The London School of Economics and Political Science

Understanding How the Identity of International Aid Agencies and Their Approaches to Security Are Mutually Shaped

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A thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

London, January 2011

In memory of Dominique Jacquin-Berdal

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Abstract

The objective of the thesis is to study, through a critical constructivist analysis, the conception and practice of security by humanitarian international aid agencies (IAAs), with particular reference to their relation with private military and security companies (PMSCs).

The research provides a qualitative analysis of humanitarian security, which is defined as the practice of safely accessing vulnerable populations for humanitarian purposes. Its methodology relies on semi-structured interviews, including in Afghanistan and Haiti; participant observation; and a literature review. The thesis' critical constructivist approach implies studying the co-constitution of aid organizations' identity and interests. It argues that IAAs' identity and approaches to security are mutually shaped. It does so by first highlighting dominant discourses framing aid agencies' identity and processes by which particular views are reproduced. It then identifies the dominant representations in security management and reveals how they relate to IAAs' identity.

The thesis defines three ideal–types of IAAs (Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian) and of PMSCs (Guarding, Unarmed, and Weaponised). This typology allows a dissecting of IAAs' different conceptions and practices of security, and the conditions under which each type of IAA employs PMSCs. The research reveals that an aid agency's identity forms the basis of its approach to security. Identity and security, are however, not stable but dynamic and in a constant process of interaction with each other. The thesis then offers a study of these dynamic processes, with a focus on agents.

The thesis delves into the implications of the research for the concept of security and reveals how humanitarian security embodies IAAs' distinctive baggage. It suggests that IAAs require a more comprehensive understanding of how their identity and practices affect their security. The thesis' original contribution is two-fold: it represents the first critical constructivist study of humanitarian security practices and is the first research to study humanitarian organizations as referent objects of security.

Acknowledgements

Undertaking a doctoral research is a rather lonely process, but its burden is not the author's only. For this reason, a number of people must here be acknowledged and thanked warmly.

To start with, I am grateful to my first PhD supervisor Dominique Jacquin-Berdal who, sadly, died in January 2006 during a surgical operation. This beautiful woman was of precious support to her students, me included. I am indebted to her for having accepted to supervise me in the first place, and for ensuring that my research was on track. My thoughts continue to accompany her husband Mats Berdal and their lovely daughter Ingrid.

The saying goes that 'every cloud has a silver lining'. This proved true for this research so I would like to also thank my current supervisor Mark Hoffman for his guidance as well as confidence in my ability to finish the PhD while being simultaneously engaged in other professional activities. His flexibility in this regard as well as the quality of his comments were pivotal and much appreciated.
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At this point, it is worth specifying that any and all errors or shortcomings in the thesis are mine alone.

Since a doctoral research is a long-drawn-out work any material support must also be acknowledged. I here would like to warmly thank both the Fondation Bleustein-Blanchet pour la Vocation and the London School of Economics and Political Science for their much needed financial support. This work would have hardly been possible without it.
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Having received so much support during this doctoral work, I now hope I can put what I've learnt during the research into practice, so that I can give back to some of the millions of people – dubbed 'beneficiaries' in the aid parlance – who are unfortunate enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Brisbane, the 7th of January 2011.

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Acronyms

AA: Action Aid

ACBAR: Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief

ACF: Action Contre la Faim

ACSF: Afghan Civil Society Forum

ADRA: Adventist Development and Relief Agency

APAS: Association Professionnelle des Agents de Sécurité / Professional Association of Security Guards

AOGs: Armed Opposition Groups

ANA: Afghan National Army

ANP: Afghan National Police

ANSO: Afghanistan NGO Security Office

BAPSC: British Association of Private Security Companies

BRC: British Red Cross

CA: Christian Aid

C3ISR: Command, Control and Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

CAO: Chief Administrative Officer

CCTV: Closed-circuit television

CD: Country Director

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

CESTUS: Center for Expeditionary Security Training US

CHF: Cooperative Housing Foundation

CRF: Croix-Rouge Française

CRS: Catholic Relief Services

CWS: Church World Services

COIN: Counter-insurgency

COO: Chief of Operations

DACAAR: Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees

DAI: Development Alternatives, Inc.

DCAF: Democratic Control of Armed Forces

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

DIAG: Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups

DfID: UK Department for International Development

DPKO: (United Nations) Department of Peacekeeping Operations

DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo

DSN: Dutch Security Network

DSS: (United Nations) Department of Safety and Security

ECHO: European Commission Humanitarian aid Office

EISF: European Interagency Security Forum

FAR: Forces Armées Rwandaises - Rwandan Armed Forces

FRRME: Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East

GIS: Global Investment Summits

GPR8: Good Practice Review 8

HDF: Humanitarian Defence

HPG: Humanitarian Policy Group

HPN: Humanitarian Practice Network

IA: InterAction

IAA: International Aid Agencies

IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee

IASMN: Inter Agency Security Management Network

ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross

ICG: International Crisis Group

IDP: Internally Displaced Persons

IFRC: International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

IHL: International Humanitarian Law

IMC: International Medical Corps

IOM: International Organization for Migration

IOS: Initiative ONG Sécurité (Haiti)

IR: International Relations

IRC: International Relief Committee

IRD: International Relief and Development

IRG: International Resources Group

IRIN: Integrated Regional Information Network

IRW: Islamic Relief Worldwide

IPOA: International Peace Operations Association

ISAF: International Security Assistance Force

ISOA: International Stability Operations Association

JIPO: Journal of International Peace Operations

LWF: Lutheran World Federation

MC: Mercy Corps

MDM: Médecins du Monde

MINUSTAH: Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti (United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti)

MJSP: Ministère de la Justice et de la Sécurité Publique (Haiti)

MNF: Multi-National Forces

MONUC: Mission de l'Organization des Nations Unies au Congo

MSF (F / B / H): Médecins sans Frontières (France / Belgium / Holland)

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NIC: National Intelligence Council

OCHA: (United Nations) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

ODI: Overseas Development Institute

OFDA: Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

OGB: Oxfam Great Britain

PaP: Port-au-Prince

PSC: Private security company

PMC: Private military company

PMSC: Private military and security company

PU: Première Urgence

RI: Relief International

SAG: Security Advisory Group

SC (UK / US / N): Save the Children (United Kingdom / United States / Norway)

SDC: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SMI: Security Management Initiative

SSDS: Special Security Defence Service

SSSI: Strategic Security Solutions International

SLT: Saving Lives Together Initiative

TF: Tearfund

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNAMA: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNOCA: United Nations Operation Centre in Afghanistan

UNOHCI: United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq

UNOPS: United Nations Office for Project Services

US: United States

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

USG: Under-Secretary General

USIP: Unites States Institute for Peace

USPI: United States Protection and Investigation

VDI: Virtual Defense and Development International, Inc

WFP: (United Nations) World Food Programme

WHH: Welthungerhilfe

WHO: (United Nations) World Health Organization

WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction

WSI: Wackenhut Services Inc.

WV: World Vision

Introduction

"In a world in which the total of human knowledge is doubling about every ten years, our security can rest only on our ability to learn"

Nathaniel Branden[1]

It is striking to see the different ways humanitarian aid organizations manage their security. When faced with a similar given threat, some aid agencies react by lowering their profile, others by contracting a private military and security company, whilst others cease operating in the area deemed dangerous. Differences in aid agencies' approaches to security are repeatedly noticed from one context of operations to another. The reasons for such diversity are not clearly understood. One frequently hears aid workers emphasising the disparities between the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, or between American and European organizations. Although such commonly repeated distinctions may reveal organizational and cultural differences, they are based on subjective perceptions rather than evidence-based investigation. Indeed, an assessment of the realities of intervention in any country show that such distinctions do not necessarily account for the differences in humanitarian organizations' security posture.

The present thesis is an attempt to understand aid agencies' approaches to security and to study, in particular, the processes that lead organizations to adopt practices that include the use of force.

Definitions:

The research provides a qualitative analysis of 'humanitarian security', which is defined as the practice of safely accessing vulnerable populations for humanitarian purposes. It includes the security of humanitarian personnel, the security of aid organizations' humanitarian programmes and the security of their assets and reputation.

Defining what exactly is a humanitarian actor or a private military and security company involves a normative element. The choice of words is indeed telling: aid agencies are prone to differentiate between *humanitarian aid* (which is said to be based on the needs or the rights of the identified vulnerable populations) and *assistance* (which may be simply defined as helping others – be it for the 'giver's' political, economic, military or other interests).[2] For the purposes of this thesis, the

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[1] Branden, N. (1994), p.34.
[2] Armed forces engaged in 'winning hearts and minds' may provide some assistance to vulnerable populations, but the purpose of this assistance is to ultimately serve the militaries' agenda. The consequence is that some portions of populations in need may be ignored if assisting them is not in line with the militaries' interests; or that the assistance may be used as blackmail to elicit the provision of information or other services. Similarly, assistance provided by the private sector may entail that the populations in need may not be assisted if it significantly reduces any companies' profit margin. The author has witnessed examples of such practices in both Iraq and Afghanistan – and these practices are regularly denounced by aid agencies and authors alike (Bradbury, 2010).

humanitarian sector is understood as comprising a) agencies from the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC); b) international non-governmental not-for-profit organizations (NGOs) engaged in relief or humanitarian activities; and c) the humanitarian United Nations agency (UN). Within the UN system, "four United Nations entities – UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and UNDP – have primary roles in protection and providing assistance in humanitarian crises" (UN, Undated, a)[3] while OCHA, IOM, the FAO and WHO also contribute to it.[4] The thesis focuses primarily on NGOs but also includes references to the other agencies when relevant. Altogether, these operational entities are referred to in generic terms as aid organizations or agencies throughout the thesis. UN agencies and NGOs involved in development, human rights or other types of activities are not subjects of interest to the present research.

The normative dimension behind the designation of companies pertaining to the security industry is also to be noted. The term 'private security company' for instance is perceived as less dramatic and less affiliated to the negatively perceived notion of mercenary forces, than 'private military company'. This is a major reason why companies providing security services (including armed protection) on the battlefield usually call themselves private security companies. The focus of the thesis is on the *corporate provision of security services in conflict and post-conflict environments* and, as such, is limited to private military and security companies (PMSCs). The privatisation of security – i.e. the use of corporate entities for the provision of services related to security – has to be put into this context. It does not encompass entities such as militia, mafia or government elements that provide security services without being registered as corporations.

A deeper analysis of definitions and what they entail will be provided in the empirical chapters of this thesis. For now the lexical framework provided above is sufficient.

Overview of the existing literature on humanitarian security:

The study of humanitarian security in the discipline of International Relations is a recent field. It has essentially developed in parallel to the increasing number of acts of violence perpetrated against humanitarian aid agencies and their personnel. Authors are often (former) aid workers and, as such, the literature has essentially developed in reaction to aid agencies' deteriorating security. This means that its primary focus has been to seek answers to the many security-related questions faced by humanitarian organizations. Until the mid to late 1990s, most aid agencies' approaches to security were unsystematic and consisted essentially of post-incident tactical responses at field level. The publication of the seminal *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* (Van Brabant, 2000) provided the first systematic conceptual framework to humanitarian security. This manual, which has just been updated by Van Brabant (Van Brabant, 2010) with the support of an Advisory Board

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[3] The acronyms respectively stand for Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; World Food Programme; The United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Development Programme.
[4] Through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, other UN agencies and non UN organizations cooperate together to strengthen humanitarian assistance. The acronyms respectively stand for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; the International Organization for Migration; the Food and Agriculture Organization; and the World Health Organization.

composed of humanitarian security managers, paved the way for a conceptualisation of humanitarian security.

In parallel to these efforts, the literature has also expanded in reaction to the humanitarian community's need to better understand the security incidents they were facing. A number of authors, the most prominent of which are Larissa Fast, Adele Harmer, Dennis King, Mani Sheik and Abby Stoddard, have compiled data about security incidents and provided subsequent analysis. While their efforts have greatly contributed to better understanding of aid agencies' sources of insecurity, the existing analysis is at times contradictory, and disproportionately focuses on severe acts of violence as opposed to other causes of incidents such as those due to illness or stress.

The literature that examines the interactions between international aid agencies and private military and security companies remains limited, to date. While the first publication on the topic was released in 1999 (Bryans *et al.*, 1999) no more than thirty academic articles - many by the same authors - have been published on the subject since. Nevertheless, this literatue has been essential in raising aid workers' awareness of the subject, in particular by highlighting the opportunities for, and risks of, privatising security for humanitarian organizations.

Both strands of the literature fail to explain the processes that lead organizations to approach security differently. Indeed, there has been only a limited amount of research that delves into this area, and most works focus primarily on the differences between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies. Although such a distinction is relevant, it is also limited in scope, particularly as it does not account for the conceptual and operational similarities that also exist between NGOs and UN agencies. More importantly, the literature does not provide explanations about how aid organizations come to adopt one security posture or another. For instance, it reveals some of the reasons why aid agencies outsource their security to a PMSC, yet does not offer any explanation about how such a decision is taken, particularly when it is considered controversial within the aid community.

The research questions:

It is commonly accepted in the aid sector that the practices and subsequent reputation of a single agency have the potential to affect the whole humanitarian community in a given context of operation. A point in case is Somalia in the early 1990s, where a few aid organizations opted for armed protection despite the reluctance of the majority of the aid community to do so. This however, resulted in 'crime displacement', whereby aid organizations which had continued operating without armed protection increasingly became victims of acts of violence – to the extent that almost all agencies eventually had to contract armed security providers.

Put yourself in the position of a humanitarian organization's country director whose staff is increasingly at risk, but still willing to deliver aid in a dangerous zone. Furthermore, criminality is rising and the premises of the organization are vulnerable to robberies and sometimes violent attacks. The director is aware that there are various private military and security companies offering services that

could potentially secure both the staff and the organization's premises. Perhaps another humanitarian organization whose office is located in the same area may have already chosen such an option. Their headquarters are increasingly putting pressure on them, as they want them to decide whether, and how, the organization should stay and continue operations, or evacuate the country. As the security situation deteriorates and the needs of the population are growing; what should this country director do? In other words, when facing the dilemma of having to choose between staying in an extremely dangerous situation at their own risk or giving up and leaving behind populations in need, can humanitarian actors see the use of private security as a solution? This example is perhaps rather extreme – any answer to this question would be context dependent, and in complex environments one option is rarely enough to provide an acceptable solution, but it is a blunt though effective example of the questions that may arise.

The fact that aid agencies practice security differently is not a problem *per se*. The problem lies in the implications that each approach to security carries with it. As can be seen, these implications are evident in regards to the aid sector as a whole, but also for the populations being assisted. Aid agencies are not ahistoric players that remain outside of a given conflicts' dynamics. The nature of their operations as well as the ways they interact with their environment have a potential to contribute to either the improvement or the deterioration of a situation. This is particularly true in complex environments, where the choices made by humanitarian organizations to ensure their security contribute greatly in framing the way they operate and interact with their surroundings, as well as their understanding of the security situation itself.

These problems explain the drive to better understand aid agencies' approaches to security. The following questions in particular need to be answered: what are the different approaches to security that exist in the aid sector? What are the implications of each approach for the aid sector and for its target populations? Given that some practices are deemed controversial, how are these approaches being conceived - in other words, what are the processes that lead an organization to adopt one practice over another? These questions constitute the core concerns of this thesis.

Indeed, the objective of the present thesis is to study the conception and practice of security by humanitarian international aid agencies (IAAs), including their relation with private military and security companies (PMSCs). It should be noted that the thesis's centre of gravity is international aid agencies' uses of security. As such, PMSCs are not at the centre of this study but are used as a reflection of IAAs' security practices.

The thesis adopts a critical constructivist approach that implies studying the co-constitution of aid organizations' identity and interests. As such, the general thrust of the thesis's argument will be that IAAs' identity and approaches to security are mutually constituted. It will provide evidence of this by first highlighting the dominant discourses framing aid agencies' identity, and the processes by which particular views are reproduced. It will then study the dominant representations in security management and reveal how they relate to IAAs' identity. This in turn will allow identification of the implications of aid agencies' security and underscore the potential negative impacts that security

practices carry with them. The thesis will then offer recommendations to potentially improve these practices. It is however to be noted that although the thesis is grounded on empirical research, it primarily aims at setting out a framework for analysis as a necessary preliminary step to understanding humanitarian security.

The choice of a critical constructivist analytical framework is primarily based on two considerations. First, studying IAAs' security management implies a level of analysis that focuses primarily on non-state actors rather than on the state itself. Second, the choice is based upon the assumption that security can be better understood if taken as a process, a constant construction; any attempt to define security is necessarily constrained to an agent (or community of agents), a context and a period. This assumption is also framed by the authors' own experience in humanitarian security management. By doing so, the thesis recognises an interaction between the researcher and the object of study, which highlights the need for a reflexive approach to studying humanitarian security. Its methodology will then highlight the author's assumptions and steps taken to overcome them.

In addition to conceptually framing the research, another potential value of using a critical constructivist approach is that the thesis may shed light on the concept of 'security' itself. The question of 'What is security?' has become an ongoing debate, particularly since the broadening and deepening of the security studies agenda in International Relations. The latter refers to widening the neo-realist concept of security by not limiting it to the study of military threats, and through the inclusion of a wider range of potential threats ranging from economic and environmental issues to human rights. The former corresponds to the change of the level of analysis; instead of focusing primarily on states, deepening the agenda of security studies implies studying other levels of analysis, down to the level of individuals and up to the level of global security, by way of regional and societal levels. Aid agencies being non-state actors, do not own armies or police forces; this assumes therefore that they have approached security differently from states. The need for originality that this implies may bring new perspectives on the concept of security.

The treatment in this thesis of international aid agencies as referent objects of security presents an original approach to studying security. In addition, it is also the first critical constructivist study of humanitarian security practices, particularly with reference to corporate security providers. Since the development of a 'humanitarian security' is a rather recent trend, many questions that are raised by this phenomenon remain unanswered. Through its extensive interviews, fieldwork in Afghanistan and Haiti, literature review and analysis, this thesis will contribute original approaches and add to the existing knowledge by collecting and handling primary sources, further analysing the notions of identity and security, and will also shed light on the existing cliché-laden knowledge of the dynamics that animate the IAA and PMSC communities.

Methodological considerations:

The thesis provides a *qualitative* analysis of humanitarian security. In addition to a review of the academic and professional humanitarian literature, the methodology used is based mainly upon

interviews and participant observation. Altogether, the study of IAAs' approaches to security was done through the analysis of both their discourses and practices.

Interviews were chosen as the primary data collection technique as they allow the researcher to gain an understanding of people's personal experiences, an understanding which is critical when analysing security-related issues. Interviews also provide access to the context and meaning behind an actors' behaviour (Seidman, 1998). Interviews were carried out both at headquarters and field level. Interviews at IAAs' and PMSCs' headquarters allowed information to be obtained from a senior management perspective. However, the headquarters visited while conducting research were all located in Western countries and a headquarters' perspective is not enough to build a comprehensive understanding of the reality of humanitarian security practices. Therefore, to complement this perspective, interviews were also conducted at field level in Afghanistan and Haiti. These fieldwork sites were chosen based on the following criteria:

- The countries selected needed to face a humanitarian crisis;

- This crisis needed to occur in a context of (perceived) high insecurity, so that security becomes a key issue for the personnel operating in the field;

- The crisis was to be of a different nature. As will be detailed in the next Chapter, Afghanistan is an international conflict that can be looked at through the prism of the Global War on Terror, where most of the fighting occurs in rural areas; Haiti, for its part, is a localised crisis, and most of the fighting takes place in the capital city of Port-au-Prince;

- All three types of humanitarian actors needed to operate in the area: UN agencies, ICRC and NGOs

- Both local and international private military and security companies needed to be in operation.

Ultimately, these two countries were chosen because they are contextually different yet show similar patterns in the way humanitarian action is implemented.

A total of 153 semi-structured interviews were undertaken for this study, including 56 in Afghanistan and 38 in Haiti. Other interviews were done in the United Kingdom, United States, France and Switzerland. All but 19 interviews were face-to-face, while 18 out of these 19 were by phone and one through email exchanges. The interviewees consisted of the following:

- 77 international NGO representatives, ranging from security officer in the field to security manager at HQ level, and also including country directors;

- 20 UN agency representatives;

- 7 international donor country directors or representatives, including DfID, ECHO, SDC and USAID[5];

- 3 ICRC representatives;

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[5] Respectively UK Department for International Development, European Commission Humanitarian aid Office, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, United States Agency for International Development.

- 32 private military and security company representatives, ranging from operator (also known as 'shooter') to CEO;

- 14 key informant interviewees, including for-profit development agencies' representatives and academics.

The total of representatives working in the aid and private security sectors reaches respectively 107 and 32. Naturally, these numbers do not include many informal conversations and off-the-record meetings.

Interviews were organized in four phases, starting with 39 interviews held at HQ level and conducted in the first half of 2006. Interviews in Afghanistan were organized in two steps, first in September-October 2006 and then in March 2007. Interviews in Haiti were conducted in May-June 2007. Overall findings were confirmed through a last set of interviews held at HQ level in late 2009 to early 2010.

Gathering information on security matters in conflict areas can prove challenging. The topic, being one of particular sensitivity to many interviewees, they were guaranteed discretion. As a result and in order to balance confidentiality with transparency, the current thesis attributes outcomes and quotes on a limited basis only; as a consequence a list of the persons interviewed will be provided in a separate non-public appendix to the thesis (see *Appendix 3: List of Interviewees*).

The manner in which interviews are conducted, how questions are constructed, presented, and the answers all impact on the quality and quantity of data collected. All of the interviews followed a semi-structured format with a list of pre-defined questions to direct the conversation. Semi-structured interviews are useful in that they follow a specific agenda to ensure that key questions, either common or tailor-made, are being asked to participants. They also allow flexibility as new questions can be introduced during the interview as new issues emerge. The pre-defined list of questions consisted of two different sets of questions (one for aid workers and another for security contractors) which were systematically asked, but also included additional questions tailored to the interviewee's responsibilities and experience.

The selection of participants followed a "purposive sampling" process, meaning that they were selected because they met certain characteristics and were particularly relevant to the research. This approach is popular in qualitative research and when building samples of a limited size (Robson, 1993). Attaining a statistically robust sample of participants was not the intention of this research. Rather, the focus was to achieve a sample that would provide sufficiently diverse responses and provide deep insights into on-going social and 'political' processes. The author's primary concern in building the sample was to obtain a good view of what was typically happening among key 'stakeholders'. Stakeholders were individuals or organizations who have an interest or a role in issues pertaining to security. For Afghanistan and Haiti, the sampling process started before the actual fieldwork, based on preliminary research that helped identify likely stakeholders. Once interviews started, respondents were added on an on-going basis. Patton distinguishes at least sixteen different

approaches to purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) of which the author combined four in the process of fieldwork to further expand the sample. First is "snowball sampling": at the end of interviews with most participants, the interviewer would ask for suggestions as to how other individuals that could be contacted. In many instances this provided for good interviewees. Second is "opportunistic sampling", by remaining receptive and observant throughout daily activities as well as interacting with a variety of individuals, the author identified and gained access to new participants. For example, when assisting in security meetings held at field level. Third is "maximum variation sampling", which purposefully led the author to pick participants from both ends of an organization's hierarchy, from field worker to head of organization and security specialists. Fourth is "stratified purposeful sampling", which aimed to identify participants that could illustrate characteristics of particular subgroups of interest, in other words, those who were working in each of the three types of organizations selected for study. Lastly, the sample was also enriched with key informant interviews, notably with representatives of the for-profit development sector and from academia.

Participant observation took place through both fieldwork and the author's position as the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF) Coordinator. The rationale for this was varied. First, a qualitative approach allows for a proximity to people that enables a more authentic understanding of the realities and the details of their everyday lives (Oakley and Marsden, 1990). Second, behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it takes place, so one should try to study it in situations where all contextual variables are operating (Gilbert, 2001). Third, to capture social and power relations, one should directly observe verbal and non-verbal interactions between people.

According to Klotz and Lynch:

[p]articipant-observation and ethnography best capture the intersubjective nature of reality and dialogical aspects of knowledge claims. These methods openly implicate the researcher in a way that turns to their advantages what tends to be derided by other as bias. By creating experiential knowledge, these methods force the researcher to confront interpretive problems on a different level than that of an interviewer who only briefly encounters an interviewee. This requires more openness to hermeneutic issues, as well as a different style of communicating research findings, often in forms more akin to autobiography than history. Yet their inherently contemporaneous nature also limits the range of applicability in historical settings, precluding any claims that these represent the 'best' tools for all constructivist research (Klotz and Lynch, p.107, 2007).

Participant observation was conducted both in the everyday context and on special occasions, such as important meetings or post-incident management cases. In particular, the author took advantage of continuous immersion as both the EISF Coordinator and as a consultant in humanitarian security issues within the international humanitarian community at large to actively observe how aid agencies approach security, and how they relate to PMSCs. While working as consultant allowed access to insiders' perspectives into aid agencies' security management, the position as the EISF

Coordinator placed the author at the centre of information and provided a wider view of the topic. These activities allowed the development of a web of connections within both the humanitarian security and the private security sectors. In addition, the author has been involved in several pieces of research throughout the process of this thesis, either as lead author, co-author or as peer-reviewer. Examples of these include co-authoring research on remote-management practices in Afghanistan (Stoddard, Harmer and Renouf, 2010) and peer-reviewing documents such as the revised edition of the *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* manual (Van Brabant, 2010) as well as Stoddard *et al's* comprehensive study on the relations between aid agencies and private security providers (Stoddard *et al*, 2008). In short, all of the author's professional activities undertaken in the period of preparing this thesis were directly related to the subject of study.

Finally, and in addition to the aforementioned research field trips to Afghanistan and Haiti for this thesis, the author also returned twice to Afghanistan, and once to Haiti, immediately after the 2010 earthquake. These additional trips proved useful in complementing understanding of the humanitarian security dynamics previously studied. There was also a benefit – from an anecdotal perspective – from previous field experiences in particular in Iraq and in Democratic Republic of Congo as well as testimonies from colleagues working in other humanitarian crises, in particular in Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In addition to a review of the existing academic literature on IAAs in relation to PMSCs, the analysis of humanitarian security is based on evidence collected throughout research. As will be presented in Chapter Two, these are made up of representative and credible professional documentation such as reports, policy papers, mission statements, etc, of the selected organizations as well as interviews and observations. These provide background, complementary or inside information that help to identify critical issues, triangulate conclusions and increase their reliability, as well as identify important informants.

The wealth of data collected necessitated a rationalisation of the information. This was done through the use of several tables, which were eventually gathered into two recapitulative tables, and the compilation of all documents organised both thematically and chronologically. Altogether, what was looked for were elements of information which would confirm or refute the thesis' arguments, as well as offer new aspects for consideration.

The first table provided a list of the interviewees, the date and location of the interviews and their responses to all of the questions they had been asked. It highlighted instances where contractual interactions between IAAs and PMSCs were found, and, when relevant, also included author's comments. While the data was arranged according to chronological order, it was also coded in different colours. This colour coding allowed for the identification of elements of interests for subsequent analysis. For example, instances where different interviewees would express similar views, thus highlighting similarities between them, would be specifically colour-coded. This would later

allow for a cross-cutting of the information provided, based on interviewees' location, function, or the type of organization they worked for.

The second table provides a list of international aid agencies with key organizational information, including the year of their creation; whether they have a wide or narrow mandate; their stated mission; their areas of operations, their annual budget; their source of funding; their number of staff; whether they are signatories of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief; which values others than the 'humanitarian principles' they refer to; and the source the information collected originates from. This table serves as a critical basis for the organization of IAAs according to three ideal types (see Chapter Four).

In addition, the academic literature and professional documentation collected was classified in different thematic folders (and organised chronologically inside each folder). For instance security-related documents were divided among a broad theoretical literature on the concept of security; an 'analytical' humanitarian security literature (such as academic peer-reviewed papers); a 'practical' humanitarian security literature (such as NGO security handbooks), etc. Regarding this last point, project and security related documentations were gathered from interviewees, such as original proposals, technical briefs, security policies and country security plans, in-depth studies by related consultants, minutes from public or internal meetings, public statements, leaflets, evaluation reports and accounting documentation whenever possible. While many were public documents some were also internal ones.

Altogether, the data was triangulated from interviews, authors' observations, and documents collected. On the one hand, interviewees' responses were put into perspective with official and internal documentation, and on the other, many of these documents were discussed with interviewees to gather their views about them. Last, the overall findings of the thesis were shared and tested through a last set of interviews held in late 2009 to early 2010.

Taken as a whole, the methodology used for the present research provides a comprehensive and robust basis for an understanding and analysis of the dynamics of security as conceived and practiced by two different sorts of non-state actors at both headquarter and field levels.

Structure of the thesis:

The thesis proceeds in the following manner: Part One provides the background analysis by contextualising the research and providing an outline of the state of the relations between IAAs and PMSCs (Chapter One), reviewing the existing literature on humanitarian security and on privatisation of security (Chapter Two) and presenting the thesis's conceptual framework (Chapter Three). Chapter Three provides the rationale for the choice of a critical constructivist analysis and will introduce humanitarian actors as referent objects of security. It will also set the framework of the empirical analysis by unveiling humanitarian actors' identities and interests in relation to security.

Part Two will provide the thesis's empirical analysis. Its chapters examine international aid agencies' approaches to security in three steps.

First, Chapter Four will review humanitarian organizations' identity. It will underscore how the production of IAAs' identity is the result of debates and struggles both within these organizations as well as with the outside world. It will reveal however, that these dynamics are not similar from one organization to another, which is why further distinctions will be made among humanitarian organizations in the form of a typology of aid agencies. Three main ideal–types of aid agencies will be identified, namely Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian organizations. Among these, a particular focus will be given in the thesis on five selected NGOs, namely Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Oxfam Great Britain (OGB), Save the Children UK (SC), CARE, and International Relief and Development (IRD).

Chapter Five will then study how aid agencies conceive and manage their security. By doing so, it will emphasize how these constitutive processes relate to aid agencies' identity and will reveal in particular how differences in identity are paralleled with differences in interests. Among the different conceptions and practices of security, the thesis will highlight the dominant representations and examine how they are shaped by the identiry of the IAAs' – and conversely, how this identity is shaped by their security practices. It will examine how humanitarian security was gradually developed, spread, internalised and reproduced by emphasizing the dynamics within the aid sector as well as within aid agencies. By doing so, it will demonstrate that the professionalization of IAAs' security management has lead to the paradox whereby a harmonization and polarization of security approaches are concomitantly observed.

Chapter Six will confirm the interplay between aid agencies' identity and their respective approach to security by studying their engagement with PMSCs. To achieve this, it will first provide a detailed picture of the private military and security industry and reveal its interests with regard to the aid sector. It will underscore in particular the need to distinguish different types of PMSCs – the Guardian, Unarmed and Weaponised companies – and highlight how security companies use humanitarian ethics as a legitimising factor. The chapter will then present the thesis's findings regarding IAAs' engagement with PMSCs and then demonstrate that aid agencies' positioning towards PMSCs is shaped by their identity.

All of these chapters draw on the qualitative data collected through reviews of the literature, official documentation and extensive field interviews. By engaging with empirical evidence, these chapters explore the processes of construction, in particular the dynamics by which aid agencies' identity and security are (re)produced.

Part Three will present the thesis's implications and conclusion. Chapter Seven will then offer a summary of the key findings as these relate to the key research questions and hypotheses laid out in the present chapter, followed by a discussion of the thesis' main theoretical and empirical contributions. In particular, it will argue that the research adds a new perspective to the existing

knowledge about humanitarian security, and, by doing so, confirms the relevance of a critical constructivist analysis in the field of International Relations. Further, and in light of the thesis' implications for aid agencies' approaches to security, the chapter will consider the consequences of ignoring the interplay between IAAs' identity and security when studying humanitarian security. Building on the findings of the research, it will then provide a new definition of humanitarian security as well as further reflections on the concept of security in this context.

Last, the final chapter will look at the policy implications of the thesis for international aid agencies' approaches to security. It will argue in particular that aid agencies' approaches to security are based on premises and assumptions that need to be highlighted in order to reveal their implications for aid agencies' security. The thesis will demonstrate that approaches to security reflect aid agencies' distinctive baggage. As such, they are not immune to the premises and assumptions that shape an agencies' identity. Understanding what these are helps to reveal the weaknesses of humanitarian security management and highlights areas that need further improvement, including the management of these interactions with private military and security companies.

Part I: Background and Conceptual Framework

Chapter 1 – Setting the Context: Security and the Humanitarian Sector

"To know an object is to lead to it through a context which the world provides"
William James[6]

Aid workers and private security contractors agree that the first step to a proper security assessment is to undertake a situational analysis. Before taking any further action, one needs to fully understand the environment in which one is operating. This implies not only becoming aware of the specificities of the operational context (history, people, institutions, culture, societal dynamics, etc.), but also being aware of one's own identity and the type of activities one is engaged in, as well as a thorough understanding of the 'other's' identity and activities i.e. the beneficiaries or the client. Understanding these ensures that the goods and services provided are appropriate and relevant. In addition, on-going or regular assessments make certain that the activities remain appropriate for the context. Conflict and post-conflict environments are not only complex because they are made up of intertwined layers, but also because their constitutive elements are perpetually in flux. The example of the 2003 Iraq war is telling: what began as a traditional face-to-face conflict between a national army and an invading force changed rapidly into a complex war made up of a number of different conflicts: Iraqi nationalists together with Islamists against the multinational forces in the so-called Sunni triangle; Shi'a militias - and what soon became the police force - against Sunni insurgents (who themselves eventually became recognised neighbourhood watchmen) in Baghdad; Shi'a individuals supporting Muqtada Al-Sadr against other Shi'a supporting Sayyed Abdul Aziz al-Hakim in the Southern provinces; a primarily Shi'a national army against Shi'a militias in Basra; Sunni and Shi'a groups fighting alongside against the United States Marines in Fallujah and Najaf; and finally, Arabs against Kurds and Turkmen in Kirkuk. While the above list does not even take into consideration the tensions, and at times different and/or conflicting interests among the international forces, or the many ways neighbouring countries influence the conflicts' dynamics, it illustrates the complexities of this war.

Similarly, the current situations in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Gaza Strip, Haiti, Somalia, Sudan, are also examples of complex and ever-evolving emergencies.[7] The complexities of these evolvements are one of the reasons why situational analysis is the crucial first step in any security assessment. As any aid workers and security contractors would, this thesis first situates the ensuing analysis by providing a background of the subject of study. It then looks at the

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[6] James, W. (1909), p.31.
[7] A complex emergency is defined as "a humanitarian crisis that requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency. Complex emergencies are typically characterized by: extensive violence and loss of life, massive displacements of people, widespread damage to societies and economies, need for large-scale, multi-faceted humanitarian assistance, hindrance or prevention of humanitarian assistance by political and military constraints and significant security risks for humanitarian relief workers in some areas" OCHA (2004a, p.2). For more information see Duffield, (1994); Goodhand and Hulme (1999); Maynard, (1999).

consequence of changes in contemporary warfare on humanitarian action. Secondly it provides a comprehensive overview of the current relations between international aid agencies (IAAs) and private military and security companies (PMSCs) in the context of the thesis fielwork undertaken – namely in Afghanistan and Haiti.

1.1. Changes in contemporary warfare and consequences for humanitarian action

1.1.1. Non-state actors' part in changes in contemporary warfare

Whether one agrees that the end of the twentieth century has seen the appearance of 'new wars' or not (Kaldor 1999; Kalyvas, 2001; Berdal 2003), there is little doubt that contemporary warfare has changed drastically in recent years. As compared to a few decades ago, when most wars were international – waged between two or more states - violent conflicts are considered to be more internal in nature since the end of the Cold War, even if international actors are involved (Keen, 1997; Kaldor, 1999). The evolution of warfare is also evident in the recent academic emphasis on the asymmetry of wars, where fighters and their methods are of a different nature from traditional armies battling one another: insurgents or gangs versus an institutionalized army; use of terrorist actions as tools for waging war against forms of "human warfare" (Coker, 2001); but also the advent of, what has been termed, the 'fourth generation of warfare.'[8] In addition, fighters have evolved in their number and nature. On the one hand, the last decades have seen a fragmentation of non-state actors (militias, warlords, ideological combatants, insurgents, terrorists, rebels, and criminal gangs among others), and on the other hand a diversification of the traditional international military actors (with the appearance of 'coalitions of the willing'; peacekeeping missions made up of primarily with personnel from the Global South rather than Western countries; private military and security companies, etc.) The dynamics among these actors have also evolved, with local and transnational networks working, trading or competing with the different types of non-state actors, and at the same time, international actors involved in joint operations but still failing at times to cooperate adequately. Even the notion of 'sides has become disputable; if we consider countries where newly-established governments, supported by the international community, who participate on both sides by becoming involved in criminal or insurgent activities.[9] Another dimension of the evolution of warfare is within the legal framework of war: We concomitantly notice a 'judicialisation' of conflicts with the appearance of the international courts at a global level (the International Criminal Court) or local levels (Rwanda, Cambodia, Sierra Leone courts) but also a challenge to the legitimacy of the traditional laws of war (through the emergence of extraordinary renditions; or the establishment of the Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram prisons for 'enemy combatants'). Lastly, overarching paradigms framing military actions and providing their justification have also evolved, moving away from the 'right to intervene' (introduced at the end of

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[8] The 'Fourth generation warfare' concept represents conflicts that are characterized by a return to decentralised forms of warfare, away from states' control. For more information, see: Lind *et al* (1989); Lind (2004); Echevarria II, (2005).
[9] For example, the brother of Afghan President Hamid Karzaï has long been suspected of facilitating the drug trade (Risen, 2008).

the 1980s) to the current 'stabilisation process', by way of the transition from 'peacekeeping' to 'peacebuilding' operations, from 'war against terrorism' to 'preventive' wars, from 'provision of democracy' to 'reconstruction and state building' (Biermann and Vadset, 1998; Diehl *et al.,* 1998; Chandler, 2002; Frum and Perle, 2003; Bellamy and Williams, 2004; Weiss, 2004; Jackson, 2005; Williams and Bellamy, 2005; Harlow, 2008).

Considering the above, there are convincing reasons to suggest warfare has indeed evolved since the end of the Cold War. As the 'greed and grievance' debate has shown (Berdal and Malone, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2000) many conflicts start for certain reasons (primary causes of war include the geopolitical, religious, economic, cultural, ideological, survival or existential) but their continuation is often due to reasons other than those that contributed to their eruption; from the emergence of new actors, new grievances, to the establishment of a profitable war economy, etc.

In part, for the reasons noted above, international aid agencies, as well as private military and security companies, are not acting in isolation. Their presence and actions have direct and indirect effects on the dynamics of conflict. Contractors, for instance, can contribute to a conflicts' escalation through the provision of military or security services to the fighters. Similarly, aid provided by international agencies may be misappropriated and may therefore also strengthen parties to the conflict and allow them to continue fighting (Shearer, 2000; Pérouse de Montclos, 2001; Kenyon Lischer, 2003). Much has changed since the time when parties to the conflict would agree to a temporary ceasefire so that a neutral internationally-recognised institution – the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – could access the wounded and treat them. Today, even the much respected International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement is being targeted by all sorts of actors, from criminals (demands for ransom to release personnel in Haiti)[10], to armed political actors (2003 bombing of the ICRC office in Baghdad) and is even the victim of repetitive 'collateral damages' (see for instance the 2001 mistaken bombing of an ICRC warehouse in Kabul (ICRC, 2001) or the all-too frequent examples of the movement's emergency vehicles being directly targeted). In short, humanitarian actors have been affected by the changes in warfare, as well as having been part of its evolvement.

1.2.2. Increase in aid agencies' perceived insecurity

Although the first killing of a United Nations member of staff on duty happened as early as 1948,[11] one of the consequences of recent changes in warfare is a dramatic alteration in aid workers' personal safety. Indeed, all types of humanitarian actors and agencies have been involved in serious security incidents at some point. Whether local or international NGOs, United Nations agencies or members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, all types of humanitarian organizations have lost staff in the line of duty.

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[10] In this case, the Haitian Red Cross worker was killed while his "family had been negotiating a ransom with his captors" (Edinburgh Evening News, 2005).
[11] Commandant René de Labarrière, a French Military Observer in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), became the first UN peacekeeper killed in the line of duty on 6 July 1948 (UN, Undated, b).

This observation however, is an over-generalisation. To give a subtler and more accurate picture: some NGOs have had no casualties in their history, while others are regularly confronted with incidents of all sorts. Certain conflicts are notorious for being particularly dangerous, including Afghanistan and Somalia – while other conflicts remain relatively safe for aid workers or have only pockets or phases of instability. Other areas, although they are not at war, are still dangerous for humanitarian personnel – for instance parts of Haiti, Mexico, and Venezuela - largely due to high rates of kidnapping. The specific vulnerabilities of each of these actors and the type of threats they face are various and often dependant on time and place. Research shows that IAAs have increasingly been victims of dangerous incidents, however since the aid worker population has also dramatically increased over the last decade, it remains unclear whether aid workers are more at risk than before.[12] Despite several attempts, there is no comprehensive analysis of incidents linked to aid workers, in part because the task of data collection for security incidents is extremely difficult.

The very definition of a 'security incident' varies between languages and contexts. Linguistic variations occur because authors sometimes disagree on how to define an 'incident'. Contextual variations result from the fact that the same event may or may not be considered as an 'incident' depending on where it occurs, its intensity, its type, as well as its victim(s) and those who write the security report on it. Witnessing someone shooting in the air may be seen as an incident by a humanitarian working in a rather peaceful environment, but considered as a 'normal' event by an aid worker living in a conflict zone and accustomed to hearing gunfire. While the former may report it, the latter may not. As the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) 2009 report states: aid workers "employ a distinct definition of 'major security incidents'. [For instance,] kidnapping is counted here only if the victim was held for over 24 hours, and incidents are only recorded if they result in a death, abduction or serious injury" (Stoddard *et al.*, p.2, 2009,).

