THE ECHO CHAMBER

Results, Management and the Humanitarian Effectiveness Agenda

Juliano Fiori, Fernando Espada,
Jessica Field, Sophie Dicker

**The Humanitarian Affairs Team
Save the Children**

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About the Humanitarian Affairs Team

Established in 2012, the Humanitarian Affairs Team seeks to inform and support the development and implementation of Save the Children strategy, offer proposals to improve policy and practice within the organisation and across the humanitarian sector, and foster opportunities to translate these proposals into practicable plans of action. Housed in Save the Children UK's Humanitarian Department, the Humanitarian Affairs Team serves as a counterpoint to programmatic and technical expertise, providing insight into the conceptual and theoretical questions that underpin humanitarian practice.

ACRONYMS

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CIPRODEH	Centre for the Investigation and Promotion of Human Rights
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEC	Disasters Emergencies Committee
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (formerly the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HAT	Humanitarian Affairs Team
HCRI	Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ISO	International Standardisation Organisation
JEEAR	Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda
JSI	Joint Standards Initiative
LoN	League of Nations
MBO	Management by Objectives
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIRA 1	Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (following Typhoon Haiyan)
MIRA 2	Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (following Typhoon Haiyan)

MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NPM	New Public Management
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PbR	Payment by Results
PPB	Planning, Programming and Budgeting
PUMA	Public Management Committee (of the OECD)
RedR	Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief
RBM	Results-Based Management
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
SOHS	State of the Humanitarian System
Sphere	Standards Project for Humanitarian Relief
TEC	Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
UNDHA	United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNREO	United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East
UNSCC	United Nations Standards Coordinating Committee
URD	Groupe Urgence Réhabilitation and Développement
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USC	United Somali Congress
WADEM	World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WHO	World Health Organisation

FOREWORD

When I started out as an aid worker twenty five years ago, I had no idea what a log frame was, my position had no terms of reference and key performance indicators were not part of my daily work. I could be a humanitarian worker without having to write a funding proposal or a donor report. And I was no exception. We humanitarians were largely free to follow our instincts and trust the relationships we built, largely un-encumbered with dizzying notions of standards or principles. We did good things but also made mistakes, because we did not have the knowledge or the right tools.

They were rewarding and demanding times and we did not notice we were venturing into a dawning age of 'industrialised' humanitarianism radically different from our individual experience as aid workers. The change was gradual but consistent: we became caught up in an ever growing and increasingly globalised penchant for managerialism.

Improving the way we plan, manage, monitor and evaluate our humanitarian programmes has been necessary and inevitable. Similarly, the professionalisation of the sector has brought many benefits in terms of the quality of our work on the ground. This shift has markedly improved our performance in many key areas. As Humanitarian Director of Save the Children UK, I can undoubtedly count my organisation (and myself) among the big winners of this transformation in terms of our capacity to deliver assistance to populations in need, and also in terms of 'market share'.

Indeed, as the years have rolled by the aid sector's 'love affair' with the application of managerial principles, professionalisation and the pursuit of organisational growth has shown few signs of waning. However, without denying the good intentions and progress made, it is time to ask about the real cost and limits of this transformation. That is what *The Echo Chamber* does.

When I hear 'business English' and the 'market logic' being systematically used in meetings and publications I cannot help but

fear we risk dehumanising the humanitarian endeavour. Even more importantly, I wonder whether in this process we are by-passing the massed ranks of humanitarians who courageously fight for the humanitarian cause on the world's frontlines. Young aid workers from all over the world still seek to follow the same path of humanitarian doing, but first must be taught how the 'system' works. They spend countless hours in front of computer screens filling reports, complying with administrative requests, wondering what it really feels like to be 'a humanitarian'. And that is the heart of the matter.

In striving to become ever more expert at results-based humanitarian 'well-doing' and agreeing common standards, tools and mechanisms we are fulfilling our responsibility to people affected by crises, our donors and our organisations, but we are also suffocating the humanitarian spirit. In becoming ever more adept at hitting the self-imposed target, we seem to have also rather missed the point. CEOs, managers, policy analysts, marketing experts and media people now call many of the humanitarian shots, but only so long as they are able to satisfy a range of other organisational considerations at the same time. We see potential reputational threats everywhere and, as a result, are less willing to take risks. We are losing the confidence in our ability to try and do both the right thing and things right.

Many things have changed – for better or for worse – in twenty five years, but I am as proud to be a humanitarian today as I ever was. We are the same people doing the same work for the same reasons. Save the Children could go out to help stop Ebola in its tracks two years ago because we had the right capacity, training and processes in place. However, our most highly trained British doctor would still not dare enter the red zone of the Ebola treatment centre in Kerrytown each day until a nineteen year old Sierra Leonean kid had triple checked her personal protective equipment and confirmed, 'you are ready my sister'.

Gareth Owen, OBE
Humanitarian Director,
Save the Children UK
London, May 2016

PREFACE

This is not an evaluation. At least not as the term has been understood in the humanitarian sector. It is not a policy report either. You'll not find any neatly boxed recommendations. Yes, it is about effectiveness. But you won't see written into these pages a simple recipe for making humanitarian action more effective – evidence of what really works. This is a story about how a compulsion to understand and do 'what works' turned the humanitarian sector into a closed shop. It is an invitation to a reopen the debate about how humanitarian organisations understand success, and about the possibilities of humanitarian action.

In July 2014 Save the Children's Humanitarian Affairs Team (HAT) drafted a concept note for a research project on humanitarian effectiveness. With the Save the Children movement entering a new strategy cycle, the HAT had facilitated conversations within Save the Children UK about the future of the organisation's humanitarian work and staff had focussed particularly on issues that in recent times have fallen under the banner of effectiveness: issues such as accountability, programme quality, and the participation of crisis-affected populations in humanitarian action. Meanwhile, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) preparatory process was underway, and the humanitarian community was being encouraged to reflect on humanitarian effectiveness as one of the four designated topics of the summit.

A major theme in humanitarian discourse over the last 25 years, effectiveness has been a central concern for those seeking to reform humanitarian practice and governance. Research on effectiveness in the humanitarian sector has invariably taken the concept at face value, exploring what is effective, how to be more effective, and what the impact has been of individual initiatives to improve effectiveness. With effectiveness at the forefront of strategic discussions within Save the Children and across the humanitarian sector, we (the HAT) felt that there were important questions to be asked: why has effectiveness become an organising ideal for humanitarians? What is the character

of the 'humanitarian effectiveness agenda' that has been constructed of initiatives to improve humanitarian performance? Why is effectiveness understood in the way it is, and what are the implications of all this? We identified a set of assumptions that gives initiatives to enhance performance a 'top-down' quality – even those initiatives explicitly aimed at challenging inequalities in the humanitarian system. And, on account of the role effectiveness has come to play in definitions of success, we felt there was a need for investigation into the politics and epistemology* of effectiveness, and the institutional arrangements that underpin the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. Our research started in earnest in October 2014, in partnership with the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) at the University of Manchester; this paper is its culmination.

This paper is divided into four sections. We start by introducing the humanitarian effectiveness agenda, setting the scene from which it emerged. Then, in chapter one, we explore its roots: processes of bureaucratisation and professionalisation inside and outside the humanitarian sector that have framed developments in humanitarian performance management, particularly the revolution in management at the end of the 1970s, through which business principles were used as the basis for reforms to public sector bureaucracies in Britain and then elsewhere. Then, we discuss the birth and elaboration of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda itself, demonstrating the prominent role that commercial ideas have played in shaping humanitarian performance management. So as to focus our narrative on the humanitarian effectiveness agenda itself, we use appendices to provide more detail on the historical processes that are discussed in chapter one. In chapter two, we draw on fieldwork carried out in 12 countries to consider certain implications of the way the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has developed. With the aim of stimulating constructive debate about how to improve humanitarian action, we contend that the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has reinforced a reflexive and self-referential tendency within the humanitarian sector, creating an echo chamber in which the ideas of the sector's dominant actors bounce off each other, validated without modification or critical interrogation. And we conclude with some suggestions as to how humanitarian agencies

might go about reimagining success in terms that are more sensitive to the interests of people and institutions in crisis-affected countries, and more open to discussion.

The style of this paper is unusual for a work on effectiveness or indeed for a study produced from within a humanitarian agency. We decided to write about humanitarian effectiveness using a narrative approach, as far as possible telling stories rather than presenting a catalogue of 'evidence'. This was partly because, let's face it, humanitarian effectiveness, with its attention to process, bureaucracy and management, is hardly the most alluring topic. But the decision was also taken for substantive reasons. Evidence – a code that enables action with use of a known humanitarian kit – is at the heart of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. There is an expectation in the humanitarian sector that studies about effectiveness should consist of a particular kind of evidence, presented in a particular way. There is little time for argument, exposition, and contestation. So our storytelling is a sort of dissident response to positivism* in the humanitarian sector, and to the formulaic policy-prose in which it results.

Our research project has also resulted in the production of a series of essays based on field studies, with contributions from members of the HAT and HCRI, as well as independent researchers. Published alongside this paper, *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness* also has a narrative feel.

Setting out to investigate the forces and motivations that have shaped the humanitarian effectiveness agenda, its influence over humanitarian action, and how its contribution to notions of success relates to the circumstances and aspirations of people in countries affected by crisis, we planned seven field studies to provide insight into different understandings of effectiveness and the interests involved in forming these understandings. The first study was carried out in late 2014, in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, following floods across the sub-continent. In early 2015, a second study was carried out in the Philippines, reflecting on the response to Typhoon Haiyan. At the end of the first quarter of 2015, research was carried out in Niger, looking at how humanitarian agencies have addressed slow-onset food crises. Then in the second quarter of 2015, there were studies carried out in

* A theory of knowledge and justification. Particularly concerned with the nature and sources of knowledge, an epistemology provides an explanation for how knowledge is produced and how it relates to truth and belief.

* The belief that positive (or definitive) knowledge can only be derived from experience and empirical evidence. Positivism holds that there are general and absolute laws, which govern society, as well as physical phenomena, and these can be interpreted and understood through reason.

Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, looking at responses to conflict in Syria and its neighbouring countries; in Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), considering the role humanitarian agencies play in attending to a situation of long-standing hardship; in Liberia, looking at responses to the outbreak of Ebola; and in Guatemala and Honduras, looking at the burgeoning activities of humanitarian agencies in response to urban violence. All except OPT and Central America resulted in contributions to *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness*; data from both studies were used to inform the analysis presented here in *The Echo Chamber;* a separate publication reflecting on understandings of effectiveness in these contexts will be released by the HAT later in 2016.

Field research involved desk reviews, semi-structured interviews with key informants in capitals and areas affected by crisis, focus groups, observation, and unstructured interviews. There was variation across field studies in the emphasis placed on different methods as researchers balanced what was appropriate with what was feasible. All the researchers working on the project engaged with Save the Children offices in the countries in which they conducted their fieldwork. Access to communities that have been affected by crisis and have received aid was mostly arranged by Save the Children colleagues, even though the project has not been focussed specifically on Save the Children's humanitarian activities. This was not inconsequential to the profile and disposition of people interviewed. To reduce any potential distortion of findings, researchers sought to engage with a diverse range of individuals within communities and disaggregated data by sex, age, and, where appropriate, social grouping. We were also aware of the potential impact that the researchers' affiliation with Save the Children might have on the answers provided by respondents. So that responses were not conditioned by positive or negative perceptions of Save the Children or by concerns related to future interactions with the organisation, researchers explained the purpose of the project to informants and told them that their responses would be anonymous unless they expressed a desire to be quoted by name. In some instances, both in this paper and in the field studies, we use the name of an individual interviewed; in others, we make reference to their position and the name of their institution; and in others, quotations are anonymised. (This depended on the sensitivity of the information involved and whether or not the individual was happy to be quoted). All the field research was qualitative and, though it was not inductive, we sought to allow space for the research process, and for observation and discussions with informants

in particular, to determine which themes were covered in the essays and how. *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness* provides an analysis of the impact of context on understandings of effectiveness. It also highlights infrequently acknowledged factors that shape understandings of effectiveness and others that have an impact on effectiveness according to these understandings.

Acknowledging the difficulties in moving from the particular to the general, field studies are used as supportive examples, offering insights on which we draw here, in this paper. As well as considering understandings of effectiveness, field research explored the impact in different contexts of specific initiatives to improve humanitarian performance and of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda in general. The findings in this regard are crucial to the analysis of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda in this paper. We have also carried out an extensive review of literature, not only on humanitarian effectiveness, but also on performance management, bureaucratic organisation, professionalisation, organisational change, complex systems, and various aspects of emergency response and disaster management. We have drawn on both primary sources (in particular humanitarian evaluations, but also archival information) and secondary sources, and have covered academic, journalistic and policy-focussed 'grey' publications. In addition to our interviews during field studies, we have conducted interviews with almost fifty people with relevant expertise from different professions and of different nationalities. We have carried out surveys of staff from across the Save the Children movement. We have tested and gathered ideas in practitioner and academic workshops, lectures and seminars, and conferences, including a conference on humanitarian effectiveness hosted by the HAT and HCRI in association with the WHS in September 2015. We have benefitted greatly from the counsel and expertise of an advisory group, comprising individuals from outside Save the Children, and a steering group made up of Save the Children colleagues. And we have drawn on our own experiences working in the humanitarian sector.

We are aware that our experiences, interests and profiles are sources of bias. The main authors involved in the project are white Western NGO workers. And the project has been mostly funded by, and managed from the headquarters of, a London-based international NGO. There is no attempt in either of the project's publications to 'give voice' to others, even if we aim to give attention to issues overlooked by

conventional discourse on effectiveness. Nor is there any pretence to the neutrality of the authors involved, even if the research methodology has been designed to obtain the most objective findings possible. The authors are notably, and unashamedly, present in their writings for this project. They analyse and synthesise information, offering their own perspective on histories already told and indeed proposing alternative histories. This can be seen as a rejoinder to the depoliticisation of research, which, in recent decades, has been inspired by the same ideals and interests that have shaped the humanitarian effectiveness agenda.

That this paper gives particular attention to NGOs, and has a Western-, if not Anglo-centric, slant is intentional. Initiatives to improve humanitarian effectiveness have been developed primarily in 'NGO-land' and often in the UK, even if US and non-British European organisations have played a distinct role in the development of humanitarian performance management. This paper gives more attention to process and bureaucratic changes than it does to specific crisis responses. This too is because the humanitarian effectiveness agenda itself has been heavy on process.

While we point to problems and pose questions, we do not provide, nor do we presume to hold, all the answers. Indeed, we are suspicious of the presentation of silver bullet solutions to complex challenges. What we aim to provide is principles, or bases, upon which answers may be constructed.

In the concept note for the project, we stated our intention to propose 'a new framework for understanding and analysing humanitarian effectiveness' that, informed by our research, particularly our field studies, would incorporate different perspectives on effectiveness and could contribute to making the planning and implementation of humanitarian activities more driven by contextual specificities.[1] However, as our research developed, it became clear that setting out such a framework would involve bypassing a crucial step in contextualising humanitarian aid. It became clear that the centrality of effectiveness to notions of success was itself reflective of an assumption about the objectivity of humanitarian knowledge, and therefore a barrier to contextualisation. What we propose here, then, is that, in order to open up conceptions of success, it is necessary for humanitarian agencies to challenge the politics and culture that have shaped the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. For them to truly contextualise their work, it will be necessary, in fact, to take steps towards restructuring the political

economy* of humanitarian aid. We conclude by offering some ideas about how this might be done.

Our history of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda and the forces that have shaped it is not exhaustive. But we seek to contribute to the growing body of literature that challenges 'the idea that there are no alternatives to particular practices or concepts by drawing out the conditions under which these practices and concepts emerged'.[2] In this case, that entails reflecting on the interests, ideology and events that have placed effectiveness at the forefront of humanitarian discourse and practice. We consider how conditions might be created for alternative practices and concepts to be acknowledged, valued and incorporated into the planning and implementation of humanitarian activities.

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* Political economy: The interplay of political and economic factors that shape humanitarian aid as a set of governing interests.

SOLUTION OR SYMPTOM?

On 23-24 May 2016, Istanbul, Turkey, will host the World Humanitarian Summit. Called by the UN Secretary-General in 2013, the WHS is the latest attempt to build common agreement on the reforms required to improve humanitarian performance. It has involved a lengthy and substantial consultation process – eight regional consultations, 151 country consultations, online consultation, thematic expert consultation, a global consultation, and numerous associated events – which, led and managed by the UN, with the participation of more than 23,000 people, has demonstrated the capacity of the humanitarian sector to mobilise resources to engage in focussed discussions while at the same time imposing limits for substantial change.

The WHS is an ambitious initiative insofar as it is intended to set a 'new agenda for humanitarian action', informed by 'perspectives, priorities and recommendations of *all* stakeholders on what must be done to make humanitarian action fit for the future' [our italics].[3]

But the fact that it is not being convened in response to a resolution of the UN General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council is not a minor detail. Its outcomes will not be binding for member states. In the final months before the summit itself takes place, there has been a growing tension that is reflective of the humanitarian community's relationship to politics: there has been recognition that member states will need to engage seriously, agreeing to, and taking certain ownership of, the summit outcomes if these are to be of consequence; yet there is fear that serious engagement by member states will push the discussions of civil society organisations (particularly smaller ones) to the margins, turning the summit into a forum for the pursuit of geopolitical objectives over the interests of crisis-affected populations,

and inevitably resulting in a watered-down outcome document that balances the concerns of the most powerful states. Sure enough, as the format of the summit in Istanbul has been slowly defined, and as efforts have been made by the humanitarian community to ensure the attendance of influential statespeople, the disconnection between the participatory consultation process and the plan for the summit itself has become increasingly patent, not least on account of the clear division of the summit into separate tiers with limited opportunity for civil society representation in the 'high-level' meetings.

Such a large-scale initiative required the creation of an ad-hoc bureaucracy – the WHS Secretariat – to manage the various consultations and the Istanbul summit. The job description for the Chief of the WHS Secretariat stated that 'the process leading up to the summit […] will be as important as the summit itself',[4] putting the emphasis on the management dimension of the position.[5] Candidates for the post were required to have at least fifteen years of 'managerial experience' in relief coordination in emergency situations, but there was no mention of a need for experience of coordinating or facilitating international consultations and summits.[6] For the UN, an experienced manager would be able to lead what, in the final instance, would be a process of political negotiation[7] – a nod to the centrality of management to contemporary humanitarianism.

The need to come up with 'the big idea' has been repeatedly raised in discussions related to the WHS. The notion that the WHS should produce the silver bullet that can do away with the current shortcomings of humanitarian action sits in tension with the proposal that a well-managed process is as important as the summit itself; but it is reflective of the linear-rational thinking that is characteristic of 'humanitarian neomanagerialism' (an ideology and culture that, as will be explained in this paper, has shaped the humanitarian effectiveness agenda).

As humanitarian agencies search for solutions, or rather 'the solution', in a process without a firm political mandate, they inevitably turn inwards to consider the technocratic measures that they can themselves deliver: new mechanisms and tools, bureaucratic processes and structures, technologies and indicators. The understandable demand for tangible and actionable recommendations then serves to leave unchallenged fundamental questions about culture and politics in the humanitarian sector.

How did such a situation come about? The new geopolitics of the 1990s provides an important point of departure for the story.

AN APPETITE FOR REFORM

From 'duty' to 'results': the new humanitarianism and consequentialism

In the early 1990s, a reformist disposition developed in the humanitarian sector, growing out of assumptions about the possibilities of Pax Americana (the idea that US leadership could bring about relative peace in the world) and, by extension, the possibilities of a reinvigorated international humanitarian project. Unipolarity was to serve as guarantor of a new era of international cooperation in pursuit of liberal ideals, and humanitarian language featured prominently in the declamations of statesmen about the promise of the new amity between East and West.[8] With an end to the sabotage, coup-making and balancing of the Cold War, humanitarians hoped they would now leave behind the perils of instrumentalisation and coercion.

A 'new humanitarianism'* did indeed take form in the 1990s, but not against the backdrop of a peaceful 'end of history'. As Duffield notes, early optimism was 'swept aside by a troubled decade of internal and regionalised forms of conflict'.[9] It was perceived failures in coordination, technical proficiency and accountability during humanitarian responses to the 'new wars'[10] and 'complex emergencies'[11] of this period

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* The humanitarianism, which took shape in the 1990s, focussed more on the consequences of aid, and involved a shift from needs-based to rights-based approaches. Significantly influenced by donor governments, it has often been associated with the promotion of military means to address 'humanitarian problems'. See, for example, Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*, (London: Zed Books, 2001) and David Chandler, 'The Road to Military Humanitarianism: How the Human Rights NGOs Shaped A New Humanitarian Agenda', *Human Rights Quarterly* 23 (2001), pp.678-700.

that provided focus and reason for institutional reforms within the humanitarian sector. Enabled by increased funding for emergency relief and enthusiasm for humanitarian causes, these reforms reflect the expansive ambitions of the new humanitarianism. But they also reveal the limits of institutional change within the framework of neomanagerial professionalisation. We propose that this tension between lofty aspirations and limiting methods is characteristic of the 'humanitarian effectiveness agenda' as it develops from the mid-1990s onwards.

Criticism of uncoordinated humanitarian responses to the Gulf War led to the first major humanitarian reform of this period. In 1991, the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA) was established under UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 with responsibility for coordinating humanitarian activities. In emphasising the UN's 'central and unique role... in providing leadership and coordinating the efforts of the international community'[12] to support countries affected by humanitarian crisis, this resolution reflected the enthusiasm of the time for greater coherence within the humanitarian sector and between different international responses to conflict and disaster. Since the 1960s, many humanitarian agencies had given more attention to tackling what they saw as the root causes of poverty and crisis,[13] but now there was freer discussion of their contribution to liberal democratisation and the stabilisation of 'fragile states'.

If humanitarian agencies were becoming more concerned with security and peace-building, Western militaries were, at least temporarily, also seen as useful in supporting the provision of emergency relief and protection. In 1991, a US-led coalition launched Operation Provide Comfort, interpreting UN Security Council resolutions (particularly resolutions 687, 688, and 689) as sanction to use military assets to provide a 'safe haven' and humanitarian assistance for Kurds fleeing violence and persecution in Iraq. The following year, NGOs (primarily CARE, along with International Rescue Committee and Oxfam America, among others) led the cheers for military intervention in Somalia to ensure the secure delivery of aid. This was a period of notable militarisation of humanitarian causes and humanitarianisation of Western military strategies,[14] inspired by the increasingly dominant language of human rights[15] and by a belief on the part of many humanitarians in the possibility of a new and more benign incorporation within Western geostrategy.

Conditioned by a new geopolitics, humanitarians shifted their focus from means to ends. The deontological* basis of humanitarian action was now being supplanted by a consequentialist ethics prompted by greater expectations, a ballooning sphere of activity, and broadening alliances, but also by the enthusiasm of donor governments for the introduction of results-based management (RBM) in the humanitarian sector. The inadequacy of humanitarian action in response to conflict, genocide and mass displacement in Africa's Great Lakes region would only confirm this realignment.

Rwanda: the 'end of the age of innocence'

Encountering the morbidity of war's aftermath is invariably distressing, but memories of Rwanda harrow humanitarians more than those of any other human conflict in recent decades. And perhaps more than the psychological scars of the genocidal carnage itself, it is a collective regret at not having done more that lingers, sullying the conscience of a community bound together by a sense of moral purpose.

Rwanda's tragedy, if only the abridged version, has become humanitarian folklore:[16] the assassination of Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana on 6 April 1994; the one hundred grisly days of slaughter and rape of Tutsis and moderate Hutus by Interahamwe Hutu paramilitaries; the collapse of the Arusha Accords;[17] the flimsy commitment of the UN and foreign governments to keeping the peace (in particular of the US government, which, following its calamitous intervention in Somalia a couple of years earlier, was reluctant to get involved in another African war) and their vacillation as the genocidal campaign was waged; Operation Turquoise led by France, a state that had armed and trained the Interahamwe in previous years; the Rwandan Patriotic Front's appropriation of power and the flight of two million Hutus to Zaïre, Tanzania and Burundi; the incursions into Rwanda of Hutu militiamen who regrouped and gathered strength in

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* Deontological ethics are concerned with duty or obligation. Deontological approaches to humanitarian action have emphasised the moral value in life-saving efforts, irrespective of their consequences. In line with Immanuel Kant's 'categorical imperative', an act in the name of humanity should be seen as a good in itself and not treated as a means to some other end (see Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
Consequentialism is an ethical outlook that considers the outcome of an action to be the main determinant of its moral value: an action can only be considered morally good if it brings about good consequences.

Goma's refugee camps, fed and sheltered by humanitarian agencies; and the subsequent repatriation and wishful reintegration of Hutu refugees as the Tutsi-led Rwandan government launched a military counter-offensive against the Hutu militia.

A feeling of insufficiency, or even complicity, among humanitarians undoubtedly stems from their self-association – a cultural and political affiliation – with the so-called international community, which failed to intercede in a timely, coherent and effective manner to prevent genocide. It is also clear that humanitarian action to support Hutu refugees was used as a fig leaf for this failure,[18] whether or not humanitarian agencies willingly contributed to letting others off the hook. But it is the shortcomings of the humanitarian response itself that have been the focus of most attention within the humanitarian sector, and have been used as an example to inspire a generation of humanitarian reform.

