with 'new' actors that are aligned to Western interests. Additionally, the political articulation of aid among such actors may be significantly different to that of a humanitarian system that has come to advance liberal democracy. At what point will the reconceptualisation of humanitarian aid by diffused forms of power impact on how the traditional aid system operates?

What next?

In response to the announcement of the new EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs in September 2014, David Miliband and Jan Egeland – two ex-politicians turned leaders of the Norwegian Refugee Council and the International Rescue Committee, respectively – painted a picture of an 'age of crisis':

The UN has declared the highest level of humanitarian emergency, level 3, in four countries simultaneously. For the first time, since the aftermath of World War II, the number of refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people worldwide exceeded 50 million people. Climate change will cause increased displacement through more severe natural disasters. Emergency relief has in recent years become more effective and cost-efficient, even in the most extreme of circumstances. Mortality and disease have decreased and nutrition, sanitation and education have improved compared to most emergencies during the past two decades. This progress is now threatened. This age of crises place unprecedented demands on the international aid system. (Miliband & Egeland, 2014:online)

The two authors call on the new European Union (EU) Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs to give urgent attention to three challenges: the first, gaining access to all in need of assistance and protection, includes "increased focus from the EU and the UN on how and why civilians and relief workers from Aleppo to Mogadishu continue to be attacked" (ibid.); the second, needing future humanitarian interventions to be about economics as well as social services, is justified by the assertion that "[w]e cannot continue returning again and again to the same places with emergency aid" (ibid.); and, the third, reformation by the EU Commissioner of the way aid is delivered.

Miliband and Egeland assert that:

We are used to thinking about how political instability causes humanitarian tragedy. It still does. But in the modern interdependent world there is increasing evidence of humanitarian tragedy causing political instability. (Miliband & Egeland, 2014:online)

Considering the above literature review, it is difficult to view such statements as helpful in finding solutions to the macro-political challenges facing the delivery of aid. Two leaders of the biggest humanitarian organisations in the world have managed, in one small statement, to demonstrate why it is so important to unravel the assumptions present in any articulation of a humanitarian vision that departs from a minimal conception of saving lives and alleviating suffering. As it stands, Miliband and Egeland (2014) reinforce the securitisation of aid and further entrench the identification of humanitarian actors with Western political interests. In a tragically typical case of Westerners speaking about, but not to, the rest of the world, the opinion piece is addressed to a leader of a European institution that, in a context of changing global power dynamics, will have little leverage in addressing the access constraints pointed out by the authors.

Oxfam takes a slightly different approach in an earlier text. Cairns (2012) acknowledges that the future of humanitarian action does not lie in the North. However, he goes on to propose that humanitarian organisations should focus on capacity-building in:

[T]he diverse array of local, national, and regional authorities, and civil society and religious organizations. . . . The combination of an effective state and active civil society is too often absent in countries vulnerable to crises. Meeting the challenge to build both is essential for effective emergency response and for increasing communities' resilience to disasters, violence, and other shocks. (Cairns, 2012:2)

The Oxfam position has reasserted that building resilience is a humanitarian act and has placed capacity-building – including that of the state – at the centre of its humanitarian actions in a new world order. This entrenches the state-centric, liberal-democratic developmentalist model of Western multi-mandated organisations and has overlooked more fundamental questions about how to defend a space for truly independent humanitarian aid delivery in the context of a changing global power dynamic.

Joining the dots and unanswered questions

This doctoral research asks: What does the relationship between humanitarianism and Western power mean for humanitarian access and the effectiveness of humanitarian aid in conflict? This review of the literature has contributed the following conclusions to frame further research in answering this question:

By exploring in more detail the relationship between humanitarianism and Western power – it has been possible to identify how dominant political discourses have channelled humanitarian actions, largely facilitated by humanitarianism being linked to development efforts. However, the literature downplays or overlooks the implications of this history of political baggage for humanitarian access and effectiveness.

In terms of the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, the literature found that there continues to be a focus on bridging the gap between relief and development. Currently, these attempts are in the form of 'building resilience'. However, the notion of building resilience risks erasing the distinction between development – which is by definition a partisan act – and humanitarian aid – which is by definition interested in the impartial delivery of assistance based on need and not based on the longer-term objective of state-building. However, the literature stops short in identifying what the incorporation of humanitarian aid into state-building initiatives – under the umbrella of building resilience – could mean for the effectiveness of emergency response.

In terms of access, the discourse on humanitarian space is misplaced in both its origin and its critique. The terminology of a shrinking humanitarian space mistakenly assumes that there was a golden age where a humanitarian space was large and humanitarian actors operated unhindered. This has never been the case and humanitarian actors have always negotiated

their access and acceptance. On the other hand, the critique of the usefulness of the notion of humanitarian space focuses on the historical fact that a golden age never existed and, in so doing, undermines the very real present-day challenges facing humanitarian workers. More worryingly, however, the literature entirely overlooks the reality of changing global power dynamics and how this may impact on humanitarian access. If humanitarian aid has been so closely tied to Western power, both historically and in its current conceptualisation and implementation, to what extent is a humanitarian space in fact a Western space?

In exploring the literature on changing global power dynamics and their implications for humanitarian access, it can be concluded that the future could well bring a dynamic whereby states on the receiving end of assistance will either reject humanitarian actors or privilege the acceptance of those who work in full respect of state sovereignty. In a post-Western-hegemony world order, those organisations who most vehemently defend their independence, while maintaining a Western identity, may be the ones to face the most significant restrictions. As humanitarian aid is so tied to Western power, for states in the periphery to allow an entirely independent (read: uncontrolled) 'agent of Western imperialism' would pose an unacceptable risk in protecting and asserting their sovereignty, especially in a context where multi-polarity is expressed as counter-hegemonic resistance. If humanitarian aid is part of hegemony, then counter-hegemony may well include counter-humanitarianism.

At the same time, how emerging states are involving themselves in humanitarian aid is fundamentally influenced by a rejection of the Western model of aid delivery. Concepts of South–South solidarity, legitimacy through sharing of best practices and full respect for state sovereignty are pitted against interference, conditionality and aid as an instrument of influence of the powerful over the weak. However, the literature does not point out how humanitarian actors are navigating – or how they could better navigate – such a landscape. What the literature suggests is that there is a clash between a humanitarian community that increasingly resembles an agent of a politics of the status quo due to its relationship with Western power and a diffused form of power that defines itself based on an emancipatory politics in relation to Western hegemony.

These conclusions have helped to better formulate the core dilemmas and questions that the remainder of this thesis will explore in detail. In those contexts where humanitarian aid is able to operate, is its effectiveness undermined by its recruitment into the foreign-policy objectives of the West? Can humanitarian aid only operate within the West's influence or subject to the rules set by states on the receiving end of aid yet asserting their sovereignty?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

How is the changing political landscape and the contestation of Western hegemony affecting how humanitarian aid is delivered?

The following chapter will outline how this doctoral research has been designed to answer the gaps identified in this literature review.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Introduction

The core question of this research is whether the relationship between humanitarianism and Western power has implications for humanitarian access and the effectiveness of humanitarian aid in contemporary conflict. This chapter outlines the design of this doctoral research. In summary, this research uses a critical-theory paradigm and was conducted with a combination of grounded-theory-influenced methods and case-study research. For data collection, use was made of documentary sources and interview data. An iterative analysis of the data took place with the goal of theory building.

The purpose of this research is not to identify causal relationships, nor is it interested in making generalisations based on comparisons between the case studies that were chosen. Instead, this research has been designed to explore the implications of existing links between humanitarian aid and Western power shown in the separate case studies. From these case studies, it has been possible to develop an analysis that advances knowledge in relation to the theory explored in the literature review.

The findings presented and the conclusions drawn offer a contribution to a discussion with no settled interpretation or answer. This research is restricted to modest ambitions by the only vaguely defined and often contested subject of humanitarian aid in conflict. This makes for a complex research process (Ford et al., 2009). The full consequences of many of the events on which the case studies in this research are founded are still unfolding at a rapid pace, as is the academic discipline of 'humanitarian studies' itself (for example, see Good et al., 2014).

It was from this complex reality that a research paradigm was articulated and a research design was developed. The phases of this research are summarised in Figure 3.1 below and explored in more detail in this Chapter 3.

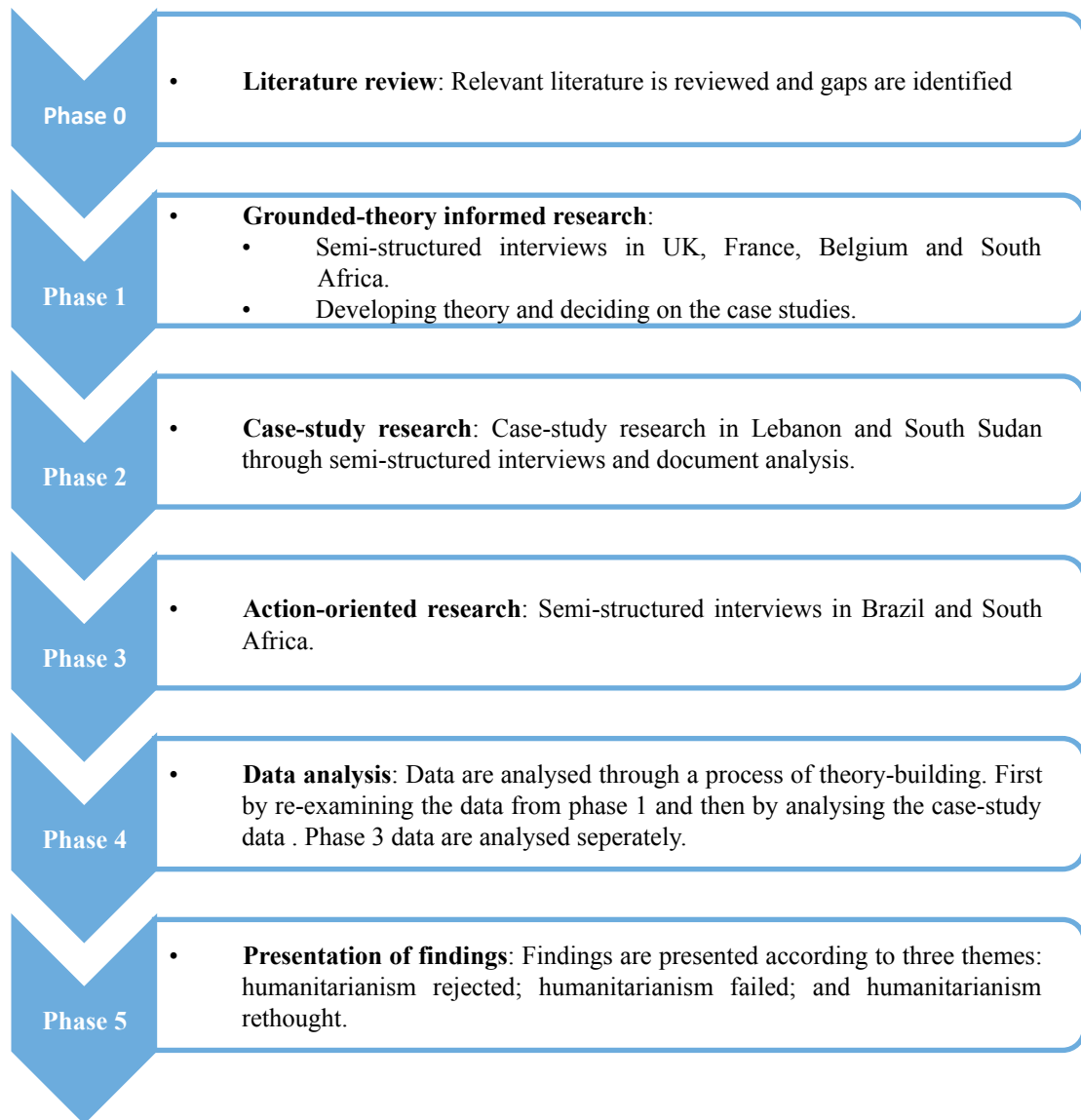


Figure 3.1: Phases of the data collection and strategies of enquiry

Approach to the literature review

The questions this research asks came out of both an analysis of the gaps in the literature and personal experience of working in many conflict zones. The literature was reviewed to develop "sharper and more insightful questions about the topic" (Yin, 2009:14). Relevant literature was sourced from journals, the University of Liverpool's online-library services and online databases, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine Donald Mason Library, the University of Liverpool Sydney Jones Library, the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies library, the University of Cape Town Library and the American University of Beirut Library.

A systematic review of the literature was not conducted because the issues that this thesis touches on are covered by too broad a range of writings. Instead, the literature review was

thematically focused. The most relevant articles were identified through a review of recent humanitarian-studies conferences and the reading material for a variety of humanitarian-studies postgraduate courses, and references were followed from key texts. Literature was chosen by whether it contributed to discussion on the themes considered to be of direct relevance to the research questions: hegemonic power and its contestation; humanitarian space; contemporary humanitarianism as a tool of Western power and in the rhetoric of intervention; and, finally, humanitarianism and changing power.

The literature review played a key role in the conceptualisation of this research. The preceding literature review aimed to set the scene by incorporating an acknowledgment of the historical origins of humanitarianism. This allowed the research methodology to focus on generating findings rooted in present realities while avoiding a historical vacuum in understanding the dynamics at play. In this way, I hope to have achieved both a "historical rootedness and an emancipatory defiance of the weight of that history" (Dabashi, 2012:2).

Research paradigm

The approach taken to this research can be partly described as drawing on the Frankfurt-school traditions of critical theory. Horkheimer once commented on Marxism that it is not about the "uncovering of immutable truths, but the fostering of social change" (Horkheimer quoted in Jay, 1973:46). I have drawn on key aspects of critical theory in designing this research project – including the combination of practical and normative thinking, which is used to "explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify actors to change it, and provide clear norms for criticism and practical goals for the future." (Bohman, 1996:190). Critical theory, as it was originally conceived:

. . . refused to fetishize knowledge as something apart from and superior to action. In addition, it recognized that disinterested scientific research was impossible in a society in which [persons] were themselves not yet autonomous; the researcher, Horkheimer argued, was always part of the social object that [they were] attempting to study. (Jay, 1973:81)

There are two components to the above approach. The first is the purpose with which research is conducted; the second is the role of the researcher as an active participant in the environment that is being studied. Just as it has been acknowledged in the literature review that humanitarianism is influenced by both its geographic positioning and historical moment, so too do I acknowledge these influences on me as a researcher. Acknowledging these influences has been an essential component in identifying the ways my findings could have been unduly influenced or biased and has allowed me to take steps for reducing that risk, which are outlined in the research process detailed below.

In terms of purpose, this research paradigm – like that of Horkheimer – draws on an action-orientated approach in the sense that it is "intended to influence or change some aspect of whatever is the focus of the research. In this sense it is concerned with the emancipatory purpose of research" (Robson, 2002:215).

Although this research is not structured with a thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis (and in that sense takes less of a Hegelian and more of a grounded-theory approach), Hegelian dialectics were applied in the sense that contradictions in the arguments made, both throughout the research findings and in the subsequent analysis, were purposefully sought out and are made explicit (M. Fox, 2005). At the core of this research question is the tension (or Hegelian dialectic) between humanitarianism as a counter-balance to power (therefore requiring it to exercise its own power) and humanitarianism as a component of state power (therefore requiring it to be a tool in the exercise of power).

Research methodology

This research sought to answer the following question: In conflict situations, how does the close relationship between Western power and humanitarian aid affect emergency-response capacity and access for aid organisations?

Short-term research objectives were developed with the ultimate aim of addressing the above question. The final research framework was shaped through an initial grounded-theory-influenced phase of research, which informed an alteration of the research objectives and the choosing of a set of case studies.

This research, however, was never intended as a full grounded-theory study. Rather, it was decided to draw on elements of grounded theory for the first phase and then to adopt a mix of other methods suited to the challenging reality of conducting research in conflict settings (Ford et al., 2009).

Strategies of enquiry

Phase 1: Grounded-theory-informed research

The research was begun by drawing on grounded theory as a way to use "the interplay between analysis and data collection to produce theory" (Gray, 2009:168). Under a grounded-theory approach, "theories are not applied to the subject being studied but emerge or are discovered from the empirical data themselves" (Gray, 2009:171). It is because of its accommodation with the complexity of reality that this approach seemed appropriate.

"Grounded theory seeks to build complexity by including context" (ibid.). In its ambitions, grounded theory begins with a defined purpose, but allows for it to become radically altered through the research process.

Based on an initial review of the literature, the following set of research objectives were set:

Initial objective	Initial question
<i>Initial objective 1:</i> To examine the possible decline of Western power through a case study of the US/NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan.	Do the cases of Afghanistan and Pakistan demonstrate a loss of Western hegemony?
<i>Initial objective 2:</i> To explore how Western hegemonic powers have made use of humanitarian action as a tool for their political objectives – most recently in the global War on Terror – and the effect that this could have had on the recipients of aid.	How has humanitarian action been co-opted by the West in the War on Terror and how has this co-option affected those providing and receiving humanitarian aid?
<i>Initial objective 3:</i> To explore whether global power is shifting away from Western hegemonic powers to rising regional powers and civic activists through a case study of Syria.	What are the alternative forms of power – both regional and civic – in contemporary conflicts that are relevant for humanitarian action?

Table 3.1: Initial research objectives

Due to the limitations in the literature on this topic, an exploratory approach was initially adopted, which involved refining the above objectives in interviews with key, expert respondents. The intent was for the findings from this phase to form the basis for selecting case studies. A series of semi-structured interviews were carried out, covering 17 participants in London, Brussels, Paris and Johannesburg. The tools used for the collection of data are explored in more detail in '*Data collection tools*' below.

In analysing the initial interviews, key themes and theories emerged that shaped the design of the case studies. These three themes were: the implications of the status of the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power for humanitarian access; the implications of incorporation of humanitarian aid into state-building and/or stabilisation projects for emergency-response capacity; and how humanitarianism is being rethought.

A note is necessary, however, on the first initial objective. Following the initial batch of interviews, the focus of the first question on Afghanistan and Pakistan was dropped, as to measure a loss of hegemony required investigation beyond what was feasible and it was decided that determining a loss of hegemony would have been a contribution to the wrong debate. The theme that finally emerged as an important focus for the research was related to the implications of the status of humanitarian actors' relationship with Western power, regardless of whether that power was objectively in decline.

Given the preceding, the objective evolved into one looking specifically at a component of hegemony that strongly affects aid practice: how humanitarian aid is incorporated into state-building and the implications of its incorporation for emergency-response capacity.

The second component that emerged in the interviews was a theme related to the identity of humanitarian action, and more specifically whether the Western identity of aid actors could have implications for their access to conflict.

The third component was linked to the role of emerging or non-traditional aid actors; but instead of focusing this specifically on Syria, it was decided to look rather at the dynamic of civil society and how it was conceptualising aid in emerging states.

The above process resulted in a revisiting of the objectives of the research to better reflect the themes that were developed out of the first research phase.

Themes and objectives
Theme 1: Humanitarian capacity <i>Objective 1:</i> To examine how the incorporation of humanitarian aid into a state-building agenda could affect emergency-response capacity.
Theme 2: Humanitarian access <i>Objective 2:</i> To determine whether the identity of humanitarian aid as being linked to Western hegemonic power affects access to conflict.
Theme 3: Rethinking humanitarianism <i>Objective 3:</i> To examine whether the concept of 'humanitarian aid' is being reconceptualised among civil-society actors in emerging states

Table 3.2: Research themes and objectives

Based on these objectives, two case studies were designed: the first was developed with the intention of demonstrating whether the incorporation of humanitarian aid into a state-

building agenda reduced the capacity of humanitarian actors for emergency response; and the second was developed with the intention of demonstrating whether access to a conflict was constrained due to the status of the relationship between humanitarian action and Western power.

Phase 2: Case-study approach

Why choose the case-study approach?

A case-study approach can be thought of as a detailed and intensive analysis performed in the study of a specific case (Stake, 1995). The purpose of case studies is not necessarily to make generalisations. Rather, it can be to identify examples that shed light on the research question(s) being explored. It is from the challenges presented by these examples that a further critique of the theory identified in the literature review might be developed.

Yin describes the case-study approach as being appropriate when "(a) 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on [a] contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context" (2009:2). Indeed, the purpose of this research was to "understand a real-life phenomenon in depth" (Yin, 2009:18). Such an understanding must, by necessity, "[encompass] important contextual conditions" (ibid.).

Therefore, an instrumental case-study approach was chosen for this research as it was decided that some cases would better illustrate the objectives set than others (McNabb, 2004:58). For an instrumental approach, a case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. Stake (1998) argues that the case itself is of secondary importance, but it is expected to advance understanding of a number of (theoretical) interests.

Two case studies were chosen to correspond to the first two objectives. The data collection for the third objective did not focus on a single case study or unit of analysis but rather, through semi-structured interviews and document analysis, it was possible to explore the emerging elements of the potential new era of humanitarianism from an action-oriented perspective (this phase is outlined in more detail below). It was decided not to use a case study for the final objective to allow for a broader dataset across contexts.

The main strength of case-study design is that it allows an exploration of phenomena within context and over time. To examine the range of contexts, this thesis expands from a focus on a single case study to a series of cases that are used to build a set of findings. It was decided that each case study chosen would not look at exactly the same problem but rather at thematic elements of the problem. The case studies are, therefore, not intended to be compared. In this sense, the research comprises a series of single holistic case studies. This

approach is in contrast to the multiple-embedded case-study approach, which relies on having multiple case studies from which direct comparisons can be drawn (Gray, 2009:258).

One of the concerns in choosing a case-study approach is that the findings under such approaches are often criticised as not being generalisable. Yin points out, however, that the findings of a case study are "generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes" (2009:15). What this means in practice is that "analytic generalization[s]" (ibid.) may be made from this research.

Instrumental case studies focus on issues. Stake points out that "issues are not simple and clean, but are intricately wired to political, social, historical and especially personal contexts" (1995:17). As part of constructing the case studies, identification of "issue statements" was used (ibid.).

Issues draw us toward observing, even teasing out, the problems of the case, the conflictual outpourings, the complex backgrounds of human concern. Issues help us expand upon the moment, help us see the instance in a more historical light, help us recognise the pervasive problems in human interaction. (Stake, 1995:17)

These issue questions were formulated as a way to help better understand the complex case within the frame of the overall research aim and objectives (see Table 3.3 below for a list of issue questions).

At the same time, what Yin refers to as "study propositions" were used (2009:28). The proposition statement, "besides reflecting an important theoretical issue, also begins to tell you where to look for relevant evidence" (ibid.). The series of study propositions attached to each of the case studies developed were the theoretical starting points for this phase of the research (see Table 3.3 below for a list of proposition statements).

A key issue raised by Yin (2009) in the development of case-study research design is the identification of a 'unit of analysis'. For the purpose of this research, the main "unit of analysis" is an act of emergency response.

Good practice in case -study development, as identified by Yin (2009), is to identify from the start the data that were to be collected to address the issue question and proposition. The data sources identified when starting these case studies is presented in Table 3.3 below.

Objective	Objective 1: To examine how the incorporation of humanitarian aid into a state-building agenda could affect emergency-response capacity	Objective 2: To determine whether the identity of humanitarian aid as being linked to Western hegemonic power affects access to conflict.
Case study chosen/unit of analysis	The overall response to emergencies in South Sudan in the period 2006–2014.	The MSF emergency response to the Syria crisis in the period 2012–2013.
Issue question	Did the link between humanitarian aid and the broader objectives of liberal democracy (in this case state-building) affect the effectiveness of emergency response in South Sudan?	Did the link between humanitarian aid and Western power affect access to Damascus and opposition-controlled territories?
Proposition	The incorporation of humanitarian aid into state-building objectives can have a negative consequence on the capacity of humanitarian organisations to conduct effective emergency response.	The Western identity of humanitarian aid can have a direct effect on humanitarian access.
Data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Documents from MSF and other organisations outlining the difficulties in performing emergency responses (including: assessment reports and evaluations). ~ Data from semi-structured interviews with the UN, NGOs and donors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Document collection from MSF (including: meeting minutes; assessment reports; and email exchanges). ~ Semi-structured interview data with people involved in the Syria emergency response (both inside and outside of MSF).

Table 3.3: Case studies chosen and their corresponding issue questions, study propositions and data sources

Although these case studies investigate the correlation between two variables, it is not the intention of this research to prove a causal connection between them, for the simple reason that, in such complex environments, there are too many confounding variables to possibly establish a causal link with great confidence. For this reason, the aim of this research is to

make contextual links between variables and to explore the possible implications of such links in the context of emergency humanitarian response.

Rationale for the choice of case studies

First, a case study linked to the effectiveness of humanitarian aid in conflict needed to be chosen. At the time of choosing, two factors influenced my decision. In February 2014, MSF released a report on Afghanistan entitled "Between Rhetoric and Reality" that pointed out that, despite ongoing investment in state-building and health-system strengthening, the emergency needs of Afghans were being overlooked in the rush to withdraw troops from the country (MSF, 2014).

Some weeks later, MSF released another report entitled "Where is everyone?" in which MSF denounced the gaps in emergency response from the humanitarian system based on case studies of South Sudan, DRC and Jordan (Tiller & Healy, 2014). What both reports alluded to, but did not mention directly, was a link between the failures of the aid system and the priorities of (primarily multi-mandated) aid actors. In South Sudan, a new conflict had begun in December 2013 and, having already worked in South Sudan in 2009, I was moved to better understand how the humanitarian community had shifted gear from what had been largely a development-focused response to an emergency and how the way aid had been thought of as being about state-building affected that shift. This intimate knowledge of and personal connection with South Sudan made the region a natural choice for the first case study.

Two options for the second case study were Syria and Libya. Due to my involvement with MSF's response to the growing emergency medical needs caused by the conflicts in these two countries, I knew that access to both Ghadaffi-controlled Libya and Assad-controlled Syria had been a problem for the organisation. As such, it seemed like both situations offered a promising case through which to explore the second objective. Data collection by interview was deemed more feasible from Lebanon (where many people linked to the war in Syria are based) than from Libya, mainly for security and logistical reasons. Therefore, the case study looks at MSF's emergency response in Syria between 2012 and 2013.

These choices also offered a diversity of contexts, covering the Middle East and Africa. Despite unusual access to MSF documents, it was decided not to focus on MSF in the case of South Sudan for two reasons: first, MSF is an organisation that actively rejects being part of longer-term development programmes, making any attempt to base this case study on MSF activities misplaced; and, secondly, the objective set required a broader perspective.

Whereas the Syrian case study lent itself to a detailed exploration of the experiences of a single organisation, the South Sudan case study required a broad scope (in terms of actors involved) and coverage of a lengthier period. In the Syrian case, MSF offered a useful focus by performing the role of a litmus test for the challenges of access for an organisation considered to be Dunantist. It was also useful to focus on MSF as the organisation had chosen to work unofficially in the north of the country, while at the same time attempting to negotiate access to Damascus. In the case of South Sudan, MSF was not a useful study subject as it had extracted itself from the state-building project being undertaken. It was, therefore, decided to take a broader perspective in the case of South Sudan and to explore general emergency response, rather than the emergency response of a specific organisation.

Phase 3: Action-oriented research

Following these two case studies, it was decided to conduct a final batch of general interviews in Brazil and South Africa as a way to better understand – drawing on a grounded-theory and an action-oriented approach – how humanitarian aid was being thought and rethought about in emerging states, in particular among civil-society actors.

The data collected in this phase complemented the data collected in South Africa in the first phase of collection. During the first phase of the research, perspectives had been sought from South African civil-society actors and academics to offer a contrast to the views that had been expressed in the interviews in Europe. These data supported the final phase of the research as they touched on similar issues of how emerging forms of power interact with a humanitarian system perceived to be, and actually, linked to Western power and how emerging power is thinking about and rethinking humanitarian aid. The decision to return to South Africa in the final phase of research was based on a need to gain data saturation for the final objective.

This final part of data collection was not performed through a case study. There was no single unit of analysis (emergency response in the two cases). However, an issue question and a proposition were still developed to frame data collection, respectively: whether civil society is thinking about and rethinking humanitarian aid in Brazil and South Africa; and that the thinking about and rethinking of humanitarian aid in emerging states has distinct political underpinnings requiring an evolution in the approach of humanitarian actors to humanitarian aid.

An action-oriented approach was taken to this third research phase. "Action research is a type of applied social research that aims to improve social situations . . . involving a process of collaboration between researchers and participants" (Newton, 2006:3). Therefore, this

phase of the research used the understanding of the problems developed in the interviews and sought to identify new ways of approaching humanitarian aid in similar BRICS-bloc states. There was "a deliberate attempt to involve participants as a way of promoting change and as a device to reduce the social distance between researchers and subjects" (Newton, 2006:3). This was achieved by seeking out the participants; opinions and input from the perspective of wanting to improve the practice of humanitarian aid.

This approach was chosen precisely because of the potential for action research to "go 'beyond an analysis of the status quo to directly consider questions of 'what might be' and 'what can be'" (Waterman, Dickson & de Koning , 2001:57).

However, this phase of the research revealed that, because of the forward-looking nature of the approach combined with the already very uncertain unfolding of different approaches to humanitarian aid in Brazil and South Africa, it was difficult to obtain the same depth of analysis possible in the previous stages of research. To offset this lack, some documentary analysis was included with this phase and this part of the research revised to offer only a snapshot of the way forward and not a comprehensive action-oriented solution. As this research question is on the implications of the status of the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power, this was regarded as an acceptable narrowing of scope. As such, investigating how aid is being thought about and rethought is an important element of the research but the focus remains on the two case studies relating to the issues of access and the effectiveness of aid.

As a result of these iterative phases, what has emerged in each set of findings is both a core case study and general data that address the broad theme of each of the objectives. Each of the findings chapters, therefore, start with the analysis of the non-case-study-specific data obtained through the first batch of interviews before going into more detail on the specific case study. This is done to highlight any tension identified in the first phase of research and then offer additional insights to the identified dialectic by exploring a case study in depth.

Research design

The final research framework took the following form:

Research aim:
To determine whether the link between humanitarian aid and Western power could affect the access and effectiveness of humanitarian aid in conflict.
Core research questions:

- ~ How does the incorporation of humanitarian aid into a state-building agenda affect emergency-response capacity in conflict?
- ~ How does the identity of humanitarian aid affect access for humanitarian organisations in conflict and how is this addressed?
- ~ Is humanitarian aid being reconceptualised in emerging-state contexts?

Hegelian dialectic:

Humanitarianism is a counter-balance to power (therefore requiring it to exercise its own power).

Humanitarianism is a component of hegemonic power (therefore requiring it to be a compliant tool in the exercise of power).

Themes and objectives:

Theme 1: Humanitarian capacity

Objective 1: To examine how the incorporation of humanitarian aid within the state-building agenda affects emergency-response capacity

Case study for objective 1: The overall response to emergencies in South Sudan in the period 2006–2014.

Theme 2: Humanitarian access

Objective 2: To determine whether the identity of humanitarian aid as being linked to Western hegemonic power affects access to conflict.

Case study for objective 2: The MSF emergency response to the Syria crisis in the period 2012–2013.

Theme 3: Rethinking humanitarianism

Objective 3: To examine the extent to which humanitarian aid is being reconceptualised among civil–society actors in South Africa and Brazil.

Table 3.4: Final research framework

Host organisation

This research was made possible through my links with MSF. The majority of the research – except for the initial batch of interviews carried out in London, Belgium, France and South Africa – was facilitated by my affiliation with MSF. At the same time, I have a personal

interest in working to improve MSF. This relationship resulted in both opportunities and tensions.

As Buckle and Dwyer point out, "[b]eing an insider might raise issues of undue influence of the researcher's perspective, but being an outsider does not create immunity to the influence of personal perspective" (2009:59). What is clear from my experience was the need to constantly evaluate the risks and the benefit of the affiliation and take conscious steps to enhance the benefits and reduce the risks. As Buckle and Dwyer go on:

. . . although there might be caveats to being a member of the group studied, for many access to the group would not be possible if the researcher was not a member of that group. The positive and negative elements of each must therefore be carefully assessed. (ibid.)

The benefits of being an insider were obvious. My affiliation with MSF enabled me to gain access to documents that I would not have had such easy access to otherwise. In addition, my travel to a diversity of research locations was made possible by this affiliation. That I had worked for MSF prior to this research and was able to return to many of the same locations I had worked at allowed me to build on relationships and to gain access to the best possible research participants for the semi-structured interviews. My security was also a factor taken into consideration where this research was conducted – being affiliated with an organisation like MSF was essential in my own security management.

There is a risk of bias associated with my affiliation with MSF. Broadly, my links with MSF put me in a position of wanting to help improve the work of MSF. At the same time, being from South Africa and having started my MSF career with MSF South Africa posed the additional risk of biasing the advancement of that segment of MSF that I feel closest to.

In fact, when I started this research, I could more clearly pinpoint my biases: I had hoped that I could demonstrate through my research that emerging states offered a fresh and new kind of approach to humanitarian aid. However, as will be demonstrated in the findings, although there is some rethinking of humanitarian aid within emerging states, the end result is not what I hoped it would be. Throughout this research, I was wary enough of my biases to the point that my own perspective was disproved. Being aware of this from the start was essential to ensuring that I constantly reflected on how my own personal beliefs and desires were influencing my research outcomes. The use of a researcher diary was helpful in staying conscious of these tensions.

At the same time, during this research process, I contributed to a blog on the MSF website⁶ and engaged in many internal MSF debates where I was able to present elements of my findings in an informal way and be challenged on them. The blog was publically available and practitioners and academics outside of MSF engaged with it in the comments or bilaterally. This acted as a critical mirror where I was able to see how my work was being received and how my findings could have been influenced by my surroundings.

The challenges posed through my relationship with MSF demonstrated a tension that exists in much of qualitative research. "Our position as qualitative researchers is from the standpoint of being 'with' our participants. The 'with' is in 'relation' to our participants and can suggest a tensioned space" (Buckle & Dwyer, 2009:60). In addition to this awareness of the insider–outsider tension, an empathic neutrality was employed, acknowledging that an understanding of the environment included "personal experience and empathic insight as part of the relevant data, while taking a neutral non-judgmental stance towards whatever content may emerge" (Patton, 2002:51).

To be epistemologically reflexive, I investigated my assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge (Gray, 2009). To be personally reflexive, I investigated my attitudes, values and beliefs and how they could influence the research design and implementation at each stage. This was a "continuous, intentional and systematic self- introspection" (Dupuis, quoted in Gray, 2009:499).

Qualitative investigations are inherently subject to bias. It is my hope, however, that the precautions and processes I undertook have allowed me to take a sufficiently objective perspective for my work to be of practical value. In summary, being aware of the opportunities and constraints that my double hat entailed was essential to maximising the advantages and mitigating the risks of my affiliation with MSF.

Data-collection tools

Multiple research methods were chosen to ensure a depth of data to meet the objectives in the research design. However, these choices had to be informed by the context in which the research took place. Druckman notes that the "broad conceptual range [of conflict studies] requires comparable methodological breadth, where no particular methodology has a corner on this market" (2005,13). However, these choices had to be informed by the context in which the research took place. "By examining information collected through different methods, the researcher can corroborate findings across datasets and thus reduce the impact

⁶ See: <http://www.msf.org.uk/opinion-and-debate>

of potential biases that can exist in a single study" (Bowen, 2009:28). A mix of documentary-source and semi-structured-interview data collection was adopted.

Documentary sources

Documentary analysis took place in phases 1–3 of this research (see Figure 3.1). Documentary analysis is:

... a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. (Bowen, 2009:27)

The process of analysing the documents is outlined in the data-analysis section of this Chapter 3.

Two sources of documentary data were used in this research: institutional documents and media clippings.

Institutional documents

MSF Operational Centre Brussels made primary data available for this research. Non-technical data sourced from meeting minutes, internal reports and other internal records that I had access to form the data for the case studies.

The internal documents were chosen based on the following criteria:

- ~ Their direct relevance to the case study being explored.
- ~ Their overall relevance to understanding a component of the research question being asked.
- ~ The possibility of identifying the dates that the documents were written.

The relevance of documents was also evaluated against other sources. "Because documents are context-specific, they should be evaluated against other sources of information" (Bowen, 2009:33). In this case, these other sources included the interview data.

To gather the data, key people in MSF were emailed with requests for documents relevant to the themes that I had developed and the objectives that I had set.

Limitations and questions of possible bias

As I had worked with MSF for a number of years, a small number of the documents reviewed included material that I had either written as a practitioner or, such as meeting minutes, recounted events in which I had been directly involved. This was unavoidable; some of the topics I was researching are very specific and very few people in the organisation had or have worked on them. This was less of an issue for meeting minutes, as the parts of the minutes I was most interested in were what others had said.

However, there was a risk of my analysis of these minutes being biased by my memories of involvement. To overcome this risk and turn my knowledge of the subject under discussion into a benefit, in presenting the findings, I make use of direct (anonymised) quotes from meetings to ensure a direct correlation with the data rather than interpreting the data into a different form. Further, I incorporated a feedback element into the parts of the analysis that made use of these minutes by sharing the findings with others who were either present at the meetings or were familiar with the content of the discussions. The 'reliability check' that they provide strengthens the inter-subjective analysis of the data.

Regarding the field-assessment reports and analysis documents that I had contributed to as a practitioner, a different approach was taken. (Again, it must be noted that this pertains only to a small number of cases.) As none of the documents in question was written or created for the purpose of this research but in my capacity as an employee of MSF, they were included in the data that were analysed, but with a number of mitigating measures adopted.

In these cases, I reflected on my role in the production of the data as a practitioner. This self-reflection enabled me to understand the perspective from which the document in question was produced and be aware of how the subsequent presentation of information might introduce bias. In addition, it was decided that none of the data that I had a role in writing (such as field assessments documents or emails) were to be used in establishing new themes during data analysis to avoid giving this material inflated importance – and were included only if they correlated with findings gathered in the interviews.

Media clippings and social-media sites

In addition to the above collection of data from primary-source institutional documents, another key source of data was press clippings, YouTube videos and social-media sites. These were most relevant in the Syrian case study, where it was necessary to paint a detailed picture of the conduct of hostilities before exploring how access negotiations took place. As events were unfolding while the research was taking place, the best information on the

conduct of hostilities was sourced from a wide range of print-, TV- and web-based sources, as well as first-hand YouTube recordings.

The difficulty in using such material is knowing the relevance of the material. However, having worked extensively in Syria, I am familiar with the names of places and have encountered many journalists in my work and, based on my experience of the region, I was able to identify the sources presenting a particularly clear political bias. Additionally, only information that could be cross-checked and therefore triangulated with other sources was included for this thesis. (See "*Quality control*" below for a more detailed explanation of the triangulation process.)

Semi-structured interviews

The interview is the main road to multiple realities.⁷

Semi-structured interviews were used at all phases of this research process. Semi-structured interviews were held with key representatives of international organisations, academics, humanitarian practitioners, civil-society actors and refugees from Syria in Lebanon (for a full list of research participants, see Table 3.5-3.7 below).

The first batch of interviews was conducted in the second half of 2012 in London, France, Belgium and South Africa, a second in 2014 in Lebanon and South Sudan and a third in Brazil and South Africa in 2014, these last to complement the interviews that had been done in South Africa in 2012 (for dates for all interviews, see Table 3.5-3.7 below).

The longitudinal nature of the research design (characterised by the collection of data over a period) allowed for the first batch of interviews to be analysed – and key themes to be identified – prior to the second round of interviews, which aided in the achievement of data saturation by ensuring that relevant discoveries were pursued.

Due to the complementarity between the documentary research and interviews, the participants can be defined as a stratified opportunity sample, as they were chosen on the basis of their knowledge and expertise, and the expected likelihood of them being able to provide in-depth and detailed data:

Opportunity sampling uses the knowledge and attributes of the researcher to identify a sample, for example, using a researcher's local knowledge of an area on which to base a study or using a researcher's past experiences to contact participants or gatekeepers. (Bradey, 2006:206)

⁷ Stake, 1995:64

My existing experience of working in South Sudan and Lebanon, as well as being from South Africa, allowed me to better identify candidates in these countries. Due to my previous work for MSF and networks developed through that work, I was able to easily access other research participants, including MSF-headquarters-based practitioners and researchers in Belgium, France and the UK. Candidates were included based on their knowledge and/or proximity to the issue being studied.

The objective of the interviews was not to draw conclusions about an entire target population, nor all aspects of the case study under discussion. Rather, the interview data were gathered to identify narratives and to shed light on specific components of the problem being explored. It was, therefore, initially thought that, for the objectives stated, a minimum sample size of 30 interviews would be sufficient. However, due to the diversity of the topics and locations, the final total number of interviews reached 73.

	Category	Date	Reference code
Phase 1			
1	Academic	19/07/2012	Senior South African academic 1, 2012
2	International organisation	04/07/2012	Senior IO worker 1, 2012
3	NGO	20/06/2012	Senior NGO worker 1, 2012
4	MSF	14/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 1, 2012
5	International organisation	21/06/2012	Senior international organisation representative 2, 2012
6	Academic	18/06/2012	Senior academic 2, 2012
7	NGO	26/06/2012	Senior NGO worker 2, 2012
8	MSF	08/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 2, 2012
9	MSF	13/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 3, 2012
10	Analyst	04/07/2012	Senior South African analyst 1, 2012
11	Donor	08/06/2012	Senior donor representative 1, 2012
12	Academic	04/07/2012	Senior academic 1, 2012
13	MSF	14/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 4, 2012
14	MSF	18/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 5, 2012
15	Analyst	21/06/2012	Senior humanitarian analyst 1, 2012
16	Academic	19/06/2012	Senior academic 3, 2012
17	Academic	04/07/2012	Senior academic 4, 2012

	Category	Date	Reference code
18	MSF	19/07/2012	MSF HQ staff 6, 2012

Table 3.5: Phase 1 research participants

	Category	Date	Reference code
Phase 2			
<i>Lebanon</i>			
19	Civil Society	21/02/2014	Relief activist 1, 2014
20	MSF	24/02/2014	MSF field staff 1, 2014
21	Civil Society	26/02/2014	Relief activist 2, 2014
22	MSF	27/02/2014	MSF field staff 2, 2014
23	Civil Society	11/03/2014	Relief activist 3, 2014
24	MSF	13/03/2014	MSF field staff 3, 2014
25	MSF	15/03/2014	MSF field staff 4, 2014
26	UN	02/04/2014	UN official 1, 2014
27	MSF	03/04/2014	MSF HQ staff 1, 2014
28	MSF	02/14/2014	MSF HQ staff 2, 2014
29	MSF	27/06/2014	MSF HQ staff 3, 2014
30	International organisation	27/06/2014	International organisation representative, 2014
31	MSF	20/03/2014	MSF field staff 5, 2014
32	MSF	09/07/2014	MSF field staff 6, 2014
33	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 1, 2013
34	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 2, 2013
35	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 3, 2013
36	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 4, 2013
37	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 5, 2013
38	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 6, 2013
<i>South Sudan</i>			
39	MSF	24/07/2014	MSF South Sudan field staff 1, 2014
40	Analyst	24/07/2014	Senior analyst 1, 2014

	Category	Date	Reference code
41	MSF	24/07/2014	MSF South Sudan field staff 2, 2014
42	UN	25/07/2014	UN field official 1, 2014
43	UN	25/07/2014	UN Field official 2, 2014
44	MSF	25/07/2014	MSF South Sudan field staff 3, 2014
45	Analyst	25/07/2014	Senior analyst 2, 2014
46	UN	26/07/2014	Senior UN official 1, 2014
47	Donor	28/07/2014	Major donor representative 1, 2014
48	Donor	28/07/2014	Major donor representative 2, 2014
49	Donor	28/07/2014	Major donor representative 3, 2014
50	Donor	28/07/2014	Major donor representative 4, 2014
51	MSF	30/07/2014	MSF South Sudan field staff 4, 2014
52	NGO	30/07/2014	Senior NGO worker 1, 2014
53	NGO	31/07/2014	Senior NGO worker 2, 2014
54	Diplomat	31/07/2014	Senior diplomat 1, 2014
55	UN	31/07/2014	Senior UN official 2, 2014
56	NGO	31/07/2014	Senior NGO worker 3, 2014
57	MSF	18/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 4, 2014

Table 3.6: Phase 2 research participants

	Category	Date	Reference code
Phase 3			
58	Academic	05/08/2014	Senior Brazilian academic, 2014
59	MSF	05/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 5, 2014
60	MSF	05/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 6, 2014
61	MSF	05/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 7, 2014
62	Civil Society	06/08/2014	Brazilian civil society representative 1, 2014
63	Civil Society	06/08/2014	Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014
64	Civil Society	06/08/2014	Brazilian civil-society representative 3, 2014

65	Analyst	10/08/2014	Senior South African analyst 2, 2014
66	MSF	10/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 8, 2014
67	Civil Society	12/08/2014	South Africa civil-society representative 1, 2014
68	MSF	12/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 10, 2014
69	MSF	12/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 11, 2014
70	MSF	13/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 9, 2014
71	Civil Society	13/08/2014	South African civil-society representative 2, 2014
72	MSF	13/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 16, 2014
73	MSF	13/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 17, 2014

Table 3.7: Phase 3 research participants

Category	Number of participants per category
Academic	6
Analyst	5
Civil Society	8
Diplomat	1
Donor	5
International organisation	3
MSF	28
NGO	5
Refugee	6
UN	5

Table 3.8: Number of participants by type

In a limited number of cases, interviews were conducted over Skype with participants in Turkey and Belgium.

The semi-structured interviews were made up of open-ended questions (adapted for each interview) attentive to the interviewees' expertise. "An open ended interview . . . permits the respondent to describe what is meaningful and salient without being pigeonholed into standardized categories" (Patton, 2002:56). The semi-structured nature of the interviews

allowed for additional elements or new topics that may have emerged in previous interviews to be explored in subsequent interviews.

In Douglas' work on creative interviewing, he amusingly advises researchers not to ". . . use steamrollers to catch butterflies" (1985:23). Indeed, this is relevant advice when one is asking questions of participants that call into question their effectiveness or the depth of their understanding on a topic of great importance to them. "Creative interviewing" was found to be a useful way to optimise "cooperative, mutual disclosure and a creative search for mutual understanding" (Douglas, 1985:25). Creative interviewing requires focus on a "core sample who will be the most co-operative of all those who have the experience we are studying" (ibid.). Interviews, therefore did not consist of a "500 question inquisition" (Douglas, 1985:68) but rather a discussion in which the expertise and experiences of the research participant were shared in an environment of respect and mutual dialogue.

The advantage of this approach is that I was able to achieve great openness in the research process, while the downside was that, in some cases, I would have to share my experiences in the dialogue, which may have influenced the research participants. However, this technique was only employed with NGO practitioners and academics that have extensive experience and were less vulnerable to being swayed by my contribution to the conversation. Additionally, Gray (2009) points out that using interview techniques that increase rapport and trust is a key way of increasing the validity of the data gained through interviews. In such interviews, great attention was given to the language I used and to ensuring that my questions or contributions to the conversation did not overtly give away my views.

The majority of interviews were recorded and, when a recording was not possible, notes were taken. After the interview, material was immediately transcribed and anonymised (see "*Ethical considerations*" below).

Limitations of the interview data collection

There was a risk that interview participants would tell me what they thought I wanted to hear as a member of MSF rather than as an independent researcher. In the cases in which this dilemma arose, I would not have had access to the interviewees were it not for my MSF connection. After reflecting, I became convinced that, in the cases where this dynamic arose, it was in the interests of the research that I be seen as both a researcher and an affiliate of MSF, as this dilemma arose most notably in the interviews with the Syrian diaspora groups who were working from Lebanon to – often without any authorisation – send medical supplies into Syria. MSF had built a strong relationship with these groups and was trusted and, in my previous work, I had built a personal working relationship with some of these

participants. Ensuring that my affiliation with MSF was clearly understood allowed the research participants to feel comfortable and be confident that the data I was collecting would truly be anonymised (based on our previously established trust) and that my findings might help improve the relationship between the work of the interviewee and the organisation.

I was nonetheless aware that some answers given in questions where I sought a critique of MSF would be tempered. However, due to the existing relationships I had built with many participants and the well-understood MSF culture of being open to criticism – and, indeed, actively seeking critical perspectives – this was less of a danger than it otherwise might have been. Further, the assured anonymity went a long way in facilitating the openness of the research participants.

Field notes

This research also made use of field notes. The compilation of these notes was guided by Neuman's *Recommendations for Taking Field Notes* (2000:364). Methodological commitments included recording notes on both observations – as soon as possible after making them – and new ideas sparked by some data collection or experience. I made use of wide-margin pages so I could go back and add observations or make links between my field notes and the data coding of interviews and documents. To the extent possible, I recorded details and included diagrams or maps that helped provide context to the data-collection process. Finally, I re-read my notes periodically and noted any new ideas that re-reading generated.

Personal communication

In a limited number of cases, this research has included data gathered from personal communications. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) rules of medical publishing specify that personal communication can be used as evidence when providing essential information not available from public sources (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, n.d.). Due to the overall approach of prioritising anonymity of the research participants, the limited cases of personal communication that I use as part of this research data are referenced anonymously in the research findings.

The decision to adopt this approach was informed by the reality of conducting research in a conflict environment. As pointed out by Ford et al.:

. . . the presence of violence, can limit both access to populations over time and the ability to conduct research. As a consequence, conventional research methodologies when applied to conflict settings without due adaptation may compromise the quality of the eventual results. (2009:2)

Indeed, gathering data is extremely challenging in complex emergencies and, therefore, the use of novel sources of data is encouraged.

Data analysis

Interview data

In analysing the data, I was open to new understandings through "direct interpretation of the individual instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class" (Stake, 1995:74).

Through analysis we can progress through an initial description of the data then, through a process of disaggregating the data into smaller parts, see how these connect into new concepts, providing the basis for a fresh description. (Gray, 2009:493–494)

Data-analysis was begun following the first batch of interviews (phase 2 in Figure 3.1, see "*Introduction*"). I drew mostly on grounded theory in analysing these data. Ideally, "[g]rounded theory does not begin with prior assumptions" (Gray, 2009:502). Although I had broad research questions from the first phase of data collection, I had not yet identified clear theoretical propositions.