In addition, 'near misses' ought also to be taken into consideration. "A 'near miss' is where it appears that a security incident came close to occurring. This 'near miss' may reveal a weakness in security procedures or new information about security threats" (Mayhew, p.39, 2004). Frequently however, near misses are not reported since their non-occurrence is narrowly interpreted as an event that has not significantly disrupted workflow.

Lastly, to be comprehensive, any calculation of security incidents among aid workers has to be based on a precise figure of the total number of aid workers. However, since no one knows for sure how many humanitarians are operating, this 'denominator' remains approximate.

Research has shown that there might not have been a dramatic increase in security incidents per capita, but it is widely recognised that there has been a spectacular escalation in the actual number of aid workers becoming victims of security incidents.

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[12] Although "[b]oth absolute and relative numbers of attacks against aid workers have increased over have past three years", "[t]he three most violent contexts for aid work – Sudan (Darfur), Afghanistan and Somalia – accounted for more than 60% of violent incidents and aid worker victims". "Across the rest of the world … the security situation is improving, albeit only slightly, with attack rates declining". Stoddard, A.; Harmer, A; DiDomenico, V. (2009). This report is the single most extensive effort to map security incidents against aid workers globally. As the authors note, it also has some caveats – for instance, the aid worker population (the 'denominator') is only an estimate.

The number of incidents is not the sole indicator of change in a given environment. Access to (and lack thereof) the beneficiaries of aid is also telling. Fewer incidents may be recorded in an area not necessarily because actors are better at preventing them or protecting against them, but simply because they avoid this area. An increasingly frequent strategy implemented by IAAs consists of restricting movement to and within hazardous areas.

While an increase in IAAs' insecurity has yet to be empirically confirmed, there is mounting evidence that the *feeling* of insecurity has dramatically increased among aid workers. They may statistically not be more at risk than a few decades ago, but they largely share the perception that their work is more dangerous than it was. This is highlighted by research as well as anecdotal evidence, for example the Haitian NGO worker who explained that "we have fences, we have barbwire, we have CCTVs, we have bodyguards, and then also armoured cars and flak jackets, but we are still not safe; we have escalated our security measures, but we remain unsafe".[13]

Katy Barnett writes that:

[i]t is widely held that humanitarian work is getting more dangerous. Many humanitarian organizations in Europe and the United States see their staff and assets worldwide at growing risk as a direct consequence of the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. There is talk of humanitarians being 'soft targets'. The backdrop to this is a world involved in more conflicts than ever before, where respect for civilian life can be negligible. Humanitarians feel increasingly exposed to violence in general, and increasingly targeted. This feeling is echoed by donors, training providers and the carers who deal with the fallout of security incidents (Barnett, p.24, 2004).

Yet according to Stoddard *et al* (2006b, p.1), "[o]pinions differ on the causes and extent of the problems – overly close cooperation with military and political actors in the post-9/11 environment, new global threats posed by transnational terrorist movements and a rise in general criminality in many developing countries have all been cited – but whatever the assumed cause, a pervasive sense of growing danger has prompted changes in policy and in the conduct of field operations."

Altogether, aid organizations have to address both the actual insecurity their staff face and their staff's *perception* of their insecurity.

1.2.3. The professionalization of humanitarian security management

Confronted with the 'fog of war'[14], aid workers have always had to ensure their own safety and security one way or another. According to Hugo Slim, "many agencies in World War II wore khaki and slotted in beside the Allied advance, liberation and occupation of Europe. Many Quaker Ambulance Units worked directly with military forces although some were unusual by insisting on wearing grey not khaki" (Slim, 2003). This earlier form of embedded relief is something which would nowadays be rejected by the majority of IAAs as it would negatively impact their perceived neutrality; it shows

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[13] Interview 118.
[14] The 'fog of war' is a term used to describe Karl Von Clausewitz's observation that inherent uncertainties exist in theatres of war, due to limited information about one's capability and intent.

however that aid workers were already concerned with ensuring their security in some way. The ICRC, for instance, has traditionally *negotiated access* to those populations-in-need to ensure that relief workers would not be targeted by any parties to the conflict. They also strive to prevent any confusion through the use of emblems recognised in international law, specifically the Red Cross, and later the Red Crescent, and now including the Red Crystal (ICRC, 2009). Negotiating access however has not always been successful or safe.

In the last decade, aid agencies' approaches to security have taken a new direction. The disturbing mismanagement by IAAs of the post-genocide crisis in the Great Lake Region of East Africa,[15] as well as a range of major security incidents such as the 1996 assassination of six ICRC staff in Chechnya, the 2003 bombing of the United Nations office in Baghdad and the 2004 violent killing of Margaret Hassan (Iraq Country Director for CARE), have led aid workers to put greater emphasis on security management. While security management was somewhat ad hoc until the late 1990s, the combination of incidents lead to a greater awareness that more structured and informed procedures were needed. This in turn, led to a professionalization of humanitarian security risk management.

The move toward professionalization can be depicted as a slow-moving ripple-effect that has only gradually permeated the humanitarian community, and is still expanding. However, we can now identify landmark moments in the development of this professionalization such as the creation of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) in 1984 – and its sudden expansion in 1995,[16] the establishment by RedR of highly respected safety, security and risk management training workshops in the mid-1990s[17] following an OFDA-funded Interaction-driven sets of trainings, and the publication of the *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* by the Overseas Development Institute in 2000.

Chapter Five of this thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of humanitarian approaches to security. For the purposes of this overview however, humanitarian security management can be understood as composed of four elements:

- the human element;
- the organizational framework;
- the material element;
- ethical guidance.

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[15] "...without anyone realizing it, humanitarian agencies had engaged mass murderers and war criminals by the score as local staff, and the perpetrators of the genocide had reimposed a murderous authority over hundreds of thousands of non-combatants under the nose of the international community. A more perverse outcome from humanitarian 'good works' is difficult to imagine, and it provoked at CARE Canada and elsewhere, a great deal of introspection as well as a search for solutions, information and understanding." Bryans *et al.* (1999, p.1). For more information, see: Minear and Weiss (1995); Uvin (1998).

[16] The UNSECOORD "acts on behalf of the Secretary-General and the Heads of United Nations agencies, programmes and funds to assure a coherent response by the United Nations system to any emergency situation. It is responsible for all policy and procedural matters related to security, and, on behalf of the Secretary-General, takes decisions related to all aspects of evacuation" (UN, 2004, p.31).

[17] RedR is considered as having played a seminal role in providing humanitarian security trainings; many risk management trainings still use the RedR founding methodology. Its website indicates that "We have been running safety, security and risk management training since the mid-1990s. We have an excellent reputation in this area and run an extensive programme of courses both in the UK and overseas, using a team of skilled trainers and partner organizations" (RedR, undated, website).

The 'human element' consists of raising the awareness amongst aid workers to the security risks and how to deal with them through training, capacity-building and information-sharing.

The 'organizational framework' deals with the need to structure the security thinking and practices; this is done through the designation of authority and decision-making powers, but also through the development of security strategies, policies, plans, standard operating procedures and guidelines within each organization. Furthermore the allocation of funds specifically for security management allows for the application of these policies and plans.

The 'material element' of humanitarian security management includes equipment (radio communications, fencing, sandbag fortifications, global positioning systems, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, etc.), software (for mapping, communications etc.), or anything that supports aid workers in managing their security, including the applicable elements of research (databases of security incidents for instance).

However, the defining element of humanitarian security is 'ethical guidance', which consists of widely-shared humanitarian values and ethical tools such as codes of conduct. Although disagreements exist, these values provide a common set of written and unwritten rules that guide agencies' actions, including the ways they manage their security. Chapter Four of this thesis will develop these ethical aspects further, but the case of armed protection can be used as a preliminary illustration: although a number of IAAs are employing armed protection in certain contexts, they nevertheless tend to agree that this option should be avoided as much as possible (Stoddard *et al.*, p.9, 2008).

The professionalization of the IAAs' security risk management in the last decade can be viewed through the prism of these four constitutive elements. With regard to the human element, professionalization is evident on many levels; raising aid workers' awareness on security matters is now increasingly systematic. Pre-deployment briefings include security components; international as well as national staff members are, in greater numbers, attending safety and security training sessions of all sorts, ranging from crisis management to driving training; several IAAs have developed their own training systems via CD-ROMs or online modules,[18] and humanitarian vocational centres increasingly include a security component in their curricula.[19] In addition, several security collaboration mechanisms such as the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF), the American NGO coalition, InterAction's Security Advisory Group (SAG), as well as the Afghanistan NGO Security Office (ANSO) and the Somalia NGO Safety Program (NSP), have shown an improvement in IAAs' information-sharing and coordination mechanisms on matters of security. These collaboration mechanisms also play a key role in promoting good practices within the humanitarian community at large. Similarly, and despite its imperfections (Micheni and Kuhanendran, 2010), the *Saving Lives Together* initiative has contributed to improving UN-NGO security collaborations. Most of these aspects of the human element of

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[18] See the *Basic Security in the Field* CD-Rom Course from UNOPS. NGOs such as CARE and Christian Aid have also developed such tools.
[19] See for instance trainings offered by Bioforce, Humacoop, RedR, etc.

humanitarian security management were developed in the last fifteen years and have played a large part in the professionalization of IAAs.

IAAs organizational frameworks have also contributed to the professionalization of humanitarian security management. An increasing number of aid agencies have recruited full time security managers or designated security focal points at headquarters and field levels (Mujawar, 2009). Many also have developed their strategic vision and policy orientations on security matters, as well as related guidelines and country-specific and/or region-specific security plans. Several organizations, including humanitarian donors such as the European Commission Humanitarian aid Office (ECHO), have produced security manuals that are shared widely and freely among the aid worker community.[20] Following the bombing of its office in Baghdad, the United Nations have transformed the UNSECOORD into the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), providing the department with additional funding and personnel.[21] At the same time, several international protocols aimed at protecting aid workers operating under the United Nations banner (either as part of UN organizations or NGOs subcontracted by a UN agency) have been adopted. This is the case of the 1994 *Convention on the Security of United Nations and Associated Personnel* (UN, 1994) and the 2005 *Optional Protocol of the General Assembly* (UN, 2005) as well as specific Security Council resolutions in 1999 and 2003 (UN, 1999a; UN, 1999b; UN, 2005).[22] Last but not least, humanitarian donors have allocated increasing portions of their IAA budgets to improving their security.[23] Although it is occasionally allowed, donors are generally reluctant to provide funding for an agency to invest solely in security risk management. It is more common for donors to authorise a given percentage of the project budgets they fund to be spent on security-related costs. IAAs have created an increasing demand for security services, as a result, many former aid workers have set-up consultancy groups focusing solely on the provision of such services to humanitarian actors.[24] This in turn, guarantees a certain respect for the ethical aspects of humanitarian security as aid workers pass on knowledge and guidance to future generations.

Since aid agencies have always used technical tools and technology in their risk management, it is difficult to determine whether the 'material' element of humanitarian security risk has been further professionalized. On the one hand, equipment such as satellite phones and radio communication have long been part of the aid workers' tool box, there is however anecdotal evidence that, on the other hand, more aid workers have been trained to use, and are becoming reliant on, increasingly

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[20] See for instance, Cutts and Dingle (1998): Lloyd Roberts (1998); Van Brabant (2000); Wesbrock T.J. and T. (2000); Mayhew (2004).

[21] "The UN Department for Safety and Security was created in 2004 as the successor to UNSECOORD, with a higher level of leadership in the UN system, greater resources, conceptual and strategic innovations and a clear vision for enhancing security to enable vital programming." (Stoddard *et al.*, 2006b, p.3).

[22] However, members of independent humanitarian organizations have less protection, legally speaking, than most of them probably think (Mackintosh, 2007).

[23] Despite anecdotal evidence illustrating this claim, there are no comprehensive pieces of research on IAAs' funding allocation for security. This can be explained by different reasons, including the fact that security costs are often split between different budget lines, making them difficult to isolate; also, some IAAs have been poor in keeping track of their expenses. For additional explanations, see Stoddard *et al.* (2009).

[24] For instance: the Armadillo Group, Clarity, the Centre for Safety and Development, Other Solutions, Tricky Locations, etc.

sophisticated equipment. More accurately, the IAAs further understanding and use of equipment and software reflects a wider societal trend towards the increasing dependence on technology in those countries where the organizations are headquartered. In conjunction with mounting interest from academics on humanitarian security management, IAAs have also recently started to develop databases of their security incidents, enabling them to better understand and manage the risks.[25] Although these initiatives are fairly recent, they do indicate a professionalization of humanitarian security risk management.

Lastly, with regard to 'ethical guidance', professionalization of humanitarian security risk management has developed through an evolution in IAAs' thinking and practices. Traditionally, security has been regarded by aid organizations as just one programmatic component among many. Indeed, other components such as gender, the protection of vulnerable populations or HIV and AIDS were mainstreamed in many programs and projects. Program managers were responsible for the security of their program. Until recently, there was no specific guidance on how they should actually ensure this security. The last fifteen years have seen significant changes in this area, as traditional humanitarian security management has proven insufficient to enable programs to be implemented in hazardous environments.

An illustration of this dynamic is the development by the United Nations as well as by InterAction and other NGOs, of 'Minimum Operating Security Standards' (MOSS).[26] These standards are both straightforward to understand and easy to remember, and offer both guidelines and objectives for organizations to improve their security management.

Another illustration of the move toward further professionalization of the ethical aspects of the humanitarian risk management is the current efforts by the International NGO Security Association to develop a code of conduct for humanitarian security practitioners. Although this example is of more of an anecdotal nature, it demonstrates the trend toward an institutionalization and professionalization of questions relevant to security.

As was noted above, all too often, when IAAs move toward an institutionalization and professionalization of their security management, it is often the result of security incidents. Given this context, donor agencies are now systematically asking organizations requesting funding to outline their risk reduction strategies in their project proposals. This however, is not always sufficient as the measures outlined are not necessarily particularly detailed. The donors' request for such outlines could be considered as more of a 'disclaimer' in case anything happens to the organization they are funding, than an effective risk mitigation measure.

IAAs hold a range of responsibilities under criminal and civil law, which has encouraged organizations to put more emphasis on the duty of care they have toward their employees. In

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[25] CARE, Save the Children, World Vision, the UNDSS for instance have created and use their own databases. In addition, several other actors followed a similar move and created global aid workers' incident databases: the Humanitarian Outcomes' *Aid Worker Security Database*, CSD's *SIMS-ON*, iMMAP's *OASIS* and Insecurity Insight' *humanitarian workers' project*.

[26] As an example, InterAction's MOSS five standards comprise Organizational Security Policy and Plans, Resources to Address Security, Human Resources Management, Accountability and Sense of Community. Other NGOs such as CARE, Christian Aid and Save the Children US have also developed their own MOSS.

particular, these duties have become more pronounced in the United Kingdom with recent changes to the *Corporate Manslaughter Act*. It is worth specifying however, that although the duty of care requires organizations to take appropriate measures, anecdotal evidence shows that such a move is not always seen as positive by aid workers. Indeed, these measures are sometimes described by (cynical) aid workers as serving to protect management and the organization against possible lawsuits rather than to actually improve staff security.

Faced with an increasing number of threats and security incidents, humanitarian agencies have certainly allocated more time and resources[27] to improving their security risk management, which has led to their further professionalization. Although progress is real it should not, however, be overstated. As Vincenzo Bollettino writes: "[d]espite broad acceptance of the need for better security management and coordination, many humanitarian organizations remain ambivalent about devoting increased resources to security management and security coordination" (Bollettino, p.263, 2008). Post-incident analysis shows for instance that the risk mitigation strategies and procedures are often of poor quality, that aid workers' behaviour is not always appropriate and that funds requested or measures needed for proper improvements in risk management are not always allocated or taken.[28]

Putting more emphasis on security management could have meant getting closer to the armed forces, who are the traditional security actors in conflict. However as Spearin notes:

> Though some NGOs are willing to engage with militaries for the sake of protection and deterrence, they remain torn about the impact this decision has on the image of humanitarianism. … Different goals, interests, priorities, and timetables still exist between NGOs and militaries. Humanitarianism's underlying rationale of assistance on the basis of need as an inalienable right frequently clashes with the agendas of armed actors that are political and selective. What is more, … it also makes it more likely that humanitarianism becomes a means to an end. In an era of counterinsurgency and the military necessity of winning hearts and minds, … many NGOs have stressed that there should be a clear division of labour and that NGO reliance upon militaries should only be in the last resort. Similarly, should militaries be actually involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, this should only be a temporary measure conducted on the basis of dire need that the humanitarian community cannot immediately address for reasons related to scale, safety, and logistics. Reliance on the PMSC industry, therefore, seemingly provides the flexibility many NGOs desire (Spearin, 2007a).

It is then worth wondering whether the input of professional security providers would and has proved useful in improving IAAs' understanding of sound security management. Indeed, in a striking parallel where humanitarian agencies have increasingly been victims of violence, the number and diversity of commercial entities offering security services has dramatically expanded. However, among

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[27] Although the amount earmarked for security management varies considerably across the NGOs, the security budget allocated at headquarters ranges from 15,000 USD to 2 million USD annually (Mujawar, 2009).
[28] According to the October 2008 report of The Independent Panel on Accountability, a dysfunctional United Nations security management system, a lack of adequate supervision and training, and significant lapses in judgment and performance all played a major role in the 2007 terrorist bombings of UN offices in Algiers, which killed 17 staff members (Zacklin 2008).

the various measures taken by IAAs to improve their security, the contracting of private military and security companies has been, and remains, one of the most controversial.

1.2. Overview of the relations between IAAs and PMSCs

Because this thesis presents an analysis of aid agencies in reference to corporate security providers, an overview of IAAs' relations with PMSCs is necessary. This section presents this relationship in the context of Afghanistan and Haiti, where fieldwork was undertaken.

The only comprehensive outline of relations between PMSCs and IAAs is by Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer and Victoria DiDomenico in their October 2008 report entitled "*The use of private security providers and services in humanitarian operations*" (Stoddard *et al.*, 2008).[29] This thesis will draw extensively on the findings of the Stoddard *et al.* report, as well as subsequent exchanges with the authors. According to the report's findings,

> [a] majority of aid workers surveyed report that the contracting of certain security functions to external professionals has become increasingly common worldwide. Despite some early worries and alarming predictions, however, the use of commercially contracted armed protection, including armed guards and armed escorts, remains very much the exception, and is confined to particular contexts. Rather, the most commonly contracted services from international private security providers (PSPs) are security training, risk assessment and security management consulting. … Importantly, *local* PSPs are used much more often and in many more environments than international PSPs, and from these contractors the most commonly used service is unarmed guards for facilities and premises. Exceptional though it may be, the use of contracted armed security is nevertheless a reality for the international humanitarian community. Every major international humanitarian organization (defined as the UN humanitarian agencies and the largest international NGOs) has paid for armed security in at least one operational context, and approximately 22% of the major humanitarian organizations reported using armed security services during the last year (Stoddard *et al*, p.1, 2008)

Stoddard *et al* chose not to focus solely on security companies but to encompass the wider concept of "security providers", thus encompassing any entity that is a supplier of security services in exchange for financial compensation, including governmental forces and/or militias. Despite a focus that is specifically limited to the corporate security industry as well as a narrower geographical scope, Chapter Six will add to Stoddard *et al's* findings by emphasizing the links that exist between IAAs' identity and their approaches to PMSCs.

1.2.1. A review of IAAs and PMSCs' presence in Afghanistan

War not only kills people, it affects their lives in many ways. Despite the billions of dollars spent on aid in Afghanistan since 2001,[30] the humanitarian situation in the country remains dire. There have been definite improvements in certain areas – most notably in infrastructure (re)construction – but

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[29] This author was a peer reviewer for this report.
[30] According to ACBAR, "donors committed to give $25bn aid since 2001 but have only delivered $15bn" (Waldman, 2008, p.5).

many of the population's basic needs remain unanswered. Not only is Afghanistan ranked 181st out of 182 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index for 2009 but its economy is largely dependent on foreign aid, with some 90 percent of the Afghan government budget coming from international donors (Reuters, 2009).

According to the 2010 Humanitarian Action Plan for Afghanistan (UN, p.29, 2010), the most pressing humanitarian issues in Afghanistan include, but are not limited to:

-       Civilian casualties, destruction of infrastructure and private property, population displacement, attenuation of basic social services, health and reproductive health services, loss of livelihood opportunities and lack of access to basic governmental services and assistance;

-       The extreme poverty and underdevelopment in Afghanistan – 42% of the population live on less than $1 per day – which makes the population more susceptible during crises and emergencies; unequal distribution of wealth and assets; disproportionate effects of poverty on vulnerable segments of the population;

-       Global high food prices (and related phenomena such as food export bans in neighbouring countries), which are placing non-agricultural households into deepened poverty and food insecurity. Related high prices of agricultural inputs such as fuel and fertilizer, as well as drought, are preventing Afghan farmers from profiting;

-       Displacement induced by conflict, drought, poverty, and the forced return of some vulnerable refugee populations and economic migrants.

Nearly half of the Afghan population is living in poverty. Poverty is understood as a lack of material assets (including, for instance, a lack of adequate housing, money, land and/or livestock) but also encompasses a broader conception of poverty as a marginalization from access to essential services: primarily education and health, security and opportunities for employment.[31] As reported in 2009, the country is still facing a severe humanitarian crisis:

> … the vast majority of the assistance provided in Afghanistan is based on the notion that Afghanistan is a post-conflict developmental context or even today a counterinsurgency stabilization effort and it is only recently that humanitarian needs have grow in recognition. This is despite the fact that most indicators point to a humanitarian situation beyond what we normally see in traditional humanitarian contexts (Geirsdottir, p.2, 2009).

Aid is provided by a multiplicity of actors, ranging from the traditional humanitarian and development organizations such as international and local NGOs, United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, but also and controversially, by non-traditional actors such as international companies, civil-military Provincial Reconstruction Teams, military units, etc.

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[31] For more information, see ACBAR (2008).

Humanitarian organizations first arrived in Afghanistan in the 1980s, during the Mujahidin war against Soviet troops. Several of them, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Aide Médicale Internationale, International Rescue Committee, or Madera have not left the country since. Others such as the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR), supported Afghans that had taken refuge in Pakistan or Iran and started operating in Afghanistan only in recent years, accompanying refugees in their return home. Lastly, a significant number of humanitarian organizations with no previous experience of Afghanistan joined the international humanitarian and reconstruction effort following the fall of the Taliban regime in December 2001. By March 2007, the number of such organizations had stabilised, with 1,168 non-governmental organizations registered with the Ministry of Interior (277 international NGOs and 871 national NGOs).[32]

Figures relating to the number of aid workers in the country are less precise. According to the Deputy Minister of Economy Nizari Hashimi, there were roughly 67,000 aid workers involved in humanitarian projects in Afghanistan in March 2007. However, a study done by the Humanitarian Policy Group in September 2006 (Karim, 2006) reports a figure of only 25,000 to 35,000. Given the huge difference in staff numbers between NGOs,[33] it is difficult to estimate with any accuracy.

With the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, a plethora of new players appeared on the scene to take part in the effort to reconstruct the country. This multiplication of players has confused the populations, who are often unable to distinguish between the different aid organizations, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), reconstruction enterprises or foreign armed forces. Indeed some military personnel move around in civilian clothing, some enterprises claim to be carrying out humanitarian projects, some aid organizations have militarised their profile, and the PRTs (made up of military and civilian personnel) are undertaking both military operations and aid to the civil population simultaneously. As a result, the great majority of the Afghan people are not able to identify the different players and simply regard all these organizations, with their different interests and operating methods, as 'NGOs'. In this overall confusion a number of tragic events, such as the murder of five members of MSF in 2004 leading to the organization's withdrawal from Afghanistan, are not easily forgotten (MSF, 2005). Recent events have given rise to fears of an increase in the number of attacks on any target perceived to be 'Western'.

The number of private military and security companies operating in Afghanistan is not known. Despite tremendous improvements, there has been no proper registration process and several official lists of PMSCs exist. The best calculation has been provided by Susanne Schmeidl, in her seminal research on the perception by the Afghan population of PMSCs (Schmeidl, 2007). According to Schmeidl, there are 88 named security companies that are operating in Afghanistan, but this figure could reach as high as 140. In 2007, a rough figure of 20 - 25,000 security contractors was given by a

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[32] Interview 78. In May 2010, the Afghan Ministry of Economy indicated in a press release that "over 1,200 national and 301 international NGOs are currently registered in the country" (IRIN 2010a)
[33] In March 2007, DACAAR for instance had 1,100 staff while *Médecins du Monde* had 17.

well-informed UNAMA official.[34] Nevertheless, these figures are likely to change rapidly with the government declaring its intention to begin disbanding security companies.

PMSCs all arrived in Afghanistan either with the coalition forces in autumn 2001, or in the aftermath of the regime's fall. At an international level, two events made PMSCs' presence in Afghanistan suddenly more noticable: first, through the arrest and conviction of Jack Idema in September 2004 for running an illegal private prison under the cover of an authorised activity undertaken by a private security company, and second, through the highly visible protection DynCorp was offering to President Karzaï. DynCorp then became renowned for rude behaviour exhibited by its staff.[35] According to one respondent, "in 2004, the US ambassador warned the DynCorp Country Manager to have a lower profile otherwise they would be expelled."[36] Some even say that the bomb that targeted their premises on the 29 August 2004 was a consequence of their poorly-perceived behaviour and therefore should not have come as a surprise.[37]

Nine years after the fall of the Taliban regime, the security situation in Afghanistan remains dire. According to the well-established Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO):

> NGOs were again subjected [during this third quarter of 2009] to a series of serious attacks including murders, ambushes, abductions, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and complex attacks. … Attacks and threats by Armed Opposition Groups still account for 70% of all NGO incidents and produce most NGO casualties. Although *criminal* incident rates against NGOs have fallen by 50% since 2007, the murder rate of NGO staff has remained relatively constant and accounted for almost half of NGO fatalities this quarter (ANSO, p.1, 2009. Emphasis original).

As a result, more than half of the country's thirty-four provinces are no-go areas for foreign aid workers. Indeed most of the victims of violence against aid worker's are Afghan, this "is not surprising given they travel much more frequently (and often exclusively) into high-risk areas and are more vulnerable and exposed to general crime" (ANSO, p.1, 2009).

The situation in Kabul is also is far from ideal. While the further construction of walls and fences effectively denies Afghans access to a good part of the city, armed opposition groups regularly manage to mount impressive attacks on the increasingly fortified capital. This included the assault of a United Nations guesthouse in the early morning of the 28 October 2009, killing five UN staff and the three attackers. More would have probably been killed if some of the staff, who happened to be part of a UN close protection team, had not taken up weapons and fought back, effectively slowing down the attackers until the arrival of external support.

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[34] Interview 61.
[35] Including the slapping of an Afghan minister by a DynCorp contractor in 2006.
[36] Interview 49.
[37] Several interviews with PMSC and humanitarian representatives, September 2006 and March 2007. DynCorp representatives could not be confronted with these allegations since requests for an interview were repeatedly refused.

The price paid by aid workers in Afghanistan since 2001 is high. In 2009 alone, ANSO reported 19 aid workers killed,[38] all Afghans. Aid workers are, however, only a tiny portion of the victims of violence. Afghan civilians are the greatest victims of the war. If numbers tend to render suffering anonymous, they are still revealing: 2,412 civilians were killed in 2009 alone (a 14 percent increase over 2008), including 596 by international and Afghan forces (UNAMA, p.7, 2010).

As shown in Renouf and Carle (2007), the deterioration of the security situation has affected humanitarian organizations in Afghanistan, and forced them to change their operating methods and procedures. Most agencies reinforced their low-profile strategy, removing visible logos, using unmarked vehicles, reducing the expatriate presence, increasing responsibility given to local personnel with project management from a distance, even conducting clandestine operations. A few agencies repatriated their staff and put an end, temporarily or permanently, to their programmes in some parts of the country, or even left Afghanistan altogether. Some organizations opted for a 'bunkerisation' strategy or for a harder stance (use of armed guards and escorts, high walls and fences, armoured cars, cameras, etc.) often through private security services. Chapter Six will provide a fuller picture of aid agencies' use of PMSCs in Afghanistan.

1.2.2. A review of IAAs and PMSCs' presence in Haiti

Haiti is characterised by a history of military coups, violence, humanitarian crises – including the massive earthquake in January 2010 - and several failed attempts by the international community to provide security in the country. In early 2010, The International Crisis Group estimated that the earthquake killed an estimated 222,570 people, injured 300,572 and displaced around 2.3 million people at the peak of displacement. The ICG also reported that it:

> … produced enormous devastation that threatens political and socio-economic stability and poses huge recovery and reconstruction challenges. Historical institutional and governance weaknesses and deep poverty compound a major humanitarian crisis that could become very difficult to control if the security environment deteriorates further (ICG, p.i, 2010).

Such dire analysis has to be located within Haiti's historical context. Chronic political instability and the government's historical non-delivery of services has had disastrous effects on its development. Up to the point, that, in 2010:

> [a]bout three-fourths of the population lives on less than two dollars a day and more than half live on less than a dollar. Between 1990 and 2007 the GDP per capita growth rate for Haiti averaged -2.1 percent. … Almost half the population has no access to clean drinking water one-third has no sanitary facilities, and only ten percent has electricity. Less than half of the children attend elementary school and more than half the population is illiterate. Estimates of the unemployment rates - given the size of Haiti's underground and informal economies, an accurate count is impossible - range between 50 to 70 percent.

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[38] Down from 31 NGO deaths (six international and 25 Afghans) in 2008.

… According to the UN Development Program's Disaster Risk Index, Haiti is one of the most vulnerable countries to natural disaster. From 1900 to 1999, … Haiti experienced sixteen hurricanes, twenty-five major floods, one earthquake, and seven droughts. … By several indexes Haiti again, ranks close to the bottom. … The 'weak state index', used by the Brookings Institution, ranked Haiti 129th on a list of 141 developing or transitional countries. The independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank—using different measures—ranks Haiti as one of the twenty-five 'Low Income Countries under Stress," or countries that are "characterized by weak policies, institutions, and governance' (Pace and Luzincourt, p.8, 2010).

Although organizations involved in development activities have been present in Haiti for decades (Pace and Luzincourt, 2010), humanitarian agencies began large-scale operations following the 1991 coup against Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had been elected President in December 1990 in the first democratic elections in Haitian history. In the absence of specific figures, the number of both international and national NGOs operating in Haiti is estimated to be somewhere between 3,000 to 10,000.[39]

The United Nations started operating in Haiti in 1993 and a Multinational Interim Force was created in 2004 following President Aristide's coerced departure. The same year, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established in response to the failing international initiatives in Haiti. Its mandate, as presided over by the Security Council, was to provide security and stability as well as support to the political process whilst bolstering human rights through international military, police and civilian components. Until the 2010 earthquake, the humanitarian component of the United Nations' integrated approach had been subordinated by other priorities related to stabilisation, reconstruction and good governance. In 2010, the Security Council reinforced the overall force levels of MINUSTAH and mandated it to support the humanitarian and recovery efforts in collaboration with OCHA and the United Nations Country Team.

Assistance and stabilisation efforts are being implemented nearly all over the country, but it is Haiti's capital that attracts most attention. While the security situation in Port-au-Prince – and to a lesser extent in the city of Gonaïves – is a cause for concern, the rest of the country faces less security issues. The country's history in producing gangs and, in Port-au-Prince, the high proportion of extremely poor areas (slums) controlled by criminal networks, have contributed to recurrent instability and a kidnapping 'industry'. The situation had improved, in particular thanks to the 2007 MINUSTAH offensive against gang structures which led to a decrease in kidnappings and armed attacks, but politically and economically motivated unrest has still led to violent demonstrations – notably the April 2008 riots against high food prices. Following the earthquake, stabilisation in Haiti remains subject to many unpredictable variables.

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[39] As of October 2010, the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation, in charge of registering NGOs, was not able to present exact figures. Further, and given that OCHA's online contact directory was far too incomplete, the figures presented here originate from two sources identified on the Internet: the Unites States Institute for Peace stated that "at least 3000 NGOs" were operating in Haiti as of September 2009 (USIP, 2009, p.1), while Paul Collier, Professor of Economics at the University of Oxford, argued in a March 2010 news article that the total number of NGOs reached 10 000 (Collier, 2010, website).

The private security industry in Haiti has been growing throughout the last decade. Prior to the earthquake, the industry was composed essentially of around 30 locally-registered PMSCs (MJSP, 2007) such as Thomas Sécurité or Quality SA, with only a handful of international PMSCs, including Control Risks, Page Group and Virtual Defense & Development International, Inc (VDI). Before the earthquake the services offered by local companies consisted mainly of guarding compounds and providing physical protection to businesses and to the small wealthy part of the population; the international PMSCs offered a limited number of services to international multinationals, international organizations and Haitian corporations and embassies. After the earthquake, an undetermined number of international PMSCs entered the scene, including GardaWorld, Hart Security and Triple Canopy. News reports indicate that some companies such as Red24 or Global Rescue reached Haiti very soon after the earthquake as they were privately hired to find missing foreigners (Woolhouse and Chase, 2010, website[40]). As an anecdotal note, the domain name "Haiti-Security.com" was registered by another international company only a few days after the earthquake.

As assessed in June 2008 by the Security Advisor of a major European NGO, aid agencies in Haiti need to invest further in safety and security training, as well as in information sharing and analysis. The report, which was shared under the condition of anonymity, also recommended that "a closer cooperation with other safety and security actors is envisaged, ranging from UNDSS, the Inter-Agency Security Committee[41] and private security companies" (Anonymous, p.5, 2008). Chapter Six will provide details about aid agencies' actual engagement with PMSCs in Haiti.

There are many reasons why aid agencies see the use of private security services as presenting an opportunity to improve their work. However, as Spearin writes, "hiring PMSCs may alleviate some NGO concerns, but leaves others untouched and poses new ones that must be managed" (Spearin, p.60, 2005b). At a time when the debate regarding the preservation of the humanitarian space[42] is livelier than ever, there is no question that the presence of PMSCs adds a new dimension to the problem.

1.3. Conclusion

In order to build a solid foundation for this thesis, a contextual background has been provided on the interactions between international aid agencies and private military and security companies. By recalling the contemporary changes in warfare, it has been shown that humanitarian action has been

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[40] The full reference of quotes originating from the Internet can be found in the Bibliography.

[41] The IASC is "a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners" (IASC, 2009, website).

[42] According to the IASC, the term "'espace humanitaire' was first coined by former Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) President Rony Brauman, who described it in 1990 as: "A space of freedom in which we are free to evaluate needs, free to monitor the distribution and use of relief goods and have a dialogue with the people". It still lacks a formal definition, which has allowed it to mean different things to different actors and organizations. The various ways in which the term has been used have included the following: a) the denotation of physical locations that are outside the realm of attack by any parties to the conflict; b) the respect for the core humanitarian principles of humanity: independence, impartiality, and neutrality; c) the ability of international aid and protection agencies to mitigate the situation of civilians affected by the conflict; d) the operating environment that is conducive to effective humanitarian action. Interestingly, and despite the absence of a common agreement on its definition, there is widespread understanding that in recent times, there has been a steady and incremental erosion of humanitarian space" (IASC, 2008, p.1).

dramatically impacted by these changes – as much as it has been part of them. While aid workers have increasingly been victims of acts of violence; private military and security companies have mushroomed. As a result of the professionalization of IAAs' security management, in conjunction with the diversification of the type of services provided by PMSCs, there have inevitably been small yet gradual exchanges between the two communities. As the brief overviews of Afghanistan and Haiti have shown, the scope and type of exchanges vary depending on the context. They also reinforce the argument that "private military firms cannot simply be ignored: the fact that humanitarians and private military/security companies are operating in the same theatres means that their actions affect a mutual security environment" (Singer, p.71, 2006).

Chapter 2 – Conceptualising Humanitarian Security: Current Analysis and Gaps in the Literature

"Why is it that, as a culture, we are more comfortable seeing two men holding guns than holding hands?"

Ernest Gaines[43]

There is an abundance of academic literature on humanitarian issues. The interest in this subject developed incrementally at the end of the Cold War, at a time where humanitarian intervention was an emerging paradigm and humanitarian actors the 'new heroes'. However the concept of a humanitarian 'action' soon became politicised and its reputation became more problematic. With the fallout from the 1993 'Battle of Mogadishu'[44]; the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and insufficient response s from both Western governments and aid agencies during and after the massacres; the ironically named 'humanitarian bombing' undertaken during the 1999 war in Kosovo; it soon became clear that conflictcs cannot be resolved by the distribution of aid alone. Academic literature played an important role in the shift in attitudes towards humanitarian intervention: from initially praising aid workers and advocating for a right to intervene, members of the academic world became increasingly critical of both humanitarian intervention and humanitarian action.

Literature pertaining specifically to the security management of international aid agencies has developed gradually in the wake of the increase in acts of violence against humanitarian organizations. The first major work on this subject was published in 2000 by Koenraad Van Brabant in the form of a security manual (Van Brabant, 2000). Since then most of the literature on humanitarian security has been oriented towards practitioners. As a result, it is essentially published in professional journals as opposed to academic ones, is heavily normative and, as some have put it, "ha[s] been elaborated as a series of technical responses to operational problems without meaningful policy debates among international agencies on coherent security strategies" (Bruderlein and Gassmann, p.78, 2006). The focus of the literature is essentially twofold: understanding the features of security incidents aid agencies face, and developing ideas for security management that are in line with the specific nature of humanitarian action. Nonetheless, as the present chapter will argue, the literature on humanitarian security barely tackles the diversity that exists within the aid sector; it rarely considers the specific identity of each humanitarian organization, which often results in inaccurate conclusions and uninformed suggestions.

Academic interest in private military and security companies (PMSCs) has increased alongside the rise of the private security industry. Nevertheless, the number of academic contributions remains

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[43] Quoted in Alfredsson *et al* (2009), p.429.
[44] The 'Battle of Mogadishu' is named after the battle that opposed US armed forces and militiamen on the 3rd and 4th October 1993. Somalia became after that the symbol of the unacceptable costs of humanitarian intervention.

relatively limited. The two main reasons for this are firstly, that security privatisation is a very recent phenomenon and secondly, that it was somewhat secretive for many years. Prior to 1998 (Shearer, 1998), no systematic study had been carried out. However, following the brutal killing of four Blackwater private security contractors on 7 April 2004, in Fallujah, Iraq, the growing use of PMSCs was quickly placed under a spotlight. An increasing number of academic articles, and an even greater number of journalistic articles were then written on the subject. This interest can be explained by the 'myth' surrounding mercenaries, the precursors of the current PMSCs, who made it a 'sexy' subject of study. More importantly there was an increasingly obvious necessity to better understand the numerous issues linked to the growing privatisation of security.

Among the academic and non-academic *books* written on the subject of humanitarian action, none deals solely with the relations between private military and security companies and humanitarian actors. A few tackle the issue, but only superficially (Musah *et al*, 2000; Mandel, 2002; Singer, 2003; Avant, 2005).[45] Similarly, only a limited number of academic articles focus predominantly or exclusively on this relationship (the most prolific authors being Cockayne, Renouf, Singer and Spearin). This can be explained partly by the fact that authors were primarilly interested in analysing PMSCs in relation to states or multinational corporations. It is only recently that authors have sought to analyse the relationship between security privatisation and humanitarian action. As a result, several gaps are to be noted. The literature fails in particular to provide an understanding of the processes that lead an agency to consider using private security services. While authors provide different reasons for choosing PMSCs, they do not shed light on the debates, hesitations or tensions that exist when an aid agency decides to contract a PMSC. Nor do they explain *how* different aid agencies come to the conclusion that PMSCs should be hired – or not.

This chapter's focus is twofold: first it offers an analysis of the literature on humanitarian security management and then discusses its failure to study the correlation between aid agencies' identity and their approach to security. The second section examines the literature that has looked specifically at the interactions between PMSCs and international aid agencies (IAAs). While focusing on the different topics that emerge through a thematic analysis of the literature, the chapter reveals that the literature has failed to provide an understanding of the processes that lead an agency to consider using private security services.

In addition to referring to academic works, the literature review also includes articles, reports and conference outcomes written by private security and humanitarian actors. Indeed, the sources of information are so limited that an extensive review of available non-academic analyses and data is necessary.

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[45] Only a few paragraphs are devoted to the relations between PMSCs and humanitarian actors.

2.1. The humanitarian security literature: insufficient consideration given to the interdependency between IAAs' identity and their security

The literature's focus on humanitarian security management has developed in reaction to the increasing numbers of security incidents aid workers have been confronted with. As explained earlier, until the 2000 publication of the seminal Van Brabant's manual (GPR8, for *Good Practice Review 8*, as it is known), only a handful of papers tackled the subject. The International Red Cross Committee (ICRC) published a report of a seminar on the security of humanitarian personnel in the field in 1997 (ICRC, 1997); François Grunewald distributed a study on aid workers' security in 1998 (Grunewald, 1998); Mario Bettati published an analysis of a survey regarding the "Protection for non-governmental organizations on hazardous duties" in 1999 (Bettati, 1999). It must be noted that since 2002, Abby Stoddard and Adele Harmer's extensive work has made an important contribution to widening and deepening the knowledge pertaining to humanitarian security management. In addition to tackling a number of different sub-topics pertaining to the field of humanitarian security, their publications were widely distributed within the aid community, contributing to further raising awareness on the issue and shaping discussions around it.

As of now, the literature that deals with humanitarian security can be divided into two major areas: the analysis of security incidents faced by international aid agencies; and the conceptualisation of humanitarian security. These two areas of study will be the subjects of the following two sub-sections. The last sub-section will discuss the gaps in the literature and in particular the limited analysis of the correlation between aid agencies' identity and their approach to security.