In September 1994, a couple of months after the genocide ended, DANIDA, the Danish Development Agency, initiated the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR), with the support and participation of the overseas aid departments of the governments of Sweden, Norway, Australia, the UK, and the US. Aimed at drawing lessons 'relevant for future complex emergencies as well as for... operations in Rwanda and the region'[19] that were being conducted at the time, the JEEAR was the first 'system-wide evaluation' of an emergency response. Alongside assessment of the response against conventional evaluation criteria, such as impact, effectiveness and efficiency, it also involved 'qualitative analysis of cause-and-effect assessed in relation to contractual obligations and international legal norms'.[20] It remains unmatched by any humanitarian evaluation since in terms of scope, ambition and influence.

The JEEAR is made up of four studies, for which the bulk of the evaluation work was carried out in 1995, as humanitarian agencies continued to provide assistance to displaced Rwandans. All four were published in March 1996, together with a synthesis report. The JEEAR pointed to significant political and military failures in the response, but it was also critical of the humanitarian assistance provided. One of its main conclusions was that while 'the international humanitarian assistance system launched an impressive and, on the whole, effective relief operation... improved contingency planning and coordination, increased preparedness measures and adoption of more cost-effective interventions could have saved even more lives as well as relief

resources'.[21]

Study 3, led by John Borton of the Overseas Development Institute, focussed on 'Humanitarian Aid and Effects' and evaluated the assistance and protection provided within Rwanda from April to December 1994, and to refugees in Ngara (Tanzania) and Goma and Bukavu (Zaïre) until July 1995. It offers a bleak account of the plight of Rwandan refugees, 50,000 of whom died of 'cholera, dysentery, dehydration and violence' in just the first month after fleeing to Goma in July 1994.[22] Although this number might have been greater without the assistance provided by humanitarian agencies, Study 3 criticises several aspects of the humanitarian response inside and outside Rwanda. It points to insufficient monitoring and analysis of information about population movements[23] and variation across different areas in the quality of information on morbidity and mortality depending on which agencies were present.[24] It points to institutional limits and shortcomings, in particular those of the UN Rwanda Emergency Office (UNREO), which was restricted to working inside Rwanda and lacked resources, appropriately qualified personnel, capacity to collect relevant information, and clearly defined relationships with other UN entities.[25] It points to tensions between the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on account of their shared responsibility for the ration supply and distribution chain, leading to mutual casting of blame.[26] And it identifies weak coordination and leadership, proposing that the humanitarian system is 'characterised by a "hollow core"'.[27]

But perhaps Study 3's most powerful criticisms of the humanitarian response, and those that have most stuck, relate to a lack of professionalism and accountability: 'inadequately-trained and -equipped' NGO personnel; 'inadequate... mechanisms for ensuring that NGOs adhere to certain professional standards'; 'inadequate... accountability mechanisms'; 'very limited attempts by agencies to obtain the views of beneficiaries on the assistance they were provided with'.[28]

Among its 26 recommendations, then, Study 3 proposed the development of technical standards, regulation or enforcement to ensure compliance with these standards and improve NGO performance (either self-managed regulation or an accreditation system), and strengthened systems for improving accountability (through the establishment of either a body within UNDHA to act as ombudsman and undertake field-level monitoring and evaluation of emergency assistance, an

independent organisation to 'act on behalf of beneficiaries' to do the same thing, or NGO mechanisms for communicating with crisis-affected communities).

The JEEAR's assessment that the relief effort might have saved more lives and better supported refugees were it not for failures in organisation, a dearth of technical expertise, and insufficient attention to accountability hit hard. For many within the humanitarian community, it was confirmation that efforts to professionalise the humanitarian sector had not gone far enough, fast enough. It was confirmation that well-intentioned voluntarism would no longer cut it.

From the Holocaust to the Vietnam War to the Yugoslav Wars, 'moments of realisation' have contributed to re-moulding the character of the humanitarian sector. But for many humanitarians who cut their teeth in the 1990s, it is Rwanda that marked the end of the age of innocence.[29] Firstly, it offered a stark lesson about *raison d'état* and the morality of statecraft. The apparent indifference of foreign governments in the face of genocide was a reminder that, even in this new age of human rights and international cooperation, politics was the realm of self-interest. Although the JEEAR called for 'closer linkages between humanitarian and political' strategies,[30] reflecting the new humanitarianism's enthusiasm for coherence, faith in the operational and strategic alliance between humanitarian agencies and their state sponsors had been shaken. Secondly, Rwanda engendered a collective realisation of a need for accelerated professional reform in the humanitarian sector. The JEEAR's recommendations provided stimulus for a torrent of initiatives aimed at improving performance and accountability. These initiatives would give shape to what we refer to here as the humanitarian effectiveness agenda.

Born in the mid-1990s, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has been a response to contemporary challenges in humanitarian action. It is also the manifestation of a particular stage in the long history of professionalisation of the humanitarian sector, itself shaped by processes of bureaucratisation and by developments in performance management. But humanitarianism is not a world unto itself. Rather it evolves in correspondence with the world around it – the world of politics and warfare, of science and technological change, of capital and labour. It reflects, and indeed informs, the ideals and ideological preferences of its time. As such, processes of reform within the humanitarian sector have been influenced not only by 'facts on the ground', but also by political interests and by broader changes in the organisation of social and institutional life.

In the next chapter, we consider the expansion and transformation of humanitarian bureaucracy, the growing role of management, and the formation of the type of professional humanitarian who would take centre stage in the new humanitarianism.

THE HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS AGENDA

Humanitarian effectiveness in historical context: bureaucracy, management and professionalisation in the humanitarian sector

In December 1946, the newly formed UN accepted an offer from the United States to base its headquarters in New York City. The buildings were completed in 1952, at a cost of $65 million, after American philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jnr had donated $8.5 million with which to buy the site.[31] The Chief Architect was an American, Wallace K. Harrison (one of the architects of the Rockefeller Centre, also in New York); the remaining members of the board included: Le Corbusier of France, Nikolai G. Bassov of the Soviet Union, Liang Sicheng of China, Sir Howard Robertson of the United Kingdom, Gaston Brunfaut of Belgium, Ernest Cormier of Canada, Sven Markelius of Sweden, Oscar Niemeyer of Brazil, Garnet A. Soilleux of Australia, and Julio Vilamajo of Uruguay.

Keen to maximise the symbolism of such an international design process, the UN's Office of Public Information circulated photographs to the mainstream press of the design team working contently and productively together,[32] but the reality was often different. Backroom tensions, particularly between two of the most famous architects, Harrison and Le Corbusier, threatened to stall the process. Le Corbusier was reportedly unhappy at losing out to Harrison on many key decisions relating to design. One particular clash involved disagreement over how

to protect the Secretariat Building from excessive heat and glare. Le Corbusier wanted stone façades, but Harrison and the board preferred to make the most of the sunlight and use glazing. The final decision: Le Corbusier's *brise-soleil* (concrete sun-shading structures) lost out to tinted glass.[33] In another episode, allegations surfaced that Le Corbusier unfairly took credit for some of Harrison's design work.[34] In spite of these incidents, the public relations campaign continued to portray a suitably collaborative process for the conception of an institution intended to build 'a better world'.

Made up of representatives from states victorious or neutral in World War II, this board reflected an elitist internationalism. And the UN Headquarters building itself was inspired by a notably Western, liberal vision for the future of global peace, development and humanitarian cooperation: one that was corporate and bureaucratic. For the architects, as well as the authors of the international bureaucracy housed within their buildings, planning and functional modernisation lay at the heart of their vision for a peaceful, prosperous post-war world. The distinctive modernist design of the glass Secretariat tower and the curved General Assembly building deliberately dissociated the structures from history, marking them as neutral sites for global administration – an 'expression of the functionalist ideal'.[35] Yet, not out of place among the iconic commercial skyscrapers that already dominated the Manhattan skyline, the tall, glass Secretariat tower was also a declaration to the world that the UN was to complement the post-war capitalist political economy, not depart from it.[36]

The story of the physical creation of the UN offers insight into the early formation of the institution's politics and culture. It also reflects the bureaucracy and hierarchy that characterised the global governance structures – not least humanitarian institutions themselves – whose development was given increasing attention from the end of World War I until the early 1950s. This process of institution-building gave greater definition to the 'humanitarian system' (as it has come to be known in more recent times) as a network of organisations, a set of norms and institutional practices, a political economy, and a centralised and top-down system of governance. While the roots of humanitarian bureaucracy can be traced back to the nineteenth century (Appendix 1 covers some key moments in the evolution of humanitarian bureaucracy from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1970s), bureaucracy and bureaucratic power played an increasingly prominent role in humanitarian governance and practice in the decades

following World War II. States that had been involved in designing the new humanitarian architecture became more directly involved in the financing, direction and implementation of humanitarian activities.[37] And a proliferation of professional NGOs led to the development of new administrative processes, managerial priorities and quality standards. Humanitarian bureaucracy would provide a framework for the more systematic management of humanitarian performance and it would give an increasingly top-down character to the humanitarian sector.

During the interwar years, growing emphasis was placed on the role of planning and management in the development and implementation of public policy. With the growth of many government bureaucracies in the aftermath of World War II, there was greater interest in the use of scientific approaches to manage the performance of civil servants, their departments, and subcontractors.

In 1961, US Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara, a former President of the Ford Motor Company, introduced Planning, Programming and Budgeting (PPB) in the Pentagon. He sought to tighten the relationship between the inputs and outputs of defence, and set out a model grounded in economic rationality. Four years later, President Lyndon B. Johnson adopted PPB for domestic operations.

Other managerial approaches that drew on business principles were also adopted in public sector bureaucracies around this time. The practice of managing operations according to objectives was developed by businesses in the 1920s.[38] The term 'management by objectives' (MBO) was then coined in 1954 by Peter Drucker, in his book *The Practice of Management*.[39] Through the definition of objectives for all spheres of organisational activity, MBO was thought to provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of employees, thereby empowering them to achieve their personal goals and to contribute to those of their organisation. It was used consistently by Western governments from the early 1970s onwards, although there was some experimentation with it before then.

Such performance management approaches developed in the private sector, or at least inspired by free market ideals, were introduced into the humanitarian sector through government aid departments. The development of the logical framework (logframe), in 1970, provides a good example of this process. Designed by Practical Concepts Incorporated after USAID commissioned an analysis of its approach to evaluation, the logframe is an MBO tool for planning and accounting

for aid activities. It provides a template for managers to define a desired result, inputs, outputs, activities, and often conditions for achieving the result, associated risks, and assumptions. It focusses attention on single, discrete effects of aid. This offers managers greater clarity about what might be under their control and what might not. By the end of the 1990s it was almost ubiquitous within the humanitarian sector as the basis of most institutional donor grant applications.[40]

In the 1970s, challenges were posed to old-style bureaucracy, with its managerial approaches. The idea that the economic recession affecting many countries in the West was a reflection of the exhaustion of the Fordist-Keynesian model of economic development inspired a reform of state institutions that included radical changes to public sector management. Upon her election as Prime Minister of Britain in 1979, Margaret Thatcher quickly set about reorganising public sector bureaucracies, seeking to enhance their productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. In order to make government 'do more for less', she introduced a number of reforms to rationalise public administration by focussing performance and results. The new approach, which came to be known as the New Public Management (NPM), drew upon private sector management techniques; it introduced business principles and 'bottom lines': user choice and transparency, competition and incentive, customer satisfaction and accountability.[41] So as to separate public administration from politics, NPM demanded the liberation of managers from regulation by central authorities. (Appendix 2 discusses NPM and its introduction in the UK in greater detail).

In the 1980s, NPM was adopted by other governments, and it inspired reforms of international financial institutions. If it offered a rubric for enhancing organisational efficiency and productivity, the 'neomanagerialism' that shaped it can be seen as an ideology[42] concerned with the depoliticisation and 'economicisation'[43] of institutional life; as a set of mutually reinforcing institutions; and as a culture. The fervour for neomanagerial reform was carried by governments into the aid sector and, by the early 1990s, the idea that 'management is management'[44] was transforming the structure and culture of NGOs and UN agencies. Neomanagerialism became the key influence in the professionalising initiatives of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. Its rise has accompanied, accelerated and given a particular character to the professionalisation of the humanitarian sector.

The 1970s and 1980s are often seen as the decisive period in the development of a humanitarian profession,[45] but the professionalisation of the humanitarian action has a much longer history (Appendix 3 provides a brief account of this history). In the 1970s, established NGOs strengthened their focus on advertising, public relations, and professional training schemes. Professionalisation then gained further momentum from the late 1980s onwards as official development assistance, including funding for emergency responses, grew rapidly.[46] NGO revenue from private donations also increased substantially.[47] The subsequent growth of humanitarian NGOs provided a platform for the expansion and sophistication of professional infrastructure, which, in turn, gave rise to an increasingly competitive labour market within the humanitarian sector. Competition would lend a dynamism to the project of improving humanitarian performance through training, evidence capture, learning, and standardisation. But it would also generate organisational challenges and pressures.

Neomanagerial techniques introduced to the humanitarian sector by government donors were used to give order to the accelerating process of professionalisation. Though there is a long history of communities of practice and exchanges involving businessmen and humanitarians,[48] the neomanagerial reorganisation of humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies in the 1990s can be seen as a step change in the commercialisation of Western humanitarianism. The introduction of results-based management compelled NGO staff to demonstrate that their activities would 'add value'. Accounting and accountability became central concerns in all spheres of NGO activity, and indeed it became commonplace for NGOs to contract management consultancy and accounting firms to assist in strengthening compliance with business principles. Understandings of success thus became increasingly intertwined with economic notions of efficiency, productivity and even marketability, as aid agency executives and their corporate governors sought to establish competitive advantages over other organisations vying for the same funds, and satisfy the growing demands of governmental donors for value for money.

Over time this has given a paradoxical character to the development of the humanitarian professional. On the one hand, humanitarian agencies have drawn on other professional industries and specialisms to meet the requirements of neomanagerial process; there has been a particular influx of human resource professionals, lawyers, and accountants. On the other hand, there has been a progressive

transformation of all humanitarian agency staff first and foremost into managers or, in the case of entry-level staff, apprentices for whom management, as a step up the career ladder, becomes an aspiration. In other words, despite differences between humanitarian workers in their application of particular expertise, there has been a homogenisation of their administrative functions and responsibilities – performance reviews; budget oversight and reporting; strategic planning and work allocation; guidance on professional development and training – that both replicates the tasks and satisfies the demands of donor agency staff.[49] In this way, the ideal of the effective humanitarian professional has developed somewhat isomorphically; staff are institutionalised, the ability to manage and fluency in management-speak their crucial cultural capital.

The cultural impact of these developments on humanitarian agencies has been so profound that, through their extensive transnational networks, they have themselves become vectors in the globalisation of neomanagerial knowledges and practices.[50] But it would be a mistake to assume that neomanagerial reorganisation is something that was simply done *to* humanitarian agencies, despite the prominent role of government donors in promoting results-based management. Neomanagerialism in the humanitarian sector has been shaped in part by the culture, objectives and practices of humanitarian organisations, which have assumed the symbols of NPM as their own. A blending of neomanagerial and humanitarian cultures has led to the emergence of what we might call 'humanitarian neomanagerialism', with distinct and discernible characteristics.[51] The humanitarian effectiveness agenda is the main manifestation of this hybrid culture.

The birth of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda

Even before the publication of the JEEAR, there was growing interest in the creation of common professional standards for humanitarian action. In the 1980s, efforts had been made to develop guidelines specific to some technical areas of humanitarian response.[52] Oxfam's supplementary feeding guidelines and MSF's clinical guides were used across the humanitarian sector. A number of agency-specific handbooks were also produced: Oxfam's *Field Director's Handbook* and UNHCR's guide on emergency field operations are two examples. Then, in 1991, the French Red Cross Society put forward a proposal to the Steering

Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)[53] for the development of a code of conduct for relief agencies. Following numerous revisions, the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief was published in 1994, just after the Rwandan genocide. Aimed at ensuring the maintenance of 'high standards of independence, effectiveness and impact' in emergency relief,[54] it set out 10 principles for humanitarian agencies, as well as recommendations for the governments of disaster-affected countries, donor governments, and intergovernmental organisations. In doing so, it provided a definition of professional ethics for the humanitarian sector. And, with a particular emphasis on the independence of humanitarian agencies, it promoted expressions of humanity over power, projecting anxieties about the merging of humanitarian and security agendas. In addition to the eight agencies of the SCHR, a further 19 agencies signed up immediately.[55] Today, there are 595 signatories.

Although the code set out how humanitarians should behave when responding to disaster, it did not establish what they should be doing.[56] The JEEAR, however, articulated the need for definition of the appropriate content of humanitarian action. It is the breadth and the trenchancy of its analysis, in the context of the trauma of the Rwandan experience, that mobilised a concerted effort to improve humanitarian performance.

Perhaps the most significant of all the initiatives influenced by the JEEAR is the Sphere Project – the Standards Project for Humanitarian Relief. Discussions about the creation of technical standards were already taking place in early 1996 within the SCHR and InterAction (an alliance of US-based NGOs). Aware of these discussions, the authors of Study 3 decided to make enthusiastic reference to it in their recommendations. Borton has suggested that 'cross-fertilisation' between the standards initiative and the JEEAR was facilitated by the fact that Peter Walker, Nicholas Stockton and Joel McClellan were heavily involved with the former and also on the Steering Committee of the latter.[57] The Sphere Project was launched in 1997; it soon produced a Humanitarian Charter, and set minimum standards in five technical areas of humanitarian response (water supply and sanitation; nutrition; food aid; shelter and site planning; and health services), with key indicators to establish when the standards had been attained.[58]

The same year, in direct response to the JEEAR, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) was established as a membership-based forum for

sharing experiences, challenges and proposals relating to learning, accountability, and performance. It immediately focussed on building collective commitment to the evaluation of humanitarian operations, enhancing the quality and consistency of evaluation methodologies, sharing the most important lessons from evaluations, and improving follow-up to evaluations.[59]

And the JEEAR, in particular its call for an independent body to monitor and evaluate humanitarian operations, also inspired a decision at the World Disasters Forum, also in 1997, to conduct a study on the feasibility of the establishment of an ombudsman for humanitarian assistance. Entitled the Humanitarian Ombudsman Project, the study was coordinated by the British Red Cross Society on behalf of a number of UK-based humanitarian agencies. John Mitchell and Deborah Doane, who at the time were both working on the project at the British Red Cross, suggest that the primary motivation for establishing an ombudsman was 'access for claimants'; in other words, the possibility for those affected by conflict and disaster to hold humanitarian agencies to account.[60] However, upon completion of the study there was insufficient support among humanitarian agencies for the creation of an international ombudsman. There were unresolved concerns about how it would relate to governments and national judiciaries in the countries where it was deployed. But, perhaps more importantly, it seemed clear that humanitarian agencies did not want to submit to third party regulation. Since there was still widespread enthusiasm within the humanitarian community for more to be done to strengthen accountability, a two-year interagency action research project – the Humanitarian Accountability Project – was carried out, 'to identify, test and recommend alternative approaches to accountability'.[61] Upon completion of this project, in 2003, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) was launched; it developed Principles of Accountability, adherence to which became a condition for membership.

While Sphere, ALNAP and HAP can all be directly linked to the recommendations of Study 3, the JEEAR also provided clear validation for the development and expansion of other initiatives to professionalise the humanitarian sector and enhance performance, including through attention to less programmatic but complementary areas, such as people management (People in Aid is a notable example). Over the coming years, evaluation, monitoring, needs assessment, crisis classification, situational analysis, surveillance, tracking, and beneficiary surveys would become commonplace in the management of humanitarian

performance. And there would be growing interest in the development of quality assurance frameworks, good practice guides, and, among the more enthusiastic reformists, certification and accreditation schemes.[62]

Rwanda and the JEEAR had provided the spark that ignited the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. But the consistency of purpose and approach across subsequent work to improve humanitarian performance was an indication that the humanitarian sector had been already adjusting its focus, and was already inclined towards a certain kind of change.

Evaluation and evidence in humanitarian action

In the 1980s, as the privatisation of welfare services in the West was replicated in developing countries, particularly through the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, NGOs were afforded opportunities to expand their role in implementing government-funded programmes to provide healthcare and education, stimulate livelihoods, build roads, and respond to emergencies. Their profile grew further in the early 1990s, with the emergence of the so-called 'new policy agenda', which, with its promotion of economic liberalisation, 'good governance',[63] and the expansion of 'civil society', confirmed the reduced participation of the public sector in processes of economic and social development.[64] As service providers, NGOs were seen as competent alternatives to the state that would reinforce democratising tendencies.[65] But with this subcontracting came greater scrutiny by government donors and amplified demands for accountability to them.[66] If NGOs were part of the distribution chain for public services, NPM's requirement for efficiency and productivity – to 'do more for less' – would also apply to them; scientific observation and evaluation would ensure compliance.

In his book *Administrative Behaviour*, published in 1947, the economist Herbert Simon had proposed that decision-making within economic organisations should be grounded in science, informed by evidence, and free from value judgements.[67] A pioneer of neomanagerial thought, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1978, as his ideas were gaining traction among public administrators and policy-makers. Evidence-based policy became a mainstay of the New Public Management; it was seen to guarantee the neutrality

of managers, strengthen accountability, and enable an efficient allocation of resources. Sharpening the analytical basis of performance measurement, in particular, would contribute to the rationalisation of public administration.[68] Indeed, the development of robust systems for evaluation and the continuous collection of evidence would play an important part in enabling a shift from management by objectives to results-based management.

During the 1980s, there were incipient attempts by governmental overseas aid departments to gather objective evidence of their performance, and that of subcontracting humanitarian agencies in response to specific emergencies. Following the African Food Crisis in the middle of the decade, USAID conducted an evaluation of its programme in Mali from 1984 to 1985,[69] the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) did so for its relief in Mozambique from 1983 to 1985,[70] and the UK's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) did the same for its programmes across Sub-Saharan Africa from 1983-1985.[71] Then, from the early 1990s onwards, the number of donor-led evaluations markedly increased, with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation, SIDA, ODA, USAID and the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) each carrying out evaluations of their participation in emergency responses.[72]

Initially, most humanitarian NGO workers were predictably cagey about this increasingly common practice through which government donors could keep tabs on their activities.[73] But despite the emphasis on 'upwards' accountability, some NGOs were soon seeing evaluations as an opportunity for projecting their own competitive advantages in order to secure access to the ears and purses of donors. Evaluations could also help direct the process of professionalisation, generating objective data about the state of humanitarian action. And, even if evaluations subjected humanitarian agencies to tighter oversight by their government paymasters, objective evidence could also be used to safeguard humanitarian action from political interests. NGOs started commissioning independent evaluations of their emergency responses. One example is the evaluation of Concern's emergency programme in Kosti province, Sudan, from 1990 to 1991.[74] The NGO community also started investing in its own evaluation systems: in-house evaluators in NGOs to join the dots between the donors and recipients of emergency aid, as well as interagency mechanisms. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement also came on board, with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) commissioning an independent review of the relief operations of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in response to drought in Africa from 1984 to 1986.[75] Within the UN system, operational evaluations would become commonplace by the middle of the 1990s.

Evaluations then became a gateway to a more comprehensive adoption of RBM within the humanitarian sector. For many humanitarians, attention to results was not just a necessary condition for satisfying governmental donors, it was desirable, since it could systematise and concentrate efforts to improve the quality of humanitarian action for people affected by conflict and disaster. Humanitarian agencies would increasingly take ownership of the totems of NPM – efficiency, effectiveness, impact, value for money – rebranding them as enablers of better humanitarian action.

For twenty years, humanitarian effectiveness, as well as having a specific programmatic meaning – 'the extent to which… [an] intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance'[76] – has been a catchall designator for high quality programming, technical capability, accountability, organisational capacity, and human resource management. That effectiveness, with its focus on results, came to be the definition of success in the humanitarian sector is an indication of the influence of RBM. It is also reflective of a certainty in liberal truths; of a faith in objectivity, rationality and scientific method that had become prevalent not only in the realm of policy and practice but across the social sciences. Through the frame of effectiveness, success can be quantified. But in the process of measurement, assumptions are necessarily made about the value of desired outcomes. So we might ask: value according to whom? Even if the turn of humanitarian agencies to RBM in the 1990s was partly inspired by a desire to generate greater value *for* disaster-affected populations, these agencies rarely articulated questions about perspective and voice.[77] The renewed positivism that shifted attention to effectiveness at this time extended the notion of humanitarian neutrality from the operational sphere (as a functional tool for securing access to populations in need) deeper into the strategic sphere (as a belief). In doing so, it empowered humanitarian workers with a feeling that they could be part of the solution to the complex challenges they observed. It energised them to find ways of improving their practice to this end. And it strengthened a pragmatic and linear concentration on what could be achieved.

A challenge of scale and focus

The number of evaluations of humanitarian action notably increased in the mid-to-late 1990s. ALNAP played a particularly prominent role in promoting evaluations, creating an Evaluative Reports Database and fostering opportunities for evaluators and aid workers to share experiences and insights. But reporting remained the overriding function of evaluation. One indication of this is that, with few exceptions (the JEEAR being the most obvious), humanitarian evaluations of the 1990s concentrated on particular relief programmes or projects.[78] The *project* had long been understood as the basic vehicle for the delivery of development and emergency aid,[79] but the reporting requirements of RBM, along with the widespread use of logframes as an audit tool, cemented its place as the key unit of technocratic work. According to Borton, it was donor demands for humanitarian agencies to use the logframe that converted it from a 'useful logic tool into an audit tool'.[80]

There were other impediments to designing and implementing evaluations of a larger scale. The long-standing and seemingly unbridgeable discord between different humanitarian agencies regarding the legitimate bounds of humanitarian action made it difficult to establish appropriate baselines and indicators for evaluations of particular system-wide emergency responses; evaluating the performance of the humanitarian system, a system whose definition and even existence have been continuously contested until present day, was even more difficult.