To start, all interview transcripts were read and codes were applied. For example, in the margin of an interview transcript I would allocate codes according to the type of information. The data was then reorganised according to the coding. This allowed for the creation of themes that could then be interpreted. The analysis was inductive in that my themes were generated based on the codes applied to the data that I had collected. Based on these themes, I was able to refine my research objectives and develop case studies. I returned to this batch of data having completed the case studies to identify data that could further refine the case studies.

Case-study data

Explanation-building strategies

Often in instrumental case studies, important issues arise only once in the data. I was, therefore, open to these instances.

The overall strategy taken in the case-study data analysis was to use theoretical propositions to establish a set of expectations, the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of which was tested against the data generated through the case studies (see Table 3.3 at "*Research methodology – Phase 2: Case-study approach – Why choose the case-study approach?*" above).

At the analysis stage itself, data can be compared and contrasted with what the theoretical models have predicted, and suppositions made about the extent to which the original proposition can be supported or rejected. (Gray, 2009:264)

This strategy is also known as 'explanation building' (Gray, 2009). Yin calls this approach "relying on theoretical propositions" (2009:130). The findings of the research are also written up from a theory-building perspective, which was considered best suited to the explanatory nature of the cases chosen.

Content and thematic analysis

For document analysis, I followed the following analytic procedure, which:

... entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesising data contained in documents. Document analysis yields data—excerpts, quotations, or entire passages that are then organised into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis. (Bowen, 2009:28)

In this research, the iterative analysis process involved a combination of content and thematic analysis.

For the content analysis, "a first-pass document review, in which meaningful and relevant passages of text or other data are identified" (Bowen, 2009:32) was conducted. Here, I was able to identify what data were pertinent and separate them from data irrelevant to the research topic.

By contrast, the thematic analysis entailed:

... a careful, more focused re-reading and review of the data. The reviewer takes a closer look at the selected data and performs coding and category construction, based on the data's characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to a phenomenon. (ibid.)

For consistency, the codes used were, to the extent possible, those used in analysing the interview data. The advantages of analysing documentary sources by content and theme are many. I was able to "observe without being observed" (Robson, 2002:358), while, at the same time, being able to draw on material from a broad range of contexts.

Quality control

A process of triangulation – in the sense of developing coherence between my three main sources of data, being literature, document analysis and interviews – was undertaken in an attempt to ensure the high quality of the analysis. As pointed out by Mays and Pope, "[t]riangulation may be better seen as a way of ensuring comprehensiveness and encouraging a more reflexive analysis of the data than as a pure test of validity" (2000:51).

Additionally, the steps outlined by Yin in the chapter "Pressing for a High Quality Analysis" were also used (2009:161). Therefore, I considered, and in some cases directly addressed in the findings, rival explanations that had emerged in the data analysis. Additionally, my analysis focused on the most significant aspects of my case. Finally, my own experience on each of the case studies was drawn upon (ibid.).

Member-checking was used to guard against implausible or biased interpretation of the data (Stake, 1995) and to ensure that any contestations over the correct interpretation of data were made explicit. In practice, for each case study, drafts of the case studies were shared with participants in the research who were asked to comment on them. In some cases, the feedback provided altered the way the findings are presented.

Revisiting the data

Due to the breadth of this research, many themes not directly relevant to answering the objectives and research questions emerged in the interviews. At the time, these data were identified and put aside for possible further research. Later, once my findings had been written, these data were revisited to ensure that no themes well-fitted to the research framework had been overlooked.

Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was obtained for this research from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

For each research method outlined in this Chapter 3, procedures were followed to ensure ethical treatment of research participants. For the document analysis, sources were anonymised. In cases where email correspondence has been cited, permission has been obtained from the authors of (and, in the case of email exchanges I was involved in, the counterparties to) the email exchange as it was felt that, even with full anonymity, it would be possible for the authors to identify their own email exchanges.

For the semi-structured and in-depth interviews, full consent was obtained from each participant that was interviewed. Informed consent was assessed as being achieved by giving adequate information, ensuring that the purposes of the interview were fully understood and ensuring that participation was entirely voluntary (Dawn, 2000).

The major ethical worries in this research were the risks posed to some research participants should confidentiality be compromised, even in minor ways. This was particularly the case for the interviews with members of the Syrian diaspora who were engaged in relief activities from a base in Lebanon. Had these activities been – or were they to be – exposed, it could have put the participants at risk. As such, it was essential to ensure that no breach of confidentiality occurred and rigorous steps were taken at all times to ensure that data were entirely anonymised. These steps included:

- ~ All interviews taking place in an environment where the participant felt comfortable and where they could talk undisturbed.
- ~ Full consent to the recording of the interview being requested and, should the participant agree but still show discomfort, the recording device not being used.
- ~ Only the researcher having access to the recordings, which were transcribed on the researcher's personal computer and immediately coded and anonymised, and untranscribed material being encrypted at all times and kept in a safe.
- ~ Erasing of recordings from the recording device as soon transcription is completed.
- ~ Anonymising all data used in this doctoral research
- ~ Removing specific locations or events from the transcribed data that could identify the research participant.
- ~ Any notes taken during interviews not having the interviewee's name recorded and no information that could be used to identify the person being written down (for example, references to family members, friends, home town, etc.).
- ~ Only the researcher having access to the data that were collected.

Limitations

Internal limitations

The first decision that was taken at the outset of this doctoral research was on how to define the problem that I wanted to explore. The difficulty of this decision is illustrated above by the iterative development of my research design. Further, due to the scope of the topic, I had to accept early that the depth with which I would be able to investigate many of the themes of this research would be limited (see "*Strategies of enquiry*"). As such, it was decided that

the case studies should be illustrative rather than attempts to generalise findings from highly context-dependent examples. However, another decision that was taken was not to allow the specificity of the case studies to prevent the analysis from drawing broader lessons and offering alternative narratives.

It is hoped the constraints placed by such specificity in the case studies have been overcome by linking the specific findings back to the theoretical framework developed in the literature review. Because of this considered optimism, analytic generalisations were included in the findings.

There was therefore a constant tension between being modest in what the research findings offered and ambitious in terms of maintaining the initial spirit of the research that was purposefully broad in scope.

External limitations

Another limitation comes from the pace at which the field of Humanitarian Studies is evolving. When I started this research, there was little reflection on certain key ideas central to this research (for example, the critique on the notion of 'humanitarian space' was nascent). Although this research offers a unique perspective, and contribution to present academic discussion and knowledge, its relation to theory had to be adapted as literature and research became available.

Additionally, the continuing relevance of the case studies chosen made it difficult to draw a line under the data-collection process and the temptation to continually add data thrown up by events was always present. Conversely, the need to draw a line under the data-collection process may mean that the relevance of the case studies diminishes over time as new stages of the conflicts that have been studied emerge.

A final limitation was seen in the last phase of data collection. Trying to identify a phenomenon that has not fully emerged (in this case, different conceptualisation and approaches to humanitarian aid in emerging states) was difficult. The depth of these findings is limited and is the area that offers the clearest case for future research.

Presentation of findings

The findings of this research are presented below along three broad themes: state-building and emergency-response capacity; humanitarian identity and access; and the rethinking of humanitarianism. Reflecting this, the findings are not presented according to the phases of the research but to correspond to the three objectives set for this doctoral research:

1. To examine how the incorporation of humanitarian aid into the state-building agenda could impact on emergency-response capacity.
2. To determine whether the identity of humanitarian aid as being linked to Western hegemonic power could impact on access to conflict.
3. To examine whether humanitarian aid is being reconceptualised through the dynamic of shifting global power.

In each section of the findings, the data from phase 1 is presented by drawing on the Hegelian influence on the research methods. What this means is that the data are presented to demonstrate the core tensions and competing narratives that emerged in relation to each of the objectives. These tensions are highlighted as a way to (1) ensure that the major competing narratives that emerged for each theme is presented and (2) to ensure that each case study is understood within the context of these competing narratives.

For the case studies, findings are presented as a detailed examination of the challenges posed by the identity of humanitarian aid in Syria and the incorporation of humanitarian aid into broader state-building goals in South Sudan. These findings are related back to the data collected during phase 1 of this research and presented at the outset of each chapter.

At each step of presentation, the rationale behind collecting the data is pointed out (and related to the research objective being explored). The data are then presented by drawing heavily on direct quotation from research participants and the documentary analysis. The purpose of this method of presentation is to minimise unnecessary interpretation of the data. The relationship of the data to the literature will be explored in Chapter 5: "*Discussion*".

Chapter 4: Research findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity

There is no doubt from the literature reviewed that humanitarian aid has been extensively incorporated into donor-driven development processes (Duffield, 2014), in particular into state-building and stabilisation agendas. Multi-mandated organisations carrying out development activities – often serving a donor-defined securitisation agenda – under the umbrella of humanitarian aid provide a clear example of a trend towards the incorporation of humanitarian aid into partisan development agendas (Slim & Bradley, 2013). The new policy imperative of 'building resilience', as reviewed in the literature (Manyena et al., 2011; Slim & Bradley, 2013; Duffield, 2014; Levine & Mosel, 2014), has played a role in further eroding the distinction between development activities and humanitarian assistance. The UN process of integration (Metcalf et al., 2011) has also consolidated an aid set-up that seeks coherence among political, peacekeeping, development and humanitarian agendas (Holmes, 2013). These trends have taken shape in a political era of uni-polar dominance, based on advancing Western-style liberal democratic development.

How has the incorporation of humanitarian aid into development processes impacted on the capacity of humanitarian organisations to deliver life-saving assistance? The literature has not addressed this question directly. Based on this gap identified in the literature, this research first sought to better understand the challenges to the delivery of humanitarian aid in conflict as a result of the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western-donor political agendas. Based on these findings, case-study research was carried out. The results for both phases of this research are presented below.

Humanitarian shortcomings: is less more?

Based on the findings from the data gathered in 19 interviews with practitioners, donors and public intellectuals during a first phase of the research, it is possible to identify a tension that emerges between those who considered the shortcomings in humanitarian response to be a result of the humanitarian system not effectively integrating into longer-term development programming, and those who consider the attempts at incorporating humanitarian aid into longer-term objectives to be part of the reason for the failures of emergency response. The solution proposed by one group of respondents – the better incorporation of humanitarian aid into development processes - is the reason identified by the other group for the failure in emergency response.

Within the first category, some practitioners explained the shortcomings in the humanitarian system as being a technical problem.

If we want to increase our capacity, we have to improve the way we work. The approach we take has to be more cost effective. We should be investing in building systems that will last beyond the timeframe of our interventions. (Senior NGO worker 2, 2012)

Within this group, some practitioners were identified as looking for ways to be more effective at bridging the gap between relief and development in protracted crises as a way to improve the technical capacity of the humanitarian system (Senior NGO worker 2, 2012; Senior donor representative 1, 2012; Senior humanitarian analyst 1, 2012).

We can't maintain this divide between relief and development in protracted crises. We have to be able to think in the longer term and not to see the short-term relief activities as being a separate process from longer-term development. (Senior NGO worker 2, 2012)

Others referred to the need to focus humanitarian-aid resources on capacity-building as a way to reduce the cost of humanitarian aid by increasing the capacity of local government to respond to emergencies themselves (Senior donor representative 1, 2012).

Both of the above technical solutions for enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid – by bridging the gap between relief and development and through building local capacity and systems – were seen to be enabled by the concept of 'building resilience' (Senior NGO worker 2, 2012; Public debate on resilience organised by MSF, 2012).

However, a second perspective emerged from the data that stands in contrast with the above. Some research participants saw the failures of humanitarian response in protracted crises not in terms of its inability to bridge the gap between relief and development but rather in terms of humanitarian aid trying to do too much and losing sight of the basics.

Why does the humanitarian sector look like it's growing and yet it is so dysfunctional? It's because the growth includes things like resilience and capacity-building which are not proving to be effective at providing emergency humanitarian assistance (MSF HQ staff 5, 2012)

Another participant felt that the focus by humanitarian workers on development would be more justifiable if it were proving an effective model for saving lives and alleviating suffering:

If it can be done through a comprehensive approach, an integrated approach, a whole-of-government approach, a development approach, a multi-mandated approach, then super! Go

guys, do it! But unfortunately we are seeing that it is not the case. (Senior international organisation representative 2, 2012)

Some research participants used the perceived failure to incorporate humanitarian aid into development agendas as a justification to return to basics:

From my point of view, we should be focusing almost entirely on humanitarian response. When it comes to much of the development agenda, I don't think we do it very well. So let's put all our efforts into genuine lifesaving and preparedness work. What we are looking at now is managing decline and trying to bring about soft landings for as many people as we can that are left stranded by the impact of the fallout of this very model we have been complicit in promoting. There are no happy endings. (Senior NGO worker 1, 2012)

This phase of research therefore identified a core tension: are the shortcomings in emergency response a result of humanitarian actors not sufficiently bridging the gap with longer-term development programmes or is it rather a problem of humanitarian actors over-extending their objectives into longer-term processes at the expense of the basics? This tension helped frame the design of the case study on South Sudan.

South Sudan was chosen for study due to the outbreak of violence in 2014, which had resulted in large-scale population displacement. Field research for this case study was performed with the intention of developing an understanding of how aid had been conceptualised in South Sudan before the outbreak of violence (starting in the period following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement).

The following set of questions guided the interviews for the South Sudan case-study research:

- ~ How did the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 impact on how the aid system was set up?
- ~ Were there gaps in the humanitarian response during this time?
- ~ Did the creation of the state of South Sudan change how aid was conceptualised?
- ~ How did humanitarian aid fit into the aid architecture following the creation of the state?
- ~ Did this impact on the ability of humanitarian actors to respond to the emergency caused by the outbreak of violence in December 2013?

Data for this case-study research were collected through field research in South Sudan, consisting of semi-structured interviews with aid practitioners and donors. In addition to the data gathered from interviews, primary-source data were drawn on – particularly in the form of field-assessment reports by MSF – to provide additional insights into previous eras of aid

response in South Sudan. A rich source of primary data took the form of direct observations made by the researcher during time spent in South Sudan – including field visits by helicopter to three remote villages. All observations gathered during field research were recorded in a field-research diary.

By understanding the approach taken to aid delivery in South Sudan before and moving into the crisis – and by identifying specific shortcomings in emergency response in these periods – it was possible to look at how the conceptualisation of humanitarian aid could have affected response to the 2014 emergency.

Setting the scene: the birth of a nation into crisis

A peace deal was struck between actors in the north and south of Sudan in 2005 – a deal that brought an end to a decades-long civil war between Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) (see Johnson, 2011 for an account of the negotiation process). Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, South Sudan was boosted by an enthusiastic international state-building effort (Fenton & Phillips, 2009) and was classified as a post-conflict context. Donors responded by establishing pooled funding mechanisms that poured massive volumes of aid into development, capacity-building, governance and rule of law (MSF internal report 1, 2009; Fenton & Phillips, 2009; Bennett et al., 2010).

While the peace deal in South Sudan may have brought an end to the conflict, it did not mark an end to its recurring humanitarian crises. In 2009, it was estimated that only between 25 and 30 per cent. of the population in South Sudan had access to healthcare (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2009). According to an IOM (2009) village-assessment survey, only 9 per cent. of the villages in Bhar el Ghazal and Warrab states had healthcare facilities (IOM, 2009). Of those villages with health facilities, the majority lacked qualified personal (ibid.). NGOs were providing 86 per cent. of the available health services in South Sudan – and were paying the salaries of three-quarters of the health staff (Fenton & Phillips, 2009).

Across South Sudan, mortality rates remained high, malnutrition was chronic and regular outbreaks of preventable diseases, such as meningitis and cholera, were a persistent threat to life (MSF internal report 1, 2009). Violence persisted in many parts of the South, with regular clashes resulting in large numbers of war wounded and displaced persons (ibid.). Jonglei saw some of the worst of this fighting:

Underlying causes include persistent lack of services, increased competition over natural resources, and the erosion of traditional leadership structures and the unspoken rules of cattle raiding. Local- and national-level politicians have manipulated the conflict for personal and political gain, while Jonglei-based militia groups have provided weapons to tribal fighters to further their own agendas. (Leff, 2012:1)

Instability in the border areas to the north resulted in massive displacement. The oil-rich Abyei, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states lie along the border between Sudan and South Sudan. Clashes began in 2011 between the Sudanese armed forces and pro-Juba rebels in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states.

In 2011, South Sudan voted to become independent. However, ethnic faultlines plagued the newly established state (Arnold & Lerich, 2012). In December 2013, violence in South Sudan spiralled out of the newly established government's control when fighting broke out between government troops and rebel fighters following a power struggle between the president, Salva Kiir, and his former deputy, Reik Machar (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2014).

Several thousand people were killed in the first week of the violence, which spread from the capital across the country. The violence was of a particularly brutal kind, with persons recounting to this researcher how they had seen entire families massacred with machetes (Field Research Diary, Juba: 2014). One and a half million people were displaced, either internally or as refugees to neighbouring countries; ninety-four thousand people took refuge at the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) bases.

Some observers argue that the heavily resourced international community in South Sudan should have seen the violence coming:

Sara Pantuliano has argued that the international community not only ignored evidence of the deteriorating situation before the crisis but had – ever since 2005 – neglected the political dimensions of post-civil war transformation and the complexity of the South Sudanese context. Instead, it focused on technical activities, assuming 'that greater development – improved services, infrastructure, access to food – would lead to stability and lasting peace'. (Maxwell & Santschi, 2014:3)

The overly technocratic approach of the UN mission has also been criticised by Hutton, who identifies it as a reason for UNMISS being disconnected from the reality on the ground (2014:14).

Critics have been harsh on both the fact that the violence was not anticipated and the failed state-building project invested in so heavily by the West.

From Iraq to Afghanistan, American-style nation building has crumbled, exposing the limits of American power. Before things are over in South Sudan, Washington's great experiment in Africa may prove to be the most disastrous effort of all. (Turse, 2014:online)

With this in mind, the case-study data can be presented. These data were gathered in a series of 18 interviews with a variety of NGO workers, UN and donor representatives, diplomats and analysts in South Sudan. All the NGO, UN and donor participants were senior decision-makers in their respective organisations.

The participants for the research came from nine organisations, three major donor countries and one non-donor country from the global South. These data are once again complemented by direct observation that, in the case of the field research in South Sudan, included field visits to inaccessible parts of the country facing recurring crises of food insecurity, tribal clashes and overwhelming burdens of disease compounded by an almost total lack of access to healthcare.

A visit was also possible to the UN base in Tomping, Juba, where thousands of displaced persons had sought refuge. The data gathered from this visit could be contrasted with data gathered in semi-structured interviews with UN officials at the highest level of the decision-making in the UN integrated mission, donors and top decision-makers in NGOs. Further, some of the data presented below come from documentary analysis of primary sources made available by MSF.

This case study was intended to establish whether the humanitarian response to the outbreak of violence in 2014 was sufficient. Having established that there were major shortcomings in the emergency response, the question became whether the failure to respond to the South Sudan emergency in 2014 was a technical failure or the result of political choices by those humanitarian actors that naturally arose from how they conceptualised and, therefore, delivered aid.

What was uncovered was that, after years of investment in building a state, there was little of the state left to build by July 2014, the time of this research. The pace at and degree to which South Sudan unravelled was shocking for most of the participants in this research (Field Research Diary, Juba, 2014). Further, it was identified that the initial response to the crisis of the massive aid community in South Sudan was to evacuate all staff – many of whom were based in Juba on long-term assignments and, in the case of some large NGOs, with their

families (Personal communication with a group of aid workers, Juba: 2014). Some organisations had begun to return to South Sudan at the time of this research, but the data gathered suggest that some were attempting to return to a business-as-usual approach of development programming while others were struggling to scale up the emergency response (Major donor representative 1, 2014; Senior NGO worker 3, 2014; Senior NGO worker 4, 2014).

A senior UN official reflected that "[t]he damage has been done. Livelihoods have been lost; basic services have collapsed; staff have fled; facilities have been destroyed; and relationships that enable things to be done have disappeared" (Senior UN official 1, 2014). According to another participant, "years of progress in development was instantaneously undone" (Senior NGO worker 3, 2014). More worryingly, of the 3.8 million South Sudanese estimated to need assistance in 2014, even a generous estimate of aid sees only half being reached by the end of 2014 (Maxwell & Santschi, 2014:1).

Field-research data indicated two different phases of aid response in South Sudan: the phase of post-conflict peace dividends and the phase of state-building. Findings are presented in accordance with this division. In each phase, both data relating to core political decisions made by aid actors and relating to how these decisions affected the ability to respond to emergencies is presented. By understanding the phases of the aid response prior to the December 2013 outbreak of violence from the perspective of how aid was thought about, it was then possible to examine how the aid architecture affected the 2014 emergency response.

Post-conflict peace dividends: 2005–2011

The data gathered immediately following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) show how the ways of thinking about the humanitarian enterprise were linked to the policy position of donor countries – in particular the US – that had invested significantly in what was, at the time, the south of Sudan (MSF internal document 8, 2009; Senior UN official 1, 2014). Following the signing of the CPA, enthusiasm from donors was high for shifting the policy approach to a post-conflict development model as a way of helping the SPLM/A in its transition to a democratic movement able to govern a country (ibid.).

This period was also marked by political confusion in the UN system as to whether to promote southern independence or maintain the unity of the south with Sudan (Hutton, 2014).

From 2005 to 2008, UNMIS[S] went through three SRSGs [Special Representative of the Secretary General] and swung from being openly confrontational towards the GoS [Government of Sudan] for human rights abuses, to advocating for making national unity attractive. By the time Eritrean-born Haile Menkerios was appointed SRSG in 2010, it had become clear that southern Sudan was heading towards separation. (Hutton, 2014:9)

In an internal MSF report from 2009, it was documented that "the approach to addressing the needs of Southern Sudan from many governments has been from a 'post-conflict' development perspective" (MSF internal document 8, 2009). The data gathered in this research demonstrate how this post-conflict lens had a direct effect on the way donors channelled aid:

Consequently, international donors have focused their response on establishing pooled funding mechanisms to address the chronic underdevelopment of the south and to support the establishment of the Southern government. Although development is important and necessary in Southern Sudan little consideration has been given to the immediate humanitarian needs of the population, especially at a time of increasing emergencies. (MSF internal document 8, 2009)

The "increasing emergencies" referred to in this 2009 report can be matched to the following statement from MSF in a public report released in December 2009:

Since December 2008, there has been a disturbing escalation in violent clashes across Southern Sudan, from attacks by rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the Equatorial States to the so-called 'tribal clashes' in Upper Nile, Jonglei, Lakes and Central Equatoria States. The intensity and targeted nature of the violence to which MSF responded in Jonglei and Upper Nile States represents something more than 'inter-tribal cattle rustling' and suggests a targeting of villages. This trend in violence has resulted in death, injury and the displacement of thousands from their homes. Displaced people are then forced to live in precarious conditions where diseases thrive, leading to outbreaks such as cholera, and heightening the risk of malnutrition. This increased violence and its consequences compound the already grim medical humanitarian situation in Southern Sudan, where medical needs are critical. Mortality rates remain high, malnutrition is chronic, and regular outbreaks of preventable diseases, such as meningitis, measles and cholera, continue to pose a persistent threat to the lives of the population. (2009a:5)

One senior UN official, reflecting on past approaches to aid in South Sudan, had the following to say about the shift to a development approach:

From 2006–2009, there was a strong reluctance to fund humanitarian activities from donors. There was a preference toward building institutional structures of the state and supporting

national structures. But the decision to move toward development was not something well grounded. (Senior UN official 1, 2014)

According to a report prepared by Poole and Primrose:

At a critical moment in Southern Sudan's transitional period, humanitarian funding decreased on the basis of decisions which appear to have been informed not by an analysis of needs, but by a desire to move from humanitarian towards development funding. (2010:2)

This approach:

... belied the reality of both the level of humanitarian needs and the scale of development challenges. There was no space in the widely held conceptual narrative of a rapid transition to development, where residual acute humanitarian needs would melt away, for the huge and persistent burden of chronic needs. (ibid.)

The authors described how:

... in this drive towards development on the one hand with a preference for a narrow definition of humanitarian needs on the other, there has been little scope to talk openly about or fund chronic needs. This has had a powerful conditioning effect on the way in which needs are articulated and funded. (ibid.)

During the same period, the data demonstrate that the UN Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) and the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) were the only two functioning channels for emergency funding. This lack of institutional support was made all the more serious by the CHF often being used to fill the gaps left by the failure of the pooled funding mechanisms (MSF internal document 8, 2009). The Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), which was once one of the primary channels for emergency funding, had reduced its budget in 2010 from US\$60 million to US\$12 million. (ibid.)

The biggest of these pooled funding mechanisms was the bureaucratically heavy, CPA-mandated Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). Administered by the World Bank, the MDTF comprised 14 donors and had a total cumulative proceed in 2008 of US\$247 million for the North and US\$414.7million for the South (ibid.). The MDTF was originally designed so that the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) would match donor funding for the MDTF at a ratio of 2:1. Considering the GoSS financial crisis, this was later revised down to 1:1.

Although the MDTF was credited with "increasing donor coherence" it achieved little in the form of service-delivery and, therefore, peace dividends (ibid.). These data are significant

because they demonstrate how huge sums of money were allocated to building central-government structure and capacity rather than providing immediate service delivery or emergency response.

In the period covered by the documentary material, the MDTF was astonishingly slow at distributing funds and its bureaucratic nature led to serious problems, including a national drug shortage in 2009 (MSF internal document 8, 2009). Many NGO-supported clinics were found to be lacking essential drugs because the Ministry of Health (MoH) drug kits which were delivered to the health centres were inadequate and were missing supplies, such as artemisinin-combination therapies (ACT), which are used to treat malaria, and examination gloves. Evidence for this comes from an internal MSF report (ibid.) where it was noted that "[d]uring the compilation of this report – all non-MSF supported clinics visited had no stock of ACT. Considering that it is the rainy season in south Sudan – the oversight from the MDTF is unforgivable." (ibid.).

The MSF internal report notes that:

The implication of these funding mechanisms is poor quality response capacity on the ground. There is no shortage of humanitarian organisations present in South Sudan. What is missing, is that their funding mechanisms are ill-suited to the reality of the programmes they are trying to implement. IMC [International Medical Corps] is one example. IMC supports many health centres throughout South Sudan. However, during the rainy season, when the numbers of malaria cases increase they are unable to treat malaria. This is due to the donor restriction on purchasing drugs – which are supplied through the MDTF. However, ACT is missing in the MDTF funded drug kits and the subsequent quality of IMC work is reduced. Their [IMC] presence blocks the space for other actors to work. As a result of this – MSF not only has a problem in finding partners to hand over after the initial emergency phase – but MSF also encounters organisations on the ground blocking the way for effective emergency response. (MSF internal document 8, 2009)

These data demonstrate how the mechanisms through which major NGOs were funded were so inflexible and ill-suited to the reality on the ground that NGOs were unable to treat basic emergency conditions, such as malaria, when a shortage of the drug used for treatment occurred.

A number of other pooled funds existed in 2010. They were formed to cover funding gaps until the MDTF "came online" (ibid.). However, many of them remained in place due to the failure of the MDTF (ibid.). These other funds included the Basic Services Fund (BSF) and the Sudan Recovery Fund (SRF). The Sudan Recovery Fund was announced at the Oslo conference in May 2008 (UNDP [United Nations Development Programme], n.d.). The aim

of the fund was to support recovery by linking shorter-term humanitarian assistance with longer-term development (ibid.).

During this period, Poole and Primrose argued that:

In order to address chronic needs more effectively in protracted crises, government donors must be realistic in their expectations for development and state transformation and must consider alternative funding mechanisms and approaches to allow flexible, predictable programming approaches. (2010:2)

However, the same research report by Poole and Primrose does not address the motives behind donor decisions that were identified in this research and instead proposes technical fixes, including better information exchange and a more solid evidence base:

Better evidence of the scale and severity of humanitarian needs and greater transparency in information exchange about them is crucial to promote more equitable funding decisions. To achieve this requires greater commitment and investment across the humanitarian community as well as a shared technical and conceptual language with which to measure and talk about humanitarian needs. Significant progress has been made in Southern Sudan in the past five years in needs assessment and routine monitoring and surveillance, and a number of initiatives are underway within global clusters and under the IASC [Inter-Agency Standing Committee] to refine shared methodologies for measuring needs. (ibid.)

Given that humanitarian funding decisions are not driven by need but by the strategic interests of donor states – in this case building the institutions of the state – it is plausible that there would be little to no incentive to create an evidence-based decision-making process which responded more effectively to humanitarian need. The problem with evidence-based decision-making is that the evidence can go against donor states' interests. The data gathered in this period suggest that decision-making takes a longer-term perspective, seeing the daily shortcomings of aid delivery as part of a longer process that is judged to be of greater importance.

Thus, the period in South Sudan immediately after the signing of the CPA can best be described as a period in which a policy shift prioritising development and with the objective of creating a viable state took place. This shift paved the way for a post-referendum period where the data gathered present a picture of humanitarian action fully subjugated to the state-building project.

State-building: 2011–2013

Following the referendum by which the state of South Sudan was established, this research finds that development efforts were intensified to shore up the new state. The US, one of the biggest allies of the new state of South Sudan, largely led these state-building efforts:

In order to secure this nation-building 'win,' both the George W. Bush and Obama administrations poured tons of aid into South Sudan, in every form imaginable. From military aid to food aid to the provision of technical expertise, America was South Sudan's biggest ally and backer, ardently midwifing the country into nationhood by whatever means necessary. (Turse, 2014:online)

The data reviewed for this research demonstrate that during this period of nation-building the objective of humanitarian action was explicitly articulated as being about contributing to this state-building project ([Consolidated Appeals Process] CAP, 2014; Lanzer, 2013).

In 2011, the UN Security Council mandated UNMISS to support the South Sudanese government (UNMISS, n.d.).

According to the original mandate UNMISS was to support the Government in peace consolidation and thereby fostering longer-term state building and economic development; assist the Government in exercising its responsibilities for conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution and protect civilians; and help the authorities in developing capacity to provide security, establishing the rule of law, and strengthening the security and justice sectors in the country (UNMISS, n.d.:online)

According to one senior UN official interviewed, "UNMISS was created to seal the state-building projects of the international donor community. To achieve this a Chapter 7 mandate⁸ was foreseen." (Senior UN official 1, 2014). The UN official, however, went on to explain that "[t]he DPKO [Department for Peacekeeping Operations] lives in a different planet." (ibid.). Frustration at the mismatch between reality on the ground and the approach taken by the international community was identified as common among most of those interviewed for this research.

⁸ "A Security Council Resolution is considered to be 'a Chapter VII resolution' if it makes an explicit determination that the situation under consideration constitutes a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace, or an act of aggression, and/or explicitly or implicitly states that the Council is acting under Chapter VII in the adoption of some or all operative paragraphs" (Johansson, 2009:309)

How was this approach to state-building reflected in the conceptualisation of the aid response?

This research has noted that the idea of building resilience was adopted as a unifying goal, while, the converse, 'fragility', was used to frame the need for greater resilience (CAP, 2014; Email correspondence between MSF and New Deal Compact [NDC], 2014). One of the most relevant primary-source documents for understanding how aid in South Sudan during this period was thought about was the 2014–2016 Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP, 2014) (which was later shelved when conflict broke out). In an interview with a senior UN official, it was insisted that the UN had as one of its core pillars in this CAP document the objective of "saving lives" (Senior UN official 2, 2014). This is certainly the case; however, what a review of the CAP reveals is that the very first section of the document for 2014 explicitly includes humanitarian action as contributing toward the "New Deal Compact" (NDC). "The 2014–16 CAP links humanitarian action to the wider framework of South Sudan's New Deal Compact, as one component of the effort to move the country from fragility to resilience" (CAP, 2013:3).

As evidenced by email exchanges between MSF and representatives of the NDC, the deal was seen as the next big phase of the state-building project in South Sudan – and was pushed forward by the multi-hatted Resident and Humanitarian Co-ordinator (Email correspondence between MSF and NDC: 2014).

A fragility assessment was conducted in the second half of 2012, and a decision to establish a New Deal compact was made in connection with the South Sudan Economic Partners' Forum in April 2013. This meeting also discussed new funding instruments that would provide general budget support to South Sudan for the first time, including an IMF Rapid Credit Facility, an EU State-building Contract development policy operations by the World Bank and the African Development Bank, and the establishment of a new South Sudan Partnership Fund. The compact was widely seen as a dialogue and mutual accountability framework underpinning the use of these new instruments, and the compact process received extensive support from UNDP [United Nations Development Programme] and the RCO [Resident Coordinators Office]. Following an intensive dialogue process from August to October 2013, the launch of the compact was delayed in November, as South Sudan did not comply fully with the conditions of the IMF Staff Monitored Program. Just a few weeks later, the country descended into conflict. (ibid.)

While neither the ambitions of the NDC nor its relevance was under question in this doctoral research, it was necessary to interrogate the way it became a donor-driven umbrella – even

for humanitarian action – and what implications, if any, this had on the way humanitarian aid was conceptualised in South Sudan and, therefore, the way emergencies were responded to.

The way humanitarian action was seen to contribute to NDC objectives is well summarised in the Figure 4.1 below (taken from the CAP document).

Contribution of humanitarian action to the New Deal goals



Source: CAP, 2013:16

Figure 4.1: Contribution of humanitarian action to NDC goals

According to the CAP document, in 2014, humanitarian aid would contribute to improvement at three proximal targets of the NDC: economic foundations; revenue and services; and justice, the improvement of which would achieve the NDC goal of developing resilience.

From these data, we can observe that humanitarian response in the CAP was clearly thought of as taking a support role in the larger state-building project. This is also evidenced by the following quote from the CAP:

In 2012, humanitarian assistance represented an estimated 56 per cent. of all international aid to South Sudan. The longer vision set out in this consolidated appeal positions humanitarian action as one component in a wider project to help South Sudan move from fragility to resilience. In the context of the New Deal Compact, based on the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, the country and its international partners are addressing a range of challenges covering security, politics, justice, economic foundations and basic services. Devising relief programmes which, where possible, increase people's ability to be self-reliant and strengthen access to basic services, makes humanitarian action an important part of this process. Humanitarian action will address three of the New Deal goals; economic foundations revenue and services, and justice. (CAP, 2013:16)

Data collected for this research suggest that even as this CAP document was being written, South Sudan was already facing multiple emergencies – including a localised insurgency in Pibor resulting in population displacement and an influx into Maban county of refugees fleeing the ongoing conflict in the disputed border area of Blue Nile (Belanger, 2012; OCHA, 2013).

However, when it comes to emergency response, the CAP document was unambiguous: "Non-CAP organizations like ICRC and MSF will continue to provide the core surge capacity in times of need." (CAP, 2013:42). It is important to note that ICRC and MSF were not (nor are) part of the CAP process – which means that they receive no funds from the CAP appeal. Therefore, while the CAP raises funds based on saving lives, it outsourced the actual saving of life to organisations that do not receive money from these funds. These data are important because they show how the humanitarian project in South Sudan expanded so far into a state-building project that organisations outside the system were relied upon to carry out the core function of humanitarian aid: emergency response.

This observation is supported by data collected from the review of public positions taken by the senior-most UN humanitarian official in South Sudan. In 2013, the Humanitarian Co-ordinator explained how "development" was in fact South Sudan's greatest "humanitarian challenge" (Lanzer, 2013:online). This comment evidences how the paradigm of humanitarian aid had shifted from saving lives in the most immediate and efficient way possible and became about contributing to the development of South Sudan as an effective state.

From the data, it is possible to identify how the notion of building resilience became the lever for integrating humanitarian aid into development and, therefore, state-building. For example, the Humanitarian Co-ordinator argued that:

Most people in South Sudan find themselves in a continuous mode of survival, and will need humanitarian assistance for some time to come. However, in order to make meaningful progress in attaining food security we need to strengthen our collective focus on building resilience. Similarly, we need to continue to build government capacity to deliver health and education services, strengthen governance and rule of law institutions and further professionalise the armed forces. These processes are long and difficult, and may not yield the rapid results that humanitarian action can achieve. Nevertheless, in order to build a viable and sustainable state in which people are able to cope with shocks without large-scale and costly emergency assistance, addressing under-development requires our increased support. (Lanzer, 2013:online)

These data demonstrate two things: humanitarian action was deprioritised as a way to promote the building of resilience. As a result, humanitarian aid was seen as less important than building resilience. Moreover, resilience-building is presented as a measure to reduce the cost of the direct delivery of services by humanitarian organisations.

The data show that, under this model, not even the delivery of healthcare services could exist as an end in itself, but was rather seen as an activity aimed at building an "inclusive, cohesive and responsive state" (Lanzer, 2013:online).

Ultimately, building an inclusive, cohesive and responsive State in South Sudan will require establishing stronger democratic mechanisms for citizen participation and political dialogue. In parallel, devolution of power and improving the delivery of essential services, such as healthcare and schools will be critical to achieving that objective. (ibid.)

The consequences for this approach to aid delivery in South Sudan could be seen in the data on the management of the biggest emergencies faced by South Sudan during this state-building era: the refugee influx into Maban, an influx that peaked at a total of 100,000 people in July 2012 (Belanger, 2012).

When MSF responded to this refugee influx, it did so virtually alone (Tiller & Healy, 2013). In July 2012, MSF conducted a retrospective mortality study in Batil camp, finding a crude mortality rate of 1.75 and an under-five rate at 4.2/10,000/day (ibid.). After launching a lobbying effort to get other actors to respond, there was a slight improvement in overall response and the mortality rate was brought under control (ibid.). However, according to an MSF analysis of the aid response:

The response revealed important failings in humanitarian emergency capacity. UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] struggled to set up and then was unable to provide clear guidance and a strategy for the response. The NGO partners sub-contracted by UNHCR, many of whom have a long experience in South Sudan, were unable to respond with the required speed and scale to an emergency. Some agencies appear to lack the size, logistical and HR capacity and flexible funding to be effective within an appropriate amount of time (say, within 4–6 weeks of the second wave of refugee arrivals). For others, emergency response seems to have been undermined by their own efforts to work on long-term issues with a local-partner model. (Tiller & Healy, 2013:2)

It could be asked whether this kind of emergency-response capacity has ever existed and, more specifically, whether it has existed in South Sudan, where MSF has consistently been relied on to provide emergency-response capacity in the initial stages of crises (Email exchange between two MSF employees, 2014). However, based on interviews in Juba in 2014, there was a general acceptance among aid actors that, although emergency response has never been the core capacity of most NGOs, whatever capacity did exist had either suffered from an underinvestment at an international level or, in the case of South Sudan, had been de-prioritised due to the focus on state-building and resilience (Major donor representative 2, 2014; Senior NGO worker 4, 2014; MSF HQ staff 9, 2014).

The data suggest that this focus on resilience justified a redirection of investment and attention from humanitarian response to preventing circumstances under which a humanitarian response would be called for. Although a surge capacity could be identified in some clusters, such as logistics (Lucey, 2014), this was the exception rather than the rule (UN field official 1, 2014; Senior NGO worker 4, 2014; Senior NGO worker 5, 2014). The data suggest that conducting development – as proclaimed by the Humanitarian Co-ordinator himself – was the prevailing humanitarian response in South Sudan. Aid agencies – in their desire to do more and to sustain their funding – had become the development community and, in so doing, had lost their ability to act quickly in emergencies.

Even after the failures in emergency response in Maban, the 2013–2016 CAP still chose to think about humanitarian aid as a component of state-building, and emergency response was still assumed to be taken care of by non-CAP members MSF and ICRC. The data gathered for this research suggest that the lesson of South Sudan – the need to maintain and invest in an emergency-response capacity in a context where humanitarian emergencies have been a constantly recurring feature – has been overlooked in two eras of post-CPA aid architecture.

Based on a review of documentary sources, it was during this period that MSF's expectations of and frustrations with the emergency-response capacity of the aid system grew (Tiller &

Healy, 2014). However, the data also reveal what one research participant referred to as the creation of a "disincentive to act" (Senior NGO worker 3, 2014). In practice, this meant that MSF's increased investment in emergency response dissuaded others from trying to match MSF capacity in the field of health: "We were told by our donors, if you can't do healthcare as well as MSF then don't bother." (ibid.). This particular NGO worker – who works for one of the largest NGOs – went on to say: "[i]n my last planning exercise, I was told by my headquarters not to bother doing healthcare because it wouldn't be up to standard and we would just get criticised for it." (ibid.).

This reluctance to engage in emergency response – in particular related to healthcare – sets the tone for what this research found about the response to the 2014 emergency in South Sudan.

2014: the phase of humanitarian paralysis?

The framing of humanitarian aid as something to contribute to longer-term objectives was identified in this research as part of a discourse that continued well into the 2014 emergency response. This is best illustrated by events in April 2014, four months into South Sudan's biggest emergency, when Toby Lanzer referred to humanitarian action as something of "palliative" value, while he made the priority for South Sudan the longer-term project of "reconciliation and recovery" (2014:online).

By increasing our focus on building resilience, improving prevention and preparedness to crises, and contributing to strengthening national systems to deliver basic services, we can make a lasting difference and ultimately reduce reliance on emergency aid. Addressing these issues is central to humanitarian action in South Sudan and requires a change in strategy. (ibid.)

Data for this research were not collected with the intent of investigating the value of development, resilience or reconciliation and recovery. However, as this priority was articulated by senior representatives of the humanitarian system in South Sudan (in the form of the Humanitarian Co-ordinator), it became relevant to again explore the extent to which this framing influenced how the aid response was delivered.

What this research identified – the data for which are presented below – is that the hangover from the state-building era, as explored in the previous section (see "*State-building: 2011–2013*"), could be seen in how UN agencies and NGOs worked in support of the state almost by reflex instead of engaging in direct delivery of assistance. These data demonstrate how this had direct consequences both on how the UN was perceived and, by extension, on how NGOs were able to operate.

The set-up

Through the semi-structured interviews and the review of relevant primary-source documents, it was possible to establish the core features of how the aid system was set up, how this related to the state-building ways of thinking about aid from the previous era of aid delivery and how this affected emergency response.

A politically exposed UN Mission

In February 2014, the UN announced that South Sudan would be classified as a Level 3 (L3) emergency – meaning that more resources would be made available (OCHA, 2014). The three-year consolidated-appeals plan was shelved and an emergency-response plan was developed that focused on life-saving activities (ibid.). Six months after the outbreak of violence, the UNMISS mandate shifted from state-building to Protection of Civilians (UNMISS, 2014). According to one UN official, "the new UNMISS mandate which is supposed to last for six months tries to recast the UN as an impartial actor in this conflict." (UN field official 1, 2014).

Instead of acting as a primary international partner to the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) in an ambitious state building project, UNMISS is contending with a political and security crisis generating dire humanitarian conditions exacerbated by government interference, attacks and looting of supplies, violations of operating principles and an orchestrated public smear campaign. (Hutton, 2014:6)

With these data, we can see how the UN had to implement these two components – an Level 3 mobilisation and a new UNMISS mandate – through an integrated UN machine that reflexively supported the state but was, at the same time, in tension with the government.

On the one hand, tensions between the UN and government were growing significantly (UN field official 1, 2014; Personal communication with South Sudan government representative, 2014). Immediately following the outbreak of violence in South Sudan, the UN was criticised for not being outspoken enough against what the Salva Kiir government considered an attempted coup (Senior analyst, 2014). Instead, criticism had been meted out by the UN system – and the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in particular – to the government for how it had reacted to the crisis (ibid.). As one senior analyst with extensive experience of working in South Sudan put it:

There is an accusation from the government that the UN is supporting rebels. The government has been clear that they don't trust the UN anymore. The UN narrative has not been strong on what the government considers to have been a coup attempt. On the other side, the opposition

feels like there is sympathy from the UN. Hilde Johnson [the SRSG] was close to the SPLM and, more specifically, was close to those within the SPLM that were backed by the US. Many of those have left the government. (Senior analyst, 2014)

On the other hand, the UN faced difficulties in extracting itself from its prior support of the government and re-casting itself as a neutral actor (UN field official 1, 2014; UN field official 2, 2014). As one research participant queried, "how is that possible to do after two years of being hand in glove with the government?" (UN field official 1, 2014). This sudden attempt at neutrality was referred to as being "absurd" as the mission was still seeking permission from the SPLA for its patrols and, in some instances, the UNMISS actors had even been taking SPLA soldiers with them on patrols (ibid.).

What these data show is that, although the UN had, on paper, shifted away from supporting the government by shelving the CAP and changing the UNMISS mandate, in reality, it was trying to overcome tensions with the government by increasing collaboration to ensure that access constraints imposed by the government didn't grow. This observation is supported by the fact that a High Level Panel on access was created that included the UN, government of South Sudan and NGO representatives, but no representative of the opposition (UN field official 1, 2014).

However, the proximity to the government was not only in relation to access alone; as one research participant pointed out:

The UN and donors are moving back toward the government. The High Level Panel is an example of this. There is a concerted attempt to improve relations. This is partly out of fear of losing all of these state-building jobs and also after the recent criticism of them being too close to the opposition. (UN field official 1, 2014)

This reorientation toward the government was reflected in the actions of UN agencies. For example, in one interview with a UN official, it was recounted how "270 people were massacred inside a police base. The UN identified the government forces as perpetrators of this crime. And yet shortly after [the incident] the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) donated vehicles to the police." (UN field official 1, 2014). Although the UN was trying to recast relations with the government, there remained a growing sense of mistrust and frustration from the government (Personal communication with South Sudan government representative, 2014).

Also emerging from the data are indications that contributing to the tensions in the UNMISS set-up was the fact that UNMISS were planning to take a more proactive role in the protection of oil fields:

... the new troop contribution from China has already been linked in the media to the protection of oil installations ... China offered to send the additional troops if the US and other Security Council members included protecting the oil installations and civilian workers as part of the mandate. The same article quotes David Deng from the South Sudan Law Society pointing out that for the UN to protect oil facilities would be a strategic advantage for the government and 'cannot be seen as consistent with the role of a neutral peacekeeping force.' (Hutton, 2014:6)

However, the data suggest that it was more than just its role in protecting oil assets that made the UNMISS approach inconsistent with its supposedly neutral peacekeeping mandate:

... the new mandate provides that UNMISS should undertake 'specific operational coordination with the police services' in relation to the safe and voluntary return of IDPs and refugees. With UNMISS Human Rights reporting indicating GRSS uniformed personnel involvement in extensive human rights abuses, until the GRSS is seen as an impartial, rights-respecting provider of security services, there needs to be additional detail on situations and conditions under which UNMISS is willing to undertake specific operational coordination with the police. (ibid.)

As one research participant pointed out, "[t]he UNMISS mandate has become about protecting civilians and oil, while identifying people to be punished⁹ – all under a single banner that incorporates humanitarian actors." (UN field official 2, 2014). What these data suggest is that the large and clumsily integrated UN ship was sluggishly changing course from supporting resilience for a state-building end to supporting the delivery of services with the end of protecting civilians, all while desperately hanging onto hopes of returning to its state-building destination.

For NGOs in South Sudan, the integrated mission existed in more than just name:

Most NGOs have no option but to rely on UN resources. This means that their priorities are set by the clusters which reports to the HCT [Humanitarian Country Team] which is accountable to the DSRSG [Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General], who reports to the head of the UN mission. (MSF field staff 3, 2014)

⁹ As part of the UN system's political evolution, the new UNMISS mandate also included support to the Inter-Governmental Agency for Development (IGAD) peace process. Donors were putting funds into the IGAD Monitoring and Verification Teams which were hosted by UNMISS as the fourth pillar of their activities and were responsible for monitoring violations of ceasefire agreements, as well as identifying perpetrators of violations to be put on a sanctions list. Until the time of this research, no such direct consequences could be observed. However, warning signals were certainly there. Having ceasefire monitors so closely linked to UNMISS, which many NGOs were close to, could raise suspicion about discussions about humanitarian need being used for sanctions (UN field officials 1 & 2, 2014). As one research participant pointed out, "[t]he UN mission has in its mandate to support punitive measures. How do you discuss humanitarian issues when the information you gather could be used for punitive purposes?" (UN field official 2, 2014).

The majority of humanitarian funding in South Sudan was channelled through the UN-administered CHF (ibid.). When the UN was perceived to be supporting breakaway elements of the opposition under the leadership of Hilde Johnson, one government official pointed out, "you NGOs are seen as one and the same as the UN." (Personal conversation between researcher and government official, 2014) What this comment shows is the very real consequences for NGOs being seen as one with a politically compromised UN system.

"Our access is dependent on their acceptance"

This research clearly finds that the nature of the violence in South Sudan resulted in access constraints. More specifically, what the data demonstrate is that most of the access constraints within the UN system were self-imposed by the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) (UN field official 1, 2014). The consequences of this were pointed out by one senior aid worker, "[t]he UN doesn't really travel to frontline areas without a UNMISS base. We rely on UNMISS and UNDSS to be able to move around the country. Our access is dependent on their acceptance." (Senior NGO worker 3, 2014). What this tells us is that, in the case of South Sudan, the NGOs that relied on UN logistics capacity were, therefore, also reliant on the UN security assessments and greenlights.

That no NGO except MSF had invested in logistical capacity (in the form of aircraft) was partly due to funding constraints (Senior NGO worker 3, 2014; Major donor representative 2, 2014). However, in addition to reliance on the logistical capacity and acceptance of the UN mission, there was a high level of dependence on the UN funding mechanisms in South Sudan: "There is very little bilateral funding available for NGOs. The vast majority is through the UN system." (Senior NGO worker 5, 2014). A group of NGOs requesting big donors to fund an independent logistics capacity were turned down, as donors preferred to invest in improving the UN logistics cluster (Senior NGO worker 3, 2014; Major donor representative 2, 2014).