2.1.1. The literature's analysis of IAAs' security incidents

Despite an increasing number of studies analysing acts of violence against aid workers since the mid-1990s, there remains much uncertainty about the scope and nature of security incidents. As explained in the previous chapter, this is as much due to incomplete information about incidents that occur all over the world, as it is due to a lack of a common consensus about what defines an 'incident' or an 'aid worker', or of a common denominator for the total number of aid workers.

In 2010 Larissa Fast published a brilliant meta-analysis of the literature on humanitarian security incidents (Fast, 2010). She divides the literature into three categories: the "usual suspects"; those whose data originate directly from within the humanitarian community; and related research. The first category includes authors whose figures are most commonly cited, such as Kate Barnett; Larissa Fast; Elizabeth Rowley; Mani Sheik *et al*; and Abby Stoddard *et al*. The second category includes authors, such as Dennis King, whose data originates directly from the humanitarian community (as opposed to news reports or elsewhere), and aid agencies' own compilations of incidents. The third category is a body of literature that mostly examines particular issues (such as illness among expatriates); the use of small arms and light weapons; or specific populations (for example, a given NGO or region). She argues convincingly that, altogether:

… the data presents some contradictory findings, particularly regarding who suffers more. Among those counting fatalities, King suggested NGO personnel die more often than UN personnel (59 percent versus 41 percent), and Abbott's research, depending on the time frame, proposed both IGOs and NGOs as experiencing the largest percentage of fatalities. Both rely upon news sources for their data. Sheik and colleagues reported NGO numbers increasing and UN and peacekeeper deaths stabilizing, and the ODI/CIC [Stoddard *et al*] study conveyed a decrease in UN and ICRC fatalities, with a shifting burden to NGOs and from international to national staff between 1997 and 2005. From 2006 to 2008 this changed, with UN and NGO rates increasing, as did the rate of attacks against international staff. Both Abbott and Rowley report a greater risk from armed groups or insurgents as opposed to criminals, which the ODI/CIC study corroborates. Buchanan and Muggah, however, offer a contradictory assertion: 'Yet it is *criminal* violence committed with firearms — not attacks by armed combatants — that remains the most significant threat facing workers'. Again, while it is difficult to compare numbers, these conflicting data demonstrate the challenges of research on this topic.

Nor does the research definitively lay to rest debates about the relative impact of security and safety incidents. While a number of studies (Abbott, 2006; King, 2002b, 2000c; Rowley, 2005, 2007; Sheik *et al.*, 2000; Stoddard *et al.*, 2006) cite intentional violence as the cause of the majority of deaths, others (Lange *et al.*, 1994; Martin, 1999; Peytremann *et al.*, 2001; Ryan and Heiden, 1990) point to safety incidents as being more significant.

Nevertheless, several patterns converge across studies. The numbers of incidents are increasing, even if the rates of violence fluctuate some over time. NGO staff appear to experience more risk, as do national staff (see Fast and Rowley, 2008). Intentional violence emerges as the leading cause of death (above 50 percent) in the majority of studies, with the exception of those that examined both morbidity and mortality. In other words, incorporating illness (for example, evacuations and missed work days) into the overall picture tends to reduce the import of violence for mortality figures (Fast, 2010, in press).

Two points are to be taken from this meta-analysis. First, that the existing literature is incomplete, and focuses disproportionately on severe acts of violence as opposed to other sources of incident such as illnesses or stress – figures that are arguably more difficult to gather. Second that, in absolute terms, aid workers are increasingly finding themselves to be victims of acts of violence. In relative terms however, uncertainty remains, as the increasing number of incidents is paralleled by the increasing number of aid workers – thus confusing claims that they are actually more at risk. One must be aware of the fact that the current literature does not give an exact picture of the situation, though aid agencies and members of the academic community have increased their collaboration, notably through security collaboration mechanisms such as the EISF and the SAG.

Another confusion which stems from the literature is that authors disagree on the reasons that lead aid agencies to face a real or perceived increase in acts of violence. A number of authors argue that sources of incidents are primarily *exogenous* to aid agencies. The ICRC was already observing in 1997 that a key reason for the deterioration in aid agencies' security were changes in their operating environment: "Until recently, humanitarian agencies had felt that they were sufficiently protected by

international humanitarian law, which was more or less honoured by all parties to the conflict" (ICRC, 1997, website). Seven years later the ICRC maintained its position, arguing that

> [t]he 'classic' security environment is commonly described as one where the main risk is that of finding oneself 'in the wrong place at the wrong time'. It is worth noting … that according to the ICRC's experience this type of security environment remains by far the most widespread in the world today. … It therefore seems legitimate to ask what is really new today. From an ICRC perspective, what is new in the present context is the global nature of the threat, the fact that it is not necessarily geographically circumscribed (Krähenbühl, p.507, 2004).

Other commonly used arguments in favour of an exogenous explanation of security incidents are that aid agencies are targeted because they are seen as collaborating with foreign armed forces or are (seen as) part of UN's integrated approaches. For instance Barnett (2004), Krähenbühl (2004) or Bruderlein and Gassman (2006) argue that such 'politicisation' of aid either blurs the line between aid agencies and military/political institutions or transfers the risks to aid agencies, seen as comparatively 'soft targets'. Likewise, the literature also frequently refers to the multiplication of actors involved in the provision of aid, from armed forces to corporations or private military and security companies, contributing further to the confusion of actors on the ground and the dilution of the humanitarian principles. As Stoddard *et al* explain:

> A theory often cited for the apparent rise — and one that is believed deeply by certain aid organizations who have suspended operations as a result — is the securitization of aid by western governments in the global counter-terror campaign, which has created a political association of aid organizations with this western agenda. Another explanation has militants choosing aid institutions as soft targets, for the purpose of sparking conflict or general disorder. Others refute the importance of the targeting issue, insisting that the majority of violent incidents are crimes of opportunity having nothing whatever to do with politics of humanitarian action and everything to do with its material resources. … Some in the humanitarian community have also posited a growing environment of impunity, spurred by such events as abuses of prisoners under GWOT [Global War on Terror], which has had the effect of easing pressures on allies and foes alike to respect internationally sanctioned principles of humane treatment and human rights (Stoddard *et al*, p.36, 2006a).

Some, however, disagree with the view that aid workers are victims of confusion. Hammond puts it best when she writes:

> Casting a cloud of confusion around … attacks leads to the false assumption that the perpetrators' actions can be explained as a misunderstanding or as a mistake. The implication is that clarifying roles and objectives, and defense of the so-called humanitarian space by which providers of relief demand or are guaranteed access to civilians in conflict areas, will end confusion in the minds of would-be attackers, thereby making aid workers safer. … The assumption that violence stems from confusion, and

that as such it is not purposeful or meaningful is naïve and dangerous. … Their attacks should be seen not as the result of extreme confusion but as deeply conscious acts aimed at exploiting humanitarian symbols and garnering as much attention as possible for the cause that the perpetrators believe to be serving (Hammond, p.176, 2008).

In explaining the cause of violence perpetrated against humanitarian organizations, the literature also pinpoints a number of elements that are *indigenous* to aid agencies, these are incidents that they have a role in the occurrence of; this is both a systemic problem and one that varies from agency to agency. Regarding the former, several authors such as Grunewald (1999) and Bollettino (2008) argue that the sheer increase in the number of aid workers and of aid agencies as well as the greater involvement of aid agencies in crisis areas contributes to an increase in the risks of being victims of acts of violence.

Also, Bollettino pinpoints the absence of "common professional security standards and limited success with inter-agency security coordination" (Bollettino, p.263, 2008). In addition, participants in a 1997 ICRC-led seminar on security considered that "[c]ompetition for funding and the popularity achieved in the media and amongst donor governments when assisting victims in unsafe environments mean that security considerations [are] ignored or relegated to minor importance" (ICRC, 1997, website).

Agencies are also said to be individually (partly) responsible for the deterioration of their security. While Grunewald denounces agencies' limited institutional memory, leading to poor analytical planning and prevention skills or policies, others have linked security incidents to the poor quality or relevance of programmes being implemented by some aid agencies. Bruderlein and Gassman add that

[a] key aspect of the current insecurity is not that conflict situations have become much more violent in recent years, but, rather, that the staff of international agencies have become more exposed to security risks in conflict zones. This increased exposure to risks has much to do with agencies' changing operational objectives and methods (Bruderlein and Gassman, p.66, 2006).

Joe Weber (2008) on his side recalls that individual aid workers are also to blame for their inappropriate behaviour.

According to research conducted by Fast between 1999 and 2002,

… four characteristics are associated with higher levels of insecurity: organizations carrying out two or more types of activities combined with the provision of material aid; operational organizations; those organizations working with both sides of a conflict; and those organizations that are more integrated into the local community in a country (Fast, p.140, 2007).

Due to the methodology adopted however, these findings are to be limited to the case studies – Angola, Ecuador and Sierra-Leone - used in Fast's study.

Overall, Fast argued in her 2010 meta-analysis of the literature treating of security incidents that

> … a disconnect exists between two streams of the literature in relation to causation. One stream advances an epidemiological approach that emphasizes 'proximate causes' of violence against aid workers based on empirical evidence, while another tends to speculate about 'deep causes,' often without corresponding evidentiary support (Fast, 2010, in press).

She comes to the conclusion that these alternative explanations need to be studied further and, possibly, amended as each brings a set of different conclusions for aid agencies. Indeed, authors arguing that insecurity is mainly exogenous to aid agencies imply that they have a limited control over factors that can mitigate their insecurity. On the contrary, authors pinpointing indigenous factors imply that aid agencies have an important role to play in improving their security.

Altogether, and despite much improvement by the aid sector in putting their efforts together to analyse security incidents that concern them, the lack of data as well as of systematic, expository, investigative post-incident analyses still leave aid agencies confused. Acknowledging this confusion, this thesis will probe further into understanding how agencies perceive insecurity, and shape their approach to security accordingly.

2.1.2. The conceptualisation of humanitarian security

The conceptualisation of humanitarian security has been a gradual process, yet much of its theoretical basis was put forth by Van Brabant's manual (Good Practice Review 8, GPR8). Three aspects are key in understanding this conceptualisation: the correlation between the humanitarian principles and humanitarian security; the development of the Security Management Framework; and the place of the 'security triangle'.

It is worth noting here that the concept of humanitarian security developed independently from the concept of 'human security' proposed in 1994 by the United Nations Development Programme; even if they share common concerns for populations' security, the latter holds a specific people-centred view, while the former focuses *first* at the level of humanitarian organizations.

2.1.2.1. The correlation between the 'humanitarian principles' and humanitarian security:

The *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* has been signed by 436 aid agencies so far[46]. Its first four articles reaffirm what are known as the 'humanitarian principles'. They state that:

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[46] As of March 2010. As a comparison, Stoddard identifies 260 major international humanitarian NGOs (Stoddard, 2003).

- "The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries". This right is referred to the as the 'humanitarian imperative'.

- "Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone". In other words that aid is impartial.

- "Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint". This means that the provision of aid is neutral.

- "We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy". This implies that the provision of aid is independent.

Three of these principles are reiterated in the General Assembly Resolution 46/182, whereby "Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality". Although the scope, applicability and actual application of the humanitarian principles is much disputed by the literature and aid agencies alike, they are generally accepted as framing 'humanitarian action' – i.e. assistance provided on the basis of these principles.

When it comes to security a number of authors and aid agencies purport a positive correlation between the respect for these principles and improved security. For instance the two security manuals of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) recall that the respect for the "Fundamental Principles" – including humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence – are a key component of effective security (IFRC, 2007 a, b). One of the manuals states that a way to reduce the likelihood of a threat is to "operate transparently and in accordance with the fundamental principles" (IFRC, p.27, 2007b).

This positive correlation between humanitarian principles and security is frequently emphasised. The Director of Operations of the ICRC recalls that

> … in a polarized environment there are almost always expectations that any player present on the ground ought to take sides. One is friend or foe, ally or enemy and, whatever the choice, a choice has to be made. This makes it all the more complex for organizations such as the ICRC, working on the basis of the principles of independence and neutrality, to get their message across. This imposed polarization results in an increased importance of how the legitimacy of humanitarian action and in particular of the ICRC's neutral and independent way of operating is perceived. This development entails two specific risks: that of being rejected and that of being instrumentalized. … In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the relevance of neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action was questioned. Through its operations in the field, the ICRC seeks to demonstrate in concrete terms that its operational approach is not only credible but necessary in a polarized world (Krähenbühl, p.511, 2004).

In other words, the ICRC argues that the actual and perceived respect of the humanitarian principles contributes to it being distinct ifrom the parties to the conflict and therefore not being seen as a threat by anyone and this is what allows it to operate safely. Similarly, Donini *et al* established that:

> … our data shows that the higher the international political stakes are for major donors (for example, Iraq, and Palestinian territories), the stronger the perceived need - from the perspective of communities themselves - to respect humanitarian principles. … Neutrality and impartiality are not theoretical concepts or pie-in-the-sky constructs; they are essential ingredients for effective humanitarian action. "Neutrality is not an abstract notion in Iraq," our country study concluded, "but is regarded by communities and most remaining humanitarian organizations as an essential protection against targeted attack (Donini *et al*, p.9, 2008).

Nevertheless, several authors and aid workers question the 'protective power' (Hammond, 2008) held by the humanitarian principles. For instance according to Larissa Fast,

> [i]mpartiality is something that many aid workers and organizations believe provides implicit protection from harm, but it is unclear to what extent belligerents evaluate or even take into account the perceived neutrality or impartiality of an agency. … We do not know if aid workers and organizations are attacked because the attackers perceive an organization as helping the other side (partiality to one side) or because of the media attention that often accompanies an attack on humanitarians, or both, or whether it is related more to aid agencies being 'soft targets.' … It is one thing to imply an attack was political or targeted, and another to assume it is because of a loss of neutrality or impartiality (Fast, 2010, in press).

Similarly, Laura Hammond notes that "[l]ocal communities' impressions are hardly ever expressed in terms of the organization's commitment to impartiality, neutrality or independence" (Hammond, p.193, 2008). Christian Olsson (2007) deconstructs aid agencies' claims of neutrality by arguing that by operating in highly political environments, their actions are implicitly politicised by actors around them

While the rationale for this positive correlation between humanitarian principles and security is based on operational experience, there are various reasons to dispute it. For instance Bruderlein and Gassman explain that "[r]elying on the principle of independence is increasingly problematic considering the significant growth of U.N. and non-U.N. international agencies in recent years, and the parallel increased dependency of these agencies on large donors, such as the European Union and the United States who, themselves, pursue political agendas" (Bruderlein and Gassman, p.72, 2006). In addition, as an aid worker states in a professional journal, "our humanitarian mandate fundamentally contradicts the interests of local parties who utilize violence to advance their interests" (Sherman, p.7, 2005).

In other words, the positive – or negative - correlations between humanitarian principles and security remain uncertain. The reasons for this will be discussed later in the thesis.

2.1.2.2. The 'Security Management Framework' at the core of humanitarian security:

With the spate of security incidents involving aid workers in the 1990s, it soon became clear that aid agencies had much to do to improve their approaches to their security. As Charles Rogers wrote in 1998,

> NGOs must take a new look at their approaches to security management. Given the nature of our work and mission, the security management model we follow is very different from that of the military or even multinational enterprises. We cannot operate out of secure compounds, protected by the latest high-tech security equipment, and venturing out only under heavily armed escort. We have a different agenda. We must be where the people are, to live among them and to identify with their suffering, if we are to remain true to our calling and organizational ethos. So, in our approach to security, the accent must be on prevention, not on protection (Rogers, p.2, 1998).

Two years later, the GPR8 manual offered a concept of security that follows a project management cycle pattern - theoretically allowing organizations to tackle all of the steps for proper security. The 'security management framework', as it is known, starts by giving consideration to the specificities of each organization and to each context; it continues with a risk assessment to understand the particular threats and the organizations' particular vulnerabilities; it then considers the 'security triangle' (see below), which allows framing for the next step: planning. Typically, security planning involves two dimensions: articulating standard operating procedures of dos and don'ts in order to prevent an incident from happening, and contingency planning, which provides guidance for how to react when incidents actually occur. The aftermath of an incident is also addressed and the ways in whicg the subsequent analysis should lead to a review of the agency's threat, risk assessment, security strategy and planning.

Several security manuals have adopted a similar approach. The IFRC security manual (IFRC, 2007b) for instance, develops a 'security management process', which includes four phases – assessment, planning, implementation and reviewing - all of which are mainstreamed by constant situational analysis. This framework means that aid agencies have a set of key security policies and country security plans that staff are made aware and trained in; and that the necessary resources are budgeted and allocated. Indeed, and contrary to the widely held belief among aid workers, humanitarian security is not merely a technical task whereby a security officer adds bars to windows, but a very strategic one, where all stakeholders are considered and where every aspect of the project management cycle is reviewed in order to ensure that the delivery of aid can be done reasonably safely and securely and with the best possible mitigating measures to avoid an incident - be it a war related threat, or simple crime. This then implies that security is not only the responsibility of a security officer, but involves all staff at every level of management, including the CEO and Board members – eventually allowing the organization to develop a culture of security.

While the security management framework provides a reasonably holistic approach to security, several authors remain critical of aid agencies' limited understanding and implementation of this framework. As Bruderlein and Gassman argue, "there is a dearth of strategic thinking in the development of international agencies' security responses, and this absence is one of the most striking limitations on the adequate provision of security" (Bruderlein and Gassman, p.78, 2006). Likewise, Bollettino contends that "an overly narrow focus on operational readiness for field operators [...and lack of] strategic-level thinking about security and crisis management" are among the major obstacles to improving security management (Bollettino, p.266, 2008). In other words, these authors argue that the problem does not lie in the absence of a theoretical framework for humanitarian security management, but is due to inadequate interpretation and application of this framework by aid agencies. As evidence that this framework has retained relevance and is still useful for aid agencies, the GPR8 manual security management framework has been only little edited during its recent collective revision.

2.1.2.3. The 'security triangle' – a disputed concept:

The issue of security for humanitarian non-state actors is scarecely touched upon in the literature that pertainis to the wider field of International Relations. Avant however, delves further into this topic and what it means for the concept of security. As she explains:

> … international NGOs and transnational corporations think about security, and how to achieve it, differently than states have traditionally done and that these differences have consequences not only for which problems are addressed, but for whether and how violence is used in the communities where they operate. I describe how the efforts of non-state actors to treat issues of protection from loss as 'apolitical' have yielded a more inclusive and process-oriented conception of security that rests on the notion of a *security triangle* – quite different from the absolute divides, enmity and emergency powers associated with state-based security. Because of what they see as the limits to their legitimate claims and actions, non-state actors have tended to use the language of security differently in ways that also portend different behavio(u)r. The way non-state actors have used security suggests potential for the idea of security itself to be transformed where non-state entities play a larger role (Avant, p.143, 2007. Emphasis added).

A major contribution of the GPR8 manual has been the development of the 'security triangle' concept. This concept rests on the idea that, when framing their security strategy, aid agencies have a choice between three different approaches, known as 'acceptance', 'protection', and 'deterrence', drawn on paper as the three corners of a triangle. As the manual states:

> An acceptance strategy tries to reduce or remove threats by increasing the acceptance (the political and social 'consent') for your presence and your work in a particular context (politicians and the military call this 'winning hearts and minds'). A protection strategy uses protective devices and procedures to reduce the vulnerability of the agency, but it does not address the threat. In technical jargon this is called

'hardening the target'. A third approach is to deter a threat by counter-threat. This ranges from legal, economic or political sanctions to, most prominently, a counter-threat of defensive or offensive use of force (Van Brabant, p.58, 2000).

The manual also adds that "acceptance is about making more friends, protection about sheltering at a distance, and deterrence about intimidating your enemies" (Van Brabant, p.58, 2000). Intimidation, however, is not limited to the use of force; threatening to close projects and to withdraw from an area is sometimes a powerful tool of pressure. Nor is acceptance limited to sharing cups of tea: it includes developing broad-based relationships through entering in formal agreements, socialising and paying attention to the need for different interactional and negotiating styles; it also provides guidance on meetings and how to convey messages diirectly, as well as implicit methods of communication such as appearance and behaviour; it tackles the politics of staff hierarchies; and states how the design and implementation of the programmes can enhance or lead to a loss of acceptance.

What is clear from the security triangle concept is that aid agencies are primarily drawn to the acceptance approach. As Michael O'Neill, head of security for Save the Children US explains, acceptance as a foundation for humanitarian security management conforms to IAAs values: "because acceptance is consistent with this relationship-driven development approach … it is usually the cornerstone of effective security management in a development context" (O'Neill, p.22, 2008). This focus on acceptance has been repeatedly confirmed by aid workers. In their "Security Perceptions Survey", Larissa Fast and Dawn Wiest (2007) for instance show that "Respondents [to their survey] rated acceptance security measures much more favorably than they did deterrence or protective measures" (p.4); also, "respondents rated armed escort the lowest of all security measures" (p.12). Consequently, authors recommended that "[a]gencies that privilege protective and deterrent measures should revisit the importance of acceptance measures as a security management strategy that makes staff feel more secure" (p.18).

Acceptance practices are however being questioned. For instance Fast and O'Neill recall that:

[although m]ost NGOs today claim acceptance as a foundation of their security strategy, how each NGO implements acceptance however, differs substantially. Many take a 'passive' approach, assuming that doing good programming will win the consent of the local population and acceptance will automatically follow. Others take a more 'active' approach, deliberately working to gain and sustain consent from all stakeholders. The continuum of implementation, from passive to active, is evidence of the diverse ways in which NGOs apply acceptance. This diversity in implementation suggests that the acceptance approach remains inadequately understood in conceptual and operational terms. … A persistent and thorny problem with an acceptance approach is the diversity of missions, mandates and values among humanitarian agencies. … While many NGOs may claim to use acceptance as a primary means of improving the security of their staff, it is not at all clear how they define acceptance, how they implement it in practice, whether or not it is effective, or the circumstances under which it is, or is not, effective.

Many questions still surround our understanding of acceptance and its effective application (Fast, O'Neill, p.6, 2010).

Likewise, a 2004 report on security of humanitarian personnel states that "[t]here is broad consensus within the humanitarian sector that security management should aim for acceptance of the organization by all actors". It also underscores the different problems that come with the acceptance approach, including the fact that "acceptance requires careful image management"; "acceptance does not work for all threats"; "Humanitarian organizations have minimal information about how they are perceived"; "the acceptance approach is accommodating rather than challenging"; and "acceptance can be confused with leverage" (Barnett, p.29, 2004).

Given the difficulties in relying solely on an acceptance, the literature repeatedly emphasises that aid agencies ought to implement a careful balance between the acceptance, protection and deterrence approaches, adapted to the specificities of each organization and each context. Nevertheless it is also clear that, as a concept, the 'security triangle' has sometimes been poorly understood, where for instance aid workers have been lead to believe that they have to choose one approach instead of combining all three. Due to on-going confusion about the 'security triangle' concept, "[t]he revised GPR abandons the concept of the triangle in order to avoid this confusion, but maintains a focus on these three core security approaches" (Harmer, p.3, 2010).

2.1.3. The correlation between IAAs' identity and their security is little studied in the literature

It is evident to any aid worker that approaches to security vary widely from one organization to another. While some will have dedicated headquarter-based full-time security managers, others will only rely on locally recruited security focal points; while some will adopt a visible and hardened posture, others will opt for a low profile; while some will act as frontline organizations, other will remove their staff from any conflict zone. As Sam Sherman writes:

> … many aid agencies and their staff invoke a variety of approaches and strategies. Some focus on grassroots support and involvement, attempting to circumvent the dearth of public order and establish deeper understandings of the local society, culture, customs and politics. But an apparent waning respect towards the neutrality of humanitarian agencies seems to suggest additional strategies are also needed. Other humanitarian groups seek to more effectively manage their safety and security by sharing information more effectively – but the diversity of humanitarian actors and their opinions has thus far made this difficult. Moreover, some aid groups simply hire more security guards, and install stronger gates and higher walls. As NGO workers become more targeted both criminally and politically through robbery, kidnapping, and assault, they frequently search for approaches that can reduce their vulnerabilities to violence and security incidents – incidents that can eventually shut programs down (Sherman, p.6, 2005).

Oliver Behn and Madeleine Kingston argue that "[t]he way an NGO manages risk depends heavily on the organizational mission and culture" (Behn and Kingston, p.9, 2010).

Several authors have pinpointed how differently aid agencies approach security. Stoddard and Harmer for instance explain that "[a]lthough the major United Nations and NGO humanitarian actors universally concur on the importance of security, in actual practice the level of sophistication and investment into security measures varies enormously from one to another" (Stoddard and Harmer, p.32, 2006a). According to OCHA for instance, the key elements of non-UN approaches to security are that:

> [i]n approaching security, non-UN humanitarian organizations attach paramount importance to securing "acceptance" for their actions. They manage security as an integral part of their operations, they decentralize this responsibility, and they ensure that it is complemented by appropriate technical support. These four key elements [are] acceptance, integrated management, decentralization and technical support (OCHA, p.2, 2004b).

The report further argues that UN agencies would be well inspired to follow the NGOs' approach to security. As Stoddard and Harmer note:

> [i]n October 2003 the Secretary-General announced a plan to reconfigure, strengthen, and modernize the UN security apparatus - a process that has recently begun under the new Under Secretary General for the Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). At the same time he cautioned that the United Nations must not "succumb to a 'bunker mentality' and shrink from the work the world's people expect it to do." Yet many of the organization's humanitarian agencies and their partners fear this is precisely what has happened since the [2003 Baghdad] Canal Hotel bombing (Stoddard and Harmer, p.32, 2006a).

This is in line with Bruderlein and Gassman's observations. They recall the distinction, and tensions, between two approaches to security - the system-based approach and the community-based approach - and argue that these:

> reflect the two distinct operational identities of the United Nations. Its first identity is as a state-based multilateral organization assisting its member states in fulfilling their national policy agenda. Its second role is as a civil society organization serving specific constituencies such as refugees, children, and victims of war. Debates between the two security approaches conceal the inherent political tensions between governmental and non-governmental institutions both in terms of operational end goals and the means of achieve them (Bruderlein and Gassman, p.85, 2006).

Although it is clear that "[d]ifferent contexts, organizational values, principles and missions, perceptions of security, risk thresholds and human and financial resources all contribute to different management approaches" (HPN, p.1, 2010), most of the work focuses primarily on the differences

between NGOs and UN agencies. Barnett (p.79, 2004) highlights the particularities of security management in different organizations, distinguishing in particular between the Red Cross / Red Crescent movement, UN agencies, International NGOs and local NGOs. Her report is the only contribution in the literature that distinguishes between such a variety of aid agencies. Although it gives a good description of their different approaches to security, it does not take into account the conceptual and operational *similarities* that also exist within organizations pertaining to different type. For example, when a Red Cross society's approach to security shares similarities with an international NGO –as this thesis will demonstrate - distinguishing them solely on the basis of their institutional structure does not provide an accurate picture of the different approaches to security. Also, the report (like much of the literature on this subject) merely describes the different approaches to security without addressing the *processes* that lead organizations to adopt one security posture or another.

A major contribution of the current thesis will be to provide clarity on these differences and similarities and the rationale behind them. It will argue in particular that each agency's approach to security is deeply influenced by its identity – and affects the identity in turn. As Bruderlein and Gassman rightly noted (p.68, 2006) "the professionalization of security management is not without major consequences for the identities and mandates of international agencies". This will be returned to in the later empirical chapters.

2.2. The literature on the PMSC-IAA nexus: insufficient consideration given to the processes that shape IAAs' approach towards PMSCs

Authors contributing to the study of the interaction between aid agencies and private military and security companies have contributed greatly to shaping an analytical framework with which to examine these interactions. Privatisation of security is only a recent phenomenon and was initially dealt with by aid agencies with a limited understanding of its complexities, and with little or no consultation with other humanitarian organizations. The literature has put the subject in the spotlight, allowing an open discussion and providing a number of answers to questions that had remained unanswered by aid agencies.

The current section analyses this important contribution by first presenting an overview of the literature, then highlighting the topics discussed. Despite the literature's involved analysis of PMSC-IAAs relations, it has failed to provide sufficient consideration of the *processes* that shape aid agencies' attitude towards private military and security companies. Mirroring the previous section, this section concludes that a study of aid agencies' *identity* is necessary to fully understand *how* they position themselves in regards to PMSCs.

2.2.1. An overview of the literature studying the PMSC-IAA nexus

Reference to PMSCs in relation to humanitarian action remained anecdotal in the academic literature until the end of the 1990s. While no books focusing solely on the interactions between PMSCs and IAAs have been written, the first paper on the subject was the 1999 report produced by a

joint project between CARE Canada and the University of Toronto, entitled *Mean Times –
Humanitarian Action in Complex Political Emergencies – Stark Choices, Cruel Dilemmas.* It
recommended that "NGOs should consider the privatization of security for humanitarian purposes"
(Bryans *et al.*, p.2, 1999). Since then no more than thirty academic articles have been published on the
subject, and many by the same authors, in particular James Cockayne, Jean S. Renouf, Peter W.
Singer and Christopher Spearin.

While most authors are scholars, several authors are former aid workers, and less than a
handful are representatives of the private security industry, with Doug Brooks in the lead for the latter
group. As a result, the literature focuses heavily on the many real or perceived risks – rather than
opportunities – related to the use of PMSCs. While some authors highlight the positive aspects of the
privatisation of security, most raise concerns about it. These concerns are essentially ethical as well as
practical and led many authors to adopt a normative approach and to providing recommendations.
These are at times generic, but also often very detailed. Cockayne, for instance, suggests an entire
clause that could be included when drafting contracts for private security services (Cockayne, p.31,
2006). Many of the real and perceived risks posed by PMSCs to aid agencies are also faced by other
users (issues of mismanagement for instance) or entities operating in the same areas as PMSCs (risk
of being the victim of a contractor's wrongful action for instance). Some risks however, are limited to
IAAs, due to the specificity of humanitarian action. The various risks and opportunities raised in the
literature will be further elaborated below.

Given the documented risks related to the outsourcing of security, the United States private
military and security companies' association has created its own publication, the *Journal of
International Peace Operations.* The 'journal' however acts more as a showcase than an academic
journal, employing no system of peer-reviewing. At the same time, it is said to be widely read[47] and
regularly publishes articles related to humanitarian assistance.[48] Although not academic, publications
of this nature are useful from a research perspective as they offer an opportunity to examine the
industry's views on international assistance.

Outside of this publication, the number of authors from the private security industry and the
scope of their writing, especially on their interactions with humanitarian actors, remains minimal. This
may be an indicator that contractors are less interested or preoccupied with IAAs than aid workers and
researchers are by PMSCs engaging with the humanitarian sector.

Until recently, there were no publications providing a comprehensive picture of the state of
relations between private military and security companies and aid agencies. Tony Vaux, Chris Seiple,
Greg Nakano and Koenraad Van Brabant published a report in 2002, but it was based on a survey of
twenty organizations only; as it states, "the scope of the studies is not exhaustive, but rather a
snapshot of the issue" (Vaux *et al*, p.6, 2006). Later, both Singer and Cockayne based their respective

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[47] According to the IPOA website: "In January 2007, the *Journal* was described by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* as one of the
most influential periodicals in publication today. Published bi-monthly, the *Journal* has a combined print and online circulation
of more than 16,000 copies, and is read by senior executives, government policymakers, and practitioners in the field of
peace operations." IPOA (undated, website).
[48] One of the author's articles originally published in a humanitarian publication has been republished in the JIPO.

papers on evidence through extensive number and types of interviews (Singer, 2006; Cockayne, 2006). Many authors however encouraged further research and reflections on the subject. This happened with the publication in 2008 of the ODI HPG report on *The use of private security providers and services in humanitarian operations* written by Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer and Victoria DiDomenico (Stoddard *et al*, 2008).[49]

The 2008 ODI HPG report provides the only comprehensive picture through "the map[ping] of practices, the examin[ation] of trends in contracting and related policies, the approach of the private security industry towards humanitarian interests, as well as the potential implications of interaction between these two sectors" (Stoddard *et al*, p.1, 2008). This report is based on 241 key informant interviews and a survey. According to the authors:

> [t]he survey fell short of its response target, which was not a numerical goal but rather intended to obtain broad representation. However, the survey did meet the target of garnering responses from all UN IASC members, all of the largest NGOs and the participation of mid-range and smaller NGOs. As such, the authors are confident that the survey responses provide a reasonably representative picture of PSP (private security providers) usage internationally, with the important caveat that findings do not necessarily reflect the practice of the national Red Cross societies and the IFRC (Stoddard *et al*, p.5, 2008).

While all of the respondents to the survey as well as the vast majority of key informants were employed by NGOs, the United Nations or the Red Cross movement, only thirty-two security providers were interviewed. The report therefore offers an approach which strongly emphasises the humanitarian viewpoint. Nonetheless, the ODI report represents the only comprehensive picture to date of the humanitarian sector's use of PMSCs, and as such will be referred to frequently in the present thesis.

Between this thesis and the ODI report there exist several important differences in researching the subject. While the present thesis looks only at private military and security companies, the ODI HPG study's definition of private security *providers* is wider as it encompasses not only PMSCs but also "any arrangements paid for by a humanitarian agency for a security service or function" (Stoddard *et al*, p.4, 2008). Security services provided by PMSCs, governments or militia are thus also taken into consideration. Such a scope is in line with the report's stated objective to study the use of private security providers and services by humanitarian agencies. However, it does not offer a conceptual reflection on the different issues and questions related to the privatisation of security in the realm of humanitarian operations. For this reason and by its nature – even if providing a crucial analysis of the interactions between PSPs and IAAs – the report is only a snapshot that will become rapidly outdated.

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[49] The author peer-reviewed the ODI HPG report and participated in the dissemination of its findings through the European Interagency Security Forum.

While there existed no lack of interest in understanding the interactions between PMSCs and IAAs, the reasons why it proved so difficult to provide a comprehensive picture are well explained by Cockayne, who writes that:

> … the lack of discussion seems to result from a combination of factors:
> . 'embarrassment' amongst users because of the 'tension between the moral or ethical high ground that they want to take… and the ethical deviations that some of these security needs require', which even produce 'feelings of horror and outrage of having to work with … private security service providers'
> . attendant 'sensitivity' to the bad publicity for users that might result from them openly discussing their use of commercial providers
> . concern about the proprietary nature of contractual information
> . a preference for focusing attention on state failures to provide security for humanitarian staff, rather than commercial solutions
> . a consensus that security is 'a prerogative of the particular agency', not properly a matter for other organizations to comment upon (Cockayne, p.7, 2006).

Several authors highlight the lack of transparency on this subject from both IAAs and PMSCs (Vaux *et al*, 2002; Singer, 2006; Stoddard *et al*, 2008). While aid workers remain discrete as they are concerned with organizational reputational risks, contractors refer to contractual obligations that forbid them from disclosing any information that may, in their opinion, jeopardise these contracts. The challenge of obtaining information from both IAAs and PMSCs even drove Michael Von Tangen to boldly name his paper *"Private Security Should Not Be A Grubby Little Secret"* (Von Tangen, 2004). Similarly, Stoddard *et al* specify in their report that due to the sensitivities of this subject area, their study "included writing a 'Confidentiality Undertaking', which was then reviewed and endorsed by the UN's Office of Legal Affairs to ensure careful use of any sensitive security information. ... Even with these confidentiality assurances in place, however, the research team encountered difficulties in accessing some of the key United Nations individuals deemed important to the research" (Stoddard *et al*, p.6, 2008). In the case of the present thesis, as an active member of the nascent humanitarian security community, the author faced no major difficulties in reaching the relevant key informants, which wil be furthur discussed in the next chapter.

Interestingly, despite the fact that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) plays a major role among the humanitarian actors in dealing with PMSCs, this role is rarely mentioned in the literature, nor sufficiently analysed. In common with other IAAs, the ICRC's interaction with PMSCs can be studied both from a user's and a stakeholder's perspective. It shares, along with other aid agencies, the occasional use of private security services as well as sharing a presence in the same operational areas as PMSCs. In addition, however, the ICRC's involvement with the private security industry is also unique since part of its mandate is to engage with all armed actors present in conflict zones – mainly in order to disseminate the fundamentals of international humanitarian law. Few

authors however study the ICRC's specific role in dealing with PMSCs.[50] This thesis will attempt to further the understanding of the implications of this peculiar interaction.

2.2.2. The literature focuses on a limited number of topics

All the authors studying the interactions between PMSCs and IAAs agree that the privatisation of security has direct and indirect links with humanitarian action. Sometimes these links are conceptually defined, Christian Olsson for instance suggests that the two sectors share existential characteristics which make them look similar in the eyes of the local populations where they intervene (Olsson, 2007), but most of the time these links are very practically demonstrated. Singer for instance, begins several of his papers by presenting the types of activities once reserved for the traditional aid actors that have now been outsourced to the private security industry. Other authors put an emphasis on the security services of all sorts being contracted by the aid agencies, and going as far as calling PMSCs 'aid enablers'.

Since the direct and indirect links between the two communities are not in doubt, some authors then analyse the reasons and the ways these two communities have become closer with time. Several insist on the fact that IAAs start using private security services after a security incident or following a deterioration of security in a given area. According to Stoddard *et al* (2008), perceived savings in staff costs and time, as well as administrative flexibility are also reasons - particularly for the UN and international organizations. NGOs, for their part, identified a lack of in-house expertise as among the most important reasons for contracting out security; which they do so for risk analysis, staff training, professional advice on managing a particular crisis such as a kidnapping, armed and unarmed protection, etc. Several authors also pinpoint the liability concerns from IAA management. In addition, Vaux *et al* (2002) explain that following a shift in the way security is managed, the outsourcing of security management became more acceptable, or sometimes was seen as the 'least bad' solution. According to Vaux *et al:* "American NGOs use security companies not because they want to but because they must" (Vaux *et al*, p.26, 2002). While these arguments focus on IAA's move toward increased outsourcing of components of their security, some authors such as Singer or Stoddard *et al*, also look at the dynamics from the other side. They show how the humanitarian sector has been considered by the security industry as a potential 'golden pot', firstly for the potential scope of contract opportunities, but also for the fact that working with IAAs enhances their image and contributes to their legitimisation.

The bulk of the literature focuses on the pros and cons of outsourcing security. The list of arguments in favour of, or against, the use of PMSCs is long and touches upon a whole range of different issues. The author has nevertheless identified five thematic areas into which arguments can be classified:

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[50] Among others: Singer (2006); Cockayne (2006); Carbonnier (2006); Avant, (2007); Spearin, (2008).

Identity: this theme relates to the identity of the two sectors, in particular how this relates to their ethos and personnel, and the consequences of interaction on their respective activities (Shearer 1998; Von Tangen, 2004; Bjork and Jones, 2005; Singer, 2006; Spearin, 2007b; Stoddard *et al*, 2008);

Ethics: many ethical concerns are raised in the literature, sometimes related to the general privatisation of security and other times limited to the interactions between private security providers and IAAs (Mills and Stremlau, 1999; Von Tangen, 2004; Spearin, 2005; Cockyane, 2006; Olsson, 2007);

Operational issues: including the question of costs, staff selection, contract management, payment practices, etc (Cillers and Mason, 1999; Musah and Fayemi, 2002; Vaux *et al*, 2002; Singer, 2003, 2004; Spearin, 2005a; Cockayne 2006, 2008);

Accountability and regulation of PMSCs: explores how PMSCs are regulated (or not), what proposals are made to improve this regulatory framework and what is, or could be, the place of humanitarian actors in this process; and

Peace operations related issues: this thematic area studies the role of PMSCs in peacekeeping operations as well as in peace-building, and consequences for those processes.

Apart from the last two themes which extend well beyond the scope of the present thesis, all of these arguments are developed below.[51] As noted above, the literature focuses far more on the concerns raised by the privatisation of security than on praising the opportunities created by them.

2.2.2.1. An analysis of the arguments pertaining to PMSCs and IAAs' identity:

According to the different authors, the issues and concerns related to the appearance of those new actors in areas traditionally occupied by humanitarian actors are numerous, although largely interrelated. The research has established four categories in which the arguments related to the 'identity' of the two sectors can be considered: culture clash, perception, competition and independence.

Culture clash.

As Singer writes:

[t]he first and perhaps most obvious source of tension arises from the very different worlds that military firms and humanitarian agencies inhabit, and the possibilities for misunderstanding that this contains. … Firms come in with their own expectations, often shaped by their particular military background, and often have trouble understanding, not only individual NGOs, but the humanitarian endeavour as a whole (Singer, p.72, 2006).

Such fundamental differences in identity have consequences on how each understand security management. As Spearin explains:

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[51] More information related to the accountability and regulation of PMSCs and Peace operations related issues can be found in the Appendix 1.

PMSC clients instinctively want 'hardening' and PMSC personnel are drawn from the ranks of state security sectors with a mindset of physical force protection. PMSC understanding of RDA [relief and development agencies] operations is important to ensure feasibility and appropriateness of security advice to facilitate a humanitarian agenda; humanitarian clientele demand a different approach due to the need to be close to communities in need. Nevertheless, PMSCs are not often keen to 'learn' about humanitarian requirements, preferring instead a more uniform approach towards their client base (Spearin, p.41, 2007b).

Also, Kjell Bjork and Richard Jones (p.782, 2005) explain that "in reality, private security companies have little to do with civilian security. ... It is the background of the personnel of the private security companies that points to the organizational philosophy behind them, many being former soldiers." Confirming this, Stoddard *et al* show that "[m]any [respondents to the survey] noted that these companies have not adapted their products for humanitarian clients, and lacked a solid understanding of the sector" (Stoddard *et al*, p.23, 2008).