Unhindered by such ambiguity of purpose, the 'development' sector was able to agree on system-wide targets with the creation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in 2000. These goals were to be tracked globally, regionally and nationally, providing a framework for consistent evaluation of development aid on different scales. Through the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), the Busan Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the creation of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011), and most recently the Sustainable Development Goals (2015), the development sector has elaborated and refined an agenda on aid effectiveness that is significantly more coherent than that of the humanitarian sector. It also has more rigorously implemented neomanagerial reforms and more faithfully embodied the neomanagerial ideals of NPM. While humanitarians have been mired in definitional and methodological disputes, their cousins in the development sector (often in the very same organisations) have wholeheartedly realigned themselves to focus on results with the dual aims of alleviating poverty and satisfying donors.[81] On account of these disputes, the humanitarian sector has assumed the symbols of NPM – its cultural motifs – without establishing clarity on collective direction of travel.

Since the turn of the millennium, the aid effectiveness agenda has given impetus to reform of the humanitarian sector. In 2014, total spending on humanitarian aid was less than a fifth of the official development assistance provided by OECD countries.[82] With donors dedicating more resources and attention to development than emergency relief and protection, the norms and technologies of the development sector have in recent decades been significantly more influential. Development is seen to provide as the overarching order within which humanitarian action is carried out. And so the onus is on humanitarians to align their work to improve effectiveness with the goals and processes of the development sector.[83] In the 2003-2006 and 2005-2008 Public Service Agreements (PSA)[84] of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), effective response to conflict and humanitarian crises was established as a performance indicator whose achievement would contribute to the overall aim of 'elimination of poverty in poorer countries in particular through the achievement by 2015 of the MDGs'. As development has been redefined, in the words of Natsios, to 'de-emphasise good development practice' in favour of a results-focus that satisfies a 'compliance system',[85] donors have projected expectations of similar redefinition on to humanitarian agencies.

Of course, there have been interactions and exchanges between the humanitarian sector and the development sector for as long as the two have been seen as distinct (and many humanitarian and development workers dispute that they should be treated as distinct). Evaluations of humanitarian action have largely followed approaches designed for development evaluations. Published in 1991, the OECD DAC Criteria for the Evaluation of Development Assistance – efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance – were used for many humanitarian evaluations in the 1990s.[86] And they have remained a primary reference even following their revision for the evaluation of humanitarian assistance at the end of that decade.[87] Indeed, all of the main generic guidance on good practice in the evaluation of humanitarian action has recommended the use of DAC criteria (either the original five or the revised criteria): the good practice guide of the Relief and Rehabilitation

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Network[88] and the DAC Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies[89] (the two outputs of the project to revise the original DAC criteria); the ALNAP guide on humanitarian evaluation using the DAC criteria;[90] and the ALNAP pilot guide on the evaluation of humanitarian action.[91]

During the 2000s, the use of the DAC criteria became increasingly common as attempts were made to harmonise approaches to the evaluation of humanitarian action.[92] And greater harmony has contributed to a shift in the way evaluations are conducted and used. Even though they are still infrequent, joint evaluations have become more common as a means of 'evaluating together what… cannot [be] evaluated alone'.[93] Informed by different perspectives, joint evaluations tend to offer more than single-agency evaluations in terms of policy proposals that can contribute to learning and changes in practice. They are also seen to be generally of higher quality,[94] generating more robust evidence through a more coordinated and efficient process. There has been only one joint system-wide evaluation of a humanitarian response since the JEEAR (that of the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition in 2006), but the need for more regular evaluations of this sort has been a topic of ongoing conversation among humanitarian evaluators. An Inter-Agency Working Group on Joint Humanitarian Impact Evaluation was set up in November 2009. It conducted consultations on the desirability and feasibility of different approaches to joint impact evaluation with humanitarian agency staff, donor government officials, and representatives of governments and communities in countries affected by conflict and disaster. Respondents in Haiti and South Sudan expressed concerns that previous evaluations had not resulted in satisfactory responses to complaints. 95 per cent of international agency staff consulted expressed support for joint impact evaluations.[95]

However, there has been insufficient investment in joint evaluation to establish it as common practice in emergency responses. Meanwhile, alongside definitional ambiguity in the humanitarian sector, there are other practical challenges to scaling up from project evaluations. The synthesis of project data can be problematic, since there is still considerable variation in methodology and quality across project evaluations. There has also been relatively little funding for retrospective surveys of emergency responses and real-time surveillance, both of which could contribute to a more comprehensive assessment of entire responses based on information about their constituent projects, as well as enable comparison between the severity of different emergencies.[96]

Despite challenges to scaling up, ALNAP has taken steps towards evaluating the performance of the humanitarian system in recent years, initially through its Review of Humanitarian Action, and latterly through its State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) reports. Recognising that 'the "humanitarian system" is conceived and defined in numerous different ways', and that 'it would be impossible to measure accurately and comprehensively every component of the system',[97] ALNAP limits the scope of its assessment. In the latest edition of SOHS, published in 2015, it defines the humanitarian system as 'the network of interconnected institutional and operational entities through which humanitarian assistance is provided when local and national resources are insufficient to meet the needs of the affected population';[98] it measures the performance of this system against a variation of the revised DAC criteria and its own associated indicators.

There are other initiatives that have reviewed specific aspects of the system's performance. From 2007 to 2011, DARA produced the Humanitarian Response Index, which monitored the adherence of OECD DAC donors to the Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship established in 2003. The Global Humanitarian Assistance programme, meanwhile, produces an annual report with information on trends in the financing of humanitarian responses.

These reviews of the system all focus on outputs and process, rather than outcomes. Establishing causality for outcomes is notoriously difficult; indeed, ALNAP omits 'impact' from its SOHS evaluation criteria explicitly to avoid the 'attribution problem'.[99] There are also significant disincentives for humanitarian agencies to focus on outcomes. The requirement made by donors, that humanitarian agencies account for funding by demonstrating the achievement of predetermined results – defined by the World Bank as outputs, outcomes and impact – encourages focus on outputs, since these can be controlled. The increasingly prevalent Payment by Results (PbR) approach to funding aid programmes only accentuates this effect.[100] Moreover, although there have been proposals to establish goals (desirable 'social outcomes') for the humanitarian system – most recently by David Miliband, the President and CEO of International Rescue Committee[101] – there is little chance that there would be agreement on what these might be. And yet it is evidence of the outcomes of humanitarian action that would be most useful, if learning and better performance are to relate to improved conditions for those whom humanitarian agencies aim to support.

The scale and focus of humanitarian evaluations raise questions about how useful evaluation can be as a tool for learning in the humanitarian sector.[102] Cookie-cutter replication of project outputs is inappropriate; rigorous evaluation of the outcomes of whole emergency operations, or of all activity within the humanitarian system, seems unachievable. Nevertheless, as humanitarian agencies have placed greater emphasis on results, advocates of reform have pushed for performance management to be reoriented, away from compliance and towards learning and accountability; ultimately towards better outcomes for those on the receiving end of humanitarian aid. They have seen the development of collaborative, or at least consistent, approaches to activities aimed at improving performance as a way of doing this.

Coherence saves lives: making one out of many

The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) was formed in early 2005, following discussions about how to coordinate evaluations of the response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and maximise sector-wide learning. It was facilitated by ALNAP and coordinated by a Core Management Group of NGO, UN, Red Cross and donor government representatives. Its primary aim was 'to improve the quality of humanitarian action – including the linkages to recovery and longer term development – by learning lessons from the international response to the tsunami',[103] but it also sought to strengthen accountability for the humanitarian response, and to test a collaborative approach to evaluation that would in turn engender collaborative efforts to improve humanitarian performance. With five thematic studies and a synthesis report setting out almost four hundred recommendations, the joint evaluation was a very large undertaking.

Noting that more funding was pledged for the tsunami response than for any other disaster response on record (at least US$13.5 billion), the TEC was nonetheless highly critical. The synthesis report suggests that people affected by the tsunami were 'marginalised, even undermined, by an overwhelming flood of international agencies controlling immense resources', and that few international agencies 'lived up to their own principles and standards regarding respect for local and national ownership'.[104] International humanitarian agencies were driven by institutional imperatives, 'such as the urgency to spend money visibly'.[105] The 'quality and capacity of the international relief

system... [was] inadequate'. And there were 'numerous examples of poor coordination', particularly at field level.[106]

Many of the more critical statements pointed to oft-cited weaknesses of the humanitarian system. Indeed, all of the main recommendations had been articulated by previous evaluations, good practice guides and codes of practice:

1. The international humanitarian community needs a fundamental reorientation from supplying aid to supporting and facilitating communities' own relief and recovery priorities.

2. All actors should strive to increase their disaster response capacities and to improve the linkages and coherence between themselves and other actors in the international disaster response system, including those from the affected countries themselves.

3. The international relief system should establish an accreditation and certification system to distinguish agencies that work to a professional standard in a particular sector.

4. All actors need to make the current funding system impartial, and more efficient, flexible, transparent and better aligned with principles of good donorship.[107]

The TEC, like the JEEAR, emphasised the need for greater coherence: coherence within the humanitarian system, between the activities of international humanitarian organisations and those of local agencies in disaster-affected countries, and between humanitarian strategies and other strategies to 'build back better'. While the JEEAR's call for policy and operational coherence was partly a response to the presence of 'an unprecedented number of agencies',[108] the TEC similarly sought to counteract the 'fragmented approach' that had been a consequence of the 'proliferation of international agencies and their insistence on distinct programmes'.[109] These calls for coherence in the effort to meet the needs of crisis-affected populations and save more lives arose from and highlighted tensions that lie at the very heart of humanitarian neomanagerialism.

Both the TEC and the JEEAR decried competition between humanitarian agencies. Heightened competition adversely affected

'the quality, delivery and efficacy of aid'[110] and 'the objectivity of...reporting'.[111] Competition in the humanitarian sector has grown on account of the increase in available funding for humanitarian response and the swell in the number of actors vying for it,[112] but also due to the commercialisation and professionalisation of humanitarian agencies, and their adoption of business management principles and RBM. Indeed, according to the TEC, competition during the tsunami response had been fuelled by the 'perceived need for quick, tangible, agency-specific results'.[113] Increased public scrutiny of large-scale aid operations and donor demands for the demonstration of results have encouraged humanitarian agencies, eager to grow and expand their influence, to project their competitive advantages through narratives of success. Moral authority, as Hopgood suggests, becomes a 'lucrative resource – a vital source of income'.[114] And so humanitarian agencies are incentivised to do what is measurable and demonstrable.

If collaboration is an antidote to competition, it has often been pursued by humanitarian NGOs through the professionalising initiatives of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda: through efforts that bind these organisations by their mutual interest in improved performance, building coherence between their strategies and institutional practices. But although professionalisation provides a logic for the development of technical skills and standards, it is inescapably a logic of the market, which fosters competition for expertise, for profile, and indeed for resources. Competition among humanitarian NGOs – a quest to have greater impact than others, or not to be left to look retrograde as others evolve – has accelerated the reforms of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. And, in turn, this agenda, with its focus on results, has spurred competition between humanitarian NGOs. This creates a kind of competitive feedback loop, in which attempts to establish coherence within the humanitarian sector ultimately undermine coherence. And since there is no legitimate central authority in the humanitarian system to which all humanitarian NGOs submit on matters of institutional reform, and NGOs themselves have little commercial incentive to curb their competitive instincts, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has generated much bureaucratic process without establishing functional regulation – a neomanagerial reorganisation *par excellence.*

The irony of this situation is that, rather than liberate, this freedom to compete deepens the subordination of humanitarian NGOs to the interests of those who would fund their activities and determine the conditions for doing so. Moreover, it undermines the possibility for

humanitarian NGOs to develop collective bargaining power in order to alter their respective relations with donors. In this context, initiatives to strengthen coherence in the humanitarian sector have tended to overlook the role of power (even when proposed as a means of altering power relations), maintaining the management of humanitarian performance as a technology of donor control.

Lack of attention to power has meant that coherence has been pursued largely through technical fixes. Huge emphasis has been placed on coordination as a solution to disorganisation and inefficiencies, difference and discord. It has been a focus of UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 in 1991, of the Humanitarian Reform Process in 2005, and of the Transformative Agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) launched in 2011. The cluster system was introduced during the Humanitarian Reform Process as a means of rationalising humanitarian operations and giving them tighter direction, making them more needs-based.[115] But coordination of individual projects is increasingly being seen as insufficient in bringing about greater coherence. The UN Secretary-General's Report for the WHS calls for a 'shift from coordinating inputs to achieving outcomes together'.[116] This requires an alignment of humanitarian approaches, not just their organisation.

Since the early 1990s, one of the main technical endeavours through which this alignment has been sought is the creation of common professional standards. (Appendix 4 describes the process of international standardisation that has influenced the development of humanitarian standards). The first and most comprehensive initiative to produce a set of global quality standards in the humanitarian sector, the Sphere Project, received early criticism, most notably from MSF, precisely on account of its emphasis on the technical aspects of humanitarian action.[117] Through its attempt to homogenise the quality of the services provided by humanitarian agencies, Sphere has been the key technical reference as the humanitarian sector has become more focussed on results. The project has gone through different phases, adding protection principles and core standards for process to its minimum technical standards, as well as producing guidance for training to use the standards. And the technical standards have been revised through three editions of the Sphere Handbook, the most recent of which was published in 2011.

The report from an evaluation of the Sphere Project conducted in

2004 concluded that although the evaluation 'was unable to determine directly... [Sphere's] impact on the quality of humanitarian assistance to disaster-affected populations, it is clear that there is a widespread perception that it has had a beneficial effect'.[118] With the large number of humanitarian organisations that claim to use its standards, Sphere has certainly succeeded in elaborating a common agenda for the sector. For James Darcy, one of the drafters of Sphere's Humanitarian Charter, this is arguably its 'greatest value'.[119] Aside from any impact on programme quality, Sphere has also fostered the impression that humanitarian agencies are able to respond to external demands for accountability (those of governments in the countries that host them, of crisis-affected populations, and of donors) while governing and regulating themselves.[120] Indeed, while Sphere was intended to make humanitarian agencies more accountable, it was also, as Walker and Purdin point out, the answer of NGOs to the increasing threat of regulation by donor governments; a sort of pre-emptive and limited self-regulation.[121] As such, for those agencies most involved in the development of Sphere (initially, at least, members of the SCHR[122]), it has offered an opportunity to build coherence within the humanitarian sector according to their values and ideals.

By providing a basis for certification and audit as part of quality management, the Sphere standards have become a badge of legitimacy that humanitarian agencies can adopt without necessarily altering organisational processes and practices.[123] Once an organisation affiliates itself with the standards, there is little requirement for it to reform its practice systematically, since the adoption is voluntary, a 'soft law', of which there is no enforcement. There have been various opportunities for Sphere to introduce monitoring and compliance mechanisms, but these have been passed up, either because of concern that the threat of enforcement would deter humanitarian agencies from adopting the standards, undermining the whole project, or because of opposition from those agencies already affiliated.[124] As a consequence, although the Sphere standards have strengthened a symbolic coherence within the humanitarian sector, they have not brought about coherence in the quality of programmes as might have been hoped.

The founders of Sphere had intended it to have a monitoring component. When Sphere's Management Committee rejected this, HAP attempted to fill the void. HAP sought to certify humanitarian organisations that were compliant with its Principles of Accountability, conducting an independent audit. The founders felt that an increase in the number of humanitarian NGOs was making it difficult to maintain professional quality standards and they sought to put 'clear blue water between the big agencies and new actors'.[125]

The HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management was developed in 2007, and then revised in 2010. In order to meet the HAP Standard and be certified, agencies would have to commit to the HAP Standard Principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, as well as participation, informed consent, duty of care, witness, the offer of redress, transparency, and complementarity.[126] But with six benchmarks, 39 related requirements and 84 means of verification, it is little wonder that only 17 of HAP's hundreds of member organisations were certified.[127]

The HAP Standard was used to assess the quality of processes rather than the final product, on the wisdom that 'accountability processes that are managed effectively make the organisations perform better'.[128] In this respect, the HAP Standard drew significantly on ISO 9000, one of the most wide-ranging and influential 'families' of standards of the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO), which certifies whether organisations are 'fit for purpose' (for more information on ISO and standardisation, see Appendix 4). But it was difficult to obtain conclusive evidence that more accountable processes were leading to better-quality humanitarian programmes. A review commissioned by HAP, Christian Aid, and Save the Children stated that, 'at best, the lack of evidence represents a missed opportunity, at worst it highlights a failure to understand and communicate the impact that assistance is having on communities'.[129]

By the end of the 2000s, there were numerous humanitarian standards, many with related frameworks for measurement and verification. According to the OECD, multiple standards were 'complicating accountability to stakeholders and creating confusion about the benchmark/s for humanitarian assistance'.[130] Attempts to strengthen coherence in the humanitarian sector through standardisation were becoming incoherent. The Quality and Accountability Initiatives Complementarities Group had already been established, in 2006, to start addressing this. Then, in 2012, HAP, People in Aid, and Sphere came together to form the Joint Standards Initiative (JSI), seeking 'greater coherence for users of standards'. Although Sphere withdrew in 2013, the other two members set about developing a Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) that would replace the HAP Standard and the People in Aid Code of Good Practice. The CHS was launched

in December 2014, also merging with the Core Standards developed by Sphere (which became involved once again but only as a 'contributor'[131]), and the Quality COMPAS reference framework of Groupe Urgence Réhabilitation and Développement (URD).[132]

The CHS is a process-based standard that, according to its authors, 'describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian action'.[133] There was extensive discussion among those involved in its development about its possible use as a basis for verification of humanitarian performance and certification of humanitarian agencies. However, it was eventually decided that the CHS would be a voluntary code, albeit with the possibility of verification for humanitarian organisations that seek external assurance of, and certification for, their faithful application of the standard. The CHS Verification Scheme, which builds on the two-year Certification Review Project of the SCHR, offers three options: self-assessment by humanitarian organisations or consortia in accordance with an established verification framework; third party verification; and certification. The last two are overseen by independent auditors who are assessed and managed by the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative, an organisation set up in June 2015 off the back of the SCHR certification project.

Although both the JEEAR and the TEC recommended the creation of an accreditation system, the SCHR certification project was met with significant scepticism,[134] even direct opposition,[135] from within the humanitarian sector. Despite two decades of discussion of its possibilities, self-regulation in the humanitarian sector has been, as Cosgrave argues, 'a non-starter'.[136] There has been interest across humanitarian agencies in improving the quality of humanitarian action through strengthening coherence, but there is a lack of evidence confirming that such improvement is brought about through certification.[137] There have also been concerns raised about the potential financial costs of certification. And, as stated earlier, there is insufficient commercial incentive for humanitarian NGOs to willingly submit to external regulation.

The persistent reluctance of humanitarian NGOs to endorse accreditation, while they continue to invest time and resources in standardisation, is a further reflection of tension in the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. Writing about standards, regulation and certification, Cosgrave argues that 'most of those in the sector are too polite to say that the discussion is about power'.[138] Certainly decisions

to accept, promote or reject regulation are guided by institutional instincts that relate to power, by attention to the possibility of losing or gaining power, and by concern for the relative power of others.

But every attempt to strengthen coherence is itself an expression of power. That the old guard of the humanitarian sector (big NGOs, the Red Cross, the UN and OECD donor governments) can define and disseminate common standards and principles is an indication of its normative, and indeed coercive, power. Through processes of professionalisation, this old guard has formed an epistemic community*, developing a collective authority over humanitarian knowledge. It has thus been able to present as one what is a mélange of different institutional interests, albeit informed and guided by broadly the same ideology. If the quest for coherence has not gone as far as some of its advocates might have hoped, it is partly because making one out of many is a process fraught with political challenges, leading to contortions of reality (to give the impression of unwavering adherence to common commitments, such as the application of core humanitarian principles) and contradictions (between collaboration and competition, for example).

Perhaps of greater consequence than contradictions within the old guard, is a contradiction between coherence as a means of empowerment and coherence as a means of exclusion. There should be no doubt that attempts to promote rights and redress inequalities between providers and recipients of aid through standardisation are genuine. However, standards are a barrier to entry to the humanitarian sector.[139] Coherence in the humanitarian sector has reduced the possibility for the participation of people in crisis-affected countries (and the local institutions that represent them) in shaping humanitarian norms and practice so as to better meet their hopes and expectations. Those outside the old guard, particularly smaller organisations, are rarely able to influence global humanitarian initiatives; they face a disproportionate financial burden in meeting the bureaucratic requirements that such initiatives can impose. Consequently, these organisations struggle to access institutional donors when adoption of new bureaucratic measures becomes a condition for funding.

Acknowledgement of the role of power in efforts to strengthen coherence leads us to the question of perspective. Coherence might

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* A network, for which membership is dependent on the possession of certain expertise, as well as the promotion of certain values.

be seen as a means of improving accountability to crisis-affected communities but, as Featherstone asks, 'whose accountability counts?'[140]

Accountability and the humanitarian market place

> Wherever I get deployed to do monitoring and evaluation, I am still made to focus on outputs. In the Philippines, we had to update the output tracker every two days until we reached 100,000 people, because the organisation had to report back to institutional donors and it wanted to communicate our successes to the public. These numbers are nearly always fudged. They are then picked up by others, presented as evidence and used to inform future decisions.[141]

This statement by a Save the Children staff member is representative of the experiences of numerous evaluators interviewed during our research. Over the last decade, greater attention has been given to systematising learning and strengthening accountability to crisis-affected populations. The more regular implementation of after-action reviews, people-first impact method assessments, and real-time evaluations with feedback from aid recipients are indications of this. But these activities are still marginal to the practice of evaluators (particularly those working within humanitarian organisations), since reporting and upwards accountability remain the primary purpose of evaluation, and of performance management in general.

It is in the context of natural disasters that the most has been done to improve accountability to crisis-affected people through the development and trial of new approaches to community engagement. Appropriate and productive engagement is easier in disaster-prone countries, where governments and citizens are used to dealing with the effects of disaster and to interacting with humanitarian organisations, which, through long-term presence, have developed their understanding of local culture and politics. One of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, with one of the most robust legal frameworks for disaster risk management,[142] the Philippines readily lends itself to participatory approaches to the design, implementation

and evaluation of humanitarian programmes. Engagement with and accountability to communities was given significant attention during the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan. One notable initiative, developed by Plan International in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee taskforce on accountability, was Pamati Kita ('Let's Listen Together'), which was developed to encourage humanitarian agencies to 'use contextually appropriate common tools and services for accountability'.[143]

The Haiyan response also involved the use of participatory approaches to assessing the impact of the typhoon and the needs of those affected. A Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA 1) was carried out in the days after Haiyan made landfall. With the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) responsible for coordination and WFP as technical lead, MIRA 1 involved more than 40 organisations. It assessed 283 *barangays*[144] (intended as an indicative sample of some of the worst affected areas in the country), using a questionnaire and key informant interviews, supported by a review of secondary data. In early December, a Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MIRA 2) was conducted, with focus on the impact of the typhoon on households rather than *barangays*. 1,167 households from 124 *barangays* and 32 evacuation centres were surveyed. Then in mid-December, Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision and UNICEF carried out a 'children's MIRA', consulting children about their needs and priorities for the humanitarian response. These assessments reflected a growing interest within the humanitarian sector to systemise engagement with crisis-affected communities in different stages of the programme cycle.

The development of situational analysis, needs assessment, and crisis classification has been central to the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. Established under UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182, the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) provided an analysis of needs for individual emergencies. But it was criticised for failing to connect analysis to the decision-making of humanitarian agencies and donors in such a way as to ensure appropriate prioritisation and resourcing. It was replaced by the Humanitarian Programme Cycle in 2013. But despite attempts to ensure that needs assessment informs operational and strategic decision-making, needs assessments are still used primarily to substantiate funding requests and validate decisions already taken.[145] Even though, according to an inter-agency evaluation of the Haiyan response, MIRA 1 was 'generally considered

to be useful by the international community', it was primarily used to provide 'reassurance to donors and to field actors that the response was aligned with needs'.[146] The same evaluation suggests that 'there was little evidence that MIRA 1 was used by clusters or donors to make targeting or allocation decisions'.[147] Meanwhile, it proposes that MIRA 2 'was generally felt to have told agencies what they already knew' and that 'there was no evidence of… MIRA 2 having shaped action'.[148] A further indication of the disconnection of planning and decision-making from analysis during the Haiyan response is the fact that the UN's Strategic Response Plan was produced without a comprehensive needs assessment to set baselines.[149]

More than the utility of the information gathered by MIRA 1 and MIRA 2, then, it is the participatory process through which this information was gathered that has been praised within the humanitarian community – a reflection of concern for the rights and agency of disaster-affected people, expressions of which have been central to the discourse on humanitarian effectiveness. In the early 1990s, the shift from a needs-based to a rights-based approach defined the new humanitarianism.[150] Humanitarian agencies gave more attention to protection, as Boutros Boutros-Ghali declared that 'the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed'.[151] And new perspectives on agency that were now prevalent in rural development influenced the humanitarian imagination of the intended beneficiaries of emergency relief; they were transformed from passive victims to active rights-holders, with voices that should be heard.[152]

The development of quality standards for humanitarian aid was grounded in a notion of rights. The founders of the Sphere Project were inspired by the idea that those facing hardship as a consequence of war and disaster had a right to receive assistance, and that this assistance should be of a certain quality.[153] In its first sentence, the Humanitarian Charter, which sets out the legal and ethical foundations for the Sphere standards, recognises the right of all people affected by conflict and disaster to 'receive protection and assistance to ensure the basic conditions for a life with dignity'.[154]

In the early 1990s, discussions about reform and professionalisation among leading evaluators of humanitarian action (some of whom were anthropologists by training) often focussed on voice and experience.[155] However, despite the increased political currency of rights, humanitarian agencies largely paid lip service to participation in the design and evaluation of humanitarian programmes.[156] In 1999,

Apthorpe and Atkinson conducted a review of 250 evaluation reports in a study commissioned by ALNAP. They found that 'only a few of these evaluations comment on issues of consultation, and few are themselves participatory'.[157]

A number of initiatives emerged at the turn of the millennium to promote the involvement of crisis-affected communities in the activities of humanitarian agencies. In 2002, ALNAP contracted Groupe URD to carry out a Global Study on Consultation with and Participation by Beneficiaries and Affected Populations in the Process of Planning, Managing, Monitoring and Evaluating Humanitarian Programmes. This resulted in the publication, in 2003, of a handbook for practitioners on participation.[158] In 2001, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) commissioned the Disaster Mitigation Institute to conduct a public opinion survey as part of an evaluation of the DEC expenditure on the humanitarian response to the earthquake in Gujarat that same year.[159] This practice was then used more widely following the Indian Ocean Tsunami: similar surveys were part of the TEC's tsunami response evaluation;[160] and the Fritz Institute conducted the first two[161] of numerous 'recipient perception' surveys that it would carry out over the coming years. The Fritz Institute's independent surveys, in particular, have been seen within the humanitarian sector as an important innovation in the development of participatory methodologies for the evaluation of humanitarian action.[162] Meanwhile, the Listening Project, launched in 2005 by the Collaborative for Development Action, is widely recognised as producing the most comprehensive participatory study into the long-term effects of different kinds of international aid on 'people, communities, and their societies over time'.[163] In the spirit of these initiatives, projects have been developed in recent years to use aid recipient perspectives to inform programme adjustments and organisational learning (such as Keystone Accountability's Ground Truth Solutions), and to improve two-way communication between disaster-affected people and humanitarian agencies (such as the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network).