Although NGOs had a voice on various aid-system platforms in South Sudan, such as the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), there were very few that took on macro-level battles. "It is clear that the integrated mission is here to stay. It is not something that is up for discussion", said one aid worker (Senior NGO worker 5, 2014). Others more cynically pointed out that NGOs didn't want to push back on UNMISS because their own failure could be hidden in a larger system. "NGOs don't want to push back. They are not performing and their proximity to UNMISS is comfortable." (UN field worker 1, 2014). One UN worker criticised MSF for its contribution to the HCT where they felt the MSF voice was

"neutralised by the likes of Toby Lanzer and co-opted to reduce the criticism of the aid architecture – because even MSF is willing to collaborate." (UN field official 2, 2014).

One of the UN agencies identified as being highly respected in this research was the UN OCHA, in particular for its role in defending a semblance of humanitarian independence, something that OCHA saw as essential to its ability to negotiate access (MSF South Sudan field staff 3, 2014; Senior UN official 1, 2014). This was seen as a risk by the UN leadership:

... the HC [Humanitarian Co-ordinator] expressed concern about the fact that the OCHA head of office had no reporting line to him and that he had no say in the functioning and management of the OCHA office. At the same time, stakeholders reported to the review team that the HC did not fully empower or give OCHA the space or vote of confidence to do its job. (Operational Peer Review [OPR] draft report, 2014:5)

Risks versus benefit

In a scathing analysis in a 2014 internal MSF report, UNMISS's response to the needs of displaced persons seeking refuge on its bases was summed up as follows:

... the mission is so engrossed in itself that it is frozen and in a state of operational paralysis, embroiled in discussions, complications, and planning options. In so doing the UN has become incapable of both providing and protecting a mere 20 000 people that have simplified all assistance processes to the minimum – they have regrouped inside their spacious (or should I say precious) compound, in the most accessible location in South Sudan, and in obvious acute need of the most basic assistance and protection – nothing too complicated one would expect for the state of the art comprehensive military and humanitarian response machinery of UNMISS. The non-response is simply shocking. The IDPs [Internally Displaced People] have been placed in the worst areas of the UNMISS site, some in the drainage zone of the airstrip. As the light early rains have started, a pre-teaser of the full horror of the situation is emerging, yet UNMISS seems to be stuck in the continued form of paralysis it has been in for 2 months. NGOs, and ACTED (the camp managers) in particular, are proposing possible improvements to the site, pointing at solutions to alleviate the inhumane situation IDPs are subjected to: Using the more elevated UN car park; looking at the container park zone; requesting extensions here or there to allow the construction of latrines and water points in dry zones. All seem to be too complicated to even contemplate. (Internal MSF visit report, 2014)

The above data suggest that the UN integration of political, humanitarian, development and peacekeeping in South Sudan posed clear risks, but apparently little benefit. Certainly, the benefits of this integration were not seen by the people who sought refuge at the UNMISS bases. However, additional data show how the lack of performance by UNMISS on its bases was not unique to the UN community.

NGOs and the quasi-development approach in emergencies

However, it is not only the UN that is at fault in South Sudan. Many interviewees referred to the delayed response from NGOs and the attempt by many organisations to return to a business-as-usual approach:

"NGOs fled and then returned to conduct quasi-development projects because that is what they had funding for and that is what they were doing before. Many found it very difficult to adapt." (UN field official 2, 2014). "A lot of people are operating in a business-as-usual approach." (UN field official 1, 2014).

However, not all organisations withdrew completely:

Some had managed to maintain operationality if they had already been there. They tried to hang on. One organisation that I know about stayed; but when you dig further – it was one national staff clinical officer that stayed who did not get resupplied. This is more in the category of a heroic individual than an operational response. (MSF HQ staff 9, 2014)

According to a draft of the Operational Peer Review (OPR) document, which evaluated the implementation of the Level 3 emergency:

From the moment the crisis hit, it was clear that the humanitarian community would not be able to do everything and that difficult decisions would need to be made. Thus, from the outset, there was a clear vision and prioritization for the humanitarian response, for which the HC and HCT should be commended. However, insufficient capacity did not allow for a quick scale-up to enable the adequacy of response in line with that vision. This is due to a number of factors outlined in this report, including the evacuation of staff and their slow return and the difficulty of 'switching programming gears from development to humanitarian emergency' to respond to the new context. Overall, the scale and speed of delivery is inadequate to meet the needs, including for the most vulnerable. Funding (insufficient and delayed), logistical, human resources, security and political constraints are impeding internationally-agreed standards in response. (2014:2)

This slow adaptation led to a delayed response:

Why are we so late? It's six months after the crisis started and most of us are still trying to gear up. It's not as if there were no emergencies in South Sudan before this one. No lessons were learnt from last year's emergency response to the refugee crisis [in Maban]. We were still not prepared. We were all convinced that by doing our development programmes and by building resilience we would avoid the humanitarian crises. We were wrong. (Senior NGO worker 4, 2014)

As the OPR draft report summarises:

With the relative stability of the country since independence, programming was geared towards state-building and development activities. The crisis required a shift to emergency programmes, which required 'deep field' emergency response capacity and humanitarian funding. Organizations reported that some donors restricted the use of development funds to meet the urgent needs of affected populations, although some donors reported to the review team that measures were being introduced to allow flexibility of development funding. However, given the large influence of seasonality on programming in South Sudan – these shifts, while welcomed, may be occurring too late. (2014:4)

Apparent on the ground in South Sudan was the large NGOs' absence from the emergency response (Field Research Diary, Juba: 2014). Smaller organisations, not best known for their global emergency-response capacity, managed to step up. For example, one research participant pointed out that "ACTED, Medair and Samaritans Purse are some of the key emergency responders in South Sudan" (MSF field staff 3, 2014). The draft OPR document made a similar observation, singling out ACTED and Medair. However, as the research participant queried, "[w]here are the big agencies?" (MSF field staff 3, 2014).

The impact

From these data, what can be deduced is that, in the context of South Sudan, state-building under an integrated-development model led to degradation of basic humanitarian-aid capacity. Donors, the UN system and NGOs bear responsibility for this. When the violence broke out, and in the first months of the emergency, these organisations seemed paralysed and disconnected from events. The data gathered for this research strongly suggest that the causes of this disconnection, paralysis and degradation are inextricable from the conceptual approach of aid organisations. As Hutton summarises:

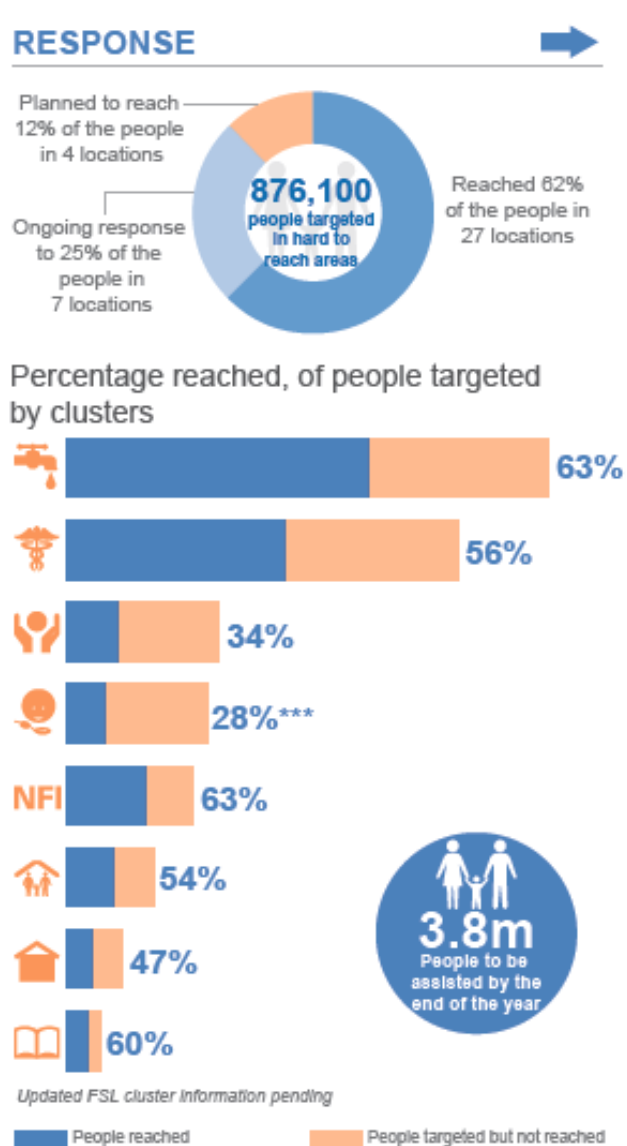
The conceptual inclinations of international interventionism in South Sudan veer frequently between strategic end goals, negotiated deadlines and longer-term developmental needs, all seemingly lacking sound theories of change to link intentions with the realities of South Sudan. (2014:7)

The data show how decisions in the first two phases of aid response following the CPA, combined with the delicate balancing act performed by the UN after the outbreak of violence in 2013/14, left the aid architecture politically compromised. The hangover of the state-building era was felt particularly in the health cluster, where concerns were raised about the ability of the cluster to ensure delivery:

There is a concern that some clusters which were well integrated into government structures prior to the crisis, may not be able to ensure equitable and neutral access and delivery. This particularly affects the health cluster given that the Ministry of Health coordinates the medicine and supplies chain as well as the disease surveillance system. (OPR draft report 2014:7)

Those in charge of the aid system clearly left the humanitarian components politically exposed.

However, the data also suggest that this political exposure was not offset by increased ability to access difficult-to-reach parts of South Sudan. If the benefits of following a state-building agenda had outweighed the risks, there would be fewer grounds for criticism; however, the inability of the aid-system in South Sudan to address needs on their doorstep is merely the most obvious example of their inability to move from capacity-building to direct action (Major donor representative 1, 2014).



Source: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/243cb1f0-0980-4423-a491-92455693b38d.pdf>

Figure 4.2: Percentage of the target population reached in South Sudan disaggregated according to cluster

According to OCHA, in July 2014, only 25 per cent. of those in South Sudan in need of assistance were receiving it.

December to May there was a shrinking operational footprint. In the last couple of months it has increased a bit. There is a slight improvement. On the other hand, there is an exponential increase in the needs. It is scale up compared to where we were some months ago, not compared to needs. (MSF HQ staff, 2014)

The consequences of this macro-model of aid delivery could be seen in the poor mobility and low levels of independence of aid actors across South Sudan, leading donors and the UN to divide areas as accessible and "hard to reach" (Major donor representative 1, 2014; Major donor representative 2, 2014; Senior UN official 2, 2014).

Justifying failure

The two explanations given most often during this research for the slow response in South Sudan were that there were difficult-to-reach areas and that there was a lack of funding. In examining these two explanations in more detail, and comparing them with data collected in the interviews and primary-source documentary analysis, it was revealed that the explanations either failed as explanations for the situation or were disingenuous, as both ignored the effects of the political choices made by humanitarian organisations.

Difficult-to-reach areas

In a map produced by an MSF humanitarian adviser that compared areas facing high levels of food insecurity with those with humanitarian actors present, it was shown that areas of highest need had the lowest presence of actors (Email correspondence between researcher and MSF representative, 2014). This was most obviously the case in northern Jonglei and southern parts of Upper Nile (ibid.).

A number of explanations for this were noted, including: risk aversion (Senior NGO worker 3, 2014; Senior NGO worker 4, 2014); the wrong profile of human resources (Senior NGO worker 4, 2014); and the logistical costs of operating in isolated areas (Senior NGO worker 4, 2014; Major donor representative 3, 2014). Considering the politics guiding the creation of the aid architecture presented above (see "*The impact*"), the most interesting reasons for this lack of coverage was that NGOs did not have their own logistics capacity (Senior NGO worker 3, 2014; Senior NGO worker 4, 2014) and were reliant on the UN system to negotiate access and security (UN field official 1, 2014; UN field official 2, 2014). These obstacles became more difficult to overcome as the government of South Sudan increased restrictions on NGOs as it viewed the UN system with growing suspicion.

The data reveal that these restrictions increasingly took the form of bureaucratic burdens (MSF South Sudan field staff 3, 2014; Senior UN official 1, 2014). Registration requirements became more complicated and information requirements, particularly in relation to staff, became more stringent (ibid.). This period also saw permission to work in certain areas being denied (UN field official 1, 2014). "The government openly said that it aimed to base its NGO policies on best practices such as HAC in Khartoum" (ibid.). The Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) is infamous among aid workers globally as one of the most obstructive government departments in hampering humanitarian access (Loeb, 2013).

The aid system in South Sudan was also haunted by the ghosts of Operation Lifeline Sudan:

The government and the opposition have the same level of expectations of how aid will be provided. And the conflict dynamics are already showing the tactic of using captive populations to attract humanitarian action. (UN field official 1, 2014)

Insecurity no doubt played a role in the scaling down of activities in South Sudan, as evidenced by many field locations being evacuated and many NGOs operating on a remote-control models due to concerns about returning to deep-field locations in the midst of such instability (Senior NGO worker 3, 2014). These explanations, however, do not fully discharge the question of why humanitarian activities were scaled down; the inability to manage insecurity was exactly the problem, as there was no culture of negotiated access within the organisations operating in South Sudan (UN field official 1, 2014; Senior NGO worker 5, 2014).

As can be seen in the data, the model many organisations had been using was a model of support for one group (the government). A culture of negotiated access is essential in contexts where frontlines are fluid and a need to support multiple parties at odds with one another may emerge. For example, at the time of this research, the cities of Malakal and Bentiu had changed hands 12 times since the start of the crisis (Operational Support Review document, 2014:2).

There was a need for organisations to shift approach and to become more mobile. However, many responded by first leaving and then returning in a very cautious way. When many organisations returned, we realised that there is no culture of negotiating access among the NGO community in South Sudan. There is a reliance on a third party. In addition to this, the reprioritisation of activities was slow to happen. (Major donor representative 2, 2014)

A further reason why the appeal to inaccessibility is difficult to stomach as an explanation for the slow response in South Sudan is that there had been a slow reaction even in easily accessible areas. This is shown (see "*Risk versus benefit*" above) by the UN failures in addressing needs in camps in their compounds.

The capacity of organisations to respond to emergencies has been very low. Many say that it is difficult to reach some areas. However, we have even seen a slow response in places three hours out of Juba. MSF was the one who first responded in these areas. We have seen the same in the Protection of Civilian sites (POCs). (Major donor representative 2, 2014)

Lack of funding

The second reason given by NGOs and the UN for their slow response was lack of funding. This contradicts certain data gathered in this research. First, it is not clear that the organisations present could have absorbed more funds for emergency-response work (Major

donor representative 2, 2014). As one donor noted, NGOs without global funding have particular difficulty shifting toward emergencies because they cannot put money upfront and recover costs later (Major donor representative 2, 2014). As noted by two interviewees, "NRC [Norwegian Refugee Council] and Save the Children have a surge capacity but they do not have a supply and logistics capacity to meet this kind of environment" (Major donor representative 2, 2014) and "[t]he capacity of NGOs is a big issue. It is not just about funding" (Major donor representative 3, 2014).

The loudest calls for more funding came in the response to food insecurity. In the face of growing need, the UN leadership resorted to issuing premature warnings of a looming famine (Elder, 2014). Parts of South Sudan certainly faced high food insecurity at the time of this research (MSF, 2014), but, if anything, this should be explained as an 'ethnic famine', meaning that the ethnic groups most affected by clashes would be disproportionately affected by growing rates of malnutrition (Personal communication with MSF South Sudan field worker, 2014). However, in 2014, levels of food insecurity did not represent a nation-wide famine (*ibid.*).

Moreover, the areas most affected by food insecurity were those areas classified as 'hard to reach' (MSF HQ staff 14, 2014). Therefore, it is as plausible that slow response to food insecurity was less about insufficient funding than the humanitarian actors' mobility and independence from a leaden, sluggish and politically compromised UN system.

Faced with an unprecedented crisis, the UN's Emergency Response Co-ordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valarie Amos, sent a letter on 31 July 2014 to what seemed to be a group of different NGOs. In the letter, she noted "the need to deploy the best staff from key partner agencies." She went on to explain how supporting staff with the creation of "humanitarian hubs, sleeping containers as well as greater access to electricity and latrines" would attract the most skilled humanitarian staff to the area. She concluded the letter by acknowledging the funding shortfalls and asking to hear "your thoughts on how you could strengthen your capacity." (Amos letter, 2014).

These data make clear that the only concrete action proposed by the highest humanitarian official in the UN system was to try to attract higher-quality staff for deep-field work by addressing living conditions in the field. Although such measures were no doubt of importance, proposing this solution to the group of NGOs was an example of how actors in the UN system could not see how their political decisions – which saw little resistance from an NGO community following the money – had bogged down humanitarian response capacity.

Conclusion to Research Findings I

The first phase of this research identified competing narratives among aid practitioners who acknowledge that the humanitarian system had shortcomings in its emergency-response capacity. There were those research participants who affirmed the need to increase the technical capacity of humanitarian actors – often in their ability to engage with the state – to build resilience. On the other hand, there were those who expressed concerns that humanitarian actors had lost their way and that the effectiveness of incorporating development and humanitarian aid was questionable.

In the case of South Sudan, this research has suggested and provided evidence that the incorporation of humanitarian aid into a largely Western donor-driven state-building agenda undermined the ability of humanitarian actors to respond to emergencies and, therefore, undermined a definitional core of humanitarian action. These data do not present a critique of state-building as an end, but they do show that an integrated approach to state-building came, in the case of South Sudan, at the expense of humanitarian actors staying true to their core purposes: saving lives and alleviating suffering.

Therefore, this research points to a crisis of capacity facing the humanitarian system, a crisis that has at least some of its causal origins in the Western-led liberal-democratic process of state-building. What these findings have not demonstrated, however, is how changing global power dynamics and the identity of humanitarian aid as Western could affect the ability of organisations to access areas and assist the most vulnerable. This will be explored in the following chapter, "*Research findings II – Humanitarian identity and access*".

Chapter 5: Research Findings II – Humanitarian identity and access

If the effectiveness of humanitarian actors is affected by their ties to Western power, as indicated by the data in "*Chapter 4: Research findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity*", what other effects does this proximity have? Does it, for instance, affect the ability of humanitarian organisations to gain access to conflict zones?

The literature did not address this question directly. Instead, it focused on how humanitarian access is based on negotiation and that humanitarian access has always been contested (Donini, 2012a; Smillie, 2012; Minear, 2012; Magone et al., 2012). What this literature did not look at was how the identity of humanitarian aid as linked to Western power could affect the limits of where institutional humanitarian actors are able to operate.

Through 19 semi-structured interviews, the first phase of this research identified whether the Western identity of humanitarian action was a problem. To test the validity of this group's self-appraisal, a range of academics and civil-society actors in South Africa were also interviewed for this phase of the research. The data from both sets of interviews were contrasted to see if there was any incoherence in the narratives and views of these two groups.

The case study was then carried out to explore what role, if any, identity played in Syria in constraining the areas in which humanitarian aid could be delivered. Two examples of access constraints were examined: the inability of MSF to establish an official presence in Damascus between 2012 and 2013; and the security incidents in 2014 in northern Syria that resulted in the withdrawal of MSF international staff from the country.

The case-study research was carried out through an extensive review of primary documents in the form of media clippings and publicly available reports (such as UN Human Rights monitoring reports or reports from NGOs). Additionally, 20 field interviews (in addition to the 19 interviews conducted in the first phase of the research) were conducted with members of diaspora networks, solidarity groups and other informal aid-provider networks based in Beirut, and MSF field and headquarter staff based in Lebanon, Turkey and Belgium. A rich source of primary data – in the form of direct observations by the researcher during time spent in Syria – enhances the above-mentioned research data. These field observations included visits to areas directly affected by conflict and involved discussions with a wide

range of Syrians, including members of the army and opposition, businesspeople and members of the general public. Very few other researchers have obtained such access in so dangerous and difficult a context. Extensive discussions were held with many who responded to the researcher while attempting to survive in a life-threatening context and experiencing overwhelming need. All observations presented as findings of this field research were recorded in a field-research diary.

A more detailed description of the nature and importance of the data will be given at each stage of presenting these findings.

Aid practitioners' understanding of the Western identity of humanitarian action

One theme emerging in the first phase of data collection was a significant scepticism about whether the Western identity of humanitarian action was a problem for access in any but a small number of situations. It is worth pointing out that all the research participants that expressed scepticism at the notion that a Western identity might be problematic for access were European. The data reveal a number of justifications for this position.

For instance, some interviewees thought that many of the challenges posed by the Western identity of institutional humanitarianism were due to misunderstandings of the goals of humanitarian aid. As one participant asked, "[t]he question is – how has the message gone so wrong, how have we been so misunderstood that our colleagues have been murdered so brutally?" (Senior international organisation representative 2, 2012). This finding in the interview data is mirrored by the discourse on managing perception seen in the literature (see "*Chapter 3: Literature Review – Part 2: Deconstructing humanitarian space – The non-existent golden age of humanitarianism*") (Abu-Sada, 2012).

Another participant insisted that the core DNA of a humanitarian act is not Western and that problems associated with a Western identity are linked to problems of social interaction rather than humanitarianism's association with the West.

We should distinguish between social forms of humanitarianism – spontaneous forms of compassion which exist throughout the world in all societies throughout history and then organised and international forms of relief, or however you characterise it, which has been branded humanitarianism. This is the Western contribution. It is a historical fact. Many people accept it, I think. And probably it may be better accepted in many parts of Africa and Asia than it is in humanitarian circles in Europe. Now, if you behave like a colonial boss, then you are a bastard and you deserve whatever happens to you. That is something else. That is shameful and unacceptable – but it is not in the DNA of humanitarianism itself – but in the DNA of social relations. (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012)

Indeed, a Western identity is not something that has systematically resulted in access constraints for humanitarian workers and the view that it is at the root of all access problems was considered overly simple by many who contested that the Western identity of humanitarianism is a problem for access. For example:

Sometimes having a Western identity is an asset. Sometimes it is a weakness. In many countries in Africa where we have our main field experience, I would say that all in all it was more positive than negative. (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012)

For those with this understanding, the risk of being understood as an imperialist vanguard was seen as something exceptional and, therefore, not worthy of being understood as a problem in its own right but as something the effects of which are mainly seen as ramifying with other dynamics in play (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012; MSF HQ staff 8, 2014). One research participant made the point that the risk of seeing the challenges of access as being purely about a problem of identity could result in a "clash of civilisations" discourse that, in turn, would risk creating us-versus-them dynamics (ibid.).¹⁰

Other participants took a different view. They saw the challenges posed by the identity of humanitarianism as being a consequence of the reality of how Western humanitarian action is undertaken rather than a consequence of a misperception (Senior donor representative 1, 2012; MSF HQ staff 2; 2012; International organisation representative 2, 2012). "Why are we being perceived as white, Western and Christian? It is because we are white, Western and Christian." (Senior donor representative 1, 2012).

The challenge of identity was quickly pointed out by many interviewees as being a core challenge: "We carry with us the baggage of a Western liberal agenda that is either being militaristically imposed in places like Afghanistan or being advanced through commercial economic capitalist expansion. We are part of all of that." (MSF HQ staff 2, 2012). Another participant noted "[w]e have been Western and paternalistic since the get-go." (International organisation representative 2, 2012).

Some participants expressed frustration that the identity of humanitarian action is not fully understood or acknowledged as a problem:

This is partially understood, but underestimated and obscured by a false sense of independence. Some still believe that a Western identity is essential to the humanitarian principles, believed to be rooted in Western, European enlightenment. (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014)

¹⁰ The "clash of civilisations" theory was developed by Huntington and refers to a clash between cultural and religious identities as the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War era (Huntington, 1996).

This structural relationship between humanitarian actors and Western power was identified as having an effect on the operational decisions of aid organisations, something also reflected in the literature on the history of humanitarian aid. For example, one research participant who worked for MSF – an organisation widely considered to be among the most independent in its relationship with Western donors – pointed out that "[i]n Afghanistan we de facto associated ourselves with the agenda of reconstruction. Iraq was the same. We were led by a public-health agenda that was in no way opposing the global agenda of the Western powers." (MSF HQ staff 3, 2012).

Although this finding does not suggest a direct relationship between MSF activities and Western power, it does show that MSF activities were not politically separated from Western agendas. The research participant went on to point out how:

... we never publically stood against the use of torture in Abu Graib or Guantanamo, which could have appeared as very strong gestures that we were not siding with the occupiers. Whether this is strategic, ideological or just a matter of neglect – this is not very clear to me. (ibid.)

This lack of distinction from the global agenda of Western power is not a new problem – as was demonstrated in the literature review (see "*Chapter 2: Literature review – Part 1 – Humanitarian aid and Hegemonic power*"). This issue was emphasised by one research participant who pointed out how, during the Cold War, "the East didn't want us and we didn't want them either. We had our little sandbox and we played in it." (International organisation representative 2, 2012).

This problem of MSF actions being indistinguishable from actions taken by those acting in furtherance of Western political agendas was identified by a group of research participants as having been accentuated by the events of 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror (International organisation representative 1, 2012; International organisation representative 2, 2012; Senior NGO worker 1, 2012). "We are waking up to the problem that we are in bed with the West. It suited us up until now but actually our future doesn't necessarily lie here." (International organisation representative, 2012).

One event emphasised by one interviewee as having been overlooked in common understandings of the post-9/11 era was the assassination of Osama Bin Ladin in Abbottabad: "We probably totally underestimated the Abbottabad attack [where Osama bin Laden was assassinated]." (Senior IO worker 1, 2012). The assassination of Osama Bin Ladin cemented a link between Western humanitarian action and Western political interests (ibid.). Indeed, the Abbottabad attack was "a non-authorized special operation on the territory of an ally of

the United States – at least a former ally – which was made possible by the infiltration of a humanitarian agency by American intelligence services." (ibid.).

When it [the information] came out [in the media] we failed to react. I believe that this was observed by all radical Islamic movements around the world. And that probably confirmed the worst doubts they have about humanitarian agencies. (ibid.)

The worst doubt is that there is a direct link between humanitarian action and military operations or, at best, that humanitarian organisations "are not able to prevent infiltration" (ibid.). This fear, of course, was amplified when it became clear that "the West was ready to operate with special operations anytime and anywhere if it was in their interests and if they have sufficient intelligence." (ibid.). "The effect was felt even stronger because it added on 10 years of compromise with the principle of independence by most humanitarian organisations in Afghanistan." (ibid.).

As another senior aid worker noted:

Our access is complicated and coloured by recent history. Whether we want to accept it or not, Iraq and Afghanistan in particular has produced divisions between representatives of the West as we are seen and the Islamic world, and the developing world as a whole actually. (Senior NGO worker 1, 2012)

The implied universality of the split between humanitarian actors aligned with either the Western world or the developing world as a whole was reaffirmed by another research participant:

It is misplaced to just think that humanitarian actors face problems of identity in places where there are radical Muslims or dictators. In most parts of Africa, there is a concern of how to get out of the neo-colonial grip of Western powers. There is a desire to industrialise and develop and they see many humanitarian and development NGOs as opposing the pan-African interest because they are promoting a free-market approach to development – an approach that is increasingly being questioned. (Senior academic 1, 2012)

These perspectives are important because they highlight the possibility that the present relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power results in a broader contest over the delivery of humanitarian aid that, although deepened by the events of 9/11, is not confined to the War on Terror.

In exploring whether the Western identity of humanitarian aid has implications for access, one participant pointed out that the identity of humanitarian action strongly correlated to the types of difficulties faced in conflict zones.

It makes the classic negotiations which we all saw ourselves as doing when we came into humanitarianism as, now, obviously more complex to the extent that we have to think very seriously about what sort of people we are putting up to negotiate with different groups. (Senior NGO worker 1, 2012)

This questioning of the profile of humanitarian actors is the most direct acknowledgment of the problems associated with a Western identity in some current conflicts:

If I am going to send 15 staff to Yemen, should I make sure they are all African or Pakistani? Do I want to send a blonde, blue-eyed northern European? Probably not. The guys with the guns are telling me not to in fact. I can send in expats, just not from the West. (ibid.)

For this research, it was necessary both to understand how humanitarian workers interpreted these dynamics and to interview senior and influential analysts and academics with personal distance from the humanitarian field but with an understanding of how it works. One senior South Africa-based academic – who is also a major public figure and veteran of the anti-apartheid struggle – had the following thoughts on what the purpose of humanitarian aid is, with particular reference to MSF. "I think that MSF is interested in two things. One is to save lives. But there is a second desire, more implicit, and that is to create the environment in which autocrats are overthrown." (Senior academic 1, 2012)

The participant pointed out that there was a "democratic agenda" implicit in the conduct of humanitarian aid that sought to create "the social conditions for regimes to be taken out." (ibid.). This perception of the work of MSF is important because it shows a broader view that the role of humanitarian aid is, at least in part, supporting the political agendas of Western power. As one civil-society activist in South Africa pointed out:

... [it is the] anger at what colonisation and imperialism has done to Africa and other parts of the world that makes civil society suspicious of MSF. If not suspicious, then it lumps MSF in the same category as that of the imperialist forces. (Civil-society representative 2, 2014)

These data are important as they suggest that the concern identified in the previous dataset regarding a false 'clash of civilisations' is not a clash between the West and the other, but rather a rejection of humanitarian aid by those who have observed the relationship between humanitarian action and Western power and who have suffered the negative consequences of such power.

Has this rejection actually resulted in less access for humanitarian workers? One respondent was adamant in reflecting on their experiences of MSF, "[t]he long-term trend for MSF is to have less access to conflict areas. Two main factors have led to this: proliferation of kidnap

and stronger emphasis of state sovereignty." (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014). The question, then, is whether the Western identity of aid providers plays a role in provoking an assertion of sovereignty or in making them susceptible to abduction.

Following this initial data collection, the case-study research on Syria was conducted to further explore whether the Western identity of humanitarian aid had implications for access.

Syria is an arena of power struggles that span the local, regional and global spectrum. This therefore creates extreme problems of humanitarian access. It was for this reason that Syria was chosen as a case study. Two specific examples of access constraints in Syria were chosen. The first example was the rejection of MSF from accessing Damascus in 2012/2013. This example explores what the data collected suggest could be the rejection of humanitarian aid due to the assertion of sovereignty. The second example was the abduction of MSF staff in 2014 that resulted in the withdrawal of international staff from Syria. The specific question that was asked in relation to both of these incidents was: What role did the Western identity of humanitarian aid play in the access constraints faced by MSF? Based on these data, it was possible to determine whether the Western identity of humanitarian aid played a role in setting the limits to humanitarian access and action.

The polarised politics of humanitarian aid and the constraints in the delivery of aid in Syria

Setting the stage: geopolitical chaos

This section explores the many regional fault lines that shape the war in Syria. These fault lines have been shown to exist at a macro-level between East and West, on a regional–sectarian level between Sunni and Shia and, within the Sunni bloc, between different strands of political Islam. Running across each of these fault lines is the defining feature of Middle Eastern political awareness, the Arab–Israeli conflict. Understanding these dynamics is essential to being able to map the remit of Western power in the Syria war and understanding how changing power dynamics have influenced the conduct of hostilities and the humanitarian landscape.

The analysis of the conflict presented below is developed from three sources: the researcher's extensive field work in Syria and the broader region which provided insight into many of these dynamics; the limited, but growing, academic writing on the Syria war; and a collection and analysis of various primary-data media-clippings and publically available reports (for example, reports from the UN or NGOs) on the conflict and its political dynamics. This analysis seeks to show that the Syria war offers a window into a disordered

world of shifting alliances, Cold War-style global bi-polarity incorporating opposing interests from Russia and the US, and competing regional hegemonies, together resulting in a messy multi-polarity.

From shortly after the 2011 outbreak of the civil war in Syria, there has been a clear sectarian division between the Sunni majority and the Shia-aligned Alawite sect that was largely in control of the core apparatus of the state (Achcar, 2013; Van Dam, 2011; Heydemann & Leenders, 2013; Al-Azm, 2014; Fisk, 2014a; Personal communication with leading Syrian opposition political figure, 2013; Personal communication with Syrian army officer, 2014).

However, even analysing the conflict under the rubric of sectarianism is a contested method. Salloukh refers to the sectarianism of the Middle East as "geopolitics by other means" (2013:34). Chit (2014), on the other hand, has pointed out that sectarianism can be considered a form of distorted class struggle. Indeed, in the case of Syria, sectarian tensions overlapped with a core–periphery divide most regularly manifest between the urban centre and the rural periphery of the country (Van Dam, 2011; Heydemann & Leenders, 2013; Al-Azm, 2014).

The Syrian conflict did not take place in isolation from regional dynamics. The geopolitics of the region were most recently shaped by the US invasion of Iraq and the resultant instability (Salloukh, 2013). "Washington's growing troubles in Iraq, and Iran's ability to assume a dominant role in post-Saddam Iraq, altered the geostrategic balance of power in the region, tipping it in Tehran's favour." (Salloukh, 2013:34–35). The geopolitical confrontation that ensued has taken the form of "a Saudi–Iranian contest over regional dominance" which has played out across the region from Bahrain to Syria (ibid.). These two would-be hegemonies squared off in the Syria war, with Saudi Arabia actively backing the armed opposition and Iran propping up the Syrian regime who, together with Hizbollah, are known as the 'rejectionist axis' or 'axis of resistance' against Zionist Israel (Bhalla, 2014; El Husseini, 2010).

While Saudi Arabia is the US's closest ally in the Middle East, the Axis of resistance receives much of its broader geostrategic support from Russia and China and plays an anti-imperialist role in the region (El Husseini, 2010; Fisk, 2014a).

Riyadh's determination to reorient Syria away from 'the axis of resistance' toward the Saudi–US camp developed into an overlapping regional–international geopolitical contest pitting

Saudi Arabia, the US, France, Turkey, Qatar and Saad al-Hariri's Future Movement [in Lebanon] against Iran, Russia, China and Hezbollah. (Salloukh, 2013:34–35)¹¹

The outer-limits of Western influence in the region therefore extend into the Gulf, and are resisted by the axis of Iran, Hizbollah and Syria.

This narrative of two competing regional hegemony backed by the old Cold War divides does not do full justice to the complexity of the region. There exist strong regional rivalries within the Sunni bloc that are being played out in the Syria war, with Qatar wanting to play a more central role in the region but often backing different rebel formations to its rival Saudi Arabia (Oweis, 2014; Stephens, 2012). Turkey, for its part, broke ties with its former ally Assad. Turkey's "policy of grandeur" in the region has been an integral element of the re-emergence of its power and the projection of a "moralist and humanitarian, as well as national security discourse on the Syrian case." (Demirtas-Bagdonas, 2014:140). This has meant Turkey has supported elements of the armed Syrian opposition that were Islamist, but not with a transnational agenda (Lund, 2014).

The tactics and firepower of Hizbollah, who engaged in street battles against the opposition, has been seen by some observers of the conflict as the tipping point back in favour of the Syrian army who had, until Hizbollah's involvement, been losing ground to the fragmented opposition (Aji, 2014; Mroue, 2014). However, the involvement of the group in the Syria war has raised tensions in Lebanon (Nakhoul, 2013).

With the rise of the Islamic State in Syria, the already murky battle lines were re-drawn and elements of the armed opposition that were within Western influence became increasingly hostile to the West and its regional allies. The Islamic State – born out of the disenfranchised post-Iraq War Sunni militias – extended itself into Syria and managed to capture large swathes of the country (Laub & Masters, 2014; Spark, 2014). The Islamic State was fighting alongside the same Syrian opposition groups that were battling the Iranian- and Hizbollah-backed Syrian government (ibid.). Ironically, the ranks of the Islamic State had been boosted when Assad released thousands of Islamists from regime jails in 2012 (Levy, 2014; Spark, 2014).

Iraq– at the time under the leadership of Maliki – was leaning toward regarding Iran as its closest ally (Abdul-Zahra & Murphy, 2012). Power dynamics in the region shifted in early 2014, with some pointing to the ousting of Prince Bander (Black, 2014a) – the Saudi intelligence chief who was accused of backing the Islamic State – being the turning point

¹¹ The Future Movement headed by Saad Hariri represents the dominant Sunni political faction in Lebanon.

(Cockburn, 2014). The growing frustration of the Syrian opposition with the radical Islamic State – who was considered by some to be deterring further Western support for moderate opposition groups – translated into the declaration of war by large parts of the Syrian opposition against the by now well-established Islamic State group (AFP, 2014). The Islamic State shifted its approach, kidnapping foreigners and selling them back to their governments for exorbitant ransoms (Dettmer, 2014). By mid-2014, the Islamic State made a push on Iraq and captured the strategic town of Mosul, as well as large oil reserves (Fisk, 2014b).

In 2014, the US turned on Malaki (De Young, 2014) and installed a more favoured leader that requested US airstrikes against the Islamic State, who had, by that stage, decapitated a number of Western hostages on camera, leading to public outcry (Crilly, 2014). Air strikes commenced in late 2014 with a US coalition – including the Gulf States – fighting the same enemy as the Iranian, Hizbollah and Damascus government (Pizzi & Karon, 2014).

On the ground, the fighting forces most effective against the Islamic State were the Turkish government's arch-enemies, the Kurds. In Iraq, arms were channelled to Kurdish fighters, while the Kurds in Syria, linked to the terrorist-designate PKK, were sidelined (Salih, 2014). In October 2014, in light of its NATO membership, criticism grew of Turkey's role in allowing Islamic State fighters to enter Syria in the first place, and for failing to join the coalition fight against the Islamic State, which would have required Turkey to fight alongside Kurdish forces (Martin, 2014; De Young & Sly, 2014). Instead, Turkey increased its criticism of the Syrian regime, calling for it to be toppled as part of the fight against the Islamic State (Al Akhbar English, 2014).

Entwined with many of these dynamics was the ever-pervasive Arab–Israeli conflict. Until 2012, Hamas – aligned to the Muslim Brotherhood – had its headquarters-in-exile in Damascus (Akram, 2012). When war broke out in Syria, Hamas was left in a politically difficult position. It had to choose between its primary backers, made up of Iran, Syria and Hizbollah on the one hand and the Muslim Brotherhood on the other (Personal communication with Hizbollah member, 2014). Iran, Hizbollah and Syria founded much of their political rhetoric on the resistance to the Zionist enemy, whereas the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gulf was a natural ally of the politically Islamist Hamas movement (ibid.).

Hamas chose the Gulf – again blurring the lines by moving closer to the West's allies. Hamas' leadership left Damascus, striking a blow to the discourse that the instability in the country was a plot to weaken the axis of resistance (Akram, 2012). One of the most gruelling battles near Damascus subsequently took place in the Palestinian camp of Yarmouk, with

various armed Palestinian factions joining either the Syrian opposition groups or the Syrian armed forces (Jokhadar, 2014).

It is within this context that this case-study research sought to understand how aid was delivered and what effect the Western identity of aid providers had on their access. To be able to answer this question, it was first necessary to understand the nature of the hostilities in Syria. Understanding the hostilities provided a way to better determine how the above-mentioned geopolitical factors influenced the on-the-ground reality having direct consequence on the ability of aid to be delivered. It further provided a way to extricate those consequences for aid delivery provoked by the Western identify of actors and those stemming from other sources.

The conduct of hostilities was explored by reviewing extensive media clippings, online material and publically available reports on the dynamics of the Syria war. This was complemented by direct observations by the researcher, who spent time in Syria during the research period, and semi-structured interviews with Syrian refugees who had recently arrived in Beirut. These data provided an understanding of the conflict that enabled a foundation for an investigation into the way aid was delivered and the constraints actors trying to deliver it encountered.

No limits? An exploration of the conduct of hostilities in the Syria war

The data collected on the nature of the Syrian conflict have overwhelmingly demonstrated that it is an immensely brutal war, continuing a trend in contemporary conflict where the line between civilian and combatant is increasingly blurred (Dewachi, Skelton, Nguyen, Fouad, Abu-Sitta, Maasri, Giacaman, 2014; Kaldor, 2006).

The UN General Assembly report produced by the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic documented government attacks on hospitals that treated wounded opposition members, notably Al-Huda Hospital, Al-Saeed Hospital in Dayr az Zawr and Tafas in Dara'a, throughout 2013 (United Nation [UN] General Assembly, 2013). According to opposition activists, the government has, since the beginning of the unrest in Syria, used hospitals to identify and arrest members of the opposition (Harding, 2011). MSF was informed of patients arrested in their hospital beds and, in extreme cases, executed in the hospital (MSF, 2013a). Hospitals specifically, and healthcare in general, became a weapon of war (Cumming-Bruce, 2013; Dewachi et al., 2014). The only remaining alternative for doctors willing to provide treatment for the wounded was to establish a network of field hospitals (MSF, 2013a). These field hospitals often functioned out of

basements, houses, rural farmhouses and even underground bunkers (Personal conversation with Syrian doctor, 2013). In some cases, these structures were directly shelled by the Syrian army and, in others, destroyed in the targeting of nearby opposition positions (UN General Assembly, 2013).¹² These findings demonstrate how health facilities were targeted as a military tactic of the Syrian army.

However, the data reviewed also demonstrate that the Syrian army was not the only force to show disregard for the protection of medical workers and services. Members of the opposition have targeted and destroyed government hospitals and health workers in government hospitals were threatened and told not to go to work (MSF internal document 2, 2012). Hospitals located in so-called liberated zones were turned into Free Syrian Army (FSA) hospitals that supported the revolution, aligning these structures with the opposition and prioritising the treatment of wounded fighters above the civilian population (MSF, 2013a).¹³

Much of the data gathered in the form of media clippings from Western media in this phase of the research gloss over how members of the opposition targeted medical facilities. Anderson (2014) refers to this trend as a kind of "Orwellian double-speak" of Western news networks (such as BBC) who, for example, regularly referred to government targeting of health facilities but, when reporting on opposition fighters targeting of health facilities – such as the bombing of Aleppo's Al-Kindi Hospital by Jabhat Al Nusra on 21 December 2013 that killed health workers – would refer to a strategic mission to re-occupy a disused building held by Assad loyalists. The likely media bias this indicates may also fuel resentment toward Western humanitarian actors, who may also be perceived as biased. This includes MSF, who were very vocal on the government targeting of health structures (MSF, 2013a) yet remained largely silent about opposition targeting of health structures and workers.

The data demonstrate the consequences on health services of such practices by both parties. From the start of the conflict to the beginning of 2014, 40 per cent. of public ambulances and 57 per cent. of public hospitals were damaged, with 36 per cent. out of service, and at least 160 doctors had been killed and many hundreds jailed (Dewachi et al., 2014). In July 2013,

¹² Reportedly, field hospitals in Al-Houla, Hamah, Idlib, Dara'a and Al-Qalamoun have been bombarded by the regime, killing patients and medical personnel alike and, in mid-May 2013, a children's hospital in Dar Al-Kabirah was destroyed (UN General Assembly, 2013). In Yabrud, in 2013, the public hospital was bombed after it had been warned to stop providing treatment to the armed opposition fighters from Qusayer.

¹³ Hospitals destroyed include the Homs National Hospital on 6 April 2012, Al-Salamiya National Hospital (Hama) on 21 January 2013 and Al Zahrway Hospital (Damascus) on 5 May 2013 (Anderson, 2014). According to media reports and a UN Special Report, in Aleppo, the Al-Nusra brigade placed their flag above a hospital – and then arrested the doctor in charge of the hospital when the flag was removed (UN General Assembly, 2013).

the Syrian Minister of Health reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) that, from the beginning of the conflict to July 2013, 87 public-health workers had been killed, 104 injured and 21 kidnapped (World Health Organization [WHO], 2013a).

What is clear from these data is that the provision of medical services was not respected and was, in many instances, directly targeted as a military strategy by both sides, which demonstrates a dangerous disregard for IHL. But was this targeting health facilities a strategy meant to achieve clearly defined aims or was it indicative of a war fought with no limits?

A review of the media clippings and field reports, as well as interviews with refugees, suggest that all sides showed a complete disregard for civilian life and infrastructure in areas under the control of their opponents. This was evidenced in the data by references to the use of Scud missiles – a notoriously indiscriminate weapon – which were used in Aleppo (Saad & Gladstone, 2013). Additionally, the use of barrel bombs – another indiscriminate weapon – has been extensive in Aleppo (MSF, 2013c).

This disregard for civilian life can be seen in the number of non-combatants treated in the field hospitals run by organisations like MSF (Personal communication with MSF doctor, 2013). However, the data revealed that this disregard for civilian life was not a consistent tactic. Based on data gathered through interviews with refugees, it was possible to determine that, in some areas, the Syrian army warned civilians to leave the area days before fighting began, while, in other areas, there was a more conscious strategy of collective punishment (Syrian refugees 1–5, 2013).¹⁴

However, as the asymmetry between the opposition and the government balanced out for a period in 2013/2014, both the media clippings reviewed and the direct observations of the researcher demonstrate the emergence of a similar disregard for civilian life and infrastructure by the opposition. This can be evidenced by, for example, direct observations in Damascus by this researcher of the firing of mortars into densely populated residential areas such as Bab Touma in the Old City (at 5 p.m. during rush hour) (see also Aji, 2013) and, in Homs, of the opposition's shelling of the Alawite neighbourhoods where the Syrian

¹⁴ From the beginning of the conflict, the Syrian army made use of, or at least benefited from, the existence of *al-Shabeeha* (The Ghosts) – who are local militia operating to a large extent independently from the government (but linked to the security apparatus) (Van Dam, 2011)). The Shabeeha have, since the beginning of the crisis made use of exceptionally brutal techniques. Many of the massacres reported across Syria have been perpetrated by these militias. However, the Shabeeha also perpetrated kidnappings of opposition members (Al Jazeera, 2011b). This is occasionally done for ransom but more importantly for prisoner swaps. Indeed, the opposition also carried out killings of pro-government families and kidnapped pro-government supporters and prominent figures from local minority groups as a way to raise funds for their purchase of weapons (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2012a). Thus a cycle of kidnapping and reprisal kidnapping emerged.

army had established its base (Damascus Bureau, 2013). This researcher was also shown YouTube videos from both pro-government and pro-opposition sites threatening to "massacre" all the Alawites and Sunnis, respectively (Field Research Diary, Syria: 2013).

Another tactic of war identified by this research – and which directly affected the way humanitarian aid could be delivered – was siege. The starkest examples of this that were identified in the review of media clippings, YouTube material and MSF reports were in Dier az Zol, Baba Amr and the entire east of Damascus, including Yarmouk Camp and parts of Aleppo (Reuters, 2013; United Nations Relief and Works Agency [UNRWA], 2013; Violations Documentation Center in Syria [VDC-Sy], 2013).¹⁵ According to the former head of OCHA in Damascus:

... some areas have been deliberately besieged or blockaded by both government and opposition forces. Civilians in these areas may voluntarily stay for family or political reasons, or stay out of fear of being killed or detained by the other side if they leave. Depending on the viewpoint, they could be regarded as human shields or victims of collective punishment, or both. (Parker, 2013:4)

One of the ways sieges were implemented was through the use of snipers (Field Research Diary, Syria: 2012). In all parts of Syria with active fighting, the presence of snipers directly affected the ability of people to move from one area to another to access healthcare.¹⁶ From this, it is possible to deduce that the capacity of health services to reach areas under siege was of abnormally great importance due to the difficulties for patients in moving around the country.

¹⁵ In the case of Baba Amr, the Syrian army surrounded and recaptured the entire opposition-controlled suburb (Reuters, 2013). Electricity became erratic, water scarce, food expensive and stocks of fuel ran out. The suburb was sustained to a limited extent by an abandoned water pipe that entered the town underneath the Syrian army positions. However, when the Syrian army advanced on Baba Amr, hundreds of families attempted to flee through the tunnel which was bombed and destroyed during the clashes (Personal conversation with journalist, 2013). Up to that point, thousands of families had remained trapped in Baba Amr under almost constant shelling. Some opposition activists claimed these families were denied the possibility to flee before the battle started; others claimed that many families stayed out of solidarity with the opposition fighters (Personal conversation with opposition activist, 2013). In the fighting in Al-Qusayer in 2012, it was confirmed that some families were prevented by the opposition from leaving the area while others that stayed were family members of the fighters (Karouny, 2012; Beaumont, 2012). Since the armed opposition entered the Yarmouk Palestinian camp at the end of 2012, all humanitarian efforts have been thwarted (UNRWA, 2013). The Syrian army repeatedly shelled the camp, bombarded hospitals and laid a siege, disallowing the entry of food and medical supplies (VDC-Sy, 2013). Armed opposition groups have also implemented siege tactics. Humanitarian supply trains leaving from opposition held territories have been blocked from entering Kurdish zones (MSF, 2013b), reportedly by clashing opposition factions (Hunter, 2013). In Aleppo, the pro-government villages of Nubbul and Zahra have been under complete siege by the opposition since October 2012 (Al Alam, 2014).

¹⁶ Some families who had been forced to flee their homes in the suburbs of Damascus were unable to return to retrieve their belongings due to the presence of snipers from both sides in their neighbourhood (Syrian refugee 1, 2013). On arrival in Al-Qusayr, government soldiers responsible for clearing buildings of snipers found booby trapped houses with civilians trapped inside (Mortada, 2013).

Finally, the review of primary data revealed the extent to which the individual brutality of the Syria war has been captured on YouTube. For example, videos have circulated of the beheading of an *al-Shabeeha* member by the opposition (YouTube, 2012), the mass execution of prisoners by both the Syrian army and opposition (YouTube, 2013a; YouTube, 2013b) and, in one video, the tormenting of the family of a Syrian army soldier who is then executed while his father listens over the phone (YouTube, 2013c). Abu Gharib-style photos have also been circulated of Syrian army soldiers being stripped and humiliated.

Similar stories have emerged from the Syrian regime's torture and detention centres (Kullab, 2014). Places of detention within Syria – maintained by the Syrian government – were largely considered to be places where systematic torture and killing took place – a cache of evidence of industrial scale systematic killing of 11,000 detainees emerged in January 2014 that could implicate the Syrian government officials in war crimes (Black, 2014b). The spreading of such material online was observed by this researcher as a major cause of extreme mistrust and anger from all sides in the war, who could draw on innumerable publicly recorded atrocities to justify their hard-line positions (Field Research Diary, Syria: 2013).