However, the same remark can be made the other way. Several security contractors interviewed for this research were found to praise aid workers in public, though in private they would, more often than not, be critical of them. The literature focuses on the perceptions of PMSCs by their clients rather than the opposite. While it makes sense to study the service providers, it is also a missed opportunity not to also attempt to understand the provider-user dynamics. With this in mind, Chapter Six of this thesis will then also offer a view on how contractors perceive aid workers.

The culture clash between security contractors and aid workers is at times exacerbated by the dubious connections or history of PMSCs and/or their employees. Singer for instance explains that "[m]any former members of the most notorious and ruthless units of the Soviet and apartheid South Africa regimes have found employment in the private military industry, including with firms working for humanitarian clients in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Iraq, Sudan and the DRC" (Singer, p.73, 2006). Aid workers are thus not very keen to work, or be affiliated, with such individuals.

In addition, Von Tangen warns of possible conflicts of interest that need to be taken into consideration when employing private security guards: "Just as bouncers in bars and night clubs have been known to foment trouble in order to justify their employment, private military and security companies have a potential self-interest in ensuring that the situation does not become too safe" (Von Tangen, p.10, 2004). Similarly, Singer argues that "[p]rivatisation of any type always has positive and negative effects. This is particularly true in the military sphere, where profit motives further cloud the fog of war" (Singer, p.16, 2004). The difference between organizational culture and ethos – making profit versus delivering aid – is another reason provided by authors to explain the culture clash between PMSCs and IAAs.

Perception.

Developing close relations with humanitarian actors is important for the PMSCs for two reasons. First, because by meeting a demand, they might potentially gain some contracts, and second, because: "[t]hese companies clearly see their future growth and prosperity depending in part on their perceived legitimacy" (Shearer, p.76, 1998). Spearin writes that "collaboration between NGOs and PMSCs serves as a way for PMSCs to enhance their reputation, given the political and moral salience of humanitarian activities" (Spearin, p.47, 2005b). On the humanitarian actors' side however, numerous authors agree that the use of PMSCs might actually compromise their perception by the local communities, parties to the conflict, as well as by donors, both institutional and individual. Worse still, Vaux *et al.* argue that such a stance "could be perceived by warring factions as increasing the stakes and could lead to reprisals" (Vaux *et al*, p.21, 2002). Karen A. Mingst (2005), Bjork and Jones (2005), and Cockayne (2006) agree that the use of PMSCs by IAAs contributes to the blurring of lines between the military and humanitarians; being associated with a party to the conflict can actually increase the IAAs' insecurity. Robert Mandel explains clearly that "[t]he fundamental feature of humanitarian operations is precisely their *humanitarian* character, and this can only be undermined, and may well be destroyed, if they are delivered at gunpoint" (Mandel, p.19, 2002. Emphasis original). These arguments however are not always pertinent since many of the services provided by PMSCs do not include the provision of armed services nor are they actually provided in active war zones.

Competition.

The idea, developed by Cockayne, is that PMSCs and IAAs enter into competition over different resources regarding: personnel (IAAs' security staff salaries cannot match those of the PMSCs); services provided ("the provision of products and services which require less focus on 'acceptance' model" (Cockayne, p.23, 2006)); as well as for donors' funds. Indeed, Cockayne argues that "competition will not only see humanitarian groups assuming a direct security service provision role – it may also see some security providers branching out, beyond security and reconstruction work, into providing humanitarian assistance type services – for a profit" (Cockayne, p.24, 2006). He then concludes "[t]he danger is that this will lead to a commercialization of the humanitarian space. That also opens up the humanitarian space for politicization, and even, weaponization" (Cockayne, p.24, 2006). Whatever the scale of such a phenomenon, it does contribute to blurring the distinctions between humanitarians and the other actors operating in the field.

Independence.

Some argue that, thanks to the privatisation of security, humanitarian actors' protection would not depend on any public means (Cockayne, 2006). Further, Bryans *et al* argue in their report that IAAs should look for private protection, precisely to protect the humanitarian space (Bryans *et al*, p.2, 1999). On the other hand, Shearer in particular, insists on the close relations between the private military and security companies and their home government: "although their activities appear to be

those of an independent commercial enterprise, few act outside the national interests of the home states" (Shearer, p.34, 1998). Sharing this concern, Mandel explains that "[t]he UNSC has recently decided to use private intelligence companies (…). However, UN diplomats are afraid that these officials will use their assignment to spy on foreign governments and pass the information on to home government intelligence agencies" (Mandel, p.22, 2002).

The reflections along these four themes (culture clash, perception, competition and independence) highlight some of the aspects related to the specific identities of aid agencies. There is nevertheless a major gap in the literature, as authors do not relate aid agencies' interactions with private military and security companies to their different identities. Apart from distinguishing the use of PMSCs by UN agencies as opposed to NGOs, or, in one occasion, between American NGOs and European ones, the literature fails to consider how interactions are shaped by each aid agency's unique identity.

2.2.2.2. An analysis of the arguments pertaining to PMSCs and IAAs' ethics:

Many ethical concerns are raised in the literature, some are related to the privatisation of security in general and others are limited to the interactions between private security providers and IAAs. Concerns about the outsourcing of security have existed since security was first outsourced. As shown elsewhere (Renouf, 2007b) there have always been voices critical of mercenaries, from the Carthaginian General Hamilcar, to Machiavelli, to Human Rights Watch. However, as the literature has shown, PMSCs' entrance in the humanitarian field has exacerbated some of these traditional concerns as well as creating new ones.

The ethical arguments developed in the literature are here distinguished between PMSCs general impact on 'conflict dynamics', on the 'humanitarian principles' and on the IAAs' 'reputation'.

Conflict dynamics.

Slabbert argues that the problem is that:

[PMSCs] cannot address the basic sources of insecurity, which characteristically lie in bad governance, social inequality and the highly uneven distribution of political and economic costs and benefits. Their presence is inherently temporary, and they may give their employers a misleading sense of invulnerability that reduces the incentive to seek lasting negotiated solutions to problems of political orders. They also have inherently tense relationships, not only with the "rebels" against whom they are fighting, but also with the "national" armies that they displace, and may well be used to control. (Slabbert, in Mandel, p.18, 2002).

Similarly, Von Tangen explicitly states: "I would like to stress that humanitarians must be aware of the potentially negative consequences of employing private firms and recognise that in doing so they will inevitably change the dynamics of a conflict" (Von Tangen, p.10, 2004).

Cockayne is equally direct and contends that:

[t]he use of commercial security providers (particularly local commercial outfits) in the 'humanitarian space' and in the immediate post-conflict setting may, if poorly managed, risk not only contributing to the insecurity of assistance providers' own staff, but also risk contributing to the insecurity of the local public in the medium to long term, by significantly impacting upon or even setting the parameters of possibility of subsequent security sector reform and related developmental strategies (Cockayne, p.28, 2006).

The above led several authors, including Singer (2004, 2006) and Renouf (2007a), to warn humanitarian users to weigh carefully the humanitarian impact they will have the potential to provide by being on the ground in the short term, against the harm such contracts might potentially cause in the medium-longer term.

This said, the literature also recognises that the use of private military and security companies can be beneficial both for the outcomes of a conflict (Shearer's position) and for the victims of the conflict. While Von Tangen (p.9, 2004) considered that "the use of PMFs [private military firms] is not necessarily a bad thing," Singer recalls that:

[p]erhaps the largest humanitarian action carried out via private military forces was the construction and operation of aid camps housing hundreds of thousands of refugees during the Kosovo crisis of 1999. While the outcomes are generally credited to the US army, the task was in fact outsourced to Halliburton's controversial KBR division, working with UNHCR and international aid groups (Singer, p.70, 2006).

According to Greg Mills and John Stremlau, "[i]n the horrific case of the predominantly Rwandan Hutu refugee camps in Eastern Zaire, mercenaries were desperately needed to provide minimal security for civilians and foreign aid workers" (Mills and Stremlau, p.7, 1999). When facing devastation in the field, it is human to look for immediate, pragmatic solutions; this relates directly to the concept of 'responsibility to protect'.[52] Deborah Avant (2005) highlights the existing debate between those who suggest that NGOs are not the appropriate instruments to *protect* people and those who argue that, given the international community's lack of commitment, NGOs have a responsibility to protect the people whose life is in direct and immediate danger. Spearin nevertheless explains that, although sometimes providing physical protection is much more important than the provision of goods, "[c]ollaboration between NGO and PMSCs, for its part, cannot provide the needed protection for civilians, however humane it might be. This is because PMSCs only sell defensive services to NGOs" (Spearin, p.56, 2005b).

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[52] "The international community has a responsibility to protect the world's populations from genocide, massive human rights abuses and other humanitarian crises. This responsibility to prevent, react to and rebuild following such crises rests first and foremost with each individual state. When states manifestly fail to protect their populations, the international community shares a collective responsibility to respond. This response should be the exercise of first peaceful, and then, if necessary, coercive, including forceful, steps to protect civilians" (Responsibility to protect, Undated, website).

Despite the vocal insistence by the security industry that they are ready to be deployed to ensure vulnerable populations' security, Cockayne notes that "[t]o date, there are very few cases of formalized private security companies being contracted by the UN or other groups to provide protection to specific third-party vulnerable populations" (Cockayne, p.12, 2006).

On the question of whether "private military and security companies have a role in ensuring the security of local populations and aid workers," Renouf concludes that

> the answer actually depends on the context, which must be carefully weighed and considered before any decision can be taken. Since all context analysis is itself influenced by the mindset of the analyst, someone sympathetic to the neo-liberal doctrine of increased privatisation might be more receptive to going private. A deep understanding of local culture is therefore absolutely essential (Renouf, p.33, 2007a).

Additionally, according to the classic security dilemma,[53] the decision of some NGOs to use private military and security companies to ensure their physical protection has a double impact on those around them. On the one hand, the neighbours feel less protected as compared to humanitarians that have hired private agents, and on the other hand, armed groups might be more inclined to attack those who are less protected. Therefore, if they have the means, those neighbours might well be interested in investing in armed protection, contributing to an escalation of stakes and a localised arms race.

In all cases, and as argued by several authors (Bjork and Jones, Mingst, Spearin, Cockayne, Renouf), the presence of security companies has also contributed to a further blurring of the lines among the various actors operating in the field and could have negative impacts on the preservation of humanitarian space. Cockayne for instance writes that

> [u]sing a commercial security provider may risk associating a group with a party to a conflict because the provider and that party share a style of dress, ethnic or social ties, formalized commercial links or because personnel working for the provider were previously associated with the party to the conflict. This jeopardizes humanitarians' perceived neutrality, impartiality and independence, and risks blurring humanitarian action and military intervention. The resulting confusion can have a serious negative impact on staff security for the user, and for other humanitarian groups (Cockayne, p.21, 2006).

This confusion contributes to the shrinking of humanitarian space. Cockayne suggests that the convergence between security providers and humanitarian assistance providers through the use of related security staff or through the development of not-for-profit security services, "may render humanitarian and commercial security providers strategic competitors for donor funds" and therefore led to a merchandising and a "commercialization" of the humanitarian space (Cockayne, p.24 ,2006).

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[53] According to this dilemma, the improvement of the protection of a unity (whether at state, intra-state or individual level), creates always a feeling of insecurity among its neighbour; consequently, those last will also look to improve their protection and therefore contribute to an escalation of the tension.

He adds elsewhere that "[h]umanitarians face similarly fundamental questions about whether turning to the global security industry increases staff security, or in fact blurs the boundaries of humanitarian space by associating humanitarians with military actors" (Cockayne, p.13, 2008a). While IAAs are often depicted as victims of this blur, Mingst recalls that, they also bear a responsibility for it, notably by accepting funding from parties to a conflict (USAID funding in Iraq for instance) but also through a further militarization of their security management.

Humanitarian principles.

As seen in the previous section, humanitarian actors operating in complex environments ensure their security with a mixture of acceptance, protection and deterrence. Seeking proximity to the population living in the areas in which they intervene, IAAs have generally preferred the acceptance approach. Implementing and communicating the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity have granted them some legitimacy to intervene in areas where other actors were refused access.

Several authors argue that there is a trade-off between pragmatism and humanitarian ethics within the humanitarian sector. For instance, Singer explains that "by hiring armed guards, agencies risk losing the perception of neutrality that they rely on to maintain their access and ensure their immunity from attack. Like it or not, they risk becoming associated with one or other side in the conflict, potentially undermining acceptance of their presence by local actors" (Singer, p.69, 2006). He also states that

> [t]he presence of firms might jeopardise norms of neutrality among aid groups and lead to a further multiplication of armed forces on the ground. Finally, if the work of PMFs [private military firms] were limited only to the protection of aid workers and facilities, external threats might be diverted to less well protected local poor and refugees. Humanitarian compounds could therefore become another symptom of the "secession of the successful" that now characterises the split between rich and poor (Singer, p.17, 2004).

This in turn, as Von Tangen (2004) and Olsson (2007) remind us, contributes to the erosion of IAAs' acceptance by the local stakeholders, and even beneficiaries of their programmes, and as result, to the decrease in their security and reputations. The dynamics introduced here will be examined further in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

Reputation.

Along with Cockayne, several authors express the concern that "[t]here is a genuine risk of highly negative publicity for organizations operating in humanitarian and post-conflict settings as a result of their association with commercial providers that commit abuses elsewhere" (Cockayne, p.21, 2006). And as will be shown below, IAAs still have a long way to go if they wish to reduce the risks – including reputational risks – related to the use of PMSCs. For their part, PMSCs are keen to develop

further contracts and relationships in order to enhance their own image. Looking at these dynamics it seems that, in terms of reputation, the affiliation between PMSCs and IAAs is a win-lose game.

Given IAAs' strong ethical discourses, it is surprising to notice that there is virtually no debate in the literature about whether aid agencies *should* even consider using private military and security companies – often seen as 'descendants' of mercenaries. Following this line, one could argue that aid agencies ought not to contract PMSCs due to ethical considerations. It seems however that this aspect of the debate has been put to one side as authors and aid workers alike have implicitly accepted that aid agencies need security and that PMSCs fill in the gap.

2.2.2.3. An analysis of the arguments pertaining to PMSCs and IAAs' operational issues:

The reflection around the question of operational management touches on four points: cost, efficiency, market rules, and contractual relations between PMSCs and IAAs.

Cost.

One major argument in support of the use of private military and security companies lies in the real or perceived savings an organization will gain from outsourcing its security management to a PMSC. As Cockayne notes, using a PMSC may "reduce costs of administration, training and replacement as staff turnover or are relocated, and also reducing insurance and opportunity costs (because of the freeing up of staff that would otherwise be tied down providing security)" (Cockayne, p.10, 2006). To illustrate the scale of these savings several authors compare the costs of an United Nations operation to the costs incurred by a using PMSCs, usually through the case studies of Rwanda and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo in 1994-1995 and Sierra Leone in 1996, and conclude that the latter are empirically less expensive.

On the opposite side of the argument, Singer suggests that "it is not clear that outsourcing always saves money" (Singer, p.156, 2003) notably because, given the PMSCs' 'propensity toward profit', when for instance: "the payment amount is determined by length of time, then it is likely the firm will bill up to the maximum allowable period" (Singer, p.156, 2003). He argues that "clear tensions always exist between the security goals of clients and the firm's desire for profit maximization" (Singer, p.151, 2003). Spearin reaches a similar conclusion, arguing that an NGO contracting a PMSC might very well face financial difficulties, precisely because of this type of contract (Spearin, 2005a).

In addition, Cockayne also looks at payment practices and shows that they may affect either positively or negatively on the distribution of power between the leadership and their employees depending on whether the redistribution of income is equal or not, "and thus may affect whether the use of commercial providers will benefit the local public generally, or private social groups" (Cockayne, p.20, 2006).

Lastly, as highlighted by several authors (Spearin, Vaux *et al.*, Singer, Carbonnier, Cockayne, Avant), the problem is that security is not an entitlement, a public good, but a luxury as it is reserved

for those who can pay. Thus, the impact for the humanitarians using PMSCs is the risk of alienating the local population, who cannot afford the same level of protection.

Efficiency.

Regarding the cost argument, those in support of PMSCs suggest that because of their corporate structure, and therefore business-oriented strategies, PMSCs offer the potential of greater flexibility and agility than states or international organizations.

Conversely, using the examples of the company GSG in Sierra Leone in 1995 and of the contractors that refused to transport goods on the famously dangerous road between Ramadi and Baghdad in 2004, Singer and Avant question PMSCs' or the reliability of their personnel. Going further, Olsson argues that:

> … the argument of efficiency, notably of military efficiency, simply misses the point. Indeed, what is focused upon here is not only on the role of the PMCs per se but also on the capacity based approach — as opposed to effect-based approach — that leads to their involvement in contemporary conflicts. Indeed, by analyzing PMCs as purely technical and apolitical tools, one necessarily fails to grasp these political and structural de-legitimizing effects. Only a political reading, that is, a reading that considers the effects of processes of (de-)politicization and (de-)legitimization on social relations, can account for the fact that the privatizing trend might have important political consequences (Olsson, p.349, 2007).

In a similar way Anna Leander also deconstructs the notion of efficiency of the private security sector (Leander, 2005).

Market rules.

In complex environments humanitarian actors have several means of ensuring their physical protection, these include hiring local informal security services, moonlighting state security forces or international private military and security companies. Also, when IAAs do not want to become associated with a particular group (ethnic group, clan, or any party to the conflict) through establishing protection arrangements with them, or when there are no public means available to ensure protection, PMSCs can be seen as the most appropriate means of obtaining protection because of their corporate structures. Some authors argue that signing a contract with a corporation might offer a sense of formality – a framework based on familiar contractual standards.

In addition, Cockayne and others contend that hiring a PMSC may "reduce organizational exposure to liability for harm to staff and third parties, because of contractual arrangements that shift the risk to the security provider" (Cockayne, p.10, 2006). However, the question of who is *morally* responsible in case of harm remains unanswered.

A positive side of competition among security providers is that they must offer the best quality services when bidding. Nevertheless, Singer explains that when there are many PMSCs in competition, this might well have the opposite effect and therefore lead to a decrease in standards

(Singer, p.18, 2003). In order to reduce their prices, PMSCs might for instance recruit less competent or experienced personnel. It is then up to those who make the selection to be responsible for adequately balancing cost and quality of service.

Another issue raised by Singer and Avant is that because a client's expertise and capabilities decrease when outsourcing functions, the organization then becomes more dependent upon the service provider (Singer, p.78, 2003) which in turn increases the probability that the contract will be extended.

Contractual relations.

The wide range of services that PMSCs offer is of real interest to IAAs. These services range from logistical support, context analysis, crisis and risk management to training, demining and physical protection of people, assets and goods. According to Stoddard *et al*, "[t]he global survey findings and interviews suggest that support services such as training are on the whole very positively viewed" (Stoddard *et al*, p.23, 2008). Spearin argues that in very dangerous contexts that are unattractive to humanitarian personnel, protection through PMSCs might give a sense of better security and therefore play a role in the recruitment of humanitarian personnel for those places (Spearin, 2005a). He also writes that for IAAs that are already paying for security services from dubious providers such as militia, governmental forces, a party to a conflict or others, the use of a PMSC may actually regularise the provision of their security (Singer, p.71, 2006).

Once the decision to hire a PMSC is taken, authors nevertheless underscore the issues that come with it. Firstly, at the *selection* level, humanitarian actors face many challenges in choosing the most appropriate company. According to Singer and Cockayne, it is difficult to screen the companies and/or their staff; difficult to establish their history; or whether they have undertaken training in humanitarian law; respect their rules of engagement, etc. Many authors highlight the impossibility of finding out what other activities a PMSC might have been, or are, currently involved in, or even what kind of potentially questionable links the company might have with militaries, government officials and corporations, at either the local or global levels (Cillers and Mason, 1999; Musah and Fayemi, 2002; Vaux *et al*, 2002; Cockayne, 2006). Singer emphasizes this by saying that "the firms are not altruistic by any measure. … war is business where nice firms do not always finish first. Aspirations of corporate responsibility and a positive image may be overridden by the need to fulfil a contract" (Singer, p.228, 2003). Cockayne drives home the point:

> … the selection of providers is rarely governed by formal guidelines referring to relevant international standards (such as human rights, policing or use of force standards). Choices are usually guided only 'by intuition' and organizational procurement policies, which are not specifically tailored to the procurement of security services (Cockayne, p.16, 2006).

In their survey, Stoddard *et al* find that in the absence of specific policies the contracting of PSPs remains a topic of considerable debate within the UN system. Some in the organization are

calling for it to be regarded as a potential security strategy, while others contend that it should be explicitly prohibited. They add that "[a]lthough a number of organizations reported that they were beginning to develop policies on PSPs, to date only a handful of the largest NGOs have internal guidance in this area. In the absence of guidelines covering the selection and recruitment of PSPs, many organizations use their regular tendering process, which focuses on cost and value for money. Beyond that, companies tend to be selected based on recommendations from other agencies" (Stoddard *et al*, p.24, 2008).

In short, there is a lack of overall strategy on the part of IAAs when deciding to use the services of a PMSC, as highlighted by Von Tangen, Van Brabant and others. Cockayne for instance specifies that "[p]roviders are chosen through highly decentralized processes that rely on poor market information, weak sanctions and make little reference to broader social impacts" (Cockayne, p.2, 2006).

Once the selection is made, a second layer of issues arise at the *management* level. Potential dangers exist, as in any contractual relationship, these include: poor contractor performance, problems relating to contract, unwillingness of the contractor to execute a task, etc. However, due to the sensitive nature of PMSCs' activities, Singer and Cockayne question whether the users are actually sufficiently prepared to deal with them. Moreover, given the complex environments in which PMSCs usually operate, any sustained monitoring of their activities is particularly challenging.

Therefore, several authors conclude that when dealing with PMSCs, humanitarian actors should develop new approaches to the implementation of contracts and their monitoring. Singer concludes that "meeting humanitarian needs with private security solutions (…) clearly carries both advantages and disadvantages that must be weighed and mitigated through effective policy and smart business sense" (Singer, p.17, 2004). Given Cockayne's (2006) suggestion that IAAs usually hire a PMSC "guided only by intuition", one might question if humanitarian practitioners actually do have this "smart sense of business".

Even if users were willing and able to follow all appropriate steps in order to select and use the best security company, they would still face difficulties in establishing some basic facts that would then hamper this effort. As mentioned above, it is difficult, and at times impossible, to establish the possible dubious links a company or its staff (managers or employees) may have. Similarly, experience has shown that, given the difficulty in finding appropriate staff, companies may – and have – hired poorly-trained people or worse, individuals who were previously involved in human rights violations. Choosing a company on its (good) reputation is an option, however several major private military and security companies have already been involved in some sort of scandal.

Given the stakes, many of the authors adopt a normative approach and end their papers with recommendations. Some, such as Van Brabant, Vaux *et al.*, Von Tangen, Bjork and Jones, etc. provide advice for the users, including very detailed and practical recommendations. Others such as Cockayne, Singer and Renouf go a step further and encourage IAAs to participate in the

professionalization of PMSCs through their involvement in the global debate on regulation. In his paper "After Blackwater - How humanitarians can help professionalize the global security industry", Cockayne shows that humanitarian organizations face real risks in using PMSCs and as such, they have a real interest in participating in professionalization of PMSCs (Cockayne, 2008a).

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the literature has vastly contributed to a better understanding of the complex relations that exist between aid agencies and security companies. Notably it has been instrumental in highlighting the risks for IAAs of privatising security. However, the picture remains incomplete in several aspects.

First, the literature fails to provide an understanding of the processes that lead an agency to consider using private security services. It reveals some of the reasons why aid agencies 'go private', yet does not offer an explanation of how such a decision is taken. This is surprising given the emphasis that the literature puts on the differences between IAAs and PMSCs, as well as on the risks of privatising security.

Second, the literature does not deal with the relationship between aid agencies' specific identity and the construction of their orientation towards PMSCs. For example, it does not provide indications of the identity or the type of aid agencies that use PMSCs. As a result, we are missing a key point in understanding the reasons why some UN agencies or some NGOs are more prone than others to contract PMSCs. The current thesis will examine the processes by which aid agencies come to the conclusion that the use of a PMSC is necessary. By doing so, this thesis will argue that due to the ethos of some IAAs, they are more likely than others to conclude that the privatisation of their security is necessary.

Lastly, in addition to not providing sufficient clarity about the users of PMSCs, the literature does not distinguish enough between the many types of corporate security providers: some companies for instance offer armed services while others refuse to do so. This in turn leads to dramatically different contractual and contextual interactions. Clarifying the differences between security companies is therefore necessary to fully comprehend the interactions between IAAs and PMSCs.

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter has examined two streams of literature. While the first section has looked into the literature engaged with the field of humanitarian security, the second section has examined the literature that focuses specifically on the interactions between IAAs and PMSCs.

Regarding the former, the chapter has shown that authors studying the realm of humanitarian security have essentially tackled two aspects: the analysis of security incidents, and the conceptualisation of humanitarian security. The literature contributes to a better understanding of the IAAs' sources of insecurity and provides them with conceptual and practical frameworks to improve their security posture. By doing so however, this thesis argues that the literature fails to explain the

processes that lead different organizations to approach security differently and, similarly, does not provide enough attention to the correlation between aid agencies' identity and their respective approaches to security.

While the academic contributions to the field of the privatisation of security are limited in number, all shed some light on the many questions raised by this recent phenomenon. The arguments raised by different authors are, in the vast majority, critical of the phenomenon and many propose that IAAs consider carefully the long-term consequences before contracting a private military or security company. Indeed, given the recent appearance of the phenomenon, many effects remain unknown. It is however striking to notice that the authors focus mainly on negative consequences, without considering what actually is working *properly*. Every day, several thousands of private security services are being provided all over the world, and many in complex and difficult environments. Though it is true to say that the consequences of any failure may be fatal, it is also worth recalling that the vast majority of these private services are provided appropriately. Another shortcoming of the literature is that despite the relevancy of the arguments raised, very few authors make any specific distinctions between the various PMSCs or the various IAAs, despite the fact that neither constitutes a homogenous block. Similarly, very few distinctions are made between the contexts where the private military and security companies are operating. This thesis will examine exactly those subtleties present in the interactions between PMSCs and IAAs.

As Carbonnier writes, "humanitarian crises – by their specific nature and the dramatic implications for the victims – highlight with particular clarity some of the main challenges and fundamental issues inherent in the privatisation and subcontracting of essential public services" (Carbonnier, p.413, 2006). This is the reason why researching the range of interactions between private military and security companies and humanitarian organizations is profoundly relelvant to the study of security privatisation. However, and because of, the complexity of the environments under discussion and the rapid pace of change in these environments, Spearin writes: "many of the concerns about relief and development agencies using PMSCs have changed, so that the debates should no longer be perceived exactly as they were in the first wave of interaction" (Spearin, p.231, 2007b). This implies that, in order to remain relevant, any research on the subject must be conceptually developed, which is the aim of the next chapter.

Chapter 3 – A Critical Constructivist Approach to Humanitarian Security

"Notwithstanding hundreds of conferences, seminars and courses held every year, the simple yet incredible evidence is that there is still disagreement on what security is"

Giovanni Manunta[54]

The study of security within the discipline of International Relations (IR) has, historically, focused on the state. Foundational, positivist theories such as realism and liberalism have set the framework of the debate for decades, and it is only since the 1990s that an alternative approach, dubbed 'critical security studies' and encompassing an array of different views, has gradually emerged. The representations of all of these competing theories and approaches can be positioned *abstractly* on a coordinate axis, where the y-axis would be the 'ontological perspective' and the x-axis the 'epistemological perspective'. The top and right ends of these axes would point toward hard, strong, absolute conceptions and the bottom and left ends toward soft, weak, relative ones. Within the realist perspective on security authors such as Waltz would sit in the top right corner, while those such as Campbell - working with a post-structuralist perspective - would be placed on the bottom left corner. By locating itself on this coordinate axis – in between the origin (the 0 (zero) point) and the bottom left corner – this chapter grounds this thesis within the conceptual framework of the discipline of International Relations.

The argument developed in this chapter is that the study of the relation of non-state actors to security is best explored using a critical constructivist approach. In doing so, however, this thesis occupies the 'middle-ground' in terms of its critical position, which can be identified as using a weak ontology, as presented by Jennifer Mustapha. According to her,

> ... weak ontologies respond to two basic concerns: First, there is the acceptance of the idea that all fundamental conceptualizations of self, other and world are contestable. Second, there is the sense that such conceptualizations are nevertheless necessary or unavoidable for an adequately reflective ethical and political life. The latter insight demands from us an affirmative gesture of constructing foundations, the former prevents us from carrying out this task in a traditional fashion (Mustapha, p.3, 2009).

This approach allows both the study of humanitarian security as a construct, and offers reconstructionist suggestions on how 'humanitarian security' could be defined, especially for the agents involved in it.

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[54] Manunta, G. (1996), p.241.

The reasons for using a critical constructivist approach will be presented in detail in the sections below but, in short, they are as follows:

First, it assumes that security can be best understood if taken as a process, a constant construction, and that any attempt to define security is necessarily constrained to an agent (or community of agents), a context, and a period. This thesis will, however, eventually put forward a definition – even if contingent – of the concept of 'humanitarian security'.

Secondly, this thesis assumes a co-constitution between aid agencies' identity and their approaches to security. It implies that an aid agencies' identity is as much a cause of its interests, as much as it is framed by them. The following empirical chapters will highlight this co-constitution.

Thirdly, it adopts a post-positivist epistemology; characteristics of this epistemic attitude are its agent focus, context-dependency, and process-orientation; in addition, as both a researcher and actor in the field of humanitarian security, the author has taken a reflexive approach to this research.

Fourthly, the thesis' focus on non-governmental organizations, international organizations and private military and security companies makes it difficult to use theories treating the state as the main referent object of security. In fact, the treatment in this thesis of IAAs as a referent object of security consists of an original approach to studying their security.

In this thesis humanitarian security is understood as the practice of safely accessing vulnerable populations for humanitarian purposes. It includes the security of humanitarian personnel, of the aid organization's humanitarian programmes, as well as of its assets and reputation. As explained in Chapter One, humanitarian security is composed of four constituents: the human element, the organizational framework, the material element, and its ethical guidance. The final chapter of this thesis will question this working definition and offer additional elements to consider given the findings explored within the body of the thesis.

The present chapter is divided into five sections: while the first section explains the relevance of using the constructivist approach to study the security of non-state actors, the second section delves into the relevancy of a *critical* study of international aid agencies' security practices. The third section introduces humanitarian actors as referent objects of security while the fourth section, unveiling humanitarian actors' identities and interests in relation to security, sets the framework for the empirical analysis. Finally, the fifth section outlines the centre of gravity of this thesis.

3.1. An explanation of the relevancy of using a constructivist approach

3.1.1. Salient points of a constructivist approach to security studies

As summarized by Krause (p.603, 2003. Author's own translation), most of the constructivist studies adopt the following premises:

- Global political actors – whether they be states or not – represent social constructs, and are products of complex historical processes that include social, political, material and ideational dimensions;

- These actors are constituted (and reconstituted) through political practices that create shared social understanding, allocating an identity to each actor as well as independent and variable interests;

- The international system is not static and immutable, and its structures are not determinant for its actors as these are, first and foremost, social constructions;

- Knowledge of these actors and the structures and practices of world politics are not objective as the organization and explanation of 'events' in the world are generated by social processes that include both observers and social actors;

- Methodologies used in these pieces of research analyse on the one hand actors' assessment of the organization of their social world, and on the other hand, the relations between these different assessments and the structures and social practices that condition them;

- The objective of theory is not explanation or even prediction of causality in trans-historic contexts but rather the understanding of a context and gaining practical knowledge.

This thesis is based on similar premises. It holds that international aid agencies represent social constructions and are products of complex historical processes; that these aid agencies are made up of individuals sharing similar ideas and sets of practices, in particular the projects that they perceive as first, being altruistic; second, responding to the needs of populations dubbed vulnerable; and third, guided by ethical principles. It then also assumes that humanitarian security is based on this specific identity shared by international aid agencies. A first look at humanitarian organizations as victims of acts of violence might lead one to conclude that they must be protected and, therefore, that armed protection would benefit them. An approach emphasizing that the system is not static and immutable highlights, however, that security is not necessarily only the fruit of material improvements, but may be the work of social and political interactions with well-identified stakeholders playing a key role in preventing any act of violence against IAAs. As shown, depicting IAAs only as comprehensive and objective institutions prevents us from seeing the weight of the gradually built networks behind individuals, and therefore specific to certain agents, contexts and periods in time. Even if successful, such an approach to security management does not mean that it will be successful or reproducible in another context. Indeed, depending on the organization, local dynamics, and time, network structures might also be insufficient at providing security to IAAs. This however is understood only if one recalls that the international system, along with it's agents and structures, is not static and immutable.

Additionally, this thesis recognises an interaction between the researcher and the object of study, which highlights the need for a reflexive approach to studying humanitarian security. Its methodology will then underscore the author's assumptions and steps to overcome them. Lastly, the objective of this thesis is not to provide an a-historical explanation of humanitarian security, but to understand how humanitarian security is conceived and practiced in given contexts – and what this entails for humanitarian actors as well as for the concept of humanitarian security more broadly.

In addition to these premises and as will be discussed below, the thesis also adopts a constructivist approach because of its level of analysis – focusing on non-state actors – and its premise that the concept and practices of security are both a process and a construction.

3.1.2. The level of analysis: Non-state actors

Non-state actors and NGOs in particular, have gradually developed a structured role for themselves, especially in such fields as ecology, human rights, development, and humanitarian aid. While certain non-state actors were initially seen as agents of progressive social change, they became increasingly criticized for not always being what they initially seemed to be. Instead of being altruistic agents of change, some are seen as self-interested entities forwarding their own agendas. They are at times not entirely democratic but hierarchical entities concerned with their own finances and longevity. Many are said to be self-appointed instead of being representative and, in some instances, their actions may even result in *increasing* violence. Their impact on international politics has, however, grown even if the benefits of their influence are debatable. Similarly, their relation to the state – whether they are acting independently from it or not – is also disputed.[55] As stated in a 2007 conference supported by the United States National Intelligence Council:

> [m]ost benign non-state actors originate in the developed world, work within the framework provided by Western institutions and regimes, and act as propagators of "western values" such as free markets, environmental protection, and human rights. From that standpoint, a key concern for the United States may be not that these actors have become too powerful, but that in many parts of the world their influence is limited – a factor that is contributing to the tilting of the global playing field away from the United States and its developed-world allies (NIC, p.1, 2007).

From this perspective, the simple presence of non-state actors in a given context may actually reinforce the influence of the state from which an IAAs originates.

Although international humanitarian law asserts that states are the prime guarantor of humanitarian organizations' security, a variety of reasons make this increasingly difficult and sometimes even impossible. The reasons can be as various: lack of political will, lack of capacity, weak states, multiplication of humanitarian actors involved in different dangerous areas including places where the government has no access, etc. Also, humanitarian organizations are usually averse to being protected by a party to the conflict, even if it is a legitimate government. Somalia is an extreme example: often depicted in the media as a country that has been without effective central government for almost two decades, it is impossible for aid organizations to rely on any state structure under these conditions. In addition, and following the humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence, international aid agencies are usually reluctant to be connected (or perceived as such) to any state. This often results in a similar state of anarchy as depicted in International Relations,

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[55] In particular given that many IAAs receive funds from different states and/or implement state-supported programs.

where IAAs will not, or cannot, refer to any overarching guarantor of security: in these cases, national security structures (if any) are seen as no more legitimate than other armed groups.

Implemented by a variety of independent multinational aid agencies, humanitarian security is not under the control of states, but is however, affected by decisions taken by states. At the same time, states are also affected by the actions of IAAs. Indeed, an NGO whose French (national) aid worker for instance has been kidnapped in a given country will most likely receive some support from the French Government. IAAs then have an impact on norms, including on how security is conceived and practised.

Studying IAAs' security management under these conditions implies a level of analysis which focuses primarily on non-state actors rather than on the state itself. The state still has a role to play – even its absence is a significant element and has to be taken into account in the analysis – however the onus is on non-state actors. As explained by Krause, "[r]eplacing the state in the centre of analysis amounts *prima facie* to adopt a constructivist approach ... , even if such researches may not necessarily be assimilated to constructivist security studies and rather emanate from a social postmodern or poststructuralist current" (Krause, p.609, 2003. Author's own translation). As detailed below, the current thesis locates itself in between constructivism and postmodernism.

3.1.3. Security as a construct

What is security? Often depicted as a contested concept in the critical literature, security is said to be self-referential (Waever), ontological (Dillon), or contingent (Krause and Williams). The question of what is security has been debated in particular since the broadening and deepening of the security studies agenda.

Depending on how one defines it, security can be a concept (national security), a speech-act (securitization), a practice (law enforcement), or a power relationship ('security' imposed by the strong upon the weak). It can also be an objective (zero crimes), a perception ('I feel safe'), it can be contingent (access to natural resources), quantitative (crime statistics) or qualitative (feeling of insecurity), etc. In addition, security can be defined negatively, when it is not present, as insecurity. It is precisely because we are insecure that we seek security – in the same way that we appreciate good health often only after having been sick.

In other words, and from an individual perspective, security is relative; it is always contingent to something: oneself, the 'other', the environment, a moment in time, a location, etc. What then is security? To paraphrase Wendt, 'security' is what one makes of the word itself. The word then shifts into a definition or a meaning, which itself turns into a (ideological) position – which can lead to a given practice. Security is then a (subjective, relative) construct. Security can be defined, and subsequent approaches to security implemented, but these will necessarily be done according to a shared construct. Understanding the identity and subsequent interests of the one who establishes security is then crucial.

In the field of humanitarian action, security management is currently being developed by IAAs. Based on the premise that states cannot, or should not, ensure their security, IAAs are developing their own concepts and practices – albeit influenced by other sectors such as the insurance industry. Understanding the subtleties of humanitarian security entails an understanding of the specific nature of humanitarian organizations as well as the specific mindset of humanitarian aid workers.

3.2. Relevancy of a critical constructivist study of humanitarian security management

3.2.1. Differentiating between dominant constructivism and critical constructivism

Alex MacLeod (2004) points to the emergence of two main currents in the constructivist approaches to the study of security: the first being the 'dominant' constructivism and the second the 'critical' constructivism. The dominant one is widely associated with Wendt and includes authors such as Katzenstein, Adler and Barnett. While ontologically challenging the main positivist theories, the focus of the dominant approach remains the state. On the critical constructivist side, MacLeod gathers an eclectic collection of authors including Didier Bigo, Karin Fierke, Jef Huysmans, Bill McSweeney and Jutta Weldes, "who distance themselves from the dominant constructivism through their criticisms of Katzeinstein's work, their dissatisfaction towards the work of the Copenhagen School, their sociolinguistic approach and their rejection of positivism" (MacLeod, p.12, 2004. Author's own translation). MacLeod recognises that these authors may not call themselves critical constructivists, but asserts that they still claim to be both constructivists *and* to reject the dominant constructivism. MacLeod then specifies that although there is no critical constructivism project *per se*, critical constructivists all agree with Weldes *et al* in that,

> 1) reality is a social construction; 2) constructions of this reality reflect, order, and reify power relationships. In turn, certain agents or groups of agents play a key role in the production and the reproduction of reality; 3) a critical constructivist approach denatures dominant constructions, offers indication for the transformation of common sense, and facilitates the imagining of alternative ways of life. It also problematises conditions of its affirmations; in other terms, a critical constructivism is also reflexive (Weldes *et al*, cited in MacLeod, p.6, 2004. Author's own translation).

In short, critical constructivism shares with the dominant current its general vision of a socially-constructed world but finds fault with its ontological and epistemological conservatism.

MacLeod further contends that:

> … critical constructivists are distinct from the followers of the Critical Theory as they do not refer to Gramsci or the Frankfurt School, and rarely to Marxism, and also do not share their central objective of emancipation. In contrast to these last, they are often less reluctant to refer to certain postmodern concepts, or to thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, but accept explicitly or implicitly

a form of foundationalism. They are then open to a dialogue with the latter, dialogue which seems unthinkable for the followers of the dominant constructivism (MacLeod, p.6-7, 2004. Author's own translation).

Critical constructivism can then be located between its dominant cousin and postmodernism. It shares with postmodernism its interest in power relationships and the way some representations of the self and the way certain aspects are privileged or discarded. In addition, both have openly normative dimensions through their affirmation of new possible representations that follow their deconstruction of dominant representations.

In addition, critical constructivism also made its mark by transposing the co-constitution between agency and structure onto the link between identity and interest. It is then different from both dominant constructivism and postmodernism as it questions the so-called causality between identity and interest when characterising the role of interests in the process of construction of identities. Dominant constructivists have tried to bridge the divide between positivists and post-positivists by explaining the effects of ideational factors in international relations. They believe they can develop causal explanations of the social world. Critical constructivists however, are sceptical of this move, which they judge to be overly conservative, and seek to break with scientific or causal approaches. They focus instead on studying constitutive processes behind ideational structures.

When studying security, while the mainstream IR theories are concerned with 'explaining why particular decisions resulting in specific courses of actions are made', the critical constructivists focus on 'how threat perceptions and the object of security are socially constructed'. Thus, the mainstream IR theories are concerned with 'why' questions and with 'explanation', while critical constructivist approach is concerned with 'how' questions and with 'understanding'. Understanding humanitarian aid agencies approaches to humanitarian security is precisely the aim of this thesis.