Particularly over the last five years, there has been more frequent and heated discussion within the humanitarian sector about the need for a 'localisation' of humanitarian action; for international humanitarian agencies and donors to 'shift power' to local agencies, to recognise the central role of local people and institutions in responding to emergencies and work in partnership with them, 'building' their capacity through providing resources and imparting expertise. These

proposals were discussed perhaps more than any other during the consultations of the WHS.[164] Although often framed in problematic terms that romanticise and essentialise 'the local' as devoid of politics, calls for localisation reflect what might be seen as a fresh cultural turn; and a post-humanitarian turn, to the extent that it calls into question the universal morality of providing assistance across borders. They often emphasise cultural difference and the need to acknowledge contextual specificities. The localisation agenda has reinvigorated discussion about the role anthropology can play in humanitarian action. In 2015, the Ebola Response Anthropology Platform was set up with funding from the Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises Programme, providing open-source access to a significant repository of anthropological papers on socio-cultural dimensions of Ebola in West Africa, as well as reviews of how local people experienced the outbreak and the international response. Should it be replicated during other emergency responses, this kind of initiative has potential to amplify the voices of crisis-affected populations and deepen understandings of context, experience and perspective among humanitarian workers.

Despite increased attention to participation, many people we interviewed for this research project felt that there is still insufficient opportunity provided by international humanitarian agencies for the involvement of crisis-affected people in different stages of the programme cycle. José Guadelupe Ruelas, the Country Director of Casa Alianza in Honduras, said that 'a lot of the time, humanitarian organisations here have put themselves at the demands of donors, not of communities'.[165] Some respondents felt that where crisis-affected people are able to participate in needs assessment, this has little impact on decision-making. Rather, anecdotal information is often used to reinforce pre-existing assumptions. Marc Cohen, Senior Researcher at Oxfam America, criticised this 'extractive approach' and suggested that there is a need for a more 'conversational approach', through which a deeper understanding of the aspirations of crisis-affected people results in changes to the way aid is delivered. The extractive approach turns engagement with crisis-affected populations into a tick-box exercise that legitimises strategies that can ultimately undermine the possibility of genuine and constructive participation.[166] Engagement then becomes a tool in service of the corporate interests of humanitarian agencies seeking to demonstrate their impact.

Participation and community engagement, taken as unequivocal

goods,[167] have been subsumed under the banner of accountability in the humanitarian sector. For advocates of professional reform in the 1990s, it was only by creating regulating mechanisms that forced humanitarians to answer to crisis-affected people themselves that there could be substantive change in humanitarian performance: humanitarian agencies would get away with providing poor quality services for as long as their power remained unchecked; and institutional donors were primarily concerned with protecting their own interests; they would be satisfied provided that humanitarian agencies met their demands, which had little to do with the quality of aid. Accountability to the recipients of aid, then, was seen as a panacea for the structural failings of humanitarian action and, therefore, as an objective to which all humanitarian reforms should contribute.

As the humanitarian effectiveness agenda drew on NPM, accountability was articulated using a commercial logic that complemented the requirement for greater efficiency and value for money. By imagining disaster settings as a market place for humanitarian goods and services, and aid recipients as customers with consumer rights, humanitarian agencies would be compelled to provide the best possible service with the resources available to them. Accountability, through which customers could express their preferences, causing organisations to adapt in pursuit of customer satisfaction, became the keystone in the construction of the humanitarian market.

The commercialisation of the relationship between humanitarian agencies and their intended beneficiaries has presented accountability both as a business imperative and a moral imperative. The alignment of, and tension between, these necessities is a defining characteristic of humanitarian neomanagerialism. It also reflects the common sense of the neoliberal era: that choice through the market is the ultimate mark of freedom, and so the market is not only the most profitable mechanism through which to organise society, but also the most liberating and efficient means through which to provide services; a primary source of public goods. The idea that consumer choice is power has, particularly in the last decade, inspired great enthusiasm for so-called market-based programmes in humanitarian response – most notably cash transfers. The provision of cash rather than in-kind aid has been seen as a way of empowering crisis-affected people with the means to access the goods and services that are most relevant and desirable to them. One of the ironies of this development is that, following attempts to establish a 'humanitarian market place', the only

way of providing choice for crisis-affected people is through improving access to, and stimulating, existing markets for standard goods and services, turning humanitarian agencies into creditors. Regulatory measures aimed at making humanitarian agencies accountable to crisis-affected communities are voluntarily adopted; it is almost impossible to imagine a regulating mechanism that simultaneously has international legitimacy, is flexible enough to be representative of the demands of the 'customers' of humanitarian agencies in each emergency, is loose enough to convince humanitarian agencies to submit to it, but is also robust enough to enforce and punish. Moreover, on account of their circumstances, recipients of aid are rarely able to reject an offer of assistance to go in search of others; a situation that is reinforced by the humanitarian community's understandable emphasis on avoiding duplication through coordination.

Accountability is constrained because it is sought through the deployment of market mechanisms where there is no market. It has become a primary objective of reform even though people receiving humanitarian aid have no possibility for 'exit'.[168] With all forms of engagement with crisis-affected people conceived of as instrumental to accountability within this commercial logic, participation can only be tokenistic – an opportunity for expression and involvement without power. Of course, there are important questions to be asked about whether a market model for humanitarian assistance could bring about fair and appropriate outcomes at any rate. But, even if it can in theory, the absence of consumer power precludes the possibility of market equilibrium.

Inspired by a rights-based approach, efforts to strengthen accountability have been aimed at flattening the unequal relationship between humanitarian agencies and the people they seek to help. However, the market model reduces this relationship to a commercial transaction, stripping associated rights of their political content. It is then through technocratic solutions that rights are promoted.

EFFECTS AND LIMITS

The theatre of effectiveness: dancing with donors

The birth of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda signalled a departure from an outmoded humanitarian sensibility. But vestiges of the old humanitarian voluntarism remained, anchoring the accelerating process of professionalisation in values that many humanitarians take to be timeless and essential to their cause. If the adoption of neomanagerial reforms consolidated humanitarian bureaucracy, it did not do away with the activism that had long prompted people to join humanitarian organisations – a 'do something' attitude inspired by an amalgam of compassion, solidarity, idealism and hubris. In fact, with the decline in popular political organisation and the institutionalisation of the Left in the West in the 1970s and 1980s, NGOs attracted many young radicals.[169] The humanitarian sector became the site of fomentation of a new hybrid radicalism that blended the pursuit of political ideals with professional aspirations. As the end of the Cold War inspired new hopes and a new humanitarianism, the activism of humanitarian NGO workers was directed both outwards, on reforming societies at large, as well as inwards, on reforming the humanitarian sector itself.

Humanitarianism is an overtly moral enterprise; a desire to do more in the face of crisis has often gone hand-in-hand with a reflexive and even compunctious posture among exponents. A certain kind of critique of the state of humanitarianism has then guided reform of the humanitarian sector. This process of adjustment has been shaped by prevailing notions of success and failure within the humanitarian sector.[170] Humanitarian discourse is deeply imbued with the promise of

modernity – an affirmation of the inexorable march of human progress – and the idea that solutions to complex problems can be sought through rational planning has both motivated reform and determined its content. As such, humanitarian activism has been directed towards confirming a collective faith in the possibility of correcting perceived wrongs.

What does this activism and reform amount to? Firstly, we might ask whether the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has achieved the objectives sought by its architects. In other words, how effective is the humanitarian effectiveness agenda?

It has not been the intention of our research to assess whether humanitarian action is or is not effective, nor to conduct a conventional evaluation of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. Through our investigation into the development of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda, the forces and motivations that have shaped it, its influence over humanitarian action, and, in particular, how its contribution to notions of success relates to the circumstances and aspirations of people in countries affected by crisis, we seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of the broader effects of professionalising reforms to performance management over the last two decades, looking beyond the question of whether or not they have achieved their stated goals. Nonetheless, although a comprehensive evaluation of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has not to date been carried out, there exists, within the humanitarian sector, a widely-held view about its achievements that is substantiated by system-wide reviews, meta-evaluations, and evaluations of individual initiatives. According to this view, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has succeeded in transforming humanitarianism into a significantly more professional enterprise, altering its character and make-up; in doing so, it has engendered a gradual improvement in the quality and coordination of humanitarian programmes, the technical proficiency of humanitarian workers, and the accountability of humanitarian organisations; however, it has produced only limited success in these areas, primarily in terms of process and outputs, and there is a need for more concerted action and greater investment. Many of the respondents to our interview and survey questions felt that the humanitarian effectiveness agenda had made things better, but hardly any could articulate exactly how.

As a review of the humanitarian system's performance, the 2015 edition of SOHS demonstrates this perspective, albeit focussed only on developments over the previous three years. Although it presents an 'overall negative assessment of the humanitarian system's performance',[171] it suggests that certain parts of the system are improving. It states that 'the Transformative Agenda has helped to raise the standard for rapid response and improve humanitarian leadership', and 'the new Humanitarian Programme Cycle and Strategic Response Plan approaches have strengthened coordinated planning and resource mobilisation'.[172] It proposes that response to rapid-onset disasters is improving, offering a largely positive appraisal of the response to Typhoon Haiyan as an example (there was productive cooperation between the Filipino government and international agencies, the relatively new IASC L3 system-wide response activation process contributed to a timely response at scale, there was appropriate targeting to meet the most immediate needs, and there was considerable attention to accountability to the affected population). It states that, despite Haiyan being the most destructive typhoon to hit the Philippines, the response 'resulted in reduced [sic] levels of morbidity and mortality than in major natural disasters in the recent past'.[173] However, it suggests that 'humanitarian assistance is falling short of its aim of supporting vulnerable people living in… [chronic] crises',[174] with significant gaps in coverage and slow responses in countries such as the Central African Republic and South Sudan. According to the SOHS, in these contexts, the L3 mechanism has highlighted 'deeper performance and accountability problems',[175] and the humanitarian system 'does not provide mechanisms that would allow the kind of genuine accountability to affected people needed to ensure a high-quality response'.[176] It proposes that, overall, there is worse coverage of needs across the humanitarian system 'both in terms of how humanitarian contributions measure up to stated requirements, and in terms of operational capacity in the field'.[177]

Where the SOHS describes improvements and successes, these relate primarily to 'the process of aid delivery rather than… substance and outcomes'.[178] And so we are left with a familiar set of conclusions: it is difficult to assess the changing impact of humanitarian action and, therefore, the contribution of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda to any change (or there is at least very little evidence of positive impact); there is some evidence that proposed outputs are being delivered, that there is a growing number of common tools for humanitarian performance management, and that humanitarian agencies continue to adopt these as a means of aligning their processes; but success in

terms of outputs and process is uneven and is most notable in those emergency responses that encounter fewest political challenges.

It is clear that initiatives for reforming and professionalising the humanitarian sector have not achieved resounding success on their own terms. All the humanitarian workers with whom we spoke felt that much more needs to be done; if this perception is shaped by their activism, it is also the result of lived experiences. The Head of Humanitarian Response for an international NGO described performance management in the humanitarian sector as a 'car crash', citing failings in programme quality and accountability.[179] In another interview, an independent evaluator said, 'I don't think I've seen a marked substantive improvement in the quality of humanitarian programmes over the almost-fifteen years that I've been working in the sector'.[180]

Great energy has been invested in improving humanitarian performance over the last two decades. The humanitarian effectiveness agenda has mobilised and focussed the humanitarian policy community, and has been a potent organising regime – a means of bringing greater order to a diverse set of activities carried out by a growing number of actors. Alignment of policies and adherence to standards and guidelines are, on account of their contribution to coherence (one of the revised DAC criteria), often held up as indicators of success. But limited value can be ascribed to coherence within the humanitarian sector without connecting it to positive outcomes, particularly those sought by people on the receiving end of humanitarian assistance. During an interview, Sara Pantuliano asked whether crisis-affected people would say they have seen a difference as a result of greater coherence.[181]

Without direct connection between the establishment of greater order and the achievement of positive outcomes, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda becomes primarily an attempt by humanitarian agencies to shape their own character in line with an ideal type, and similarly shape the character of others within their sphere of influence; to exercise what Foucault refers to as 'techniques of the self' or 'arts of existence' – actions through which people transform themselves to meet certain stylistic criteria.[182] The development, adoption, and application (albeit not always thorough) of professional standards with little evidence of improved outcomes is perhaps the clearest indication of this. This self-styling becomes part of marketing strategies through which humanitarian agencies project credibility and legitimacy to the outside world. In a competitive environment, being seen to develop measures to improve results and then being seen to adopt them can

attract capital and fend off public scrutiny, regardless of the results themselves. And, to keep taxpayers and central government onside, it is also in the interests of government aid departments to be seen to be supporting these measures.[183] What matters is the spectacle of effectiveness.

Management mechanisms developed within the NGO sector have become part of the regulatory framework of donor governments. DFID's *Humanitarian Response Funding Guidelines for NGOs* establishes that organisations seeking funding should 'take note of' the Red Cross and NGO Code of Conduct, the Sphere standards, and the CHS, among other protocols.[184] Although this is a loose requirement that in practice is barely enforced, it nonetheless conditions the behaviour of NGOs. In this way, as NGO self-regulation in the nineteenth century set out the early bureaucratic framework for charities, so regulatory measures designed by NGOs themselves in the neomanagerial era have been incorporated into government regulation.

Humanitarian agencies redesign their operational systems and strategies to focus on results, but they evade regulations that entail real concessions of power. Government donors demand results, but they refrain from enforcement of commitments relating to programme quality, generally reserving the application of pressure to ensure alignment with geostrategic objectives. There is no commercial incentive to orient RBM towards positive outcomes for crisis-affected people, it is difficult to measure outcomes, and humanitarian programmes are planned so as to deliver that which is measurable. And so we reach the unfortunate conclusion that a lot of the reforming activity of humanitarian agencies over the last two decades has been a performatory dance with donors; theatrical acts of self-transformation through which humanitarian agencies can present a marketable image of themselves, donors can feign concern for programme quality, and all are provided with reassurance of the inevitability of progress.

In focus

Within the humanitarian sector we typically hear two critiques of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. The first comes from its architects, who extol the progress made through the development of professional standards and codes of practice, yet simultaneously lament the

managerial baggage that was dragged along with these advances.[185] They suggest that mechanisms developed to make humanitarian aid more effective are only as good as users make them,[186] and that undesirable consequences are the result of misapplication.[187] The second group of critics, a younger generation of 'new believers', argues that the effectiveness agenda has been too centralised and donor driven, that it has not given enough space for technicians and managers to engage with crisis-affected populations, and that it has not gone far enough in restructuring the sector to focus on results (particularly outcomes) in a way that would be conducive to learning. This is essentially a critique of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda for not being neomanagerial enough.

Even if both these critiques lead to calls for 'transformation' of the humanitarian sector, neither challenges the politics or the epistemology of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. This is partly because neomanagerial language and culture have become so deeply engrained in the humanitarian sector. And this limits the construction of alternative visions for the relationships between donors, humanitarian agencies, and people and institutions in crisis-affected countries. It limits the construction of alternative models of humanitarian engagement shaped by alternative understandings of success.

It is not possible to disaggregate the humanitarian effectiveness agenda, to reinforce technical developments while breaking them loose from managerial constraints. As we have proposed through our account of the development of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda and the forces and motivations that have shaped it, neomanagerial culture in the humanitarian sector and the humanitarian effectiveness agenda have been mutually constitutive and mutually reinforcing. And it is only through recognition of the intellectual, cultural and political dependencies of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda – as a manifestation of humanitarian neomanagerialsim – that we can hope to understand its consequences beyond the realm of technical endeavour, and offer propositions that avoid legitimising and entrenching its potential defects.

Over nine months from the end of 2014 to the third quarter of 2015, Save the Children's Humanitarian Affairs Team carried out research in 12 countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal; Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey; Liberia; Niger; Occupied Palestinian Territories; Philippines; Guatemala, and Honduras), exploring how understandings of effectiveness are constructed in different contexts, the political and institutional interests that underpin these understandings, how these understandings shape humanitarian action, and how the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has played out in relation to all the above. This research resulted in the production of five essays that reflect upon different issues related to effectiveness.[188] It also generated qualitative data, informing analysis that we draw on here, together with our own experiences working in the humanitarian sector, to discuss seven tendencies associated with the humanitarian effectiveness agenda.

1. Humanitarianisation

The rapid growth of urban populations[189] and the concentration of economic activity in cities have heightened urban conflict and disaster risks. While responding to urban emergencies is not new to humanitarian agencies, cities are increasingly sites of humanitarian operations, and major disasters in urban environments, such as the 2010 earthquake in the Haitian capital Port au Prince, have destabilised 'rural assumptions' that underpin conventional relief approaches. There is growing emphasis in international policy debates on urban humanitarian responses and the conceptual and technical challenges they entail.[190]

In recent years, urban violence has been given greater attention as a discrete field of study. It has naturally also become an issue of concern for humanitarian organisations turning their gaze towards cities. With violence increasingly seen as both generating 'humanitarian needs' and forming an 'integral and intractable part of the current development model',[191] cities with high levels of violence appear to be ripe for humanitarian agencies to test programmatic approaches aimed at preventing, managing and responding to crisis.[192] While the relative scarcity of funding for humanitarian activities in cities suggests that humanitarian agencies are not being drawn to focus on urban violence by short-term commercial incentives,[193] there is certainly a strategic interest in adapting to be able to respond to human suffering as its forms and geographies change. However, humanitarian organisations seek to balance adaptation of their operational modalities with maintenance of brand unity and constancy in their stated mission. The effect has been to superimpose humanitarian ideals and concepts on situations of human suffering previously thought to exist beyond the realm of humanitarian concern.

The spectre of extreme violence is a permanent source of terror for many residents of Tegucigalpa and Guatemala City (the capitals of Honduras and Guatemala respectively). The homicide rates in these cities are among the highest in the world;[194] they are also blighted by torture, rape, and robbery.[195] Although much of the violence today is attributed to territorial gangs involved in extortion and the traffic of drugs, Honduras and Guatemala have long, if distinct, histories of violence: state repression, supported and supplemented by foreign interventions (most notably, in the latter part of the twentieth century, by the US), predated by centuries of colonial rule, with its legacies of patriarchy and racial discrimination. In both capital cities, government lacks the institutional capacity to respond to gang violence with anything more appropriate and creative than *mano dura*[196] approaches, and there is little political incentive for deploying resources to target gangs in the poorest quarters of the city where they are most embedded. Corrupt and securitised state institutions reinforce a cycle of violence to which the brutality of gangs is just one contributor, albeit a very notable one. According to Carlos Sierra of the Centre for the Investigation and Promotion of Human Rights (CIPRODEH), 'it is the multidimensionality of violence and its impacts that turns this situation into a humanitarian crisis'.[197]

International humanitarian organisations are starting to deploy resources to respond to this 'humanitarian crisis', with a few of the big international NGOs, as well as the ICRC, working in the shanty towns of both cities, albeit not on a large scale. Violence in Honduras and Guatemala is generating widespread humanitarian concern. Nonetheless, as international humanitarian agencies seek to provide the protection and services for vulnerable communities that the Honduran and Guatemalan governments are unwilling and unable to offer, they are contributing to a logic of 'humanitarianisation', according to which assistential approaches are normalised to compensate for the persistence of structural problems related to rule of law, democratic accountability, public services and deep-seated social division. For Bernard McCaul, GOAL's Country Director in Honduras, 'substitution of government is not a risk, it is a reality'.[198]

Ian Walker, the Inter-American Development Bank's Representative in Honduras, told us: 'Humanitarian organisations do not need to focus on assistance. There are big holes in social protection but these are for the government to fill through cash transfers'.[199] Moreover, ambiguity as to the appropriate categorisation of urban violence within

international law[200] calls into question the legitimacy of international humanitarian organisations delivering conventional relief programmes unless requested to do so by national governments. Both the Honduran and Guatemalan governments have used the presence of international agencies to plug gaps and bolster their own legitimacy without wanting to declare states of emergency. Those international humanitarian agencies present have not then generally focussed on assistance programmes. While MSF and ICRC have provided support for local public health facilities, GOAL has been using innovative approaches to protect small businesses from extortion, and Save the Children and other NGOs have prioritised basic protection activities and education programmes to prevent children from joining gangs. Humanitarian agencies have sought to adapt their operational platforms to deliver these programmes, while building relationships with the community associations and municipal governments with which they need to work.

The need to demonstrate effectiveness has conditioned operational approaches to urban volence. The absence of a clear normative framework for their engagement means that hHumanitarian agencies inevitably draw on their existing 'kit', which, as Redfield suggests, is designed to provide 'only a temporary patch'.[201] During an interview, Edy Manolo Barillas Cruz, OCHA's National Disaster Response Adviser in Guatemala, made the point that 'our tools for effective action are designed for use in response to large-scale disasters. We know they do less well in the context of chronic violence and instability'.[202] Save the Children Guatemala's Director of Programmes, Roberto Cabrera, told us that it is not appropriate to be guided by technical standards for emergency response when working on health or hygiene in a shantytown that needs more than an emergency response.[203]

Cabrera is critical of the tendency of humanitarian agencies to 'projectise' – short-term, technical approaches – in response to urban violence. While projectisation in this context might be partly due to a lack of clarity regarding the longer-term role of humanitarian agencies, it is also, he suggested, a consequence of the requirement to give evidence of results.[204] The need to focus interventions on what can be measured has given even the developmental education projects of humanitarian agencies a short-term and assistential character. For Arabesca Sánchez, an independent analyst working on public security in Tegucigalpa, 'lack of continuity is a common and problematic feature of the projects of international agencies'.[205] A 15 year-old girl living in one of the Honduran capital's most violent neighbourhoods also said

that 'there is a need to give more continuity to projects. Often they start and stop'.[206] (Projectisation by international humanitarian agencies was also a subject of complaint among key informants during our research in other contexts, notably in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal following floods in 2014, and in parts of Niger that have experienced ongoing crop failure and food shortages).[207]

By encouraging projectisation and a reliance on the humanitarian kit, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda reinforces the logic of humanitarianisation of chronic urban violence. Focussing on assistential aspects of their activities, they then also come to imagine the societies that host them as suitable settings for the application of assistential approaches. According to Cabrera 'many humanitarians come to Guatemala City and want to think about an event to which they might respond'.[208] This turns humanitarian action into an instrument of the bureaucratic power of the state that can use its management of a permanent emergency response as a means of maintaining order in the absence of more comprehensive measures to reduce violence. It also serves to pathologise societies already forced to live in a permanent state of exception, through which denial of political and economic rights prevents the construction of lasting peace.

2. Constructing the exceptional crisis

The progressive humanitarianisation of new terrains and new thematics has been partly inspired by the expansive ambitions of the new humanitarianism. But changing conceptions of crisis have also played a role. The increasingly fashionable notion of resilience – the ability to manage risks and absorb shocks in a complex, interconnected and hazardous world – has contributed to the imagination of crisis as a permanent feature of contemporary political, social and economic systems. Yet, despite the prevalence of this post-modern framing of crisis as intrinsic to everyday life,[209] individual crises have often been presented by humanitarian agencies as exceptional. Crisis becomes simultaneously ubiquitous and unique.