What these data mean, when combined with an understanding of the broader geopolitics of the region, is that Syria may well represent the kind of conflicts of a political era without either a single hegemon to assert its interests or a clear, bi-polar dynamic to balance the polarisation. Instead, Syria has been the site of multiple proxy wars (Hughes, 2014). It is these multiple interests that have created an environment conducive for what this research has argued is a war fought without limits by both the regime and its opponents. The resultant humanitarian needs and the responses to them are framed by this geopolitical context and the conduct of hostilities.

An equally fragmented aid response?

How did these conflict dynamics define the ways humanitarian needs were able to be addressed? An understanding of the modalities of aid provision was made possible through 20 semi-structured interviews with a mix of members of diaspora networks, solidarity groups and other informal networks of aid providers based in Beirut. Access to this particular network of local Syrian opposition activists involved in the provision of relief was enabled by the researcher's previous work in the region and would not have been possible without the establishment a significant level of trust.

The data provided through these interviews are, therefore, invaluable in understanding the mechanisms of aid delivery – much of which happens in a clandestine manner. Each of the

'relief activists' – the term used by this research for unofficial providers of aid – interviewed had been involved in the delivery of assistance since the beginning of the uprising and subsequent outbreak of conflict in Syria. All were based in Lebanon but conducted regular cross-border trips to Syria to deliver relief supplies.

Interviews were also conducted with MSF field and headquarters staff based in Lebanon, Turkey and Belgium. All the MSF staff interviewed held co-ordination positions (some of them were Emergency Co-ordinators, others were Heads of Mission), meaning that they were all in a decision-making position. Two interviews took place with non-MSF staff who were based in Damascus and held senior positions, one in the UN and one in an international organisation. Both participants had been working in Syria since the beginning of the crisis and had had extensive interactions with senior figures in the Syrian government. Both participants had the negotiation of access as part of their respective responsibilities.

Additionally, extensive documentary analysis of situation reports, meeting minutes and email exchanges was conducted. These documents were made available to the researcher through MSF. Although the identity of the participants in meeting minutes cannot be revealed for confidentiality purposes, the minutes record discussions between MSF representatives and senior Syrian government officials with decision-making power over the access of aid organisations in and into Syria. Other officials recorded in the meeting minutes were advisers at the highest levels of the Syrian government.

What these data allow us to observe is that a defining feature of the conflict was that life-saving services and supplies were incorporated into the military tactics and strategies of the parties to the conflict. The first evidence of this was seen in the inability of patients to access health facilities at the beginning of the conflict and the subsequent emergence of underground medical facilities, which were then targeted to deny healthcare to members of the opposition (see previous section). The targeting of health facilities by the government was enabled by the delegitimisation of the opposition by referring to them as "terrorists" (Relief activist 1, 2014; Relief activist 2, 2014; Relief activist 3, 2014). Similar tactics have been used in a number of conflicts since 9/11 and are not unique to the case of Syria. In Syria, as in other contexts, this approach of denying medical care to those designated terrorists expanded to include other components of relief, such as food or shelter (Relief activist 3, 2014).

The data gathered in this research reveal that the Syrian government and security apparatus maintained a high level of control over official aid-delivery mechanisms (MSF internal document 2, 2012). The official aid architecture in Damascus was controlled by a series of

administrative and bureaucratic procedures (Parker, 2013). For example, when operating officially in Syria, aid that was delivered passed through a number of pre-authorised national NGOs (Parker, 2013). The one with the largest capacity was the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC) (MSF internal report 2, 2012). All aid organisations travelling outside of Damascus, supplies to be delivered or activities undertaken required the written approval of the government, who received the green light from the security apparatus (Parker, 2013).

What can be identified from MSF field-situation reports is that, for the most part, organisations able to work in Damascus did so by working alongside SARC or by supporting the technical departments of the Syrian government (MSF internal document 2, 2012). Those organisations that worked officially in Damascus included some major multi-mandated organisations, such as Oxfam and the Danish Refugee Council (Field Research Diary, Syria: 2012). In an online job description for a water engineer, Oxfam states that the position is responsible for "coordinat[ing] with the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) and water establishment (water board) engineers, Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and other relevant technical bodies to implement water and sanitation responses" (Oxfam, n.d.:online). Although not entirely unusual for an organisation to have such an agreement with a host government, this remains an example of how to organisations officially allowed operate in Syria did so in collaboration with the Syrian state institutions. Some of these organisations were able to deliver assistance across frontlines, but their ability was minor when compared to the overall needs in areas under the control of the opposition (OCHA, 2013).

The institutions of humanitarian aid delivery in Syria therefore worked either under the control of the state or through an implementing-partner model in the north of the country where moderate Syrian civil-society members were identified to implement the programmes of large international organisations. In this way, the aid response can largely be considered either to have worked only in those areas where the West still had influence (among the opposition) or in accordance with the established development *modus operandi* seen in South Sudan, where NGOs worked to support the state's humanitarian response. This left major gaps in the capacity to respond to emergency needs.

This gap in the aid coverage was filled by armed opposition groups, informal networks of activists, regional organisations and political-solidarity networks, and newly formed foundations organised in secret in Syria or operated from across the borders in areas controlled by the opposition. Abdelwahid explains how a network of relief activists, including medical personnel, and citizen journalists emerged in the beginning of the Syrian uprising to document the conduct of hostilities and to provide relief to communities under siege: "The networks and techniques that activists had honed to stage demonstrations,

evading pervasive government surveillance, interference, detention and assault, were soon put to use in delivering a wide range of humanitarian and social support" (2013:15).

However, this researcher observed how, as the conflict evolved, it was not only civil-society activists that were organising for the provision of assistance. In 2013, there were believed to be as many as 1,000 armed opposition groups functioning in Syria (BBC, 2013, White, Tabler & Zelin, 2013), many of whom incorporated service-delivery as part of their activities (Sayigh, 2013). Armed groups had a degree of access and acceptance of risk-taking that civilian aid providers did not have: "Several opposition groups provide food, medicine and evacuate people from conflict affected areas. Often this relief is provided in areas of intense conflict where no other groups can operate." (ACAPS & MapAction, 2013:9)

Interviews conducted with relief activists also pointed to the existence of other politically affiliated organisations, some of which had strong links to, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood: "We discovered when the uprising began that these foundations that we thought were independent are actually the political hand to influence people. It is something that destroyed our revolution and it destroyed our civil society." (Relief activist 2, 2014).

The reality for many of the independent organisations was that funding was more readily available to advance the hearts-and-minds campaigns of various politically interested parties: "we are independent, but nobody is funding us. Independent activists – not only those that give relief – are all isolated." (Relief activist 2, 2014). The importance of these data are that they demonstrate how, over time, those that saw themselves as independent and free from political affiliation were sidelined by, or subsumed into, modalities of aid delivery that supported the different agendas of regional or international donors (from the West and Gulf countries) that supported the different elements of the opposition.

Some organisations – most prominently MSF – chose to deploy teams across the Turkish border to respond to needs in areas under the control of the opposition (MSF, 2013a).

The two parallel aid-delivery mechanisms in Syria – the one officially recognised by the state and UN and the other unofficial – gave rise to a heated debate among aid practitioners over the merits of cross-border versus cross-frontline assistance (UN official 1, 2014; Slim & Gillard, 2013; Tisdall, 2013; Krähenbühl, 2013; Weissman & Rodrigue, 2013). On one side were those who saw the aid response from Damascus as being channelled by regime priorities, resulting in an imbalance of who was receiving aid (Weissman & Rodrigue, 2013). On the other were those who saw the cross-border operation as fragile as it was not recognised by the state and was unable to reach the large parts of the country distant from the Turkish border (Krähenbühl, 2013).

An important question at this juncture is to what extent this deployment was only possible where Western governments or allies had some form of influence over armed groups. The examination of the abduction incidents of MSF personnel, presented later in this Chapter 5, provide some insight and answer.

With the findings from the data regarding the conflict's effect on aid response having been presented, it is now possible to try understand how, in this environment, the Western identity of humanitarian aid may have affected access. Two examples of access constraints are examined: the denial of access for MSF by the Syrian government between 2012 and 2013; and the withdrawal of the MSF teams from the north of Syria in 2014 as a result of the abduction of five MSF staff members.

MSF began attempting to work in an official capacity in Syria after the Iraq War resulted in an influx of refugees (MSF internal document 1, n.d.). However, the organisation was never able to fully establish itself as an autonomous legal entity in Syria (ibid.). When the protests first erupted in Syria in 2011, and the subsequent war broke out, MSF was unable to scale up and gain official access to assist in the response to consequent growing medical needs (ibid.). Since 2011, the organisation had decided that it would respond to the needs generated by the conflict by establishing projects in the opposition-controlled territories in the north and by crossing the border into Syria without the consent of the Syrian government (ibid.).

Initially, this took the form of donating medical supplies and transporting them across the border from Lebanon (MSF internal document 3, 2011). It was in May 2012 that the first assessment of needs was possible for the MSF Operational Centre Paris – from across the border in Turkey into opposition held territory in northern Syria – that resulted in the presence of MSF on the ground (MSF internal document 4, 2013).

In 2013, it became possible for MSF to establish a full operational presence with surgical capacity in four different provinces (ibid.). At the same time, MSF continued to provide medical supplies to areas unreachable from northern Syria, such as the suburbs of Damascus, Homs and Deraa (ibid.). MSF's operational response and the volume of its aid provision – combined with the fact that there were so few other organisations willing to work 'illegally' across the border – gave MSF a very prominent profile among members of the opposition in Syria, as well as among activists, the Syrian diaspora and regional organisations (International organisation representative, 2014). "MSF is seen as the hero, willing to do things that nobody else dares to do." (ibid.)

MSF was used as the organisational subject for this part of the case study for two main reasons: (1) MSF did not take any government funding for its programmes in Syria (MSF,

2013a), which meant it could be considered one of the most independent of the organisations that were responding to the conflict; and (2) MSF has a history of being willing to conduct cross-border aid operations without the consent of the state if it means being able to reach those most in need (Weissman, 2014).

Additionally, if we consider how the humanitarian community's capacity was compromised by its relationship with Western power (as explored in the case of South Sudan; see "*Chapter 4: Research Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity*"), it was necessary to choose an organisation that maintained an operational capacity for emergency response were access to be granted. As an independent organisation working outside the constraints imposed by sovereignty, MSF serves as a useful litmus test in understanding how the assertion of sovereignty affected access in the case of Syria and the relationship this had to changing global power dynamics and the Western identity of humanitarian action.

Sovereignty and access: an exploration of MSF negotiations with Syrian authorities

Discussions with Russia

In 2012, the MSF Operational Centre in Brussels decided to try officially gain access to Syria (MSF internal document 1, n.d.). The first step in the MSF re-engagement strategy was to create a unified approach between different MSF sections. A review of internal documents reveals that it was also decided to engage more proactively with Russian-government contacts, which were seen as being in a position to influence the Syrian authorities to allow MSF access (ibid.). A letter was sent in March 2012 to Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov from MSF requesting "any support you and the Russian Federation may provide to our efforts of dialogue with the Syrian authorities in order to have access to the people in need of urgent medical assistance." (MSF letter 1, 2012).

This engagement with the Russian authorities resulted in the Russian ambassador approaching the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) regarding MSF access. According to one senior member of the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs:

One of the recent contacts that the government had from MSF was through the Russians. The MFA fed back to the Russians that MSF was welcome to provide humanitarian support – but that MSF people were not needed in the country at this moment. (Meeting minutes 1, 2012)

Although the Russian ambassador made the request, other meeting minutes at a later date reveal that the ambassador had reservations about the approach MSF had taken to working illegally in Syria by crossing the border from Turkey:

Your organisation has a terrible reputation among the Syrian government. They are outraged by what they consider the shameless violation of their sovereignty and the kind of public position that has been taken off the back of this. (Meeting minutes between MSF and Russian official 2, 2012)

In the meeting, the ambassador went on to note that "the question it comes down to is: what is more important, sovereignty or humanitarian needs and assistance? For me it is sovereignty." (Meeting minutes between MSF and Russian official 2, 2012).

Engagement with the BRICS

In November 2012, MSF shifted approach from using only Russian diplomatic channels to engaging through the MSF South Africa office with the South African Embassy in Damascus (MSF internal document 2, 2012). South Africa was not playing a central political role in the crisis, unlike neighbouring countries or Russia and the South African Embassy had maintained a strong relationship with the Syrian government (ibid.).

A first visit to Damascus by a South African delegation took place at the end of 2012 (MSF internal document 2, 2012). While in Damascus, a meeting was held with the Indian ambassador and the MSF office in Brazil engaged with the Syrian diaspora in São Paulo (MSF HQ staff 11, 2014). The BRICS-engagement strategy of MSF was boosted in March 2013 when the Assad government publically called on BRICS to support Syria (Gladstone & Droubi, 2013). In a letter to the BRICS group ahead of their summit, Assad wrote:

You, with all the huge political, economic and cultural weight you represent that seeks to consolidate peace, security and justice in the troubled world of today, are called upon to exert all possible efforts to end the suffering of the Syrian people. (Gladstone & Droubi, 2013:online)

Assad went on to call the BRICS group "a just force that seeks to spread peace, security and cooperation among countries away from hegemony, its dictates and oppression which have lasted for decades upon our peoples and nation." (ibid.).

It is very clear from the minutes of meetings that the MSF delegation from South Africa's warm welcome to Damascus was almost entirely based on the respect of the Syrian government for the South African state (Meeting minutes 1, 2012). In a visit report from

Damascus, the MSF delegation remarked that "[t]he frankness of the interactions that we had with high-level government officials was made possible by the fact that we were from a non-Western country." (MSF internal document 2, 2012). In one meeting with a senior government official, they remarked that:

It is only possible to have these kinds of conversations with people from the South or developing world – who have also been on the receiving end of Western hypocrisy. Others just don't understand. The way the West treats the Arab world is insulting. It is a form of racism. (Meeting minutes 3, 2012)

Based on these political openings – linked in part to a reframing of MSF as non-Western in identity – an operational opportunity was created for MSF: "Through South Africa – you will be welcome in Syria" was the statement by the Syrian government (Meeting minutes 1, 2012). The international desk of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made it even more explicit:

The decision to allow you in to Damascus now is only because of the deep respect of the South African government. Any political decision to co-operate with MSF will only be based on the relationship Syria has with the South African government. (Meeting minutes 4, 2012)

It became increasingly clear for MSF in negotiations with the government that promoting the non-Western aspects of its identity – in this case highlighting the existence of MSF South Africa – was the only possible way of overcoming the suspicion toward MSF at that point in the conflict.

According to one senior Syrian government representative:

The approach of MSF to this crisis has made the government suspicious towards the organisation. But if you can arrange within your organisation for your activities in Damascus to be MSF South Africa – then it will help to remove the politics from the issue. The political decision to allow you to work here will be made much easier. Of course, you are still part of the same organisation – but there has to be a way to reduce the political suspicion. This approach will help. (Meeting minutes 3, 2012)

MSF developed a proposal for a programme that would not provide aid across the frontline from Damascus into opposition areas – the difficulties of negotiating for this access given the low level of trust in MSF by the Syrian government were acknowledged – but would rather respond to needs that existed in government-controlled territory, in particular through the provision of emergency obstetric care in a suburb of Damascus that had received a large influx of internally displaced people (MSF internal document 2, 2012).

Despite continued negotiations and a high level of willingness from SARC – whose structures MSF planned to support – the proposed MSF team – made up entirely of BRICS nationals – was never given a visa to enter Syria (MSF HQ staff 11, 2014). No direct reason was ever given for this. However, based on informal feedback provided to this researcher, it can be attributed in part to the fact that the Syrian government did not sufficiently trust the South Africa initiative and did not view it as separate from other MSF actions considered to be in violation of Syrian sovereignty. A reason for this may be that, during the negotiations, other parts of MSF continued to publically criticise the Syrian government and, at one point, even signed an agreement with the Qatari Red Crescent in the north of Syria that was publicised by the Qatari Red Crescent (MSF HQ staff 12, 2014).

However, the data also shed light on a broader set of factors that influenced how the Syrian government approached aid delivery and understanding these factors allows a more nuanced understanding of the above-mentioned rejection.

Military tactics take priority

Firstly, the provision of aid in Syria was identified as being of secondary importance to the primary goal of the Syrian state to deal with what it termed 'terrorists' (Meeting minutes 1, 2012). This was confirmed in a statement to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in which the Syrian Permanent Representative to the UN stated that "the eradication of terrorism is the only proper way to deal with the root causes of this humanitarian suffering in a number of areas in Syria." (Syria Arab Republic Permanent Mission to the UN, 2013).

Given the above, it can be observed by making the link with the findings of the conduct of hostilities that the provision of aid could not undermine the immediate military strategy of the Syrian army, which, as was demonstrated, used strategies of siege and did not recognise armed opposition members and their support as being entitled to receiving lifesaving humanitarian aid (MSF internal report 2, 2012; Meeting minutes 1, 2012).

According to the minutes of one senior Syrian government official in a meeting with an MSF representative:

The Syrian government health facilities do not distinguish between civilians and opposition [meaning that treatment was provided to everyone regardless of the political affiliation]. However, in accordance with international law – the Syrian government is entitled to question patients once they have been treated. The terrorists, criminals and insurgents are turning houses

into clinics to avoid this questioning. Wherever we go, we find these clinics in houses. The Syrian government will not destroy its own facilities. (Meeting minutes 1, 2012)

This statement reveals that the destruction of 'terrorist' health facilities was seen as legitimate as these structures were understood to have been created as a way to bypass the legal right of the Syrian government to question 'criminals' in public-health structures.

The Syrian government argued that:

... the obligation each party has to allow access is subject to it being satisfied that the consignments will not be diverted from their destination; that control over the goods is effective; and that the enemy's military efforts or economy will not accrue a definite advantage as a result of the aid. (IRIN, 2013:online)

This logic informed the Syrian-government decisions on allowing or denying humanitarian aid actors the ability to cross frontlines into opposition-controlled territories.

But utilitarian concerns were not all that was at work. At a certain meeting between MSF and Syrian government officials it was stated that "these terrorists are not human." (Meeting minutes between MSF and Syrian government 5, 2012). This kind of dehumanisation acted as justification for tactics employed by the army, which included denial of access to aid providers seeking to deliver medical supplies to areas under the control of the opposition and, it could be argued, resulted in tactical decisions that one observer referred to as an "assault on the health system" that amounted to the use of a "weapon of mass destruction" (Sparrow, 2013:online).

The Syrian government has increasingly restricted the delivery of medical supplies to opposition-controlled areas in recent months, several aid workers told IRIN, refusing to approve medical deliveries; taking medical supplies out of aid convoys; and requiring case-by-case negotiations for the delivery of surgical kits. (IRIN, 2013:online)

This report was confirmed by the previous head of OCHA, who commented that "[m]edical supplies come under particular scrutiny, with aid agencies virtually prohibited from sending surgical material to opposition-held areas, the assumption being that they could be used to patch up wounded rebel fighters." (Parker, 2013:4).

Attempts to override or bypass this military strategy were seen as undermining the state and, as such, provoked an assertion of sovereignty, which, as we can see from the above-mentioned MSF negotiations in Damascus (see "*Discussions with Russia*" above), was fully backed by states such as Russia.

Due to the findings emerging from the above data, the rejection of MSF based on its Western identity can be seen as an ostensible justification, and not necessarily the underlying reason, for the denial of access. This is especially evident if we consider that other clearly Western organisations like Oxfam and International Medical Corps did get granted access to Damascus.

Maintaining state legitimacy

Interestingly, an important aspect of the Syrian government's approach to aid is revealed in the weight given by government officials to the role played by the state in the delivery of assistance. For example, in a communication to the UN OHCHR, the Syrian Permanent Representative to the UN noted that "Syrian domestic efforts account for 75% of needed humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, as opposed to barely 25% provided by international organisations." (Syria Arab Republic Permanent Mission to the UN, 2013).

Further, this research revealed that SARC was the "coordinator and gatekeeper" of other humanitarian agencies (Parker, 2013:4):

SARC approval is required for the registration of humanitarian INGOs [International NGOs] and their programmes. The SARC is the conduit for the majority of UN-supplied food aid and a significant proportion of international non-food aid. Its agreement is required for field offices, visits and needs assessments. It is the primary agency for registering and assessing populations in need, which itself is a politically charged process. (Parker, 2013:4)

More evidence of the weight given by Syrian officials to the government's role in aid delivery can be identified in the minutes of a meeting between MSF and senior government officials where the high level of pride taken by the Syrian government in its ability to provide subsidised bread, education and healthcare to its population while at the same time manufacturing large quantities of its own medical supplies and exporting health workers in the region was noted (Meeting minutes 5, 2012).

The importance attached to the preservation of the Syrian identity of aid provision can be understood as a key factor in the reluctance of the Syrian government to allow assistance that did not work through or in direct collaboration with the state. This understanding suggests that organisations willing to work in full respect of the state – for example, organisations with more of a development orientation – could be favoured in decisions by the government on who to allow or not allow access to.

Managing perceived risk

A third defining feature of the Syrian government's approach to aid delivery emerging from the findings was the importance of risk management. A review of meeting minutes between MSF and Syrian government officials reveals how aid was viewed with extreme suspicion (Meeting minutes 1, 2012). In multiple private conversations between the researcher and Syrian public figures – including well-known TV personalities and businesspeople – the admission of international aid workers was seen to risk the advancement of an agenda of destabilisation (through, for example, spying or providing political or military support to the opposition).

The suspicion noted during these personal interactions was confirmed in the review of meeting minutes. For example, according to one senior government official: "The government has a lot of suspicion towards the agendas of Western organisations. The humanitarian needs would not even be there if the West and neighbouring countries were not pouring arms and money into radical extremists." (Meeting minutes 1, 2012).

This suspicion and resentment toward the West was identified as being fuelled by the precedent set in Libya, where humanitarian concerns were used to justify a military intervention against the Libyan government (Parker, 2013):

With memories of the UN mandate which authorized military action in Libya fresh in the mind, which used civilian protection as a justification, the Syrian government sees humanitarian operations as a Trojan horse to delegitimize the state, develop contacts with the opposition and win international support for military intervention. (Parker, 2013:3)

The result was restrictions on visas given to international staff workers in Syria and obstruction for particular nationalities (UN official 1, 2014). As another interviewee noted:

. . . within a few weeks of the assassination of Osama bin Laden – using humanitarian actors to gather intelligence – we saw the very toxic rhetoric of NATO's intervention in Libya that was based on the idea of a protection of civilians. That explains a lot of why the Syrian government is reluctant to let humanitarian organisations operate in their country. It all goes together a bit. The almighty West that will resort to military power wherever and whenever it's in its interests and it will disguise that under humanitarian purposes. And if you study the French rhetoric on Syria today, we still see this romantic human-rights-driven attitude that I can imagine drives many people who are in a position to grant humanitarian access today completely nuts. (Senior international organisation representative 1, 2012)

This research also identified how the risk-management strategy of the government when it came to Western organisations was informed by a politico-ideological position of resistance to Zionism and its belief in the West's hypocrisy in supporting the creation of Israel, which was considered to be the root of all the Middle East's instability (Meeting minutes between MSF and senior Syrian government representative, 2012; Personal communication with Hizbollah member, 2014).

These findings – when understood in conjunction with the geopolitical concerns outlined earlier in this research – suggest that it was in this ideological rejection of humanitarian aid, based on concerns about the risks posed to the sovereignty of the state, that the Syrian government could find support from rising powers such as Russia.

The above data suggest that the answer to the question of whether the Western identity of humanitarian aid affected access is that it did. The minutes of the meetings are significant findings in themselves because they clearly show reference by persons of power to humanitarian aid being rejected due to suspicion over the objectives of aid actors given their links with the West.

However, on closer examination, the data suggest that, given the Syrian government's approach to aid delivery, the Western identity of MSF was more a justification for its rejection than root cause. Other factors, as indicated, including the military strategy of denying assistance to the opposition, the desire to preserve the Syrian identity of aid delivery and the management of perceived risk, are possibly more significant.

However, the choice of issue used for justifying the Syrian government denial of access to international aid organisation demonstrates that a Western identity would chime with these other factors in a problematic way. The identity of MSF made limiting the organisation's ability to provide aid an easy sell. In the absence of a Western identity, MSF may have been able to apply additional leverage to address the real obstacles in the organisation's way.

Abduction and the link to the Western face of humanitarian aid

A second access constraint that this research sought to explore was that caused by security concerns faced by MSF in conducting cross-border aid operations.

The cross-border access to northern Syria that MSF had gained was brought to an end with the Abduction of five MSF workers in early 2014 (MSF, 2014). Due to the sensitive nature of this incident, this research was not able to explore in detail the circumstances surrounding this security incident except for what is in the public record. According to MSF, "[o]n

January 2, 2014, five MSF staff members were taken by an armed group in northern Syria, where they were working in an MSF-run hospital to provide essential healthcare to people affected by the conflict." (MSF, 2014) The MSF International President went on to point out that:

While millions of Syrians need assistance for their survival, the very idea of an independent humanitarian presence is rejected among some of the armed parties to the war. We should be running some of the largest medical programs in MSF's 40-year history, in line with the massive needs of the Syrian people. But in the current environment our capacity to respond is painfully limited. (MSF, 2014:online)

Media reports indicate that the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the abduction, saying that they had "arrested European doctors who were spying on jihadist combatants." (ANSAMED, 2014:online).

Again, at face value, the data suggest that the Western identity of humanitarian actors was at the core of justifications for constraints on access. However, it is necessary, as with the official denial of access by the government (see "*Sovereignty and access: an exploration of MSF negotiations with Syrian authorities*" above), to explore in more detail what deeper causes could result in such an incident.

One set of data that sheds light on this incident is related to the way MSF was able to work in northern Syria prior to this incident for two years without any significant security incident. Why was this possible?

Do Western allies respect Western humanitarian organisations?

The data suggest that part of the reason access for the above-mentioned period was possible was due to the political connections between the Syrian armed opposition and the West, in particular, its regional allies.

The research findings indicate that the armed opposition attempted to increase its provision and co-ordination of relief as part of a strategy to create a government in waiting. Included in these structures were 'local committees' as well as the more formal Syrian National Council, which was the first coalition of opposition groups, and which later became the Syrian National Coalition after what was largely considered the failure of the Council to unite the diverse opposition (Personal conversation with member of the National Coalition, 2014).

Within the National Coalition, an Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) was established to co-ordinate the delivery of services in areas under the control of opposition forces.¹⁷ The ACU was promoted by the Syrian National Coalition as a body that supported the moderate opposition and the data suggest arguments were made that by channelling aid through the ACU both Assad and radical extremist groups could be weakened: "We need to take a leap of faith [in supporting the ACU]" said Mr Debeuf [former adviser to the Belgian Foreign Minister]. "Of course things will go wrong, but what we are doing now, is going very, very wrong, and we are only making two people stronger: Assad and Jabhat al-Nusra." (McTighe, 2013:online). DFID even placed an adviser within the ACU to support its institutional development (Major donor representative 4, 2014). This shows that had ACU aligned itself with Western interest and influence.¹⁸

The data show that this approach of backing only mechanisms of aid delivery aligned with foreign-policy interests was not a strategy unique to the British government. Also shown is that the Turkish government was instrumental in establishing the Islamic armed movement in Syria known as the 'Islamic Front' and that it used aid-delivery mechanisms to channel support to areas under the group's control (Lund, 2014; Zelin, 2013). As evidence, the humanitarian activities of the Islamic Front were partially subsidised by NGOs close to the governments of Turkey and Qatar:

SIF [Syrian Islamic Front] activity, though, is not limited to military operations. It has also pumped extensive resources into humanitarian and other social activities. Part of this has been subsidized in cooperation with government-funded NGOs from Turkey (Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation [known by its abbreviation IHH]) and Qatar (Qatar Charity). The SIF has acknowledged this in video releases highlighting such patronage. (Zelin & Lister, 2013)¹⁹

For MSF, the operation in Syria was to a large extent accepted and facilitated by elements of the armed opposition. According to an MSF staff member involved in the early days of the

¹⁷ See the Assistance Coordination Unit website for further details: <http://www.acu-sy.org/84/Who-we-are/About-ACU/> [Accessed: 16/12/2014]

¹⁸ However, the ACU – like the political structures of the National Coalition – faced major questions over its legitimacy in co-ordinating aid delivery when many of their structures were based outside of Syria. For example, according to one relief activist interviewed, "the ACU pretends to be there but it is only on paper" (Relief activist 1, 2014). The activist went on to say, "you can't depend on any Syrian political group in the opposition" (ibid.).

¹⁹ Another regional organisation, unlike IHH in that it was established directly out of the crisis, is the largely diaspora-managed WATAN association, which has close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. WATAN sees itself as "the pioneer of progress to build the future for Syria" (WATAN, 2013). Another research participant criticised the ability of WATAN to navigate networks outside of the sphere of Muslim Brotherhood influence, therefore limiting its ability to work in many parts of opposition-controlled Syria (International organisation representative 1, 2014).

organisation's activities in Syria, some supplies were even transported in close collaboration with the FSA, using FSA escorts at a minimum (MSF HQ staff 7, 2014).

This changed as relief networks became more organised and MSF became better at identifying trustworthy interlocutors who had developed their own smuggling networks (ibid.). However, as these networks existed in the areas under opposition control, MSF became associated with the various opposition groups (MSF field staff 3, 2014). When MSF established its presence in the north of Syria, it was able to gain a greater degree of separation from these groups but had to negotiate the protection of its medical facilities with a variety of different armed opposition actors (MSF HQ staff 7, 2014).

This association between MSF and elements of the opposition was acknowledged in the data that were collected. For example, one participant pointed out that "[a]ll of our networks gravitated around the revolution – but they also gravitated around the secular part of the revolution." (MSF field staff 6, 2014)

However, in one part of northern Syria, MSF was able to establish a presence in an area with a significant presence of Islamic State fighters (MSF HQ staff 7, 2014), which indicates that, at least in part, MSF was accepted for the valuable medical services the organisation was offering (ibid.).

An alternate explanation, however, might be found in the wide-spread rumours that the Islamic State was receiving some level of support – or at least facilitation – from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar (see, for example, Stephens, 2014). Although impossible to prove – at least in this research – if true, it suggests that the support received from regional powers and the decision not to target MSF may have been linked. Therefore, in the case of the Islamic State, the transition from MSF being tolerated to being targeted may have coincided with the Islamic State having its support by allies of the West cut off (MSF HQ staff 7, 2014).

Minimally, what these data demonstrate is that MSF was able to work alongside and be accepted by a range of different actors who sought or received support from the West and its regional allies. As pointed out by one research participant, "[t]hose [non-state actors] looking for Western support are likely to allow humanitarian actors, those fighting the West are not." (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014). The one exception to this observation can be found in the Al Nusra brigade – an Al Qaeda affiliated group that has been rejected by the West, but that has still allowed MSF to work in the areas under its control (ibid.). However, this exception could be due to the support the group receives from regional players allied to the West or due to tactical considerations by the group as to their need for MSF services (ibid.). Overall, the

data suggest that, as soon as MSF worked alongside or in the territory controlled by a group that saw the West as its enemy, it encountered constraints in access.

European states and abduction risks

One research participant pointed out how the abduction of foreigners in Syria was directly linked to the practice of some European governments:

The statistics of the kidnap industry over the last four decades are very clear: Western, white foreigners are the most likely to be kidnapped. This has been true in Colombia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Sahel and now Syria and Iraq. This cannot be seen [as] separate from the practice of paying ransom. Western foreigners typically command anywhere between half a million and 10 million dollars/euros/pounds. This correlation is substantiated by the preference of kidnappers in recent years for certain nationalities, notably French, Italian and Spanish, whose governments have been most prolific in readily paying large sums to free its citizens. So regardless of the country, region or even continent, Western foreigners are most likely to be kidnapped, and French, Italian and Spanish nationalities even more so. This has not been different in Syria. (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014)

Although there is no data available that suggests whether MSF paid a ransom or whether a ransom was even demanded for the release of the abducted MSF team, what the interview data suggests is that there was no exceptional targeting of aid workers over other foreigners and that an expectation of ransom payment may be at the core of this practice: "No difference is made between journalists, aid workers or other professions; what counts is their passports, and how likely the kidnappers believe it is that a large sum of money will be paid for their release." (ibid.).

The importance of the willingness of governments to pay ransom as a causal factor in the prevalence of abductions in the case of Syria, for example, raises the question of why neither Qatari nor Saudi foreigners were kidnapped, when it can be assumed that both countries have the capacity to pay ransom. The same research participant pointed out:

The Qatar government has no such tradition of paying ransoms, and anyway their nationals have only recently branched out into being active in conflict zones where kidnaps are most likely to take place. However, as there is no doubt that the Qatar government would be able to afford large ransom payments, another unknown factor may be at stake here as well. It is entirely possible, that financial aid provided to Syrian rebels by the Qatar government has been made on the unspoken condition of non-kidnap for their nationals. (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014)

Nonetheless, these findings point to the same outcome: "if you are Western, and easily recognisable as such by being white, you are most at risk of kidnap." (ibid.). These data

therefore show the link between a Western identity and limits in access imposed by the risk of abduction.

MSF exposed

For MSF, another important feature of the aid environment in northern Syria emerging from these data is that MSF was, with only minor exception, the only Western organisation with a full international team deployed in northern Syria. This finding is significant in that it shows MSF was particularly exposed.

The unstructured nature of the groups involved in the provision of aid did not fit the requisite *modus operandi* of the traditional aid system that required its "implementing partners" to have a "level of accountability" that could be measured through an inflexible set of criteria and standards (MSF HQ staff 6, 2014; Relief activist 3, 2014). The result, as revealed by this research, was that aid delivery was mediated by an increasing number of layers between the donor and the recipient of aid, with very few international organisations willing to directly work on the ground: "Today we have to work through four layers in order to reach people from the donors to the person who receives the assistance." (Relief activist 2, 2014). Analysis of the data show these four layers to be the donor, the International NGO, the local foundation or NGO and the local network on the ground that the aid is channelled through (ibid.).

This layering seems to have resulted from the great deal of time spent by many Western humanitarian organisations and Western donors in creating implementing partners that fitted their model of an organisation that aid could be channelled through. For example, a senior donor representative of a Western government pointed out how aid organisations were having difficulty finding partners who were not "overtly political." (Donor representative 1, 2014). Reference was made to their "political statements" and the fact that they lack "humanitarian principles" (ibid.). "In other contexts, we are able to elbow these groups out of the way. However, in Syria this is not possible due to their level of operationality." (ibid.).

Faced with a demand from donors to professionalise to meet donor due-diligence criteria, some research participants involved with local networks pointed to a trend of formalising their structures. For example, one relief activist pointed out that:

We started to make foundations because we were told by donors and some foreign organisations that they could not support us unless there is an official status of the organisation. MSF was the only one willing to work with and alongside groups that do not have some kind of official status. (Relief activist 1, 2014)

Despite these challenges, what this research has uncovered is that the traditional humanitarian system failed for the most part to adequately engage with these actors to either gain direct access or even develop partnerships through which aid could be delivered. Instead, most aid agencies opted for the implementing-partners model, which required established entities that could contract with donors or their International NGO sub-contractors (Field Research Diary, Syria: 2013; informal conversation between the researcher and a major NGO in Beirut, 2013; informal conversation between the researcher and a major donor in Beirut; 2014).

As indicated above, the emergence of a growing gap between the provision of funds and the delivery of services was fuelled by multiple layers of a bureaucracy either slowing down or hampering entirely any adequate response. The response from the aid community to the challenges of having to work with dispersed networks was to try to organise the networks into structures they knew how to deal with. In effect, the response was to bureaucratise the problem.

These data reveal that it was only through financial independence from Western governments that MSF managed at all to work in areas accepting of the West's interests. Financial independence meant that MSF was not constrained by donor models and requirements, and this increased its effectiveness. This observation supports the data from the previous chapter on South Sudan, where the links between humanitarian organisations and Western donor interests were demonstrated to affect the capacity of emergency response.

However, it also meant that MSF was exposed, in the sense that it was still understood as Western since most of its international staff were European. This triggered the targeting of individuals in the organisation for abductions by a group hostile to the West and looking for resources from governments in the West known to pay ransoms.

Conclusion to Research Findings II

The data presented in this Chapter 5 demonstrate a tension that exists among the practitioners interviewed. On the one hand, there are those who see the identity of humanitarian action as a peripheral challenge that is only of consequence because of misperceptions about humanitarian aid actors. On the other, there are those who see the Western identity of humanitarian aid to be rooted in the reality of both the historical and present practice of humanitarian action.

For the former set of participants, this history and practice influences the way humanitarian organisations are understood by those with the power to grant or deny access. This latter

category includes those who see 9/11 as a moment where these challenges became more acute.

However, there are also those – primarily based outside of Europe – who see the Western identity of humanitarian action as broadly problematic – not only because of 9/11 – due to the experiences of communities and governments in the periphery who have observed a relationship between humanitarian aid and the advancement of Western interests in the form of colonialism, imperialism and hegemony.

To shed further light on this problem of identity and access – in particular with changing global power dynamics in mind – the case of Syria was examined to better understand the consequences arising from the relationship between humanitarian action and Western power. Two examples were explored: the denial of access to MSF by the Syrian government between 2012 and 2013; and the access constraints caused by the abduction of MSF staff in northern Syria in 2014.

What the data on the prevention of MSF from accessing Damascus suggest is that the Syrian government's justification of its denial of access to the MSF movement by reference to concerns about how the organisation might be aligned to Western interests was considered plausible enough by Syrian officials to be used. The Western identity of MSF was particularly incompatible with the Syrian government's core approach to aid delivery.

The presence of MSF caused three major problems for the Syrian government: it naturally undermined the government's military strategy and, as a Western organisation, was seen to be doing so as part of a plot of destabilisation; as a Western organisation, it undermined the Syrian identity of aid delivery; and, finally, as a Western organisation, there was the risk of it being infiltrated or used to lay the path for humanitarian intervention, as was perceived to be the case in Libya.

As such, the Western identity of MSF may not have been the root cause of the organisation's rejection by a government that was clearly making use of the denial of aid in its military strategies, but it was nonetheless used as a plausible justification for the organisation's rejection. In itself, this demonstrates how MSF was constrained in navigating the core issues due to its identity as a Western actor and part of a Western humanitarian system used by hegemonic powers.

Western identity also played a ramifying role in the second category of constraints: security concerns. As seen in the given examples (see "*Abduction and the link to the Western face of humanitarian aid*" above) of the security incidents in the north of Syria, the data suggest that

MSF was able to work in zones under the control of armed opposition groups who were receiving or attempting to receive support from the West and its regional allies. Outside those zones, the Western identity of the organisation left it exposed to an abduction threat by those who were opposed to the West and understood that certain Western governments would pay ransom for hostages.

The above suggest that the humanitarian space of MSF in Syria was largely demarcated by its identity, indicating that humanitarian space may in fact not be a space of protected action where the principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality are the keys that unlock the doors of access, but rather that the scope of Western power and influence is what defines the limits of humanitarian access.

When combined with the findings of the previous section (see "*Chapter 4: Research findings Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity – Conclusion to Research Findings I*"), what begins to emerge is a picture of an embattled humanitarianism intricately constrained in its capacity and access as a result of its relationship with Western power. The remaining question, then, is how an emerging global power structure – one that sees the decline of Western hegemony and the emergence of a contested multi-polarity – will affect the humanitarian-project.

Chapter 6: Research Findings III – Humanitarianism rethought?

The previous two chapters have presented findings related to identity, access and whether the links between humanitarian aid and development agendas affect emergency-response capacity in conflict. They demonstrate an embattled humanitarianism in Syria and South Sudan, the causes of which can, at least in part, be attributed to its relationship with the Western liberal democratic project.

The case study of South Sudan presented data showing that the political underpinnings of aid in South Sudan resulted in compromised emergency-response capacity. In Syria, the Western identity of humanitarian actors resulted in, at a minimum, a justification for the denial of access. In the case of Damascus, this was made more acute by emerging powers that rejected what was perceived to be a compromised humanitarian agenda. The question remaining is how the changing power dynamics of emerging states and diffusion of power could reshape the delivery of humanitarian aid into the future. If the pursuit of liberal democracy and a security agenda define the 'declining West' approach to aid, what defines the 'rising rest' approach?

The findings in this Chapter 6 are the third and final set of new data presented by this doctoral research. This phase of research was influenced by an action-oriented methodology. The research sought to answer whether humanitarian aid is being reconceptualised in the dynamic of shifting global power.

Data for this phase of the research were gathered in a series of interviews with civil-society activists and academics in both Brazil and South Africa. This included 15 interviews with a range of academics, civil-society activists and MSF staff based in the Brazil and South Africa offices. The following broad set of questions informed the data collection relevant for answering the above question:

- ~ What are the key political characteristics of rising powers and how do these interact with humanitarian responses?
- ~ Are emerging-state powers the only relevant element of changing power dynamics? What about the phenomenon of the diffusion of power enabled by civil society and social media?
- ~ What examples exist of MSF experiences of working with diffused forms of power (for example, civil society or social-media activists)?

In addition to the data gathered from these interviews, documentary analysis was performed with the intent of identifying examples of MSF interaction with diffused forms of power.

This final phase of the research was intended to offer an insight into a dynamic that is presently unfolding. As such, gaining a breadth of understanding rather than an in-depth exploration of a specific dynamic was prioritised. Additionally, it is hoped that these findings will therefore offer an opportunity to identify future research agendas.

The BRICS effect: an emerging multi-polarity?

The data that were gathered in the first phase of research in South Africa and in the final phase of research in both South Africa and Brazil were gathered in an attempt to first understand the political discourse that frames the dynamic of emerging powers.

One element of this political discourse can be seen in the way rising powers are presented as having a distinct political approach: "Americans want take-away [fast-food] politics. They want instant political gratification. This is the difference between the West and rising powers." (Senior South African analyst 1, 2012).

The war in Iraq played a major role in growing dissatisfaction with the post-Cold War liberal agenda (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014; Senior South African analyst 1, 2012). "The discourse of democratic peace is empty and it was exposed in Iraq. It made BRICS states more aware of the hypocrisies – especially when it came to reforming multilateral institutions." (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). The Libya intervention marked another moment where, as explored in the literature (see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 3: Contemporary humanitarianism as a tool and in the rhetoric of intervention – Libya: The return of humanitarian intervention*"), emerging states felt duped by a Western-plotted regime change veiled in language of the R2P (Noueihed & Warren, 2012; Bellamy & Williams, 2011).

Although seen with suspicion by some research participants based in Brazil and South Africa (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014; South African civil-society representative 2, 2014), the BRICS was mostly seen as an appealing configuration for counter-balancing Western dominance in that it could force the West into a more multi-lateral approach to various issues (Senior South African analyst 1, 2012; Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014; Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). "You have for the first time the possibility of a viable bloc that upsets the uni-polar situation." (ibid.).

By contrast, participants interviewed for this research who were living in Europe articulated this challenge to the "uni-polar situation" more often in terms of a "fall from grace" (MSF HQ staff 5, 2012). "The world is a very different place", said one senior aid worker (Senior NGO worker 2, 2012):

I think we still have an intellectual power and a brute force power and we also still have a role due to our history. But the big crew – US, UK and Europe – well, we are a big crew facing an even bigger financial abyss. And so we are losing our power. (ibid.)

This decline was seen to be manifesting in diminishing Western leverage or ability to project power. Because "why", one interviewee asked, "should the Somalis choose the West and not the Qatari or Chinese model?" (MSF HQ staff 5, 2012).

Some participants chose to elaborate on the role of the BRICS in offering an alternative political model or interaction to what many states feel to have been an unjust imposition of conditions by Western-dominated financial institutions: "In the midst of a global financial crisis the combination of state and market achieved by China is seen as a more promising option. The state is starting to reassert its role." (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). This assertion by the state of its role was also seen as being linked to the "rejection of the financial institutions that promoted a decreased role of the state in aspects such as service delivery." (ibid.).

Other participants interpreted the changing power dynamics as a loss of hegemony rather than an end to uni-polarity. "What we are seeing is the emergence of a uni-polar world without hegemony." (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). Those holding this view understood that the brute-force power of the US is still intact, keeping it the single dominant power, but its ability to dominate norms and values has decreased.

Regardless of the dissatisfaction expressed with the West, this research found fears that this new dispensation could mark the beginning of a chaotic interim period until an articulated alternative contesting the space for norm creation emerges (Senior South African analyst 2, 2014). In the meantime, there is a risk that power could be shaped through war (Jordan, 2014). Pallo Jordan, a senior South African political figure, pointed out in a 2014 editorial:

After the Second World War, for the 45 years of the Cold War, the international community was polarised between Moscow and Washington. Both power blocs squandered wealth in an arms race preparing for a war that no one dared fight. We hoped that the end of the Cold War would usher in an era of peace, enabling society to release these resources for social upliftment. A century after the outbreak of the First World War, a new world order is emerging. Hopefully, it will not be shaped by war. (ibid.)

Current dynamics led one participant to refer to a 'BRICS effect' that is "decentering the Western-led liberal international order" (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). The winds of change are certainly blowing, but in what direction? There were a number of features of the rising multi-polarity identified in this research and outlined below which form the core of an elaborately defined BRICS effect.

One element was the growing value of the concept of political legitimacy (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). This was evidenced by reference to the inclusion of South Africa into the BRICS group: "South Africa's inclusion in the BRICS group sent a message that this was not an economic alliance. It was about political legitimacy through multi-polar diversity." (ibid.).

A second element was the emergence of a "respectful sovereignty" (Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014). "Government-to-government co-operation and quiet diplomacy are seen as a form of respectful solidarity." (ibid.).

A third element was a questioning of dominant norms and values (Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014; Senior South African analyst 2, 2014). Indeed, the above-mentioned challenge to the Western-led liberal international order has often been in the form of a questioning of its norms and values – often embodied in multi-lateral institutions:

Emerging states and the BRICS in particular are in a position to dispute every 'value' and 'norm' and this is something that is emboldening many of the states at what the West considers to be its periphery. (Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014)

However, at this stage, the questioning of norms has not yet progressed into norm creation, partly because of the lack of a dominant alternative (Senior South African analyst 2, 2014). At its core, the unifying ideology of emerging states can still best be described as "a willingness to counter Western power" (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). This has been born out of a growing acknowledgement of the North–South divide.

This BRICS effect has translated into a tempering of international responses to issues of global concern – particularly in relation to peace and security (Senior South African analyst 1, 2012). At worst, this state of affairs could be seen in an international paralysis with neither side of the divide willing or able to exert its full interest and/or influence, which was a situation identified in the case-study research on the case of Syria (see "*Chapter 5: Research Findings II – Humanitarian identity and access – The polarised politics of humanitarian aid and the constraints in the delivery of aid in Syria – Setting the stage: geopolitical chaos*"). At best, "[w]hat it is doing is preventing a kind of headlong plunge into a particular direction. You ultimately get a more tempered international response." (Senior South African

analyst 1, 2012). Regardless of whether the outcomes of this dynamic are positive or negative, the reality is that "there is an alliance outside of the dominant Western alliance that is able to keep that dominant alliance in check." (Senior South African analyst 1, 2012). At least to a limited degree.

There were some unresolved dynamics identified within this BRICS effect that were yet to fully take shape and were related to its positioning on the global stage. There was a strongly articulated concern among civil society that the BRICS could simply be a gateway for Chinese imperialism (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014): "Is BRICS an anti-imperialist tool or is it just sub-imperialism, or worse, the new imperialism?" (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014; South African civil-society representative 2, 2014). More specifically, it was felt that the growing multi-polarity was temporary and would only persist until China was willing to exert its role as a superpower (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014).

On the one hand, the BRICS formation is a way to hide the footprint of China, who is not ready to take its international responsibilities as a superpower and, on the other hand, it is used to boost the powers of Brazil and South Africa in particular. (ibid.)

On this logic, the data explain how some have come to view the BRICS as a gateway for Chinese imperialism under the cover of collaboration and co-operation.

Additionally, there was strong suspicion expressed about the role of Russia as "a predator state" that should be seen as distinct from the non-aligned tradition of emerging states such as Brazil, India and South Africa (Senior academic 2, 2012). "Brazil or South Africa are countries which can very much be part of a humanitarian agenda. I don't see Russia or China being part of that." (ibid.).

Indeed, the tensions within the BRICS were identified as a dynamic that has not yet fully taken shape (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014).

IBSA [India, Brazil, South Africa] represents the more developing economy of BRICS and the concerns they bring can be quite different. And there is also a much closer alignment over the past year between Russia and China and the IBSA group, which likes to be seen within the mould of the non-aligned movement. I think some tensions might arise between IBSA and the other two and this will also be healthy. (ibid.)

A final element of the BRICS effect identified in this research was what this research refers to as a 'national liberation logic', which was seen in a political discourse prominent in emerging states that have either recently emerged from a national liberation struggle, as in

the case of South Africa, or an armed struggle against military rule, as in the case of Brazil (Senior South African analyst 1, 2012; Senior South African analyst 2, 2014; South African civil-society representative 2, 2014).

On one hand, this aspect of the BRICS effect translated into a militant position toward the West (referred to more commonly in Brazil as 'the North') (Senior South African analyst 1, 2012). This could be best seen in the terms of South-South solidarity, which was described by one participant as "a globalised version of 'African solutions for African problems'" (Senior South African analyst 1, 2012). This sense of mutual solidarity "is rooted in the nationalist tradition of doing things for ourselves. The West has screwed us over repeatedly. They colonised us, they enslave us with their aid – and now we need to do things for ourselves".

This militant self-reliance was seen as a duty. "We need to do it because we owe it to ourselves and to each other and we don't want to be screwed over again by the West pretending to help us." (ibid.).

How does this BRICS effect affect humanitarian action?

Keeping the BRICS effect identified above in mind, it was possible to explore how it affected humanitarian action.

The first consequence of the BRICS effect – or messy multi-polarity – on the current model of institutional humanitarian action was identified as the outright rejection of humanitarian aid and its independent delivery (Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014). "Humanitarian aid is seen as an agenda from the North. It is imposed through bully tactics that are becoming less tolerated." (ibid.). The recent experiences of Libya have also contributed to this growing rejection of aid delivery (Senior South African analyst 2, 2014). One research participant pointed out how emerging states have sought to protect their self-interest by looking for support among respectful peers rather than giving in to Northern bullies (ibid.).