Although the division between the dominant branch of constructivism and the critical one is well founded, Jennifer Mustapha (2009) aptly argues that many problems arise between mainstream and critical theories and recalls that the term 'critical' encompasses an array of different views – some criticising the ontology of the dominant theories, others criticising their epistemological aspects. She then reminds the reader that Fierke:

… resists simple binaries altogether and argues for a conceptually-based understanding of competing critical approaches in order to avoid oversimplifying their complexities. Notably however, she does point out a key distinction between realist security studies and critical security studies, which relates to [an] earlier point about ontology. ... It is in this area of ontology that it is perhaps most warranted to attempt to pull out the "critical" from the "mainstream." But again, this distinction must be carefully made, and is at its most useful when it allows us to recognize that there are powerful critiques that can be levelled against traditional understandings of security (Mustapha, p.6, 2009).

Basing her arguments on Stephen K. White's work on strong and weak ontologies, Mustapha argues that a critical post-structuralist approach can still produce claims about the 'real world', but that such a posture requires reflexivity about the inter-subjectivity and indeterminacy of the claims made, and of being accountable to them (Mustapha, p.21, 2009).

To justify her argument, she then offers an original distinction between strong and weak ontologies. The former refers to the "mainstream" theoretical approaches to IR, defined as modernist positivists, whose "ontological commitments are framed unreflexively and there is little, if any, acknowledgment of their essentially contestable nature" (Mustapha, p.2, 2009). Weak ontology for its part "does not refer to the (lack of) persuasiveness of a theory's ontological commitments so much as it refers to the process of arriving at those commitments and an acknowledgement of their contestability" (Mustapha, p.2, 2009). Mustapha then explains that:

> … weak ontologies respond to two basic concerns: First, there is the acceptance of the idea that all fundamental conceptualizations of self, other and world are contestable. Second, there is the sense that such conceptualizations are nevertheless necessary or unavoidable for an adequately reflective ethical and political life. The latter insight demands from us an affirmative gesture of constructing foundations, the former prevents us from carrying out this task in a traditional fashion (Mustapha, p.3, 2009).

This then means that "simply declar[ing] their contestability, fallibility, or partiality at the start and then proceed[ing] pretty much as before" (Mustapha, p.3, 2009) is insufficient, as this will tend to a reification of the claim, which weak ontologies precisely aim to avoid. As Mustapha contends:

> What is crucial in a weak ontology is that such an acknowledgement of epistemological limitations necessarily changes the very nature of the assertions being made. Therefore, unlike in a strong ontology where foundational claims are asserted unproblematically and unreflexively, in a weak ontology foundational claims need to be constantly affirmed, and the ethical function of theorizing resides in its goal of critically sustaining one's affirmations (Mustapha, p.4, 2009).

The advantage of Mustapha's distinctions in analysing IR theories is evident: she allows poststructuralist approaches in particular to respond to the often heard criticism that while their input is useful, their inability or lack of will to offer alternative views of the world eventually limit their overall relevance. Although Mustapha uses the strong/weak ontology in order to argue that a poststructuralist approach to security can offer a careful yet valid reconstructive dimension, the critical constructivist approach can certainly also benefit the field, as will be discussed in further detail below.

3.2.2. Reasons for a critical constructivist approach

The bulk of critical security studies share a desire to de-emphasize the role of the state and reconceptualise security in a different way. Focusing on a non-statistcal approach to security, this

thesis will conclude by providing reconstructionist suggestions on how 'humanitarian security' could be (re)defined, and how agents can work with this definition.

The argument developed within this thesis is premised on a mutual constitution between the research and of the subject of study, using a reflexivist lens. Locating the thesis more specifically in the coordinate axis presented in this chapter's introduction, the thesis' critical constructivist approach towards humanitarian security refers to an ontologically constructivist-reconstructionist and epistemologically postpositivist-reflexivist approach. Adopting such an approach allows an engagement both with dominant constructivists and postmodernists. This approach to the study of humanitarian security can be a way to build bridges both within and outside of constructivism.

The decision to take this approach to the subject is due to the following reasons: the nature of the subject – a study of non-state actors as objects of security; the assumption of a social construction of security; the authors' natural inclination – due to his own experience in humanitarian security management – in assuming a co-constitution between identity and security; and the aim to propound a definition, even if relative, of the concept of security. The subsequent argument will highlight the link between the specific identity of IAAs and the way they approach their security. It will then be suggested that not taking into account the co-constitution between their identity and their security could possibly lead to a misunderstanding of humanitarian security management. Its findings will also delve into the implications of research for the concept of humanitarian security. By doing so however, this thesis will highlight the conditions of what it affirms. As recalled by Mustapha (p.18, 2009), "any ontological claims that are made should not be static and are always reflexively open to interrogation." In other words, deploying a weak ontology allows the theorist to make claims, though not unreflexively. The critical constructivism of this thesis is thus resolutely reflexive.

3.2.3. A reflexive consideration: The study and the findings of the thesis

Alex MacLeod recalls that:

> … reflexivism is an important aspect of any theory which claims to be critical. It is actually fundamental for critical constructivism. It means first of all that the researcher must be conscious of the premises of his own thoughts, or even of his bias, and of the values and norms which compose any theory. There cannot be any separation between values and facts, or between theory and practice. Any analysis must always take the social context in consideration. Reflexivism subscribes to the idea of the incommensurability between paradigms or theoretical currents which are in opposition on the epistemological level, but believes that dialogue between them is possible, even desirable (MacLeod, p.6, 2004. Author's own translation).

As will be further explained below, the reflexivity of this thesis stems from a) self-awareness of the author as both researcher and actor in humanitarian security; b) the way the research is conducted and humanitarian security studied; c) an openness to dialogue and to alternative views of humanitarian security; d) the nature of the claims of the thesis' findings.

As a practitioner of humanitarian security[56], the author is familiar with the codes, language specificities and beliefs shared by the humanitarian community. These advantageous familiarities have also been utilised in many ways – as it would have otherwise been difficult to communicate properly, and be accepted by the aid community through the course of this research. In addition, as an active member of an epistemic community made up of humanitarian security professionals, the author shares with this network "common normative beliefs and common perspectives on causal mechanisms and notions of validity, and adopt[s] common policy positions" (Bollettino, p.272, 2008). One research tool adopted for this thesis was participation-observation. Klotz and Lynch explain that

> [a]nalyses at the level of the international system tell little about the micro-level processes of socialization that reinforce institutionalized practices, traditional modes of thinking, and standard procedures for organizing knowledge. ... Participant observation allows researchers to see [how institutions are reproduced – how specific norms permeate institutional settings] more clearly (Klotz and Lynch, p.37, 2007).

They then add that "Cohn suggests four stages in the participant-observation process … : listening, speaking, dialogue and 'terror', a term she uses to indicate an unnerving alienation from former beliefs as the participant recognizes the internalization of the organization's alternate assumptions" (Klotz and Lynch, p.38, 2007).

In the author's case, much of the aid community's alternate assumptions were already internalised in previous experiences as an aid worker before embarking on the current research; therefore, there was no experience of 'terror' as defined by Cohn. 'Terror' however, can also be interpreted differently and may rather relate to an awareness of thinking in a certain way; 'terror' is then a *moment of reflexivity*. This sort of 'terror' was experienced by the author, first as an aid worker prior to working on this thesis and then as an academic when conducting research for this thesis. In the latter case, the author was consciously and reflexively aware of assumptions, and distanced himself from them in order to be able to provide a useful academic analysis. The questions asked by the thesis and the sources and methods used to answer them, consciously adopt an academically-minded approach. This thesis is, however, written with the assumption that humanitarian action can best be understood if one appreciates the *specific* yet subtle nature and mindset of IAAs and aid workers. In that sense, the author adopts their views of the world – but this does not preclude offering criticisms of those views.

The current research is essentially of a qualitative nature. Although qualitative research has gained recognition as a valuable method to explore life experiences and social processes (Creswell,

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[56] The author has been employed for several years as a humanitarian aid worker and researcher in different crisis contexts including Afghanistan, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, North Korea and Zambia. In addition to offering consultancy services to different NGOs while working on this thesis, the author was a member of the Advisory Board overlooking the update of the seminal *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* manual. More significantly, the author was the *European Interagency Security Forum* Coordinator for a year and half. The EISF is a network created to encourage collaboration and security dialogue among European humanitarian agencies. This allowed the author to have daily interactions with aid workers on matters of security as well as regular interactions with security contractors.

2003), the research is also based on personal experiences and interactions with a diversity of people through fieldwork. As such, it is nurtured by interpretations by the researcher and may be influenced by his personal values, biases or interests (Van Maanen *et al.*, 1982). It is thus important to acknowledge that qualitative research does not attempt to separate the researcher from the study, to seek "objective results" in the strongest positivist sense. In the course of this work, although sources were carefully selected in order to identify consistent and genuine social patterns, one cannot escape the fact that all data has eventually been interpreted and processed through the author's understanding of people's perceptions and thoughts, a cognitive process that has inbuilt limitations.

As such, and although the thesis will shed light on IAAs' security practices, it will not claim to provide the 'only' or even the 'best' view; the author fully understands that humanitarian security can be studied from other perspectives and that these different perspectives would naturally provide different findings. However, while recognising that studying humanitarian security without understanding the subtleties of humanitarian action can lead to new thoughts and ideas, their *relevance* to aid workers as practitioners may be debatable. It is assumed in this thesis that the findings of the research should eventually serve both the needs of academia and those of practitioners in the 'real world'.

It follows that a reflexive approach should also be adopted for the concluding claims of the thesis, as well as for the conditions of these claims. Mustapha recalls that "ontological claims are seen as inherently problematic because all knowledge is situated knowledge, and there is nothing that can be objectively known to be True. In other words, all constructed foundations are seen as being inherently modernist and necessarily invoking unreflexive claims about what *is*" (Mustapha, p.18, 2009. Emphasis original). For these reasons she argues:

> [f]irst, that acts of reconstruction can be critical in the most fundamental ontological sense, and they do not always have to look like the 'strong ontologies' of either modernist traditionalist theories, or the alternative critical security theories that appeal unproblematically to external grounds to make their claims. Second, and perhaps most important of all, that acts of reconstruction can emanate directly from post-structuralist commitments, where deconstruction is seen as both a first step and as an ethic to bring to engagement with the status-quo. This engagement is necessary if we are serious about avoiding a paralytic disjuncture from the 'real world,' where millions face corporal insecurity every day (Mustapha, p.21, 2009).

Similarly, Burke recalls that "[w]e live in a world where security will continue to remain one of the most powerful signifiers in politics, and we cannot opt out of the game of its naming and use. It must be defined and practiced in normatively better ways, and kept under continual scrutiny" (Burke, p.16, 2007). Besides reflecting the ethics of a researcher who is also an aid worker, this thesis offers acts of reconstruction as a way to "bridge the gap"[57] between academia and practitioners.

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[57] In reference to Alexander George. See Nye (2008).

3.3. Introducing humanitarian actors as referent objects of security

3.3.1. Establishing humanitarian actors as objects of security

Driven by realism, the traditional approach to security is characterized by its focus on the state as the referent object of security. This changed with the gradual broadening and deepening of the concept of security. With the Copenhagen School emphasizing the social aspects of security, the constructivist, critical and feminist theories have further brought the unit of analysis, the referent object and subject of security down to the level of individuals.

In 2008 The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution to name the 19th of August as World Humanitarian Day annually in order to "honor all humanitarian and the United Nations and associated personnel who have lost their lives in the cause of duty and those who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause" (UN, 2008, website). According to the resolution, the aim however is not only to pay tribute to the fallen and honour the living, but also to recall that humanitarian action is about "delivering aid, despite the risks" (UN, 2008, website). Humanitarian security is therefore not necessarily only about keeping staff out of danger, but also and most importantly, about enabling aid workers to safely respond to the needs of vulnerable populations. The designation of this special day unequivocally highlights the dangers faced by aid workers, and by doing so identifies them as referent objects of security.

Designating non-states actors as referent objects of security is not new (Buzan,1991; Hemel *et al*, 2000; Gurr and Monty, 2003) but designating *humanitarian actors* as such, is. Humanitarian action is said to be based on the premise that a population (designated as vulnerable) has certain needs which non-state actors can respond to, in an ethical way, not motivated by profit. As will be made apparent in the next chapter, humanitarian action is based on a set of shared values, an understanding of which strongly shape aid agencies' identity. In turn, studying IAAs' identity implies examining how they relate to the 'other'. Does the construction of one's identity inevitably imply a *dangerous* 'other'? If so, what consequences does this have for aid agencies? Does it clash with their values? In addition, designating IAAs as referent objects of security also requires an understanding of how they construct their own understanding of the threats they face; what is to be secured; how this process of what is to be secured is developed and what are the consequences of such a process; whether IAAs securitize issues and if so, what issues and with what consequences, given their specific humanitarian ethos.

In order to understand how the construction of IAAs as referent objects of security happened, the thesis will look at the developmentof the threats IAAs claim they face, and so assessing how ideas and values shape their protective discourses and practices. The thesis will provide an understanding of how such a process occurred by analysing the co-constitution between IAAs' identities and interests.

3.3.2. Relevancy of establishing humanitarian actors as objects of security

Establishing humanitarian actors as referent objects of security has several benefits. To begin with, it allows an understanding of humanitarian security through the prism of power relationships – both material power and discursive power – within the aid sector as well as between IAAs and other actors or 'beneficiaries'. Indeed, examining IAAs as referent objects of security implies that they are capable of providing security to themselves, as well as capable of providing – or denying – security to others. According to some tenants of critical security studies, representations of security are always seen as political, operating for the benefit of some and the disadvantage of others (Fierke, 2007). What does this imply for IAAs whose claimed *raison d'être* is to help and support vulnerable populations – populations whose primary need is often physical security?

Also, and as Vaughn argued, aid agencies appear as "unlikely securitizers" (Vaughn, 2009). Organizations that are known primarily for providing aid do not intuitively appear as possible providers of security. Particularly since aid agencies generally prefer non-violent means of achieving their missions, even in insecure environments. Identifying them as referent objects of security implies an understanding of how they reconcile their preference for non-violence with the necessity of protecting themselves. This in turn suggests that they have developed approaches to security that are different from the traditional 'statist' approaches (based on balance of power and military confrontation). One of the aims of this thesis is to underscore these approaches and see how traditional approaches to security could benefit from them.

In addition, depicting IAAs as referent objects of security introduces the state as a potential issue. As other studies of non-state actors as objects of security have shown, state-centric views of security maintain a certain vision of the character and location of the political community. 'IAA security' then, introduces another vision of political community. Moving away from state-centric views down to non-state actors, this approach reinforces human security claims that the onus of security should be placed on a human level rather than that of the state, and that it should tackle a variety of threats other than simply military ones.

In summary, the relevance of establishing humanitarian actors as referent objects of security stems from a) understanding IAAs' power relationships in relation to managing their security; b) exposing the co-constitution of humanitarians' security with their identity; c) underscoring the reproduction of a humanitarian political community; d) as underscored in the previous sub-section, understanding the nature of threats in the humanitarian realm.

3.4. Setting the framework: Examining IAAs' identities and interests in relation to security

Constructivists study actors' social identities and interests. While identities provide the basis for interests in 'dominant' constructivism, identities and interests are *mutually constituted* for critical constructivists. Indeed, the identity of an actor implies his/her/their preferences, but is also the product of these. Such an actor views 'others' according to the identity he associates with them, while

concurrently reproducing his own identity in daily social practice. The producer of the identity however, is not in control of what it ultimately means to others; the inter-subjective structure is the final arbiter of meaning. As Klotz and Lynch contend, "[m]ost constructivists treat interests as social construction, much like identities. … Identities and interests may not be separable variables, but they may be sufficiently distinguishable in their discursive content to warrant more precise differentiation, particularly in their potential effects" (Klotz and Lynch, p.83, 2007). Therefore, in order to understand humanitarian security management and IAAs' links with PMSCs, the thesis' empirical analysis will examine aid organizations' identities and interests in relation to security in the three following chapters. The author will argue in particular that aid agencies' identities are at the basis of their interests as much as they are the products of those interests.

The thesis will also argue that every organization has a distinctive spirit – an ethos – which is constituted and constantly shaped through ideas and practice. This ethos is closely linked to organizations' identity and interests and it achieves their co-constitution as much as it is shaped by them. In the field of humanitarian action, this ethos is crucial in an organization's positioning of itself, in general and within a particular context; whether the organization is risk-averse or whether it has defined itself as a "frontline" organization? Is it focusing on immediate life-saving activities or primarily long-term development projects? Is it sensitive to external pressure, be it political or financial? Does it claim to follow humanitarian principles of action? Is it receiving funding originating from a party involved in the conflict? Although such an ethos is not materially tangible, it is nevertheless still demonstrable, in a way that is similar to the way that humanitarian organizations or their employees have been described as part of specific epistemic communities (Haas, 1992; Nelson and Neack, 2002; Stoddard, 2003; Bollettino, 2008).[58]

3.4.1. Understanding aid agencies' identity

Identity is understood in this thesis as the construction of a 'self' through both the gathering of shared values, attitudes and norms under a single 'self' which translates and gives justification to particular practices, and the constructed contrasting of this 'self' to 'others'. An 'entity' is then the product of both its internal dynamics and its interactions with its environment. As such, it is constantly reproduced through (self)perception and distinction from the 'others'. Each 'entity' however is composed of multiple identities depending on which of its facets is made most salient, what it is contrasted to, or who is looking at it. For example, the variability of a man's identity depends on whether he is compared to his parents, another individual of his age, his children, an individual from the opposite sex, another continent, another social status, etc. For some he will be a son, for others, a husband, a father, a man, a white man, a rich man, etc. Similarly, the variability of international aid agencies' identity results from the natural variability of every identity that is *contingent to its point of*

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[58] As Stoddard argues, "[d]espite the fact that NGOs have different mandates, organizational histories, cultures and interests, epistemic and collegial links among staff members of the major NGOs are strong. [...] Although it has not received much scholarly attention, an epistemic community has developed among humanitarian practitioners and decision makers, both in the field and at headquarters, where programming experience, technical know-how, values and ideas are shared, often apart from or in defiance of an individual organization's expressed mandate, or its board's wishes" (Stoddard, 2003, p.34). Similarly, Jones contends that PMSCs can also be equated to epistemic communities (Jones, 2006).

reference. 'International Medical Corps' for instance, can be referred to as a non-state actor, a non-governmental organization, a medical NGO, a humanitarian organization, an aid agency, a Western institutional expression of altruism, a tool of Western imperialism, etc. In this thesis, the prime identity which is referred to relates to the main *claimed and commonly perceived function* of the studied entities, i.e. providing aid or providing security. As such, the thesis first refers to 'aid agencies' and 'private security providers'. It, however, narrows down its scope to *international* aid agencies, and to private military and security *companies*. Such a level of analysis remains too general given the diversity of NGOs and PMSCs. This is the reason why the thesis will also offer a grid of analysis based on novel typologies of humanitarian actors and of private military and security companies, so that the empirical analysis is carried out at various levels. The criteria that form the basis of these typologies will be detailed in the following chapters.

Defining aid agencies' identity implies understanding how their identity is constituted, which itself involves enquiring into the co-constitution between structures and agents as well as understanding how the current narrative, to which they identify, became dominant. The following chapter will identify the main features that constitute aid agencies' identity. According to MacLeod

> … apprehending the process of changing identities does not necessarily mean that the analysis should be reduced to the agent to the detriment of the structure. Political elites or national leaders do not construct identities where their willpower takes them. The ideas and values which they convey are necessarily based on some legitimacy. They must echo the culture, norms, history and political environment of the group which they are supposed to represent (MacLeod *et al*, p.19, 2004a. Author's own translation).

In addition to revealing how aid agencies' identity is the product of the co-constitution between structures and agents, it will also highlight the way that that humanitarian values form a guiding reference to organizations (as much as they are shaped by organizations' practice). In other words, it will underscore *how* the production of IAAs' identity is the result of debates and struggles both within the organization as well as with the outside world. As will be revealed however, these dynamics are different from one organization to another, which is why further distinctions will be made between humanitarian organizations in the form of a typology of aid agencies.

In addition, and as MacLeod and Voyer-Léger explain, "it is impossible to clearly distinguish between security and identity, as the definition of the threats and the means to counter them are also part of who we are" (MacLeod and Voyer-Léger, p.75, 2004b. Author's own translation); drawing on this insight, the thesis will then also analyse how IAAs construct and represent their threats.

In exploring the relationship between identity and security, Williams asserts that:

> [f]or critical constructivists, the central concern in exploring the relationship between identity and security is to outline how narratives of ... identity become dominant in a particular context. These, in turn, help set the limits for legitimate or feasible political actions. Here, identity is inherently unstable, contingent

and a site of constant competition. Representations of security and threat can be central in this regard, serving to define who 'we' are and the 'other/s' from whom 'we' need protection. The study of identity then becomes the study of different representations that compete with others to provide realistic accounts of who a particular group is and how that group should act. The concern here is less with 'why' actors act the way they do than 'how possible' equations: 'how meanings are produced and attached to a various subjects/objects, thus constituting particular interpretive dispositions which create certain possibilities and preclude others' (Williams, p.62, 2008).

Critical constructivists, in other words, study how actors come to believe in a given representation. For this reason this thesis will identify the dominant discourses which frame aid agencies' identity and highlight how these discourses are internalised and reproduced. However, as Fierke recalls,

> ... identity exists in a *relationship*, an idea that is often captured in the concept of alterity. Identity is a social category that expresses not only the meaning any one actor attributes to the self; rather self-definitions are related to definitions the self gives to others and others to the self. Categories are thus intersubjective and defining of a particular community of identity and practice; they are not purely in the minds of individuals (Fierke, p.76, 2007. Emphasis in the original).

In the present case, this implies that the research must look at both the defining characterisitics of an aid agency, and also who those 'others' are, from whom IAAs distinguish themselves. As outlined earlier, this thesis will offer a typology of aid organizations and will highlight the construction of these identities by contrasting different types of aid agencies.

As noted above, constructivists agree broadly that identity is based on a division between 'us' and 'them'. What, however, does it imply for IAAs who claim to to be driven by ethical values which constitute a shared humanity? If, as Klotz and Lynch explain, "[b]oth social identity and representational approaches also claim that comparison creates inherent hierarchies" (Klotz and Lynch, p.74, 2007), then how do IAAs relate not only to their 'beneficiaries', but also to governments and other non-state actors such as private military and security companies? Is the 'other' necessarily seen as a threat? While perpetrators of violence are naturally seen as a potential threat to operations, aid agencies, on occasion, also see governments' policies as presenting a threat. Vaughn, for instance, explains that governmental policies and practices such as counter-insurgencies involving a comprehensive approach between security and aid contribute to 'rendering indistinct' (i.e. to blurring the lines) between humanitarian and military actions, therefore jeopardising the aid agencies' own work and security. IAAs then securitize indistinctiveness' as, they argue, that such "indistinctiveness poses an existential threat both to their material security and to their identity" (Vaughn, p.269, 2009). In these cases, and as will be underscored in Chapter Five, the securitization in the face of an issue that poses a 'threat' may be the first step in ensuring their security, but it also contributes to (de)legitimising their own actions, both internally and externally, which in turn contributes to shaping

their identity. By studying international aid agencies' construction of identity, this thesis will then explore who are the IAAs' and who are the 'others',, what threats IAAs are said to be facing and how these threats are constructed and securitized. Given the possible tensions between value-driven aid organizations and security management, the thesis will then also question how aid agencies' approaches to security affects their identity as well as their legitimacy.

3.4.2. Understanding humanitarian actors' interests in relation to security

Aid agencies have a multiplicity of interests, ranging from ideational to material, from reputational to financial. However, given the scope of this thesis, it will focus primarily on aid agencies' interests in matters pertaining to security. Fierke argues that

> [w]hile realists view interests as material and objective phenomena, social constructivists tend to argue that interest flows from identity and is thus not first and foremost a material property. ... In this respect, identity belongs to a field of practices, within which objective goals and thus interests are constituted. While there is a relationship between identity and interests, neither is stable … and both may be transformed through interaction (Fierke, p.80, 2007).

In order to study international aid agencies' interests, this thesis will examine what these interests are, and how, through a study of IAAs' representations of themselves and of PMSCs, they are constructed.

Klotz and Lynch note that, "[f]or constructivists, interests are the product of constitutive processes that lead people, as individuals and members of collectivities, to synthesize a wide range of needs and desires" (Klotz and Lynch, p.104, 2007). Because interests are here limited to aid agencies' choices in security, this thesis will then study how aid agencies conceive and manage their security. By doing so, it will emphasize how these constitutive processes relate to aid agencies' identity and will reveal in particular how differences in identity are paralleled with differences in interests. It other words, the thesis will argue that aid agencies' approaches to security vary from one type of aid agency to another. Klotz and Lynch further argue that "[l]ike identities, interests are neither self-evident nor static; their formation is a process that needs to be explained. Conceptualizing interests as the product of interactions and institutionalized identities presumes intersubjective content" (Klotz and Lynch, p.95, 2007). Thus, this thesis will stress different approaches to security, in particular contrasting IAAs' preferences *within* the aid sector as well as *outside* of it, in comparison to PMSCs' own preferences. While doing so however it will be emphasised that interests remain dynamic and will therefore proceed with caution when characterizing these preferences.

Among the different conceptions and practices of security, this thesis will highlight the dominant representations and examine how they are shaped – but not determined – by IAAs' identity. It will examine how humanitarian security was gradually developed, broadened, internalised and reproduced by emphasizing the dynamics within the aid sector as well as within aid agencies themselves. It will for example examine how the humanitarian security focus on the 'acceptance

approach' is a result of a given conception of security, where some dominant representations of the self lead IAAs to conclude that the acceptance model is the most valid one. According to Hopf,

> [b]y making interests a central variable, constructivism explores not only how particular interests come to be, but also why many interests do not. The tautological, and therefore also true, most common and unsatisfying explanation is that interests are absent where there is no reason for them, where promised gains are too meagre. Constructivism, instead, theorizes about the meaning of absent interests. Just as identities and interests are produced through social practices, missing interests are understood by constructivists as produced absences, omissions that are the understandable product of social practices and structure (Hopf, p.177, 1998).

Similarly, this thesis will look at alternative conceptions of the acceptance model. The 'deterrence approach', which may include the use of private military and security companies, is often seen as one alternative. However, by highlighting the influence of humanitarian values on aid agencies' approaches to security this thesis will underscore that the 'deterrence approach' remains the least preferred one despite calls for a more 'muscular' provision of aid. The author will then propose that unless IAAs or PMSCs' identities or their representations change, it is unlikely that deterrence becomes the preferred approach.

In line with a critical constructivist view, this thesis will highlight the co-constitution between aid agencies' identity and interests through the identification of dominant discourses and practices. It will argue that aid agencies can be organized in three different types and reveal how each type of aid agency approaches its security accordingly.

3.5. The thesis' centre of gravity

Klotz and Lynch explain that "[c]onstructivists see 'security' as a relationship historically conditioned by culture rather than an objective characteristic determined by the distribution of military capabilities. Consequently, [they] favour methodologies that acknowledge contingency and context" (Klotz and Lynch, p.17, 2007). Contingency however, does not mean exclusivity, and contextualisation does not mean that a phenomenon is necessarily restrained to a single context only. Therefore, the thesis' methodological approach adopts a fine balance between a) contingent and *relatively stable* agency and b) context-dependency and *continuity* among contexts.

The thesis' centre of gravity is the study of humanitarian organizations' approaches to security through an examination of their identity and interests. Private military and security companies are not at the centre of the study but are used as a reflection of IAAs' approaches to security. Therefore the centre of gravity of the thesis is the international aid agencies themselves, divided into different types.

The level of analysis of the thesis could have been solely on 'aid agencies' and 'private military and security companies' but it is suggested that the aid sector is too diverse for such a wide focus to

be relevant enough. Instead it will distinguish between 'Deontological', 'Solidarist' and 'Utilitarian' aid agencies, and within PMSCs, between 'Guarding, 'Unarmed' and 'Weaponised' companies. The rationale behind these typologies, as well as their constitutive criteria, will be further detailed in the following chapters. While researchers encounter a variety of different identities, Klotz and Lynch argue that:

> [c]onstructivists agree in principle that identities are inherently contestable but remain at odds over when to treat these social constructions as relatively fixed. The terminology of representations tends to signal the view that identities are too unsettled and overlapping to be treated as variables. However, not all researchers who adopt the terminology of roles or norms treat identities as stable or accept the notion of variables. [Klotz and Lynch's] response is empirically oriented: *some identities, in certain circumstances, may be more stable than others; some may be more inclusive than others; and some may be more hierarchical than others* (Klotz and Lynch, p.70, 2007. Emphasis added).

In line with such an approach, the thesis contends that it is indeed possible to identify the main features of IAAs and PMSCs, providing a contrast between the relationships of various aid agencies towards PMSCs. This however, is only relevant if simultaneously recognising the contingency of the typology offered. Dividing aid agencies into three types is not a clear-cut exercise – and one should expect to see a cross-over between the three proposed types of aid agencies, however, (re)production of identities and identifiable patterns in the aid sector allow for a relatively stable and insightful comparison between IAAs.

While humanitarian action is present in a variety of countries, the present thesis narrows its geographical coverage, focusing on those places where international aid agencies and PMSCs are concomitantly operating. Ultimately, Afghanistan and Haiti were chosen because they are contextually different yet show similar patterns in the way humanitarian action is implemented. This allows for an identification of, both details contingent to a context, and generalizations reproducible from one context to the other.

Critical constructivists emphasize when, how, and why particular practices become relatively fixed while others remain fluid. This is accomplished through an exploration of contexts, within which meanings form structures. These contexts however need not be geographic and the details need to be balanced with broader generalizations. As Klotz and Lynch recall, "[t]he more credible claim combines the insights of studies that rely on *generalization* with others that stress *details*" (Klotz and Lynch, p.21, 2007). Located between conventional constructivism and postmodernism, the thesis will study international aid agencies' approaches to security through a fine balance between contingent (details) and relatively stable agency (generalization) and between context-dependency (details) and continuity among contexts (generalization).

It is to be noted that although the thesis is grounded on substantial empirical research, it primarily aims to set out a *framework for analysis* as a necessary preliminary step to understanding humanitarian security. The reason being that the research has been conducted upon the inference

that such framework was missing and as such, needed to be devised prior to any *further specific* empirical research. As such, humanitarian security is here being analysed through a wide portfolio of aid organizations. Nevertheless and in order to contextualise its findings, the thesis will also focus on five selected NGOs, namely Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Oxfam Great-Britain (OGB), Save the Children UK (SC-UK), CARE, and International Relief and Development (IRD). In addition to operating in both Afghanistan and Haiti, these organizations were selected for the fact that each sheds light on a different aspect of the three ideal–types of IAAs. In other words, these NGOs have not been selected for being representative of the aid sector as a whole, but rather to specifically illustrate the distinctions between the three ideal–types of aid agencies. As will be further explained in Chapter Four, MSF was identified as a Deontological organization; OGB as an agency sitting in between the Deontological and Solidarist ideal–types; SC-UK as a Solidarist NGO; CARE as an organization sitting in between the Solidarist and Utilitarian agencies; and IRD as an Utilitarian NGO.

According to Klotz and Lynch "[a]ny choice of methods necessarily draws on select evidence and limits the range of possible interpretations. In defending these interpretations, scholars will inevitably weigh generality against details, even though neither will make universal claims" (Klotz and Lynch, p.107, 2007). The research could have compared international aid agencies security practices in Haiti versus those in Afghanistan, but it will instead focus on showing the continuity of identity and interests between a humanitarian organization's headquarters and its field offices *compared to other aid agencies.* The arguments of the thesis are not developed through a comparison of geographic case studies, but rather through the comparison across three types of aid agencies – Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian – including the five aforementioned NGOs. The author will naturally contextualise some of his affirmations and findings, but will also show the continuity of an organization's identity and interests beyond geographical contexts. The reason for such approach lies in the specific structures of aid agencies. They are organized in the form of a concentric web, with the headquarters (HQ) at the centre, and a multiplicity of field offices at regional and/or local levels. Studying field levels without taking into consideration headquarters would ignore the cultural, social, economic continuity which exists between HQ and field offices. While looking at the dynamics at field level is crucial, a comprehensive understanding of an organization's approach to security necessitates looking at it both at horizontal and vertical levels. Despite acknowledging recurrent tensions and disagreements between HQ and field offices, the thesis will reveal a continuity of identity and interests that exists between a humanitarian organization's headquarters and its field offices, and that this continuity tends to over-ride the specific context.

3.6. Conclusion

By locating this thesis in the field of critical security studies, the present chapter has outlined the conceptual framework of the research. The chapter first grounded the thesis in the constructivist approach by emphasising its onus on non-state actors and highlighting its assumption that security is

a construct. By providing the rationale for the study of humanitarian security through the lens of a co-constitution between identities and interest – which is the focus of the three subsequent empirical chapters – it also showed how potentially conducive a critical constructivist approach is to the study of humanitarian security. Further, the chapter has established the relevance of examining international aid agencies as referent objects of security. Lastly, this chapter presented the centre of gravity of this thesis: humanitarian aid agencies, in relation to private military and security companies.

This chapter also presents the claims regarding the originality of this thesis which are two-fold. Firstly it represents the first critical constructivist study of humanitarian security practices, with particular reference to private military and security companies. Second, it is the first piece of research to study humanitarian organizations as referent objects of security.

Part II: Empirical Analysis

Chapter 4 – Identity and Interests: Constituting the Humanitarian Aid Community

"I think history is inextricably linked to identity. If you don't know your history, who are you?"

Mary Pipher[59]

In the eye of the average individual donor, there is little difference between giving money to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) or to International Relief and Development Inc. (IRD); both are NGOs and both are working in emergencies to provide assistance to those in need. Both are also accountable to a board of directors with no financial interests in the programs or operations of the organization, they share practices, customs and norms; ultimately, both are 'doing good'. Yet, no aid worker would ever say that MSF is anything close to IRD. Although both agencies are not for profit non-governmental humanitarian organizations, the mindset of their respective constituencies, the values which guide them, the way they manage their operations and their sources of funding puts them at odds with one another. The diversity within aid agencies should not be underestimated. While many are involved in development activities, some are involved in both development and humanitarian activities, and a handful are in humanitarian activities only. In addition, the values that drive an organization, the size of the organization, the number of staff, the annual budget, the countries of operation and the number and type of donors differs vastly from one organization to another.

In other words, humanitarian agencies do not constitute a set of identical organizations; each has its own specific identity. As explained in the previous chapter, 'identity' is understood as the construction of a 'self' through, firstly, the gathering of shared values, attitudes and norms under a single 'self' which translates and gives justification to particular practices (including security practices), and, secondly, the constructed contrasting of this 'self' to 'others'. A critical constructivist study of the identities of international aid agencies (IAAs) requires an understanding of how that identity is constituted and is evolving. This itself involves enquiring into the co-constitution between structures and agents as well as understanding how the current narrative with which they identify was internalised and reproduced and eventually become dominant. In addition, it is also necessary to look who form the 'others' against which humanitarian organizations distinguish themselves and what, in comparison, are their own defining characteristics and interests. The present chapter will then discuss *how* the production of IAAs' identity is the result of debates and struggles both within the organization, as well as with the outside world. It will underscore the fact that these dynamics do not display similarities from one organization to another, which is why further distinctions will be made amongst humanitarian organizations in the form of a typology of aid agencies. The chapter will achieve this by

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[59] Quoted in Hackney, S. (1999), p.102.

providing evidence that every organization has a distinctive spirit – their ethos – which is constituted and constantly shaped through ideas and practice. This ethos is closely linked to an organizations' identity and interests, as it accompanies their co-constitution as much as it shaped by them. Building on this, three main types of aid agencies will be identified.

The present chapter is then divided into three sections. The first part offers a typology of humanitarian organizations based on their ethos. The second section provides empirical evidence validating the constitution of three types of international aid agencies. The last section reveals who the 'others' are from whom aid agencies distinguish themselves and what, in comparison, are their own defining characteristics.

4.1. A typology of humanitarian organizations

The diversity in the aid sector has already been recognised in the literature. Different typologies of humanitarian organizations have been provided. Slim, as early as 1997, distinguished between "deontologist" organizations, which perceive some actions as good in and of themselves, and "consequentialists", who see the goodness of an action as being measured by virtue of its consequences (Slim, 1997). Schloms also distinguishes between different sources of moral obligation and argues accordingly that aid agencies "may obey only the humanitarian imperative (the affective approach), may turn towards its own principles and mandates (the introvert approach), or may rely on its political environment (the extravert approach)" (Schloms, p.8, 2005. Author's own translation). Although revealing of different approaches to ethics, these morally based distinctions do place enough not emphasise enough the *capability* of organizations to put into practice their claims of 'doing good'. The 2002 'Guide to NGOs' differentiates between the Emergency Response NGOs, the Development NGOs, and Multi-sectoral NGOs (Frandsen, 2002). Such distinction is rather arguable as in reality the nexus from emergency to development is more blurred than clear. Stoddard *et al* distinguish between the religious, the 'Dunantists' and the 'Wilsonian' NGOs (Stoddard, 2003). This typology rightly highlights differences among European and American NGOs and the religious variations of each[60], but does not include aid agencies other than NGOs. Weiss offers a spectrum ranging from 'classicists' to 'solidarists', along with 'minimalist' and 'maximalist' categories of each as well as 'political humanitarians' (Weiss, 2006). The typology was however disputed by leading members of some agencies as oversimplified and incomplete.[61] Donini *et al* (2008) have also distinguished among 'principled' and 'pragmatic' aid organizations. These names however, are misleading as all agencies include a degree of principled responses and pragmatism. MSF for instance, often described as the archetypally principled organization claims to be pragmatic in its interpretation of humanitarian principles.[62] Similarly, World Vision has called for a 'principled pragmatism' when engaging with armed actors, underscoring further that the two notions are not antithetical (Thompson, 2008). Dijkzeul and

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[60] A collective of authors have also identified similarities and differences between the French and Anglo-Saxon humanitarian aid agencies (Blanchet and Martin, 2006).
[61] See *Ethics and International Affairs*, Volume 13 Issue 1.
[62] Interview 149.

Moke's typology is probably the one that resonates most with aid workers. They "offer a 'mental map', which plots organizations on two axes according to the nature of their relationships with governments: from 'Independent' to 'Public Service Contractor' on one axis, and from 'Impartial' to 'Solidarity' on the other."[63] Another added value of this typology is that it includes the full variety of providers of assistance, ranging from NGOs and UN agencies to churches and private companies.

As Stoddard argues "[t]here may in fact be no satisfactory way of categorizing NGOs according to their philosophy, and there are potentially unlimited ways of carving up the community according to which of the humanitarian principles and values are emphasised, and in what operational context" (Stoddard, p.28, 2003).

The variations in these typologies stem from the criteria chosen to differentiate aid agencies. As a result, while MSF and the ICRC are, in one typology, located at opposite ends of a spectrum, they are located at the same end in another.[64] While several of these typologies recognise that references to humanitarian values is a relevant criteria to distinguish aid agencies, they all fail to capture the tension between aid agencies' value-driven identities and their *actual* capability of putting these into practice. This tension is best illustrated if two main criteria are confronted: values on the one hand, and 'operationalization' of values on the other. These actually constitute the crux of IAAs ethos.

4.1.1. Underlying aid agencies' ethos

The present thesis argues that every aid agency has a distinctive ethos which is constituted and constantly shaped through ideas and practice. This ethos is constituted at two levels: the ideational level characterised by the guiding values of agencies and the practical level, based on their operational approach.

As outlined in Chapter Two, aid agencies have a strong commitment to a common set of values. If they are not direct signatories of the aforementioned Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, all of the major international aid agencies still refer to one or several of its principles.[65] This is also true for UN agencies involved in relief activities. Aid organizations *do* display recognition of these principles, whether in their internal documentations such as annual reports, statutes, mission statements, etc, or on their website. These principles also serve as benchmarks to differentiate between 'humanitarian action' (which is based on the needs or the rights of the identified vulnerable populations) and 'assistance' (which may be simply defined as helping others) be it for the 'giver's' political, economic, military or other interests.

However, these principles more often than not serve as guides to an organization rather than being strictly implemented by them. This may be due to the fact that the 'operationalization' of these

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[63] Quote from Stoddard, (2003, p.3).
[64] This was first put into evidence by Stoddard (2003).
[65] A study of a sample of 50 aid agencies highlights such commitment – See Appendix 2.

principles is challenging and is frequently the result of competing interpretations.[66] Drawing on the arguments of Hugo Slim, Dijkzeul and Moke note that:

> [m]any of these differences stem from the lack of shared agreement on definitions of the principles at the heart of humanitarian action. As Slim has outlined, different players have different concepts of these core "humanitarian principles" — humanity, neutrality, impartiality and solidarity. Many organizations and their staff lack a thorough understanding of them, or apply them inconsistently. This has significant consequences for their operational choices in the field on issues such as the willingness to accept armed military escorts, or restrictions imposed by a party to a conflict. … While a number of other humanitarian organizations claim to be neutral or include references to neutrality in their literature, Slim is certainly correct when he suggests that most are just repeating a slogan. Many humanitarian organizations — and scholars — should think through more clearly their use of these terms and their applicability to their actions (Dijkzeul and Moke, p.675, 2005).

The next factor that goes into constituting an aid agencies' ethos is their operational approach. This is intrinsically linked to the previous point, as operations are guided by the values of an organization. In the words of the ICRC's director-general, "the [humanitarian] principles are not primarily moral values, but rather *a means to secure access* to those who suffer the brunt of conflict and violence and to enhance the effectiveness of aid" (Gnaedinger, 2010, website. Emphasis added). Vaughn also contends that "by articulating and performing these principles, humanitarian organizations lay claim to a unique identity, and it is by virtue of this identity that organizations claim to merit special treatment in the midst of armed conflict" (Vaughn, p.270, 2009).