Apocalyptic description of uncontrollable human and environmental degradation has become the requisite preface to calls for reform of the humanitarian system over recent years.[210] In order to show just how necessary change is *now*, truths about climate change, growing inequality, human conflict, and exhausted natural resources must be rearticulated each year with greater melodrama than the last. Emerging

disasters and conflicts must also fit this image of a world facing impending doom. Particularly since the Ethiopian famine of 1984 and its widespread news media coverage, humanitarian organisations have contributed significantly to shaping public consciousness of conflict and disaster. The presentation of each crisis as 'the worst yet' has become an essential means of mobilising action and public donorship.[211] This narrative, however, often dislocates conflicts and disasters from their historical and political context, with the potential to pervert strategic and operational decision-making. To the extent that the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has encouraged the use of humanitarian frameworks to address different forms of human suffering in an increasingly humanitarianised world, it has contributed to a dehistoricisation and depoliticisation of individual events, which are seen instead as exceptional and unprecedented.

Niger has a long history of food crises;[212] it has experienced several escalations in food insecurity in recent years (in 2005, 2008, 2010, and 2012). It is also ranked bottom of UNDP's Human Development Index.[213] Niger is a 'disequilibrium environment', in which climatic variability and drought have become normal.[214] Chronic poverty and limited government capacity to provide a safety net have increased the impact of environmental shocks on vulnerable households. Vulnerability to the impact of drought is produced over time, by what Robert Chambers refers to as a 'ratchet effect', whereby the recurrent degradation of household assets, drives people irreversibly into poverty.[215] But, as David Matyas points out in his study for this research project, food insecurity in Niger has typically been addressed through repeated emergency responses, attending to spikes as unique and disconnected from the wider context.[216] Matyas suggests that this approach is like periodically pouring buckets of water into a few tributaries in the hope of replenishing a dried up river. The insufficient and at times inappropriate action of government and development agencies, as well as the short funding cycles, have had the effect of cultivating a state of dependence on emergency measures among some recipients. But, again, the transformation of 'everyday crises' into exceptions is partly a product of the approaches adopted by humanitarian agencies to improve performance. Clusters, intended to provide a platform for coordination during emergencies, have been continuously activated in Niger, giving the impression of an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Meanwhile, emphasis on measuring results and reporting has encouraged focus on short-term relief projects that disconnect the symptoms of food crisis from

its causes. A respondent from a village in the Zinder region criticised this as undermining continuity in the support provided to people with limited access to food: 'When the project comes to work, it should not leave us like this. They need to follow-up even if it is irregular. If there are actions without following, we come back to zero'.[217]

In order to plan, deliver and measure humanitarian activities, international humanitarian agencies depend upon a conceptual apparatus that constructs different terrains as suitable for their emergency interventions. Indeed, with its focus on discrete results, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has contributed to the development of this conceptual apparatus. In doing so, it has emphasised what geographer Kenneth Hewitt, in 1983, referred to as the perceived 'un-ness' of crises: that they are unprecedented, unexpected, unpleasant, unimaginable, unmanageable, and so on.[218]

As discussed by Fernando Espada in his study on the response to the spread of Ebola in Liberia in 2014, the narrative drew heavily on such concepts of 'un-ness',[219] despite the fact that there had been numerous previous outbreaks of Ebola in West and Central Africa, and there was evidence of the variables on which containment most depends: levels of poverty and social exclusion, the condition of public health systems, and the education of the population. Under pressure from foreign governments and citizenries to come up with definitive solutions, international agencies largely bypassed the structures and resources available in-country. Brave foreign volunteers were sent in to work in treatment centres, while brave local volunteers also treated those infected, carried out information campaigns, mobilised communities, and buried the dead. Considerations of their own effectiveness and impact focussed foreign humanitarians on their own operational tools and the difficulties they would encounter in using them to tackle what was the most serious Ebola epidemic on record; failure to draw on local knowledge and activities then contributed to the construction of the outbreak as unprecedented and unmanageable. Ironically, it was the characterisation of the crisis as exceptional that led to the involvement of international actors other than humanitarian agencies, primarily foreign militaries. The consequence of not supporting local agencies at an early stage was arguably to draw out the response and prolong the crisis; also, a securitisation of humanitarian activities occurred across the affected countries instead, the ramifications of which go beyond the Ebola response itself.

3. Missing politics

The rise of neomanagerial culture in the humanitarian sector has entrenched technocracy; the importance attributed to the role of management in humanitarian action reflects and reinforces a rejection of engagement with politics and governance, in favour of the impartial administration of technical inputs to achieve predetermined results. Unsurprisingly then, from the creation of standards to the development of professional training schemes, the initiatives of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda have generally focussed on enhancing the technical quality of humanitarian programmes, even if, according to a Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser at Save the Children, the shortage of technical capacity in the field remains a major barrier to achieving desired results.[220] Meanwhile, measurement has privileged the use of quantitative methodologies that tend to be insufficient for improving understanding of political and social dynamics.

Linear-rational models of programme planning allow for the consideration of known variables that might affect the achievement of desired results; they do not account for the unexpected, nor capture the multidimensionality of real interactions, making them especially ill-adapted to the uncertainties and complexities of politics and political process. In the humanitarian sector, the technical focus of RBM and of the various tools that have been introduced to support it has meant that attention has rarely been paid to the impact of interpersonal and interinstitutional relationships (and the inequalities that characterise them) on humanitarian outcomes; to micropolitical dynamics within humanitarian organisations; or to the social and political relations that condition the delivery of aid, determine how it is received and judged in crisis-affected countries, and influence its outcomes.

In the field studies for this research project, the theme of trust came up repeatedly; it is generally overlooked in reflections on effectiveness, but is in fact of utmost relevance. While levels of trust between humanitarians and the intended beneficiaries of their assistance shape the character of individual acts of humanitarian care, we found that trust between international humanitarian agencies and local authorities is of particular consequence to the impact of humanitarian action. Fernando Espada's study of responses to floods in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, in 2014, argues that there has been a decline in trust between international humanitarian NGOs and host governments in these countries in recent years.[221] While national governments see international NGOs as

potential competitors, unwilling to submit to governmental leadership on 'disaster management', international NGOs have seen national and local governments as 'incompetent, short-sighted and not always driven by the "humanitarian imperative"'.[222] Espada proposes that this 'trust deficit' is partly a product of the way authority has been acquired and exercised in South Asia. The space for international agencies to plan and implement their programmes depends on how they engage with an evolving statist model of governance that emphasises national sovereignty and governmental leadership in upholding the security and wellbeing of citizens. This model is designed to maintain internal order and project strength externally; in the case of India, it is used to consolidate regional hegemony. It promotes the outsourcing of service provision to NGOs and the private sector is promoted, building on long-standing relations of patronage and the enthusiastic implementation of structural adjustment programmes. Nonetheless, it has given national governments and local authorities an increasingly prominent role in directing and regulating responses to emergency. Meanwhile, the expansion of national bureaucracies has, as Sobhan suggests, deepened a 'political nepotism in administration', drawing foreign NGOs into a system used to service ruling parties.[223]

International humanitarian NGOs have been stymied by their dysfunctional relationships with host governments in South Asia. But in their own focus on technical concerns, and faced with diminishing emergency response capacity, they have continually resorted to the implementation of standardised short-term projects. The effect of this has been to legitimise the very bureaucratic and self-serving structures that have stymied them. They have then sought to address challenges that fundamentally relate to power and the exercise of authority through coordination. Where humanitarian agencies have sought to challenge bureaucratic restrictions and manipulation through advocacy, and have sought to mobilise communities to demand appropriate support from their governments, this has been at odds with the primary focus on programme delivery and reporting.

4. Tightening donor control

If humanitarian neomanagerialism has had a depoliticising effect on humanitarian agencies, reducing their attention to and understanding of political dynamics that influence both the implementation of humanitarian programmes and the consequences of humanitarian

action, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has created new opportunities for institutional donors to project their political interests on to humanitarian agencies. As we have already described, the collection of evidence for reporting on humanitarian activities became an increasingly common practice towards the end of the 1980s, as donors tightened their scrutiny of the aid programmes they were funding, and then promoted neomanagerial reforms in the NGO sector. A culture of reporting was really only confirmed some years later, when humanitarian agencies themselves started to champion evidence-based policy, adopting management tools to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, impact and productivity. However, tools used for the management of programmes and staff by humanitarian agencies can also be used by donors to manage humanitarian agencies. Although donors have rarely enforced regulation of humanitarian agencies and their programmes on matters of technical quality or accountability to affected communities, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been used to strengthen the conditionalities for the disbursal of funding.

Beyond giving donors tighter control of specific programmes, RBM has normalised the provision of assurances about the achievement of desired results, in turn contributing to a greater risk aversion. In fact, the trend from post-disbursal reporting and audit to Payment by Results is an indication of increasing demands for assurances by donor governments, with potentially significant consequences for NGO independence. Our research in the Middle East demonstrates that the conservative attitude of donor governments towards risk, reinforced by a culture of reporting, has imposed considerable limitations on humanitarian activities. In particular, with many states adopting more stringent and far-reaching counter-terrorism laws over the last fifteen years, the requirements of government overseas aid departments for reporting and accountability have paralysed NGO activities in some areas, taking precedence over the provision of support precisely for those people in the direst circumstances. In her study on responses to the conflict in Syria and its neighbouring countries, Jessica Field reflects on these restrictions.[224] With reference to counter-terrorism requirements, a doctor working for a diaspora organisation explained to her why his organisation was pulling out of Al-Raqqah and Deir ez-Zor, two Syrian cities brutally occupied at the time of interview by the so-called Islamic State (IS): 'Record [-keeping] and channels are difficult. There is insufficient reporting and we have obligations to donors'.[225] While it is not government aid departments themselves that establish

and enforce counter-terrorism legislation, their emphasis on reporting turns an understandable fear of inadvertently providing resources to IS and a desire to act in line with counter-terrorism measures into an unassailable barrier to humanitarian action. International agencies are prevented from taking risks to operate in areas controlled by IS and donor accountability requirements make it very difficult for them to partner with local and diaspora organisations that tend to have better access to populations in need of support but less developed monitoring systems.

In her study on humanitarian effectiveness in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Field describes restrictions placed on foreign NGO activities as a result of counter-terrorism measures aimed at preventing support for Hamas.[226] According to a former project manager of an international NGO working in Gaza, NGOs, as well as limiting their activities to those on which they can report, have to spend significant amounts of programme funding on managing donor perceptions of their attempts to mitigate what are unavoidable risks.[227]

Of course, regulation in accordance with counter-terrorism laws is a feature of humanitarian activity in numerous countries (Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, and many others) and, moreover, a culture of reporting has made humanitarian aid more donor-driven in contexts where these laws are of little relevance. It should be recognised that government donor divisions have a democratic responsibility to account for the public funds they spend on aid. It should also be acknowledged that humanitarian NGOs have their own political and commercial interests. However, the tightening of donor controls as a result of neomanagerial reforms in the humanitarian sector can serve to disconnect the actions of humanitarian agencies from the needs and aspirations of crisis-affected communities.

5. Averting risks and blocking out critique

It is not only government donors that have become more risk-averse with the development of a reporting culture. Humanitarian agencies have also become more conservative as they seek to avoid stepping too far out of line. In her studies on the Syrian Civil War and on the OPT, Field found that the mere threat of adverse consequences for failing to act in accordance with donor demands has led to self-policing among humanitarian agencies.[228] To avoid incurring risks in these contexts, humanitarian agencies have often prioritised comparatively easy-

to-deliver assistance projects in readily accessible areas, they have managed operations remotely, or they have cut assistance programmes altogether.[229] In this way, a reporting culture has evolved into a compliance culture.

Risk is a central but paradoxical theme in neomanagerial discourse. Risks offer opportunities, and managers need to be free to take risks. But, in a complex world, risk is seen as omnipresent. All action is then moderated by fear of failure, giving way to what Michael Power refers to as the 'risk management of everything'.[230] The existence of risk becomes both a guarantee of progress and a permanent and unacceptable threat.

As it has accompanied and accelerated the commercialisation of humanitarian activities, RBM has raised the cost of failure for humanitarian agencies. This is not in itself a bad thing. However, since the measurement of effectiveness is not just aimed at improving future performance, but also at informing and accounting for funding decisions, humanitarian NGOs have been encouraged to engage in low-risk activities and settle for low-hanging fruit in the form of easily quantifiable targets for reach and spend.[231] As increased attention to commercial incentives has shaped their engagement with the public as well as institutional donors, humanitarian NGOs have often focussed on the generation of success stories, 'dumbing down' their public communications in the hope of desensitising potential supporters to the less glossy features of humanitarian activity. The treatment of public discussion of failure as a threat to survival has then resulted in the creation of institutional barriers to critique and critical reflection within the humanitarian sector, undermining institutional learning.[232]

6. Distancing humanitarians from those they seek to support

While neomanagerial conceptions of risk have altered the priorities of humanitarian agencies, they have also contributed to shifts in the means through which these priorities are pursued. As the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has placed emphasis on the deliverable project, non-interventionary modes of humanitarian action have increasingly been seen as acceptable and even favourable in certain contexts. Driven by security concerns, the rise of remote management is partly a consequence of changes in the environments in which humanitarian agencies operate and the challenging circumstances humanitarian workers face.[233] There has certainly been an increase in the number of attacks on aid workers in certain conflict-affected countries such as

Somalia, Sudan and Afghanistan.[234] However, given the expansion of the global humanitarian workforce,[235] the rise in attacks against aid workers does not necessarily amount to the generalised and uniform deterioration in their security across all conflict settings often invoked by contemporary aid narratives as justification for the widespread adoption of alternative (often remote) operational modalities.[236]

An institutionalisation and even militarisation of risk management has, as Duffield proposes, transformed security into a 'mandatory performative act'.[237] In this context, if some humanitarian agencies take measures to assume their 'duty of care' and protect their staff,[238] others are obliged to fall in line so as to avoid being exposed. Remote programming then becomes a viable option for safeguarding staff while pursuing the discrete results demanded by humanitarian agencies and their donors.

The evolution of humanitarian operations in South-Central Somalia over the last twenty-five years offers one of the starkest examples of the shift in practice from direct to remote operations. In the months after the United Somali Congress (USC) deposed Siad Barre as President of Somalia in January 1991, South-Central Somalia was a 'dangerous and chaotic' place,[239] but Save the Children UK nonetheless had foreign staff working in all five of its offices there – in Mogadishu, Beledweyne, Baidoa, Jalalaqsi, and Bardera. In Mogadishu, there were three remotely managed clinics in the notoriously dangerous areas near the Green Line (which separated territories controlled by opposing factions of the USC), while foreign staff directly supported approximately 10,000 people each day with supplementary feeding in other parts of the city. Today, all operations in South-Central Somalia are remotely managed from Nairobi, with national staff and local partners responsible for implementation.

As documented by Jessica Field in her study on responses to the Syrian conflict, most international NGO programmes inside Syria are being managed remotely.[240] A number of high profile kidnappings and executions have reaffirmed the real threat facing aid workers, both Syrians and foreigners. If the institutionalisation of risk management has made remote programming the default option for agencies keen to 'maintain a presence' in insecure environments, the evolving expectations of the humanitarian manager have shaped the character and bureaucratic requirements of remote operations. Physically and notionally distant from workers and 'clients', as well as corporate governors, free from infrastructural and organisational regulations in territories hosting humanitarian operations, but obliged to micro-manage the means and timing of operational delivery, the remote manager has become the archetypal neomanagerial subject.

Monitoring and accounting for remotely managed programmes is inevitably challenging: because of the conditions in the areas in question, and the difficulty of finding people with appropriate skills who have access to those areas. During an interview, an international NGO worker in Lebanon spoke of the challenge in obtaining receipts and invoices related to programmes inside Syria when many of those involved in the provision, purchase and transportation of goods are fearful of the consequences of their names being associated with aid activities.[241] Institutional donors that have funded remote operations have sometimes softened reporting requirements.[242] Nonetheless, NGO remote managers have faced pressures from within their organisations to account for their programmes and generate fundraising and media 'content' that can be used publicly when it is deemed safe to do so. Digital technologies, fetishised by the humanitarian sector, have then been used to gather information and compensate for a lack of face-to-face contact: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, smartphone communication, chip-enabled smart cards for the receipt of cash transfers, biometric data capture devices, and even 'humanitarian drones' have been seized upon as possible solutions for anachronistic inefficiencies.

It has become clear that it is possible to provide humanitarian assistance through remotely managed operations; perhaps remote programming is the best that humanitarian agencies can hope to offer when faced with various constraints in insecure environments. Nonetheless, the trend towards non-interventionary modes of humanitarian action has problematic implications. It deepens inequalities between foreign aid workers, protected in their compounds in capital cities, and local aid workers and the people they support, who do not have access to the same security apparatus. It contributes to the securitisation of aid delivery and infrastructure. It reinforces top-down decision-making by donors and humanitarian agencies, reducing the possibility for meaningful participation of crisis-affected populations in the direction of aid programmes. It makes it more difficult for humanitarian agencies to develop their understanding of the contexts in which they are providing assistance. It devalues the 'small things' that humanise humanitarian care.[243] And it leaves little space for reciprocity, contestation, and politics. It contributes to a distancing, both spatial and psychological,

of humanitarians from the people they seek to support.

7. Projecting truths

As efforts have been made to improve accountability to crisis-affected populations since the 1990s, more attention has been given to the need for sensitivity to cultural specificities in the planning and delivery of humanitarian programmes. This concern is reflected in the inclusion of relevance and appropriateness among the revised DAC criteria for humanitarian assistance. However, while these two criteria encourage reflection on the programmatic objectives and technical substance of humanitarian activities ('relevance' is taken to refer to the 'overall goal and purpose of a programme' and 'appropriateness' to 'activities and inputs'[244]), they relate to aid programmes delivered from the outside, offering no opportunity for questions about the legitimacy of agencies involved, about the suitability of analytical methods used to inform programme design, or about local appreciation of the values and ideals that shape these methods. Such limited considerations of cultural relevance leave uncontested the epistemological assumptions and philosophical propositions of humanitarian agencies. They take for granted the neutrality and universality of the scientific methods promoted through the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. Cultural relevance is then reduced to a box to be ticked in accordance with the feedback or complaints of a sample of crisis-affected people about a particular project.

In a study for this project, Jessica Field reflects on the appropriateness of the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2014.[245] She notes that, with a long history of providing disaster relief in the Philippines, humanitarian agencies were aware of existing social structures and engaged productively with *barangay* captains, as figures of established local authority. Nonetheless, many of the people she interviewed in the Philippines expressed dissatisfaction at the way aid was distributed. Following the typhoon, humanitarian agencies carried out a variety of needs assessments in consultation with communities and community leaders that informed their provision of food, non-food items and livelihoods support. But liberal conceptions of need, vulnerability, and individual rights that guide such assessments were often in tension with values given greater importance in the Philippines, such as *pakikipagkapwa* (generally understood as 'community') and

bayanihan (a commitment to 'toiling' for the good of others within one's community). In three out of the four focus groups conducted in different *barangays* in the presence of captains, councillors and community members, participants were unanimous in their criticism of international agencies for not distributing aid equally to all members of the community regardless of circumstances. This was not a challenge to the substance or quality of the aid provided by international agencies but to the very idea of humanitarian triage as a process that necessarily discriminates according to scientific measures of need.

That evaluations of the Haiyan response have generally not faulted its appropriateness and relevance[246] despite such tension and dissatisfaction is perhaps an indication of the limited, programmatic focus of these criteria as they are understood in the humanitarian sector. The possibility of grounding humanitarian action in objective analysis in order that it might be more driven by the needs of crisis-affected people has provided inspiration for many of the reforms of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. But this quest for objectivity has reinforced assumptions about the universality of the ideals and conceptual frameworks guiding the actions of humanitarian agencies. As even reflections on the cultural relevance of humanitarian action are restricted to the technical content of programmes, the truths (or zero points) of Western humanitarianism are projected on to societies that host humanitarian operations, with consequences for how aid is received.

The echo chamber

Given that, in global terms, emergency response has been and remains a cottage industry (even in 2014, when more was spent on humanitarian operations than in any other year, military expenditure was more than 70 times higher),[247] the humanitarian sector is remarkably self-referential. One need only look at the bibliography of the average humanitarian policy report to get a sense of the homogeneity of sources used in the production (and reproduction) of knowledge within the sector. This self-reference is born of long-standing assumptions about the unique and special character of humanitarian care; a humanitarian exceptionalism nurtured by pioneers of Western humanitarianism who sought to delink their activities from the dirty world of politics.[248] It is also a product of the positivist philosophies that popularised the term

'humanitarian' in the nineteenth century, according to which the search for truth through science was an essential foundation for morality.[249] As proposed above, in bringing about greater order, the development of humanitarian bureaucracy has established more formal limits to the humanitarian sector. It is only those seen as legitimate humanitarian actors that then assume the authority to establish truths about humanitarian action.

While the new humanitarianism built alliances with other spheres of activity, its emphasis on bureaucratic organisation made the internal management of the humanitarian sector the means of fulfilling its expanding ambitions. The elaboration, since the 1990s, of managerial instruments to improve humanitarian performance has resulted in the consolidation of humanitarian bureaucracy and its irreversible conquest over anarchic forms of voluntarism. These instruments ensured that emergency response remained the bread and butter of the humanitarian agency, even as greater concern was expressed for human rights and democracy. In fact, they would contribute to an appropriation of the 'humanitarian' label by emergency responders.[250] Bureaucratisation was necessarily going to tighten definitions and contribute to a consciousness of the self within the humanitarian sector, but the humanitarian neomanagerialism that has shaped this process over the last two decades has given rise to a particular reflexivity.

A common criticism of bureaucracy is that it establishes rules that take on a life of their own; that is, they become separated from the purpose for which they were originally created, their achievement becomes a goal in its own right, and they are transformed into absolutes.[251] If the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has reflected neomanagerial scepticism about regulation, it has nonetheless placed much emphasis on process. Renewed faith in objectivity has given humanitarians confidence in the value of approaches used for assessing and replicating what works. The symbols of NPM – efficiency, productivity, marketability – that underpin these approaches have then become incontestable within the humanitarian sector (both among donors and implementing agencies).

A significant consequence of this confidence in neomanagerial process is that success comes to be defined from the 'top down', by donors and humanitarian agencies according to generalisable criteria that can be quite removed from the specific circumstances of people in countries affected by war and disaster. With effectiveness taken as the central focus for humanitarian reform, the achievement of humanitarian agencies'

own objectives takes precedence over pursuit of those outcomes most sought by people and their societies in crisis-affected countries, or those deemed most appropriate according to some other criteria.[252] Of course, the objectives of humanitarian agencies can coincide with the aspirations of crisis-affected populations, and anecdotal information can be, and is, drawn from needs assessments and beneficiary surveys to inform the planning of humanitarian agencies, but the starting point for determining what is effective is the definition of what humanitarian agencies can do and seek to do, as shaped by the interests of their donors. The attention given to improving effectiveness through the development of new technocratic tools and mechanisms has then encouraged further introspection by humanitarian agencies. There is no intention here to criticise efforts to reflect and build self-consciousness within the humanitarian sector. However, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has created boundaries to legitimate challenge that limit reflection to an exercise in navel-gazing.

Language has played an important role in the creation of such boundaries. The language of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda is the language of humanitarian neomanagerialism: a corporate and technocratic language softened by altruistic reference, expressed in English or, if not, in direct translation from the English. This substantial and distinct lexicon – of key performance indicators and accountability, of logframes and value for money – has been an instrument in the consolidation of an epistemic community of Western humanitarians; for those on the outside, it is impenetrable and alienating. Of importance here is not simply the development of a particular vocabulary that might not be universally accessible (although the use of technical terminology can itself unnecessarily distance humanitarian agencies from people in crisis-affected countries, especially in dealings with local organisations that draw on their own vernaculars), but the process of inclusion and exclusion shaped by structures of power and knowledge that language reflects and protects. In order to participate in discussions about humanitarian performance, even from a critical perspective, it is necessary to adopt the management-speak of the effectiveness agenda. But in adopting this language, participants in these discussions inevitably concede to the economic logic that underpins the effectiveness agenda. This double bind ensures that the parameters for reflection on possible improvements to humanitarian practice and governance remain constant; it bolsters the kind of policy science through which the humanitarian effectiveness agenda can only be challenged in the

name of a 'real humanitarian effectiveness agenda'.[253]

Through our field research, we have found indications of perverse consequences of reforms carried out to improve humanitarian performance, particularly in the introduction of RBM. There is undoubtedly a need for further investigation into the causality that links changes in humanitarian performance management to the tendencies we have identified – comparative studies that can reflect on how widespread particular effects might be, exploring the role of other variables. However, it is clear that the humanitarian effectiveness agenda's dependence on linear-rational approaches, with their assumptions about objectivity, has reinforced the propensity of the humanitarian sector to look inwards. The findings we have already set out point to the conclusion that, for all the expansive ambition of the new humanitarianism, the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has bounded humanitarian reform with the ideas of the humanitarian sector's dominant actors, which conform to the fundamentals of humanitarian neomanagerialism. It has created an echo chamber, in which these ideas bounce off one another, reinforcing rationalist assumptions that privilege market models for humanitarian action. Beyond the odd tokenistic contribution from Southern humanitarians, this echo chamber is closed to dissident or even simply alternative ideas, particularly those that challenge the incentive structures that shape the activities of humanitarian agencies.

CONCLUSION

REIMAGINING SUCCESS

More than tools and mechanisms: challenging an ideology

Reflecting on the possible consequences of humanitarian action is important. Even if 'the humanitarian imperative comes first',[254] the rise of consequentialism has challenged self-righteous assumptions about the incontestable morality of the humanitarian act as an end in itself. In 1999, Mary Anderson's important admonition to 'do no harm' encouraged humanitarians to think about the broader consequences of their actions.[255] And only through consideration of what comes after emergency response can humanitarian agencies avoid reducing the recipients of relief to their biological existence – their bare life.[256] A valuable contribution of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda has been to encourage humanitarian agencies to look beyond inputs. However, excessive concern for setting and achieving desired results is short-termist. It focuses attention on process but not systems. Its lessons can potentially improve discrete planning, but it ignores those consequences of humanitarian action that are unintended, are beyond the control of humanitarian agencies, or are simply too complex to be understood through a linear process. It makes humanitarian action instrumental to an economic logic that deprioritises considerations about voice, perspective, ethics and even politics. And it leaves unchallenged the incentive structures that shape the actions of humanitarian agencies, prevent a more meaningful participation of crisis-affected populations in humanitarian activities, and undermine the democratisation of humanitarian governance.