A more immediately expedient rejection of humanitarian aid has also been empowered by the BRICS effect:

What we can start to see within the domestic politics of some states is that they are using the BRICS power dynamic to strengthen their domestic positioning on service delivery and rejecting outside help or looking to control it and channel it to better support their domestic political objectives. (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014)

Another consequence in the data of the BRICS effect can be seen in the rethinking of the modalities of humanitarian assistance; in other words, what humanitarian aid means and how it is provided and what institutions govern its provision (MSF HQ staff 10, 2014; MSF HQ staff 15, 2014; Senior South African academic 1, 2012; Senior South African analyst 1, 2012; Senior South African analyst 2, 2014). This rethinking may be linked to the questioning of norms and values.

The paternalism that must be tolerated in accepting assistance from the North has been rejected in favour of aid rooted in domestic experiences (Senior South African analyst 2, 2014; MSF HQ staff 10, 2014; MSF HQ staff 15, 2014). Here, once more, we see the emergence of the political-legitimacy logic: "Brazil created its models for international development from the bottom up" (MSF HQ staff 15, 2014). Indeed, this bottom-up approach can be seen in Brazil's approach to food security and nutrition, and how this approach is articulated in "familiar agriculture" through the programme of *CG-Fome*²⁰ under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ibid.). "It was created by Lula out of the experiences of *Fome Zero* and it is shared with other states as a progressive model of social justice" (ibid.).

Indeed, in the case of Brazil, "[s]olidarity is seen as an obligation. The ideals of humanitarian co-operation are strongly influenced by the Lula legacy" (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014). Similarly, in South Africa, an approach to humanitarian aid has developed as "part of the South African foreign policy to promote dialogue, peaceful reconciliation and co-operation based on the legacy of Madiba [Nelson Mandela]" (Senior South African analyst 2, 2014).

These data demonstrate that this liberation humanitarianism has been articulated on the global stage within the framework of the BRICS effect, meaning that it has not been offered as a complementary model to Western humanitarianism but is at least being articulated as an alternative approach.

At the same time, there has been a questioning of the governance structures that have developed to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance (MSF HQ staff 5, 2012). "The new donors are saying that they don't necessarily want to sign up to the good-humanitarian-donorship thing because they want to pursue their economic interests. At least it's honest." (MSF HQ staff 5, 2012). This honesty is, in turn, challenging the "myth of governments providing aid neutrally" (ibid.).

²⁰ *Fome* means hunger in Portuguese.

Another consequence identified in the data was the persistence of a more-of-the-same dynamic (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014; MSF HQ staff 15, 2014; Senior South African analyst 2, 2014). Emerging states, like all states, have self-interest at the core of their international relations (ibid.).

When you look closely at what they are doing it is clear that they look for distinction to the Western model – but it is more rhetorical. In practice, they are often doing the same thing: privileging aid to ideological allies or to places with economic interests. The overseas agricultural budget of Brazil – which is dominated by big business – is five times more than the agricultural-development budget that supports grass-roots mobilisation. We have exported the contradiction in Brazilian society between big business and social resistance. (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014)

Therefore, although the political rhetoric of changing power is distinct, how it interacts with humanitarian aid remains based on a model of promoting national self-interest.

These findings can be contrasted with the findings that emerged, for the most part, from the first phase of research, where aid workers clearly saw a crossroads facing humanitarian action as a result of these changing global power dynamics.

Humanitarian crossroads

Evidence gathered during this research indicated that an emerging multi-polarity creates a crossroads for humanitarian organisations.

The rise of alternative powers – in particular, China – was considered by some to be the defining challenge for the future of the humanitarian project. In reference to its implications for an organisation like MSF, one academic pointed out:

MSF is at a crossroad. It can fall back into a Cold War position where it was partial and part of the fight against socialism. That path can be motivated by the notions of humanitarianism having genuinely Western values and therefore it is fine to maintain a Western character. (Senior academic 1, 2012)

However, this approach was thought to be a risk to the ability of an organisation like MSF to remain relevant – especially when considering that the literature indicates an emergence of multi-polarity rather than the contestation for dominance between two big powers seen in the Cold War (Nye, 2011). "The other option is for MSF to move on, to develop and learn from the past and understand how MSF can become a truly international actor amidst growing divisions" (Senior academic 1, 2012).

A practitioner from a large international organisation agreed:

We really have to chart a different course otherwise we will be left behind and we will be mourning and weeping into our tea saying 'but we are the real humanitarians' and the world would have moved on. And the new generations won't care about where we were in the 1960s. That's our narrative. It is certainly not the new narrative. (Senior international organisation representative 2, 2012)

A group of participants in the interview process saw humanitarian aid as something inevitably Northern:

... humanitarian action is structurally from the North to the South. It's normal – from the rich to the poor. Now to say that because it is from the North to the South it is part of the imperialist agenda is very simplistic. (Senior academic 2, 2012)

Starting here, research participants articulated a need for Northern humanitarians to find a way to be accepted outside of the North as global power dynamics change, while at the same time playing a role critical of Northern states (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012).

Humanitarian aid doesn't have to be what it was intended to be. It has its roots in imperialism but even the colonial doctors were not insensitive to what they saw and there was a lot of tension between colonial doctors and military administration. (ibid.)

Given this perceived inevitability, there was suspicion from participants about the need to adjust to the BRICS effect. As one participant pointed out:

I'm not entirely comfortable with the concept of the global South – or adapting our behaviour in relation to it – because it all comes from the feeling that we in the North are in debt. It's driven by a post-colonialism guilt. (MSF HQ staff 3, 2012)

There were also questions raised about the value of what was thought to be reducible to "being nice to the South" (ibid.).

There is this idea that being nicer to the South will help us. I don't think that being nicer to the South will help us. But I see the trend of that vision being promoted and I think it is dangerous. (ibid.)

Part of the rationale for this suspicion of any supposed "pandering to the South" comes from thinking about the BRICS effect as being an alignment with dictators and autocrats rather than being about an opposition to Western hegemony (MSF HQ staff 3, 2012). "I'm wondering whether South Africa is a privileged partner to some of these state authorities not

because it comes from the global South but rather because it has aligned itself with these dictators' politics." (ibid.).

The aiding of the South by the South was identified as being about self-interest:

It is not about opposing greater empire from the North. I suspect if South Africa had shown less support to the Sudanese government in Khartoum then Ghadaffi would have had more problem accepting South Africa as a go-between during the Libya war. (ibid.)

The findings from these data are that participants did not think the global South offers a new paradigm but instead one that should be approached with caution. Although it may be that emerging powers wish to equally instrumentalise aid for their self-interest, a simplistic and patronising short-cut was taken in the logic that connected being wary of emerging-power self-interest to seeing emerging power as a bigger threat to the humanitarian project than Western power. "Are we looking forward to aligning ourselves with Russia and China when it comes to talking about the massacre of civilians? We have to be careful about that." (MSF HQ staff 3, 2012) This caution was informed by a deep-rooted suspicion: "For me Russia has danger signs all over it. What is their philosophy for engaging in international development and how are they going to use their power?" (Senior NGO worker 2, 2012).

The above position can best be understood as being informed by a desire to build on a critical-insider role and the Western traditions of humanitarian aid while remaining cautious of new power configurations and what they might mean for the advancement of the humanitarian agenda born out of Western power.

Taking this approach means accepting both the Western identity of institutional humanitarian aid – both historically and in its current form – and accepting Western humanitarian actors' critical discourse and role within the constructs of Western power. This tradition is most clearly seen in the discourse of participants from MSF, an organisation that emerged in the West but out of a political tradition that does not necessarily tow Northern-government lines. "Modern humanitarian agency has also in mind a will of emancipation or liberation from these powers" (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012).

Indeed, this "will of emancipation" can be seen in the efforts of organisation such as MSF to obtain financial independence:

... as a way to get rid of these imperialist influences. And I think that MSF is a good example of one aspect of a very diversified relief and humanitarian movement. You can challenge the view that humanitarianism and empire are only one thing in discerning various tendencies in humanitarian aid. (ibid.)

As Weissman points out:

The refusal of MSF to call for just wars needs to be understood in light of the imperial aspect of liberal universalism since the nineteenth century. We want to break away from a humanitarian tradition that associates the abolition of slavery with forced labour, human rights with colonization, humanitarian assistance with humanitarian military intervention, and the liberation of Afghan women with aerial bombardments. In a word, we want to distance ourselves unambiguously from the politics of force acting under the banner of humanitarian universalism. (2010:200)

However, the data also suggest that this tradition – of the critical colonial doctor as a beacon of counter-imperialism in a sea of uncritical colonial doctors and non-doctors – risks making too fine a distinction when up against the messiness of the BRICS effect. This point was most interestingly made in a recent (as of 2015) email exchange within MSF. The email exchange took place in reaction to the participation of MSF representatives based in China and from the organisation's London office in an event organised by the British consulate in Shanghai to discuss the relationship between NGOs and government. MSF had only been able to attend the discussion – which included representatives of an influential think-tank with ties to the Chinese government – on the invitation of the British consulate to share its experiences of interaction with the British government through MSF's UK office. One MSF staffer reacted by expressing a harsh critique that points to an internal awareness that, even though MSF's intention may be to be the critical insider, its perspective is not always so easily understood by outsiders:

So NGOs are not invited because they are seen as [W]estern government infiltrators, and to bypass that perception we get ourselves invited through the British embassy? So between that, MSF taking DFID and Norwegian money in South Sudan, ECHO money in CAR [Central African Republic] and generally acting as the French foreign-office spokesperson on Syria, Mali and CAR, it is clear why the Chinese and other states think we are an agent of [W]estern foreign policy. They think that, because we are. (Email correspondence between two MSF representatives, 2014)

The above critique derives from a frustration at what was seen as the organisation's inability to distinguish itself sufficiently from Western foreign policy in a number of high-profile conflicts where, for better or for worse, the position taken by Western governments often aligned with the political perspectives of the members of the MSF movement (*ibid.*).

An additional critique arose in the data of how, in the current era, MSF and other organisations rely on articulation of their principles to distinguish themselves from the

policies and interests both of the warring parties and governments from where the organisations originate.

As another internal MSF email exchange puts it, "[b]eing of Western origin is not the problem but functioning in the current world order as a [W]estern organisation is a problem." (Email correspondence between two non-European MSF representatives, 2011). Emphasis on humanitarian principles and the notion of independence, it was being argued, are not sufficient in the post-Cold War era:

We rely so heavily on principles today and we forget that during the Cold War states didn't allow us to work because of our principles. We were seen to be working against communism and that was supported by the states that were also battling communism and it was supported by the governments in the home societies. (ibid.)

"Where do we find our leverage today?" (ibid.) one participant asked. "We no longer just happen to be on the side of the power that has the most weight and that is battling another power that blocks humanitarian aid." (ibid.).

An alternative to the perspective of those accepting the discourse of the critical insider was articulated by those research participants who saw the decline of Western power as an inevitable reality and the emergence of a new political landscape as something not necessarily definable but that nevertheless requires a change of approach by humanitarian workers (Senior NGO worker 1, 2012; Senior IO worker 1, 2012; MSF HQ staff 2, 2012; Academic 1, 2012; MSF HQ staff 6, 2012). This perspective is rooted in pragmatism and not in the view that the flow of aid from North to South and the Western identity of aid was inevitable but rather in the view that change is inevitable and the need to manage and engage with it is unavoidable:

I must say that the naivety of the leadership of the humanitarian community is astounding, even from the perspective of their own agenda, because what they are implicitly doing is falling into the trap of saying that those guys [in reference to strong states that block humanitarian access] are critical of us purely because they don't understand us, and they are a bunch of autocrats who don't care about their people, without understanding that the way humanitarian actors manage the baggage of their engagement is important for their own legitimacy and access. Whether you like it or not, if a large amount of the developing world considers you to be forerunners of a Western intervention, then it's a problem you are going to have to figure out how to manage. And how you articulate yourself and how you engage are important. Identity matters. I'm not asking you to capitulate to the Gadaffis or Assads of this world, but, on the other hand, you don't have to unproblematise the Western identity just

because the critique of you is being made by the autocrats. (Senior South African academic 1, 2012)

The non-state diffusion of power

The diffusion of power was overlooked by the research participants who were focused on an emerging multi-polarity. The question that this part of the research sought to answer was whether diffused forms of power also had consequences for humanitarian action.

This research identified a tensioned space between the rising powers of the post-liberation-movement state (such as South Africa) and the civil-society formations that used to be influenced and supported by the Soviet bloc during the struggle (in the case of South Africa). These former comrades-in-arms against the state have now become the current citizens of a pluralistic liberal democracy with a high moral legitimacy on the international stage (Adler & Steinberg, 2000).

The existence of a civil-society configuration having both a national focus and a critical stance toward the state could be clearly seen in South Africa and Brazil (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014; Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014; Brazilian civil-society representative 3, 2014; South Africa civil-society representative 1, 2014; South Africa civil-society representative 2, 2014). One research participant referred to this dynamic as the presence of "critical nationalists" (Senior South African academic 1, 2012). This research identified that, although these critical nationalists would often be in opposition to their state, an awkward relationship emerged when they dealt with international issues.

This tensioned space could be seen in the position taken on the military intervention in Libya by civil-society groups in South Africa, where the trade-union movement initially came out strongly against Ghaddafi's crackdown on protests.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions strongly condemns the massacre of more than 1000 protesters by the government of Libya and demands that people be allowed to exercise their basic human right to demonstrate peacefully against the regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. (Craven, 2011)

However, when the military intervention was launched by NATO, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) maintained its support of the "call for democracy in Libya through the struggles of the Libyan people" but called for protests against "the bombings led by the forces of imperialism . . . against the people of Libya" (Congress of South African Trade Unions [COSATU], 2011).

This tension was best described by one research participant as follows: "In the struggle between the fox and the hen you first have to get rid of the hawk. They might be autocrats – but they are my autocrats" (Senior South African academic 1, 2012). This quote compared the battle between civil society and the state as the struggle between a fox and a hen. Western interests were identified as being the hawk, against which the fox and hen would unify.

In South Africa, civil-society movements have articulated their understanding of the current political moment as "dangerous times".

We live in dangerous times. Much of the 20th century was marked by the binary division between 'cold war' powers on either side of the iron curtain. This has broken. It has been supplanted by the comparative anarchy of multiple powers of the hot war; these are the waning but still significant power of the world's big governments, the overlapping and unbridled power of the corporate sector (the 1%) and the growing power and allure of various fundamentalisms. (Heywood, 2014:online)

This positioning has pitted civil society against both the fall out of the existence of multiple powers and the global inequalities generated by the uni-polar era's imposition of market economics. In this way, civil society in, for example, South Africa, "is not just anti-West but more anti-imperialist" (Civil-society representative 2, 2014). A result of this articulation is that not only the West suffers critique, but also "all international forces that are building empires and strengthening nations as opposed to a struggle for internal democracy that works for all, not just a minority." (ibid.) It is this struggle for social justice "that unite[s] organisations and communities and informs an opposition to the West or the international community or China." (ibid.).

This frame informs the post-liberation leftist structures of civil society that are now organising around the concept of social justice (Heywood, 2014).

Those who organise around principles of social justice may be the last hope, the last redoubt of decency and community. Our organisations are the last hiding place where people still dream of dignity, equality and opportunity for all. But the pursuit of social justice remains a minority sport. (Heywood, 2014:online).

To better understand how the diffusion of power could affect humanitarian action, it was useful to look for and explore examples of such effects in the operational experiences of MSF. Two examples were identified through a review of internal MSF documents and by drawing on the previous field experience of the researcher. The first, the way MSF

responded to the outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa in 2008 and, the second, the way MSF responded to the uprising in Bahrain in 2011.

There are a number of interesting features to the South African case, including: that the response took place in a country where MSF had recently established a branch office, which gave the organisation a distinctly rooted identity in the country (Nueman, 2013); that MSF had been present for some time in South Africa and had been conducting an HIV project that had, at its core, an alliance with post-national-liberation civil-society formations that had taken a confrontational stance toward the state (Fox, 2013); and the way humanitarianism was articulated as an expression of solidarity and as part of a fight for social justice which informed the approach of MSF (MSF HQ staff 15, 2014).

All of this occurred in South Africa at a time when the state was increasingly positioning itself in alliance with other BRICS members and was taking a leading role in promoting African solutions for African problems (Senior South African analyst 1, 2012).

South Africa: a post-liberation-movement-driven humanitarian response

During the transition from apartheid to majority rule in South Africa, violence erupted in the townships (areas relegated to the peripheries of cities and in which Black persons were required to live) (South African Democracy Education Trust, 2004; Saunders, 2007). Much of this violence originated in the township hostels (Sitas, 1996; Segal, 1992), which were operated by the apartheid government and housed migrant workers (who mostly had been forced off their ancestral land), some of whom belonged to the ANC's main rival, the Inkhata Freedom Party (IFP) (ibid.).

South Africa's apartheid security forces manipulated these hostel dwellers to create divisions and instability within the townships as a way to counter the ANC's popularity. When xenophobic violence broke out in Johannesburg in 2008, these same hostels were the source and the violence had many similar characteristics to that which took place in the '80s and '90s.

The violence was targeted at foreign African nationals – the majority of whom came from Zimbabwe, a country that had recently undergone a complete economic collapse (including hyperinflation) (Compagnon, 2011). "Gruesome images on national television of 'foreigners' in townships surrounding Johannesburg who were burned alive by groups of people armed with machetes and knives brought home the extent of the violence." (Robins, 2009:637). Thirty-eight thousand people were displaced in the violence and "found refuge on the streets, outside police stations, and in churches, mosques, and community halls. Responding to the

crisis, the government established refugee camps at the various 'hot spots' in Cape Town and Johannesburg." (ibid.).

In the years following the establishment of a democratic South Africa, the country was in transition. "Rather than entering the envisioned socialist utopia, post-apartheid South Africa would make a detour into pluralist democracy. Comrades would become citizens." (Adler & Steinberg, 2000:9). It was the civic formations of the national liberation movement that became the bedrock of an activism caught between the reality of liberal democracy and an ideology of socialist revolution (see Habib, 2013 for an exploration of *South Africa's Suspended Revolution* and Ashwin Desai, 2002 for an exploration of post-apartheid civil society). Many of the civil-society movements that had emerged in the post-liberation South Africa took up the cause of social justice – most notably in the form of the struggle for access to treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS (Treatment Action Campaign, 2010).

It was these activists that MSF had aligned itself with in 1999 on its arrival in South Africa for starting an HIV project (see R. Fox, 2014 for an ethnographic study of MSF, including the establishment of both its projects in South Africa and the MSF South Africa office). Some of these same activists would later establish the first MSF branch office on the African continent in 2006 (ibid.).

In his study of MSF, Redfield points out that:

To act, MSF relied on local partners, particularly TAC [Treatment Action Campaign]. South Africa was different terrain from the group's classic field context, featuring a relatively rich endowment of infrastructure alongside extreme social inequity. Moreover, the country's charged colonial history made it difficult for an outside organization – particularly a European one contesting the health policy of an anti-colonial minister – to claim moral legitimacy or operate independently. Such government opposition set South Africa apart from other countries with AIDS projects. As a consequence MSF learned to operate in a coalition; humanitarian action there moved through demonstrations and up courthouse steps. (2013:246)

"MSF initially (when they first arrived in 1999) took a position of solidarity with the mass movements of activists and patients struggling to access treatment. We chose our allies well." (MSF HQ staff 14, 2014). This marked the beginning of MSF's collaboration with the Treatment Action Campaign and other critical civil-society organisations that based their action on tools of mobilisation, protest and litigation (R. Fox, 2014). These groups were founded in support of the Constitution of South Africa and were born out of the struggle against apartheid. "For MSF [during the implementation of its HIV projects in Cape Town],

a broad range of alliances—a classic tactic of the antiapartheid struggle—was a condition for success." (Neuman, 2012:166).

"At a time when the country had just rid itself of white power, MSF could hardly draw legitimacy from its identity as an organisation from the 'North'" (ibid.). Alliances, therefore, became an operational tool to enable MSF to gain "the space it needed to develop its activity and advocate for access to treatment. These alliances also became a political shield, essential for warding off attempts by the South African government to destabilise the Khayelitsha programme." (Neuman, 2012:166).

When the xenophobic violence broke out in 2008, the MSF office joined forces with the MSF project, which was working on providing assistance to Zimbabwean refugees in inner-city Johannesburg (see Kuljian, 2013 for an account of the events at the Central Methodist Church, where thousands of refugees sought shelter and where MSF had established a clinic). MSF responded to the outbreak of violence with emergency medical teams that worked at various stages of the crisis in close collaboration with civil-society groups (MSF, 2009b).

Even though MSF was, by the time of the violence, a well-known organisation in South Africa, it still had to prove its relevance outside of the HIV-activist circles. "MSF had to earn its legitimacy as an organisation associated with a global [W]estern elite" said one internal document from the time (MSF internal document 7, 2008). What created and delineated MSF's space to operate in South Africa was not the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality – nor was it any international legal standards or moral imperative. Rather, it was through the alliances established in its HIV work that MSF found its legitimacy.

The partnership between MSF and such groups informed the approach taken by MSF during the xenophobic violence in 2008 (MSF HQ staff 14, 2014).

It was clear that neutrality was a useless tool in the context of South Africa. It didn't address the power dynamics, the history of struggle, the reality of a suspicion toward the West. Claiming neutrality was like pretending to be invisible. Nobody buys it. (MSF HQ staff 13, 2014)

These alliances confronted the state – they were neither passive nor collaborative (ibid.). But nor were they arrogant enough to try to 'build capacity'.

The white, liberal Western NGOs were just painful to watch in how they dealt with the state and civil society. Their respect was so patronising and the product they were peddling was so

disconnected from a reality of mass movements that don't take orders from anyone. Especially some white European. (South African civil-society representative 1, 2014)

That MSF was able to navigate these dynamics in the late '90s in South Africa was due more to individuals than institutional strategy.

I think that it was a complete co-incidence that MSF happened to send a Marxist to SA to start its projects here. But this fact then did play a critical role in appreciating the traditions of struggle and mobilising as a tool for change. MSF got the politics right. (MSF HQ staff 15, 2014)

Getting the politics right meant that:

It understood that it needed to be immersed in the identity of the patient movement because this was the strongest lever of power. And this understanding and politics comes from understanding the progressive role played by communities and the trade-union movement in South Africa. (ibid.)

What was interesting about this approach was that it went against the international discourse which had positioned South Africa as a model of transition:

The rainbow nation was blinding the world, and yet, MSF could position itself and locate its work against the policies of this government that was revered all over the world for having achieved a miracle. But this required deep and conscious politics and, unfortunately, MSF has not used this element of its work as part of its operational tool in the way that it defined the standards of care, for example, in a refugee camp. (ibid.)

MSF needed to see itself less as an outsider exposing a government or institution for creating human suffering, but rather as "working alongside the poor who are their own advocates" (MSF internal document 5, 2010). In this environment, MSF was able to put its weight into creating a political movement favouring the assisting of foreign nationals displaced by xenophobic violence. If we consider the political underpinning of much of the work carried out by humanitarian actors in South Sudan (see "*Chapter 4: Research Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity*"), what is clear in the case of South Africa is that the political underpinnings were distinctly different:

To work in this kind of environment, you need to be political. I'm not talking about taking sides. That's such a Cold War way of thinking. I'm talking about political consciousness. You have to be grounded in Steve Biko, Black Consciousness, the politics of mass struggle for liberation, anti-colonialism. The West thinks these notions are from a previous era. Maybe it is for them. For South Africans involved in the struggle, this is our bread and butter. Socialism

still means something. It means social justice and that doesn't equal liberal democracy. Steve Biko disliked white liberals for a reason. (South African civil-society representative 1, 2014)

Although some research participants criticised MSF's use of expatriate staff in the later stages of the response to the xenophobic violence, others saw past this because of what MSF had to offer:

What worked in MSF's favour was its pragmatism. It wanted to get things done and it wasn't fond of talking and having endless meetings. This was an advantage, but as things developed we started to see the uglier face of foreigners that just don't get it. (South African civil-society representative 1, 2014)

This focus on operationality was reflected in an internal document from the time. "The world has an overabundance of desk-top activists regurgitating volumes of research to tell the world how poor people suffer. What distinguishes MSF from this is its operationality and speaking out based on this presence." (MSF internal document 6, 2010).

Although the experiences of MSF in South Africa can offer a unique perspective on the diffusion of power, there is an additional reality that was identified in answering the research questions. The MSF-SA office, though critical in capturing much of the operational experience of MSF in South Africa, has been criticised for not being able to bring that added value into MSF operations outside of the region (Personal communication with MSF representative in Brussels, 2014).

The data presented above are only one example of the effects of diffused power, in particular in its effect on the articulation of and approach to humanitarian aid.

Bahrain: social-media humanitarianism

To answer the research questions, it was still necessary for this research to investigate how social media interacted with the messy multi-polarity of the BRICS effect. Through a review of the MSF internal documents, events in Bahrain in 2011 were identified as a useful example for exploring this dynamic in greater depth.

Bahrain's population comprises, *inter alia*, a Shia majority ruled by a Sunni minority that is connected to the global capitalist elite (Dodge, 2012). Since independence in 1970, the Shia have been heavily involved in resistance against the ruling monarchy. Until the uprisings of 2011 began, 1994 had been the peak of unrest (Ulrichsen, 2012). In 2007 (236), Nasr pointed out that "Bahrain's sectarian troubles will bear directly on Shia–Sunni relations in the

UAE, Kuwait, and, most important, Saudi Arabia, whose Eastern Province sits a stone's throw away from the causeway that links Bahrain to the Arabian mainland."

It was fear of this ripple effect that spurred Saudi Arabia into action when uprisings in Bahrain gained momentum in March 2011 (Ulrichsen, 2012). Saudi tanks rolled across the causeway to suppress the Shia-majority uprising (see Matthiesen, 2013 for a specific exploration of the Gulf in *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't*; Al Jazeera, 2011a; Ulrichsen, 2012).

Much like in Syria, the crisis in Bahrain occurred in the context of a contest for regional hegemony between Iran and Saudi Arabia that intersected with broader geostrategic interests. Just as Russia had a naval base off the coast of Syria, the US had a key naval base in Bahrain (Ulrichsen, 2012). At the same time, the military intervention in Libya was kicking off and the US was seeking support from Gulf states:

The Americans have also taken an approach of attempting to appease the Bahraini government – mainly due to the regional political dynamics at play that are linked to Libya. The US wants to secure a role for Qatar and UAE in Libya to 'de-[W]esternise' the intervention. UAE and Qatar have both contributed troops to the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] intervention force in Bahrain, and the US is not willing to sacrifice their co-operation on Libya over Bahrain. However, at the same time the US is nervous about pushing the opposition towards Iran. The main political opposition is currently not strongly linked or tied to Iran despite the state propaganda to the contrary. However, this could quickly change if they feel isolated from the [W]est and under siege from the government. (MSF internal situation report, 2011)

The above factors played heavily in the considerations of the US government, who essentially gave cover to the Saudi-led intervention to prop up the Bahraini monarchy (Zunes, 2013; Matar, 2014).

The regional cover received by the Saudis, and the muted criticism from the US, enabled a brutal crackdown on the opposition (ibid.). The only public-referral hospital in the small island kingdom was occupied by the military (Stokes, 2011). In an editorial on Al Jazeera, MSF's General Director criticised how patients were being treated in the crackdown:

In the kingdom of Bahrain, to be wounded by security forces has become a reason for arrest, and providing healthcare has become grounds for a jail sentence. During the current civil unrest, Bahraini health facilities have consistently been used as a tool in the military crackdown, backed by the Gulf Cooperation Council, against protesters. The muted response from key allies outside of the region such as the US – who has significant ties to Bahrain, including a vast naval base in the country – can only be interpreted as acceptance of the

ongoing military assault on the ability to provide and receive impartial healthcare. While the government and its supporters in Bahrain continue to refer to the protesters as 'rioters', 'criminals', 'extremists', 'insurgents' or 'terrorists', the label that remains conspicuously absent for those who are wounded is 'patient'. (Stokes, 2011:online)

MSF sent a team into Bahrain. Twitter, Facebook, Skype and Blackberry Messenger became MSF's primary tools of communication with its young, social-media-savvy patients, many of whom were in hiding for fear of accessing public hospitals, while others had been released from jail after being tortured (MSF internal associative article²¹, 2011). MSF would arrange to see patients over Blackberry Messenger (ibid.). "As in other uprisings in the region social-media networks are a major driving force in terms of mobilising the opposition and coordinating protest actions." (MSF internal situation report, 2011)

This use of social media was driven, in part, by a fear of open organising and an understanding that there was protection in more anonymous mobilisation:

Protestors who are too afraid to talk on the phone use Twitter, Whatsapp, Facebook and Skype as well as BBM on Blackberry. MSF has also had to adapt to this environment. We contact our networks using social media and have communicated with patients and underground doctors using BBM. (ibid.)

The MSF team would then travel to a patient's home with the support of activists who would help identify the best route into the villages to avoid being followed by police (ibid.).

An internal MSF article describes how, as the crackdown intensified, patients became more fearful of receiving the MSF team at their homes (MSF internal associative article, 2011). In response, the MSF team set up a Skype clinic (ibid.). The premise was for patients to be able to safely and securely make contact with the MSF medical team to discuss their medical problems and seek basic advice (ibid.). If it was urgent that a patient be seen by the MSF team, a meeting place could be arranged over Skype (ibid.). However, due to the limited possibilities of medical intervention over Skype, the service quickly evolved into a mental-health support programme (ibid.). Patients needing to talk would call the online clinic and receive mental-health support from an MSF psychologist (ibid.).

At the same time, MSF would hear about planned protests on Twitter and was better able to manage both its security and operational pre-positioning than was usual (ibid.). Social media allowed MSF to establish proximity with its patients that would have otherwise been impossible due to the nature of the government crackdown (ibid.).

²¹ MSF is a member-based association. Within the association there exist a number of internal publications. This "associative article", and others like it, is therefore an internal article written for members of the MSF association.

Despite its usefulness, social media did not entirely replace more traditional forms of media engagement as an operational strategy. Engagement with traditional media outlets was part of an advocacy strategy (MSF internal communication impact evaluation, 2011). MSF produced a public briefing paper and published an opinion piece on the *Al Jazeera English* website (Stokes, 2011). The organisation also created partnerships with the media by sharing information off the record and steered the news agenda by highlighting to the media what it was missing due to the severe restrictions placed on its access and movement (ibid.).

At the beginning of the uprisings, the MSF team had actively sought proximity to its patients:

... we had moved our small team into the 'triangle of resistance' – a Shia village outside of the capital Manama. We chose a small, discreet flat and left it up to patients to knock on our door. Very few patients felt safe to come, but our proximity gave us a deeper insight into the crackdown. (MSF internal associative article, 2011)

The effect of this step was seen immediately. "We were seen as part of the community – our humanitarianism was immediately understood as solidarity." (ibid.). This reflection of the team demonstrated an approach to humanitarian principles deeply influenced by their proximity to the protests and networks with underground activists:

As an organization, we were understood to be impartial more than neutral. As individuals, we were not neutral. We couldn't be. The advantages of being a small, mobile team integrated into a community also meant that we were exposed to the communities' same struggles. Neighbours were arrested, molested at checkpoints, harassed in the streets. The riot police chased down young boys outside our window. Our local mosque was partially destroyed. One of our team members had his house burnt down and was beaten while under arrest two days later. Our network became smaller by the day as our contacts were arrested. We were angry; neutrality would have been dishonest. It would have created a distance and violated the trust that enabled our access to patients. Each patient we saw was only possible after a process of secret discussions with a variety of middlemen. This is not to say that we abandoned neutrality in our institutional positioning. After all, there remain contexts where neutrality is a tool we can use to negotiate access. And it is therefore a principle that needs to be preserved. However, it was not a dogma that prevented our anger and justified our isolation. (MSF internal associative article, 2011)

To shield itself from a crackdown by the Bahraini government, the MSF team emphasised its Western identity and took a strong public position to demonstrate the ability of the organisation to mobilise public opinion:

We spoke out early and strongly and in so doing we demonstrated to the authorities our ability to mobilize public opinion and generate outrage. In doing so, we created a deterrent for the authorities to specifically target MSF by kicking us out. We created a situation whereby in order to win the battle of Salmaniya, they had to win over MSF. Thus began the initial charm offensive, which later turned into a smear campaign. However, it never crossed into a direct targeting of MSF with expulsion. We had taken out an insurance policy: unlike in many other contexts, in Bahrain we built close relationships with key [W]estern embassies. Not because we were the usual euro-centric [W]estern expats considering the [W]est to be the guardians of all things moral – but because we identified the US and UK as embassies with key leverage that the royal family was susceptible too [sic]. (MSF internal associative article, 2011)

Ultimately, however, Western governments prioritised their strategic interests and did not use their leverage to support MSF to gain the official authorisation needed to work in the country (Personal communication with MSF representative in Brussels 2, 2014).

In an internal publication, MSF noted that:

This project may have been unusual – but it is the future: small teams, strategically building alliances, integrating into communities, providing treatment and using our voice to mobilize public opinion, with our fingers on the pulse of social media. (ibid.)

However, the implications of this experience go beyond demonstrating a mere need to keep "fingers on the pulse of social media". Events demonstrated how new forms of power – diffused and expressed through social media – could generate new forms of operational possibilities (MSF internal associative article, 2011).

The Bahraini example shows how the institutionalised notions of 'downward accountability' and 'participation' were largely irrelevant when interacting with social-media activists engaged in humanitarian activities. These activists were the real drivers of change, as they were directly affected by events and had the highest stakes in the success of humanitarian programmes (Personal communication with MSF representative in Brussels 2, 2014).

The mechanisms of the large NGOs were somewhat unsuitable where those affected by an oppressive regime were mobilising through social media to deliver aid as part of their political struggle (ibid.). These activists were not 'implementing partners' but drivers of change. The 'cluster system' and the endless 'best practices' developed by the humanitarian community became irrelevant (ibid.) in Bahrain. These mechanisms were not used by local activists and would have been useless anyway as MSF was the only international humanitarian organisation on the ground (ibid.).

A return to the *sans frontières* moment?

What is clear from the interviews, examples presented (see "*South Africa: a post-liberation-movement-driven humanitarian response*" and "*Bahrain: social-media humanitarianism*" above) and documentary analysis is that the political undercurrents that informed the use of diffuse power – seen in online activists and civil society – were framed and guided by the politics of national liberation, social justice and solidarity. By contrast, what we see from the literature (see "*Chapter 2: Literature review – Part 1 – Humanitarian aid and Hegemonic power*") and from the case study on South Sudan (see "*Chapter 4: Research Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity*"), in particular, is that the political undercurrent in much of the institutional humanitarian system comprises a liberal democratic ideology.

Even for an organisation such as MSF, which rejected the shift to multi-mandated development, the data presented in Chapters 4 and 5 and this Chapter 6 show how a de facto political underpinning affected its work. For example, it was able to tap into diffused power in Syria – where that power was aligned with Western interests – but not in Bahrain, where it didn't.

The data suggest that this was less a problem with MSF and more representative of the limits faced by a humanitarian system associated with Western power and of which MSF is an undeniable component. This point is important because it shows how a Cold War *modus operandi* of responding to needs in areas under Western influence, while being blocked or constrained from responding in areas under anti-Western influence, has returned.

Interestingly, the data gathered suggest that there is a clear generational difference within an organisation like MSF. "In the '70s, many of us had a political background. It was the time of the war in Vietnam, Soweto riots – and I had a political background. I was all about the imperialists, and the racists." During this period, "political involvement was self-evident for some of us. There was a certain pervasiveness of progressive political ideas" (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012).

However, this was downplayed as being an era of "[s]imple oppositions between the future and the past, liberation and oppression. It was in a way quite easy to be an activist." (ibid.). This need to downplay political commitment derives largely from what is seen as a proliferation of obvious difficulties for alternative systems in the wake of the widely perceived bankruptcy of the communist alternative.

... when it became obvious that this alternative system had failed – in China and Russia, everywhere – things became much more complicated. In a way it is much more difficult today to be a political activist than it was in the '60s or '80s. It is not a matter of personal politics, but political realities." (ibid.)

These roots of political activism can be seen in the way MSF operates. Redfield argues that MSF operates with a "deeply realist geopolitical perspective and a categorical moral conscience about suffering" (2013:21).

I would consider this description of MSF as a description of what might be called 'humanitarian realism'. This humanitarian realism has emerged out of what Redfield identifies as an erosion of the "more utopian framings for political history", such as class struggle and anti-colonial liberation (2013:34). Indeed, this humanitarian realism – a radical ethics of refusal – "emerged amid a political context of cold war, decolonization and generational turmoil" (Redfield, 2013:39). "The group's emergence, furthermore, coincided with a period of political disillusionment and an erosion of intellectual faith – in the prospect of Marxist revolution, in the romance of decolonization, even in politics itself." (Redfield, 2013:236) Redfield notes that it was "[a]mid the debris of political regimes, its members found refuge in medical work and asserting the value of human life" (2013:236). Additionally, "[a]spects of MSF's oppositional vision, as well as its style and rhetoric, echo the French revolutionary tradition" (Redfield, 2013:44).

The data suggest that, contrary to the perspectives taken by some interviewees, difficulty experienced in being a political activist today may well be experienced more by those living in European societies. The data further suggest that those in countries that have recently emerged from liberation movements, such as Brazil or South Africa, or who are increasingly faced with the failures of the capitalist system following the financial crisis, are much less likely to experience this difficulty. Indeed, the reported "obviousness", the stated "[s]imple oppositions between the future and the past, liberation and oppression" (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012), that made it so easy for some interview participants to become activists provokes the following question when we can see from the data that non-Europeans today understand all too well that obvious need to become political: do Europeans today feel less driven to become political because their lives are less affected by the capricious actions of hegemonic powers?

Having been colonised, having lived under a repressive regime, having fought battles against oppression, inequality and racism, means that your analysis, how you interpret and understand vulnerability, is very different to a European or an American or anyone who comes from a society which functions today as a democracy. Where basic needs are met and human dignity

and respect are part of the fabric of society. I think that the major difference in political identity between someone from the global South and an expat from Europe is that Europe and rich countries function more and more as private individuals and the nuclear family is the cornerstone of existence. Life, work, existence is about the individual. Features of which are consumerism and shopping malls. So even the individual acts of humanitarianism becomes an end in itself. And for the majority of people living in countries like South Africa with huge inequalities, consciousness is informed by this reality. And the need to organise and mobilise is a way of life. Survival depends on it. And solidarity is part of that survival. (MSF HQ staff 15, 2014)

What these data suggest is that, in many ways, the current political moment in emerging states could be analogous to the political moment which birthed the "*sans frontières*" movement. This is not to imply that humanitarian actors should become political. Rather, it suggests that the political identity and understanding of those that make up the humanitarian sector influences the approach to the delivery of aid.

However, to tap this political moment requires a process of "contesting ground" (Senior South African academic 1, 2012):

You have to contest ground for the support of the critical nationalists. You have to win the intellectual high ground with elements of the national intelligencia that are critical of both the Western project and the domestic autocracy. (ibid.)

The difficulty in achieving this was identified by a senior public intellectual as being caused by a weakness in the humanitarian community, namely the habit of assuming rather than actively demonstrating the universality of the humanitarian act. "Demonstrating a universality, rather than assuming it, is where the humanitarian community's weakness is" (Senior South African academic 1, 2012). Indeed:

... the fact that all societies engage in solidarity with the weak – and therefore in a form of humanitarianism – is obvious but it does not translate into a universality of the Western humanitarian system. It is an absurd leap of logic. (Senior South African academic 1, 2012)

This need to actively demonstrate the relevance of humanitarian action may well reflect a changing global power dynamic, where the assertion of principles are no longer sufficient in distinguishing humanitarian actors.

Indeed, this brings us back to the problem of identity, which has been shown to be a challenge for access and a problem for how humanitarian actors engage with diffused forms of power.

The civil society that MSF interacts with has this knowledge and experience of states in general, and of superpowers and politics of the international community. And, if MSF cannot be distinguished from its roots, and rich nations in particular, then civil society will not embrace MSF as a comrade, as an organisation fighting for poor and oppressed people. (Civil-society representative 2, 2014)

The implication here is that "MSF falls between being a charity, bunch of do-gooders and an organisation no different to Northern donors with a rigid agenda. So much is about getting the politics right" (MSF HQ staff 15, 2014). However, "getting the politics right" is hampered by the fact that power in MSF is measured "by virtue of being an international staff. And this arrogance informs interaction and engagement with civil society" (ibid.).

The assumed universality of humanitarianism is, therefore, regarded by this research as needing to be delinked from Western power and redefined. These research findings have highlighted the tension posed at the outset of this doctoral research. The current era of humanitarian actors face a core choice between operating as a counterbalance to power or as an extension of power. Fortunately, findings from the final batch of data reflect the capacity of humanitarian action to be a counterbalance to power in the present political moment of emerging multi-polarity and diffusion of power.

Preserving the capacity for agitation

A number of risks that relate to how the humanitarian project could evolve in the present climate of political change have been revealed during this research. The first arose when Western humanitarian organisations tried to de-Westernise themselves. As noted, "[w]hen Westerners de-Westernise [humanitarianism], they paradoxically re-Westernise it. They are still the masters." (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012).

Another risk noted is of creating capacity on both sides of a growing North–South divide:

There is a risk to building a capacity on both sides of the divide and both become arms of their respective foreign-policy agendas. That is a real danger, because then what you end up with is humanitarian proxy wars. Each has their own NGO and military wing and their job is to destabilise the other and that is how the game gets played. (Senior South African academic 1, 2012).

Indeed, the creation of a capacity on the 'other side of the divide' would replicate the same issue of humanitarian action being incorporated into Western power that has been explored in the preceding case studies of South Sudan and Syria (see "*Chapter 4: Research Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity*" and "*Chapter 5: Research Findings II –*

Humanitarian identity and access"). A humanitarianism that panders to the political winds of change risks losing its core confrontational capacity, something that was identified in this research as essential for a truly impartial delivery of assistance:

Fighting for humanity for your own and the one of the other is not violent by nature and physical action – but it is really violent in terms of human experience. This is a problem with humanitarianism as it is presented today. It doesn't acknowledge that humanity emerges out of conflict. The law of armed conflict allows for a preserving of a space of humanity through legal fighting, human fighting, action fighting. And through having difficult encounters with the others. If you do not ask, you will never receive anything. And even if you ask, you will be threatened, qualified as a traitor or spies, and you will have to prove your intention, your action, your non-politicisation up to what is possible. (MSF HQ staff 1, 2012)

This conceptualisation of humanitarian action, however, requires the political capacity to manoeuvre (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012). This capacity does not derive from partisan politics but from, as one research participant noted, "[a] political sense of action":

The variety of political entities which want to use relief goods and humanitarian aid and discourse for their own benefit is so large that it gives us margin of manoeuvre and possibilities to express our own view. Now it is up to us to use those margins of freedom with degrees of liberty. Some organisations use them, some don't; some think they exist, some just don't see them. This is the political sense of action that NGOs must have to achieve their goals. (ibid.)

The same participant went on to point out:

Speaking out harshly, being critical – knowing how to use a political window of opportunity – being reactive to pass messages, make propositions, deliver a critique; that is what is important for MSF's well-being and reputation. Not to fix the world, but to change some things. And we have examples of this in our history. (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012)

At the same time, the legitimacy of humanitarian action was seen by some participants as being linked to action, rather than words or identity. "Operations speak – not words. Today do our operations show that we are distinct from Western empire? This is questionable in some places." (MSF HQ staff 3, 2012).

What these data suggest is the need for humanitarian actors to have the capacity to navigate multiple dimensions of power in their delivery of humanitarian assistance while also being aware of the risks of being caught on either side of a political divide. This, in turn, suggests the need to both avoid falling into a trap of pandering to rising power and also extract humanitarian aid from declining Western power.

Conclusion to Research Findings III – Humanitarianism rethought

What the findings of this Chapter 6 suggest is that institutional humanitarian action – with its baggage of having in the past furthered Western political interests – is contested by an emerging political multi-polarity that is defined largely by its anti-Westernism. The disdain shown toward the West was pervasive in the data and can be explained as being, *inter alia*, rooted in a collective memory of colonialism, the failure of economic models imposed by Western-dominated multi-lateral institutions and a growing frustration at the hypocrisy of self-interested Western foreign-policy actors that hide behind the language of freedom and democracy.

However, as demonstrated in the exploration of Syria in the first part of this research, emerging powers offer opportunities for humanitarian access – such as was seen in the engagement with the BRICS by MSF for access to Damascus – but only within the context of the core features of the BRICS effect with state sovereignty at its core. In this sense, the approach to humanitarian aid from rising powers is largely indistinguishable from the approach taken by Western powers. However, in the cases where humanitarian aid is contested by the rising multi-polarity through the assertion of sovereignty, it cannot be dismissed as simply being a demonstration of autocracy. It is rather rooted in a political counter-hegemony in which humanitarianism is considered a component of that hegemony.

These findings have also demonstrated that the dichotomy between the rising rest and the declining West has been oversimplified by humanitarian workers and has affected their ability to navigate a changing political landscape. This is because it has led to the short-hand understanding of emerging power as being exemplified by a support for autocracy and, therefore, posing a risk to the values of impartial humanitarian assistance.

However, power is also diffusing. Civil-society formations and social-media activists are creating new spaces for political interaction. With a declining Western uni-polarity, the political underpinning of such movements is fundamentally different to the political framework within which institutional humanitarian action is currently incorporated. The ways these formations are thinking about humanitarian action as belonging to mass movements, solidarity and resistance to social injustice can be seen as a mirror of the founding moments of the *sans frontières* movement. The difference, however, is that this process is not playing out in a bi-polar world, but a chaotic one.

However, these research findings suggest that engagement and alliances with civil society alone do not offer a magic-bullet solution for avoiding constraints imposed by a changing

power configuration (as indicated in the case of Bahrain). However, these research findings have shown how a diffusion of power represents an additional dimension to navigate to ensure the legitimacy of humanitarian aid. However, the ability to navigate this dimension of power is, once again, constrained by the relationship – both perceived and real – between humanitarian aid and Western power.

Chapter 7: Discussion – A crisis of identity and capacity

The findings of this doctoral research reveal the consequences of the relationship between humanitarian action and Western power. The research results show both that the incorporation of humanitarian aid into Western political projects in certain contexts can result in a failure of the humanitarian system to respond effectively to emergencies and the relationship between humanitarian action and Western power can pose a problem for humanitarian access in certain conflicts.

Further, the findings have revealed how power is changing. Emerging powers are contesting norms, asserting sovereignty and emphasising political legitimacy. In addition to this, power is diffusing. Civil-society formations and social media represent just some of the structures through which non-state actors exercise power.

Additionally, it has been found that this political moment for the structures of diffused power often emerges from the failures of the liberal democratic project, which is still promoted by a large part of the so-called 'humanitarian community'. Humanitarian actors' interaction with both a rising multi-polarity and a diffusing power base is constrained by the reality of a humanitarian system acting more as an extension of Western power than a counter-balance to it.

These findings reveal both a continuation of historical trends and, it has been demonstrated, an evolution of them. As discussed in the literature review (see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 1: Hegemonic power and humanitarian aid*"), Barnett classifies humanitarian action into:

... an age of imperial humanitarianism from the late eighteenth century to World War II, an age of neo-humanitarianism from the end of World War II to the end of the Cold War, and an age of liberal humanitarianism from the end of the Cold War to the present. (2011:7)

For Davey et al. (2013), the phases of humanitarian history are: the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the First World War in 1918; the Wilsonian period of the interwar years and the Second World War; the Cold War period; and the post-Cold War period – each period playing out in unique political and social circumstances.

What both of these authors stop short of is in giving a firmer periodisation to the current phase of humanitarian aid, choosing instead to maintain that the current humanitarian

moment remains within the post-Cold War period. This research, however, has offered insight into a new era of humanitarian aid – the era of declining Western power and humanitarianism's crisis of legitimacy. This crisis shows itself in many recent failures of humanitarian aid delivery, as particularly demonstrated by the case of South Sudan and the rejection of humanitarian aid seen in Syria.

This Chapter 7 is divided into three core sections. The first, "*Humanitarianism failed*" explores the effectiveness of humanitarian aid when it is both perceived as being and genuinely is part of a Western state-building project. This section examines the findings from the South Sudan case study (see "*Chapter 4: Research Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity*") and tries to understand them in light of the literature reviewed on how humanitarian aid is conceptualised as part of a development agenda often associated with state-building. This analysis seeks to partly fill the gaps in the literature that deals with whether the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power has impacted on the effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

The section "*Humanitarianism rejected*" explores the consequences of a Western identity for humanitarian access in Syria and tries to understand these consequences within a context of changing global power dynamics. Further, the findings from the Syrian case study (see "*Chapter 5: Research Findings II – Humanitarian identity and access*") are examined in light of the theoretical framework established in the literature review, which identified gaps in knowledge stemming from how humanitarian space is being conceived of in a context of changing power.

The final section, "*Changing political paradigms*", analyses the findings on how a growing multi-polarity and a diffusion of power is shifting the aid landscape, seeking to articulate an alternative understanding of the current challenges facing humanitarian aid. The conceptual framework that emerges from this analysis is influenced by the literature of Joseph Nye (2011), which offers a unique frame for the research findings and analysis.

Humanitarianism failed

The first objective of this research was to examine how the incorporation of humanitarian aid into a state-building agenda could affect emergency-response capacity.