'Operations' consist of the nature of the programmes, their locations and their source of funding. The nature of the programmes refers to an organizations' mission or mandate – implementing a variety of types of projects or developing an expertise on just a few, such as health, food or refugees. The location of the projects indicates the relative 'frontline' or 'risk averse' nature of an organization. The source of funding, in particular the amount of private versus institutional funding, highlights their actual capacity in choosing and implementing projects. Indeed, an organization with limited private funding is, for instance, less likely to be operating in areas where there is little interest from institutional donors. In other words, the amount of non-institutional or non-earmarked funding is indicative of an aid agencies' capacity to 'operationalize' their self-proclaimed impartiality and independence.

Humanitarian principles are, however, not the sole values aid agencies refer to. As will be discussed later, their emphasis varies between organizations. The core of aid agencies ethos therefore revolves around a) what importance they attach to the humanitarian principles, and b) how they actually put these principles into practice. Based on these distinctions, it is possible to

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[66] The exchange of views in the March 2002 edition (Issue 20) of the Humanitarian Exchange Magazine is one example among many of the existing debates and interpretations of these principles.

differentiate aid agencies. This thesis offers an original typology of aid organizations - that nevertheless remains conventional as it builds upon previous contributions.

4.1.2. Discerning ideal–types of aid organizations

As independent agencies, every humanitarian organization has its own identity and interests. Similarities however, can be found amongst agencies, even if each is characterised by its own ethos, it is possible to distinguish three 'ideal–types' of aid agency based on ethos: Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian. Although all three types of agency are guided and implement their programs according to some set of values, the reference to these values and the ways they impact the implementation of programmes differ.

The 'Deontological' organizations judge the appropriateness of an operation based on the *action's adherence to core humanitarian principles*, in particular impartiality, independence and neutrality. In the face of a given dilemma, aid organizations of this kind will decide to take a decision based upon respect of the humanitarian imperative (saving lives), but in compliance with a strict respect for humanitarian principles.

Interpretation of those principles and an ability to live by them differs between agencies. It is therefore necessary to distinguish further between 'Maximalist' and 'Minimalist' positions within the Deontological organizations. The former, typically the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), have both the will and means to live up to their claims; the latter, comprising organizations such as Action contre la Faim (ACF), Concern Worldwide, Médecins du Monde (MDM) or the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) refer to the humanitarian principles as much as possible, but are likely to compromise these depending on the context (funding, political pressure, level of security, etc). As Alexander Cooley and James Ron note:

> Some INGOs may resist material pressures, either because of idiosyncratic funding patterns, unique organizational cultures, or remarkable leaders or coalitions. Others may even define themselves in opposition to the mainstream, condemning their rivals' marketized or "corporate" mentalities (Cooley and Ron, p.8, 2002).

For the same reasons, Islamic Relief (IR), Oxfam GB (OGB) and Première Urgence (PU) are located at the margin between this sub-category and the following ideal–type.

The 'Solidarist' types of organizations are defined by the *relation they have with the vulnerable populations*. Many of these agencies are involved in activities other than purely humanitarian ones as they aim to tackle the root causes of populations' vulnerabilities. Their values often emphasise their claimed proximity to vulnerable people, and these organizations call for solidarity, equity, humility, peace, social justice – and for some, faith, love, hope and compassion. As such, a distinction can be made between the 'Secular' Solidarists and the 'Denominational' Solidarists. Into the former camp would fall organizations such as ActionAid (AA), Cesvi, Intersos, Merlin, Save the Children UK (SC-

UK), Solidarités International, UNICEF or Welthungerhilfe. Into the more overtly religious group would fall organizations such as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Christian Aid (CA), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Medair, Muslim Aid, or Tearfund (TF). Many of the Solidarists are torn between respecting humanitarian principles and engaging in activities that are not purely humanitarian in nature. Some organizations are located at the margin between either of the Solidarist sub-categories and the third ideal–type. These are CARE US, the International Relief Committee (IRC), Mercy Corps, UNHCR or Save the Children US (SC-US).

The last category is that of 'Utilitarian' organizations. They believe that the value of an operation is determined by its *utility* – in other words an operation is worthy if it eventually brings an improvement to the condition of the vulnerable populations. According to this ethos, the relation between the operations and their positive or negative outcomes depends on the circumstances, and no principles are absolute or necessary in themselves. Such organizations prefer to make decisions based *firstly* upon the priorities they choose, which are based upon the wider environment in which the organizations locate themselves, i.e. political but also geographical, financial or religious dimensions. Their action is informed by humanitarian ethics, but their interpretation of these values is broad and flexible. Absolute respect for the humanitarian principles is not considered as essential, so long as the utilitarian organization perceives itself to be "doing good". Morals, defined here as the (subjective) distinction between 'right' and 'wrong', are an essential component of their ethics. Organizations such as CHF International (CHF), International Relief and Development (IRD), the UN Development Program (UNDP), or the UN World Food Program (WFP) are included in this category.

Based on this typology, agencies can be located on a spectrum. Similar to the 'mental map' used by Dijkzeul and Moke, the spectrum represents an imaginary continuum of agencies that aid workers integrate through experience.[67]
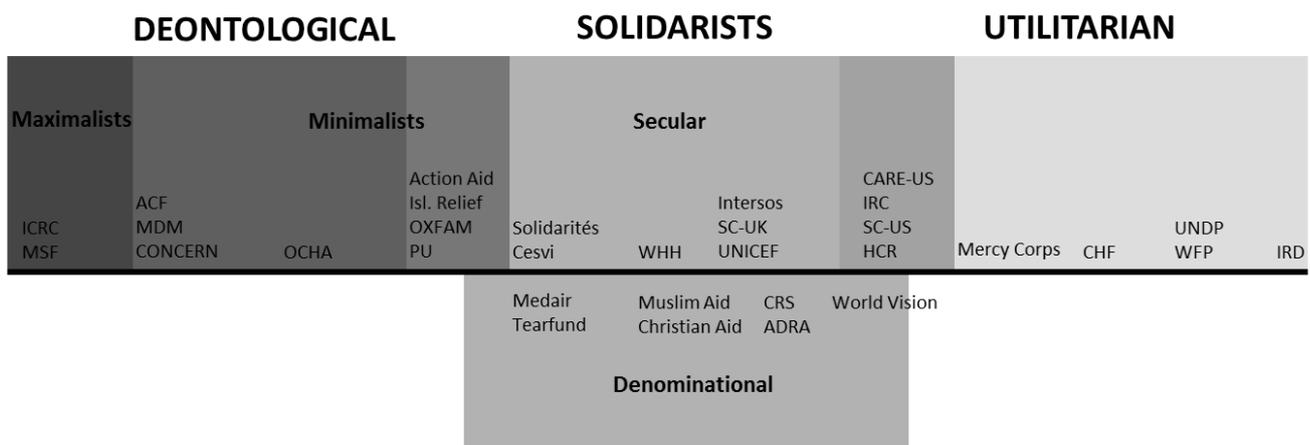
Figure 1 - Typology of international aid agencies ("Spectrum")[68]

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[67] The determination of an agency's location on the spectrum is consolidated by both the empirical evidence presented in the next section, and the use of the table presented in Appendix 2, which collects and organises aid agencies' displayed characteristics such as the reference to humanitarian principles or the amount of non-institutional funding.
[68] The author is grateful to Carly Gillham for the realisation of the Spectrum.

A blurring of the three ideal–types is inevitable – hence some organizations sit at the margin between two types; none of the ideal–types is stable, but rather, they are tempered by realities on the ground. And although organizations' identities are sufficiently stable to locate them along the spectrum at this instant, their identities are bound to evolve. As Ryfman puts it, aid agencies "go through cyclical crises and regularly remodel their identity" (Ryfman, p.28, 2007).

However, the typology does provide a basis for a thorough analysis of the way each type of organization interacts with its environment and in particular, operates and manages its security.

4.2. A body of corroborating evidence in the constitution of IAAs' identity

The previous section revealed that aid agencies can be divided into three types based on their ethos, which identifies the distinctive spirit of an aid agency. The following sections offer a body of corroborating evidence that allows for such distinctions. It is however, important to state that, by doing so, the thesis does not claim to reveal causation between a set of ideas or practices and the identity of an organization, but instead to underscore correlations that contribute to forming a body of corroborating evidence. Indeed, following its critical constructivist agenda, this thesis recognises the contingency of its claims – as well as the complexity of the humanitarian enterprise.

Aid agencies do share common features. Ryfman for instance, rightly shows that NGOs have a "striking similarity in their concerns" (Ryfman, p.28, 2007). Partly because of this, humanitarian organizations are often depicted in the news as part of a group of undifferentiated organizations, and are often praised or criticised as a whole. Such an a-historic view, however, does not do justice to the multiplicity of organizations and dynamics and is not helpful in understanding who they are and how they manage their security. A critical constructivist approach to understanding aid agencies' identity reveals how their identity is (re)produced, which means examining the co-constitution between structures and agents as well as discerning ways the current narrative with which they identify was internalised and reproduced to eventually become dominant.

The current section argues that aid agencies are the product of an era – as they are created and evolve in reaction to events; and that they are constituted by a range of features, of which self-proclaimed values is a major one. These are being constantly reproduced by the personnel and constituencies of each organization through a formal and informal system of transmission and reproduction. This contributes to gradually fixing a dominant narrative and set of practices within each organization, which in turn contributes to forming the organization's ethos, made up of both its mindset and its operational practices. The dominant narrative and practices are sometimes challenged, and this may lead to the repositioning of an organization, yet they are nonetheless helpful in differentiating one organization from another.

The present section will first place the aid agencies in the contexts of their creation and evolution, then identify the dominant discourses and values which frame their identity and study how these discourses are internalised and reproduced.

4.2.1. Aid agencies are the evolving product of an era

Essentially created and adapting themselves in reaction to an event, whether international or localised, in a given period in time, aid agencies are the product of an era. Although some organizations' founding moments placed them in opposition to their societies' dominant values and narratives (such as the ICRC, Save the Children UK, the IRC or Oxfam), most are very much influenced by them. This is the case for the range of organizations created under the post-Second World War's 'never again' motto, as well as of those created by leftists from the 1970s. These dominant values and narratives, or opposition to them, have contributed to shaping the ways organizations both perceive themselves and operate. As Ryfman explains, "[p]osition, size, place in society, relations with the political world and the state and so on depend on the historical circumstances in which private humanitarian action came into being in a given country and then on the extent to which it expands into the international field" (Ryfman, p.23, 2007).

Indeed, international aid agencies share the fact that most of them were created in reaction to an event, usually a conflict or a (natural or man-made) disaster. Massive tragedies often send a shockwave which acts as a catalyst for raising awareness of an issue, putting people and effort together and gathering funds.

The International Committee of the Red Cross was created in 1863[69] on the initiative of Henry Dunant as a reaction to his unexpected encounter with the battle of Solferino four years earlier. The horrors he witnessed – in a single day, about 40,000 soldiers on both sides died or were left wounded on the field – led him to:

> … push for the creation of a neutral and impartial organization to protect and assist the war wounded. He also suggested that voluntary relief societies should be established to care for the injured – an idea that would eventually lead to the formation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In addition, he proposed that an international principle be created to serve as the basis for these societies, an idea that developed into the Geneva Conventions (ICRC, Undated, website).

The ICRC is a unique organization in many ways: first, it is worth recalling that "[c]ontrary to popular belief, the ICRC is neither a non-governmental organization (NGO) nor an international organization. It is not an inter-state body either. It is a private agency, governed by a committee of between 15 and 25 exclusively Swiss members, who set policy and decide on strategy" (ICRC, Undated, website). Up until the early 1990s, only Swiss citizens were allowed to serve as ICRC delegates abroad. More significantly, and as the custodian of the Geneva Conventions and the guardian of International Humanitarian Law, the ICRC has a mandate from the international community. All of these specificities are related to both the historic conditions of the ICRC's creation and the following historic changes it was involved with, such as the Geneva Conventions. As such, the ICRC is a unique Deontological organization.

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[69] The organization was first named "International Committee for Relief to the Wounded" and took its current designation in 1876.

In the history of aid agencies, four events are particularly significant in shaping aid agencies' identity and actions: the World Wars, the Nigerian–Biafran war, the post–cold war era, the 1990s and the post–9/11 decade.

The two World Wars contributed greatly in orienting aid agencies' focus towards civilians, a refusal to distinguish between victims of war even if this went against a government's policies. Among the international NGOs (INGOs) still operational today, Save the Children United Kingdom (SC-UK), is a venerable institution. Created in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb, who, along with the co-founders, sought to draw "attention to the plight of children on the losing side of the First World War" (SC, 2010, website). As in the case of the ICRC, Save the Children was well ahead of its time, in particular regarding its ideas about children's welfare, though like today it always remained part of the establishment. As Slim explains,

> British like that their charities are gently rebellious and independent, but they expect them to be respectable, pragmatic and constructive. … The Charity Law establishes a balanced relation between charities and politicians by exonerating them from taxes and protecting them against an excessive control from the government. In turn these charities, unelected and potentially partisan, commit to not directly attacking politicians. This compromise allows them to be critical but without frontally attacking the positions of a particular political party (Slim, p.34, 2006. Author's own translation).

A few of today's most famous INGOs were created during or after the Second World War. Oxfam was created in 1942 by a group of Quakers, social activists, and Oxford academics as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief; it opposed the British government to provide relief assistance to the Greek victims of both the Nazi occupation and the Allies' blockade (Ryfman, p.38, 2008). "This opposition between humanitarian principles and politico-military decisions subject to catastrophic consequences for the civilian populations is not only 'engraved in Oxfam's genes', but it constituted from there on a permanent characteristic of humanitarian action" (Ryfman, p.38, 2008. Author's own translation). Indeed, the confrontation between Oxfam and the Allied governments during its very first action was a sign of the tensions to come between the humanitarian drive and political and military interests. CARE was created in 1945 under the initial name of Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe "to provide relief to survivors of World War II" (CARE, Undated, website); the acronym now stands for Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc. Similarly, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was created in 1943, Christian Aid in 1945, Church World Service (CWS) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in 1946, and World Vision in 1950. Apart from Oxfam, which is located at the margin between the Deontological and the Solidarists organizations, all of these agencies are Solidarists.

The World Wars also served as catalyst for the creation of the constellation of agencies associated with the United Nations. Among the UN agencies working in the relief sector, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was created in 1946 to provide emergency food and healthcare to

children in countries that had been devastated by World War II (UNICEF, Undated, website). The World Health Organization (WHO) then took over the League of Nations' Health Organization in 1948, which itself was created in 1919. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created in 1950 to help Europeans displaced by the war (UNHCR, Undated, website). The birth of the World Food Programme (WFP) was formally established in 1961 by parallel resolutions from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN General Assembly. It is said however, that WFP's existence is "due to the inspiration of one man, George McGovern. At the time, he was the first director of the newly created Office of Food for Peace in the Executive Office of United States President John F. Kennedy and special assistant to him" (Shaw, p.6, 2001). Shaw adds: "it is important to understand this background as it left its mark on WFP that has remained to the present day" (Shaw, p.6, 2001) – and explains why WFP is the most Utilitarian of all UN humanitarian agencies. Indeed, UN agencies are all the results of political decisions made by states in the first place. This heavily influences their identity as in the case of the WFP. However, and with the multiplication of resources and a ubiquitous presence, UN agencies progressively, yet diversely, asserted themselves from the member-states. As explained by Ryfman, "humanitarian action is one of the fields where [international organizations] can easily affirm a will to create some space and autonomous action" (Ryfman, p.39, 2008. Author's own translation).

During the Cold War, aid agencies were both the result and part of the development paradigm which focused on newly independent countries. A number of NGOs in particular were created and funded in order to support the newly emancipated populations – and regimes. Also, "persistence of hunger, which was perceived as both unbearable and an anachronistic vestige" of colonialism (Ryfman, p.43, 2008. Author's own translation) played a role in the *continuation* of previously created agencies.

The 1967–1970 Nigerian–Biafran war was a major event in the founding of many key humanitarian aid agencies. The Irish NGO Concern was, for instance, created in 1968 "in response to appeals from missionaries working in war torn Biafra" (Concern, Undated, website). The foundation of Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders, MSF) in 1971 had an impact much greater than the simple creation of one organization; the people who were behind it made a plea which *gradually* formed the basis of a wider 'without borders' movement; Action contre la Faim (ACF) for instance was founded in 1979 inspired by these values, as were Aide Médicale Internationale (AMI) in 1979, Médecins du Monde (MdM, 1980), Solidarités International (1980) or Handicap International (HI, 1982). Created both, under the influence of, and in opposition to the ICRC, the originality of this movement lay first in setting forth the basis for a *permanent emergency* humanitarian capacity at a time where there was little interest in such endeavour. Most importantly, this movement became famous for its tendency to pay no heed to states' prior agreements to work inside their borders and also for its vocal advocacy (*témoignage*) of human rights. Several of these organizations still proclaim their commitment to these values, even though the idea of entering and working illegally within a

country's borders is seldom done nowadays. Taken as a whole, most of the NGOs created in this period are Deontological organizations.

The 1990s left a deep mark on aid agencies. Although the end of the Cold War initially raised hope that aid work would be somewhat easier to implement, the many conflicts and complex emergencies of the decade proved otherwise. From the Balkans war to the Somali disarray; the so-called 'humanitarian war' in Kosovo and the horrific genocide in Rwanda; the decade led to sharp criticism and a necessary reconsideration of humanitarian aid (Shearer, 2000; Pérouse de Montclos, 2001). This in turn accelerated aid agencies' professionalization through, for instance, the adoption of quality standards and Codes of Conduct. These however, were not created out of nothing. The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief as well as the Sphere Humanitarian Charter are the result of decades of gradually developing ideas. The next sub-section will present evidence to demonstrate that these are the products of two different approaches to aid work.

In the 1990s, organizations which neglected the field of emergency response in favour of development activities, when faced with the increasing importance given to responding to emergencies, had to reposition themselves – often painfully due to internal struggles – toward more humanitarian action. Avant recalls rightly that:

> [many] donors felt disillusioned by development assistance which, despite decades of investment, seemed to produce few tangible results. In comparison, humanitarian action became highly attractive, producing an immediate, visible and (at least on the surface) positive impact. With donor interest – and money – came many new 'humanitarian' actors, some moving from other areas (like development) and others entirely new. Many of these had little familiarity with humanitarian principles and standards and launched projects in the field that threatened the security associated with the traditional acceptance strategy (Avant, p.144, 2007).

Indeed, many of the Solidarists and Utilitarian organizations such as ActionAid, Cesvi, CARE, CHF, Intersos or IRD are engaged in multiple types of activities that are not exclusively humanitarian (such as development work, human rights advocacy, conflict resolution, community stabilisation, promotion of the rule of law, etc). This, in turn, means that they are torn between different priorities and ways of thinking which, as the thesis will underscore, problematises a strict application of humanitarian principles.

The events following the attacks of 11 September 2001 did not bring about any fundamental changes in the debates surrounding humanitarian assistance which had emerged in the 1990s, but the attacks served to exacerbate these debates by revealing dissension within the aid community. An anecdotal, yet revealing, illustration of occurred in a Guardian news article disclosing the tensions existing between Save the Children UK and its US counterpart. SC-UK "was ordered to end criticism

of military action in Iraq by its powerful US wing to avoid jeopardising financial support from Washington and corporate donors" (Maguire, 2003, website).[70] This tension is a result of the differing orientation of SC-UK, a Solidarist organization, and SC-US, located in between the Solidarist and the Utilitarian types.

As the Humanitarian Policy Group pointed out in 2003, "the war on terrorism constitutes a framework within which national and international policy, including humanitarian aid policy, will be defined and implemented" (Stoddard, p.1, 2003). The effects of 9/11 on aid agencies were numerous; they ranged from a further politicisation of public funding allocated to aid, to an increasing assimilation of aid agencies into the broader Western agenda and the multiplication of actors implementing relief assistance, including private companies and Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Altogether, the post–9/11 effects were most prevalent in Iraq and Afghanistan[71], but have also influenced dynamics in other contexts (Donini *et al*, 2004). According to Donini *et al*,

> [t]o confirm that humanitarians need to be wary of politics, even as they do their work in highly politicized settings is nothing new. What is new in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 eras is that the stakes are much higher because the extent of need has proliferated, the awareness of need has become more instantaneous and more global, and humanitarian action has become a multi-billion dollar enterprise (Donini *et al*, p.3, 2008).

In Afghanistan, Utilitarian and a few Solidarist organizations were particularly criticised by aid workers interviewed for the present research, for not distancing themselves enough from US policies. The case of the Utilitarian IRD is particularly telling: it is the only not-for-profit NGO which explicitly advertises its expertise in programmes that support governmental 'stabilisation' strategies (IRD, Undated, b, website).

Although the manipulation and politicisation of aid have come back into fashion during the post 9/11 decade, they are not new. They were already significant during the famine which struck Ukraine in 1921 under the Soviet government. Indeed, while some debates remain limited to a period in time, many are recurrent. Aid agencies' responses to these recurrent debates is diverse, yet contributes to challenging or reproducing their identity.

Whether religious or secular, Denominational organizations, for their part, rapidly joined the nascent international humanitarian effort during the late 19th century, and contributed to its expansion. Caritas Internationalis (now a confederation of 165 Roman Catholic relief, development and social service organizations operating in over 200 countries and territories worldwide) was created as early as 1897 (Caritas, Undated, website). The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) was created in 1947 to

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[70] Both organizations are now working closely and have harmonised their policies and share resources.
[71] For instance Hansen clearly highlights "a fractured humanitarian enterprise": "Sharp differences over humanitarian principles persist between agencies striving to remain at arms length from the [Multi-National Forces in Iraq] (and, in some locations, from Iraqi authorities) in order to safeguard their ability to operate, and the UN agencies, some international NGOs and non-profit corporations that remain reliant on the MNF-I for security and other forms of support" (Hansen 2008, p.7).

coordinate the activities of the many different Lutheran churches (LWF, Undated, website). Other Protestants are also represented, for example by World Vision (founded in 1950), which is now the world's largest NGO. Islamic NGOs have emerged from the 1980s, with the creation of the Islamic African Relief Agency in Sudan in 1980 (Ryfman, p.46, 2008) and Islamic Relief in 1983. Because they were created within the context of particular (religious) values, Denominational organizations did not have the same need to provide an ethical framework to their action as secular agencies. This explains why, even though some are culturally closer to the Deontological and others to the Utilitarian, all of them are Solidarists. They put more emphasis on their relations with the vulnerable populations than on humanitarian principles.

Aid has always been shaped by 'historic' events and subsequent narratives. Each aid agency has developed and evolved, within a certain framework. Accordingly, each has constructed a discourse framing its own identity.

4.2.2. Humanitarian values and source of funding as indicators of IAAs' identity

The process of the construction of an aid agency's identity is not limited to a reaction to external elements. The formally articulated values, and material realities - such as the need for financial sustainability - play a key role in shaping an organization's identity.

4.2.2.1. Dominant discourses framing aid agencies' identity: the reference to humanitarian values

The 'humanitarian' concept encompasses a multiplicity of elements; notably historic, ideational, and material. Although "there is no single definition [of humanitarian action], and [that] no one owns the concept" (Davis, 2002, website), the objectives of humanitarian action are often accepted as saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity during, and in the aftermath of, conflicts and disasters, as well as preventing and strengthening preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.[72] Humanitarian action includes the protection of civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities, and the provision of food, water and sanitation, shelter, health services and other items of assistance, and in its strictest definition, it is not based on political, military or economic interests.

Because humanitarian action focuses firstly on emergencies, the humanitarian system is characterised by specific funding mechanisms; these are often short term and flexible. They are also characterised by a certain type of human resource – often those experienced in dealing with emergencies. As set out in the Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship:

> … humanitarian action should be guided by the humanitarian principles of *humanity*, meaning the centrality of saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found; *impartiality*, meaning the implementation of actions solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected

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[72] InterAction, the largest US-based NGO network, refers to the same objectives (InterAction, Undated, website).

populations; *neutrality*, meaning that humanitarian action must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out; and *independenc*e, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented (WHO, Undated, website).

Although these core humanitarian principles stem from the international humanitarian law and are reiterated in a UN resolution, the Humanitarian Charter and several humanitarian Codes of Conduct and documents, each agencies' interpretation of those principles and their 'operationalization' differ.

Despite their apparent coherence, these documents are the results of two different approaches to aid work. The origin of the core humanitarian principles is to be found in the ICRC. Early in its history the organization developed a set of four principles to orientate its actions, 'the humanitarian principles', as they are known today:

> … were not, however, the subject of a systematic treatise until 1955, when Jean Pictet, in his book on the Red Cross Principles, defined and analysed all the values which guide the work of the Movement. … On the basis of this in-depth study, the Movement's seven Fundamental Principles as they stand today were unanimously adopted in 1965 by the 20th International Conference of the Red Cross (ICRC, 1996, website).

The first four articles of the Code of Conduct that constitute the core of these humanitarian principles clearly echo the Red Cross Fundamental Principles. This approach, which provides a coherent framework based on a set of core principles, is often referred to as the 'traditional humanitarianism'. It is guided by:

> … a universal duty to act in the face of human suffering. Deriving from a sense of compassion and common humanity, it is governed by an ethical principle sometimes articulated as the 'humanitarian imperative'. It is governed by other rules too, most obviously by the provisions of international humanitarian law (IHL) which extend the humanitarian concern to the political arena, by setting humanitarian limits on what is permissible in the conduct of war. Traditional approaches to humanitarian action are needs based. The principle of impartiality is central, but stress is also put on neutrality and independence. Traditional humanitarianism is apolitical and wary of co-option. It sees 'humanitarian war' as a contradiction in terms, and takes no view on (say) the legitimacy of war on Iraq, only on the way it is conducted. The traditional humanitarian agenda is a strictly *limited* agenda with relatively modest goals (Darcy, p.10, 2004).

Deontological aid agencies such as ACF, MSF, the ICRC and IFRC, explicitly proclaim the framing of their actions within the core humanitarian principles.

Most agencies however, do not refer exclusively, or mainly, to the humanitarian principles. As an interviewee working for a Utilitarian organization explained "pragmatism has also been accepted as a principle: since the job needs to be done there is a dilemma between sticking to the humanitarian principles and not having the job done, and putting the principles aside at times."[73]

Humanitarian organizations are the result of a moment of generosity which was put into action – and sustained. In addition, they are fundamentally driven by an imperative to help. As such, they are intrinsically linked to a variety of values, whether personal, religious, moral or social.[74] Eradication of poverty for instance, is pivotal for organizations such as ActionAid, CARE, Christian Aid, Concern, Muslim Aid or Oxfam GB. Others put an emphasis on the solidarity which ties them to the beneficiaries of their actions; this is the case for Cesvi, Christian Relief Services, Intersos, Save the Children, Solidarités International or World Vision. Some organizations, such as the Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Dévelopement, Christian Aid, Church World Service, Islamic Relief, Medair, Muslim Aid or World Vision, refer explicitly to their religious values; these are not necessarily expressed in their names, but in their internal documentations as well as practices.[75] Guided by values and, their extensive experience in development activities, some of these organizations developed an alternative way to frame their actions and to provide coherence between relief and development agendas.

The 1990s saw an increasing number of organizations, in parralel with academic discourses (Slim, 2001), pushing for a 'rights-based' approach to humanitarian action. Such an approach does not describe situations in terms of human needs, but in terms of society's duty to respond to the rights of individuals. Rights-based humanitarianism in other words:

> … looks to human rights to provide its universal ethic, enshrined in legal terms that go beyond the narrower confines of IHL. Arising in the post-Cold War era, some interpretations of it are pro-interventionist, accepting that armed force may be necessary to achieve humanitarian ends. More generally, this approach accepts that political engagement is both a proper and necessary part of humanitarian action. It tends to see coherence between humanitarianism and a range of other agendas including development and conflict reduction. … It concerns itself with tackling root causes as well as symptoms, with structural injustices, even power imbalances. Emergency and development work can and should be reinforcing, on this view, and rights provide the analytical framework that unites them (Darcy, p.10, 2004).

Traditional humanitarian values have been challenged by the tenants of this 'new humanitarianism'. The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief for instance is the conciliatory result of these two divergent approaches to aid work. As Stockton puts it,

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[73] Interview 147.
[74] This however, does not mean that aid agencies are always doing the right thing, or that they are doing things rightly. Indeed, the *Do No Harm* framework developed in 1999 by Anderson illustrates this.
[75] Several organizations organise or encourage staff to pray together for instance. This however, does not necessarily mean that denominational organizations are proselyte. On the contrary, all of those named in this research *claim* providing help regardless of beneficiaries' faith and beliefs, and with no will to convert them.

… all ten "principles" of the Code of Conduct are hedged with conditions and qualifications, testifying to an editorial process that ensured the Code reflected, as faithfully as possible, the interests of its original sponsors. For example, it reads as if the Red Cross supplied the headlines of the first four principles while NGOs supplied the caveats; roles that were reversed for principles five to ten. This elaborate compromise therefore, rather ironically, resulted in a far-reaching relaxation of the unofficial rules of humanitarian action, for example … to espouse political or religious beliefs while distributing humanitarian aid. It is therefore to be expected that the signatories to the Code … present such diametrically opposed positions regarding US military practices in the War against Terror, whilst still making the plausible claim that they are acting within the letter of the Code (Stockton, p.3, 2005).

Deep divergences of views exist between aid agencies, particularly over what degree of political engagement is appropriate for humanitarians;[76] in the words of an IRD employee: "Are we principled? Yes to a degree - but at the same time we work closely with the US Government, and we don't see this as a contradiction."[77] In reality, the difference between organizations is not neat; in particular since many organizations endorse aspects of both the 'traditional' and 'new' humanitarianisms (Darcy, 2004). This explains the rationale in categorising aid agencies along a spectrum rather than into strict categories. Nevertheless, indicative of the differences that exist among the five selected NGOs for this research, the three organizations closest to the Deontological and Solidarist parts of the Spectrum (MSF, OGB, SC-UK) have signed the aforementioned Code of Conduct, while the two closer to the Utilitarian part (CARE US[78] and IRD) have not.

Altogether, the degree of commitment in adhering to the humanitarian principles contributes to shaping aid agencies' ethos. This commitment however needs to be both expressed, and also practiced. Pursuing independence and neutrality has a cost that not all organizations are able, or willing, to pay.

4.2.2.2. Origins of funding and its influence in shaping aid agencies' identity

The second factor that constitutes aid agencies' ethos is comprised of their operational approach. It is linked to the previous factor, as aid agencies' operations are framed by their values. 'Operations' are informed by a multiplicity of aspects: the nature of the programmes; their locations and their source of funding. However, studying the origins of an organization's funding proves particularly relevant to understanding an organization's identity.

To begin with, it's worth emphasising that a common aspect among all aid agencies is that they are not-for-profit . In contrast to private companies or for-profit development companies such as

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[76] For more information see Darcy (2004). Also according to Donini *et al* (2008, p.4), "Many mainstream agencies have been drawn implicitly or explicitly into the service of political agendas. Only a minority have exhibited the policy determination and financial wherewithal to resist."

[77] Interview 142.

[78] The case for the CARE family is original: while CARE International, CARE Australia, CARE Deutschland, CARE Japan and CARE Netherland have signed it, CARE US has not (Code of Conduct, Undated, website).

Chemonics or DAI[79], they do not aim at getting richer through their activites. – even though aid agencies need to be financially sustainable and increasingly talk of organizational 'growth'.

IAAs' funding usually stems from two sources: private (donation from individuals and bodies, traditionally located in Western countries) and institutional (ranging from grants to contracts administered by institutional donors). Donations are, for the most part, collected through fundraising; grants are usually requested through proposals that are directly related to an affected populations' needs as identified in the field; contracts are often driven by donors' pre-identified areas of interests. It is commonly argued that the more private money an agency receives, the more independent it is. On the other hand, the more funding it obtains from an institutional donor, the less autonomous it is when spending the money. In the words of a MSF staff: "our funding is a major indicator of our independence: in 2008, 85 or 90% of it was stemming from private donations."[80] This is particularly true for funding which is earmarked or has strings attached – i.e. when the money is given for particular projects and destinations that are in line with the donors' interests. A good part of the humanitarian institutional funding has similar conditions; "[t]he share of funding that is not earmarked ranges from 10% to about 50% of total income among the multilateral agencies" (DI, p.4, 2007). This means that aid agencies whose budgets originate mostly from institutional donors effectively have less autonomy in spending it.[81]

As the table below shows, only a few organizations have a budget based on a majority of private donations. Some of these include Islamic Relief, Médecins sans Frontières, Médecins du Monde, Oxfam GB and World Vision. Several such as Concern, Church Relief Services, Church World Services and Intersos have a balance between the two sources of funding. Many however, including CARE US, Cesvi, the IRC, Merlin, Norwegian Refugee Council, Première Urgence, Solidarités and Welthungerhilfe rely heavily on institutional funding. This is also the case for all of the United Nations agencies involved in relief activities – although UNICEF makes a particular effort in attracting private funding (nearly a third of its 2008 budget came from private sources).

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[79] One of DAI's six core values is profitability: "We must be a successful company to succeed in our mission. There is no conflict between financial success (profit) and mission success (development). Quite the opposite. If we succeed as a business, we will have a deeper development impact" (DAI, Undated).
[80] Interview 149.
[81] "In terms of humanitarian funding for specific emergency response efforts, bilateral government funding to individual aid agencies for specific programs continues to represent by far the largest share (roughly 80%) of contributions" (Stoddard, 2008, p.11).

	Organization	Annual Budget	Origin of the funding	Source of information
A majority of private donations	IRW (Deontological/Solidarist)	£ 47.7 M	$17.2 M Donations from overseas partners (36%); $11.4 M Grants (24%)	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	MDM (Deontological)	€ 57.8 M	62% private; 35% institutional; 3% other	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	MSF France (Deontological)	€ 180.7 M	€179 M Private; € 1.7 M Institutional	Charter / Annual Report 2008 / Website
	OGB (Deontological/Solidarist)	£ 299.7 M	£103.6 M Donations & Legacies; £70 M from Governments; £65.7 M sales	Annual Report and Account 07–08 / Website
	WV (Solidarist)	$ 1.109 M	42% Private cash contributions; 33% gifts in-kind; 25% Gov. grants	Annual Review brochure 2008 / Website
Equilibrium between private and public funding	Concern (Deontological)	€132.3 M for 2008	€ 66.3 M from Governments and co-funders (50%); €53.6 M fundraising (41%); €11.2 M Donated Commodities (8%)	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	Christian Aid (Solidarist)	£87.7 M / €94.4 M	£28.5M General donations (33%); £25.7M Institutional income (29%)	Annual Report 2008-2009 / Website
	CRS (Solidarist)	$ 611.2 M	Around 45% US Government; around 30% private contributions; 30% Commodities & freight	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	CWS (Solidarist)	$ 70.9 M	$30.2 M Government (42.6%); $26 M Public appeals (36.7%)	Annual Report 2008 / Website
A majority of public funding	CARE US (Solidarist/Utilitarian)	$707.8 M (from July 07 to June 08)	$267 M US Government; $149 M US Private; $59 M Grants & Contracts	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	IRC (Solidarist/Utilitarian)	$ 260.7 M	79% Grants and contracts; 17% contributions	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	IRD (Utilitarian)	$ 539.1 M	Mostly US government and International organizations	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	Mercy Corps US (Utilitarian)	$ 196.9 M	$ 131.2 M Government & Intl Org.; $ 65.6 M Private	Annual Report 2009 / Website
	Merlin (Solidarist)	£ 43.8 M	Majority comes from institutional donors (DfID, USAID, EC)	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	Save the Children UK (Solidarist)	£ 216 M	£102M Institutional grants (47%); £56.3M Donations (26%); £29.3M Gifts (14%)	Annual Report 2008-2009 / Website
	Solidarités (Solidarist)	€ 45.2 M	67.8 % Institutional donors; 21.3% private donations	Website / Annual Report 2008
	WHH (Solidarist)	€ 147.4 M	€101.9 M Public grants (61.9%); €37.1 M Donations (25.2%)	Annual Report 2008 / Website
	UNICEF (Solidarist)	$ 3.390 M	60% Governmental; 29% private sector & NGOs	Annual financial Report 2008 / Website
	UNWFP (Utilitarian)	$ 5.115 BN	10 largest donors accounted for 82% of the resources received; 18 % was non-earmarked	Annual report 2008 / Website

Table 1 - Overview of the private/public funding ratio in IAAs' 2008 annual budget[82]

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[82] This table presents only a portion of the data collected. For a full overview, see Appendix 2.

The ICRC (and to a lesser extent UN agencies such as UNHCR and WFP) is a slightly different case.[83] While the majority of its funding originates from institutional donors, its claim to be independent from them is largely true. This is explained by the fact that a good part of this funding is directly paid to its multilaterally-funded core budget, which is then used as its mandate dictates. This however, does not mean that they are immune from pressure from their donors. As Stoddard states, "[l]ess contingent on the vagaries of legislatures than bilateral project grant funding, core contributions can nevertheless be affected by downward pressures on foreign aid budgets" (Stoddard, p.25, 2008).

It is nevertheless striking to see that while Maximalist Deontological organizations are financially independent, Utilitarian types rely heavily on governmental funding. This however, does not mean that financial independence automatically makes an organization principled – this is only achieved through action. Yet, the opposite is revealing: most aid agencies simply do not have the (human and financial) resources to abide by their proclaimed principles despite their will to do so. This implies that they might take decisions which take them away from the principled approach because the funding they have received is far too important to be given back[84], or because they are under pressure from their donors to accomplish the projects. An IRD employee illustrated it well: "We would continue to work if a staff member was killed – we continue the contract unless dictated otherwise by the donor."[85] Furthermore, and particularly in heavily politicised contexts, some organizations may put aside the humanitarian principles they have agreed to in order to please a donor.[86] Although all organizations claim to be operating in a given context primarily because of the existing needs (or rights)[87] of the vulnerable populations, there appears to be a sense of opportunism at times. Stockton goes as far as saying that many organizations base their interventions on a 'business case' rather than a 'moral case' (Stockton, p.4, 2005). As an interviewee working for a Utilitarian agency went so far as to say, her organization "is going into projects in which they don't necessarily have the expertise; there is a real sense of opportunism."[88] Although all organizations lacking in private funding can be suspected of opportunism, doubts are particularly prevalent with Utilitarian organizations. Because Utilitarians focus on the outcome rather than the process of an action, it appears that they are less concerned about the origins of funding than other aid agencies. This in turn reinforces impressions of opportunism. IRD for instance has a remarkably wide range of "thematic capabilities". It claims to have a "sectoral capability in infrastructure, health, agriculture, economic development, democracy and governance, community development, water and sanitation, relief, and logistics" as

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[83] "ICRC … can only expect 2–4 of its 67 country appeals to be fully funded and therefore uses unearmarked funding to meet requirements. This enables it to respond on the basis of need, not on the basis of what the donor has funded" (Stoddard, 2008).
[84] When receiving funding from a donor, an aid organization often allocates a certain percentage of it to the functioning of the organization – the overhead costs. Hence, when deciding that they cannot continue to operate in a given context, they will often have to return the money to the donor and will therefore not be able to benefit from these overhead costs.
[85] Interview 142.
[86] The Iraq example is very relevant: some NGOs in particular have accepted working closely with and even receive funding from the US government despite their usual reluctance to accept money from a party to the conflict. Or they have refused to publicly criticize the policies of a donor as such a move would be seen as potentially jeopardizing a source of funding. See for instance Maguire (2003, website).
[87] Darcy and Hofmann argue that the distinction between 'needs' and 'rights' is overrated (Darcy and Hofmann, 2003).
[88] Interview 143.

well as "in public–private partnerships, multi-sectoral programming, civil–military programs, design, construction and engineering, management and rapid start up" (IRD, Undated, a, website). In contrast, an MSF employee explained that "nowadays, the point is not about doing lots of projects in a context, but about the quality of the aid provided: we need to have a true proximity with the population; to have a better understanding of the contexts. After all, humanitarian action is a dedication, not a service delivery or a supermarket."[89] Significantly, while MSF has a majority of private funding, IRD has a long list of donors that most aid agencies would refuse to be funded by, including the US Department of Defence, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and a PMSC (IRD, Undated, c, website).

Despite its charitable intent, the realm of realpolitik also exists in the aid sector. A major criticism heard among humanitarian security managers interviewed for this research, is the (occasional) incoherence between an organization's discourse and its actions. From time to time aid organizations make operational choices that clash with their self-articulated values. Several interviewees referred, for instance, to the tensions between their organization's values and the acceptance of highly politicised, sensitive, counterinsurgency related funding for assistance in the 'Af-Pak' region. An InterAction policy paper states that:

> … in Pakistan, as well as in Afghanistan, INGO field staff remain concerned that the [US] administration's overall civilian response and aid strategy is dominated by counter-insurgency (COIN) imperatives. Operating out of unmarked vehicles, and with primarily local staff, InterAction's humanitarian and development member organizations work hard to maintain a measure of impartiality that allows us to better serve the most vulnerable communities. To that end, it is imperative that U.S. assistance dollars that fund NGO programs not be tied in any way to COIN language and objectives. If COIN language is present in funding agreements, then the ability of many INGOs and Pakistani NGOs to serve as partners to USAID will be limited, as this labelling is in direct tension with our humanitarian principles and would jeopardize our impartiality and ability to operate safely and effectively in many areas (InterAction, p.3, 2010).[90]

Yet at the same time, several interviewees whose agency is a member of InterAction, criticised their organizations for accepting the funding in the first place; one respondent, working for CARE, questioned whether their organization is driven by humanitarian principles: "officially we are, yet in reality I have doubts. An organization which is donor oriented cannot be principled – a case in point is Pakistan where the funding we accepted looks a lot like a large counterinsurgency funding."[91] Similarly, the head of security of another Solidarist/Utilitarian organization shared his frustration: "this funding is loaded with counter-insurgency language, is in violation of the point 4 of the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct as it clearly promotes US foreign policy and goes against our strategic plan; when I raised these concerns with the CEO, the answer was that 'we couldn't walk off the

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[89] Interview 23.
[90] Interestingly, the paper does not question the counterinsurgency nature of the funding, but merely its labelling.
[91] Interview 134.

project'; now we have four staff kidnapped, the actual projects accomplished very little and we'll have to close the program due to insecurity."[92]

As security managers often state, 'say what you do, and do what you say', as inappropriate trade-offs can endanger the staff of an organization. To be fair though, it is worth recalling that aid agencies are juggling a multiplicity of sources of funding and operate in a diversity of complex environments. Maintaining coherence between discourses and practices is an inherent challenge given the nature of the sector.