'Surely we cannot accept that it is alright not to measure, given the money and energy that goes into humanitarian action', John Borton told us during an interview.[257] It is certainly important not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Assessment, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, is important to improve understanding of how humanitarian workers and humanitarian aid interact with the world around them. But we might question the way measurement is used by donors in the regulation of humanitarian agencies, and the way it is used by humanitarian agencies in marketing strategies. And we might question the epistemology that determines how measurement is made. The role played by measurement is not a product of the particular mechanisms used to measure. Rather, as we have proposed, it is a product of political and cultural developments.

It is not, then, a new accountability mechanism, a new tool for communicating with crisis-affected communities, or a new digital technology that, in the main, will make humanitarian action more effective according to the criteria of humanitarian agencies themselves. To improve effectiveness, it is necessary to reconfigure the incentives of humanitarian agencies and their donors. However, improving effectiveness should not be the priority concern for the humanitarian sector with respect to humanitarian performance. More pressing is the need to question the significance given to effectiveness in determining how success is understood; to challenge the forces that reinforce reflexivity, concentrating power in the hands of an elite group of donors and implementing agencies insufficiently connected to the interests of crisis-affected populations and the institutions that most represent them. This requires challenges to be posed to the ideology that has shaped the humanitarian effectiveness agenda and the political economy of humanitarian aid.[258]

Beyond the humanitarian market-place

We have provided an outline of the long processes of bureaucratisation and professionalisation of the humanitarian sector that have framed humanitarian performance management, proposing that it is the neomanagerial reforms of NPM in particular that have inspired the development of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. Performance management became the arena in which neoliberal principles were tested and promoted in the humanitarian sector. The ideological preferences

that, from the late 1970s onwards, reshaped government bureaucracies, economic institutions, and intergovernmental organisations became so pervasive in the humanitarian sector that all reform activity, whether focussed on interactions with donors, the development of technical expertise, or engagement with crisis-affected populations, would be imagined and articulated as contributing to a humanitarian market. The centrality of effectiveness to contemporary humanitarian discourse is a reflection of the importance that has been attributed to neomanagerial imperatives; as relatively early champions of neomanagerial reform, humanitarian agencies have played a significant role in the elaboration and dissemination of neoliberal ideas.

It is the market logic for humanitarian aid that must be challenged if humanitarian agencies are to reimagine success in terms that are more sensitive to the interests of people and institutions in crisis-affected countries, and more open to constructive debate. Humanitarian agencies and their activities are inescapably products of capitalist charity, and they are dependent on the resources of institutions and individuals able to generate their own income. But that economic relations play an important role in enabling humanitarian action does not mean that they have to dictate all aspects of the institutional life of humanitarian workers, including interactions with the recipients of aid. Institutional donors, in particular, exercise considerable normative power over humanitarian agencies through their conditioning of funding; they have, over the past two-and-a-half decades, generally promoted the commercialisation of humanitarian activities. However, humanitarian agencies are not powerless to determine their own organisational structures and set their own culture: they can choose between different sources of funding; they can adopt cooperative business models; they can establish ethical codes and red lines for the funding they are prepared to accept.

From results to systems: rethinking linear approaches to the planning, delivery and evaluation of humanitarian action

The idea that the application of commercial principles in the humanitarian sector can satisfy both donors and the intended beneficiaries of humanitarian aid stems from an imagination of the market as the main source of public goods. It is then intuitive that big business should be seen as a natural ally of humanitarian agencies,

that innovation should be seen as synonymous with the introduction of technologies of the market, and that the provision of cash in disasters to stimulate markets should be seen as an unproblematic alternative to in-kind assistance. Whether individual private companies or specific technologies developed in the private sector can be of benefit to humanitarian agencies and crisis-affected people is not important here. The point at hand is that, in the absence of any 'consumer power', it is not possible to make humanitarian aid demand-driven; therefore, a market model accentuates the inequalities that characterise the relationship between humanitarian agencies and those they seek to support. RBM has been central to the promotion of this model. Humanitarian agencies should, then, seek to check obsessive attention to results and rethink linear-rational approaches used to plan, deliver and evaluate humanitarian action.

Reforming organisational structures and processes. Humanising operational activity

It is not possible simply to do away with commercial incentives. But it is possible for humanitarian agencies, NGOs in particular, to moderate them, reducing the emphasis placed on marketing and branding, and reducing dependence on commercial techniques, particularly outside of fundraising departments. Challenging commercial incentives therefore requires changes in organisational structure and process. It requires a greater proportion of income to be invested in programmatic and operational functions (technical expertise, logistics, human resources, and programme finance), reflective capacities (research and evaluation), and advocacy, compared with expenditure on marketing departments, which have grown significantly in recent years. It requires more attention to strengthening operational systems that are adaptable to different circumstances and can facilitate interagency cooperation. It also requires a humanisation of operational activity, with greater focus on the human needs of staff and aid recipients, and less on institutional economic imperatives (this could also rebalance the unreasonable expectations of staff working hours that have been another product of the emphasis on performance and productivity).[259] And it requires a reduction in the administrative requirements of staff assessment, risk management, and strategic planning; a change that would encourage humanitarian staff to take initiative and assume

leadership, and would reduce the exhausting bureaucratic burden that results from the generalisation and expansion of management duties within humanitarian agencies.

Sacrificing organisational growth (at least initially) to change business models

Humanitarian agencies incur a risk of reducing their income by shifting emphasis away from commercial functions. However, acceptance that organisational growth might have to be sacrificed (at least initially) on account of principle and in pursuit of other priorities is necessary, if challenges are to be posed to commercial incentives. Indeed, it is not possible to alter the political economy of humanitarian aid without fundamental changes to the business models of humanitarian organisations, and to funding arrangements for particular emergency responses.[260] In agreement with this point, Bennett et al. propose that an 'assessed contribution' model of funding humanitarian responses could offer 'a feasible first step towards the significant, sustained and impartial funding both sudden-onset and protracted crises require'.[261] Certainly the creation of some arrangement through which funding for crisis responses, accessible to all humanitarian organisations, is regularised and regulated by a body with international legitimacy is an appealing, though alone insufficient, option to reduce the distortion of humanitarian activities that results from competition. Strengthening interdependencies between humanitarian agencies through pooled or consortium-based funding can also break the commercial incentives to compete, potentially encouraging more anticipatory approaches to humanitarian action that are more readily shaped by circumstances and needs in particular crisis contexts. While both models can be used to legitimise oligopolies for the resourcing or for the implementation of humanitarian programmes, they can also be used to ensure funding is open and provided to organisations most connected to the needs and aspirations of crisis-affected populations.

Remaking the political economy of humanitarian aid

The political economy of humanitarian aid is fundamentally determined by interests. Its remaking, facilitated by reform of organisational

structures and funding models, is a political project, pursued through the articulation of political interests. Challenging a political economy that centralises power in the humanitarian system requires humanitarian agencies to turn from a politics that privileges private enterprise in humanitarian action (including their own) to a politics of solidarity, according to which they position themselves in pursuit of a common purpose alongside those to whom they provide support and other agencies seeking complementary goals. This solidarity is not grounded in some fanciful notion of altruism; it is not devoid of self-interest. Rather, it articulates interests and incentives primarily in political rather than commercial terms, related to broad goals of humanitarian action – saving lives, alleviating suffering, upholding rights, fighting oppression, or wherever a particular agency sets its limits. It gives greater currency to principles that promote the specific hopes and needs of crisis-affected populations themselves, and it shapes political relations according to these principles.

A cultural shift: promoting principles that reflect a politics of solidarity

Since neomanagerialism has reshaped the identity and culture of humanitarian organisations (their language, their institutional practices and customs, their values, and their normative outlook), even initiatives to improve performance that have not directly sought to reinforce the commercialisation of humanitarian activities have generally been informed by neomanagerial ideals. Neomanagerial culture serves as a safeguard for the existing political economy of humanitarian aid. In order for humanitarian agencies to change this culture and promote principles that reflect a politics of solidarity, they need to interrogate their values and understand how they have projected them. They need to engage critically with their histories to understand how their cultures have evolved. And they need to establish clarity regarding the ethical frameworks that guide their actions.

Towards a different conception of knowledge: contextualising humanitarian activities

Faith in scientific method and in the objectivity of the knowledge produced by humanitarians has inspired the reforms of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda. Humanitarian ethics, in particular the notion of humanitarian neutrality, are predicated on the modernist ideal of universal truth. As we have argued, the rationalism of neomanagerial initiatives has then entrenched long-held positivist assumptions. Reimagining success in the humanitarian sector requires humanitarians not only to roll back commercialisation, but also to destabilise an epistemology influenced by neomanagerial reforms. Reliance on linear-rational models and quantitative methods of programme evaluation should be complemented by the more regular use of qualitative approaches and of anthropological, historical, and sociological research methods, which can support a more rounded perspective on the environments in which humanitarians operate and the effects of humanitarian action within them. In conducting our field studies we have encountered various alternative understandings of effectiveness, and different perspectives on what the objectives of humanitarian organisations should be. Interpretative approaches would encourage more open-ended planning, allowing for understandings of success to be shaped according to context and according to the needs and aspirations of crisis-affected populations.

The intention here is not to write off the humanitarian effectiveness agenda or specific reform initiatives. Nor is it to disregard the energies and talents that have been expended in the analysis of problems of humanitarian performance and the development of solutions. Rather, by highlighting that humanitarian reforms have been carried out within a limiting framework, in tension with the growing ambitions of the sector, and explaining the forces and interests that have informed and guided the reform agenda, we hope to stimulate a more open debate about how humanitarian agencies understand success, and about the possibilities of humanitarian action; a debate that the architects of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda would no doubt promote. Whether or not the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul provides a platform for this debate, may the energy that has been invested in the preparatory process be channelled to ensure that the meeting stimulates sustained critical and constructive reflection on humanitarian affairs.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Administering humanity: the development of humanitarian bureaucracy

The term 'bureaucracy' refers to an administrative system, typically of a government, that is characterised by a specialisation of functions, an architecture of impersonal, fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority. Max Weber famously defined bureaucracies as dependent on a particular type of legal-rational authority, whereby impersonal rules and laws are seen as legitimate because they appear objective and fair, and problems are resolved through the deployment of expertise and specialised knowledge. Though Weber recognised shortcomings of bureaucracy, he proposed that it was an efficient and appropriate model for managing modern life's technical demands.

Western humanitarianism started developing a bureaucratic character as early as the mid-nineteenth century. In Britain, laws were passed aimed at regulating the work of charitable organisations and welfare associations. After numerous failed attempts to introduce legislation to reform charities in the 1840s, the Charity Commission was established in 1853, with government-accountable commissioners appointed to oversee the creation and financial management of social welfare organisations. However, the remit of the Charity Commission was limited and, rather than state initiative, it was self-regulation among charities that set out bureaucratic parameters for charitable activities.[262] Sharing in the 'culture of the world of finance and share-holding businesses', charities focussed on accountability as part of an 'identity-shaping manoeuvre' to challenge accusations of profligacy and sloppy targeting.[263] It is from the self-regulatory practices of charities (for example, through the voluntary Charity Organisation Society)

that more comprehensive governmental regulation and prescription followed, over time giving tighter definition to those undertakings that were to be considered legitimate acts of charity and, by virtue of exclusion, those that were not.[264] The regulatory process that was developed within the voluntary sector and by government in nineteenth century Britain contributed to a formalised social knowledge relating to the humanitarian care and directed compassion of organisations operating at home and abroad.

On the international stage, key developments in the advancement of humanitarian bureaucracy came with the formation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863 and the first Geneva Convention of 1864 (for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field). The ICRC supported the establishment of national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, which each had auxiliary status with their national governments but were autonomous entities responsible for the neutral provision of care to wounded soldiers on the battlefield.[265] Although not usually seen as examples of humanitarian bureaucracy, these societies and the international committee should be understood as exactly that: firstly because of their legal-rational foundations; secondly because of their autonomous authority and control over a certain type of expertise (namely impartial caregiving); and thirdly because of the authoritative, quasi-governmental, role that they have come to play globally in determining what constitutes a humanitarian crisis. Red Cross members had a simultaneously national and international status, derived from the profile of the Red Cross movement itself. And so their authority and expertise came to define the site of humanitarian action within *and* beyond borders (initially the battlefield, though from the early twentieth century onwards 'natural disaster' zones as well), and also define what constituted useful knowledge and acceptable care: medical not militaristic, palliative not political.

The administrative character of modern humanitarian bureaucracies can be more readily dated to the early twentieth century with the formation of the League of Nations (LoN). Established in 1920 to maintain world peace, the LoN, forerunner to the UN, came out of the Paris Peace Conference that ended World War I. Like the UN, the LoN separated areas of activity and responsibility. The Permanent Secretariat was a body of experts working under the charge of the Secretary-General. Humanitarian matters were designated as an area for international action and oversight within the Health Committee of the LoN – a branch of the League's Health Organisation, which later became the World Health Organisation (WHO) – and some activities also fell under the management of the Social Committee.

However, the creation of the UN would ultimately be of far greater significance to the development of humanitarian bureaucracy than the short-lived structures of the League. The UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was established in 1943 to 'plan, coordinate, administer or arrange for the administration of measures' for relief provided to the victims of war in areas not under the control of the Axis Powers. The UN itself was then established in 1945, with 53 founding members. In the space of five years, numerous UN agencies were set up, focussing on various (and often overlapping) areas of humanitarian relief and protection: the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 1945, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Refugee Organisation in 1946, the WHO in 1948, and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in 1949. Despite competition between UN agencies from an early stage, their development would enable a division of labour in international responses to war, disaster and displacement.

A number of governments established departments dedicated to overseas aid in the 1960s. Among others, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) was set up in 1961, DANIDA in 1963, and the UK Ministry of Overseas Development in 1964. As states became more actively engaged in the direction of aid programmes, these departments not only administered funding to operational agencies (especially those of the UN), but also developed regulatory frameworks to ensure that their funding was having its intended effect. It is this form of state participation in the development of aid bureaucracy, in particular, that would contribute to changes in humanitarian performance management.

Appendix 2

'Doing more for less': a revolution in management

On 4 May, Margaret Thatcher became British Prime Minister. Following the 1973 oil crisis and subsequent stock market crash, Britain had faced recession, then high inflation and rising unemployment. Then, just months before the election, the so-called Winter of Discontent[266] destabilised Jim Callahan's Labour government. Thatcher came to power promising to 'restore the balance of power in favour of the people'.[267] For Thatcher's Conservatives, the post-WWII welfarist state had become unwieldy, to the detriment of individual liberty. A radical downsizing of government was required, and the recipe was simple: liberalise, privatise, deregulate and 'flexibilise' everything. The neoliberal revolution, inspired by the ideas of Chicago School economists and kick-started in the fertile testing ground of post-coup Chile, had found its doyenne. But this revolution was not purely about 'prudent-macroeconomics-cum-smaller-states'.[268] The rise of neoliberalism is primarily a story about the reassertion of the dominance of capital and the transformation of the state into a vehicle for the accumulation of private wealth.

Central to Thatcher's strategy for transformation of the state was the reorganisation of public sector bureaucracies to 'do more for less'. In 1979, she appointed the managing director of Marks & Spencer, Derek Rayner, as her personal adviser on public sector efficiency and effectiveness.[269] He immediately set up the Efficiency Unit to consider ways of saving money in the Civil Service, then instigated a series of reviews of public financial management as part of his 'lasting reforms' agenda. This was the beginning of what would come to be known as the New Public Management (NPM) – a neoliberal approach to the organisation of public institutions that was soon adopted by governments in New Zealand, Australia and Sweden, before spreading to developing countries (from Bangladesh to the 'newly industrialised economies' of Singapore and Hong Kong). The reforms of NPM would become a pillar of 'good governance' with the establishment of the OECD's Public Management Committee (PUMA) and they would be picked up and championed by international financial institutions and third sector organisations.

In order to rationalise and streamline public administration, NPM introduced commercial techniques and focussed on results. Whereas it was previously deemed necessary to regulate the self-interest of public managers, NPM encouraged them to take risks, be entrepreneurial and exercise 'discretionary power'. Managers needed to be free to manage and take decisions that had previously rested with central authorities. NPM was seen by its proponents in government both as a panacea for the perceived inefficiencies, rigidities and inertia of the Weberian model of rule-bound bureaucracy that had dominated twentieth century managerialism, and as a means of separating public administration from politics.

Ideals of rationality and objectivity, which had underpinned the technocratic tendencies of old-style bureaucracy, were just as important to NPM. Indeed, unshackling public managers from bureaucratic regulations would, it was argued, protect their objectivity, allowing them to respond effectively to the rational demands and decisions of clients and stakeholders. Apolitical, administrative, objective – the public manager now had a more technocratic profile than ever before.

But while NPM seemed to shelter managers from politics by decentralising decision-making, these 'liberated' and empowered middle-men formed a blockage in the democratic accountability of political elites. Rather than eroding hierarchy, the freedom bestowed upon managers ultimately concentrated authority over the means and timing of public service delivery in their hands, creating a two-tier hierarchy and positioning them at the centre of a procedural politics. Moreover, despite the anti-bureaucratic polemic of NPM's architects, the introduction to the public sector of new bureaucratic procedures, tools, entities, and systems was required in order to enable the deployment of market mechanisms and compensate for the cutback on 'rules' and 'red tape': benchmarking and performance management systems; customer satisfaction monitoring; balanced scorecards; strategic planning processes; change management programmes. In this way, far from disappearing, hierarchy and bureaucracy were reshaped around the neomanagerialist imperatives of NPM.[270]

Appendix 3

The making of the humanitarian professional

The professionalisation of humanitarian action can be traced back to the capitalist roots of the humanitarian sensibility.[271] The businessmen at the forefront of many of the humanitarian reforms and charitable activities of nineteenth century Europe[272] gave humanitarianism an entrepreneurial character, and dedicated charity fundraisers contributed to the collection of huge sums of money to fund responses to war and famine abroad: in Britain, £515,200 was raised for the Indian famine of 1876 and £1,233,072 for the Second Boer War of 1899-1900 – £226.1m and £437m respectively in real values (inflation-adjusted to 2012).[273]

Advances in epidemiology and surgery during the nineteenth century and the emergence of 'scientific medicine'[274] at the turn of the twentieth century shaped the practice of humanitarian medicine, giving it an increasingly professional character. These developments also added to an expanding regime of training and humanitarian knowledge production. Christian missionaries, who played a central role in internationalising Western humanitarianism, were often trained in healthcare, as well as education; and the need for technical training during peacetime for those who might provide relief for the victims of war was one of Henri Dunant's motivations for founding the ICRC in 1863.

The professionalisation of the humanitarian sector should be seen as a trajectory rather than a series of moments of rupture from the past.[275] In the twentieth century, developing hand-in-hand with humanitarian bureaucracy, professionalisation gathered increasing momentum.

In the interwar years, humanitarian institution-building coincided with the ascendancy of 'the professional' and 'the expert' in Western society. Indeed, though it reflected continuities with earlier philanthropic and charitable activity, the professionalisation of humanitarianism in this period can be seen as part of a broader professionalisation of society.[276] As European governments placed emphasis on planning as a cornerstone of effective public policy, technical, commercial and scientific professionals came to play a more prominent role in the management of political and social affairs. Seeking to utilise their independent expertise for social ends (a kind of 'expert activism' aimed at providing technocratic solutions to social problems) and empowered with new social status, economists, technicians and social scientists became 'the vanguard of capitalist reconstruction',[277] technocratic functionaries of the emerging welfare state, and then administrators of the post-World War II recovery.

The League of Nations embodied this new faith in professional knowledge, with its Permanent Secretariat made up of experts, and its reliance on voluntary and technical organisations.[278] It is therefore unsurprising that, as Davies notes, for the League, the term '"humanitarian" implied the "social-scientific, knowledge-based" management of problems'.[279] The changing composition of voluntary organisations themselves also contributed to the professionalisation of humanitarianism. Hilton et al. suggest that 'just as professionals flocked to local government, to engineering, to the financial sector, to architecture, to law and to medicine, so too would they become the bulwarks of an expanding NGO and voluntary sector'.[280] Indeed, they argue that it is from the professionalisation of Western society that the modern NGO emerges. NGOs began to place more emphasis on technical expertise as different spheres of social welfare – education, medicine, nutrition[281] – took on a more technocratic character.

The recruitment of marketing professionals and the professionalisation of humanitarian fundraising would also continue to serve as a catalyst for a more generalised professionalisation of humanitarian NGOs. Founded in 1919, Save the Children had already invested significantly in advertising as early as 1920, hiring a couple of professional press secretaries who would run high-profile appeals, which sometimes involved full-page newspaper adverts. Between 1920 and 1923, the organisation spent five per cent of its annual income on fundraising.[282] The head of the organisation, Eglantyne Jebb, commented: 'we have found that advertising pays'.[283] Some two decades later, CARE and Oxfam would also draw on commercial expertise to support organisational growth in their early years.[284] One of Oxfam's founders, Cecil Jackson-Cole, owned furniture and estate agency franchises. In 1947, he recruited two business colleagues and an advertising professional who managed the organisation's finances and expanded its fundraising activities, opening its first shop and launching emotive appeals.[285]

Developments in the world economy and in international relations during and after World War II contributed to the entry of professionals into the humanitarian sector. Wartime growth of industrial production in the 1940s and then post-war expansion of production

for export brought about a long economic boom, which would sustain the expansionist exploits of First World and Second World powers, including, particularly in the case of the former, the resourcing of relief programmes in the Third World. UN agencies provided a conduit through which the United States and its allies could offload surplus agricultural produce and channel funding for aid. With the expansion of these agencies, privileged opportunity to contribute to the new system of global governance was then offered to professionals with technical and managerial know-how, many of whom had worked under the colonial administrations that were now being brought to their end. The growth of the UN also created new funding opportunities for NGOs, contributing to their growth and, in turn, stimulating a sophistication and diversification of their workforce. Through UN agencies, NGOs were also able to influence international public policy, and, largely on account of requirements for NGOs to align their technical expertise with the UN's institutional priorities, a certain kind of professionalism became a means of entry to an elite sphere of humanitarian knowledge and practice.

The Biafra war of 1967-1970 is often seen as a turning point for international humanitarianism; certainly, it had significant impact on the course of professionalisation of the humanitarian sector.[286] Marking the start of what O'Sullivan et al. refer to as the 'NGO moment',[287] it was one of the sources of inspiration for the creation of MSF and the Irish NGO, Concern. Meanwhile, a perception that the ICRC had been unable to manage a large-scale operation, develop strong public relations, or recruit suitably qualified staff for its response to the war also led to the initiation of a reform process to professionalise that organisation's field operations and advertising.[288]

The propaganda campaign of the Biafran authorities had shown that, in the midst of conflict and famine, advertising could be a powerful medium for communicating with the outside world. The widespread publication of images of children with kwashiorkor had been crucial in the awakening of foreign citizenries to the plight of the Biafran people; the images served to mobilise foreign donorship for the humanitarian response and also as an advocacy tool, aimed at eliciting political support for the Biafran military campaign. By the 1970s, those humanitarian NGOs founded in the interwar and immediate post-war years were attributing greater strategic importance to public relations than ever before. They recruited growing numbers of marketing and advertising

professionals to develop and deploy new commercialised fundraising technologies. Despite a global economic downturn following the 1973 oil crisis and stock market crash, this allowed them to take advantage of changes in the moral and political landscape of Western liberal democracies: an upsurge in popular humanitarian consciousness and charitable donations as disasters (particularly the African food crises of the 1970s and 1980s) were covered on live news;[289] and the drive to downsize government and outsource the provision of public goods to charities and businesses.

There was a consolidation of humanitarian institutions during the 1970s and 1980s.[290] It is also in this period that a humanitarian 'knowledge community' takes shape.[291] As Davey et al. explain, using the emergency shelter sector as an example. They describe how research and evaluations relating to specific experiences of post-disaster reconstruction (for example, following earthquakes in Turkey, in 1970, and Guatemala, in 1976) recorded operational and policy innovations, contributing to 'practice-oriented knowledge-sharing efforts'. With the development of this knowledge community, technical expertise gained further cachet. There was now growing interest in the formation of professional associations – the Club of Mainz, later known as the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM), was founded in 1976 – and of platforms for the deployment of professional experts to support emergency responses abroad – the Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief (RedR) was created in 1980 to deploy British engineers. Steps were taken towards a system of accreditation for humanitarian professionals; training opportunities were expanded, with the development of clearer professional pathways within humanitarian organisations and the creation of specialised training bodies, such as the Institut Bioforce, established in 1983.[292]

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Appendix 4

Standards and technological utopia

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Humanitarian standards are rooted in the development of modern professional society. The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) was established in 1906 and is recognised as a pioneer of international standardisation; its founders saw it as contributing to a vision of 'technological pacification'.[293] Most European and a number of non-European countries soon set up national standards associations, and the LoN and then the UN also followed the example of the IEC. The UN Standards Coordinating Committee (UNSCC) was established in 1944 by the US, the UK and Canada, to provide order to post-war reconstruction.[294]

After World War II, there was growing interest in the creation of a new international standardising body for professional industries, with some of the engineers and technicians associated with the foundation of the IEC proposing that it should not be dominated by the winners of the war, but should be open to all those countries willing to collaborate, with equal rights and obligations.[295] The new body, founded in 1947, was the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO). It was decided that the ISO would be privately financed; that membership, following the IEC model, would be open to only one national standardisation body per country; and that standards would be developed by a network of international experts, coordinated by the ISO secretariat from Geneva. More importantly, it was accepted that the standards would be adopted voluntarily and that the autonomy of the ISO would limit the ability of governments and corporations to interfere with their development.