The literature reviewed (see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review*") showed how institutional humanitarian action has been politically underpinned by the politics of liberal democracy and a securitisation agenda (Duffield, 2014; Slim & Bradley, 2013). This critique does not take aim at the entirety of the diverse humanitarian sector, but does aptly apply to those who

have taken on a multi-mandated agenda of combining relief and development work (ibid.). To further understand this dynamic and its effect, the literature explored three post-9/11 contexts. In Libya (see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 1: Humanitarian aid and hegemonic power – Humanitarianism as a justification for dominant-state foreign policy – Libya: the return of humanitarian intervention*"), humanitarian concerns were used to justify intervention (Domesticci-Met, 2011; Hehir & Murray, 2013). In Afghanistan (see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 1: Humanitarian aid and hegemonic power – Humanitarianism as a tool to advance dominant political ideology – Afghanistan: humanitarian aid and soft power*"), humanitarian aid was used as a state-building and stabilisation tool and aid was provided as a way to boost the legitimacy of the state as part of a counter-insurgency strategy (Saikal, 2006; Gordon, 2010). In Somalia (see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 3: Contemporary humanitarianism as a tool and in the rhetoric of intervention – Somalia: the rise of humanitarian criminals*"), it was the flip side of the same coin: aid was criminalised if it was provided to groups that opposed the Western-backed central state (Menkhaus, 2010; Mackintosh, 2011).

In each of these contexts, the literature identifies negative consequences of relationships between humanitarian aid and Western power: the literature on Libya raises worries about the "new politics of protection" that are based on a rejection of how the war in Libya was justified (Bellamy & Williams, 2011:847); in Afghanistan the literature provokes questions about whether a military should directly deliver assistance and whether the approach taken to stabilisation is effective for winning hearts and minds (Gordon, 2010; D. Thompson, 2008); and, in the case of Somalia, the literature reveals that the criminalisation of aid could result in the targeting of humanitarian workers (Menkhaus, 2010; Mackintosh, 2011).

However, what the above literature fails to examine is the effect of the status of the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power in relation to the effectiveness of a primary purpose of humanitarianism: emergency response. While the failures in emergency response are most directly addressed by Tiller and Healy (2014), this literature dwells on the technical shortcomings in aid response and stops short of pointing fingers at the political choices behind such failures.

The initial phase of data collection identified a tension in the aid community between those who saw the shortcomings in emergency response as a technical problem – fixable by conceptual approaches such as resilience-building (Senior NGO worker 2, 2012; Senior donor representative 1, 2012; Senior humanitarian analyst 1, 2012) – and those who considered the attempts at incorporating humanitarian aid into longer-term objectives to be a

reason for the failures of emergency response (Senior NGO worker 1, 2012; MSF HQ staff 5, 2012; Senior international organisation representative 2, 2012).

Interestingly, those who saw the need for a technical fix mirror the literature that points out how during the '90s most of the discussions around humanitarian assistance focused on managerial and technical issues (Harmer & Macrae, 2004). Tellingly, these discussions were taking place in a political context of a "technocratic politicization and militarization of development that serves to incorporate the restive peripheries into the globalised web of liberal peace" (Donini, 2014b:xv). It was from this understanding of the political dimensions of humanitarian aid as part of the liberal democratic model that the case study on South Sudan (see "*Chapter 4: Research Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity*") was carried out. This Chapter 7 therefore examines the findings of this research by investigating how the conceptualisation of aid – as being about building resilience for the purposes of state-building under an integrated UN system – affected the ability of humanitarian actors to respond to emergencies.

A core theory that emerges from the analysis of the research findings is that a state-building approach that is implemented through an integrated UN mission risks undermining the core emergency-response capacity of humanitarian actors. I will therefore argue that the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power can be detrimental to emergency-response capacity, resulting in failures in humanitarian response.

Building resilience by deconstructing humanitarian aid

From the signing of the CPA, the approach to aid delivery in South Sudan progressed from ensuring longer-term developmental peace dividends to creating the foundation of an independent state to, ultimately in 2011, supporting the establishment of a new state. At each stage, as shown in the findings, aid delivery was subordinated to longer-term political goals that superseded emergency response to ongoing crises. Findings in "*Chapter 4: Research Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity – Post-conflict peace dividends: 2005–2011*" show how the approach to aid had been shifted from being based on needs to "a desire to move from humanitarian towards development funding" (Poole & Primrose, 2010:2).

There is an extensive literature justifying a need for humanitarian actors to link relief and development and, more specifically, to work in support of the state's upholding of its responsibilities (Harvey, 2009; Harmer & Macrae, 2004). This approach was certainly prevalent in South Sudan.

Much of the literature on resilience focused on the opportunities the discourse offered for increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. For example, Manyena et al. (2011:423) argued that the resilience discourse could be used to shift approaches to supporting victims of disaster to 'bounce forward'. Another category of literature on resilience takes a more pragmatic approach. Resilience, argue Levine & Mosel, is not something new.

It is important to remember that the banner of resilience has created important political momentum behind old problems (reshaping the emergency development separation, finding a new aid paradigm, retargeting aid on those most prone to crisis, etc.). (2014:21)

For Duffield (2014), however, the resilience narrative completed the process of blurring the distinction between relief and development. Nevertheless, the literature emphasised that, in such protracted crises, relief and development needed to work together and in a principled partnership. Harvey, for example, argues that:

... it is possible to remain committed both to humanitarian and to developmental principles. Doing so requires humanitarian actors to realise that commitments to neutrality and independence are compatible with principled engagement with states to encourage and support them to fulfil their responsibilities to protect and assist their citizens. Humanitarian actors also need to give greater attention to respecting state sovereignty and ownership over humanitarian as well as development strategies, and to view substitution for the state as more of a last resort. Equally, development actors working in humanitarian crises should themselves be committed to humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality. (2009:3)

However, Duffield (2014) argues that the linking of relief and development is based on a consequentialism that places the longer-term goal of development above the immediate goal of saving lives. An examination of the literature on stabilisation, for instance, demonstrated how humanitarian aid has been incorporated into development activities predominantly to advance Western foreign-policy interests (Gordon, 2011; Collinson et al., 2010; Barakat et al., 2010; Zyck et al.; 2014). Further, the literature noted that attempts to build resilience were paradigm cases of the merging of humanitarian and development activities under what Slim and Bradley refer to as a "unified ethical goal." (2013:9).

The above literature failed to address whether the elimination of this distinction between humanitarian aid and development posed problems for the effectiveness of emergency response. The findings of "*Chapter 4: Research Findings I – State-building and emergency-response capacity*" contributes to filling this gap in the literature.

Firstly, in South Sudan, the findings show how humanitarian aid effectively became development aid. This was no principled partnership; it was an amalgamation. Additionally,

in South Sudan, development assistance could not be understood to respect humanitarian principles for the simple reason that development aid is a political act that, in the case of South Sudan, was carried out for the purposes of supporting the state, who – in December 2013 – became party to a civil war.

This is a key finding. It highlights the fundamental tension revealed by how difficult it was to shift the aid architecture from having a partial to impartial effect and intention. Thinking about aid as about building resilience hampered this transition because, as this research found, the resilience discourse did more than merely link relief to development and instead eliminated the distinction altogether.

The most striking demonstration of how the resilience-building discourse underpinned humanitarian aid in South Sudan comes from the senior-most UN humanitarian official, Toby Lanzer, who referred to development as being the biggest humanitarian priority in South Sudan (2013):

By increasing our focus on building resilience, improving prevention and preparedness to crises, and contributing to strengthening national systems to deliver basic services, we can make a lasting difference and ultimately reduce reliance on emergency aid. Addressing these issues is central to humanitarian action in South Sudan and requires a change in strategy. (Lanzer, 2014a:online)

This statement mirrors the perspective revealed in the literature that conflict can ultimately be seen as a development problem that necessitates the promotion of liberal democracy (Duffield, 2014; Slim & Bradley, 2013). Understanding humanitarian aid as being palliative and giving primacy to development and state-building indicates a 'new humanitarianism' approach that Duffield defines as occurring when humanitarian action is incorporated into a development logic due to a core belief in the "'moral' cause of [W]estern governance" (2014:79).

While this research was not intended as a critique of the commonly accepted need and importance of development programming, what was problematic in the case of South Sudan was how the development and state-building agendas were advanced at the cost of the ability to save lives immediately.

What this research has demonstrated is that, by directing capacities toward a single objective – which is what integration in South Sudan was for – humanitarian aid became subordinated to agendas that did not have efficiently saving lives as the primary objective. For example, in an article written by the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator in April 2014, he argues that

humanitarian aid is palliative and there is a need to focus on longer-term development even in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. The logic of this appeal combines two separate activities – development and relief – while at the same time down-playing the importance of immediate relief.

By focusing on long term development, we hope to minimize the impact of the current crisis. At the same time, the country will be in a much stronger position to overcome its differences and become a safe, peaceful and prosperous nation in the heart of Africa where crises are a thing of the past. (Lanzer, 2014a:online)

However, the tone of appeal made by Lanzer (2014a) shifted dramatically in an article written six months later, which followed the deterioration of the situation in South Sudan:

Making the most of the dry season forms the backbone of our strategy for a more cost-effective, flexible and far-reaching humanitarian response in the coming year. However, seizing this opportunity requires resources, now. Another [US]\$637 million is still required to keep our highly prioritized and bare-bones aid operation going this year. On top of that, aid agencies need [US]\$269 million now to kick-start operations for 2015, including upgrading key infrastructure and pre-positioning relief items by road. In a world where attention is torn between the Ebola crisis, war in Gaza and protracted suffering in the Central African Republic, Iraq and Syria, funding for humanitarian action is inevitably scarce. That is why it is so important to make resources go further. For aid agencies working in South Sudan, every dollar received now, before the end of the year, can save many more lives than the same amount received when rains strike next May. Averting a famine is much more cost-effective than tackling the death and devastation that inevitably follows in its wake. Providing vaccines, clean water and latrines to a community costs less than treating hundreds of severely ill children. (Lanzer, 2014b:online)

In the initial stage of aid delivery following the CPA, this research shows how pooled funding mechanisms resulted in major gaps in aid delivery (MSF internal report 1, 2009; Fenton & Phillips, 2009; Bennett et al., 2010). These gaps persisted into the state-building era, ultimately – for the purposes of this research – leading to the 2014 failure of response to the humanitarian needs caused by the outbreak of violence.

As discussed in the debates of the '90s over the role of humanitarian aid in protracted crises (Harmer & Macrae, 2004), there was an attempt in South Sudan to reduce tomorrow's humanitarian bill by building resilience today. Funds were directed to the state or to NGOs that supported the state. As demonstrated by this research, a resilience focus was used to justify a redirection of investment and attention from immediate humanitarian response to preventing the circumstances in which the need for a humanitarian response arises.

The aid architecture was designed to build institutional capacity. Even though the CAP drafted prior to the conflict included "life-saving activities", these activities were intended to serve the larger objective of resilience and state-building under the framework of the NDC (CAP, 2013). Tellingly, while the CAP document claimed to have life-saving activities as one of its core functions, the document still referred to MSF and ICRC – two organisations outside of the CAP (and therefore not receiving any funding through the CAP) – as the primary actors for emergency response. "Non-CAP organizations like ICRC and MSF will continue to provide the core surge capacity in times of need." (CAP, 2013:42). This demonstrated a willingness by the integrated UN system to accept that responding to emergencies would fall outside of its core remit – while it continued to raise funds through a so called humanitarian appeal. This could in turn, be justified by the longer-term end of building a state as being of greater importance.

Therefore, the paradigm in which humanitarian aid operated was shifted from saving lives as quickly and as efficiently as possible to conducting development programmes. As such, the 'ultimate expression' of humanitarianism was directed to the newly established South Sudanese state, not the population. The research has revealed how, under an integrated mission, there was no space to carry out development alongside maintaining a capacity for emergency humanitarian response in a context that did not cease to experience emergencies. At least in South Sudan in 2014, the logic of resilience failed. It is important to note, however, that this failure was not as a consequence of local factors alone, but also of factors that are systemic in the humanitarian system – and which could well cause such failure again in the future.

What the research demonstrates is that the political choices of the aid community had disastrous effects on its ability to respond to emergencies. This was seen in both the post-CPA era and the state -building eras. The aid system was so busy building the state that it was unable to do the basics. By the time the conflict broke out in December 2014, the research results indicate that no lessons had been learnt.

Compromised aid architecture

Collinson (2014) explains that the aid industry operates as a "separate, independent and relatively powerful economic, social and political actor in many poor and crisis-affected countries where indigenous sovereignty and indigenous economies are often relatively weak" (Collinson, 2014:24). She points out how the aid industry is controlled by a small "... oligopoly of organizations that, despite some differences in specific missions and mandates, operates as a relatively closed group with interrelated histories and limited scope for entry"

(Collinson, 2014:26). The *modi operandi* of this oligopoly are defined by the structures of the aid system, including the clusters, the sphere standards and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (ibid.). In South Sudan, it was shown by this research how this oligopoly of aid actors operated within an integrated UN mission established for state-building.

The findings suggest that the paralysis in humanitarian response following the outbreak of violence in 2014 was linked to the inability of this international aid architecture to function without a liberal democratic state to build or support. This was first seen in attempts by UNMISS to, on one hand, shift from a state-building mandate to a protection-of-civilians mandate (UNMISS, 2014; UN field official 1, 2014) while, on the other hand, patch up its relationship with a government that had become concerned about UNMISS connections to members of the opposition (UN field official 1, 2014). As a result, the UN system was forced to straddle an uncomfortable middle ground where they had to shift from supporting the state to ensuring civilians were protected – from both the state and armed opposition – while at the same time trying to maintain a relationship with the institutions of a state that – after the six-month Protection of Civilian mandate was set to expire – it expected to return to supporting.

Generally, NGOs – reliant on UN funding and logistics – permitted their ability to access areas to depend on the UN's management of this political balancing act (Senior NGO worker 1, 2014). This research shows how NGOs were timid at best in challenging the aid architecture and defending a space for humanitarian emergency response alongside that of the dominant development agenda (see *Chapter 4: Research findings I – State building and emergency response capacity – The impact – Justifying failure – Lack of funding*).

As for the donors, most development funds that were being channelled through the state were frozen (Major donor representative 1, 2014; Major donor representative 2, 2014; Major donor representative 3, 2014), whereas funds that were being channelled through NGOs continued to flow (ibid.). The result was a donor community in hiatus, without a clear political direction of who to back in the conflict and without a state to support. NGOs that continued to receive development funding conducted quasi- development in areas affected by conflict – once again entrenching their proximity to the state – but justifying it by asserting that they supported the state at local, but not national, levels.

The slow humanitarian response in South Sudan was predominantly justified by a discourse that made much of a lack of funding and the difficulties in reaching areas in need of aid. More money and better logistics were seen as solutions.

While funds were, in truth, lacking, it is by no means certain that, due to general capacity constraints, the NGO community could have absorbed more funds. Likewise, it may be true that there were difficult-to-reach areas, but this difficulty could only serve as a legitimate excuse for the poor aid response if such response had been otherwise excellent in relatively easy-to-reach areas. A possible discharge of this critique levelled at humanitarian responders is undermined by the failure of response in areas such as the UN bases in Juba. Tens of thousands of people removed almost every conceivable logistical constraint in South Sudan by relocating themselves literally onto the doorstep of the UN system (MSF internal document 9, 2014). At the same time, this research demonstrated how the integrated UN architecture was prioritised by donors for its ability to align the political objectives of all aid actors in one structure. This meant that, when it came to logistics, for example, very few aid actors – except MSF and ICRC – had a logistical capacity of their own to respond to emergencies.

Therefore what these research findings have demonstrated is that in the case of South Sudan the oligopoly of aid actors conceptualised their aid response in terms of building resilience for the ultimate purpose of state-building. This was facilitated by an integrated aid architecture that was led by donors who promoted the creation of a liberal democracy. What went wrong in the case of South Sudan is that this architecture prioritised the building of a state at the expense of emergency-relief capacity. The finding of this research on how the political conceptualisation of aid led to the failure of emergency response is a key contribution in filling the gaps in the literature. The literature focused instead on critiquing the effectiveness of resilience approaches, not from the perspective of how it affected emergency response, but rather on how effective a tool it was to bridge the gap between relief and development, which many authors assumed to be a positive step (DFID, 2011; ALNAP, 2012; Manyena et al., 2011; Levine & Mosel, 2014).

A core proposition arising from this research is therefore the following: what the South Sudan example demonstrates is that eliminating the distinction between relief and development in a conflict makes the ability to respond to emergencies dependent on the political acceptance of a liberal democratic state-building agenda. In South Sudan, the development and state-building objectives of major donors and the UN system incorporated humanitarian activities to such an extent that it undermined emergency-response capacity.

Despite this, the appeal for resources in the CAP were still referred to as a 'humanitarian' appeal and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General was still referred to as a 'Humanitarian Co-ordinator'. This demonstrates that, at least in the context of South Sudan, the democratic state-building project of Western power had managed to entirely

reframe what humanitarian action meant and how it could be delivered. This may have been a net positive for those whose objective was development and state-building but, if one considers emergency response to be a defining feature of humanitarian aid, and this research does, it can only be considered a failure for humanitarian aid provision.

Failure in the delivery of humanitarian aid resulting from the link to Western state-building projects is a central problem in the crisis of legitimacy presently facing institutional humanitarianism. Though the failures of emergency response in South Sudan have not been directly related to changing global power dynamics, the effect on the credibility and value proposition of humanitarian actors is to the detriment of the ability of institutional humanitarian actors to demonstrate their relevance in a changing political landscape.

As one non-Western ambassador based in Juba pointed out: "UNMISS is just generating all these jobs for a bunch of well-paid white people" (Senior diplomat 1, 2014). These failures of humanitarian aid and its perceived link to Western power – represented in the "field" by a "bunch of well-paid white people" (ibid.) – damages the credibility and, therefore, legitimacy of humanitarian actors who are focusing on effective emergency response.

What was less prevalent in South Sudan, but is becoming more and more so in the context of changing global power dynamics, is the very ability of humanitarian workers to access conflict being compromised by their Western identities. This was more fully explored through the case study on Syria.

Humanitarianism rejected

The second objective of this research was to determine whether the perceived identity of humanitarian aid as being linked to Western hegemonic power affected humanitarian access to conflict. Keeping the failures of the humanitarian system in South Sudan in mind, this part of the research sought to understand how the broader identity of humanitarian aid affects organisations which do have the capacity to carry out an emergency responses should access to crisis zones be granted.

In "*Chapter 2: Literature review – Part 1 – Humanitarian aid and Hegemonic power – Access*", this thesis explored the debate on whether humanitarian space is shrinking or whether there has ever been a golden age – a period in which humanitarian actors could operate freely and widely – of humanitarian action (Donini, 2012b; Acuto, 2014; Magone et al., 2012; Elhawary & Collinson, 2012).

Three interlinked debates on humanitarian space were identified in the literature review: the first included those that claim that humanitarian space is not shrinking (Hubert & Brassard-Boudreau, 2014); the second included those that claimed that there has never been a golden age of humanitarian action anyway (Donini, 2012a; Smillie, 2012; Minear, 2012; Weissman, 2014); and the third included those focused more on the determinants of the challenges facing humanitarian action (Elhawary & Collinson, 2012). The critique I advance in this thesis is that this literature for the most part overlooks the consequences for humanitarian aid of a present political moment of emerging multi-polarity and diffusion of power.

As demonstrated in the first stages of research, there is a tension between two competing narratives among the humanitarian aid workers interviewed. Some saw any link between humanitarian aid and hegemony as a problem of perception and not inherent in humanitarian aid, while others saw the identity of humanitarian action as linked to imperialism and hegemony – a link being continued by the present structure and practice of humanitarian aid. Reflection on these initial findings led to a case study to determine how the identity of humanitarian aid affected access in Syria (see "*Chapter 5: Research Findings II – Humanitarian identity and access*").

Syria as geopolitical chaos

The geopolitical landscape of the Syria war created an enabling environment for a conduct of hostilities that showed no respect for civilian lives and infrastructure (Saad & Gladstone, 2013; MSF 2013c; Syrian refugees 1–5, 2013). Unlike in other parts of the region, in Syria, there was no dominant external power able or willing to exert its influence. The case-study findings show how parties to the conflict were left to escalate it with neither side seeming to have the ability to break the stalemate.

A demonstration of the effect of regional dynamics could be seen in the relative unity of the regime compared to the complete fragmentation of the opposition. The competing hegemonies supporting each side of the conflict almost certainly played a role in this (see, for example, Salloukh, 2013). What these findings show is that, while, on a macro level, there may have been a classic Cold War divide between Russia and the US, on a regional level, shifting power resulted in a messy multi-polarity unlike that in any of the previous eras of humanitarian aid identified in the literature.

The consequence of this messy multi-polarity has, as demonstrated in the case study, been a conflict that has escalated unabated with deeply brutal tactics being employed (Saad & Gladstone, 2013; MSF 2013c; Syrian refugee 1–5, 2013; YouTube, 2012). Populations have been put under siege, medical structures and workers have been targeted and civilians have

been attacked with barrel bombs, Scud missiles and chemical weapons (MSF, 2012). Notably, the research also revealed how the Islamic State was able to exploit the fractures among the competing regional hegemonies to establish areas of control.

The polarisation of aid delivery has, in the eyes of the Assad government, put those who work without respect for state sovereignty in the same camp as those with a Western political agenda of destabilisation. Western interference was used as justification for the Syrian government asserting its sovereignty by blocking humanitarian access. Tellingly, the discourse of anti-imperialism – a discourse mirrored in the literature on the decline of Western empire and hegemony – served the Syrian regime in articulating its resistance to interference (Stathis, 2010; Mann, 2003; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Nye, 2011).

In this milieu of competing regional powers and the macro-level Cold War-style tension between Russia and the US, MSF both attempted to negotiate access to Damascus and established programmes in the north of Syria – including in areas under the influence of the Islamic State. In both cases, the research findings show how the Western identity of the organisation influenced its ability to navigate the geopolitical chaos of the conflict.

Humanitarian space as a Western space

Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau (2014) break the concept of humanitarian space into three parts: respect for humanitarian law; security of humanitarian workers; and access to populations at risk. These three categories are then used to show that humanitarian space is not shrinking, with the authors noting a lack of evidence for a decline in respect for humanitarian law or a rise in attacks on humanitarian workers. Instead, the authors argue, humanitarian access is increasing, not decreasing.

This critique of the discourse of a shrinking humanitarian space is supported by additional literature focused on the inevitability of humanitarian aid having to negotiate, accept a degree of co-option and, ultimately, make compromises for access (Magone et al., 2012). What this literature – as was the case with the literature on the purported golden age of humanitarian space and the periodisation of humanitarian assistance – overlooks is that the very notion of humanitarian space and its expansion are tied to a period of rising Western power likely to be coming to an end.

The literature review of this doctoral research identified how this humanitarian space discourse promotes the idea that humanitarian principles can create a protective bubble within which humanitarian actors can operate (Tennant et al., 2010). Humanitarians' belief in their ability to claim what Collinson (2014) refers to as a "petty sovereignty" underpins the

notion of a humanitarian space. International-relations literature on core and periphery politics helped shed light on how humanitarianism is both associated with an expanding core and is yet operating in the peripheries (Muhr, 2012; Sakellariopoulos & Sotiris, 2008; Rajagopal, 2003; Freeman & Kagarlitsky, 2004; Sethi, 2010). Humanitarian action may have always been contested – as is argued in much of the literature – but how is it contested specifically in the case of the shrinking core?

The shrinking core and its effect on humanitarian access

To understand the dynamic of access in the context of a shrinking core, the research on Syria has offered critical perspectives on where humanitarian actors could work and under what conditions. For example, there were those organisations – primarily the multi-mandated ones – who accepted working in respect of sovereignty and, therefore, in support of the state. In fact, the majority of traditional aid-system actors were biased toward working in support of the state. This can be understood in terms of how development aid grew out of the Cold War period and, as identified in the literature, gave a centrality to the role of the state, which was seen as essential in crushing any rebellion or in building liberal democratic models to stop the spread of communism (Chandler, 2014; Kahn & Cunningham, 2013). These organisations willing to work in support of the state were tolerated by Damascus.

However, the Cold War history of humanitarianism is also one of encouraging the delivery of aid to rebel groups that were aligned to the West against regimes supported by the Soviet Union. In the Syria war, MSF decided to work in the north of the country out of a self-proclaimed imperative to reach those most in need and in the absence of an ability to do so officially. This self-proclaimed imperative cannot be separated from the historical relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power identified in the literature (see "*Chapter 2: Literature review – Part 1 – Humanitarian aid and hegemonic power*"). MSF was rejected by the Damascus government, while those organisations willing to work with respect for sovereignty were tolerated (though within the limits set by the government in terms of its military strategy), suggesting that one challenge as global power changes will be for those organisations that have a Western identity but attempt to work independently and impartially. Such an approach sees any narrow violation of sovereignty, when combined with a Western identity of the violator, clash with the broader assertion of sovereignty against the West currently empowered by the BRICS effect.

Field research demonstrated that blockages in access for humanitarian organisations are clear indicators of the regime's retreat to the protective confines of state sovereignty. All forms of interference, be it benign humanitarian aid or the presence of foreign fighters, were subjected

to the full force of a sovereign defence mechanism. In reflecting on the assertion of sovereignty by states, one research participant pointed out that:

Independent humanitarian organisations threaten this sovereignty as their actions are not controlled by states, especially for MSF whose very name is an anti-sovereignty statement – as international borders define the sovereign state, being 'doctors without borders' reads like 'doctors who don't respect your sovereign state'. States like Sudan, Pakistan, Burma, Syria and Turkey can no longer be bullied into allowing Western NGOs unhindered access by the US and the EU, as they now rely on economic partnerships with China, Russia, India and others, which are countries that do not have a tradition of independent, private aid organisations and are quite happy to sponsor aid in direct state-to-state relationships. (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014)

All states assert their sovereignty; indeed, this assertion is a defining feature of statehood. A core proposition of this research is that what is new is the extent that humanitarian aid is exposed to any assertion of sovereignty by the declining influence of Western power. It is this proposition that bridges the gap between the literature exploring changing power dynamics from an international-relations or economic perspective without connecting it to humanitarian aid (Nye, 2011; Kupchan, 2013; Zakaria, 2008; O'Neill, 2011) and that exploring humanitarian space and the periodisation of humanitarianism, which stops short of identifying changing power dynamics as a significant determinant of access for humanitarian actors and the effectiveness of humanitarian aid (Donini, 2012a; Smillie, 2012; Minear, 2012; Magone et al., 2012; Acuto, 2014; Elhawary & Collinson, 2012).

The research findings have demonstrated how the assertion of sovereignty over the issue of illegal border-crossing by MSF (see "*Chapter 5: Research Findings II – Humanitarian identity and access – Sovereignty and access: an exploration of MSF negotiations with Syrian authorities*") was, in fact, part of changing global power dynamics, where states like Syria were able to find alliances in a multi-polar world order. Russia backed Syria's assertion of sovereignty as a core feature of the BRICS effect (Meeting minutes between MSF and Russian official 2, 2012). As found by the case study (see "*Chapter 5: Research Findings II – Humanitarian identity and access – Sovereignty and access: an exploration of MSF negotiations with Syrian authorities – Engagement with the BRICS*"), MSF was unable to overcome this blockage of access because, by the time it tried to do so through its BRICS initiative, aid was already entrenched into the bunkers of two sides of the political schism and MSF was too associated with the political opposition due to the locations in which it was working and the networks it relied on to gain access to these areas. This divide was further exacerbated by the aid community, which publically pitched cross-border aid delivery against the official delivery of aid (UN official 1, 2014; Slim & Gillard, 2013; Tisdall, 2013; Krähenbühl, 2013; Weissman & Rodrigue, 2013).

The approach by the aid community was to view the challenges of access as detached from the political context of an emerging multi-polarity. Instead of understanding the Syrian conflict in its changing regional and global geopolitical context, most of the attention from aid workers – including MSF – followed the same pattern as the literature on humanitarian aid. For example, the expectation of humanitarian space – or the ability to operate as a Western humanitarian organisation in a conflict in which the West was backing one side – was taken as a given (MSF HQ staff 7, 2014), just as it is in the literature on humanitarian space where access is implied to be a universally justifiable demand (Hubert & Brassard-Boudreau, 2014).

Certainly, the delivery of independent assistance is enshrined in IHL (Bouchet-Saulnier et al., 2007), but IHL does not oblige the warring parties to accept any form of assistance, regardless of its origins and, in particular, if there is a suspicion about the political motivation of the assistance (ibid.). This research shows that, by assuming a universality of humanitarian space, humanitarian actors failed to navigate the very real power plays that were underway and which had a direct negative influence on the ability of humanitarian workers to operate.

Criticism of Assad's refusal to accept assistance or grant access were based mainly in narrow ethical claims about the brutal tactics employed by the government in fighting its opponents. For example, Assad's targeting of medical workers was explained as if it were an end in itself, seen in the rhetoric claiming "[a] war against health workers" (Weissman, 2013:online) and an "assault on the health system" that amounted to using a "weapon of mass destruction" (Sparrow, 2013:online). This focus on narrow ethical issues allowed some research participants to play down the challenge posed by the Western affiliation of humanitarian aid actors and institutions (MSF HQ staff 4, 2012; MSF HQ staff 3, 2014). As a result, these participants were able to decontextualise for themselves the geopolitics of the war and the tactical, strategic and political uses of humanitarian action in the exercise of power as global dynamics change. The rejection of humanitarian aid was, therefore, not understood as being in part linked to identity but rather in its entirety linked to the brutality of the Assad regime.

By contrast, this research has demonstrated that the targeting of healthcare workers was not an end in itself but rather an aspect of strategy in hostilities having no apparent limit and taking place in a geopolitical context involving competing regional hegemonies, contested uni-polarity and diffused power. MSF was denied access both because it was a health organisation *and* because it was seen by the regime to fall on the opposite side of the geopolitical fault lines. Ironically, those who demonstrated the greatest independence by

working cross border were those most closely understood to be aligned with Western interests.

Indeed, within this context, the application of the *sans frontières* tactics developed during the Cold War – of bypassing the state in the delivery of assistance – ensured humanitarian aid was seen as acting on behalf of the uni-polar Western power bloc. This was not necessarily a political choice by MSF. As the case study indicated, needs were certainly more acute in areas under the control of the armed opposition (MSF internal document 3, 2013; MSF internal document 4, 2013). The question of whether, by choosing such a strategy, MSF was able to assist more people is not one pursued in this research, though, incidentally, the data suggest that this is the case (ibid.). What is explored is whether, by taking such an approach, access was denied to other areas due to the political interpretation of those actions. Certainly, the research reveals that, just as during the Cold War, MSF's *sans frontières* could be seen as much as a display of independence and impartiality as a display of support for the Western-backed political and military opposition.

Despite the assertions of some research participants, this was not merely a problem of misperception. As was noted in the literature – and as supported by the research findings – the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power is deeply entrenched in the history and practice of humanitarian aid, even for an independent organisation like MSF. This link between humanitarianism and Western power was reaffirmed in the Libyan experience (Parker, 2013) and, more broadly, in the experience of the global War on Terror (Senior international organisation representative 1, 2012).

At the end of 2014, as airstrikes on the Islamic State by the US and its allies intensified in northern Syria, one research participant reflected on how events would further complicate humanitarian access. A direct link was made with the identity of humanitarian action:

Historically airstrikes, either by plane, drone or helicopter, have made humanitarian access more, not less, difficult. One reason is that the majority of airstrikes are done by the same Western nations that host most of the humanitarian agencies, so armed groups that are under attack by 'the West' are less willing to allow Western foreign agencies to operate in their areas, and more likely to target Westerners operating in their areas. Kidnap, for financial gain but now justified as a political act of pressure against the aggressors, and killings, like the recent beheading of British and US nationals as a revenge against airstrikes. But even when the political stakes and narrative are less high than currently in Syria and Iraq, there is a genuine fear on the ground by local fighters that allowing Western foreigners to enter, that airstrikes will follow. One of the most common reasons for access denial, even with groups that are otherwise in need of the humanitarian product, is that foreigners attract drone strikes. As most

of the major armed opposition groups – such as the Islamic State, Jebet al Nusra, and the Islamic Front – are subject to these airstrikes, and not likely to abandon their practice of kidnap, for Syria and Iraq access is probably getting worse. (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014)

A politically decontextualised response in Syria, especially in interactions with the Syrian regime, meant that humanitarians played into political polarisation by creating an either/or binary. Either you provided aid 'through the regime' – and, therefore, came under a system where military logic prevailed – or you provided aid in 'liberated' zones – thus serving, in many instances, the hearts-and-minds approach of the armed opposition and its regional or Western backers.

Therefore, in overlooking the current moment of humanitarian aid delivery, there is a tendency to overlook how the political baggage of humanitarianism interacts with power and how that influences access. The case study of Syria has shown that the current political baggage of humanitarian aid includes its Western identity. This is felt in contexts where the assertion of sovereignty is a tool of resistance to empire by states at the periphery in an era of growing multi-polarity.

In the case of Syria, MSF was not operating within the protective confines of its principles, but within a set of constraints largely defined by the political forces at play and the relationship of humanitarian aid with those forces. These findings support the idea that humanitarian action is about negotiating compromises found in discussions on humanitarian space (Magone et al., 2012). Where this research diverges is by suggesting that humanitarian aid is tied to operating in zones in which the West has influence. As such, the humanitarian space of an organisation like MSF is linked to the scope of Western influence. Indeed, the Syrian case study shows clearly that MSF was rejected in Syria as soon as it attempted to work outside Western-influenced space – both in Damascus and in the north of Syria.

The notion of humanitarian space is, therefore, the notion of a Western space to operate. Humanitarian action has become so implicated in Western power that the supposed universality of its space is predicated on the reach of Western power. What this means is that as Western power declines and retreats so too does humanitarian access – or humanitarian space. This is directly linked to the identity of humanitarian action rooted in Western power and associated with it through the use of aid in the rhetoric of intervention and as a tool by Western states to support liberal democratic state-building and stabilisation efforts.

Humanitarianism at the outer limits of empire

Concretely, what the research demonstrates is twofold: first, the Western identity of MSF – and the more general entanglement of institutional humanitarian aid with Western power – hampered MSF and others from being able to navigate the political planes of changing power; and, secondly, it meant that humanitarian actors were only able to operate in the zones under the influence of hegemonic power. Therefore, due to the identity of humanitarian actors such as MSF, humanitarian space in Syria was in fact the space of Western influence.

The above analysis can be seen to support the validity of the notion of the 'humanitarian frontline' that De Cordier (2009) advances. For De Cordier, a humanitarian frontline was a "competition or at least an occupation of competing humanitarian spaces between different categories of development and relief actors" (2009:667).

However, if we accept the analysis of humanitarian space as being Western space, then the humanitarian frontline is represented by the outer-most limits of Western power and influence. That frontline – at the edge of the empire's reach – is often occupied by the journalists and humanitarian workers that function in the borderlands and peripheries. As seen in Syria, humanitarian actors associated with the West were unable to operate beyond that frontline. In the case of Somalia, the literature reveals that those who attempted to work beyond this line were criminalised.

Another finding that supports this analysis is that the Western identity of MSF did not cause access problems in areas under control of groups seeking or receiving support from the West and its regional allies:

A Western identity used to be a help, as many of the states where independent humanitarian actors intervened were largely dependent on financial aid from Western states, so were likely to allow Western agencies to operate, or were bullied into accepting this – like Darfur! This trade-off is still the case in many countries today, such as DRC, South Sudan, Colombia, CAR, Mali. However, the same logic makes a Western identity a hindrance in states that no longer rely on Western financial support. This allows them to deny access as alternative state-to-state support is available from China, India, Russia and others. There is no such thing as newly assertive states: the prime objective of every state is to defend its own sovereignty, as that is what defines them. However, in the past, most states were not able to reject independent humanitarian action, and now, with different sponsors, they can. For territories under control of non-state actors, the same logic applies. Those looking for Western support are likely to allow humanitarian actors – like in Sudan and Syria – whereas those fighting the West are not – like in Somalia, the Sahel and Pakistan. At the moment, there are as many places where a Western

identity helps and hinders access. This is likely to change towards less access, so strategically it would be wise to invest in new 'sponsors'. This is partially understood by MSF, but underestimated and obscured by a false sense of independence. Some in MSF believe that a Western identity is essential to the humanitarian principles, believed to be rooted in Western European enlightenment. (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014)

This finding offers a new insight into the debate reviewed in the literature on the divide between Dunantist and Wilsonian humanitarian approaches (Stoddard, 2003) (see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 1: Humanitarianism and hegemony – Humanitarianism as tool to advance dominant political ideology*"). What the research indicates is that both Wilsonian and Dunantist actors are operating on the same playing field – making the debate a false one in terms of the contemporary challenges for humanitarian aid and its access to zones of conflict. In Syria, all forms of Western institutional humanitarian aid were firmly confined to the realms of the West's influence. Those able to work in Damascus – and therefore arguably outside of Western influence – did so due to the established approach of humanitarian aid as being in support of the state. Independent aid – associated with the West – was seen as too difficult to control by the Syrian regime. At the same time, humanitarian actors were able to operate in a Cold War-style *sans frontièrism* in areas under the control of the armed opposition, who was supported or backed by regional and Western allies. When that support diminished, kidnappings began and humanitarian aid retreated. The modern question for those desiring humanitarian access, therefore, is not whether to be Wilsonian or Dunantist – principled or rights based – but rather whether to accept being tied to Western power or seek a way to be extracted from it. However, a full extraction from Western power is not possible without addressing the remnants of a Western identity.

An alternative reading of the data is that the Western identity of humanitarian actors was used as an excuse by the Syrian regime, which used the denial of assistance as a tactic of war. This might well be the case. If true, however, it does not blunt the critique, as the regime was able to use the Western identity of humanitarian actors as a plausible justification, even if it was not the primary reason, for its denial of access. As such, the Western identity of humanitarian aid acts, at the very least, as an additional barrier for humanitarian actors seeking access by making it easier for those who would otherwise seek to deny assistance to do so.

Therefore, the conclusion to be drawn from the experience of humanitarian aid in Syria remains that humanitarianism faces a crisis of identity in contexts of changing global power dynamics. The elements of the humanitarian system able to overcome the assertion of sovereignty that rejects humanitarian interference do so by adopting a radical *sans*

frontièrism which still operates within the realms of the west's influence. This, in turn, reinforces the Western identity of the organisation. The relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power is therefore something of intrinsic importance to humanitarian access in that it defines the limits of emergency response. Humanitarian space is not shrinking, Western power and influence is. And humanitarians are either retreating with the tide or being left exposed.

These findings demonstrate a clear political risk–benefit analysis that is being conducted when granting or denying access. In the present geopolitical moment, the identity of actors is a key factor in that analysis. Those seen to advance Western interests are considered a risk. Further, if the findings of the previous analysis on the failure of emergency response are added (see "*Humanitarianism failed – Building resilience by deconstructing humanitarian aid*"), it can be seen that the benefit of permitting Western humanitarian aid access is diminished. The debate over humanitarian space should, therefore, not be about whether a golden age existed but about how a humanitarian system, so deeply associated with Western power, will be able to navigate changing power dynamics.

The authors reviewed in the literature address the debate on whether humanitarian aid ever had a golden age by delegitimising the current challenges facing humanitarian aid as being nothing new (Donini, 2012a; Smillie, 2012; Minear, 2012; Magone et al., 2012). This resulted in the very real and emerging power dynamics identified through this research being overlooked as a key factor in humanitarian access. These research findings have contributed to the understanding of the periodisation of humanitarian aid and the debates on whether humanitarian aid ever had a golden age by demonstrating that, in the context of Syria, humanitarian access was directly influenced by a current political moment of multi-polarity and declining Western power that left humanitarian actors exposed to the BRICS-backed assertion of sovereignty and the outright rejection of aid by members of the opposition not receiving support from Western states. This current era of humanitarian aid could, therefore, best be described as the era of humanitarianism's crisis of legitimacy in a world of changing power dynamics.

The theory that can therefore be developed from these case-study data is that, due to the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power – that has existed throughout the history of institutional humanitarian action – the ability of humanitarian aid to operate is linked to a Western space of acceptance. In the zones beyond this space of acceptance, humanitarian aid risks being rejected.

Changing political paradigms

The findings of the case studies demonstrate an embattled humanitarianism, rejected in Syria and failing in South Sudan as a result of its relationship to Western power. These two case studies answer the first two objectives outlined in "*Chapter 3: Research Design – Strategies of enquiry: designing the research – Phase 2: Case-study approach*". The third objective (outlined under the same heading as the above) of this research was to examine the implications of changing power for the humanitarian landscape.

Interviewees for this stage of the research demonstrated a binary in views on the consequences of rising power. On the one hand, some aid practitioners see the rising rest as a threat to humanitarian action – justifying the need for humanitarian action to remain a Western contribution (Senior academic 2, 2012; MSF HQ staff 4, 2012; MSF HQ staff 3, 2012; Senior NGO worker 2, 2012). On the other hand, there are those that see the rise of the rest as being an inevitability that requires adaptation by the aid system (Senior NGO worker 1, 2012; Senior IO worker 1, 2012; MSF HQ staff 2, 2012; Academic 1, 2012; MSF HQ staff 6, 2012).

However, this research, in interviews and analysis, as well as in the literature review, demonstrated that power is diffusing (Nye, 2011). Civil society in non-Western states is challenging all forms of hegemony – be it Chinese hegemony or that of the West (Rajagopal, 2003). Indeed, this research demonstrates how, in the context of a declining Western unipolarity, the political motivations of civil-society movements and non-state actors are fundamentally different to those that have underpinned the Western political framework to which institutional humanitarian action has become so tied.

Conceiving of humanitarian action as linked to mass movements, solidarity and resistance to social injustice mirrors the founding moments of the *sans frontières* movement. A difference, however, is that this is not playing out in a bi-polar Cold War era, but rather in what the research has identified as the chaotic disorder of rising multi-polarity and diffusion of power.

To be clear, this research does not mean to suggest that either the emerging multi-polarity or the diffusion of power offer a perfect solution for the crisis of identity and capacity facing humanitarian action. What it does demonstrate is that, in the current world order, humanitarian actors: (1) need to function along multiple dimensions of power; (2) need to be aware of how their identity affects their ability to navigate those dimensions; and (3) who see the world through the post-Cold War lens and ignore the changes of the present by doubling

down on their attachment to a Western identity in response to threats posed by the rising rest, are losing an opportunity to engage with the agents of more diffused forms of power.

Trapped in a post-Cold War paradigm: the ongoing hangover of historical periodisation

The emerging 'BRICS effect' (see "*Chapter 6: Research Findings III – Humanitarianism rethought? – The BRICS effect: An emerging multi-polarity?*") is characterised by a respectful sovereignty, a contestation of Western norms and values, a valuing of political legitimacy and, in some cases, a post-liberation political militarism. This mirrors what the literature identified as the BRICS approach to humanitarian aid, which was informed by the respectful sharing of best practices as a form of South–South solidarity and a primacy given to the central role played by the state, which is, in turn, informed by the assertion of sovereignty. The BRICS effect can be interpreted as de-centering the Western liberal order (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). Importantly, what brings the BRICS together is not a common political ideology – as was so typical for Cold War actors – but an alliance of convenience in contesting Western dominance in an era of growing suspicion about Western hypocrisy (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014; Senior South African analyst 1, 2012). For this reason, humanitarian action that retains the Western identity is, at least at present, not compatible with the rising multi-polarity.

Kent (2011) argues that the future of humanitarian action will be influenced by the decline of the West, the political centrality of humanitarian crises and assertions of sovereignty. These assertions of sovereignty are not necessarily expressions of autocracy but are rather tools of resistance from states on the receiving end of dominant power interference – tools states are increasingly able to deploy in an era of rising multi-polarity.

Kent argues that this will "make localism – or the preference for one's own customs, culture, and language – not only a preferred option but also a political necessity" (2011:954). This localism will reflect a "political individuality and assertion that in turn is mirrored in sovereignty, minilateralism, and fluid multipolarity" (ibid.). Indeed, the literature has begun to suggest that the days of the West dominating the humanitarian sector are over (ibid.). The findings of this research, however, point to a more radical contestation of the practice of humanitarianism than the ending of Western dominance of the humanitarian sector.

The unifying ideology of emerging states, if such a thing exists, might best be described as "a willingness to counter Western power" (Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014). This willingness has been born from a growing acknowledgement of the North–South divide, an idea supported by some evidence in the literature; for example, the voting patterns of BRICS states in the UN, which reveal the North–South political tension as a unifying feature

(Ferdinand, 2014). If we add to this analysis the findings of the two case studies we can see clearly that humanitarian action is embroiled with Western power. Logically, then, an emerging multi-polarity would contest humanitarian norms. As one research participant pointed out, this is not a problem that can be brushed aside as being merely about autocrats criticising humanitarian action (Senior South African academic 1, 2012). Rather, it is a problem rooted in the identity of humanitarian action that arises as a result of its relationship – both historical and in the present contexts such as South Sudan – with Western power.

The consequences of the BRICS effect are the outright rejection of humanitarian aid, the questioning of the modalities of aid delivery and attempts to use humanitarian aid in the exercise of power as has been done by the West. Tellingly, each of these consequences has, at core, the assertion of a sovereignty-based international order as the ultimate rejection of Western interference.

This offers both an opportunity and a risk. As one research participant pointed out:

The opportunity is clear: if non-Western powers can be convinced that independent humanitarian agencies like MSF are a benefit, not a threat, to their political needs . . . they can take the glory in case of success, blame the independent agency in case of failure, then having diverse partnerships and eventually a more global profile will increase the likelihood of humanitarian access in more places. The threat is the old one: Western powers have used and abused foreign aid as a political and sometimes military tool. New powers are likely to do the same. So trading one for the other can open some doors but close others. (MSF HQ staff 17, 2014)

Just as the literature on the periodisation of humanitarian aid affected the way humanitarian space was understood – as explored in "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 1: Hegemonic power and humanitarian aid – A historical perspective of humanitarianism and hegemony*" – so too has it framed how rising multi-polarity is understood. Indeed, the tendency to see the shifting power dynamics through a Cold War lens risks creating an unhelpful binary: on the one hand, humanitarians are defending their Western identity and claiming independence as critical insiders to Western power; and, on the other hand, humanitarians are claiming the inevitability of change. Those who promote a critical-insider role within Western power for humanitarian actors set up a false dichotomy – either we stay as we are or we pander to autocrats – that ends up being used to justify the entrenchment of a Western identity and hampers humanitarian actors in engaging with a changing humanitarian landscape.

From this latter position, an approach is taken to engage with 'emerging or new actors' as subjects of humanitarian diplomacy rather than as operational allies. These new actors were

seen in the literature to be taking two forms: actors that are aligned to emerging states and are operating globally (most often seen in the form of national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies operating abroad); and informal groupings which are not aligned to the state per se but fill a gap left by the majority of organisations which tend to focus on state-based aid provision (Armstrong, 2013; Bernard, 2011).

A problem with this conception is that these actors, as was seen in Syria, may not be new actors but rather newly noticed actors. As identified in the literature, it is an unfortunate quality of the traditional aid system that it often positions those actors as 'new' (Shaw-Hamilton, 2012; Davey, 2012).

However, this approach informs another *modus operandi* identified in the literature. The partnership approach of many organisations – particularly multi-mandated ones – has most often been seen within the framework of liberal development. The promotion of civil society and the empowerment of local actors are seen as a critical part of a healthy democracy (MSF HQ staff 1, 2014; Relief activist 3, 2014). What the case study of Syria found was that many of the informal networks of aid providers were forced into organising themselves in a way that could be understood and engaged with by Western donors and organisations looking for implementing partners. However, the attempt of the Western liberal aid system to harness civil-society activism for objectives set by donor governments was seen as, yet again, missing the point of the political moment in emerging states.

Civil-society power

Indeed, Nye argues that two power shifts are occurring in this century: "power transition and power diffusion" (2011:113). According to Nye, "[s]tates will remain the dominant actor on the world stage, but they will find the stage far more crowded and difficult to control" (2011:114). Two examples of this were identified in this research: MSF's interactions with civil-society in response to the 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa (see "*Chapter 6: Research Findings III – Humanitarianism rethought? – South Africa: a post-liberation-movement-driven humanitarian response*"); and MSF's use of social media to establish networks of care during the 2011 civil unrest in Bahrain (see "*Chapter 6: Research Findings III – Humanitarianism rethought? – Bahrain: social-media humanitarianism*").

The South African example shows how the post-liberation-movement approach to the delivery of assistance as being about social justice and solidarity resulted in a rethinking of humanitarian assistance. This is supported by the literature, which notes:

. . . social movements . . . reject the state as the main agent of socio-political transformation and do not seek state power as an end in itself. Instead they seek to recover their own political space in which they can set the pace and direction of economic change. (Rajagopal, 2003:242)

In this way, social movements are the converse of the BRICS effect. Instead of seeing sovereignty and rights as universal categories, social movements instead offer:

. . . a pluriversal defense of local communities. In doing that they reveal the limitations of a Kantian liberal world order based primarily on individual autonomy and rights and a realist world order based primarily on state sovereignty. (Rajagopal, 2003:245)

For this reason, there is a disconnect between the humanitarian system and such social movements. As generally conceived, humanitarian space assumes a universalism in its right to access and assist, while social movements assume that there is a political configuration against which they must struggle. Given that the traditional humanitarian community engages with civil society as an integral part of liberal democracy – and, therefore, from the state-centric perspective – this difference might be expected.

The research identified that Western humanitarian-aid practitioners in Syria raised concerns about the political nature of such social movements and the effects they could have on humanitarian principles (Major donor representative 4, 2014). However, this research has demonstrated such concerns to be, at least in part, disingenuous. The case study on South Sudan shows how humanitarian actors are quite willing to align themselves with state-based agendas pushed by the donors but are cautious of aligning themselves with the civil-society movements operating to counter the policies of Western neo-liberalism.

If humanitarianism is to be understood as operating behind the frontlines of Western power, it becomes clearer that the values of humanitarian aid – at least in terms of how they are operationalised – would be contested by emerging and diffused forms of power. This is not because saving lives and alleviating suffering is considered a negative activity but rather because institutional humanitarianism is viewed as the caring arm of a neo-liberal globalisation effort by many civil-society members and academics from the South. The silk glove that hides the iron fist, perhaps.