As highlighted in this sub-section, aid agencies' ethos is constituted at two levels: the ideational level characterised by an agencies' guiding values and the practical level based on their operational approach. The origin of humanitarian organizations' funding, in particular the amount of private versus institutional funding, influences their actual operational capacity, inhibiting their freedom to choose and implement projects according to their proclaimed values. Altogether, the disparities in approaching humanitarian principles or in securing funds from diverse origins, contribute further to the differences between aid agencies. Organizations that are financially and operationally capable of abiding by humanitarian principles often appear to be Maximalist Deontological agencies. Minimalist Deontological as well as Solidarist organizations often claim to abide by humanitarian principles, but the reality is that many of them are engaged in activities other than purely humanitarian and/or depend too much on institutional funding to be able to do so. Utilitarian organizations refer to humanitarian principles only among other values; and in all cases, are far too dependent upon institutional funding to have an actual principled approach even if they wished to do so.

4.2.3. The co-constitution between structures and agents

The construction of an organization's identity is the result of processes occurring at different levels. According to critical constructivists, understanding the construction of aid agencies' identity implies that the analysis should not focus only at the level of the structures, but also look at the interplay between structures and agents. Indeed, the process of construction of an aid agency's identity depends greatly on its constituencies. Aid agencies are not empty institutions. They are shaped by their personnel as much as these people are shaped by the organization. Agency's discourses become dominant because they are internalised and reproduced. This process takes various forms, yet is rather similar from one organization to another. Consequently, the present sub-section will not put much emphasis on the differences between the three types of aid agencies, and will focus instead on demonstrating the processes of co-constitution between structures and agents.

Bloom claims that:

> … *given the same environmental circumstances*, there will be a tendency for a group of individuals to make the same identification, to internalise the same identity. Similarly, again *given the same*

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[92] Interview 139.

environmental circumstances there will also be a tendency for a group of individuals to act together to protect and to enhance their shared identity (Bloom, p.23, 1990. Emphasis original).

Unsurprisingly, transmission and reproduction of agencies' values and norms takes place through collegial work and life, in particular at field level where it is often the case that aid workers live and work in the same places as their colleagues. Whether working for the UN, the ICRC or NGOs, most aid workers interviewed in Afghanistan and Haiti were either living and working in the same house/office, or renting accommodation with colleagues.

Most IAA employees interviewed for the present research shared their organization's values[93], whether they were working at headquarter or field level. An IRD employee explained for instance that "yes, I share the organization's values, as the rest of the staff do. Actually, employees buy alot into our 'community stabilisation' projects."[94] Similarly, a SC-UK staff argued that "For the most part both national and international staff buy into our values."[95] An MSF representative shared that the "staff do share the organization's values; the transmission happens during the selection process and then during trainings, programme implementation, understanding of our Charter, etc."[96]

Respondents added that their colleagues also shared the organization's values, even if it was sometimes less true for the personnel not directly involved in the operational activities, i.e. personnel working in administrative positions.

Wendt makes a distinction between three levels of internalization of identity: coercive, interest-driven and normative (Wendt, p.254, 1999). On the first level, internalization is based on fear of punishment. On the second level, actors realise their interest in complying with the norm. Finally, on the third level of internalization, actors believe in the norm and it becomes a part of them. Within the aid sector, internalization is rarely coercive, but rather normative and interest-driven, with individuals sharing the interests of their colleagues or their organization. As such, the firing of an aid worker occurs only rarely, for instance when an employee violates the organization's code of conduct – seen as the red line not to cross – as was observed by the author in Haiti.

Most interviewees explained that internalization in their organization is essentially the result of a *transmission* of the norms and values, through processes of education, communication and persuasion. An interviewee explained for instance, that "the transmission is promoted through formal tools, such as training at the onset of employees' contracts, where policies, missions and annual plans are presented – they are all the summary of our approach. These documents are shared with local staff when possible."[97] Another answered that the "transmission is the result of a strong and militant

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[93] A few however struggled in saying what were the values of their organization. This could be explained by the fact that they paid little attention to them, or by the fact that such a question – which was the second of the interview – caught them by surprise.
[94] Interview 142.
[95] Interview 148.
[96] Interview 149.
[97] Interview 145.

commitment from the employees and from the volunteers. In addition, integration is also made through the encouragement to participate on a voluntary basis with MdM's projects in France on Saturdays."[98] A CARE representative argued that "the internalization of CARE's values by the staff is very strong, and this happens through daily practices, workshops, trainings, etc."[99]

Similarly, Sørensen notes that the ICRC:

… is certainly the only humanitarian organization that I know of, which has a written and well-publicized myth of origin, translated into numerous languages, that is widely used both to generate committed and loyal staff, and to create global awareness, legitimacy and support. The myth also plays an important role in ICRC's professional relations with other humanitarian actors on the global scene, and has helped the ICRC to assume a hegemonic, but not uncontested, position in the world of humanitarian agencies with a particular responsibility to take a lead in setting humanitarian standards (Sørensen, p.3, 2006).

An employee of a Christian organization shared the information that: "at headquarter level we spend a lot of time in prayer – we actually prioritise praying as our relationship with colleagues and partners are very important to us. At field level, we work through partners including churches and have a culture of sharing and giving within the communities. The local and international staff are rather close with each other and have developed strong bonds." [100] When asked about the transmission of the organization's values, she explained that: "everyone at headquarters is Christian: our values are shared with the staff during the induction; we also have weekly staff meetings (which look like a church assembly), prayers, etc. On the field, expatriates organize team prayers; the national staff benefit from an induction about our values, without however focusing on the specifically Christian aspects." Similarly, Tearfund's website offers a 'prayer zone', from which anyone can download a PowerPoint to be shown at churches as a way to gather support and prayer. The Haiti Emergency Appeal PowerPoint asks readers to "pray for the successful recruitment of about 30 Haitian staff to work with Tearfund's Disaster Management Team; pray for Tearfund's staff to be able to coordinate well with other agencies; pray for safety and good radio and satellite communications for the team" (Tearfund, 2010, website). Such calls for prayer are rather unusual in the aid community and show clearly the strong Christian identity of the organization.

Internalization also starts before the recruitment of staff. Medair and World Vision explicitly state that they recruit their international staff only from among Christians. Similarly, Tearfund states that "applicants must be committed to Tearfund's evangelical Christian beliefs. You will be presented with our Basis of Faith declaration when filling out any online application form and will be asked to confirm that you agree with its statements" (Tearfund, Undated, website). On the other hand, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Muslim Aid and Muslim Hands only ask applicants to have a 'commitment' to the organization's values and ethos. Islamic Relief Worldwide's job profile for a Communications Director

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[98] Interview 146.
[99] Interview 134.
[100] Interview 151.

position states that: "it is essential that the post holder shows a good understanding and sympathy with Islamic values and principles. A commitment to IRW's vision, mission statement and values is also essential". Not limited to Denominational organizations, secular aid agencies also request that employees share and commit to the organizations values. For instance, a job profile for an SC-UK Emergency Programme Manager position requests that applicants have a "commitment to and understanding of Save the Children's aims, values and principles." Similarly, MSF requires applicants to share a "commitment to the aims and values of MSF" (MSF, Undated, a). This ensures an *a priori* active process of identification and assimilation.

A challenge to the transmission of values lies in the fact that aid agencies are largely composed of personnel from the countries in which they operate – referred to as their national and local staff. [101] With personnel originating from different cultures, assimilationof their values becomes inherently difficult.

Two unrelated reports from MSF highlight the problems faced. The first states that "MSF Sudanese employees expressed a feeling of unease with MSF's witnessing activities. They noted also that expatriates may not always be aware that Sudanese authorities may have a different understanding of the words 'emergency', 'security' and 'without borders' leading to unnecessary tensions at times" (MSF, p.4, 2010). The following quotes from the national staff illustrate this: "If you say that 'we are doctors without borders, we can work everywhere' then people think that it is another period of colonization"; "In one shop, a guy asked me: 'You are MSF? Are you sure you are without borders? So why you were kicked out [from Sudan by the Government]?'"; "There is a problem with using the word 'emergency'. It gives bad feelings (means that there is a big problem)"; "Some people don't understand the word security (when we use the word security, insecurity in our correspondence, during meetings, etc.). They think of something big. It is good to explain to them in simple words. When you say 'security is not good', you better say 'the road is not safe for this or that'" (MSF, p.28, 2010).

In the second case, the report explains that:

MSF's concept of neutrality was perceived differently in the Yemeni context. National staff suggested that it would be difficult for the community to conceive of an organization without political motivations, partly because of linguistic and conceptual differences in understandings of 'neutrality'. Given the highly politicised nature of Arab society, political neutrality is generally not understood in the same way that Western humanitarian organizations articulate the concept. For example, neutrality was not possible in the Iraq war or the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and individuals were generally assumed to have a political stance on most issues (Haddad, 2009, website).

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[101] A 'national staff' is an inhabitant of a country working for an aid organization independently of his/her area of origin, while a 'local staff' is someone being employed *in the very area he/she comes from*.

It usually requires more effort and commitment to explain an organization's values to national staff, and local stakeholders alike, but anecdotal evidence shows that agencies are not necessarily successful in doing so. The ICRC for instance is famous for its lengthy integration courses targeting new international employees prior to their departure to the field and again a few months down the line. This, in addition to being part of a unique organization, helps to provide a shared mindset amongst the international staff. However, as explained by an employee "we still have efforts to make when it comes to the national staff. We try to integrate them better, but they are very diverse: some are working with us out of conviction, others for the money – it also depends on each context and delegation."[102] This is well known by aid agencies and in Afghanistan and Haiti it has meant that security managers often pay careful attention to drivers, guards and doormen in particular. They are usually the first point of contact for visitors and outsiders and need to understand the organization and explain it in a way that fosters acceptance.

Interviewees who answered that they *didn't share* their organization's values didn't necessarily *disagree* with these values. They rather stressed that they could just as easily work for another aid agency instead. One interviewee explained that "I could work for a number of NGOs but I do like the health programmes as, being a security professional, it gives me a dynamic to build from as it can link every human being."[103] He is here referring to the fact that implementing health projects makes it 'easier' to operate in Afghanistan or Haiti: everybody, even insurgents, criminals or their families need medical treatment; this can then facilitate the acceptance and implementation of health activities.

Another interviewee, working as a Global Security Advisor explained: "I agree in principle with the organization's values, but I am focused on the work – I shy away from development discussions or programmatic debates."[104]

One interviewee however was more critical of her organization: "I have certain moral values and do share the organization's values on paper; but in practice, I don't think these were actualised: guards and drivers are paid well below what the lowest NGO would pay; the organization does not value its staff, which I see as a security concern. Also, they invest little in security: the organization is committed to work in conflict environments, but is not ready to invest in the necessary resources to work safely."[105]

As Stoddard explains, "[d]espite the fact that NGOs have different mandates, organizational histories, cultures and interests, epistemic and collegial links among staff members of the major NGOs are strong. Over the past ten years, NGOs have greatly increased their coordination, in practice and in principle, covering virtually every aspect of their work" (Stoddard, p.4, 2003). In addition, it is not only the case that aid organizations recruit most of their personnel from the same pool of candidates, but these candidates then move easily from one organization to another. As will be demonstrated in the

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[102] Interview 152.
[103] Interview 144.
[104] Interview 136.
[105] Interview 143.

next chapter, this leads to a cross-fertilization of ideas, values, and know-how in aid agencies, and renders their 'borders' porous.

Aid agencies are very active in ensuring that their culture, values and norms are assimilated by their personnel. Altogether, transmission and internalization occur through a range of dynamics that are very similar from one organization to another. The focus of these dynamics is nevertheless different, this in turn, differentiates each agencies' respective identity at both headquarter and field level.

4.3. The differentiation of the 'other' as a reaffirmation of the 'self'

In addition to studying the co-constitution between structures and agents and the construction of dominant narratives in the aid sector, a critical constructivist study of aid agencies implies the need to identify who form the 'others' against which aid agencies distinguish themselves, and what, in comparison, are their own defining characteristics. Identity is traditionally constructed in an exclusionary way through narratives which constantly produce symbolic barriers between the 'self' and 'other'. Beliefs, attitudes and opinions of aid workers are shaped by values, norms and organizational culture, but also by their perception of the role that their organization plays in the international arena, and the status of that role.

While the 'other' is often regarded within the discipline of International Relations as an enemy, the 'other' against which aid agencies construct their sense of themselves is not criminal gangs or Taliban but other members of the international community. It is common to hear aid workers differentiating themselves from those who they are most like – independently of the level of analysis, i.e. inter-organizational or intra-organizational. This is the case when aid agencies communicate their difference from armed forces coming from the same country as them; or from private contractors engaged in reconstruction activities; or from UN agencies involved in political processes. This also is the case within the UN family. As an HCR staffer said "the UN needs a common denominator, but HCR is willing to differentiate its profile though."[106] Similarly, in order to distinguish themselves from the UN *political* agencies, the UN *humanitarian* agencies in Afghanistan and Haiti paint the 'UN' letters on the side of their car in blue rather than black. Most people are unaware of the rationale for this distinction, but it helps the UN humanitarian agencies to make their point to their political colleagues. The rationale behind aid agencies' differentiation from other members of the international community lies in their shying away from any manipulation of assistance by political, military or corporate actors.

Differentiation among agencies also exists between organizations located at different ends of the aforementioned identity Spectrum. For instance The International Medical Corps (IMC) claims that its establishment "… in 1984 was a development that had global significance, not because it added another name to the pool of international relief agencies, but because it boldly declared the

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[106] Interview 153.

emergence of a new kind of relief agency. By providing health care through training, International Medical Corps challenged, indeed changed, the very definition of relief" (IMC, Undated, website). It also specifies that "… unlike many other relief organizations, we stay long after the crisis has ended to help communities fully recover and get back to self-reliance". Such self-aggrandising narratives need however, to be qualified as many aid workers are simply unaware of the IMC's existence. Also, a few organizations, such as IRD, Médecins du Monde (MdM) and Première Urgence (PU), mention explicitly that their objective is 'to go where others [other agencies] don't go'. PU further explains that they provide assistance in areas that are most difficult to reach, and to the populations "forgotten by humanitarian assistance" (PU, Undated, website). Indeed, the location of the projects offers another indication of these agencies' identity: operating projects in rural Helmand, Afghanistan, or the slums of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is far more challenging and dangerous than in restrained Badakhshan or quiet Jacmel. Some agencies are then referred to as 'frontline' organizations while others appear to be 'risk averse.' For instance according to an Oxfam employee, "compared to other NGOs, Oxfam is 'cautious', and has a 'conservative' approach." [107] Similarly a CARE representative explained that "CARE is "conservative' as we won't take great risks."[108] Interestingly, the 'frontline' organizations are to be found at both ends of the Spectrum, and as the next Chapter will demonstrate, this proves true whether we refer to MSF or IRD. Although Maximalist Deontological organizations and Utilitarians disagree on how to implement humanitarian programmes, they nevertheless concur in investing substantial efforts and capabilities to reach out to vulnerable populations, including in the most dangerous areas. In Afghanistan for instance, the remaining organizations that continue implementing projects in the war-torn southern parts of the country are essentially Maximalist Deontological and Utilitarian organizations, including MSF and the ICRC on the one hand; and CHF, IRD and WFP on the other. In contrast, OGB, SC-UK and CARE have all left the dangerous South.

Efforts to contrast one agency with another are also observed among organizations located in the *same* section of the ideal–type spectrum. The creation of MSF in reaction to the ICRC's stance during the Nigerian–Biafran war is a point in case. Similarly, MDM was created by Bernard Kouchner and others after having slammed the door of MSF and this remains a vivid memory (MDM, Undated, website).

In all of these cases, where an external observer may see similarities between organizations, aid agencies and aid workers would rather highlight differences. This in turn *reaffirms the perceived boundaries between the 'self' and the 'other'*. The affirmation of the 'other' in the aid sector is an important component of the realization of identity, particularly since identity is constructed to the extent where one can determine those aspects which comprise the foreign. This aligns with the work of Campbell who claims that the conceptualisation of identity is "constituted in relation to difference [rather than] fixed by nature, given by God, or planned by intentional behavior" (Campbell, p.9, 1998). As such, the identity of every entity is "performatively constituted" and contains "no foundations that

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[107] Interview 18.
[108] Interview 134.

are prior to, or outside of, its operation". Campbell adds that "the constitution of identity is achieved through the inscription of boundaries that serve to demarcate an 'inside' from an 'outside' or a 'self' from an 'other'" (Campbell, p.9, 1998).

How do aid agencies then define members of the "in-group"? It is both an actual internalization of the difference by employees, and also the agencies' calculated aim to influence both outsiders (by attracting donors' attention) and insiders (by building staff cohesion).

It is rare to hear staff of organizations located at either end of the Spectrum claiming that their organization is anything close to those sitting at the opposite end of the Spectrum. In other words, in both Afghanistan and Haiti aid workers interviewed had internalised that MSF is not IRD. Interestingly, several interviewees working for Deontological organizations compared their agency to others by disapprovingly referring to other organizations' lack of respect for the humanitarian principles. In the words of an MSF employee: "In certain contexts, many use armed escorts as they want to show their donors that they are capable of reaching their beneficiaries. But what worries us, is that these agencies don't see this as a matter of principle."[109] On the other hand, several aid workers working for Utilitarian organizations have argued that they get the job done precisely because, as opposed to Deontologicals, they have a pragmatic attitude towardshumanitarian principles. The following quote by an IRD employee illustrates the point: "MSF personnel are the first ones to die; they don't play the game, and don't share information - they are in accordance with their principle, but at what cost?"[110] Respondents working for Solidarist organizations have claimed respect for humanitarian principles, but referred to their rights-based or denominational approaches as a distinctive feature. Last, differentiation among NGOs was also made on the basis of nationality, opposing in particular American to continental European ones. Although such a distinction is relevant in many ways, it is too narrow and underplays the similarities that exist across the Atlantic (Blanchet and Boris, 2006).

Keen in defending their traditional identity, Deontological organizations are particularly vocal when it comes to differentiating their stance. A Red Cross employee explained for instance that "other humanitarian organizations are not necessarily a threat but their actions still impact on us."[111] Going a step further, MSF argues that "[f]or the sake of preserving the space for impartial humanitarian assistance in war zones, multi-mandate organizations should make a choice between relief and development assistance, a choice between saving lives today or saving societies tomorrow" (Hofman and Delaunay, p.6, 2010).

Nevertheless, the delimitation of the lines between the 'self' and the 'other' is also *contingent to the situation and the audience*. There have been cases where aid agencies critical of the militaries or of the UN have sought their support when confronted with an immediate threat. For instance in the DRC, during 2005 Oxfam made use of MONUC helicopters several times despite normally being critical of the Blue Helmets' actions. And despite displayed differentiation between aid agencies,

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[109] Interview 23.
[110] Interview 142.
[111] Interview 135.

organizations do collaborate with each other on a daily basis or when necessary. The presence of all types of agencies around the same table during information-sharing meetings, as observed in Afghanistan and Haiti, is a case in point. The differentiation with the 'other' is then often made for a specific audience in a specific context, such as getting donators' attention in a crisis by gathering massive media attention; or when it comes to internal team-building processes; or when an agency is seeking to coax a stakeholder who is critical of the broad humanitarian sector. As such, differentiation is also a calculation of the outcome and how it will best benefit the interests an agency.

Social constructivists argue that a shared sense of identity can reduce perceptions of intergroup threat. Yet in the aid sector, the 'other' frequently denounced is the one who shares most similarities with the aid agencies. The thesis will argue in the next chapter that this has an impact on how aid agencies perceive and manage threats.

4.4. Conclusion

International aid agencies' are not stable structures operating independently from their environments. On the contrary, there is strong evidence that they are created in reaction to an event, whether global or local, and that they are then continuously shaped both by their environment and by internal dynamics. However, due to aid workers' movements from one agency to another, and given the multiple interactions their personnel entertain with their external environment at all levels of the organization, aid agencies' 'borders' are porous. Still, through active processes of assimilation, dominant discourses and practices gradually emerge and permeate each organization. In particular, the application of humanitarian principles as well as the ratio of private to institutional funding are good indicators of aid agencies' identities. Altogether, these form a body of corroborating evidence which eventually allows one to distinguish each agency's ethos, which is comprised of their mindset and operating modes. There are however similarities within these differing ethoses, which in turn provides a basis for identifying three ideal–types of organizations: the Deontological, Solidarists and Utilitarians. Identity claims are however, enhanced or undermined by certain practices. Aid agencies' identities form the basis of their approach to security management. But this is not a one-way process and this fact also, in turn continuously shapes their identity.

As the next chapter will show, this typology provides a basis for a thorough analysis of the way each type of organizations interacts with its environment, and in particular thinks and manages its security. Having identified and located aid agencies in a spectrum, this will allow us to understand their different choices regarding security management practices.

Chapter 5 – Identity and Interests: Representations of Security

> *"We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are."*
>
> *The Talmud*[112]

Why, when faced with a given threat, does one agency decide to use armed guards, fences and CCTVs, while another - even if located on the same street - keeps its doors wide open? Why do aid agencies sometimes take different measures to mitigate a similar threat? Why do some look for external private security providers while others shy away from them? What are the processes that lead an aid organization to decide whether or not to harden its stance? How do such stances or the use of external security providers affect an aid agency?

Since each organization has its own identity, each also has its own vulnerabilities. In addition, each interfaces with threats in its own way. Each then, has its own interests when it comes to ensuring its security. Threat perceptions and approaches to security are intrinsically linked with an organization's identity. Similarly, and in a cyclical way, norms and values associated with certain approaches to security are internalized by the personnel of an agency, to the point where they become part of an organization's identity. Indeed, critical constructivists claim that identity and security are not stable institutional characteristics but constant processes, which fuel each other. From this perspective, interests are best analysed through a dynamic study of these processes, with a focus on agents and on changes.

Because the interest of this thesis is limited to aid agencies' preferences in security, it will study how aid agencies conceive and manage their security. By doing so, it will emphasize how these constitutive processes relate to aid agency identity and will reveal in particular how differences in identity are paralleled with differences in interests. Among the different conceptions and practices of security, the thesis will highlight the dominant representations and examine how they are shaped – but not determined – by IAAs' identity constructs. It will examine how humanitarian security was gradually developed, spread, internalized and reproduced by emphasizing the dynamics within the aid sector as well as within aid agencies.

The first section of the chapter discusses how aid agencies' approaches to security vary from one type of aid agency to another. Given that identities are also constructed in reaction to perceived threats, understanding humanitarian actors' identities requires analysing how they construct their threats and are shaped by them. The second section then explores what threats are confronting international aid agencies (IAAs) and how these threats are constructed. Understanding how IAAs'

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[112] Quoted in Myers, D. (2002), p.73.

identities shape dominant representations in humanitarian security management is the focus of the third section of the present chapter.

5.1. Aid agency approaches to security are contingent upon their identity

Critical constructivists argue that identities and interests are mutually constituted. That the identity of an actor implies their preferences, but is also the product of these. It is not surprising then that, given variations in aid agencys' identities, their approaches to security also vary. While the present section underscores these differences, the following sections will provide evidence of the differences in approach. By doing so however, the thesis recognizes the contingency of its claims. The current section provides *indications* of aid agency approaches to security rather than *strict assertions*. As will be discussed below, these indications are at times tempered by different contextual realities.

Aid agency approaches to security are shaped by both the values that drive each organization and the ways these values are put into practice; as a result, three approaches to humanitarian security have been identified.

The approach to security of *Deontological organizations* is heavily conditioned by the conviction that a close respect for, and application of, humanitarian principles is the best way to ensure the safe continuation of their work. As emphasized in the previous chapter, humanitarian principles are not perceived as absolute moral values but as an ethical framework that guides operations. By expressing and effectively transforming these principles into a range of practices, Deontological organizations strive to put themselves in a position where they can be given special consideration – such as safe access to vulnerable populations – by all relevant parties. To do so however, they have to explain to all stakeholders the meaning of their humanitarian principles and convince them of their relevance, as well as prove that their implementation of them is coherent.

In other words Deontological agencies such as the Red Cross movement and Médecins sans Frontières are holistic in their approach to security. They do not focus as much on technical fixes as on political considerations.[113] They then pay particular attention to the source of their funding; they strive to maintain a consistency to their operations; and to develop networks with relevant warring parties and/or criminal groups in order to find operative agreements, build trust and ensure continuous channels of communication. This means that, compared to other agencies, they are more successful in having (quasi-)permanent (expatriate) staff, including in the most dangerous areas such as the rural areas of Helmand and Kandahar in Afghanistan or the various slums in Port-au-Prince. In addition, their *modus operandi* implies that, contrary to many organizations which keep a low profile in dangerous environments, deontological organizations strive to always openly display their logo as a way of being distinguished from other actors. They put an emphasis on the acceptance approach but

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[113] In the words of an ICRC delegate: "the ICRC is apolitical and humanitarian—or perhaps I should say that it takes part in "politics" in the original, noble sense—so as to further humanitarian aims. We are neither with you nor against you." Quote taken from Donini *et al*, (2008, p.28).

also use elements pertaining to the protection approach – but keep them low-profile, in particular when these consist of 'hard' protective measures. They occasionally use a deterrence approach, but this is usually manifested as a diplomatic threat rather than use of gun power. For instance, if threatened they would identify the source of the threat, say an armed group, and warn them in return that they could stop their projects and leave the area – which in turn, could potentially go against the armed group's interests.

Minimalist Deontological organizations such as Action contre la Faim, Concern or Oxfam share similar views to those of the Maximalists. This is compounded by the fact that many of them depend on institutional funding or are not engaged solely in humanitarian activities. This then means that their operational choices may be limited by certain considerations and their approaches to security might resemble those of Solidarists.

Solidarists aim and claim to be using a similar approach to security as the Deontological agencies, but in reality this is not the case for many of them. The reasons for this are threefold.

First, many of the Solidarist organizations such as ActionAid, Cesvi, CARE, Intersos or Save the Children, are engaged in multiple types of activities not just purely humanitarian ones. This in turn means that they are torn between different lines of thinking, which may eventually play against a coherent understanding and application of their humanitarian principles. The consequence is that organizations engaging in activities such as development may be seen to favour one party to the conflict, to the detriment of the other.[114] It also means that they are more likely to favour using local partners, be it local NGOs or community–based organizations, which in itself implies a different approach, and means of implementing security.

Secondly, like the Deontological Minimalists, they might lack the private funding to be operationally independent. This implies that they might take decisions which move them away from their principled approach because they are under pressure from their donors.

Thirdly, in addition to facing the same situations described in the previous two points, *Denominational* Solidarists such as Caritas, Christian Aid, or Muslim Aid often work through their particular religious network. This does not indicate that they are actively engaged in proselytising activities, but that through the use of their local religious networks, they have alternative ways to implement programmes and reach the beneficiaries.

In other words, Solidarists refer to humanitarian principles as much as possible, but are likely to compromise depending on the context. Like the Deontological organizations, Solidarists prefer an approach to security that emphasizes acceptance – with elements of protection and deterrence – but

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[114] As the EISF stated 2 July 2010, the targeting of a development agency in Afghanistan by insurgents "indicates the risks to agencies implementing development programmes amidst a context of shrinking humanitarian space; as noted [previously], where development is explicitly a central plank of the strategy of one warring party, agencies implementing development programmes – no matter how divorced from political agendas they may conceive themselves to be – risk being conflated with partisan activities, especially in 'contested' zones …. This is especially the case for those agencies implementing programmes funded by donors – such as USAID – of countries with troops on the ground, or implementing programmes funded under the aegis of local governments, such as is the case of the Afghan government's National Solidarity Programme" (EISF, 2010).

when weighing the risks that their operations entail against the benefit that they provide to the populations, Solidarist organizations have often relied on avoidance strategies. For some, their willingness to stay close to their beneficiaries means that they will attempt to stay at any cost but for many this willingness will cease when they realise that such an approach places their staff at too great a risk. This may require that they suspend or remotely manage their operations when immersed in increasingly hazardous environments. The practice of remotely managing projects is by no means limited to Solidarist organizations, but because they are more risk averse than the other two organization types, they are more likely to use avoidance strategies such as remote management.[115]

Utilitarian organizations such as CHF International, International Relief and Development or the UN World Food Programme, are driven by the conviction that an aid operation is worthy if it eventually brings an improvement in the condition of the vulnerable populations. In relation to this and given that their main source of funding is institutional, it also means that they are more subject to donors' pressure – and political choices. They therefore, tend to adopt a pragmatic approach to security management whereby achieving this objective will take pre-eminence over *how* to achieve the objective. They prefer to ground their actions in a basis of stakeholder acceptance, but given that they favour the objective over the means, they are less reluctant to use a deterrent approach. Their action is driven by ethical considerations, but their definition of it encompasses a broader understanding than just an interpretation of humanitarian principles. As such, they are more likely to adopt a hard stance or 'favouring a side' in order to obtain physical security.

It must be specified that this thesis recognizes that aid agencys do have a lot in common; as an example, aid agencies all refer to humanitarian principles. Nevertheless, distinctions between aid agencies' approaches to security can still be made on the basis that, *comparatively*, the security conception and practices of some organizations – the Deontologicals – are guided more by these principles than other types of IAAs.

The differences of approach to security between the three ideal–types are not clear-cut, and rather constitute observable trends. They do indicate however that differences in identity run parallel to a differences in interests.

5.2. The place of the threats in aid agencies' identities

It was highlighted in Chapter Three that "it is impossible to clearly distinguish between security and identity, as the definition of the threats and the means to counter them are also part of who we are" (Macleod and Voyer-Léger, p.75, 2004b. Author's own translation); studying the construction of threats, this section will then analyse how ideas and values shape their protective discourses and practices.

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[115] For more information on remote management see Stoddard, Harmer and Renouf (2010).

There are different levels on which threats against aid agencies can be understood. On a broad level, anything which poses a danger to the *survival* of the organization is a threat. In particular anything which may have negative consequences on an organization's funding and reputation and may lead to its closure.[116] Still, a distinction needs to be drawn between the threats to the survival of an organization and the threats to its security. Because the present research looks at the interplay between the identity and security of IAAs, it focuses on security, not survival. Yet because a threat which materializes as a security incident may still severely affect an organization, threats to security and to survival may meet at some point.[117]

The nature of threats against an aid agency's security are twofold. On the one hand there are *direct threats*, and on the other, *indirect ones*. Each however, is perceived differently by aid workers. The current section will underscore the processes through which each kind of threat is constructed. It will argue that direct threats are constructed through processes of socialization, while indirect threats are the product of securitization processes.

5.2.1. The construction of direct threats through processes of socialization

Direct threats are extremely diverse and include anything from poor road conditions to armed clashes, extortion, sexual assault and floods. The "threat portfolio" that the Security Management Initiative uses in its training distinguishes for instance, between a range of threats including: 'political, social and cultural instability'; 'weakness of state and bad governance'; 'civil disorder and violent actions'; 'criminal acts and banditry'; 'danger of arms and explosive devices'; 'travel risks'; 'natural hazards'; 'health and stress'; 'infrastructure and organization'; and 'staff' and this list is said to be non-exhaustive (SMI, p.1, Undated). Indeed, several aid workers interviewed for the research also referred to "dissatisfied beneficiaries". Haiti, in the aftermath of the devastating January 2010 earthquake, is a good illustration of this given the recurrence of aid convoys and aid distributions being looted by impatient or angry crowds.

One interviewee summarized well what is at stake: "the type of threat varies from context to context. Petty crimes and road traffic accidents are the most numerous, but those that concern me most are kidnapping, terrorist threats and armed attacks."[118] The severity of the threat is measured not by the numbers threatened, but by its potential impact. As one interviewee put it: "those threats that worry me most are those with the potential to snowball – affecting not only one mission, but the whole region or even globally; there is for example anecdotal evidence that the killing of Margaret Hassan [the CARE Country Director in Iraq] gave ideas to other groups to target CARE elsewhere."[119] At

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[116] The French NGO *Equilibre* had for instance to file a bankruptcy petition when its main European donor dramatically reduced its funding in 1998.

[117] The threats to the *survival* of an aid agency may lead an organization to take decisions which may negatively affect its *security*. Some organizations whose survival is questioned due to lack of funding may have to take drastic decisions such as the closure of their security unit. An Irish NGO, which operates in a number of high–risk countries, took such a decision following the reduction of its income in the aftermath of the 2009 global financial crisis. As a result, the full time Security Advisor at headquarters level and his team members on the field were made redundant – yet the organization continued operating in insecure areas.

[118] Interview 150.

[119] Interview 144.

another level, an employee explained that "since information travels so quickly, it's a challenge for us to influence what is being said about the ICRC – we worry that false rumours may eventually affect the teams in the field."[120]

The threats confronting IAAs are constantly evolving, whether we talk of their type, their frequency or their impact. Kidnapping for instance was frequently cited by interviewees as a new threat, in particular "since they have become generalized even in countries where they didn't exist before."[121] Similarly, the CARE head of security commented that "we notice a renewed emphasis on sovereignty, in particular in Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Sudan, etc, which translates through staff arrest, or administrative and judicial harassment against us."[122]

The reason for the evolution of threats is explained diversely: according to the Security Advisor of an NGO: "three things have changed: the origin of the threat (terrorist groups targeting us in this way is a new thing since groups with political claims used to respect us more), the type of threat (kidnapping and bomb attacks used to be less of a concern), and the frequency of the threats (attacks coming from criminal groups are more frequent)."[123] Another added that "acts of terror are rather new – and are linked to a feeling of impunity; such threats are considered as normal procedures to some groups."[124] In addition, as the number of aid agencies has substantially increased as well as their presence in the field, so their exposure to threats has increased accordingly. A few have also commented that threats and acts of violence in contexts which are not armed conflicts have also multiplied. All agreed that these evolutions could be linked to the changes affecting the global environment, including the perceived assimilation of aid agencies with a 'murky' Western agenda.

When is a threat really threatening? A threat may have been made yet does not pose any danger since the source of the threat is not capable of turning it into action. Similarly, someone may pose a danger without having made a threat. In other words, how do aid agencies construct the threats they say they face?

The construction of direct threats in the aid sector is not the product of grandiloquent discursive practices such as those involved in indirect threats, or at another level of analysis, by states in the War on Terror or in the lead-up to the Second Iraq War (Kaufmann, 2004; Thrall, 2007; Mustapha, 2008). On the contrary, they are the results of a *socialization process*, through daily interactions and assimilations of peer discourses and experiences and *encompass both objective and subjective elements.* An illustration of this socialization process is the fact that the assessments of threats are often the result of team-work within an aid agency or among agencies. Similarly, employees at field level are greatly encouraged to report any security–relevant information within the agency as well as to other agencies, as the author witnessed during Save the Children UK security meetings in Kabul. These dynamics contribute to information exchange and gradual assimilation of security narratives.

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[120] Interview 152.
[121] Interview 147.
[122] Interview 134.
[123] Interview 146.
[124] Interview 147.

The 'objective' elements of threat construction are based on facts and statistics which a community of subjects (aid workers) agrees to interpret in a similar way. For example, in 2009–2010, several French aid workers were kidnapped in a period of a few months in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic by the 'African Free Eagles', a Sudanese group which claims to be acting in response to French foreign policy in Africa (Reuters, 2010a, website). It is then likely that any aid agency employing French personnel in the area and receiving a threat would take it *very* seriously. Aid agencies compile, share and analyse information related to the environment in which they operate, and this contributes to improving their understanding, awareness and preparation for the risks they face.

The subjective element of threat construction is more difficult to apprehend as it depends either on experience or relates to an organization's identity. Regarding experience, it is common to see an individual or an organization that went through a security incident becoming, in the aftermath, more prone to seeing threats everywhere (Fast and Wiest, p.18, 2007). Understandably people are more influenced by a vivid, personal story than they are by bland statistics and facts (Schneier, 2008a, website). They will then need a proper and thorough reassessment of the environment and of themselves before being able to 'let go' of their bias.

Threat perceptions however are also related to an agency's identity: depending on where they are located in the spectrum presented in Chapter Three; IAAs will not assign the same meanings to the same threatening environment. Threats encompass a projection of one's world views. As such, an aid organization may decide not to work in a given area because it seems too dangerous; or may decide to work there, but only after having developed a thorough network of key stakeholders; or only with armed escorts.

The case of humanitarian action in Southern Afghanistan supports this argument. MSF, a Deontological organization, has successfully expanded its operations in Helmand after engaging with all armed actors, including the coalition forces, the Afghan national forces, as well as the Taliban and affiliates. It operates through the use of highly visible expatriates and a low profile network of local staffers. In comparison, IRD, a Utilitarian organization, operates from a heavily fortified compound protected by an international private security company, and the movements of its staff are very restricted. OGB, SC-UK and CARE on their side, have all ceased operating and pulled their staff out of Southern Afghanistan when the security deteriorated exponentially. In contrast, Tearfund, a Solidarist organization, has kept its (unarmed) office in Kandahar, but its staff do not travel outside of the city. Each option is not free from reaction and carries its own consequences. Withdrawing from the reality of being on the ground comforts OGB, SC-UK and CARE and affirms their view that it is indeed too dangerous to be there. Developing a network provides MSF with further understanding and protection from the stakeholders; they realise that travelling there with armed escorts is precisely what increases the likelihood of being attacked[125]; yet this likelihood is exactly what reinforces the IRD's

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[125] A Taliban spokesman confirmed for instance that "the insurgents would attack aid convoys which use armed escorts from the Afghan police or private security companies" (Reuters, 2010b, website).

belief in the need for further armed protection.[126] Humans are frequently victims of 'confirmation bias' according to which they are more likely to notice evidence that supports a previously held position than evidence that discredits it (Schneier, 2008a, website). Also, threats are perceived differently by agencies, not necessarily because they face different threats, but because their respective vulnerabilities to these threats differ.

Altogether, because of the 'feedback' that each agency receives when implementing a certain approach to security their identity, which is inherently linked to their security, is either challenged or reinforced. The success or failure of their security practices confirm or undermine the validity of their values, attitudes and norms. When successful, this process is progressive rather than sudden, and as such, is difficult to pinpoint clearly. In contrast, the process is more visible when an organization is confronted to a security failure. This happens every time an organization faces a severe security incident (such as the killing or kidnapping of a staff) for the first time. For instance, the 2008 assassination of Pascal Marlinge, SC-UK Country Director in Chad, lead the organization to dramatically reinforce its security globally through the implementation of a new security strategy at a global level and new practices at field level. This in turn contributed to changing its attitude and norms towards security as illustrated by the following comment made by a SC-UK employee: "Pascal's death in Chad made people stop and reflect on how this could happen on their watch. Staff begun to see the necessity to scale-up our security management."[127]

It is clear however that if, for instance, a Deontological organization was to devise a new global security strategy that was essentially based on deterrence rather than acceptance, its place in the Spectrum would be questioned. Such a change in approach by the organization would likely affect its practices in such a way that its identity would ultimately be reshaped accordingly. This in turn would serve as a basis to move the organization in question towards the Solidarist or Utilitarian types. Equally, this dynamic holds true for organizations belonging to the latter ideal–types.

For the most part changes in aid agencies' identities are not dramatic. The construction of the 'self' may evolve based on a threat, yet Rousseau shows that "changes in opinions need not indicate a lack of belief, coherence or stability of beliefs. Rather, the increasing and decreasing of the salience of specific latent dimensions may explain the changing responses quite accurately" (Rousseau, p.7, 2004). In other words, threats do not necessarily bring about a dramatic change in identity, but *make some identity facets more salient than others*: as underscored in Chapter Three, each aid agency is composed of multiple identities depending on which of its facets is made more salient, what it is contrasted with or who is looking at it. The case of the ICRC illustrates such argument. With the bombing of the ICRC's Baghdad office in October 2003 and the killing of several of its staff in different countries in a short time period, the environment seemed more threatening to the ICRC; it then went through a phase of uncertainty, where internal debates about the best way to move forward were frequent. Divided on whether to harden its posture or return to its fundamentals, the ICRC eventually

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[126] Interview 59. This is the crux of the normative dilemma of security, whereby stating a security claim contributes in producing an outcome which was to be avoided. For more information see Huysmans (2006).
[127] Interview 148.

opted for the latter and reaffirmed the *humanitarian* dimension of its identity.[128] Recalling firmly the necessity to remain an impartial, independent and neutral actor allowed it to re-negotiate access to areas which it had left, resulting in its having some of its largest operations in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan or Sudan.

Critical constructivists argue that identity and interests are co-constituted. Although such co-constitution has been argued for states (Campbell, 1998), it is more difficult to make this evident for aid agencies. The reason for this is that security threats against aid agencies rarely threaten their survival. Indeed, while a threat has direct immediate consequences at field level, it has a limited impact on the wider survival of an organization. A threat or a security incident may lead to drastic changes in a country programme's values, attitudes and norms, but will not necessarily affect the organization as a whole. As such, the process by which aid agencies' interests shape their identity is subtler and only gradually affects their values, attitudes and norms. Nevertheless, as shown in the previous chapter, norms, attitudes and values (including those associated with a certain approach to security) are internalized by the personnel of an agency, to the point where they become part of the (re)production of an organization's identity.