In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a sharp increase in the number of international standards developed, as governments and businesses adapted to changes in the world economy (acceleration in the globalisation of financial markets and a proliferation of trade agreements, especially).[296] Today there are more than 19,000 international standards published by the ISO, covering 'almost every industry, from technology, to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare', with impact on 'everyone, everywhere'.[297]

Providing services and moving goods across borders, humanitarian organisations have faced similar challenges to private companies in a globalising world, albeit often on a smaller scale, and the influential international standardisation of the ISO has provided practical guidance. On account of their perceived objectivity and universality, standards derived from scientific and expert knowledge have been seen as an especially appropriate tool to eliminate anachronistic, arbitrary, standards are a product of old-style bureaucracy, they contribute to the pursuit of the technocratic ambitions of neomanagerialism. And they have complemented the techniques of RBM that have shaped the humanitarian effectiveness agenda.

ENDNOTES

1. Humanitarian Affairs Team, *Humanitarian Effectiveness Project Concept Note* (Unpublished, 2014).

2. Eleanor Davey, *Humanitarianism in a Complex World*, HPG Policy Brief 59 (London: Overseas Development Institute Davey, 2014), 2.

3. World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat, *Frequently Asked Questions* (New York: United Nations, 2015), 2-3.

4. World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat, *Chief – World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat – Job Description* (2014), accessed 27 Dec, 2014,
    .

5. According to the terms of reference, the expected results are: 'Effective and efficient delivery of an inclusive and transparent consultative process leading to the summit; Well-run summit with concrete deliverables; Well-managed Secretariat; Effective leadership and management of project work streams, including timely outputs; Effectively manages complex policy issues related to the WHS; Forms strong partnerships both internally and externally to ensure that WHS objectives are achieved' (WHS Secretariat, *Chief – Job Description*).

6. WHS Secretariat, *Chief – Job Description*.

7. Chandran, Rahul, 'Saving The World Humanitarian Summit From Itself', *United Nations University Centre For Policy Research* (2015), accessed 27 October, 2015,

8. See, for example, the press interview with US President George H. W. Bush and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, President of the Soviet Union, carried out just after the Malta Summit in December 1989 – Associated Press, 'The Malta Summit; Transcript of the Bush-Gorbachev News Conference in Malta', *New York Times*, 4 December, 1989, accessed 10 October, 2015,

9. Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London: Zed Books, 2001), 1.

10. 'New wars' refers to the predominantly internal and transborder wars that broke out in this period, obscuring the distinction between civil entities and the Weberian state, with its monopoly on the legitimate use of force. For two distinct analyses of these wars see: Duffield, *Global Governance*, and Mary Kaldor, *Old and New Wars* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

11. The term 'complex emergency' was first used to describe the situation in Mozambique in the 1980s, when conflict, cyclones and drought created desperate circumstances for many people across the country. Referring to what was going on as a 'complex emergency' was seen as less controversial than highlighting 'conflict' or 'civil war'. Complex emergencies are characterised by a combination of conflict, political instability and the collapse of state authority, socio-environmental shocks, population displacement, and widespread poverty. See OECD DAC, *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies,* Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness Series 1 (Paris: OECD, 1999), 5-6.

12. UN, *General Assembly Resolution 46/182 - Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations (*1991), accessed 30 October, 2015
    .

13. Humanitarian NGOs hastened their turn towards development with the launch of the UN Decade of Development in January 1961, and then through their participation in FAO's Freedom from Hunger campaign.

14. Duffield has written extensively about the merging of security and development agendas from this time onwards (see, in particular, Duffield, *Global Governance*). It should, nonetheless, be recognised that the histories of international humanitarianism and Western state intervention in the non-Western world are mutually constitutive (see, for example, Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40[5], 2012: 731), and that 'military humanitarianism' – or the pursuit of purportedly humanitarian objectives through military means – can be traced at least as far back as 1860, when Napoleon III sent French expeditionary forces to intervene in the Mount Lebanon civil war.

15. Chandler proposes that human rights activism has sought to integrate humanitarianism with state strategy under the banner of 'ethical' or 'moral' foreign policy. David Chandler, 'The Road to Military Humanitarianism: How the Human Rights NGOs Shaped A New Humanitarian Agenda', *Human Rights Quarterly* 23, 2001.

16. For a comprehensive and authoritative account of the construction of the political and economic conditions in which the Rwandan genocide was perpetrated, see Gerard Prunier. *Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers, 1998).

17. With the aim of ending the three-year civil war, the Rwandan government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) signed the Arusha Accords in August 1993. The negotiations, sponsored by the Organisation of African Unity and the governments of France and the US, had lasted for more than a year. A transitional government was established, made up of five different political parties and the RPF. The accords also included a plan for the repatriation of refugees and the strengthening of rule of law.

18. Among the many authors, evaluators, commentators and aid workers who have made this point, see Eriksson et al., *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience*, Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance in Rwanda, (Copenhagen: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1996), 9. They state that 'in effect, humanitarian action substituted for political action'.

19. Ibid., 4.

20. Ibid., 7.

21. Ibid., 10.

22. Borton et al., *Study 3: Humanitarian Aid and Effects*, Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (Copenhagen: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1996), 13.

23. Ibid., 14.

24. Ibid., 19.

25. Ibid., 18.

26. Ibid., 19.

27. Ibid., 162.

28. Ibid., 18-19.

29. In a video interview about the creation of the Sphere Project, Nicholas Stockton, one of the initiators of the project and a former Emergencies Director at Oxfam GB, suggests that the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath mark 'the end of the age of humanitarian innocence'. The Sphere Project, *The Sphere Project, a video documentary* (2015), accessed 23 September, 2015,

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30. Borton et al., *Study 3*, 17

31. UN, *Fact Sheet: History of the United Nations Headquarters* (2013), accessed 30 January, 2016,

32. James Loeffler, 'Introduction', in *The United Nations*, ed. Ezra Stoller (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 6.

33. David Arnold, 'Air Conditioning in Office Buildings After World War II', *Ashrae Journal* (1999), 34.

34. Ibid., 34.

35. Loeffler, 'Introduction', 7-8.

36. Jessica Field, 'United Nations Headquarters, New York: The Cultural-Political Economy of Space and Iconicity', *Journal of History and Cultures* 1 (2012).

37. Emily Baughan & Juliano Fiori, 'Save the Children, the Humanitarian Project, and the Politics of Solidarity: Reviving Dorothy Buxton's Vision', *Disasters* 39(S2), (2015), 136

38. Theodore H.Poister & Greg Streib, 'MBO in Municipal Government: Variations on a Traditional Management Tool', *Public Administration Review* 55(1), (1995).

39. Peter F. Drucker, *The Practice of Management* (New York: Harper Business, 2006).

40. John Hailey & Mia Sorgenfrei, *Measuring Success: Issues in Performance Management*, Occasional Paper Series 44, (INTRAC, 2004), 7.

41. Of course, the idea that public institutions should look and act more like commercial enterprises was not new. Nelson writes that in 1868 the US National Manufacturers' Association declared that it was 'indispensable that public affairs be conducted on business principles' (William Nelson, *Roots of American Bureaucracy*, [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982], 120). Moreover, as we have shown, NPM is predated by other efforts to make government bureaucracy more efficient through the application of business principles and to introduce new forms of performance management, such as MBO and PPB. As Krause argues, earlier initiatives are often overlooked in the literature on public management reform and it is necessary to recognise a fuller history – Monica Kraus, *The Good Project: Humanitarian Relief NGOs and the Fragmentation of Reason*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2014) 78.

42. See Christopher Pollitt, *Managerialism and the Public Services: The Anglo-American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), xi.

43. André Gorz coined the term economicisation to refer to the application of economic rationality to spheres of activity not previously subject to market logic (André Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason* [London: Verso Books, 1989]).

44. B. Guy Peters, *The Future of Governing: Four Emerging Models* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 28.

45. See Eleanor Davey et al., *A History of the Humanitarian System: Western Origins and Foundations*, HPG Working Paper, (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2013), 29.

46. Between 1985 and 1992, official development assistance grew from US$33.9 billion to US$68.7 billion in real terms (2015 values. Source: OECD.Stat). Fearon shows that emergency aid increased sharply in 1990; despite a dip in the mid-1990s, it has grown reasonably steadily since. James D. Fearon, 'The Rise of Emergency Relief Aid', in *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*, ed. Barnett et al. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 57.

47. See Fearon, 'The Rise of Emergency Relief Aid', 68.

48. See, for example, Sarah Roddy et al., 'Humanitarian Accountability, Bureaucracy, and Self-Regulation: the View from the Archive', *Disasters 39(S2)*.

49. This has been a notable trend in NGOs in general, not just in the humanitarian sector. Natsios suggests that, through their funding, government donor agencies have supported the 'gradual promotion of management and compliance – as opposed to development – experts' within development organisations. Andrew Natsios, *The Clash of the Counter-bureaucracy and Development*, Centre for Global Development Essay, (Washington, D.C.: Centre for Global Development, 2010), 36.

50. Roberts et al., 'NGOs and the Globalisation of Managerialism: A Research Framework', *World Development* 33(11), (2005).

51. Lewis describes the manner in which NGO management has merged features of public, corporate and third sector management. David Lewis, *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organisations: an Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

52. Peter Walker & Susan Purdin, 'Birthing Sphere', *Disasters* 28(2), (2004), 102.

53. At this time, the members of the SCHR were the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Save the Children, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Oxfam and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

54. SCHR, *The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*, Relief and Rehabilitation Network Paper 7 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1994), 6.

55. Ibid., 4.

56. Walker makes this point in a video interview about the creation of the Sphere Project. The Sphere Project, *The Sphere Project*, 2015.

57. The Sphere Project, *20 Years After the Rwandan Genocide: The Unfinished Accountability Revolution – An Interview with John Borton,* (2014), accessed 30 October, 2015,

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58. The first 'trial edition' of the Sphere Handbook was published in 1998.

59. See ALNAP, *Record of the First Meeting* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1997) and ALNAP, *Record of the Second Meeting*, (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1997).

60. John Mitchell & Deborah Doane, 'An Ombudsman for Humanitarian Assistance?', *Disasters* 23(2), (1999), 118.

61. HAP, The History of HAP (2008), accessed 3 November, 2015,

62. People in Aid started off in 1995 as a research project studying the experiences of relief workers returning from Rwanda and the neighbouring countries. Through the development of the People in Aid Code of Best Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel, it sought to contribute to improving the quality and accountability of humanitarian aid.

63. In the 1990s, international financial institutions increasingly focussed on 'good governance' as an objective and a condition of development assistance. 'Good governance' was defined by democracy, respect for civil rights, transparent and effective financial and human resource management, accountability in public services, and rule of law. See Carlos Santiso, 'Good Governance and Aid Effectiveness: the World Bank and Conditionality', *The Georgetown Public Policy Review* 7(5), (2001).

64. Michael Edwards, 'International Non-Governmental Organizations, "Good Government" and the "New Policy Agenda": Lessons of Experience at the Programme Level', *Democratisation* 1(3), (1994), 505.

65. David Lewis, 'Development NGOs and the Challenge of Partnership: Changing Relationship Between North and South', Social Policy and Administration 32(5), (1998), 502.

66. AccountAbility, Citizen Sector Accountability: A Review of the Literature, (Basel: Novartis

Foundation, 2006), 2

67. Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior: a Study of Decision-Making Processes in *Administrative Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

68. Gernod Gruening, 'Origin and Theoretical Basis of New Public Management', *International Public Management Journal* 4, (2001), 5.

69. Baron et al. *An Evaluation Of The African Emergency Food Assistance Program In Mali, 1984-1985*, A.I.D. Evaluation Special Study No. 49 (Washington, D.C.: US Agency for International Development, 1987).

70. Tom Alberts & Krister Eduards, *Drought and Destabilization – An Evaluation of Swedish Disaster Relief in Mozambique 1983 to 1985*, SIDA Evaluation Report (Stockholm: SIDA, 1987).

71. John Borton et al., *Study 3: Humanitarian Aid and Effects*, Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (Copenhagen: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1996).

72. Niels Dabelstein, 'Evaluating humanitarian action', Annuaire Suisse de Politique de Développement 18(61), (1999), 61. Wood et al. provide an account of the evolution of humanitarian evaluation architecture (Wood et al., *Evaluating International Humanitarian Action: Reflections from Practitioners* [London: Zed Books/ALNAP, 2001]).

73. Mick Howes, 'Linking Paradigms And Practise. Key Issues In The Appraisal, Monitoring And Evaluation Of British NGO Projects', *Journal of International Development* 4(4), (1992), 393.

74. John Borton et al., An Evaluation of CONCERN's 1990-91 Emergency Programme in Kosti Province, Sudan, (Dublin: Concern, 1992).

75. Robert Chambers, An Independent Review and Evaluation of the Africa Drought Relief Operations 1984-86 of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 1986). The review focussed particularly on Chad, Mali and Sudan.

76. OECD DAC, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*, (Paris: OECD, 2002), 20.

77. In this respect, Barbara Harrell-Bond's powerful and influential critique of the 'imposition of aid' to refugees remained largely unanswered. Barbara Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

78. All but 10 of the 102 evaluative reports from the 1990s on the ALNAP Humanitarian Evaluation and Learning Portal focus on the programme or project of a single operational agency or donor.

79. See, for example, James Ferguson, *Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development', Depoliticisation, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

80. John Borton, 'Trends and Challenges in Measuring Effectiveness in the Humanitarian System', In *Measuring What Matters in Peace Operations and Crisis Management*, ed. Meharg (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 163.

81. Despite this attention to results, some in the development sector charge that aid effectiveness has been too focussed on process, without sufficient concern for social outcomes. See Save the Children, *Effective Aid: Delivering Results for the Poorest People*, Position Paper for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (London: Save the Children UK, 2011), 12-14.

82. According to the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2015, US$24.5 was spent on humanitarian aid in 2014 (Development Initiatives, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2015* [Bristol: Development Initiatives, 2015]), while official development assistance amounted to US$135.2 (OECD DAC, *Detailed final 2014 aid figures released by OECD/DAC* (2015), accessed 30 December, 2015,   ).

83. A paper on effectiveness, entitled *Leaving No One Behind*, recently published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), proposes an approach to improving the effectiveness of humanitarian action that contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. OCHA, *Leaving No One Behind: Humanitarian Effectiveness in the Age of the Sustainable Development Goals*, OCHA Policy and Studies Series (New York: OCHA, 2015).

84. PSAs between the Treasury and individual government departments were introduced in 1998, during the first term of Prime Minister Tony Blair. They established targets and indicators for a three-year period, against which performance would be measured. This would inform the Treasury's budgeting process. PSAs were abolished in 2010, under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government.

85. Natsios, *Counter-bureaucracy and Development,* 65.

86. OECD DAC, *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*, (Paris: OECD, 1991).

87. The revised criteria are: efficiency; effectiveness, timeliness and coordination; impact; connectedness; relevance and appropriateness; coverage; coherence; and, as appropriate, protection. See OECD DAC, *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance*.

88. Alistair Hallam, 'Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance Programmes in Complex Emergencies', *Relief and Rehabilitation Network Good Practice Review* 7 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1998).

89. OECD DAC, *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance*.

90. Tony Beck, *Evaluating Humanitarian Action Using the OECD-DAC Criteria (*London: ALNAP, 2006).

91. Margie Buchanan-Smith & John Cosgrave, J. *Evaluation of Humanitarian Action: A Pilot Guide* (London: ALNAP, 2013).

92. Tony Beck & Margie Buchanan-Smith, 'Joint Evaluations Coming of Age? The Quality and Future Scope of Joint Evaluations', in *ALNAP Seventh Review of Humanitarian Action*, ed. ALNAP, (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2008), 84.

93. An interview with a member of UNHCR staff, quoted in Peter Wiles, 'Meta Evaluation', in *ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2004*, ed. ALNAP (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2005), 128. See also Beck & Buchanan-Smith, 'Joint Evaluations'. Since the early 2000s, UN agencies have been collaborating on joint evaluations of multi-agency projects and responses to emergencies across particular technical sectors. The inter-agency health evaluations of UNHCR and WHO are examples.

94. Beck & Buchanan-Smith, 'Joint Evaluations', 87.

95. Tony Beck, *Joint Humanitarian Impact Evaluation: Report on Consultations*, Report for the Inter-Agency Working Group on Joint Humanitarian Impact Evaluation (2011), accessed 3 January 2016,
       , 15.

96. See Borton, 'Trends and Challenges', 166. In 2003, Darcy and Hofmann proposed the introduction of 'consistent sector-based surveillance, including the routine measurement of mortality rates and the prevalence of acute malnutrition' (James Darcy & Charles-Antoine Hofmann, *According to Need? Needs Assessment and Decision-making in the Humanitarian Sector*, HPG Report 15, [London: Overseas Development Institute, 2003]). Ramalingham et al. point out that there are a number of initiatives that track health and nutrition data, including the Standardised Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART), the Complex Emergency Database (CE-DAT) of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, and the Health and Nutrition Tracking Service (HNTS). However, the authors suggest that most tracking systems are 'oriented to the needs of donors and the UN, and they tend to lack focus on field capacity to strengthen primary data collection' (Ben Ramalingham et al., 'Counting What Counts: Performance and Effectiveness in the Humanitarian Sector', in *ALNAP Eighth Review of Humanitarian Action*, ed. ALNAP [London: Overseas Development Institute, 2009]).

97. ALNAP, *The State of the Humanitarian System – 2012 Edition* (London: Overseas

Development Institute, 2012), 15.

98. ALNAP, *The State of the Humanitarian System – 2015 Edition* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2015), 18.

99. See ibid., 28-29.

100. PbR is an approach to funding which makes payment conditional on the achievement of desired results. It is increasingly favoured by government donors such as DFID and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), as well as private donors.

101. Miliband proposed the creation of Humanitarian Goals – HuGos (David Miliband, 'It's Time to Reassess the Goals of Humanitarian Aid', *The Guardian* [28 February, 2014], accessed 20 December, 2015,

). The Humanitarian Response Review, published in 2005, proposed the creation of impact benchmarks, as well as process benchmarks, for the humanitarian system (Constanza Adinolfi et al., *Humanitarian Response Review* [New York: OCHA, 2005]).

102. See Tony Beck, *Joint Humanitarian Impact Evaluation: Options Paper* (New York: OCHA, 2010), 7.

103. John Telford et al., *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami* (London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, 2006), 25.

104. Ibid., 93.

105. Ibid., 93.

106. Ibid., 22.

107. Ibid., 23.

108. Borton et al., *Study 3,* 18.

109. Telford et al., *Joint Evaluation*, 17.

110. Ibid., 78.

111. Borton et al., *Study 3*, 19

112. The Herfindahl index is used by economists to measure market concentration. Fearon points out that the Herfindahl index for humanitarian NGOs changed from 0.22 in the mid-1980s to 0.035 in the first decade of the new millennium, indicating a shift in the NGO 'sector' from a 'tight oligopoly to a highly competitive market' (Fearon, 'The Rise of Emergency Relief Aid, 69).

113. Telford et al., Joint Evaluation, 22.

114. Stephen Hopgood, 'Saying "No" to Wallmart: Money and Morality in Professional Humanitarianism', in *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics,* eds. Barnett et al. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 106.

115. OCHA, Cluster Coordination (2014), accessed 21 August 2015.

116. Ki-moon Ban, *One Humanity: Shared Responsibility, Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit* (New York: UN, 2016), 36.

117. See, for example, Fiona Terry, 'The Limits And Risks Of Regulation Mechanisms For Humanitarian Action', *Humanitarian Exchange* 17, (2000), 3. Marine Buissonnière, former International Secretary of MSF, also argued that 'standards reduce humanitarian action to a set of technical actions' (Marine Buissonnière & Maurice Herson, 'Whose Standards? Standards and Accountability in Humanitarian Aid', *MSF Dialogues Series* [London: MSF UK, 2006], 3). Members of MSF have more recently criticised the Core Humanitarian Standard as 'abstract and technocratic' (Sandrine Tiller & Arjan Hehenkamp, 'The Painfully Obvious Core Humanitarian Standards Highlight a Humanitarian System that's Out of Touch', Opinion and Debate – MSF (2014), accessed 23 December, 2015,

).

118. Marci Van Dyke & Ron Waldman, *The Sphere Project Evaluation Report*, Centre for Global Health and Economic Development, Programme on Forced Migration and Health (New York: Columbia University, 2004), 6.

119. James Darcy, 'Locating Responsibility: The Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Its Rationale', *Disasters* 28(2), (2004), 122.

120. On standards and self-governance, see Winton Higgins & Kristina T. Hallström, 'Standardisation, globalisation and rationalities of government', *Organisation* 14(5), (2007), 13.

121. Walker & Purdin, 'Birthing Sphere', 101.

122. In 2003, Buchanan-Smith wrote that the Sphere Project had been 'a largely "northern"-driven policy initiative, although there are many agencies and institutions in the "south" who are now strong supporters of Sphere and who have played a role in the piloting of Sphere'. Margie Buchanan-Smith, *How the Sphere Project Came into Being: A case study of policy-making in the humanitarian aid sector and the relative influence of research*, Working Paper 215, (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2003), 2.

123. Westphal and Zajac discuss how the adoption of standards – new 'formal structures' – can be decoupled from an organisation's ongoing practices (James D. Westphal & Edward J. Zajac, 'Decoupling Policy from Practice: The Case of Stock Repurchase Programs', *Administrative Science Quarterly* 46[2], [2001], 202). With reference to other professional industries, Sandholtz also suggests that after standards are adopted, 'organisational processes remain frequently unaltered' (Kurt W. Sandholtz, 'Making standards stick: A theory of coupled vs. decoupled compliance', *Organization Studies* 33[5-6], [2012], 256).

124. An experienced and prominent humanitarian evaluator and researcher (11 November, 2014) said to us during an interview that 'Sphere has the best tool in the sector but it is not used effectively'. He asked: 'How can you justify the expenditure on Sphere when we don't know how many agencies use its standards or how agencies perform against them?'.

125. John Borton, interview, 17 November, 2014.

126. HAP, *The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management* (Geneva: Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, 2010), 8-9.

127. HAP, *Certified Organisations* (2013), accessed 5 August, 2015,

128. HAP, *HAP Standard*, 1.

129. Andy Featherstone, *Improving impact: Do accountability mechanisms deliver results*, A Joint Christian Aid, Save the Children and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership Report (London: Christian Aid, 2013), 27.

130. Alison Scott, *DFID's Assessment of Multilateral Organisational Effectiveness: An Overview of Results*, International Division Advisory Department (London: DFID, 2005), 2.

131. To clarify its position, Sphere published a *Q&A* explaining how it differs from the CHS: The Sphere Project, *The Core Humanitarian Standard and Sphere: Frequently Asked Questions* (2015), accessed 30 October, 2015,

. It also published nine pages of analysis, comparing the new standard and the Sphere Core Standards, in which it stresses the greater ambition and scope of Sphere, compared to the CHS, which is 'a stand-alone document': The Sphere Project, *The Core Humanitarian Standard and the Sphere Core Standards: Analysis and Comparison* (2015), accessed 30 October, 2015.

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132. The CHS actually merged a number of other standards, guidelines and commitments. Alongside the four already mentioned, the CHS cites the Red Cross and NGO Code of

Conduct, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Commitments on Accountability to Affected People/Populations (CAAPs), and the OECD DAC's Criteria for Evaluating Development and Humanitarian Assistance. And it includes nine commitments: 1. Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant; 2. Humanitarian response is timely and effective; 3. Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects; 4. Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback; 5. Complaints are welcomed and addressed; 6. Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary; 7. Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve; 8. Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitable; 9. Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose.

133. CHS Alliance, *Core Humanitarian Standard* (2015), 23 January, 2016,

134. See, for example, Groupe URD & Coordination SUD, *Humanitarian Certification Discussion Workshop Report* (2013), accessed 30 January, 2016,
.

135. See, for example, Ed Schenkenberg, *Certification: a Cosmetic Exercise in Humanitarian Response* (2014), accessed 30 January, 2016,
.

136. John Cosgrave, *Standards: A Stick to Beat Us With?* (2013), accessed 1 October, 2015,
, 3.

137. This point was even acknowledged by the SCHR. See Tamminga (2014).

138. Cosgrave, *Standards*, 6.

139. Donini compellingly develops this proposition. Antonio Donini, 'Humanitarianism in the 21st Century', *Humanitaire* 25, (2010), 2.

140. Featherstone, *Improving Impact*, 25.

141. Save the Children staff member, interview, 10 August, 2015.

142. Rebecca Barber, *Localising the Humanitarian Toolkit: Lessons from Recent Philippines Disasters*, Report for Save the Children and the ASEAN Agreement for Disaster Management and Emergency Response Partnership Group (Melbourne: Save the Children, 2013), 1.

143. Alex Jacobs, 'Pamati Kita: "Let's Listen Together"', *Humanitarian Exchange* 63, (2015), 16.

144. *Barangay* is the Tagalog term for a village or ward. It is the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines.