This scepticism was reflected in the data from interviews with civil-society representatives and public intellectuals in Brazil and South Africa (Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014; Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014; Brazilian civil-society representative 3, 2014; South Africa civil-society representative 1, 2014; South Africa civil-society

representative 2, 2014; Senior South African academic 1, 2012; Senior Brazilian academic 1, 2014; Senior South African analyst 1, 2012).

Indeed, the research identified a discourse in civil society that rejected neo-liberalism and instead advanced social justice as a way of addressing the fallout of neo-liberal injustices (South Africa civil-society representative 1, 2014; South Africa civil-society representative 2, 2014; Heywood, 2014). This approach to humanitarian action is in stark contrast to the approach used in South Sudan, which was based on the building of a liberal democracy (CAP, 2014; Lanzer, 2013; Lanzer, 2014a). If the political underpinning of humanitarian assistance in South Sudan was Western-led liberal democratic state-building, in South Africa the underpinning was mass-movement solidarity and a social-justice agenda informed by the history of liberation struggle.

For MSF, the research shows how the baggage of Western humanitarianism was only overcome in South Africa through both its direct added value as an operational actor and its rootedness in strategic alliances that channelled MSF's work into a broader struggle against both the state and international humanitarian institutions – such as UN High Commissioner for Refugees – that upheld the state's policies.

In Bahrain, MSF attempted to work in the zones that fell outside of the West's interest by engaging with the diffused power bases of social-media activists. The strategy of publicising its Western identity to create a protective cover against backlash from the state was ultimately unsuccessful. When the regional geopolitical interests of the West and its allies were asserted, the strategy was revealed as the house of cards that it was, and MSF was denied the ability to operate. The attempt by Western power to monopolise humanitarian aid to ensure that such aid only functions to advance its interests (as seen in the literature explored on the criminalisation of aid; see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 1: Hegemonic power and humanitarian aid – Humanitarianism as a tool to advance dominant political ideology – Somalia: the rise of humanitarian criminals*") meant that, in the end, the ability to navigate new forms of power was undermined by the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power. Although MSF would assert its independence from Western power, it forms a critical part of a humanitarian system structured by the uni-polar political moment of the post-Cold War era.

The fact that MSF was unable to entirely rely on new power for its access in a context such as Bahrain supports the writing of Nye, who dismisses as "fanciful" those who believe that the "information revolution will flatten bureaucratic hierarchies and replace them with network organisations" (2011:114). The research finding emerging from the experiences of

MSF in Bahrain goes much further than accusations of fancifulness – especially when considered in conjunction with the Syria case study, which showed how humanitarian aid actors were confined to operating in the zones of the conflict under the influence of the West. A similar dynamic can be seen in Bahrain: MSF was able to tap into diffused forms of power but it did so in opposition to a state allied to the West. Ultimately, MSF was unable to operate and was kicked out of Bahrain.

One of the core propositions of this research is that humanitarianism found its universality only under Western hegemony. With a changing global power dynamic, this universality can no longer be assumed and, if it is to persist at all, needs to be re-defined. What this research shows is that this redefinition must take into consideration the reality of rising powers, the diffusion of power and a global context in which the inequality created and maintained by the previous Western hegemony – often in alliance with states and local elites in the periphery – is being contested.

What the findings of the research demonstrate is that institutional humanitarian action – with its baggage of Western political interests – is contested by an emerging political multipolarity that is defined largely by its anti-Westernism. This emerging multi-polarity offers some opportunities for humanitarian actors – as demonstrated in the case of Syria; however, as with Western government approaches to aid delivery, the BRICS effect remains primarily self-interested and, therefore, does not offer a radical departure from a co-opted Western humanitarian project.

This is relevant for the literature on bio-politics. A humanitarian aid that goes beyond the essentials of saving lives as an act of defiance – and, instead, enters the realm of state-building – supports the process by which a state administers life. This administration of life – often through fear – goes hand in hand with the securitisation of aid that Duffield (2014) critiqued. This could be termed the bio-politics of humanitarian aid.

This is distinct from what Žižek (2008) has referred to as emancipatory politics. Through its relationship with Western power, humanitarian actors have moved beyond the emancipatory politics of immediate aid delivery in defiance of exclusion and have, instead, developed a bio-politics. However, many of the social movements and emerging powers with which humanitarian organisations interact are – at least rhetorically – adherent to an emancipatory politics of defiance against Western domination. Again, this illustrates what the research findings identified as the different political underpinnings of aid in a context of changing global power dynamics.

Finally, this research has demonstrated that both the rise of new powers and the diffusion of power will affect thinking on and approaches to humanitarian aid. Not only do humanitarian actors have to contend with the realities of an emerging-state-based multi-polarity – in all its messiness – but also a contested diffusion of power. For the broader humanitarian system, this means that the quality of its actions will be an increasingly important determinant of its legitimacy, even as it is compromised by its relationship – present and past – to Western political agendas.

For an organisation like MSF, which has largely managed to maintain an emergency-response capacity, the ability to navigate this difficult terrain is still largely tied to its Western identity and, more broadly to the political baggage of Western humanitarianism.

This finding is divergent from Miliband and Egeland's view of the way forward (see "*Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part 3: Humanitarianism and counter-hegemonic resistance – What next?*"). They refer to an "age of crisis" and call on the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs to give urgent attention to three challenges (2014:online): gaining access to all in need of assistance and protection, including an "increased focus from the EU and the UN on how and why civilians and relief workers from Aleppo to Mogadishu continue to be attacked" (ibid.); making future humanitarian interventions about economics as well as social services, which is justified with the assertion that "[w]e cannot continue returning again and again to the same places with emergency aid" (ibid.); and, finally, reforming the way aid is delivered. Finally, they make the point that humanitarian crises can contribute to instability.

In making such arguments, the authors fall into a number of traps identified in this research. First, they assume that the reformation of the humanitarian aid system in line with Western political interests can serve to increase access and effectiveness. This research has given two examples of this approach failing: Syria and South Sudan. This is not to say that the EU does not have a key role to play in humanitarian aid – that question has not been addressed in this research – but rather that the representatives of the aid oligopoly are, if the cases of Syria and South Sudan are representative, proposing solutions that will entrench the causes of the very problems they so accurately diagnose.

This points to the need for a new conceptual framework for humanitarian aid.

A new narrative

One theoretical model identified in the literature and applicable to the context of changing power is what Joseph Nye refers to as the "three dimensional chessboard" (2011:213). The

three dimensional chessboard is a useful thinking tool for understanding the current political moment and how humanitarianism could better navigate complex power dynamics. According to Nye:

The world is neither unipolar, multipolar, nor chaotic – it is all three at the same time. Thus, a smart grand strategy must be able to handle very different distributions of power in different domains and understand the trade[-]offs among them. (ibid.)

Drawing on the notion of this three dimensional chessboard, this analysis will refer to the three power structures as: the uni-polar or the Western uni-pole; the messy multi-polarity of emerging powers; and the diffusion of power. Chaos occurs at the intersection of all three. If we consider the combined knowledge of the literature and the additional knowledge discovered in this research in terms of this three-dimensional chessboard, a new paradigm for understanding humanitarian access and effectiveness can be generated.

One proposition under this new paradigm is that humanitarian actors are still only playing on one side of the chessboard. This critique applies to both the practice and academic theorising of humanitarian aid.

In Syria, humanitarian aid was largely contained by the borders of Western influence. In attempting to understand the new era of changing power dynamics, some of the literature explored the resurgence of state sovereignty as the core and defining feature of a contested hegemony (Kahn & Cunningham, 2013; Kent, 2011; McGoldrick, 2011; Daccord, 2013; Allie, 2011). The research findings on Syria support this view. However, this approach overlooks the dynamic of the diffusion of power, be it in the form of an emerging multi-polarity, civil society, social-media activism or transnational Jihadi networks. These diffused networks of power form part of a chaotic moment of global politics. On this chaotic plane, diffused civil-society networks are interacting within multiple locations of contested hegemony, resisting autocratic dominance and, at the same time, trying to move either idealistically or pragmatically toward the uni-polar side of the chessboard.

What emerged in the case of Syria was a pragmatic alliance between a nationalist civil-society opposition against autocracy, backed by regional hegemons (Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey). MSF was able to work with the opposition but was rejected when it stepped out of the bounds of Western influence and attempted to work in areas controlled by the Islamic State. In this case, there was a rejection of the uni-pole and a contestation of power through the advancement of a transnational ideology – a religious *sans frontières* that filled the cracks caused by the competing regional hegemons on the multi-polar side of the

chessboard. Humanitarianism was rejected amid this chaos because Western influence was fundamentally rejected by the transnational Islamic State.

In Bahrain, a similar dynamic emerged. Shia opposition groups – empowered and mobilised through the diffusion of power – were courting the uni-pole for support but were eventually betrayed by Western power that backed autocracy in the service of maintaining its uni-polar power in the region. When MSF stepped beyond the monopoly on the use of humanitarianism by the uni-polar power, it was resisted by the Bahraini government and ultimately expelled. While the findings of how MSF operated in Bahrain and South Africa offer useful insights into possibilities of increasing leverage through alliances with civil-society groups that function under the chaotic diffusion of power, Bahrain demonstrates the limitations of this strategy.

Within the realm of uni-polar power, humanitarian workers expressed concern at the politicisation of humanitarian aid. The understanding that is identifiable in the dominant discourse among humanitarian workers interviewed for this research was that the core challenge to humanitarian aid delivery was the politicisation of aid purely in terms of trade-offs on the uni-polar chessboard or, at a lower level, in terms of who benefits from the delivery of aid. Little understanding of how these trade-offs have been consequential for the broader identity of humanitarian action in a multi-polar or chaotic world was shown.

Indeed, most of the key literature on humanitarian space was constructed on the presumed universality of humanitarian action in all realms of power. Those opposing this conception of humanitarian space critiqued it by showing how humanitarian aid had always been manipulated in the interests of power.

What both sides in the debate fail to note is that the construction of humanitarian space – and its critique – only takes place on the uni-polar part of chessboard, where humanitarian aid was inevitably incorporated in the US empire's expansion. Thus, both this discourse and its critique completely overlook two additional emerging dimensions of the interaction of humanitarian actors with power: multi-polarity and chaos.

Of course, humanitarian space is shrinking as Western power declines; its very 'space' is defined by Western power. The discourse that discredits the notion that humanitarian space is shrinking – arguing, as it does, that the new era poses merely more of the same challenges – fails to recognise the novelty in changing political realities, and does so at the expense of being able to look forward and adapt.

In the realm of the Western uni-pole, humanitarian space is not shrinking and it continues to be able to operate based under a set of micro-compromises with those that control territory yet ultimately accept the Western identity of humanitarian aid – because of its concrete value, their ability to control it or because they are bullied into accepting it. It is within this realm that an important convergence of factors emerges. The multi-mandated delivery of humanitarian aid has been demonstrated through the literature review to privilege the state. When humanitarian aid that is associated with the uni-pole operates in a messy multi-polarity, it is those actors that work in support of the state that have been able to survive. Syria is a good example of this. A number of Western organisations were able to work officially in Syria, but they had to be willing to submit to the exertion of control by the state. In the realm of messy multi-polarity, it is the truly independent aid that is the biggest loser, as it operates under an ideology of *sans frontièrism* that fundamentally opposes state sovereignty while still being identified with Western power.

In understanding this environment, there has been a tendency identified through this research to see the choices facing humanitarian actors in terms of a false dichotomy: either being a critical insider to Western power; or pandering to Southern-led sovereignty and authoritarianism. This binary is influenced by the previous era of humanitarian aid, the Cold War, where two powers contested for dominance of the uni-polar chessboard. However, this is not the way of the current political moment. Emerging states have not moved into the phase of norm creation – something carried out by Soviet Russia. Therefore, seeing the world in a bi-polar dichotomy risks missing the core nature of power in today's world and how it interacts with humanitarian action.

Staying with the metaphor of the chessboard, and in the context of the theory advanced by the literature on the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power, the following might be said in summary:

Humanitarianism was born out of the single-dimension chessboard, previously contested in the Cold War era, but now dominated by Western uni-polar power. In the Cold War, humanitarian aid was confined to one side of a bi-polar chessboard, as it was rejected by a Soviet system that saw humanitarian aid as a tool of Western governments. A "*sans frontièrist* element emerged which rejected the ability of the nation state and sovereigns to deny access. Cross-border aid was delivered largely in alliance with those groups resisting the Soviet system from the inside. As the bi-polar chessboard was clearing and new players entered the field of play, liberal democracy dominated and humanitarian aid expanded in partnership with development, which was used to consolidate the establishment of the liberal-democratic order in what were then referred to as 'failed states'.

Attacks on the ability of humanitarian actors to operate in the uni-polar era were driven largely by what Kaldor (2006) described as the dynamic of 'new wars'. What emerged was an interest-based acceptance or rejection of humanitarian aid in what were largely internal conflicts based on the notion of humanitarian aid as something that might be manipulated to serve national military tactics. Humanitarian access was negotiated based on compromises with these interests. The services that humanitarian actors had to offer gave a level of leverage in the process of negotiating access.

The exaggerated rise of a transnational 'terrorist' threat saw the beginning of a new era for humanitarian aid. The foundations of securitised aid and mechanisms of delivery developed in the Cold War world – and incorporated into liberal democracy with multi-mandated structures – were used in the new battle against terrorism. Humanitarian aid actors had to defend themselves from the risk of being associated with the West and, in response, asserted principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality. As a result of the overstretch of American power in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – combined with a financial crisis and a general loss in legitimacy – the uni-polar chessboard became destabilised and American power began to decline. In its place, emerged a messy multi-polarity, a diffusion of power and, in some cases, pure chaos.

Humanitarian action – still tied to the uni-polar chessboard – has had to contend with a more complex power dynamic in which its identity is Western and its capacity is tied to Western political interests and institutions, but in which there is no longer a Western uni-pole. The toolkit developed by humanitarian actors for defending their legitimacy to operate is coming into question as its effectiveness in delivering emergency assistance is undermined by its incorporation into the liberal-democratic model (a model questioned and contested by an emerging multi-polarity defining itself with the rejection of Western models in general).

The discourse over humanitarian action remains trapped by the legacy of both a uni-polar Western world and Cold War bi-polar contestation for power. Neither frameworks adequately address how humanitarian actors should navigate a political multi-polarity where power has become diffused and a Western identity is a constraint on both the access and effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

The Dunantist and Wilsonian factions in the humanitarian sector face a differing challenge. The effectiveness of Wilsonian actors that operate from a rights-based, multi-mandated approach is in question as a consequence of the attempt to broaden humanitarian goals beyond the basics of saving lives and alleviating suffering. That said, such actors are at an advantage in the multi-polar world of assertive sovereignties in that their full respect for state

sovereignty is seen to create a manageable risk for states on the receiving end of their assistance.

Dunantist actors – or more specifically the *sans frontièrist* components of the Dunantist tradition – face a different challenge. Their effectiveness in emergency response is largely intact as they have avoided the traps of multi-mandated approaches. However, their disrespect for sovereignty combined with their Western identity has a greater effect on their acceptance and, therefore, access.

With these findings in mind, we can return to the dialectic that was posed at the outset of this research: Is humanitarianism a tool in the exercise of power or a counter-balance? Put differently, does humanitarianism implement a bio-politics of administering life or does it have, at its core, an emancipatory politics?

The history of humanitarian action – particularly the way it has been practiced in the pursuit of broader goals and objectives than those implied by its most narrow definition – clearly points to the former. Humanitarian actors have been blown in the winds of the prevailing political discourses – be it anti-communism or liberal democracy – as a consequence of their service of power. The current bio-politics of humanitarian aid represents its most comprehensive integration into a securitised administration of human life. However, humanitarianism in its minimal definition – and its simple act of defiance against the arbitrary exclusion of the means of human survival – points to the latter. The real discussion that ought to be had is not whether humanitarian space is shrinking – or whether humanitarian aid should build resilience and contribute to state-building – but rather how humanitarian aid should position itself with respect to this core tension.

If humanitarian actors choose to be a counter-balance to power, this will influence the way they navigate the power dynamics of a declining uni-polarity and emerging messy multi-polarity. Humanitarian actors will have to face up to the reality that their identity and how they carry out activities – a legacy of a uni-polar era – hampers their ability to be a counter-balance to power outside the zones of the uni-pole's influence.

If humanitarian actors are going to maintain their scope and reach, they need to find better ways to navigate the dimensions of power by: finding alliances with progressive civil society; resisting hegemony through public positioning; internationalising by bringing a genuine universality to the humanitarian identity; asserting a global *sans frontièrism* with a radical impartiality that actively goes beyond the realms of Western-defined acceptability; and ensuring effectiveness by returning to the basics of saving lives for the sake of saving lives. These steps will not entirely solve the dilemmas and challenges facing humanitarian

aid actors, but they will allow humanitarian actors to regain their legitimacy and face with integrity the push-back from those who see assistance as impinging on their political and military strategies.

Chapter 8: Conclusion – Humanitarianism is dead. Long live humanitarianism

The story of institutional humanitarianism is the story of, on the one hand, a collaboration with a rising Western power that promoted civil freedoms, democracy and human rights and, on the other hand, a collaboration with the structures of Western hegemony that sought to advance its own interests. The humanitarian endeavour does not occur in a political vacuum and there is no ideologically neutral space for humanitarian actors to work in that would permit aid delivery to be shaped only by the internal politics of the states and communities within which they work. Humanitarian aid comes with the political baggage of hegemonic power; something understood all too well by those who receive this assistance and those who control access for humanitarian organisations. This research regards the relationship between humanitarian aid and western power as a *systemic* problem to present aid delivery and affecting the ability of humanitarian actors to access or – when accessed – be effective in responding to emergencies. In a current political landscape of emerging multipolarity and a diffusion of power, the challenges facing institutional humanitarianism cannot only be solved with technical or technocratic solutions aimed at making particular aspects of aid delivery more efficient or cost effective.

However, instead of disentangling humanitarian aid from western power, the liberal democratic tradition that has underpinned institutional humanitarianism is currently being reinforced by certain currents of thinking in the humanitarian sector. Humanitarian aid actors are seeking to solve the challenges of humanitarian access and effectiveness by promoting concepts like “building resilience”, which has at its core a bias toward a development process enacted only insofar as it serves the interest of Western power.

Unfortunately, this merger of humanitarian aid with longer-term Western-donor-driven development projects fundamentally misconstrues the present political moment. Western power and influence are in decline and a multi-polar political dispensation is arising that includes the emerging and diffused powers of non-state and civil-society actors. In such a context, counter-hegemony can include counter-humanitarianism. The failure of the institutional humanitarian system to disentangle itself from Western interests is a symptom of a humanitarian system too ideologically aligned within the West to realise the crisis of legitimacy it faces.

Research phase 1

The first phase of this doctoral research explored the relationship between humanitarianism and power in interviews with humanitarian workers, donors and academics in France, Belgium, England and South Africa. These interviews were to investigate competing narratives on the relationship between humanitarian aid and Western power. Two core tensions were identified in this phase, that were later explored via case study research.

Some saw the shortcomings in institutional humanitarian action as being capable of being fixed by technical or technocratic means, most notably including the use of a resilience approach that entails increasing support to state systems and through the bridging of the gap between relief and development activities. Others, however, saw the shortcomings in aid delivery capacity as being linked to the extension of the remit of aid provision beyond the more narrowly defined bounds of saving lives and alleviating suffering. In short, the very solution proposed by one group of participants - the more effective incorporation of humanitarian aid into longer-term development processes - was the reason identified by the other group for the failures of humanitarian response.

The second tension identified at this stage of the research was found in the discourse over the identity of the humanitarian system. Some research participants regard rising powers as a threat to the humanitarian project while others see new power configurations as inevitable and demanding an adaptive response from humanitarians.

These data led to a second phase of research in the field, comprising two case studies: South Sudan and Syria. These case studies explore in more detail the tensions noted above. Data were collected in three ways: (1) in interviews with a wide-range of aid practitioners, diplomats and analysts; (2) through an extensive documentary analysis of media clippings, reports, meeting minutes and other relevant internal documents made available by MSF; (3) through researcher observations that were recorded in a field-research diary. From these case studies, it was possible to make analytic generalisations (Yin, 2009).

Research phase 2

South Sudan

In the case of South Sudan, it was found that tying humanitarian aid provision to a state-building agenda resulted in shortcomings in emergency-response capacity. The aid-actor oligarchy present in South Sudan thought of their ultimate purpose as being state and resilience-building. For this aid oligarchy, development was the most important

humanitarian need in South Sudan. This led to a reduction in the capacity of humanitarian actors to directly deliver life saving assistance. It is a central finding of this thesis that conceiving of aid delivery in this manner led, and might lead again, to a breakdown in emergency-response capacity. The political choices of aid actors, and the ideologies that the provision of aid advances, can have a direct impact on the effectiveness of emergency response.

As was noted in the literature review, academic sources that explore the impact of Western hegemony on the delivery of aid are difficult to find and this topic is not central to any ongoing academic discussion. Most discussion has been on technical questions about the effectiveness of resilience approaches and has largely ignored how these approaches have affected emergency response. The debate has been about how effective a tool resilience-building is in bridging the gap between relief and development – which many authors assume to be a positive step (DFID, 2011; ALNAP, 2012; Manyena et al., 2011; Levine & Mosel, 2014). In reality, eliminating the distinction between relief and development in a context like South Sudan can result in emergency-response capacity being underfunded, degraded and made dependent on the political whims of those attached to the liberal democratic state-building agenda. This research contributes to addressing this gap in the literature.

Syria

In Syria, the character of the conflict accounted for many of the access constraints encountered by humanitarian actors. In the context of a Cold War-style bi-polar standoff between the US and Russia, the identification of institutional humanitarian aid with Western interests became a substantial barrier for humanitarian access. This was exacerbated when it was combined with a *sans frontièrist* approach to aid delivery that incorporated the violation of Syrian sovereignty in cross-border aid activities into its strategy. This combination saw organisations like MSF being regarded by the Syrian government as belonging to the opposition axis, resulting in an assertion of Syrian government sovereignty - backed by emerging powers - against MSF actions.

While being identified as Western may not have been the root cause of MSF's rejection by the Syrian government, it certainly provided a convenient pretext for a government that was actively using the denial of aid as a military tactic. It's very plausibility as a justification should be a warning for Western-affiliated aid organisations. When MSF violated Syrian sovereignty, it was only able to work in those zones where members of the opposition had an interest in receiving support from Western governments, whereas as soon as MSF acted

contrary to those interests or in its own interests, it encountered security risks in the form of abductions by sections of the anti-Assad opposition.

The central contribution to the literature made by this case study is a broader problematising of the present periodisation of humanitarian aid and the debates on whether a golden age of humanitarian aid provision has ever existed. In Syria, humanitarian access was directly influenced by a new multi-polarity and a declining Western power that left humanitarian actors exposed, both to a BRICS-backed assertion of sovereignty and the outright rejection of aid by opposition organisations not receiving support from the West. Humanitarian actors were, therefore, constrained by the limits of Western aid acceptability. Beyond the spaces where the West or Western interests were valued, humanitarian aid actors risk rejection. The current era of humanitarian aid is, therefore, distinct from what the literature refers to as the post-Cold War era in that declining Western power and an emerging political multi-polarity have direct influence on the ability of humanitarian actors to deploy assistance.

Research phase 3

The central contribution of the third phase of the research is in characterising how the notion of humanitarian aid is being renegotiated and reconceived of as newly powerful actors adapt to shifting power dynamics. Data collection for this phase was done via four activities: (1) field research in Brazil and South Africa; (2) drawing on data from the first phase of research; (3) adding to the data by incorporating a series of interviews conducted with civil-society representatives, academics and MSF staff in Rio de Janeiro, Johannesburg and Cape Town; and (4) complementing the foregoing with documentary analysis of primary-source data from MSF's responses to emergencies in South Africa and Bahrain.

One of the substantive findings in this section is that the current emerging multi-polarity incorporates the BRICS effect (see "*Chapter 6: Research Findings III – Humanitarianism rethought? – The BRICS effect: an emerging multi-polarity?*" for further discussion of the term). Largely catalysed by the US invasion of Iraq, the BRICS effect is characterised by the following: a growing critique of political legitimacy; an emphasis on the importance of sovereignty; and a questioning of dominant norms and values. What must be noted, however, when considering such an effect, is that emerging states are ultimately as self-interested as any historical empire and significant concerns about emerging powers replacing the West as hegemon were found, particularly regarding China. Nevertheless, changing power dynamics are clearly having a significant effect on humanitarian aid provision. In some instances, Western forms of humanitarian aid are outright rejected. In other cases, the modalities of delivery are being challenged.

On a broader level, the governance structures that have emerged as conduits for the delivery of humanitarian aid are being questioned. It was found that some aid practitioners think this questioning signifies that humanitarianism is at a crossroads. On the one hand, some saw humanitarian aid provision as an inherently Western practice and, therefore, a practice necessarily attached to the role of the critical insider to Western power, while others saw the need for humanitarian actors to untether themselves from Western power. That said, it was also found that power is diffusing – as most notably evidenced by the roles played by civil society and social-media activists in Bahrain and South African. The political framework under which power is diffusing is substantially different to the political framework under which the institutional humanitarian system was constructed. Liberal democracy is being contested, hampering the ability of humanitarian actors to successfully engage with agents of more diffuse power that often articulate their role in terms of social justice, counter-hegemony and solidarity.

Summary of the research contribution to knowledge

The original contribution to knowledge made by this research is the finding that humanitarian aid faces a crisis of legitimacy due to the present relationship between humanitarian aid actors and Western power. Changing global power dynamics only sharpen this crisis. Humanitarian action has become so implicated in the advancement of Western interests that the supposed universality of its space to operate is predicated on the reach of Western power. What this means is that, as Western power declines and retreats, so too does humanitarian access – or humanitarian space.

A core proposition defended by this thesis is that the theory on humanitarian aid – which has, till now, been focused on debates over whether humanitarian space is shrinking – is overlooking the reality that humanitarian space is in fact a Western space. Indeed, it has been found that humanitarian aid is tied to a retreating core and, as such, risks both diminished access to the most vulnerable and failure even where access is permitted. The failure in emergency response capacity further erodes humanitarian legitimacy.

For humanitarian actors, this research indicates a pressing need to ask whether their role is to be as a tool in the advancement of hegemonic power or as a counter-balance to it. This question runs parallel to the question of whether to have a politics of biopower – where life is administered – or an emancipatory politics (Žižek, 2008). Choosing the latter will not necessarily make the work of humanitarian aid delivery in conflict easier, but it will make it possible to better face the real challenges entailed in resisting exclusion by coping better with the baggage acquired from the past practices of humanitarian actors. In this way,

humanitarian actors will be able to remain aware and rooted in their history even as they enact an emancipatory defiance of that history.

In conclusion, this research finds that humanitarian action needs to untangle itself from Western power. This does not mean fully aligning with emerging state power that may also seek to co-opt aid, but rather means seeking alliances with emerging and established civil-society formations. The countervailing force to this proposal will be the growing importance given to the full respect for state sovereignty. Alliances with diffused forms of power is not a full solution for ensuring that humanitarian aid remains effective and able to access the most vulnerable; there are of course technical evolutions that might improve the quality of humanitarian aid. However, this research has not explored these options but has instead demonstrated that any technical fixes that further entrench humanitarian aid into Western power will ultimately reduce the effectiveness of emergency response and will reinforce an identity that is used as a justification for the denial of access.

In the short term, pragmatism should prevail in seeking alliances with emerging states in the negotiation of access, but this pragmatism should be tempered by a realisation that, in the long term, humanitarianism needs to develop a true 'without borders' politics that is both relevant and legitimate in a multi-polar world. In essence, humanitarian workers need to be able to navigate multiple dimensions of power simultaneously, which requires a larger toolkit than is currently offered by adherence to humanitarian principles for ensuring the legitimacy and acceptance of humanitarian action. A true *sans frontières* movement needs to emerge based on a meaningful internationalisation of the identity of institutional humanitarian action, but such a movement cannot be formed by those who continue to subordinate the humanitarian ideal to state interests, a strategy most commonly associated with discourses of development and building resilience.

Humanitarian actors need to acknowledge that the political logic of their institutions derives from a specific liberalist ideology and, therefore, in moving forward, they need to both consciously adopt a politics opposed to hegemony and assert an identity in counter-balance to the negative consequences of power – in all of its dominant forms.

Humanitarian aid is a form of agitation. By acknowledging this, humanitarian actors will be better able to deal with the daily challenges emerging from an essentially bottomless source: the opposition to humanitarian aid from those who abuse their power. In an ideal humanitarianism – one bringing about an era of what might be termed 'humanitarian internationalism' – it will be possible to confront these challenges with the backing of progressive forces in civil society that respect the universality of saving lives and alleviating

suffering in crisis. The only greater goal this radical impartiality should serve is the counter-hegemonic act of resistance.

This research has been purposefully broad in its scope. This has allowed wide-ranging conclusions to be drawn that need to be tested and elaborated on. Moreover, a number of themes arose in this research that could not be fully unpacked. Additional research is needed on how the politics of the global South affects approaches to aid delivery that are distinct from that which developed under Western power. Although this research offers significant insight into this question, a deeper and more focused research project on the political underpinnings of international aid from the perspective of the global South would be relevant, especially considering how such ideological formations have shaped the Western aid system in the past.

Bibliography

Works cited

- Abdelwahid, D. (2013). 'You got the stuff?' Humanitarian activist networks in Syria. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*, 56. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-59/you-got-the-stuff-humanitarian-activist-networks-in-syria> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Abdul-Zahra, Q. and Murphy, B. (2012). "Iran Rallies To Salvage Iraq's Al Maliki Government" [online]. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/04/iran-tries-to-salvage-ira_n_1569204.html [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Abiew, F. K. (2010). Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: Redefining a Role for 'Kind-hearted Gunmen'. *Criminal Justice Ethics*, 29(2), 93–109.
- Abu-Sada, C., ed. (2012). *In the Eyes of Others*. United States: Doctors without Borders / Medecins sans Frontieres, Humanitarian Outcomes and NYU Centre on International Cooperation
- ACAPS and MapAction. (2013). Relief Actors in Syria [online]. Retrieved from http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/relief_actors_in_syria.pdf [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Achcar, G. (2013). *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising*. London: Saqi Books
- ACU (Assistance Coordination Unit) (n.d.). "About ACU – Assistance Coordination Unit" [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.acu-sy.org/84/Who-we-are/About-ACU/> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Acuto, M., ed. (2014). *Negotiating Relief: The Politics of Humanitarian Space*. London: Hurst.
- Adler, G. and Steinberg, J., eds. (2000). *From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics Movement and the Transition to Democracy*. New York: St. Martin's Press in association with Albert Einstein Institution.
- AFP (Agence France-Presse) (2011a). "Somali peace deal needed to prevent famine repeat: AfDB boss" [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne+News/World/Story/A1Story20110720-290035.html> [Accessed 22 May 2012].
- — —. (2011b). "Famine in Somalia is 'immoral': UN aid coordinator" [online]. *Google News*. Retrieved from

Bibliography

- <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jxTYsNtXmqbsi6l4Eaa0BFQpl71g?docId=CNG.e53b2b929df6a1fba2dd39f41a1fec11.61> [Accessed 22 May 2012].
- — —. (2014). "Syrians launch new 'revolution' against ISIS" [online]. *Now Syria*. Retrieved from <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/Now-Syria/528566-syrians-launch-new-revolution-against-isis> [Accessed 19 January 2015]
- Aji, A. (2013). "Damascus in grips of fear as mortar bombs rain down" [online]. *Daily Star*. Retrieved from: <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Nov-30/239422-damascus-in-grips-of-fear-as-mortar-bombs-rain-down.ashx#axzz2rQE3q2s9> [Accessed 20 October, 2014].
- — —. (2014). "Syrian troops capture town near Lebanon border" [online]. Associated Press DBA Press Association. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nsm&AN=AP487ce226b1074e5f87a063967c7805e0&site=eds-live&scope=site>. [Accessed 20 October, 2014].
- Akram, F. (2012). " Hamas Leader Khaled Meshal Abandons Damascus Base". *New York Times* [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/28/world/middleeast/khaled-meshal-the-leader-of-amas-vacates-damascus.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Al Akhbar English. (2014). "Turkey ready to send ground forces against ISIS in exchange of Syrian governments removal: PM" [online]. *Al Akhbar English*. Retrieved from <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/turkey-ready-send-ground-forces-against-isis-exchange-syrian-gov%E2%80%99ts-removal-pm-says> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Al Alam. (2014). "Syria rebels may lift deadly siege on Aleppo's villages" [online]. *Al Alam*. Retrieved from <http://en.alalam.ir/news/1560228> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Al-Azm, S. J. (2014). "Syria in revolt: understanding the unthinkable war". *Boston Review*, 39(5), 34–41.
- Al Jazeera. (2011a). "Bahrain: Shouting in the dark" [programme; online]. *Al Jazeera English*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/2011/08/201184144547798162.html> [Accessed 5 April 2012].
- — —. (2011b). "'Scores dead' in Syria after kidnappings – Middle East" [online]. *Al Jazeera English*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/201112616188773705.html> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- — —. (2014). "Turkish police raid charity aiding Syria – Middle East" [online]. *Al Jazeera English*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/01/turkish-police-raid-charity-aiding-syria-201411411543616402.html> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Al-Manshour. (2013). "We Stand Behind the Syrian People's Revolution – No to Foreign Intervention" [online]. *Al Manshour*. Retrieved from <http://www.al-manshour.org/en/statement-by-rev-socialists-marxists-on-us-attack-on-syria> [Accessed 20 October 2014].

- Allie, M. P. (2012). Introduction: "Acting at any price?" In Magone, Weissman and Neuman, eds., *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience*. p1-11. New York: Columbia University Press.
- ALNAP (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action). (2012). The state of the humanitarian system. [online] ALNAP. Retrieved from <http://www.alnap.org/resource/6565> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Amnéus, D. (2012). Responsibility to Protect: Emerging Rules on Humanitarian Intervention? *Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations*, 26(2), 241–276.
- Anderson, T. (2014). "Syria's Hospitals targeted by NATO-backed Armed Groups" [online]. *Global Research*. Retrieved from <http://www.globalresearch.ca/syrias-hospitals-targeted-by-nato-backed-armed-groups/5363563> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Annan, K. (1999). Two concepts of sovereignty. *Economist*, 352(8137), 49–50.
- ANSAMED. (2014). "Al-Qaeda claims responsibility for kidnapped doctors in Syria" [online]. *ANSAMED*. Retrieved from http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2014/01/08/Syria-Qaeda-claims-responsibility-kidnapped-doctors_9868077.html [Accessed 13 October 2014].
- Armstrong, J. (2013). The Future of Humanitarian Security in Fragile Contexts: An analysis of transformational factors affecting humanitarian action in the coming decade. *Humanitarian Futures Programme research paper for the European Interagency Security Forum*.
- Arnold, M. and Lerich, M. (2012). *South Sudan: From Revolution to Independence*. London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd.
- Barakat, S., Deely, S. and Zyck, S. A. (2010). 'A tradition of forgetting': Stabilisation and humanitarian action in historical perspective. *Disasters*, 34, S297–S319.
- Barnett, M. N. (2011). *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). (2013). "Guide to the Syrian rebels" [online]. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24403003> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Beath, A., Christia, F. and Enikolopov, R. (2012). Winning Hearts and Minds through Development? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan [Online]. The World Bank East Asia and the Pacific Region Office of the Chief Economist. Retrieved from: <http://crei.cat/files/filesActivity/48/enikolopov.pdf> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Beaumont, P. (2012). "Syrian rebels retreat from Baba Amr district of Homs" [online]. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/01/syrian-rebels-retreat-baba-amr-homs> [Accessed 20 October 2014].

Bibliography

- Belanger, L. (2012). "Refugee Crisis in South Sudan – Oxfam Calls for Action" [online]. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/louis-belanger/refugee-crisis-in-south-s_b_1901623.html [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Bellamy, A. J. (2010). *Global Politics and the Responsibility to Protect: From Words to Deeds*. New York: Routledge.
- Bellamy, A. J. and Williams, P. D. (2011). The new politics of protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect. *International Affairs*, 87(4), 825–850.
- Bennett, J. Pantuliano, S. Fenton, W. Vaux, A. Barnett, C. Brusset, E. (2010). "Aiding the peace: a multi-donor evaluation of support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities in southern Sudan 2005–2010" [online]. *Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from <http://www.odi.org/publications/5488-aid-effectiveness-south-sudan> [Accessed 18 January 2015].
- Bernard, V. (2011). Editorial: The future of humanitarian action. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(884), 891–897.
- Bhalla, R. (2014). The Geopolitics of the Syrian Civil War [online]. *Stratfor*. Retrieved from <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/geopolitics-syrian-civil-war> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Binder, A. and Meier, C. (2011). Opportunity knocks: Why non-Western donors enter humanitarianism and how to make the best of it. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(884), 1135–1149.
- Black, I. (2014a). "End of an era as Prince Bandar departs Saudi intelligence post" [online]. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/16/prince-bandar-saudi-intelligence-syria> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- — —. (2014b). "Syrian regime document trove shows evidence of 'industrial scale' killing of detainees" [online]. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/20/evidence-industrial-scale-killing-syria-war-crimes> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Bohman, J. (1996). "Critical Theory and Democracy". In Rasmussen, D. M., ed., *Handbook of Critical Theory*. p190-220. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bouchet-Saulnier, F. et al. (2007). *The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40.
- Bradey, A. (2006). "Opportunity Sampling". In V. Jupp, ed. *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*. London: SAGE Publications, Ltd, pp. 206–207. [online]. Available from: <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/the-sage-dictionary-of-social-research-methods/SAGE.xml> [Accessed October 6, 2014].

- Bricmont, J. (2006). *Humanitarian imperialism: Using human rights to sell war*. [Translated By Diana Johnstone], n.p.: New York : Monthly Review Press, 2006.
- Buckle, J. and Dwyer, S. (2009). The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research. *International Journal Of Qualitative Methods*, 8, 1, pp. 54-63
- Bush. (2001). "President Bush Launches Attack on Afghanistan" [online]. Retrieved from <http://middleeast.about.com/od/afghanistan/qt/me081007b.htm> [Accessed 23 September 2014].
- Carapico, S. (2014). *Political Aid and Arab Activism: Democracy Promotion, Justice and Representation*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Cairns, E. (2012). Crises in a New World Order: Challenging the humanitarian project [online]. OXFAM. Retrieved from <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/crises-in-a-new-world-order-challenging-the-humanitarian-project-204749>. [Accessed 24 November 2014]
- CAP (Consolidated Appeals Process). (2013). "South Sudan: Consolidated Appeal 2014–2016" [online]. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Retrieved from https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CAP/CAP_2014-2016_South_Sudan.pdf [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- Chandler, D. (2000). *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*. London: Pluto Press.
- — —. (2006). *Empire in Denial: The Politics of State-Building*. London: Pluto. Press
- — —. (2012). Resilience and human security: The post-interventionist paradigm. *Security Dialogue*, 43(3), 213–229.
- — —. (2014). "Humanitarianism, development and the liberal peace". In Acuto, M., ed., *Negotiating Relief: The Dialectics of Humanitarian Space*. p231-247. London: Hurst.
- Chit, B. (2014). Sectarianism and the Arab revolutions [online]. *Socialist Review*. Retrieved from <http://socialistreview.org.uk/388/sectarianism-and-arab-revolutions> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Chomsky, N. (1999). The Current Bombings: Behind the Rhetoric [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199903--.htm> [Accessed 18 December 2014].
- Clinton, H. (2011). "US Response to Declaration of Famine in Somalia and Drought in the Horn of Africa". [online]. *U.S. Department of State*. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/07/168792.htm> [Accessed 22 May 2012].
- Cockburn, P. (2014). "Iraq crisis: How Saudi Arabia helped Isis take over the north of the country" [online]. *Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/iraq-crisis-how-saudi-arabia-helped-isis-take-over-the-north-of-the-country-9602312.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Collinson, S. (2014). "The humanitarian system: How does it affect humanitarian space?" In Acuto, M, ed., *Negotiating Relief: The Dialectics of Humanitarian Space* (p23–38). London: Hurst

Bibliography

- Collinson, S., Elhawary, S. and Muggah, R. (2010). States of fragility: Stabilisation and its implications for humanitarian action. *Disasters*, 34, S275–S296
- Compagnon, D. (2011). A Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe [online]. *Foreign Affairs*, Sep/Oct 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68195/daniel-compagnon/a-predictable-tragedy-robert-mugabe-and-the-collapse-of-zimbabwe> [Accessed 18 December 2014].
- COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions). (2011). "COSATU supports march by our affiliate NUMSA to demand end to NATO bombings in Libya" [online]. COSATU. Retrieved from <http://www.cosatu.org.za/show.php?ID=5136> [Accessed 11 October 2014].
- Craven, P. (2011). "COSATU deplors Libyan slaughter" [online]. *Politics Web*. Retrieved from <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71651?oid=223699&sn=Detail&pid=71651> [Accessed 11 October 2014].
- Crilly, R. (2014). "Islamic State's execution videos are sly propaganda written in blood" [online]. *Al Jazeera America*. Retrieved from <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/9/2/sotloff-executionvideospropaganda.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Cumming-Bruce, N. (2013). "U.N. Reports Syria Uses Hospital Attacks as a 'Weapon of War'" [online]. *NYTimes.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/14/world/middleeast/un-panel-accuses-syria-of-attacking-hospitals.html> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Dabashi, H. (2012). *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism*. New York: Zed Books.
- Daccord, Y. (2013). "Dunant's dream, 150 years on a sober celebration?" [online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine – Issue 58*. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-58/dunants-dream-150-years-on-a-sober-celebration> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Dallaire, R. (2012). "Forward". In Donini, A., ed., *The Golden Fleece: Manipulation and Independence in Humanitarian Action* (xvii–xviii). Virginia: Kumarian Press
- Damascus Bureau. (2013). "Alawite Families in Homs 'Between the fire of the opposition and the fire of the regime'" [online]. *The Syrian Observer*. Retrieved from <http://www.syrianobserver.com/Features/Features/Alawite+Families+in+Homs+Between+the+fire+of+the+opposition+and+the+fire+of+the+regime> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Dandoy, A. and Pérouse de Montclos, M. A. (2013). Humanitarian workers in peril? Deconstructing the myth of the new and growing threat to humanitarian workers. *Global Crime*, 14(4), 341–358.
- Davey, E. (2012). "New players through old lenses: Why history matters in engaging with Southern actors" [online]. *HPG Policy Brief* 48. July 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.odi.org/publications/6692-history-humanitarian-action-aid-ngos>. [Accessed 18 January 2015]

- Davey, E., Borton, J. and Foley, M. (2013). "A history of the humanitarian system: Western origins and foundations" [online]. *HPG Working Paper*. Retrieved from <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8439.pdf>
- De Cordier, B. (2009). The 'Humanitarian Frontline', Development and Relief, and Religion: What context, which threats and which opportunities? *Third World Quarterly*, 30(4), 663–684.
- De Young, K. (2014). "U.S. won't intervene in Iraq in absence of political reform by Iraqis, Obama says" [online]. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/kerry-says-us-will-act-soon-on-iraq-but-at-request-of-baghdad-government/2014/06/13/53ddc5f0-f2f9-11e3-9ebc-2ee6f81ed217_story.html [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- De Young, K. and Sly, L. (2014). "U.S. frustration rises as Turkey withholds military help from besieged Kobane" [online]. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-frustration-rises-as-turkey-withholds-military-help-from-besieged-kobane/2014/10/08/311cb190-4f0e-11e4-babe-e91da079cb8a_story.html [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Dechaine, D. R. (2002). Humanitarian Space and the Social Imaginary: Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders and the Rhetoric of Global Community. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 26(4), 354–369.
- Demirtas-Bagdonas, Ö. (2014). Reading Turkey's Foreign Policy on Syria: The AKP's Construction of a Great Power Identity and the Politics of Grandeur. *Turkish Studies*, 15(1), 139–155.
- Derderian, K., Stobbaerts, E., Singh, I., Rocha, S. and Melody, D. (2007). "UN humanitarian reforms a view from the field" [online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine – Issue 39*. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-39/un-humanitarian-reforms-a-view-from-the-field> [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- Desai, A. (2002). *We Are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Dettmer, J. (2014). "Where Is Al Qaeda Holding Its Western Hostages In Syria?" [online]. *The Daily Beast*. Retrieved from <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/01/22/where-is-al-qaeda-holding-its-western-hostages-in-syria.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Dewachi, O. Skelton, M. Nguyen, V. Fouad, F. Abu Sitta, G. Maasri, Z. Giacaman, R. (2014). Changing therapeutic geographies of the Iraqi and Syria wars. *The Lancet*, 383(9915), 449–457.
- DFID (Department for International Development). (2011). "Humanitarian Emergency Response Review" [online]. DFID. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67579/HERR.pdf. [Accessed 18 January 2015]

Bibliography

- Dodge, T. (2012). Conclusion: "The Middle East After the Arab Spring". In *After the Arab Spring: Power Shift in the Middle East?* [Online] London School of Economics. Retrieved from http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR011/FINAL_LSE_IDEAS__ConclusionsTheMiddleEastAfterTheArabSpring_Dodge.pdf [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Domesticci-Met, M. J. (2011). Protecting in Libya on Behalf of the International Community. *Gottingen Journal of International Law*, 3(3), 861–889.
- Donini, A. (2012a). "Introduction". In Donini, A. ed., *The Golden Fleece: Manipulation and Independence in Humanitarian Action* (1–17). Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press
- — —, ed. (2012b). *The Golden Fleece: Manipulation and independence in Humanitarian Action*, 1st ed. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.
- — —. (2014a). "Humanitarianism, perceptions and power". In Acuto, M., ed., *Negotiating Relief: The Dialectics of Humanitarian Space*. p39-47. Hurst.
- — —. (2014b). "Foreword". In Duffield, M., *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. New edition. pXV-XIX. New York: Zed Books.
- Douglas, J. D. (1985). *Creative Interviewing*, 1st ed. USA: Sage Publ.
- Druckman, D. (2005). *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*. Fairfax, USA: SAGE.
- Duffield, M. ([2001] 2014). *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. New York: Zed Books.
- Economist. (2013). "The Syrian civil war: A turning point for Bashar Assad?" [online]. *Economist*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21579055-fall-qusayr-boost-regime-far-decisive-turning-point> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Elder, J. (2014). "South Sudan: A country falling into famine" [blog]. UNICEF Connect. Retrieved from <http://blogs.unicef.org/2014/07/26/south-sudan-a-country-falling-into-famine/> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Elhawary, S. (2010). Security for whom? Stabilisation and civilian protection in Colombia. *Disasters*, 34, S388–S405.
- Elhawary, S. and Collinson, S. (2012). "Humanitarian space: trends and issues" [online]. Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=6426&title=humanitarian-space-principles-aid> [Accessed 9 June 2012].
- El Hussein, R. (2010). Hezbollah and the Axis of Refusal: Hamas, Iran and Syria. *Third World Quarterly*, 31(5), 803–815.
- Evans, G. (2007). "Forward". In *Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas in Action*. Weiss, T. USA: Polity press.