145. Interviews with John Borton (17 November, 2014) and Sara Pantuliano (17 February, 2015). Darcy and Hofmann made this point more than ten years ago: Darcy & Hofmann, *According to Need?*, 8.

146. Teresa Hanley et al., *IASC Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Typhoon Haiyan Response*, (New York: OCHA, 2014), 62.

147. Ibid., 62.

148. Ibid., 62.

149. Ibid., 36.

150. Many have written on the shift to a rights focus in humanitarian action in the 1990s. See, for example, Hugo Slim, 'Not Philanthropy But Rights: The Proper Politicisation of Humanitarian Philosophy', *The International Journal of Humanitarian Rights* 6(2), (2002).

151. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*. UN document A/47277-S/24111 (New York: UN, 1992).

152. The work of Chambers was particularly important in this regard. For example, see Robert Chambers, 'Rural Appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory', *IDS Discussion Paper* 311, (1992).

153. Darcy, 'Locating Responsibility', 117.

154. The Sphere Project, *Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, 2011*, (Rugby: Practical Action Publishing, 2011), 20

155. This point was raised by Raymond Apthorpe and John Borton during a roundtable event on the role of anthropology in the humanitarian sector (11 November, 2015).

156. Among proposals for greater participation of crisis-affected populations in the distribution of aid at this time, see: Hugo Slim & John Mitchell, 'Distribution on Whose Terms? Agency-Managed and Community-Managed Systems', *Refugee Participation Network* 8, (1990); Hugo Slim & John Mitchell, 'Towards Community-Managed Relief: A Case Study in Southern Sudan', *Disasters* 14(3), (1990); and Barbara Harrell-Bond et al., 'Counting Refugees: Gifts, Givers, Patrons and Clients', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 2(3/4), (1992).

157. Raymond Apthorpe & Philippa Atkinson, *Towards Shared Social Learning for Humanitarian Programmes*, ALNAP Synthesis Study (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1999), 8.

158. ALNAP & Groupe URD, *Participation by Crisis-Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action: A Handbook for Practitioners* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2003).

159. Disaster Mitigation Institute et al., *Independent Evaluation of Expenditure of DEC India Earthquake Appeal Funds – Volume Two, Full Evaluation Report* (London: Disasters Emergency Committee, 2001). According to ALNAP, this was one of the first extensive 'beneficiary perception surveys' (ALNAP, *Inventory of the Principal Projects, Initiatives and Approaches Which are Relevant to Overall Performance Assessment of the Humanitarian System*, ALNAP Humanitarian Performance Project [London: Overseas Development Institute, 2008], 55).

160. Telford et al., *Joint Evaluation,* 26.

161. Fritz Institute, *Recipient Perceptions of Aid Effectiveness: Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation in Tsunami Affected Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka* (San Francisco: Fritz Institute, 2005); and Fritz Institute, *Lessons from the Tsunami: Survey of Affected Families in India and Sri Lanka*, San Francisco: Fritz Institute, 2005.

162. See ALNAP, *Inventory of the Principal Projects, Initiatives and Approaches Which are Relevant to Overall Performance Assessment of the Humanitarian System*, ALNAP Humanitarian Performance Project (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2008), 56.

163. Anderson et al., *Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: CDA, 2008), i.

164. See World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat, *Restoring Humanity: Synthesis of the Consultation Process for the World Humanitarian Summit* (New York: United Nations, 2015), particularly 90-122.

165. José Guadelupe Ruelas, interview, 6 May, 2015.

166. Richards warned of the dangers of bureaucratising participatory approaches in his critique of the Participatory Rural Appraisal. , Paul Richards, 'Participatory Rural Appraisal: A Quick and Dirty Critique', *PLA Notes* 24, (1995).

167. For critical perspectives on participation that challenge the presentation of participatory practices as necessarily good, see Bill Cooke & Uma Kothari, *Participation: the New Tyranny?* (New York: Zed Books, 2001).

168. In his seminal essay, 'Exit, Voice, and Loyalty', Albert Hirschman describes 'exit' as the decision to cut off from a certain company by no longer consuming its products or severing ties in some other way (for example, resignation from an organisation). Albert Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organisations, and States* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970).

169. See Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2012). Davey recounts how the sans-frontiérist humanitarianism of MSF became an

expression of the radicalism of young French activists of the revolutionary Left (Eleanor Davey, *Idealism Beyond Borders: The French Revolutionary Left and the Rise of Humanitarianism, 1954-1988* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015]).

170. For discussion of perceptions of success and failure in humanitarian action, see Fernando Espada, 'Perceptions of Success and Failure in Humanitarian Action', *Humanitarian Affairs Think Tank*, (2015), 23 February, 2016,

.

171. ALNAP, *Humanitarian System* – 2015, 14.

172. Ibid., 14.

173. Ibid., 11.

174. Ibid., 68.

175. Ibid., 72.

176. Ibid., 78.

177. Ibid., 11.

178. Ibid., 14.

179. Head of Humanitarian Response in an international NGO, interview, 12 April, 2015.

180. Independent evaluator of humanitarian action, interview, 3 February, 2015.

181. Sara Pantuliano, interview, 17 February, 2015.

182. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 10-11. Foucault describes arts of existence as 'those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria'.

183. During an interview for this project, Lewis Sida, an independent consultant who has worked with a number of donors and humanitarian agencies, made this point, saying, 'it is in everyone's interests to appear to be doing the right thing' (31 March, 2015).

184. DFID, *Humanitarian Response Funding Guidelines for NGOs* (London: DFID, 2015), 5.

185. See, for example, Maurice Herson, 'Doing the Thing Right or Doing the Right Thing?', *ALNAP blog* (2015), accessed 20 August, 2015,

186. Walker and Purdin, 'Birthing Sphere', 111.

187. See 'Maurice's Response' in Buissonnière and Herson, 'Whose Standards?', 10.

188. Fernando Espada (ed.), *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness* (London: Humanitarian Affairs Team & Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, 2016).

189. According to UNDESA, the global urban population rose from 1.35 billion in 1970 to 2.29 billion in 1990, and then to 3.88 billion in 2014. UNDESA, *World Urbanisation Prospects*: The 2014 Revision, ST/ESA/SER.A/366 (New York: UNDESA, 2014), 21.

190. Donald Brown et al., *Urban Crises and Humanitarian Responses*: *A Literature Review*, A report for the DFID Humanitarian Policy and Partnerships Group, CHASE (London: The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, 2015), 56. The review conducted by Brown et al. shows that the body of literature on humanitarian action in urban environments is growing significantly.

191. Caroline Moser & Cathy McIlwaine, 'New Frontiers in 21st Century Urban Conflict and Violence', *Environment and Urbanization* 26(2), (2014), 331.

192. Reid-Henry and Sending suggest that the three common components in the approach of international humanitarian organisations responding to violence are: 'a focus on reducing individual vulnerabilities and enhancing community 'resilience'; building trust between victims, perpetrators and political authorities; and working as a bridgehead into 'no-go areas'

on behalf of other actors, including the private sector and the state'. Simon Reid-Henry & Ole Jacob Sending, 'The "Humanitarianisation" of Urban Violence', *Environment and Urbanisation* 26(2), (2014), 427.

193. Ibid., 430.

194. The Mexican Citizens' Council for Public Security and Penal Justice produces an annual ranking of the 50 most violent cities in the world. In 2015 it placed Tegucigalpa sixth, with a homicide rate of 73.51 per 100,000 residents, and Guatemala City twenty-fifth, with a homicide rate of 47.17 per 100,000 residents (Seguridad, Justicia y Paz, *The 50 Most Violent Cities in the World* [2016], accessed 3 February, 2016,

3)

195. All those who participated in our interviews or focus groups in the two cities told stories of extreme violence that had affected them, their families, or their communities.

196. *Mano dura*, most commonly translated as 'iron fist', is the term given to crime-reduction strategies that rely on the use of force, particularly the deployment of military personnel to carry out civil functions of enforcing law and order. *Mano dura* approaches have been adopted by governments across Central America in response the upsurge in gang violence over the last decade.

197. Carlos Sierra and Ian Quiroz of CIPRODEH in Tegucigalpa, interview, 8 May, 2015.

198. Bernard McCaul , interview, 5 May, 2015.

199. Ian Walker, interview, 7 May, 2015.

200. The ICRC has proposed that urban violence falls under 'other situations of violence', for which it has a legal mandate.

201. Peter Redfield, 'Vital Mobility and the Humanitarian Kit', *in Biosecurity Interventions: Global Health and Security in Question*, ed. Lakoff et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 165.

202. Edy Manolo Barillas Cruz, interview, 27 April, 2015.

203. Roberto Cabrera, interview, 29 April, 2015.

204. Ibid.

205. Arabesca Sánchez, interview, 5 May, 2015.

206. Focus group with four girls between the ages of 14 and 21 from a violent neighbourhood of Tegucigalpa (7 May, 2015).

207. See Fernando Espada, 'On Authority and Trust: A Reflection on the Effectiveness of Disaster Management in Bangladesh, India and Nepal', in *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness, ed.* Espada (London: Humanitarian Affairs Team & Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, 2016); and David Matyas, 'Even the River Has Need of Its Tributaries: An Exploration of Humanitarian Effectiveness in the Slow-Onset Context of Niger', in *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness*, ed. Espada (London: Humanitarian Affairs Team & Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, 2016).

208. Roberto Cabrera, interview, 29 April, 2015.

209. See Mark Duffield, 'Challenging environments: Danger, resilience and the aid industry', *Security Dialogue* 43(5), (2012), 480.

210. The UN Secretary-General's report for the WHS (Ban, *Restoring Humanity*, 2) offers a good example of the well-known narrative: 'In too many places, peace, stability and sustainable economic growth remain elusive. Brutal and seemingly intractable conflicts have devastated the lives of millions of people, threatening the futures of entire generations. More countries are slipping into fragility, marked by extreme poverty and weak institutions, compounded by natural hazards and climate-induced disasters. Violent extremism, terrorism and

transnational crime create persistent instability. Growing economic inequality within countries and the widening gap between rich and poor is further marginalizing the most vulnerable in society. Climate change continues to cause increased humanitarian stress as it exacerbates food insecurity, water scarcity, conflict, migration and other trends. Disasters are becoming more frequent and intense. Pandemics, epidemics and other global health threats continue to emerge at worrying levels and frequency. As millions of people leave their homes in search of safety or opportunity, the capacity and willingness of countries to absorb them is seriously challenged. Although towns and cities provide new opportunities, rapid unplanned urbanization combined with natural hazards, pandemics and aerial bombardments are placing even more people at risk'.

211. Of course, it is not only humanitarian agencies that contribute to this discursive construction of new crises. During a debate at Save the Children, in 2013, on critiques of humanitarian action in news media, journalists and Save the Children staff both recognised that demands from news agencies for sensational stories provide additional incentive to present crises as unprecedented in scale and severity.

212. See Simon Batterbury, 'Shifting Sands'. *Geographical* 70(5), (1998).

213. UNDP, *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development* (New York: UNDP, 2015), 211.

214. See Ced Hesse et al., *Building Climate Resilience in the Sahel* (London: IIED, 2013).

215. Robert Chambers, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (Essex: Longman, 1983), 112.

216. Matyas, 'Even the River'.

217. Matyas, 'Even the River.

218. Kenneth Hewitt, *Interpretations Of Calamity From The Viewpoint Of Human Ecology* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1983).

219. Fernando Espada, 'The Un-Ness of an Emergency: A Reflection on the Ebola Response in Liberia', in *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness*, ed. Espada (London: Humanitarian Affairs Team & Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, 2016).

220. Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser at Save the Children, interview, 17 August, 2015.

221. Espada, 'On Authority and Trust'.

222. Ibid.

223. Rehman Sobhan, *South Asia's Weak Development: The Role of Governance.* European Institute for Asian Studies Briefing Paper (1999), accessed 30 March, 2015, .

224. Jessica Field, '"No Voice Can Be Heard Above the Gunfire': Protection, Partnerships and Politicking in the Syrian Civil War', in *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness*, ed. Espada (London: Humanitarian Affairs Team & Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, 2016).

225. Doctor from a diaspora NGO, interview, June, 2015.

226. Jessica Field, 'Politics by Other Means? Humanitarian Effectiveness in the Occupied Palestinian Territories'. Unpublished 2016.

227. Former international NGO project manager in Gaza, interview, June, 2015.

228. Field, '"No Voice"'; and Field, 'Politics by Other Means'.

229. Field, '"No Voice"'; and Field, 'Politics by Other Means'.

230. Michael Power, *The Risk Management of Everything: Rethinking the Politics of Uncertainty* (London: Demos, 2004).

231. A Monitoring and Evalution Adviser for an international NGO told us during an interview that her organisation would inevitably focus on 'quants' as long as results are given more attention than systems (10 August, 2015).

232. See Juliano Fiori et al., 'The Critical Role of Humanitarian Critique', *ALNAP Blog* (2015), accessed 13 January, 2016, .

233. See Abby Stoddard et al., *Once Removed: Lessons and Challenges in Remote Management of Humanitarian Operations for Insecure Areas*, A Humanitarian Outcomes Report for the Centre on International Cooperation (2010), accessed 30 January, 2015, .

234. There were 58 major security incidents – killings, kidnappings or attacks leading to serious injury – involving aid workers in Somalia from 1997 to 2005, compared to 158 incidents from 2006 to 2014. In Sudan, the number rose from 49 to 187 from the first period to the second and, in Afghanistan, from 74 to 380 (The Aid Worker Security Database, accessed 28 June, 2015 According to interviews for this study with five aid workers who have worked in South-Central Somalia at different points over the last 25 years, foreign aid workers were robbed and caught in crossfire but were rarely targeted in the early 1990s. From the mid-2000s onwards they have been directly targeted. One British staff member of Save the Children, based in Mogadishu from 1991 to 1993, said that, back then, being and looking foreign had made her safer: 'When driving to field sights, white expats would take it in turns to sit in the front and hang their arm out the open window to show they were foreign. This was an effective security measure'. Another said 'Aid workers always travelled around in branded vehicles back then and flags flew over aid compounds'.

235. Stoddard et al. suggest that the global humanitarian workforce is growing by an average of six per cent per year. Abby Stoddard et al., *Providing Aid in Insecure Environments: 2009 Update. Trends in Violence against Aid Workers and the Operational Response: Why Violent Attacks on Aid Workers Are on the Increase*, HPG Policy Brief 34 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2009).

236. With the increase in the number of humanitarian workers, if we exclude figures for the three most dangerous countries for aid workers – Somalia, Sudan and Afghanistan – there was actually a decrease in the number of attacks on humanitarian workers from 2006 to 2008 (Stoddard et al., *Providing Aid in Insecure Environments*, 2-4). Fast argues that this highlights the need to contextualise and disaggregate data on attacks on aid workers (Larissa Fast, 'Securitisation and Threats to Humanitarian Workers', in *The Routledge Companion to Humanitarian Action*, ed. MacGinty [London: Routledge, 2015], 316). Also see Michaël Neuman, 'Is Medical Care Really Under Fire?', MSF UK blog (2014), accessed 15 July, 2015, .

237. Duffield, 'Challenging Environments', 484. See also Michaël Neuman and Fabrice Weissman, *Saving Lives and Staying Alive: Humanitarian Security in the Age of Risk Management* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers, 2016).

238. Clearly, since it is foreign staff who tend to be withdrawn when programmes are remotely managed, there are unresolved ethical questions about the prioritisation of their security over that of local staff; questions which are complicated by appeals to 'localise' the delivery of aid and 'build local humanitarian capacity'.

239. Jonathan Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu: Testing US Policy in Somalia* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 38.

240. Field, '"No Voice"'.

241. International NGO worker in Lebanon, interview, June, 2015.

242. See Stoddard et al., *Once Removed*.

243. See Paul Bouvier, 'Humanitarian Care and Small Things in Dehumanised Places', *International Review of the Red Cross* 94(888), (2012).

244. OECD DAC, *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance*, 22.

245. Jessica Field, 'A Culture Clash? Exploring "Appropriateness" and "Relevance" in the Response to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda', in *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness*, ed. Espada (London: Humanitarian Affairs Team & Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, 2016).

246. See, for example, ALNAP, *State of Humanitarian System – 2015*, 65.

247. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, worldwide military expenditure in 2014 was US$1,776 billion, 0.4 per cent lower than it was the previous year (SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, accessed 21 January, 2016,). Meanwhile, as already mentioned, US$24.5 billion was spent on humanitarian aid in 2014 (Development Initiatives, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2015*).

248. Baughan and Fiori discuss the role of Save the Children's early leadership in contributing to this process of depoliticisation (Baughan & Fiori, 'Save the Children').

249. See Katherine Davies, *Continuity, Change and Contest: Meanings of 'humanitarian' from the 'Religion of Humanity' to the Kosovo War*, HPG Working Paper, (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2012), 3.

250. On the narrowing understanding of the humanitarian label, see Julia Pacitto & Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 'Writing the "Other" into Humanitarian Discourse: Framing Theory and Practice in South-South humanitarian Responses to Forced Displacement', *Refugee Studies Centre: Working Paper Series* 93, (2013), accessed 23 August, 2015, .

251. See, for example, Robert K. Merton, 'Bureaucratic Structure and *Personality', Social Forces* 18(4), (1940).

252. This is illustrative of what Santiago Castro-Gómez refers to as the 'hubris of the zero point': with approaches to achieving established results based in 'scientific thought', humanitarian agencies and institutional donors assume a position as conveyors of reason, drawing on and developing authoritative language to consolidate their own power. Santiago Castro-Gómez, *La Hybris del Punto Cero: Ciencia, Raza e Ilustración en la Nueva Granada* (1750-1816), (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2005).

253. Ferguson's observation that challenges to 'development' are only made in the name of 'real development' is clearly relevant here (Ferguson, *Anti-Politics Machine*, xiv).

254. SCHR, *Code of Conduct*.

255. Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).

256. Agamben suggests that, by reducing individuals to 'bare life', humanitarian organisations end up colluding in the establishment of a permanent 'state of exception', through which states deny them the rights of citizenship. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1998), 133.

257. John Borton, interview, 27 January, 2015.

258. During an interview, Lewis Sida contended that the genuine participation of crisis-affected populations in humanitarian activities requires changes to the political economy of humanitarian aid (31 March, 2015).

259. Staff surveys at Save the Children UK in recent years have consistently shown dissatisfaction with a working culture that celebrates working long hours.

260. The Global Public Policy Institute has been working on a research project that looks at incentives and the political economy of humanitarian aid. The project is entitled 'Drivers and Inhibitors of Change in the Humanitarian System: a Political Economy Analysis'.

261. Bennett et al., *Time to Let Go: Remaking Humanitarian Action for the Modern Era*. HPG report (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2016), 70. With reference to Tsui

(Edward Tsui, *Analysis of Normative Developments in Humanitarian Resolutions Since the Adoption of 46/182*, Report commissioned by OCHA [New York: OCHA, 2015]), Bennett et al. describe assessed contributions as 'the mechanism through which member stated fund the "regular" budget of the United Nations and the budget for UN peacekeeping operations, which are determined on the basis of scales of assessment recommended by the Committee on Contributions and decided by the General Assembly'.

262. See Roddy et al., 'Humanitarian Accountability'.

263. Ibid., 197.

264. The Charitable Uses Act 1601 had already established a list of purposes considered by the state to be of value to society when, in 1891, Lord MacNaughton presented a classification of charitable causes that remains a reference today. MacNaughton's four categories are: trusts for the relief of poverty, trusts for the advancement of education, trusts for the advancement of religion, and other trusts beneficial to the community.

265. This auxiliary status means that the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are created by an act of parliament or a governmental decree – 'each society should be seen as the result of a partnership between a small volunteer group and its respective government... It is a civil society organisation created by law as auxiliary to its respective public authorities'. Giovanni Zambello, 'Strengthening the Red Cross Red Crescent Auxiliary Role: a Humanitarian Imperative in a Fast-Changing World' (2012), accessed 19 October, 2015.

266. The Winter of Discontent refers to the period, in early 1979, when public sector unions went on strike against a cap of five per cent on pay rises. It was the coldest winter since the early 1960s.

267. Conservative Party, *Conservative General Election Manifesto 1979* (1979), accessed 23 July, 2015, .

268. Jose Gabriel Palma, 'Why Did the Latin American Critical Tradition in the Social Sciences Become Practically Extinct? From Structural Adjustment to Ideological Adjustment', in *The Handbook of International Political Economy*, ed. Mark Blyth (London: Routledge, 2008), 251.

269. See Nehal Panchamia & Peter Thomas, *The Next Steps Initiative*, Institute for Government (2014), accessed 20 July, 2015, .

270. This can be characterised as a shift in the focus of bureaucratic process from inputs to results.

271. Thomas Haskell, 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1', *The American Historical Review* 90(2), (1985).

272. Haskell describes the 'Quaker reformers who were so prominent in antislavery and every other humanitarian endeavour of the age... [being] often fabulously successful businessmen who epitomised the Protestant ethic and the capitalist mentality'. Haskell, *Capitalism*, 346.

273. Roddy et al., 'Humanitarian Accountability', 191.

274. 'Scientific medicine' is a term used to describe the modern form of medicine based on scientific method that emerged in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century with the development of germ theory and bacteriology.

275. O'Sullivan et al. propose that the history of humanitarianism should also be seen in this way. O'Sullivan et al., 'Humanitarianisms in Context', *European Review of History* 23(1-2), (2016).

276. HIlton et al., *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain Hardcover* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7.

277. Hilton et al., *The Politics of Expertise*, 8.

278. Martyn Housden, *The League of Nations and the Organisation of Peace* (Abingdon:

Routledge, 2012), 92.

279. Davies, *Continuity, Change and Contest*, 13.

280. Hilton et al., *The Politics of Expertise*, 10.

281. Cullather describes the transformation of nutrition from a discipline with 'descriptive, reformist roots' to a 'quantitative, technocratic specialisation'. Nick Cullather, 'The Foreign Policy of the Calorie', *The American Historical Review*, 112(2), (2007).

282. Emily Baughan, '"Every Citizen of Empire Implored to Save the Children!" Empire, internationalism and the Save the Children Fund in inter-war Britain', *Historical Research* 86(231), (2013), 123.

283. Cited in Baughan, '"Every Citizen"', 123.

284. On the professionalisation of CARE, see Heike Wieters, 'Reinventing the Firm: from Post-War Relief to International Humanitarian Agency' *European Review of History* 23(1-2), (2016).

285. See Jessica Field, 'Cecil Jackson-Cole and the Development of Fundraising as a Technology of Rule, 1942-1979', PhD diss. (University of Manchester, 2015).

286. See Davey et al., *A History of the Humanitarian System*, 11; Barnett, *Empire of Humanity,* 133; Peter Macalister-Smith, *International Humanitarian Assistance: Disaster Relief Actions in International Law and Organization* (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1985), 118.

287. O'Sullivan et al., 'Humanitarianisms in Context', 7.

288. Marie-Luce Desgrandchamps, 'Organising the Unpredictable: the Nigeria–Biafra War and its Impact on the ICRC', *International Review of the Red Cross* 94(888), (2012).

289. With the projection of images of Ethiopian babies with distended bellies during the 1984-5 famine, televised appeals raised huge amounts of money. Public donations alone amounted to approximately £150m following the LiveAid concert.

290. The Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator was created in 1971 and, in the same year, UNICEF established the Office of the Emergency Operations Coordinator. In 1974, WHO set up an Emergency Relief Operations Office, and in 1975 FAO established the Office for Special Relief Operations and the WFP set up its Emergency Unit. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees created an Emergency Office in 1980. Meanwhile, the UK, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, West Germany and Netherlands all established offices for emergency relief. Davey et al., *A History of the Humanitarian System*, 31-2.

291. Davey et al., *A History of the Humanitarian System*, 29.

292. RedR developed its own UK-based training programme in 1991, and became increasingly focussed on the provision of professional development courses.

293. Thomas A. Loya & John Boli, 'Standardisation in the world polity: Technical rationality over power', in *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations since 1875*, ed. Boli et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 172.

294. Jack Latimer, 'Friendship among equals: Recollections from ISO's first fifty years' (Geneva: International Organisation for Standardisation, 1997), 16.

295. Ibid., 18.

296. Walter Mattli & Tim Büthe, 'Setting International Standards: Technological Rationality or Primacy of Power?', *World Politics* 56(1), (2003), 7

297. ISO, *About ISO* (2015), accessed 7 January, 2016, .

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With increased focus on results in the humanitarian sector over the last 20 years, effectiveness has been understood as 'doing what works' as efficiently as possible. Significant energy and resources have been invested in technocratic measures to improve effectiveness of humanitarian action through strengthening accountability, developing technical proficiency, building an objective evidence base, and achieving greater value for money. But whose understanding of effectiveness has this been built on and how closely does it reflect the understandings of people for whom humanitarian action is enacted?

This report offers a critical analysis of the emergence of the humanitarian effectiveness agenda, the bureaucratisation and professionalisation of humanitarian action, the politics behind these trends, and their impact on humanitarian action. It proposes that, in spite of bringing order and focus to efforts to improve humanitarian action, the development of the effectiveness agenda has reinforced an echo chamber within the humanitarian sector that is depoliticising humanitarian agencies, distancing them from the humanitarian imperative and the people they seek to support.

The arguments presented in *The Echo Chamber* are informed by field research which is presented in a second publication – *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness*. Essays in the collection offer an analysis of the impact of context on understandings of and approaches to effectiveness.

The Echo Chamber: Results, Management and the Humanitarian Effectiveness Agenda and *Essays on Humanitarian Effectiveness* can be downloaded at www.humanitarianeffectivenessproject.com