- — —. (2012). “Responsibility While Protecting” [online]. *Project Syndicate*. Retrieved from <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/responsibility-while-protecting> [Accessed 16 May 2012].
- Fadyl, J. K., Nicholls, D.A. and McPherson, K. M. (2013). Interrogating discourse: The application of Foucault's methodological discussion to specific inquiry. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 17(5), 478–494.
- Featherstone, A. (2012) “Afghanistan: A case study – Strengthening principled humanitarian response capacities”. [online]. ALNAP. Retrieved from <http://www.alnap.org/resource/6337> [Accessed 5 January 2015].
- Feller, E. (2009). “Protecting People in Conflict and Crisis – Responding to the Challenges of a Changing World” Opening Address: Humanitarian Space Oxford. *UNHCR*. 22 September 2009 [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/4ad49ed29.pdf> [Accessed 2 October 2014].
- Fenton, W. and Phillips, M. (2009). “Funding mechanisms in Southern Sudan: NGO perspectives” [online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine – Issue 42*. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-42/funding-mechanisms-in-southern-sudan-ngo-perspectives>.
- Ferdinand, P. (2014). Rising powers at the UN: an analysis of the voting behaviour of BRICS in the General Assembly. *Third World Quarterly*, 35(3), 376–391.
- Ferguson, N. (2010). Complexity and Collapse. *Foreign Affairs*, Mar/Apr 2010 [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65987/niall-ferguson/complexity-and-collapse> [Accessed 22 May 2012].
- Ferreiro, M. (2012). Blurring of Lines in Complex Emergencies: Consequences for the Humanitarian Community [online]. *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*. Retrieved from <http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1625> [Accessed 8 December 2014].
- Ferris, E. (2011). Megatrends and the future of humanitarian action. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(884), 915–938.
- Fisk, R. (2014a). "How the Sunni–Shia schism is dividing the world" [online]. *Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/how-the-sunnishia-schism-is-dividing-the-world-8899780.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Fisk, R. (2014b). "The old partition of the Middle East is dead. I dread to think what will follow" [online]. *Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/robert-fisk-the-old-partition-of-the-middle-east-is-dead-i-dread-to-think-what-will-follow-9536467.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Ford, N. et al. (2009). Ethics of conducting research in conflict settings. *Conflict and Health*, 3(1), 7.
- Forsythe, D. (2005). *The Humanitarians: The International Committee of the Red Cross*. 1st ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bibliography

- Fox, M. A. (2005). *The Accessible Hegel*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books.
- Fox, R. C. (2014). *Doctors Without Borders: Humanitarian Quests, Impossible Dreams of Médecins sans frontières*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Freeman, A. and Kagarlitsky, B. (2004). *The Politics of Empire: Globalisation in Crisis*. London: Pluto Press
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Avon books Inc.
- GHSI (Global Health Security Initiative). (2012). "Shifting Paradigm: How the BRICS are reshaping Global Health and Development" [online]. Global Health Security Initiative. Retrieved from http://www.ghsinitiatives.org/downloads/ghsi_brics_report.pdf [Accessed 1 October 2014].
- Gladstone, R. and Droubi, H. (2013). "Syria's Assad Seeks Help from BRICS Countries" [online]. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/28/world/middleeast/syrias-developments.html> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Glanville, L. (2012). The Responsibility to Protect Beyond Borders. *Human Rights Law Review*, 12(1), 1–32.
- Global Emergency Overview. (2012). "Syria – Conflict (Update) – 13.08.2012" [online]. ACAPS. Retrieved from <http://geo.acaps.org/docs/428> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Global Humanitarian Assistance. (2012). "Defining humanitarian assistance" [online]. Global Humanitarian Assistance. Retrieved from <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/data-guides/defining-humanitarian-aid> [Accessed 5 January 2015].
- Good, B. et al. (2014). Medical humanitarianism: Research insights in a changing field of practice. *Social Science & Medicine*, 120, 311–316.
- Goodhand, J. (2010). Stabilising a victor's peace? Humanitarian action and reconstruction in eastern Sri Lanka. *Disasters*, 34, S342–S367.
- Gordon, S. (2010). The United Kingdom's stabilisation model and Afghanistan: the impact on humanitarian actors. *Disasters*, 34, S368–S387.
- — —. (2011). "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan's Helmand Province" [Online]. Feinstein International Centre. Retrieved from http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/4206~v~Winning_Hearts_and_Minds__Examining_the_Relationship_between_Aid_and_Security_in_Afghanistans_Helmand_Province.pdf [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing Research in the Real World*, 2nd ed. London: SAGE.
- Habib, A. (2013). *South Africa's Suspended Revolution: Hopes and Prospects*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

- Harding, L. (2011). "Wounded Syrian protesters being tortured in hospital, claims Amnesty" [online]. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/25/wounded-syrian-protesters-torture-hospital> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Harmer, A. and Macrae, J. (2004). "Beyond the Continuum: The Changing Role of Aid Policy in Protracted Crises". *Humanitaria Policy Group. HPG report 18*. Retrieved from <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/279.pdf> [Accessed 19 January 2015]
- Harvey, P. (2009). "Towards good humanitarian government. The role of the affected state in disaster response" [online]. *Humanitarian Policy Group. HPG Report 29*. Retrieved from <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5092.pdf>. [Accessed 15 January 2015]
- — —. (2014). "The New Deal and South Sudan: Eggs in one basket state-building?" [blog] *Secure Livelihoods*. Retrieved from http://www.securelivelihoods.org/blogs_entry.aspx?id=58. [Accessed 21 December 2014]
- Hasan, M. (2011). Oh, what a liberal war: Mehdi Hasan explores the case for intervention in Libya. *New Statesman*, (5046), 20–22.
- Hehir, A. (2010). *Humanitarian Intervention: An Introduction*, 1st ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hehir, A. and Murray, R. W. (2013). *Libya, the responsibility to protect and the future of humanitarian intervention* [online]. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from <http://proxy.bibliotheques.uqam.ca/login?url=http://site.ebrary.com/lib/uqam/docDetail.action?docID=10775935> [Accessed 26 September 2014].
- Heydemann, S. and Leenders, R., eds. (2013). *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Heywood, M. (2014) "Analysis: Quo Vadis, civil society?" [online]. *Daily Maverick*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-08-18-analysis-quo-vadis-civil-society/#.VDkdKuc0M7A> [Accessed 11 October 2014].
- Hilhorst, D. and Jansen, B. J. (2010). Humanitarian Space as Arena: A Perspective on the Everyday Politics of Aid. *Development and Change*, 41(6), 1117–1139.
- Hindawi, H. (2012). "In Syria, Sunni rebels besiege Shiite" [online]. *Daily Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Oct-18/191947-in-syria-sunni-rebels-besiege-shiite-villages.ashx#axzz2sHYfrNQW> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Hofman, M. (2011) "Dangerous Aid in Afghanistan" [online]. *AfPak Channel*. Retrieved from http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/01/12/dangerous_aid_in_afghanistan [Accessed 8 May 2012].

Bibliography

- Hofman, M. and Delaunay, S. (2010). "Afghanistan: A Return to Humanitarian Action" [online]. *MSF USA* Retrieved from <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news-stories/special-report/afghanistan-return-humanitarian-action> [Accessed 1 October 2014].
- Holmes, J. (2013). *The politics of humanity: the reality of relief aid*. London: Head of Zeus.
- Holzgrefe, J. (2013). "The humanitarian intervention debate". In Holzgrefe, J.L. and Keohane, R.O. eds. (2003). *Humanitarian intervention: ethical, legal, and political dilemmas*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hosenball, M. (2012). "Exclusive: Obama authorizes secret U.S. support for Syrian rebels" [online]. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/01/us-usa-syria-obama-order-idUSBRE8701OK20120801> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- HRW (Human Rights Watch). (2012a). "Syria: Armed Opposition Groups Committing Abuses" [online]. *www.hrw.org*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/20/syria-armed-opposition-groups-committing-abuses> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- — —. (2012b). "Syria: Government Attacking Bread Lines" [online]. *www.hrw.org* Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/30/syria-government-attacking-bread-lines> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Hubbard, B. (2014). "Break in Siege Is Little Relief to Syrian City" [online]. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/10/world/middleeast/in-homs-syria-still-no-relief-from-a-siege.html> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Hubert, D. and Brassard-Boudreau. (2014). "Is humanitarian space shrinking?" In Acuto, M, ed., *Negotiating Relief: The Dialectics of Humanitarian Space* (p13–23). London: Hurst
- Hughes, G. A. (2014). "Syria and the Perils of Proxy Warfare". [online]. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edb&AN=96869171&site=eds-live&scope=site>. [Accessed 19 November 2014]
- Hunter, I. (2013). "On the Ground, Aid Workers Face Kidnapping and Stolen Food Baskets" [online]. *Syria Deeply*. Retrieved from <http://www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2013/09/2486/ground-aid-workers-face-kidnapping-stolen-food-baskets/> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Huntington, S. P. (1988). The U.S. – Decline or Renewal? [online]. *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1988/89. Retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/43988/samuel-p-huntington/the-us-decline-or-renewal> [Accessed 22 May 2012].
- — —. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Hutton, L. (2014). "Prolonging the agony of UNMISS: The implementation challenges of a new mandate during a civil war" [Online]. Clingendael. Netherlands Institute of International Relations. CRU report. Retrieved from

- <http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/Prolonging%20the%20agony%20of%20UNMISS%20-%20Lauren%20Hutton.pdf> [Accessed 19 January 2015]
- ICG (International Crisis Group). (2014). "South Sudan – A Civil War by Any Other Name" [online]. International Crisis Group. Retrieved from [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/south%20sudan/217-south-sudan-a-civil-war-by-any-other-name](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/south%20sudan/217-south-sudan-a-civil-war-by-any-other-name) [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- ICMJE. (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) (n.d.). "Preparing for Submission" [online]. *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors*. Retrieved from <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/manuscript-preparation/preparing-for-submission.html> [Accessed November 29, 2014].
- ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross). (n.d.) "The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent" [online]. ICRC. Retrieved from www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0513.pdf [Accessed 13 November 2012].
- Ignatieff, M. (2003). *Empire Lite: Nation Building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan*. London: Vintage.
- IOM (International Organization for Migration). (2009). "Village Assessments and Returnee Monitoring in Southern Kordofan and Two States in Southern Sudan" [Online]. IOM. Retrieved from http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/brochures_and_info_sheets/iom_village_assessments_monitoring2008.pdf [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Jamison, M. (2011). "Humanitarian intervention since 1990 and 'liberal interventionism'". In Simms & Trim., *Humanitarian Intervention: A History*. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511921292> [Accessed 13 November, 2012]
- Jansen, B. (2013). Measuring Acceptance in Humanitarian Action: The Case of South Sudan. Abstract submitted to *Human Security: Humanitarian Perspectives and Responses Conference*. Istanbul, 2013. Retrieved from [http://www.humanitarianstudiesconference.org/index.php?id=9&tx_ptconference_pi4\[showUId\]=281&cHash=5a2c4e4ca1ae2cff2be22561f850e7d4](http://www.humanitarianstudiesconference.org/index.php?id=9&tx_ptconference_pi4[showUId]=281&cHash=5a2c4e4ca1ae2cff2be22561f850e7d4) [Accessed 12 June 2014]
- Jay, M. (1973). *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Jihadology. (2012). "New video message and statement from the Syrian Islamic Front: 'Announcement of the Syrian Islamic Front'" [online]. *Jihadology*. Retrieved from <http://jihadology.net/2012/12/21/new-video-message-and-statement-from-the-syrian-islamic-front-announcement-of-the-syrian-islamic-front/> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Johansson, P. (2009). The Humdrum Use of Ultimate Authority: Defining and Analysing Chapter VII Resolutions. *Nordic Journal of International Law* 78:3 (2009), pp. 309–342.

Bibliography

- Johnson, A. and Mueen, S. (2012). "Short War, Long Shadow: The Political and Military Legacies of the 2011 Libya Campaign" [online]. *Royal United Services Institute*. Retrieved from <http://www.rusi.org/publications/occasionalpapers/ref:O4F631FBA20DF9/> [Accessed 19 May 2012].
- Johnson, H. F. (2011). *Waging Peace in Sudan: The Inside Story of the Negotiations that Ended Africa's Longest Civil War*. Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press.
- Jokhadar, C. (2014). "Damascus' Yarmouk camp facing ongoing crisis" [online]. *Al-Monitor*. Retrieved from <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulseen/security/2014/04/syria-yarmouk-palestinian-camp-ongoing-crisis.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Jordan, P. (2014). "New realities are redefining power relations" [online]. *Business Day Live*. Retrieved from <http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2014/06/05/new-realities-are-redefining-power-relations> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Kahn, C. and Cunningham, A. (2013). Introduction to the issue of state sovereignty and humanitarian action. *Disasters*, 37, S139–S150.
- Kaldor, M. (2006). *New and Old Wars: Organised violence in a Global era*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Karouny, M. (2012). "Smell of death filled Syria's Baba Amr: residents" [online]. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/06/us-syria-district-idUSTRE8250DY20120306> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Kennedy, P.M. (1988). *The rise and fall of the great powers: economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000*. Random House.
- Kent, R.C. (2011). Planning from the future: an emerging agenda. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(884), 939–963.
- Klein, N. (2007). *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, 1st ed. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Kleinfeld, M. (2007). Misreading the Post-tsunami Political Landscape in Sri Lanka: The Myth of Humanitarian Space. *Space and Polity*, 11(2), 169–184.
- Koser, K. (2014). "Afghanistan 2014: Preparing for the Humanitarian Transition" [online]. The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/08/28-afghanistan-humanitarian-koser> [Accessed 25 September 2014].
- Krähenbühl, P. (2013). "There are no 'good' or 'bad' civilians in Syria – we must help all who need aid" [online]. ICRC. Retrieved from <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/feature/2013/03-05-syria-aid-krahenbuhl.htm> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Kuljian, C. (2013). *Sanctuary: How an Inner-City Church Spilled onto a Sidewalk*. Johannesburg: Jacana.

- Kullab, S. (2014). "Refugees remember horrors of detention" [online]. *Daily Star*. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jan-28/245514-refugees-remember-horrors-of-detention.ashx?fb_action_ids=10151930168053652&fb_action_types=og.recommends&fb_source=other_multiline&action_object_map=%5B478129385642425%5D&action_type_map=%5B%22og.recommends%22%5D&action_ref_map=%5B%5D#axzz2sHYfrNQW [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Kupchan, C. (2013). *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Kurowska, X. (2014). Multipolarity as resistance to liberal norms: Russia's position on responsibility to protect. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 14(4), 489.
- Lanzer, T. (2013). "South Sudan's greatest humanitarian challenge: development" [online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*. Issue 57. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-57/south-sudans-greatest-humanitarian-challenge-development> [Accessed 27 November 2014].
- — —. (2014a). "In South Sudan, Humanitarian Action Is a Palliative, Not a Long-Term Solution" [online]. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/toby-lanzer/in-south-sudan-humanitari_b_5134821.html [Accessed 27 November 2014].
- — —. (2014b). "South Sudan: Spend Now to Save More Later" [online]. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/toby-lanzer/south-sudan-spend-now-to_b_6027870.html [Accessed 27 November 2014].
- Laub, Z. and Masters, J. (2014) "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria". *Council on Foreign Relations* [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state-iraq-syria/p14811> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Lawler, S. (2008). *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*. Polity Press.
- Leff, J. (2012). "My neighbour, my enemy: Inter-tribal violence in Jonglei" [online]. *Small Arms Survey*. Retrieved from http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB21-Inter-tribal_violence_in_Jonglei.pdf [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Levine, S. and Mosel, I. (2014). "Supporting resilience in difficult places: A critical look at applying the 'resilience' concept in countries where crises are the norm" [online]. *HPG commissioned report*. Retrieved from <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8881.pdf> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Levy, R. (2014). "Assad's policy of boosting ISIS has backfired". *Human Security Centre, Defence and Security, Issue 3, No. 2* [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.hscentre.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/irony-rise-assad/> [Accessed 10 October 2014].

Bibliography

- Lipschutz, R. (2007). "On the Transformational Potential of Global Civil Society". In Berenskoetter, F. & Williams, M. J., eds., *Power in World Politics*. p225-244. New York: Routledge.
- Loeb, J. (2013). "The disappearance of cross-line aid in Darfur, Sudan" [online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine – Issue 58*. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-58/the-disappearance-of-cross-line-aid-in-darfur-sudan> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Lothe, E. and Peake, G. (2010). Addressing symptoms but not causes: stabilisation and humanitarian action in Timor-Leste. *Disasters*, 34, S427–S443.
- Lucey, F. (2014). The challenges of 'scaling up': a study of logistics cluster activations in emergencies. Masters dissertation. Liverpool: Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, University of Liverpool Catalogue
- Lund, A. (2012). "Syria Jihadism" [online]. *Swedish Institute of International Affairs*. Retrieved from <http://www.ui.se/upl/files/77409.pdf> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- — —. (2014). "The Politics of the Islamic Front, Part 1: Structure and Support – Syria in Crisis". *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* [online]. Retrieved from <http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=54183> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Mackintosh, K. (2011). Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project: Implications for Humanitarian Action: A View from Medecins Sans Frontieres. *Suffolk Transnational Law Review*, (3), 507.
- Magone, C., Weissman, F. and Neuman, M. (2012). *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Maktabi, R. (2012). "Syria 2012 sees rise of citizen journalism" [online]. *Al Arabiya*. Retrieved from <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/12/30/257860.html> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Mann, M. (2003). *Incoherent Empire*. London: Verso.
- Manyena, S, O'Brien, G, O'Keefe, P, & Rose, J. (2011). Disaster resilience: a bounce back or bounce forward ability? *Local Environment*, 16(5), 417–424.
- Martin, P. (2014). US and Turkey at Odds Over Syria Intervention. *Global Research* [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.globalresearch.ca/us-and-turkey-at-odds-over-syria-intervention/5407309> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Marx, K. and Engels, F. ([1848] 2008). *The Communist Manifesto*. Rockville, USA: Wildside Press LCC.
- Matar, M. (2014). "Fighting for Democracy While Supporting Autocracy" [online]. *LobeLog*. Retrieved from <http://www.lobelog.com/bahrain-isis-democracy/> [Accessed 11 October 2014].
- Matthiesen, T. (2013). *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't*. California: Stanford University Press.

- Maxwell, D. and Santschi, M. (2014). "From post-conflict recovery and state building to a renewed humanitarian emergency: A brief reflection on South Sudan" [online]. *Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium*. Retrieved from www.securelivelihoods.org/resources_download.aspx?resourceid=320. [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Mays, N. and Pope, K. (2000). Qualitative research in health care: Assessing quality in qualitative research. *British Medical Journal*, 320(7226), 50–52.
- McGoldrick, C. (2011). The future of humanitarian action: an ICRC perspective. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(884), 965–991.
- McNabb, D. E. (2004). *Research methods for political science: quantitative and qualitative methods*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- McTighe, K. (2013). "Syrian Insurgents Say Aid Isn't Getting Where It Needs to Go" [online]. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/world/middleeast/syrian-insurgents-say-aid-isnt-getting-where-it-needs-to-go.html?_r=1& [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Menkhaus, K. (2010). Stabilisation and humanitarian access in a collapsed state: the Somali case. *Disasters*, 34, S320–S341.
- Metcalf, V., Giffen, A. and Elhawary, S. (2011). "UN Integration and Humanitarian Space: An independent study commissioned by the UN Integration Steering Group" [online]. *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/FINAL%20Integration%20humanitarian%20space%20study%20Dec11.pdf> [Accessed 18 December 2014].
- Miliband, D. and Egeland, J. (2014). "Humanitarian Aid: EU Leadership in an Age of Crises" [online]. *Die Zeit*. Retrieved from <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2014-09/eu-leadership-age-of-crisis> [Accessed 29 September 2014].
- Minear, L. (2012). "Humanitarian Action and Politicization: A Review of Experience since World War II". In Donini, A., ed., *The Golden Fleece: Manipulation and Independence in Humanitarian Action*. (p43-64). Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.
- Mortada, R. (2013). "Syria: Opposition's Booby Trap Blueprint for Qusayr" [online]. *Al Akhbar English*. Retrieved from <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/15885> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Morton, A.D. (2007). *Unravelling Gramsci: hegemony and passive revolution in the global political economy*. London: Pluto Press.
- Moscow News, The*. (2012). "Russia and the changing world" [online]. *Moscow News*. Retrieved from <http://themoscownews.com/politics/20120227/189488862.html> [Accessed 18 May 2012].
- Mroue, B. (2014). "Hezbollah develops new tactics in Syrian civil war" [online]. Associated Press DBA Press Association. Retrieved from

Bibliography

- <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nsm&AN=APc57e2511e5704e24890b04190a537998&site=eds-live&scope=site> [Accessed 12 December 2014]
- MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières). (2009a). "Facing Up to Reality: Health crisis deepens as violence escalates in Southern Sudan" [online]. MSF Retrieved from http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/old-cms/fms/article-images/2009-00/Facing_Up_to_Reality.pdf [Accessed 16 October 2014].
- — —. (2009b). "No Refuge, Access Denied: Medical and humanitarian needs of Zimbabweans in South Africa" [online]. MSF. Retrieved from <http://www.msf.org/article/no-refuge-access-denied-medical-and-humanitarian-needs-zimbabweans-south-africa> [Accessed 21 October 2014].
- — —. (2012) "*International Activity Report, 2012*" [online]. MSF. Retrieved from http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf_activity_report_2012_interactive_final.pdf [Accessed 29 September 2014].
- — —. (2013a). "Syria Two Years On: The Failure of International Aid". [online]. MSF USA. Retrieved from <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news-stories/special-report/syria-two-years-failure-international-aid> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- — —. (2013b). "Letter to the Member States of the High Level Group on Syria" [online]. MSF USA. Retrieved from <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news-stories/speechopen-letter/letter-member-states-high-level-group-syria> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- — —. (2013c). "Syria: MSF treats 44 wounded after bombing in Idlib" [online]. MSF International. Retrieved from <http://www.msf.org/article/syria-msf-treats-44-wounded-after-bombing-idlib> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- — —. (2013d). "Somalia: MSF forced to close all medical programmes" [online]. MSF UK. Retrieved from <http://www.msf.org.uk/article/somalia-msf-forced-close-all-medical-programmes> [Accessed 17 December 2014].
- — —. (2014). "Malnutrition Rates Are Alarming in Leer, South Sudan" [online]. MSF International. Retrieved from <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news-stories/slideshow/malnutrition-rates-are-alarming-leer-south-sudan> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Muggah, R. (2010). The effects of stabilisation on humanitarian action in Haiti. *Disasters*, 34, S444–S463.
- Muggah, R., ed., (2014) *Stabilization Operations, Security and Development States of Fragility*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Muhr, T. (2012). Bolivarian Globalization? The New Left's Struggle in Latin America and the Caribbean to Negotiate a Revolutionary Approach to Humanitarian Militarism and International Intervention. *Globalizations*, 9(1), 145–159.

- Munslow, B. and O'Dempsey, T. (2009). Loosing soft power in hard places: humanitarianism after the US invasion of Iraq. *Progress in Development Studies*, 9(1), 3–13.
- Murray, R. W. and Hehir, A. (2012). Intervention in the Emerging Multipolar System: Why R2P will Miss the Unipolar Moment. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 6(4), 387–406.
- Nakhoul, S. (2013). "Analysis: Hezbollah tips Syria power balance, polarizes Lebanon" [online]. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/11/us-syria-hezbollah-conflict-analysis-idUSBRE95A0XS20130611> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Nasr, S. V. R. (2007). *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). (n.d.). "NATO – Topic: Comprehensive Approach". [online]. NATO. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51633.htm [Accessed 22 May 2012].
- Neuman, M. (2012). "South Africa. MSF, an African NGO?" In Magone, Weissman and Neuman, eds. *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience*. p163-171. London: Hurst and Company.
- Newton, J. (2006). "Action Research". In Jupp, V., ed., *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (3–4) [online]. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications. Retrieved from <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/the-sage-dictionary-of-social-research-methods/SAGE.xml> [Accessed 6 October 2014].
- Noueihed, L. and Warren, A. (2012) *The Battle for the Arab Spring: Revolution, Counter-revolution and the Making of a New Era*. Yale University Press.
- Nye, J. S. (2011). *The Future of Power*, 1st ed. New York: PublicAffairs.
- OCHA (Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs). (2009). "South Sudan: Violence escalates in Pibor" [online]. OCHA. Retrieved from <http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/south-sudan-violence-escalates-pibor> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- — —. (2012). "OCHA – Afghanistan" [online]. OCHA. Retrieved from <http://www.unocha.org/ochain/2012-13/afghanistan> [Accessed 29 September 2014].
- — —. (2013). "2014 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP)" [online]. OCHA. Retrieved from https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CAP/2014_Syria_SHARP.pdf [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- — —. (2014). "South Sudan Crisis Situation report as of 13 February 2014 Report number 19" [online]. *ReliefWeb*. Retrieved from <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-crisis-situation-report-13-february-2014-report-number-19> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- O'Dempsey, T. and Munslow, B. (2009). Editorial: Reshaping humanitarian assistance in the twenty-first century. *Progress in Development Studies*, 9(1), 1–2.

Bibliography

- Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. (2010). "Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilisation Strategy" (Online). US State Department. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/135728.pdf> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- O'Neill, J. (2011) *The Growth Map: Economic opportunity in the BRICs and beyond*. Penguin books.
- Orford, A. (2003). *Reading Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law*. Cambridge University Press.
- Oweis, K. Y. (2014). "Saudi-Qatar rivalry divides Syrian opposition" [online]. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/15/us-syria-crisis-qatar-idUSBREA0E1G720140115> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- OXFAM. (n.d.). "Job profile: WASH engineering Team Leader, Syria" [online]. OXFAM. Retrieved from [http://www.google.com.lb/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=coordinate%20with%20the%20ministry%20of%20water%20resources%20\(mowr\)%20and%20water%20establishment%20\(water%20board\)%20engineers%2C%20syrian%20arab%20red%20crescent%20\(sarc\)%20and%20other%20relevant%20technical%20bodies%20to%20implement%20water%20and%20sanitation%20responses&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB0QFjAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fjobs.oxfam.org.uk%2Fvacancy%2F198%2Fdescription%2Fajaxaction%2Fdownloadfile%2F%3Fid%3D3472%26pagestamp%3D4ada114b-4596-4b3c-8792-9b06e7dd7197&ei=2dBEVObfHsvnygPsqoCgDg&usg=AFQjCNH0eS-eH93vJTOgaAB_pwgLzqsNpA&sig2=XmAgMtf6SLVv4Uv5mJYC7Q&bvm=bv.77648437,d.bGQ&cad=rja](http://www.google.com.lb/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=coordinate%20with%20the%20ministry%20of%20water%20resources%20(mowr)%20and%20water%20establishment%20(water%20board)%20engineers%2C%20syrian%20arab%20red%20crescent%20(sarc)%20and%20other%20relevant%20technical%20bodies%20to%20implement%20water%20and%20sanitation%20responses&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB0QFjAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fjobs.oxfam.org.uk%2Fvacancy%2F198%2Fdescription%2Fajaxaction%2Fdownloadfile%2F%3Fid%3D3472%26pagestamp%3D4ada114b-4596-4b3c-8792-9b06e7dd7197&ei=2dBEVObfHsvnygPsqoCgDg&usg=AFQjCNH0eS-eH93vJTOgaAB_pwgLzqsNpA&sig2=XmAgMtf6SLVv4Uv5mJYC7Q&bvm=bv.77648437,d.bGQ&cad=rja). [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Pantuliano, S. and Metcalfe, V. (2012). "Neutrality undermined: the impact of counter-terrorism legislation on humanitarian action in Somalia" [online]. *Humanitarian Practice Network*. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-53/neutrality-undermined-the-impact-of-counter-terrorism-legislation-on-humanitarian-action-in-somalia> [Accessed 11 June 2012].
- Parker, B. (2013). "Humanitarianism besieged" [online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine. Issue 59*. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-59/humanitarianism-besieged> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Third Edition. London: Sage Publications
- Pizzi, M. and Karon, T. (2014). "Obama's Iraq dilemma: Fighting the ISIL puts US and Iran on the same side" [online]. *Al Jazeera America*. Retrieved from <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/6/13/obama-s-iraq-dilemmafightingisilputsusandiranonthesame.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Pommier, B. (2011). The use of force to protect civilians and humanitarian action: the case of Libya and beyond. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(884), 1063–1083.

- Poole, L. and Primrose, J. (2010). "Southern Sudan: Funding according to need" [online]. Global Humanitarian Assistance. Retrieved from <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Funding-according-to-needs-Sudan-Oct-2010.pdf> [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- Prindle Institute for Ethics, The. (2008). "Imperfect Duties? Humanitarian Intervention in Africa and the Responsibility to Protect in the Post-Iraq Era" [online]. R2P symposium thematic guide. Prindle Institute for Ethics. Retrieved from <http://www.depauw.edu/files/resources/r2psymposiumthematic.pdf> [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- Qatar Red Crescent Society. (2013). "Qatar Red Crescent continues to provide urgent healthcare in Tal Abyad, Syria" [online]. *ReliefWeb*. Retrieved from <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/qatar-red-crescent-continues-provide-urgent-healthcare-tal-abyad-syria> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Rajagopal, B. (2003). *International Law from Below: Development, Social Movements, and Third World Resistance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ramazani, R. K. and Fatton, R., eds. (2004). *Future of Liberal Democracy: Thomas Jefferson and the Contemporary World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Redfield, P. (2013). *Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors Without Borders*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Reuters. (2013). "Syrian army recaptures symbolic Baba Amr district in Homs" [online]. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/26/us-syria-crisis-homs-idUSBRE92P07U20130326> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Ridgwell, H. (2012). "For Refugees Who Flee Aleppo, Turkish Camps Await" [online]. *voanews.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.voanews.com/content/refugee-flee-aleppo-turkish-camps-await/1454286.html> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Rieff, D. (2002). *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis*. London: Vintage.
- Rieff, D. (2011). Saints Go Marching In. *National Interest*, (114), 6–15.
- Robins, S. (2009). Humanitarian aid beyond 'bare survival': Social movement responses to xenophobic violence in South Africa. *American Ethnologist*, 36(4), p637–650.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*, 2nd ed. New Jersey: Blackwell Publishers.
- Saad, H. and Gladstone, R. (2013). "Syrian Activists Report Scud Attacks in Aleppo" [online]. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/23/world/middleeast/scud-missile-aleppo.html> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Saikal, A. (2006). Afghanistan's Transition: ISAF's Stabilisation Role? *Third World Quarterly*, 27(3), 525–534.

Bibliography

- Sakellariopoulos, S. and Sotiris, P. (2008). American Foreign Policy as Modern Imperialism: From Armed Humanitarianism to Preemptive War. *Science & Society*, 72(2), 208–235.
- Salih, C. (2014). "Why did the US help the Kurds in Iraq but leave Isis to massacre them in Syria?" [online]. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/07/us-kurds-iraq-isis-massacre-syria-kobani> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Salloukh, B. F. (2013). The Arab Uprisings and the Geopolitics of the Middle East. *International Spectator*, 48(2), 32.
- Saunders, C., ed. (2007). *From Apartheid to Democracy: Localities and Liberation*. [Cape Town]: Dept. of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town.
- Sayigh, Y. (2013). The Syrian Opposition's Leadership Problem [online]. Retrieved from http://carnegieendowment.org/files/syrian_leadership_problem.pdf [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Segal, L. (1992). The human face of violence: Hostel dwellers speak. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18(1), .190.
- Sethi, R. (2010). Musings on the Empire [online]. *The Sunday Tribune – Spectrum*. Retrieved from <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2010/20101024/spectrum/book1.htm> [Accessed 1 October 2014].
- Seymour, R. (2008). *The Liberal Defence of Murder*. Verso Books.
- Shah, S. (2011). "CIA's fake vaccination programme criticised by Médecins Sans Frontières" [online]. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jul/14/cia-fake-vaccination-medecins-frontieres> [Accessed 7 September 2012].
- — —. (n.d.) "Fears for safety of doctor linked to CIA Bin Laden vaccine [online]. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jul/12/fears-safety-bin-laden-doctor> [Accessed 27 July 2012].
- Shannon, T. R. (1996). *An Introduction to the World-System Perspective*, 2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Shannon, R. (2009). Playing with principles in an era of securitized aid: negotiating humanitarian space in post-9/11 Afghanistan. *Progress in Development Studies*, 9(1), 15–36.
- Shaw-Hamilton, J. (2012). "Newly recognised humanitarian actors" [online]. *Forced Migration Review Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.fmreview.org/north-africa/shaw-hamilton.html> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Sheikh, M.K. (2009). "Disaggregating the Pakistani Taliban". (Online). *DIIS Brief*. Retrieved from http://subweb.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Briefs2009/Disaggregating_Pakistani_Taliban.pdf [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Sitas, A. (1996). The new tribalism: Hostels and violence. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22(2), p.235.

- Slim, H. (2004). "A Call to Alms; Humanitarian Action and the Art of War". Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Retrieved from <http://www.hugoslim.com/Pdfs/A%20Call%20to%20Alms.pdf> [Access 18 January 2015]
- Slim, H. and Bradley, M. (2013). "Principled Humanitarian Action & Ethical Tensions in Multi-Mandate Organizations in Armed Conflict". (Online) World Vision. Retrieved from <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.humanitarianinfo.org%2Ffasc%2Fdownloaddoc.aspx%3FdocID%3D6519%26type%3Dpdf&ei=jsS7VLaBDMfnUpKehKgK&usg=AFQjCNF-j4mgrFgLriv2qJb7tf4hBGJsaw&sig2=rUQXwxEgqQ2ppqotTP2aKg&bvm=bv.83829542,d.d24> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Slim, H. and Gillard, E. C. (2013). "Ethical and legal perspectives on cross-border humanitarian operations" [online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine – Issue 59*. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-59/ethical-and-legal-perspectives-on-cross-border-humanitarian-operations> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Smillie, I. (2012). "The Emperor's Old Clothes: The Self-Created Siege of Humanitarian Action". In SNAP. (2013). *Regional Analysis Syria* [online]. Retrieved from http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/part_i_syria_0.pdf. [Accessed 24 July 2014]
- Smith, K. (2011). "Non-DAC donors and humanitarian aid: shifting structures, changing trends". [online]. Global Humanitarian Assistance. Retrieved from: <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/GHA-non-DAC-donors-humanitarian-aid1.pdf> [Accessed October 1, 2014].
- South African Democracy Education Trust. (2004). *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*. Cape Town: Zebra Press.
- Spark, J. (2014). *ISIS Taking over the Middle East: The rise of Middle Eastern Supremacy*. Conceptual Kings.
- Sparrow, A. (2013). "Syria's Assault on Doctors by Annie Sparrow" [blog]. *New York Review of Books*. Retrieved from <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2013/nov/03/syria-assault-doctors/> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Stake, R. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- — —. (1998). "Case studies". In Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S., eds. *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Stathis, G. M. (2010). Reassessing American Foreign Policy Amidst the Maelstrom: The Last Superpower? Revisiting the Paradigm of Imperial Decline. *Journal of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters*, 87, 293–316.

Bibliography

- Stephens, M. (2012). "What is Qatar doing in Syria?" [online]. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/aug/08/qatar-syria-opposition> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- — —. (2014). "Islamic State: Who supports the jihadist group?" [online]. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29004253> [Accessed 3 December 2014].
- Stoddard, A. (2003). "Humanitarian NGOs: challenges and trends". Humanitarian Policy Group. HPG Briefing. July 2003. Retrieved at <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/349.pdf> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Stoddard, A., Harmer, A. and Ryou, K. (2014). "Aid Worker Security Report 2014. Unsafe Passage: Road attacks and their impact on humanitarian operations" [online]. Humanitarian Outcomes. Retrieved from <http://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/sites/default/files/Aid%20Worker%20Security%20Report%202014.pdf>. [Accessed 3 December 2014]
- Stokes, C. (2011). "Bahrain: From hospital to prison" [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/05/201151285040679763.html> [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Streets, J., Reichhold, U. and Sagmeister, E. (2012). "Evaluation of Humanitarian Access Strategies in DG ECHO-funded Interventions: GPPi". [online]. Global Public Policy Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.gppi.net/?id=2439> [Accessed 9 June 2012].
- Syrian Observer, The. (2013). "Maher Assad, Fourth Division Involved in Homs Assault" [online]. *Syrian Observer*. Retrieved from <http://www.syrianobserver.com/News/News/Maher+Assad+Fourth+Division+Involved+in+Homs+Assault> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Tennant, V., Doyle, B. and Mazou, R. (2010). "Safeguarding humanitarian space: a review of key challenges for UNHCR". United Nation High Commission for Refugees Policy Development and Evaluation Services. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/4b68042d9.html> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Terry, F. (2002). *Condemned to repeat? The paradox of humanitarian action*. Cornell University Press,
- — —. (2011). The International Committee of the Red Cross in Afghanistan: reasserting the neutrality of humanitarian action. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(881), 173–188.
- Thompson, D. (2008). "The Role of Medical Diplomacy in Stabilizing Afghanistan". (Online) Defense Horizons: Center for Technology and National Security Policy National Defense University. Retrieved from <http://fas.org/man/eprint/meddip.pdf> [Accessed 18 January 2015]
- Thompson, M. (1996). Empowerment and Survival: Humanitarian Work in Civil Conflict. *Development in Practice*, 6(4), 324–333.

- Tiller, S. and Healy, S. (2013). "A Review of the Emergency Response in Maban, South Sudan 2012. Analysis of the Humanitarian Aid System – Case study 1" [Online]. MSF International. Retrieved from http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/maban_case_study_review_-_external.pdf [Accessed 19 January 2015]
- Tiller, S. and Healy, S. (2014). "Where is everyone? Responding to emergencies in the most difficult places". [online]. MSF International. Retrieved from http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf-whereiseveryone_def-lr_-_july.pdf [Accessed 16 September 2014]
- Tisdall, B. (2013). "The challenges of access in Syria" [online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine, Issue 59*. November 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-59/ethical-and-legal-perspectives-on-cross-border-humanitarian-operations> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- Treatment Action Campaign. (2010). "Fighting for our lives: the history of the Treatment Action Campaign 1998–2010". Cape Town: Treatment Action Campaign.
- Turse, N. (2014). "Christmas in July and the Collapse of America's Great African Experiment". *TomDispatch*. Retrieved from http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175878/tomgram%3Anick_turse_christmas_in_july_and_the_collapse_of_america%27s_great_african_experiment/ [Accessed 19 January 2015]
- Ulrichsen, K. (2012). "Bahrain's Aborted Revolution". In London School of Economics, ed. *After the Arab Spring: Power Shift in the Middle East?* (28–32).
- UN General Assembly (United Nations General Assembly). (2013). "Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic" [online]. United Nations General Assembly. Retrieved from http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A.HRC.22.59_en.pdf [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (UN RC and HC). (2010). "Second Report of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia". United Nations. Hard Copy document.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). "South Sudan Recovery Fund" [online]. UNDP. Retrieved from http://www.ss.undp.org/content/south_sudan/en/home/operations/fund-management/south_sudan_recovery_fund-southsudan.html [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan). (2014). "With new mandate, UNMISS can protect more civilians, says SRSG" [online]. *ReliefWeb*. Retrieved from <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/new-mandate-unmiss-can-protect-more-civilians-says-srsg> [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- — —. (n.d). "UNMISS Mandate - United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan" [online]. UNMISS. Retrieved from

Bibliography

- <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmiss/mandate.shtml> [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency). (2013). "Statement by the Commissioner-General on Palestine Refugees Trapped Inside Yarmouk" [online]. UNRWA. Retrieved from <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/statement-commissioner-general-palestine-refugees-trapped-inside> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- UNSC (United Nations Security Council). (2009). "Security Council Extends Mandate of Group Monitoring Weapons Bans in Somalia, Eritrea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1916 (2009)" [online]. UN Security Council. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sc9888.doc.htm> [Accessed 1 October 2014].
- UNSCR (United Nations Security Council). (2010). United Nations Security Council Resolution 1916 on the Situation in Somalia.
- Van Dam, N. (2011) *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and the Ba'th Party*, 4th ed. I. B. Tauris.
- Vaux, T. (2006). Humanitarian trends and dilemmas. *Development in Practice*, 16(03–04), 240–254.
- VDC-Sy (Violations Documentation Center in Syria). (2013). "Forgotten under siege: A Special Report on the Siege of Yarmouk Camp in Damascus and Mo'adamieh City in Damascus Suburbs" [online]. VDC-Sy. Retrieved from <http://www.vdc-sy.info/pdf/reports/1379660373-English.pdf> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Waltz, K. (2008). *Realism and International Politics: The Essays of Ken Waltz*. 1st ed. Routledge.
- WATAN. (2013). "About Watan" [online]. WATAN. Retrieved from <http://www.watansyria.org/en/about-watan/> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Waterman H., Tillen D., Dickson R., de Koning (2001) Action research: a systematic review and guidance for assessment. *Health Technol Assess*, 5(23). Southampton: National Coordinating Centre for Health Technology Assessment, 2001
- Weiss, T. (2007). *Humanitarian intervention: ideas in action*, 1st ed. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Weissman, F. (2010). 'Not In Our Name': Why Medecins Sans Frontieres Does Not Support the 'Responsibility to Protect'. *Criminal Justice Ethics*, 29(2), 194–207.
- — —. (2013). "Syria: 'A War Against Health Workers and Services'" [online]. MSF USA. Retrieved from <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news-stories/field-news/syria-war-against-health-workers-and-services> [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- — —. (2014). "The Impact of Criminalising the Enemy on Humanitarianism". In Acuto, M, ed., *Negotiating Relief: The Politics of Humanitarian Space* (p177–184). Hurst.
- Weissman, F. and Rodrigue, M. N. (2013). "Syria: Breaking the De Facto Humanitarian Embargo against Rebel-Held Areas" [online]. MSF CRASH. Retrieved from <http://www.msf->

- crash.org/en/sur-le-vif/2013/04/03/7223/syria-breaking-the-de-facto-humanitarian-embargo-against-rebel-held-areas/ [Accessed 10 October 2014].
- Western, J. and Goldstein, J. S. (2011). "Humanitarian Intervention Comes of Age" [online]. *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136502/jon-western-and-joshua-s-goldstein/humanitarian-intervention-comes-of-age> [Accessed 3 May 2012].
- White, J., Tabler, A. and Zelin, A. Y. (2013). "Syria's Military Opposition: How Effective, United, or Extremist?" [online]. Washington Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/syrias-military-opposition-how-effective-united-or-extremist> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Whittall, J. (2010) "We don't trust that' politicised assistance in North-West Pakistan" [Online]. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine, Issue 49*. Retrieved from <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-49/we-dont-trust-that-politicised-assistance-in-north-west-pakistan> [Accessed 5 April 2012].
- — —. (2014a) "Either . . . Or – Building resilience is still not compatible with humanitarian aid" [Blog]. MSF UK. Retrieved from <http://www.msf.org.uk/article/opinion-and-debate-either%E2%80%A6-or-building-resilience-still-not-compatible-humanitarian-aid> [Accessed 25 September 2014].
- Whittall, J., Philips, M. and Hofman, M. (2014b). "Building resilience by deconstructing humanitarian aid" [Blog]. MSF UK. Retrieved from <http://www.msf.org.uk/article/opinion-and-debate-building-resilience-deconstructing-humanitarian-aid> [Accessed 25 September 2014].
- WHO (World Health Organization). (2013a). "Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq" [online]. WHO. Retrieved from http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/syria/SitRep17_final__1-Aug_edit.pdf [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- — —. (2013b). "Donor Update: Syrian Arab Republic September 2013, Quarter Three Report" [online]. WHO. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/hac/syria_donorupdate_18102013.pdf?ua=1 [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- — —. (2013c). "Health Syrian Arab Republic 2013" [online]. WHO. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/hac/syria_dashboard_6june2013_final_small_.pdf?ua=1 [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Wilder, A. (2010). Aid and stability in Pakistan: lessons from the 2005 earthquake response. *Disasters*, 34, S406–S426.
- Williamson, J. (2011). Using humanitarian aid to 'win hearts and minds': a costly failure? *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93, 884, pp. 1035-1061
- Woodward, B. (2010). *Obama's Wars*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th ed. SAGE Publications.

Bibliography

- YouTube. (2011). *Peter Walker Part 2 end* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqDRIwP5DII&feature=youtube_gdata_player [Accessed 20 October 2014].
- — —. (2012). *Beheading of alleged shabiha* [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0hZnuL8bn4> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- — —. (2013a). *18+ Syrian army mass execution in Aleppo*. [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TD8qm0G4kw>.
- — —. (2013b). *18+ FSA Free Syria Army War crimes – Execution of Prisoners of War, young Syrian soldiers* [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OIgDLrk0sg&feature=youtube_gdata_player [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- — —. (2013c). *Syrian Soldiers Last Words; Forgive me dad, they're going to behead me* [Video file]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pvHPICw4Dw&feature=youtube_gdata_player [Accessed 22 October 2014]
- Zakaria, F. (2008). *The Post-American World*, 1st ed. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Zambelis, C. "Royal Rivalry in the Levant: Saudi Arabia and Qatar Duel over Syria" [online]. *Intelligence Quarterly*. Retrieved from <http://www.intelligencequarterly.com/2013/09/royal-rivalry-in-the-levant-saudi-arabia-and-qatar-duel-over-syria/> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Zelin, A. Y. (2013). "The Syrian Islamic Front: A New Extremist Force" [online]. Washington Institute Retrieved from <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-syrian-islamic-front-a-new-extremist-force> [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Zelin, A. Y. and Lister, C. A. (2013). "The crowning of the Syrian Islamic Front" [online]. Retrieved from http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/06/24/the_crowning_of_the_syrian_islamic_front [Accessed 22 October 2014].
- Žižek, S. (2008). *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, 1st ed. New York: Picador.
- Zunes, S. (2013). Bahrain's arrested revolution. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 35(2), 149–164.
- Zyck, S. A., Barakat, S. and Deely, S. (2014). "The Evolution of Stabilization Concepts and Praxis". In Muggah, R., ed., *Stabilization Operations, Security and Development States of Fragility*. p15-35. Oxon: Routledge.

Interviews

	Category	Date	Reference code
Phase 1			
1	Academic	19/07/2012	Senior South African academic 1, 2012
2	International organisation	04/07/2012	Senior international organisation worker 1, 2012
3	NGO	20/06/2012	Senior NGO worker 1, 2012
4	MSF	14/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 1, 2012
5	International organisation	21/06/2012	Senior international organisation representative 2, 2012
6	Academic	18/06/2012	Senior academic 2, 2012
7	NGO	26/06/2012	Senior NGO worker 2, 2012
8	MSF	08/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 2, 2012
9	MSF	13/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 3, 2012
10	Analyst	04/07/2012	Senior South African analyst 1, 2012
11	Donor	08/06/2012	Senior donor representative 1, 2012
12	Academic	04/07/2012	Senior academic 1, 2012
13	MSF	14/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 4, 2012
14	MSF	18/06/2012	MSF HQ staff 5, 2012
15	Analyst	21/06/2012	Senior humanitarian analyst 1, 2012
16	Academic	19/06/2012	Senior academic 3, 2012
17	Public debate	04/07/2012	Public debate, 2012
18	MSF	19/07/2012	MSF HQ staff 6, 2012

Bibliography

	Category	Date	Reference code
Phase 2			
<i>Lebanon</i>			
19	Civil Society	21/02/2014	Relief activist 1, 2014
20	MSF	24/02/2014	MSF field staff 1, 2014
21	Civil Society	26/02/2014	Relief activist 2, 2014
22	MSF	27/02/2014	MSF field staff 2, 2014
23	Civil Society	11/03/2014	Relief activist 3, 2014
24	MSF	13/03/2014	MSF field staff 3, 2014
25	MSF	15/03/2014	MSF field staff 4, 2014
26	UN	02/04/2014	UN official 1, 2014
27	MSF	03/04/2014	MSF HQ staff 1, 2014
28	MSF	02/14/2014	MSF HQ staff 2, 2014
29	MSF	27/06/2014	MSF HQ staff 3, 2014
30	International organisation	27/06/2014	International organisation representative, 2014
31	MSF	20/03/2014	MSF field staff 5, 2014
32	MSF	09/07/2014	MSF field staff 6, 2014
33	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 1, 2013
34	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 2, 2013
35	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 3, 2013
36	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 4, 2013
37	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 5, 2013
38	Refugee	18/02/2013	Syrian refugee 6, 2013

	<i>South Sudan</i>		
39	MSF	24/07/2014	MSF South Sudan field staff 1, 2014
40	Analyst	24/07/2014	Senior analyst 1, 2014
41	MSF	24/07/2014	MSF South Sudan field staff 2, 2014
42	UN	25/07/2014	UN field official 1, 2014
43	UN	25/07/2014	UN Field official 2, 2014
44	MSF	25/07/2014	MSF South Sudan field staff 3, 2014
45	Analyst	25/07/2014	Senior analyst 2, 2014
46	UN	26/07/2014	Senior UN official 1, 2014
47	Donor	28/07/2014	Major donor representative 1, 2014
48	Donor	28/07/2014	Major donor representative 2, 2014
49	Donor	28/07/2014	Major donor representative 3, 2014
50	Donor	28/07/2014	Major donor representative 4, 2014
51	MSF	30/07/2014	MSF South Sudan field staff 4, 2014
52	NGO	30/07/2014	Senior NGO worker 1, 2014
53	NGO	31/07/2014	Senior NGO worker 2, 2014
54	Diplomat	31/07/2014	Senior diplomat 1, 2014
55	UN	31/07/2014	Senior UN official 2, 2014
56	NGO	31/07/2014	Senior NGO worker 3, 2014
57	MSF	18/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 4, 2014

	Category	Date	Reference code
Phase 3			

Bibliography

58	Academic	05/08/2014	Senior Brazilian academic, 2014
59	MSF	05/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 5, 2014
60	MSF	05/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 6, 2014
61	MSF	05/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 7, 2014
62	Civil Society	06/08/2014	Brazilian civil-society representative 1, 2014
63	Civil Society	06/08/2014	Brazilian civil-society representative 2, 2014
64	Civil Society	06/08/2014	Brazilian civil-society representative 3, 2014
65	Analyst	10/08/2014	Senior South African analyst 2, 2014
66	MSF	10/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 8, 2014
67	Civil Society	12/08/2014	South Africa civil-society representative 1, 2014
68	MSF	12/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 10, 2014
69	MSF	12/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 11, 2014
70	MSF	13/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 9, 2014
71	Civil Society	13/08/2014	South African civil-society representative 2, 2014
72	MSF	13/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 16, 2014
73	MSF	13/08/2014	MSF HQ staff 17, 2014

Document analysis

	Context	Document code
1	Syria	MSF internal document 1, no date
2	Syria	MSF internal document 2, 2012
3	Syria	MSF internal document 3, 2011
4	Syria	MSF internal document 4, 2013

5	Syria	MSF internal document 5, 2010
6	Syria	MSF internal document 6, 2010
7	South Africa	MSF internal document 7, 2008
8	South Sudan	MSF internal document 8, 2009
9	South Sudan	MSF internal document 9, 2014
10	Bahrain	MSF internal associative article, 2011
11	Bahrain	MSF internal situation report, 2011
12	Syria	Syria Arab Republic Permanent Mission to the UN, 2013
13	Syria	Syrian Arab Republic Permanent Mission to the UN, 2014
14	Syria	MSF letter 1, 2012
15	Syria	Meeting Minutes 1, 2012
16	Syria	Meeting minutes 2, 2012
17	Syria	Meeting minutes 3, 2012
18	Syria	Meeting minutes 4, 2012
19	Syria	Meeting minutes 5, 2012
20	Syria	Meeting minutes 6, 2013
21	South Sudan	South Sudan major donor meeting minutes, 2014
22	South Sudan	OPR draft report, 2014
23	Bahrain	MSF internal communication impact evaluation, 2011
24	South Sudan	Amos letter, 2014
25	General	Email correspondence between two MSF representatives, 2014
26	South Africa	Email correspondence between two non-European MSF representatives, 2011

Bibliography

27	South Sudan	Email correspondence between MSF and NDC, 2014
28	General	Email exchange between two MSF employees, 2014
29	South Sudan	Email correspondence between researcher and MSF representative, 2014

Personal communication

Category	Date	Reference code
Syrian opposition	12/08/2013	Personal communication with leading Syrian opposition political figure, 2013
Syrian army	08/06/2014	Personal communication with Syrian army officer, 2014
Hizbollah	21/06/2013	Personal communication with Hizbollah member, 2014
MSF	25/07/2014	Personal communication with MSF doctor, 2013
Government	29/07/2014	Personal communication with South Sudan government representative, 2014
NGO	30/07/2014	Personal communication with a group of aid workers, Juba: 2014
MSF	31/08/2014	Personal communication with MSF South Sudan field worker, 2014
MSF	14/09/2014	Personal communication with MSF representative in Brussels, 2014
MSF	14/09/2014	Personal communication with MSF representative in Brussels 2, 2014