Deborah Avant argues that:

[w]hile states' identities have historically revolved around the creation of political communities of 'us' and 'them', many non-state actors have mandates that stand in explicit contrast to that notion. For different reasons, both NGOs and corporations have specific commitments to 'apoliticism'; the fulfilment of their respective mandates requires that they do *not* make enemies or take sides. One might imagine, then, that this commitment might lead non-state actors – even those facing violent threats – to think of security and how to generate it differently (Avant, p.146, 2007).

This however is incorrect as in reality aid agencies *do* differentiate between 'us' and 'them'; the subtlety lies in the fact that the 'other' which IAAs most often themselves differentiate from is not seen as producing direct threat, and when seen as a threat, is usually viewed only as an indirect threat, as will be discussed in the next sub-section. Avant is nevertheless correct in stating that aid agencies try hard not to make enemies.

An original element of this approach of aid agencies to security is that *if aid agencies are sometimes referred to as enemies, the opposite is generally not true, i.e. they don't designate people or groups as enemies.* When asked whether their agency was viewing any actor as an enemy, none of the IAA representatives interviewed for this research responded positively. In other words, regardless of the ideal–type they wish be identified with, aid agencies have a common a reluctance to convert a 'threat' to 'enmity'. An employee of one Utilitarian organization explained for instance "in Afghanistan we have been specifically targeted in some areas by people whose interests are threatened by our

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[128] Interviews 34 and 152.

programmes (such as the training of women) – but we don't see them as our enemies."[129] Similarly a Security Advisor from a Deontological organization shared that "some people must consider us as an enemy otherwise we would have not have two kidnapped staff as of now, but we don't see them as enemies – that goes against our principles anyway. There aren't any bad guys; there are only people to educate."[130] Far from being a naive comment, such resilience reinforces the fact that armed, threatening groups, and even groups that have already been the source of acts of violence against aid agencies are not seen as enemies, but simply as actors to be especially wary of.

Importantly, this holds true for former military personnel now working for aid agencies. While their former career taught them to identify – and fight – their enemy, their position as aid worker cools their ardour. Indeed, irrespective of the IAAs they were employed by, none of the former military aid workers interviewed in the research referred to the concept of enmity, which underscores that these personnel have done a good job in assimilating their peers' discourses and experiences. This contributes to demonstrating further the *socialization process* that exists within the aid sector, including in the ways aid workers view their surroundings, reinforcing institutionalized practices and modes of thinking.

A few interviewees nevertheless recognized that the *national* staff of their organization may be more prone to seeing the 'other' as an enemy. As explained by one: "in polarized conflicts we also have polarized staff, so we need to ensure our staff respects boundaries; also we ensure diversity in our staff."[131] Another confirmed that "in some countries (especially in contexts where the international staff have not been around for long) our national staff do see some groups as enemies; we however do our best to not allow this kind of talk happening."[132] As explained in the previous chapter, neutrality is sometimes culturally inconceivable. Many Palestinian national staff for example found it difficult to understand the principles of neutrality or even impartiality of their organization.

Identifying a group or an individual as an enemy entails taking a political stance which aid agencies shy away from. Such a posture would imply that violence against the enemy is acceptable – but this goes against what aid agencies believe in and stand for. Such conceptual positioning is however challenging to maintain, not the least because belligerents – 'unprincipled' actors in a conflict – have difficulties understanding the value of nonpartisan and impartial action. Aid actors then strive to 'educate' their audience, and because such process is hazardous, must also take appropriate measures to protect themselves.

5.2.2. The construction of indirect threats through the securitization of indistinctiveness

Indirect threats are elements which are formalized as threatening because of the specific *humanitarian* identity of aid agencies. Put simply, they are the negative externalities of someone else's

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[129] Interview 139.
[130] Interview 137.
[131] Interview 136.
[132] Interview 144.

action. Integrated missions are an example of such threats[133]: in these cases, aid agencies – usually NGOs, when the integrated mission is UN–led, are concerned with the tension between "the partiality involved in supporting a political transition process and the impartiality needed to protect humanitarian space" (Eide *et al*, p.3, 2005). Their fear is that they will be perceived as taking a side and that actors in the conflict may then decide to oppose their work. As Jacques Forster, Vice-President of the ICRC explains:

> … the main risk I see for humanitarian action in general is its integration – willing or otherwise – into a political and military strategy to defeat the enemy. In other words, the subordination of humanitarian activities to political goals, using aid as a tool for local or foreign policy. The danger is real if insurgents, or parts of the population, perceive the humanitarian agencies as instruments of a foreign agenda. In some countries, they may even perceive such agencies are part of a Western conspiracy against Islam. What does such a perception entail?
>
> a) Security risks, not only for expatriates but also for locals working with international organizations; a blurring of the lines between political/military action and humanitarian/development action might thus have severe consequences for the lives and safety of many groups and individuals.
>
> b) Scepticism about the accountability of humanitarian actors if they are no longer setting their own objectives and have become, as it were, "second class citizens" in a broader political framework over which their influence is limited.
>
> These elements are high on the list of ICRC concerns, partly because mixing roles and perceptions can be detrimental to all those – including the ICRC – who aim to bring impartial and independent aid in a conflict situation (Forster, 2005, website).

Views such as this were widely shared among aid agencies' representatives interviewed in the course of the research for the thesis. Adele Harmer has nevertheless challenged the basis of these concerns and argues that "[a]ctual evidence regarding the impacts of integrated missions on humanitarian operations, including the security of aid workers themselves, has been weak" (Harmer, p.528, 2008).

In this regard, the source of worry for aid agencies comes from any mechanism, institution or dynamic which may contribute to rendering their identity indistinct to a party to the conflict ('blurring the lines' in the aid parlance). Militarization of aid, for instance through the use of Provincial Reconstruction Teams or counterinsurgency and stabilization efforts in which assistance is provided by armed forces or contractors 'to win populations' hearts and minds', are seen as a threat to humanitarian action. This concern is not unfounded; the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office argued that:

> [t]he Taliban and most other [Armed Opposition Groups – insurgents] were not systematically targeting NGOs and seemed to be making some effort to distinguish between neutral and non-neutral actors.

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[133] The *Report on Integrated Missions* defines 'integrated mission' as "an instrument with which the UN seeks to help countries in the transition from war to lasting peace, or to address a similarly complex situation that requires a system–wide UN response, through subsuming actors and approaches within an overall political–strategic crisis management framework" (Eide *et al*, 2005, p.14).

"Neutrality and local acceptance, not the military or counter-insurgency, have become the dominant factors of security for NGOs in the vast areas of the country now dominated or controlled by the Taliban and other armed opposition groups," it said. To back this assertion, ANSO said most of the 59 NGO staff abducted by insurgents in 2009 were released unharmed after their "neutrality" and local acceptance were verified (IRIN, 2010c).

Vaughn has demonstrated aid agencies' securitizing shifts conceptually "as they argue that indistinctiveness poses an existential threat to their programmes and to the organizations themselves" (Vaughn, p.265, 2009). She rightly posits that aid agencies "securitize indistinctiveness" in three steps.

First, they associate their survival with the fate of vulnerable populations as well as with the survival of the practices that constitute humanitarianism. Aid agencies emphasize that any threat against them necessarily affects both vulnerable populations and humanitarian action (as the only independent, neutral and impartial provision of aid). In turn, the acceptance of the validity of IAA claims legitimates them as referent objects of security – in other words as something that needs to be safeguarded.

Secondly, Vaughn contends that aid agencies securitize indistinctiveness by developing specific security discourses for each of their three audiences (their own staff, other humanitarian organizations, and donors as well as other political actors). This in turn increases the likelihood of being heard and eventually, supported.

Thirdly, IAAs claim that the insecurity they face and its repercussions on vulnerable populations and principled humanitarianism, justify that extraordinary measures be taken such as "changes in policy or procedure that may inconvenience staff or initially disrupt programmes, … controversial methods (e.g. … use of armed guards), and significant budgetary alterations (e.g. … reallocation of funds to purchase security equipment)" (Vaughn, p.278, 2009).

One may add that the construction of indistinctiveness as a security issue also reinforces aid agencies in their identity. Indeed, a successful securitization results in convincing an audience that the referent object is legitimate. While Vaughn recalls that "[t]he humanitarian identity is characterized by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality" (p.269, 2009), successfully securitizing indistinctiveness then reinforces the distinctiveness of aid agencies as unique representatives of this humanitarian identity. This then underscores further the subtle feedback loop that exists between aid agencies' identities and their security.

Despite the fact that aid agencies frequently adopt a common narrative relating to this humanitarian identity, the previous chapter confirmed that relations to humanitarian principles vary in practice. As Vaughn rightly puts it, "humanitarian organizations are themselves culpable of a growing indistinctiveness, as it results, in part, from their failure to project and perform a unique, humanitarian identity" (Vaughn, p.269, 2009). However, while she aptly demonstrates the process by which aid organizations transform what they see as rendering their identity indistinct, into a grave security issue justifying the use of extraordinary measures, she does not consider the differences in aid agencies' identities. Because the securitization of indistinctiveness is based on a principled approach to

humanitarian action, only Deontological and, to a lesser extent, Solidarist organizations actually securitize indistinctiveness. This happened for instance when MSF argued that "[i]n Afghanistan, the first aspect of the confusion [between humanitarian organizations and political-military institutions] was caused by camouflaging psychological warfare and intelligence operations as humanitarian action" (Weissman, p.3, 2004). Similarly, OGB spearheaded a Joint Briefing Paper where it denounced that "the use of soldiers and heavily protected contractors to implement PRT and other reconstruction and development projects, particularly those which serve counterinsurgency objectives, has … blurred the line between aid agencies and the military" (Jackson, p.17, 2010). Significantly, the 29 IAAs signatories of the Paper are all Deontological and Solidarist organizations. SC-UK on its side complained that "PRTs blur the distinction between military and humanitarian objectives [and] may contribute to the 'militarisation' of aid" (SC, p.3, 2004). CARE called in 2009 for a "restriction of PRT and broader military involvement" in aid projects (Glad, p.56, 2009).

In contrast, not only do Utilitarian organizations rarely securitize indistinctiveness, but they sometimes adopt the opposite approach. Because parts of the programmes they implement are serving their institutional donors' political objectives, the successful outcome of their operations is linked to the success of the wider political objectives of their patrons. As such, they require their donors to contribute to their security in two ways. First they request that donors provide them with enough funding so that private security companies can be used. A Security Director working for a Utilitarian organization has revealed that in one instance: "the annual operating budget of the Security department is USD 700 000 but if you include in it the contracts with PSCs, it is close to six million."[134] As will be disclosed in the next section, very few aid agencies have the funding – and the will – to spend such a significant amount of money on (outsourced) security. Secondly, Utilitarian organizations also request that armed forces of the same country of origin of their institutional donors provide them security directly. For instance in Afghanistan, while many respondents said that they were engaging directly with the Taliban and insurgents at local level to negotiate safe access to vulnerable populations, an interviewee working for the Utilitarian IRD explained that "part of our strategy is to be close to the US militaries; they go to a village, secure it and we come behind to provide development."[135] Despite "doing our best to provide Afghan faces", he openly admitted that they were *de facto* participating in the counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy, without any consideration for the humanitarian values and reasons underpinning them. It is then not surprising that, in contrast to the other NGOs selected for this research, IRD has not published any report denouncing the confusion between aid and military actors. Similarly in Haiti, much of the food distribution organized by the WFP in the aftermath of the devastating 2010 earthquake was done under the protection of US armed forces. In both cases, interviewees working for Deontological and Solidarist organizations have been extremely critical of such security practices.

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[134] Interview 142.
[135] The interviewee insisted in remaining anonymous.

The present section has highlighted how threats against an aid agency's security can be divided between direct and indirect threats: while direct threats are constructed through processes of socialization, indirect threats are the products of securitization processes. This section has further shown that many of the threats against aid agencies are being constructed according to the identity of the referent object of security. As such, threats are not being constructed in the same way by Deontological, Solidarists or Utilitarians. Threat perception is shaped by aid agency identity and, in turn, contributes subtly to making some dimensions of this identity more salient.

5.3. Understanding how the identity of IAAs shapes dominant representations in security management

According to Fierke, "[w]hile realists view interests as material and objective phenomena, social constructivists tend to argue that interest flows from identity and is thus not first and foremost a material property" (Fierke, p. 80, 2007). Klotz and Lynch note that, "[f]or constructivists, interests are the product of constitutive processes that lead people, as individuals and members of collectivities, to synthesize a wide range of needs and desires" (Klotz and Lynch, p.104, 2007). Because interests are here limited to aid agencies' preferences in security, this thesis will then study how aid agencies conceive and manage their security. Klotz and Lynch further argue that "[l]ike identities, interests are neither self-evident nor static; their formation is a process that needs to be explained. Conceptualizing interests as the product of interactions and institutionalized identities presumes intersubjective content" (Klotz and Lynch, p.95, 2007).

This section will identify the dominant representations of humanitarian security and examine further how they are shaped – but not determined – by IAA identity. It will first stress aid agencies' preferences in security management, and secondly reveal under what conditions these are (re)defined.

5.3.1. International aid agencies' preferences in security management

Security has costs. Whether an agency builds fences or relationships, both of these approaches to security require resources. Implementing security measures implies spending resources, whether in terms of wealth, personnel or time – and usually all three. Security also involves trade-offs, either when these resources are limited or when security measures affect an organization's ability to operate. For instance and as observed by the author in both Afghanistan and Haiti, the balance between security restrictions and freedom of movement is hard to find in dynamic conflict–prone environments. Similarly, the balance between the community work of an organization and the necessity to protect its staff sometimes appears to be a challenge – in particular when the 'fog of war' does not allow a proper identification of threats. Zedner explains rightly that:

> … the pursuit of security presupposes threats against which one must be secured. And just as it presupposes those who must be protected against threat, so it presupposes those who threaten. The pursuit, to say nothing of the attainment, of security necessarily implies the identification and exclusion of this latter group. ... The irony is that the promise of community safety and social solidarity is bought only at the cost of social exclusion (Zedner, p.211, 2000).

Social exclusion, another cost of security, may ultimately challenge the real or self-proclaimed legitimacy of IAAs where it is based on their close relation to communities.

Security costs however, are also opportunity costs; when these costs are well accounted for, the resources they require are eventually balanced by the outcomes they provide – i.e. the prevention or mitigation of harmful events and the eventual realization of aid projects. This is particularly true for incidents where costs are often high, unanticipated and where handling of a particular incident offers a limited choice of acceptable options. For agencies operating in war zones or crime–prone areas, security management should be a necessity – even though this view is actually rather recent among aid workers. Infact the 'classical' approach to security, whereby identified threats are eliminated, is hardly satisfactory – or even achievable – for aid agencies. Confronted by their own dilemmas, they have had to gradually develop their own security concepts and practices.

What, in terms of security, do international aid agencies want? Donini *et al* argue that:

> … aid agencies have a mix of physical security and human security preoccupations. The first relate to personal safety of staff and agency assets, the second to the security of the persons and communities with whom the agencies interact. These twin concerns are multi-layered, with significant differences both within and between country situations (Donini *et al*, p.59, 2005).

Humanitarian security management however focuses mainly on an aid agencies' and not on a populations' security – which is the preserve of human security and IAAs' *protection*'s[136] activities. The paradox – or conceptual myopia – is that in complex environments, no one is truly secure unless all are secure. An MSF staff rightly recalled that: "we talk of aid workers' security, but we tend to forget the protection of civilian populations; we'd rather need to remind states of their responsibilities, and build their legitimacy and their capacity [to protect their populations]."[137]

Donini *et al* explain further that:

> [n]ot surprisingly, aid agencies consider providing assistance as a factor contributing to improved security. Conversely, the denial or withholding of assistance is viewed as creating insecurity. This is clearly the case in Afghanistan where large swathes of the countryside are off-limits to aid workers because of unacceptable risks (Donini *et al*, p.59, 2005).

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[136] The concept first arose in 1998 when the Secretary-General identified protecting civilians in situations of conflict as a "humanitarian imperative". Civilians, as well as wounded combatants and prisoners of war are the focus of these protection activities. (UNSG, 1998).

[137] Interview 23.

Aid agency interest in security is defined by the fact that they want to be able to safely respond to the needs of vulnerable populations. They don't simply want to be safe. They want to be safe *while responding to populations' needs*. There is little use in being safe if they cannot implement their activities: not only would they not be providing aid, but their legitimacy, and ultimately their survival, would also be questioned if such inaction persisted. Responding to the needs of the population is not a necessary guarantee of security since populations may have other (social, religious, political etc.) needs that aid agencies can't respond to directly, yet it contributes in fostering a more quiescent environment. This proved particularly true in Haiti where parts of the Port-au-Prince population remained restless until they benefited from aid projects.

Human and material resources are necessary for a safe provision of aid, but they are not enough. What is also needed is a *conception* of how these human and material resources are to be arranged in order to safely provide aid. Aid agencies for instance often raise concerns about threats to their humanitarian space – usually understood as the access and freedom for humanitarian organizations to assess and meet people's humanitarian needs. It is however clear today that the theoretical space that insulates aid workers is increasingly unsafe. It is hardly surprising that the paradigm of security that protects humanitarian actors is the focus of constant rethinking as will be revealed below. IAAs have gradually developed preferences on how their security should be conceptually and practically arranged. Given the specificity of their humanitarian nature, they need an understanding of security which both respects their ethos and is not too costly. This implies that security should enable rather than restrict their operations; should not harm or threaten any of their constituencies and beneficiaries; and should not jeopardize their reputation and their resources. Humanitarian security management in other words, inevitably embodies humanitarian aid agencies' cultural and social baggage. Comprehending humanitarian actors' interests in relation to security implies understanding how these are both being constructed and how they are evolving.

5.3.2. How and why have IAAs' interests developed: an evolution of dominant representations

It is not uncommon to meet aid workers who have been in the aid sector for two or three decades rambling about how things used to be better. A minority of them share bitter views on how their organization's security ought to be managed. Although commendable, it is striking to hear that their views are based on a conception of security which clearly does not take into consideration the dramatic contextual changes as well as the changes in the nature of the threats that their organization now faces. Despite the fact that there is no specific agreement on how aid agencies should ensure their security, trends have surfaced among the humanitarian community. It is possible to trace the aid workers' security thinking and practices, and identify how dominant representations have emerged, and alternative trends were left aside.

Aid agencies have always looked to protect themselves – the instauration of the Red Cross emblem was done precisely so that those providing help were visible to the warring parties and, as

such, not targeted. Most agencies' approach to security has been historically embodied by two elements: acceptance and 'common sense'. Acceptance implied that the aid programmes were implemented in conjunction, and with the consent of, the local communities and stakeholders. It was however not conceptually defined and relations with communities were guided more by interpersonal skills rather than formally included in what would later become 'project management cycles'. This view was typically, even if anecdotally, illustrated by lengthy discussions held over 'cups of tea'.[138]

The second aspect of this approach to security was that aid workers were encouraged, if not left, to use their gut feeling when taking care of their own and the programmes' protection. This was done with no guidelines, training or institutionalization of good practices, and despite the fact that managers were possibly lacking the requisite skills. While (the majority of) aid workers working for the main agencies now, cannot be described as 'sandal wearing', 'tree huggers' or 'pot smoking hippies'[139] (though they may have been described as such in a distant past) there is no doubt that they have only reticently entered into the realm of security management. Indeed, 'security' wasn't a word or a concept which was viewed favourably, as it was associated with the military and as such seen as opposing the nature of the aid work. Similarly, security precautions were easily superseded by the interests of the programmes. Although these approaches to security may seem naive to current readers immersed in the so-called 'risk society'[140], they also have to be put into context: this happened in the 1970s and 1980s, well before the decade identified with 'dirty wars' or 'complex emergencies'. Conditions on the ground were different, even if already challenging; aid workers tended to be more respected by parties to the conflict and the threats they were facing were generally of lesser complexity than the ones they face today. Also, apart from a handful of organizations, humanitarian action was seen as an adventure rather than a professional endeavour.[141] In addition, the limitations of means of communication between the field missions and their headquarters meant that aid workers in the field had greater autonomy and freedom: the relation to 'time' and to building relationships was necessarily different.

As discussed in Chapter One, the management of security by IAAs is recent and can be traced to the professionalization of the aid sector which steadily developed from the mid–1990s. This, in turn, led to a refining of humanitarian security management with an emphasis on coherent system development as opposed to an over reliance on 'gut instincts', 'common sense' or 'experience' (however valid these remain). This evolution can be depicted as a wave that has only gradually permeated the community – and which is still spreading. Four phases can be identified in this wave: the first phase consists of *disorientation* and can be said to have happened in the beginning to late 1990s. The second phase, which started approximately at the end of the 1990s, consists of the laying

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[138] Some authors later used such expression to name their book *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time* (Mortenson and Relin, 2006). In page 150, it is explained that the book's title comes from a Balti proverb: "The first time you share tea with a Balti, you are a stranger. The second time you take tea, you are an honored guest. The third time you share a cup of tea, you become family..."

[139] These are all commonly, even if ironically, heard designations.

[140] Ulrich Beck defines it as a society in which hazards and insecurities induced by modernization are dealt with in a systematic manner (Beck, 1992).

[141] Interviews 79, 91, 120, 152.

of the *foundations*. The early to the middle of the first decade of this century then saw an *institutionalization* of humanitarian security management and from the latter part of the decade, a period of both *harmonization* and *polarization* has begun. In reality these phases are not clear-cut – on the contrary, given the fact that the waves of humanitarian security are spreading unevenly, these phases are actually rather blurred. The dates are only used to provide an indication of the timeframe and underscore the evolution in the thinking and practices of IAAs.

5.3.2.1.The disorientation phase

The first phase, that of *disorientation,* corresponds to a period when aid agencies are said to have lost their naivety (Sørensen, 2006). Facing new and unprecedented challenges in the Balkans, Somalia, and central Africa, aid agencies' traditional landmarks became blurred. Aid workers were increasingly becoming victims of acts of violence; programmes were diverted by warring parties; and aid was accused of fuelling rather than appeasing conflicts (Rieff, 2002). Their values, attitudes and norms had been shaken by security incidents and forced them to adapt. In turn, it contributed to shaping aid agencies' identity by raising their self-perception as referent objects of security. For instance IAAs operating in Zaïre/DRC wondered what role they had in protecting victims of the Rwandan genocide (Avant, p.203, 2005). It was becoming evident that the management of security needed to be formalized, yet aid agencies struggled with the traditional conceptions of security, whereby enemies are identified and must be neutralized. Humanitarian organizations looked for a variety of new approaches, from which three main ones can be identified. Deborah Avant explains these thoroughly:

> *Some [aid agencies] chose to withdraw in the face of instability, exploitation and danger* – or at the very least to do no harm. This position held to the articulation of responsibilities in the ICRC 'Code of Conduct', in effect suggesting that NGO action was dependent on other actors – like states – fulfilling their responsibilities at some minimal level. If that was not the case, and efforts to help could end up hurting, NGOs should withdraw. *Others began to more actively consider traditional security options.* For instance, CARE Canada, in the wake of the Rwandan debacle, published a report entitled *Mean Times* advising that relief INGOs consider the hiring of PSCs (private security companies) directly to maintain 'humanitarian space'. Some went even further in developing this argument, calling the acceptance strategy and its 'apoliticism' untenable and arguing that NGOs, and the international community in general, must seize a more active role that aims to shoulder the 'responsibility to protect' when states shirk that responsibility. … The third – and now more prominent – approach to security within the NGO community did not accept the traditional view. While advocating the importance of remaining in the field *it also remained true to the principles within the classic acceptance doctrine* and cautioned against 'politicization' or enmity. … The key to NGO security, in this view, is to *avoid* taking a position as friend or foe, ally or enemy. Instead, NGOs should develop a pragmatic plan to insure their safety that rests on 'dialogue with all actors involved in or affecting the outcome of a given situation of conflict' (Avant, p.148, 2007. Emphasis added).

The three approaches described by Avant are *withdrawal*, *hardening* and *pragmatic engagement*. While this shows increasing differences in the way that aid agencies understand and manage security, similarities remain: none are free from trade-offs and costs; all need resources, and some need a particular expertise. From the late 1990s, a number of aid agencies – in particular Utilitarian organizations as will be shown in the next section – started to accept the idea that hiring 'security officers' was becoming a possibility. This however, wasn't easy to accept as it often meant recruiting former military (or, to a lesser extent, former law enforcement) personnel. It is still not fully accepted; as an MSF aid, interviewed in 2006, explained: "security responsibilities are not centralized upon one person but rather shared among many: security is collective and the responsibility shared. The term 'security officer' is anyway much too linked to a militaristic jargon."[142]

Some agencies stood their ground, arguing that the use of security officers was counterproductive. A few also argued that they should recruit anthropologists rather than security officers. As early as 1999 François Grunewald called for: "fewer security advisers, fewer fences, barbwires, guards, radios, bunker" and "more anthropologists, sociologists, more empathy, dialogue, explanations". He added that: "although sometimes necessary, defensive measures are a contradictory response to the spirit and ethics of humanitarian action, [while] security problems linked to a lack of knowledge of the contexts and understanding of mechanisms of violence can be avoided thanks to appropriate analytical means." One of his papers is a good illustration of this tension. "We absolutely need to avoid the UN manual 'Security in Somalia: a guide for United Nations International Staff'", he argues:

> Explanations on the socio-cultural context are limited to three pages and half and to a single map of Somalia's main clans. On the other hand, one finds 64 pages of advices on quasi-military procedures written in a tone which is hostile to Somali people. There is nothing to really understand the social and economic components of violence, nothing to appreciate the richness of the Somali culture and its extraordinary hospitality, nothing to support a positive socio-cultural view. Everything is put in defensive terms, which can only lead UN personnel on the field to adopt fearful or aggressive behaviours, which will then stimulate the aggressiveness of the Somali. Worse, the guide does not refer to developing the relations with national colleagues in times of crisis, or on how and why manage a team through an 'inter-clanic' balance; there are no advices on analysing current or future tensions, or on the importance of respectful dialogue with 'the Elders' ... In few words, this book rather endangers those whom it is theoretically supposed to protect (Grunewald, p.20, 1999. Author's own translation).

In line with Grunewald's approach, Mike Gent would later provide some recommendations originating from psychologists – rather than security officers – to aid workers on how to better weigh security risks (Gent, 2002).

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[142] Interview 21.

5.3.2.2. The foundations phase

The three aforementioned competing approaches described by Avant were theorised and framed into what was called the 'security triangle'; this was the 'foundations phase'. Acknowledging that aid agencies' security could not be ensured solely through an acceptance approach and that two more approaches were necessary: protection and deterrence.

In the late 1990s, Brabant's Good Practice Review 8 (GRP8) also underscored that even if aid agencies' security practices have ameliorated the situation, there is much room for further improvement. "What is missing is a *management* approach to security", which "is about controlling, or rather 'reducing', risk to a level considered acceptable" (Van Brabant, 2000, respectively p.9 and p.4. Emphasis added). This manual was very much the product of its time. As an interviewee explained "in 1996–1997, a working group, gathering around ten people [including the interviewee], was created to implement the OFDA grant provided to InterAction through its Security Task Force (which was the predecessor of today's Security Advisory Group); several NGOs such as Save the Children, CARE and World Vision were part of this Task Force. InterAction and RedR organized two security trainings accordingly, once in the US and once in the UK. The GPR8 is the verbatim of this whole effort."[143] The interviewee also added that "one of the recommendations of the trainings was to have full time headquartered Security Focal Point and to include a sensitisation of NGOs' executives. That happened in 2000, with the participation of US CEO to the executive seminar."

This opened the way to an *institutionalization* of humanitarian security management. Avant rightly recalls that "[w]ith the philosophical basis of an NGO security strategy in place (the security triangle), a good deal of effort has been focused on developing security management language, processes and best practices that can be diffused ... and institutionalized" (Avant, p.151, 2007).

5.3.2.3. The institutionalization phase

Security had traditionally been the responsibility of the field personnel, which meant that security management was framed at the operational level and consequently lacked strategic thinking. Two main *modus operandi* were then developed for practice. The first one, usually known as the community–based one, focuses on working hand-in-hand with the beneficiary communities.[144] It implies that communities contribute to protecting the aid workers.[145]

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[143] Interview 25.

[144] An internal document to MSF named "Proximity or the art of drinking a cup of tea" explains in a rather light way that "We have more and more the tendency to be scotched to our computer to make nice report...with graphs or brilliant power point presentations... while the real live is outside. And when we go out of our well protected compound, its to jump in our Toyota, make a tour at the health centre or hospital and come back in the comfortable safety of our compound with the data we collected. … Don't hesitate to go and walk around, visit the market and the places where the people are living, listen to the people, explain who you are and why you are there ... and drink a cup of tea ! You will collect a lot of useful information and discover the reality hidden behind the figures but you will also create a link with the population. Now, if they need help, they will come to you... and the day you need help, they will also come to you... because they know you" (MSF, Undated, b, p.1).

[145] One might question how communities themselves victims of violence can do so, yet the answer lies in the fact that communities, more aware of the local dynamics that may endanger the aid agencies, inform and advise aid workers on the steps to follow to avoid or prevent violence. Such an approach however rests on the assumptions that communities have an interest in the implementation of the projects, which itself implies that these must be relevant and inclusive. Unfortunately this

The second *modus operandi*, the system–based approach, emphasizes the need to follow common standards and procedures; to have security policies; to update country security plans and to conduct formal risks assessments. The system–based approach is usually replicable and, has as its basis, the principle that agencies need to be protected from threats, or neutralize them. The United Nations as well as InterAction, the largest coalition of US – based international NGOs have, for instance, both adopted a set of Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) which serve as a basis for developing institutional security strategies.[146] Since 2002, the MOSS is mandatory for the members of the UN family, and from 2006 NGO members of InterAction have to certify that they are 'MOSS–compliant' or are working towards it. The InterAction MOSS standards are straightforward to read and easy to remember, and act both as guidelines and objectives. Yet they can also be limited on occasion, as they don't always take into consideration the diversity of contexts in which agencies are operating; though these standards usually specify that they should be adaptable to the specificities of every context. Similarly, World Vision has developed a user-friendly tool to asses the advantages and risks of interacting with armed actors (World Vision, Undated) in each situation. All of these tools emphasize an interplay between context and principle; each requires an interpretation of the principles within the specificities of the context, thus opening room for competing applications.

Although the two approaches are sometimes depicted as contradictory (Bruderlein, 2004; Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006), aid agencies are increasingly implementing a mix of both. One interviewee explained that: "a good mix of acceptance–based and system–based are needed; we focus on acceptance in our training, and we traditionally were all about community–based approach until the end of the 1990s. But new staff wanted more accountability, so it has evolved into a more system–based one."[147] A balance however, is difficult to reach because, in the words of the Director of Security of SC-US, "MOSS is not an acceptance oriented document – it's not even talking about it."[148] As another interviewee summarized it: "procedures and policies must be followed but context specific measures are also necessary – and help establishing better relationships between the headquarters and the field. Indeed, an authoritarian approach to security or a totally community based approach would not work."[149] Indicative of the differences between IAAs, among the five selected NGOs in this thesis, only CARE and IRD at one end of the Spectrum have developed MOSS, while MSF and OGB at the other end, haven't. SC-UK on its side, sits in the middle as it has developed a set of 14 'standards' which are close to MOSS "but are rather 'principles' so that they can be contextualised and interpreted."[150]

Bruderlein and Gassman (p.87, 2006) have subsequently called for the implementation of an integrated security management system which, taking the best of both approaches is "a standards–based, centralized planning and policy structure that provides guidance regarding a set of security

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is not always the case and aid agencies sometimes wrongly assume that they are being accepted simply because they are delivering projects.
[146] The UN have also developed Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards (MORSS).
[147] Interview 147.
[148] Interview 139.
[149] Interview 138.
[150] Interview 139.

sectors located at the periphery" that aims at responding to the dynamic sequence of factors and events that give rise to insecurity.

As a 2004 ECHO driven report highlighted: "relying on acceptance to generate security for humanitarian organizations is problematic in many contexts, and requires more skilful management of perceptions than many humanitarian organizations currently afford it" (Barnett, p.2, 2004). Similarly, when asked if aid agencies were accepted in Afghanistan and Haiti, most aid workers interviewed in this research claimed it was the case – yet rapidly qualified their assertion. Acceptance can be granted with efforts made, but it can then be lost rapidly; acceptance is often very localized and easier to obtain at the field sites than en route to these. It was also noted that while aid agencies claim to be accepted within the areas in which they work, it may be difficult for them to start projects in new areas: local dynamics are unfamiliar to aid workers and aid organizations themselves are unknown to the stakeholders in the area – agencies must deal with the disconnect and suspicion from both sides that such situations incur. Further to this, frequent economic and social divides between urban and rural areas mean that their respective populations react differently to outsiders' assistance. In addition to this, in contexts such as the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Sri Lanka, or Afghanistan, there are international or local legal prohibitions against interacting with opposing groups, in particular in the wake of counter-terrorism legislation.

The 2004 ECHO report further states that:

… there is broad consensus within the humanitarian sector that security management should aim for the acceptance of the organization by all actors, be it context-–based, and managed at the field level. The exception to this in some ways is the UN, which tends towards protective security measures, has a centralised security body, UNSECOORD [the former UN security agency], and uses a system of Minimum Operating Security Standards which largely standardises security management across the organization (Barnett, p.5, 2004).

This seems even truer since the 2007 bombing of the UN compound in Algiers and the subsequent nomination in May 2009 of the new Under-Secretary General (USG) for Safety and Security, Gregory Starr. An interviewee reported attending a senior security meeting in autumn 2009 at which the USG unofficially explained that the UN "does not use acceptance as a strategy of security [anymore]".[151] Such a statement underscores the paradox of the current phase, which is dominated by both *harmonization* and *polarization*.

5.3.2.4.   *The harmonization and polarization phase*

The harmonization of humanitarian security management is illustrated by the fact that the security strategy of today's main aid agencies is organized in a similar way to the 'security

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[151] Interview 139.

management framework' advocated by the GPR8 (Chapter Two). All of the interviewees stated that their organization was iguided or somewhat influenced by this framework.

In line with these findings, a recent study of NGOs' security documentation, in which Rowley *et al* compared twenty NGOs' security policies and manuals to the InterAction MOSS (Rowley *et al*, 2009), underscores further the harmonization of IAAs' practices.

Although security practices have ameliorated the situation, there is still room for further improvement. The aforementioned 2004 ECHO report states for instance that:

> … risk analysis – the process of identifying what kind of threats different staff members may face in the course of their work and devising measures to reduce those risks or staff members' vulnerability to them – is widely understood to be the cornerstone of security planning. However, in practice it is often overlooked (Barnett, p.4, 2004).

Several interviewees admitted that their organization's security procedures were not always respected by the personnel; that resources allocated to security were insufficient; that incidents were still frequently the results of wrongdoing by personnel or lack of understanding of their environment; that security training of their personnel was insufficient and training of the local partners often non-existent; that accountability was limited including after a security incident; or that information within and among aid agencies wasn't circulating enough.[152] In addition, a few also stated that their organization would not or had not resisted donor pressure to get engaged in emergencies before having appropriately assessed existing risks.[153]

It is clear that despite a harmonization of security thinking and practices, and despite several inter-agency efforts and initiatives to improve security management at both field and headquarters' level; further awareness raising, behavioural changes and allocation of resources are necessary. This is particularly true, since and in spite of, the harmonization, a *polarization* exists between aid agencies and aid workers on how security ought to be managed.

Two schools of thoughts can be contrasted here: a *'process based'* one versus a *'situational judgment'* one. These schools of thoughts are not so much the product of strategies, but rather *mindsets* which are both innate and nurtured within each organization. The former focuses on reducing uncertainty, while the latter advocates for context–specific decisions. The former emphasizes rules while the latter fosters a shared mindset. The difference eventually lies in the level of responsibility which is *effectively* given to aid workers on the ground. While Country directors of two different NGOs may have the same responsibilities on paper, one will be encouraged to meet warlords for negotiating access while the other will be instructed to leave OCHA to do it on the aid agencies' behalf. As one interviewee put it "in the first case [the process based], which is very Anglo-Saxon, you

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[152] Interviews 142, 144, 146, 148, 150, 151.
[153] Interview 143.

work with ISO norms, you 'tick the boxes', you read a document and sign the document. In the second case, decisions are made on the basis of models of reasoning and analytical tools – whereby people are taught to ask the right questions at the right moment."[154] These two organizational mindsets lead to a great many differences when it comes to security practices in the field. The 'situational judgment' school of thinking fosters an approach to security that is contextual, and in which the responsibilities of managing security are shared. In other words, security is 'political' (as an integral part of the programmes being implemented) and decentralized. The 'process based' school of thinking, in contrast, cultivates an approach to security that is more technical and centralized - as will be highlighted in the next sub-section. While the former tends to consider openness and reflection as important security elements, the latter tends to put more emphasis on self-defence and discipline.

The differentiation between these two mindsets reflects the distinction between aid agencies' ethoses. For 'situational judgment organizations', choices will be driven by a variety of elements such as contextual dynamics or the organization's adherence to humanitarian principles; while the choices of 'process based organizations' will be driven by the necessity to avoid risks. Typically, Deontological organizations such as the ICRC, MSF or PU value situational judgment while Utilitarian ones such as CHF, IRD or the WFP emphasis processes. Solidarist organizations like CARE or SC–UK sit in the middle: these agencies are more process based yet their national staff, and particularly their field staff, are often in positions of situational judgment. These varying approaches to security were observed several times in both Afghanistan and Haiti. For instance, personnel from Utilitarian organizations – for example UNDP staff – would have to request an authorization from the security office before any field trip, while personnel from Deontological organizations – say ACF – would first do the field trip and then report its results to their managers or headquarters.

As underscored in the previous chapter, the interplay between an organization's structure and its agents ensures that employees internalize mindsets and reproduce them in their daily practices. This in turn, also contributes to their agencies reproducing the same approaches to security. Consequently, it emerges that each mindset contributes to gradually accentuating differences in identity that exist between agencies. Depending on which school of thought aid workers are immersed in, the operational choices they make will be different. Choices in turn, confirm aid agencies in the aptness of their approach to security management. Using Grunewald's earlier example of the UN security guide for Somalia, staff facing an incident in this context would theoretically react differently depending on the school of thought they are influenced by. While a staff immersed in a 'process based organization' would have concluded that to avoid the incident, they should have followed the guide more strictly, a staff member immersed in a 'situational judgment organization' would deduce that they had not put enough emphasis on understanding the environment or enough effort into engaging with the various stakeholders.

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[154] Interview 134.

Aid agencies have always sought to protect their staff and assets against threats. But approaches have evolved over time, eventually leading to a paradoxical situation whereby aid agencies have harmonized their security framework; yet, their operational choices are often polarized in practice. The implications of the current approaches to security will be discussed in the next chapters. While the present sub-section has highlighted how aid agencies preferences are clearly various and constantly changing, the next sub-section will discuss under what conditions aid agencies redefine their interests.

5.3.3. How do aid agencies redefine their security interests?

Aid agencies preferences in security management have been, and are, defined (and redefined) by both the external environment and an organization's internal dynamics. Given the turmoil aid agencies have faced - particularly during the 1990s - it would be surprising if they had not evolved in reaction to, and in a few cases, in anticipation of these events. This section will then develop two levels of analysis regarding the conditions under which IAAs think and (re)define their security interests. First it will look at the epistemic community which permeates the sector and allows cross–fertilization among agencies; second it will characterize the power relationships within agencies. In developing these two levels of analysis however, the present section will focus on dynamics occurring at organizational level. As such, an emphasis will be placed on studying the dynamics at headquarters as opposed to field dynamics, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

5.3.3.1.   An analysis at the level of the humanitarian security epistemic community

Even if humanitarian security professionals have disagreements, they nevertheless share a real sense of belonging to the same community – above and beyond the boundaries between individual agencies. An anecdotal yet revealing illustration of this is that the author witnessed a number of times, in both Afghanistan and Haiti, that when security coordination meetings were organized by humanitarian security professionals on the ground, they frequently asked people who do not work for aid agencies to leave the meeting, even though these individuals might be working as security officers for a private company or media. A reason for this is that security-related information dubbed sensitive is typically shared during such meetings. The audience is automatically considered as trustworthy, but only if it is composed of security officers working for not-for-profit organizations.

As explained in Chapter Three, an epistemic community is defined as: "a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy–relevant knowledge within that domain or issue–area" (Haas, 1992, quoted in Bollettino, 2008). For Bollettino,

> [e]pistemic communities share common normative beliefs and common perspectives on causal mechanisms and notions of validity and adopt common policy positions. These networks can facilitate cooperation among disparate actors facing uncertain outcomes by identifying the complex inter-linkages between issues and by formulating policy alternatives. (Bollettino, p.272, 2008. Emphasis original).

While Bollettino called for a greater role for these networks of professionals, one could argue that these were already playing an important role – one that has since expanded further.

Networks of humanitarian security professionals are constituted at both the global level such as: the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF), the Inter Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) or the Security Management Initiative (SMI); and the local level such as: the Initiative ONG Sécurité (IOS) in Haiti or the Afghanistan NGO Security Office (ANSO). Some are institutionalized and function as independent organizations, while others are informal and consist simply of regular meetings and information sharing. Some of the networks are limited to United Nations agencies, others are open to all aid agencies (Saving Lives Together (SLT) initiative) and a further number are limited to NGOs only (ANSO). Lastly, a few networks exist only virtually, through websites such as *NGO Security* and *Patronus Analytical* – yet they have proved useful in sharing thoughts, information and documentation. Acknowledging that aid workers can benefit from academic research on humanitarian security, several of these inter-agency collaborations engage with the academic sector and at times facilitate the connection between academia and practitioners. Also, independent humanitarian security consultants revolve around these networks in mutually beneficial exchanges. At field level, networks of humanitarian security professionals are now commonly set-up at the onset of each emergency response. Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti for instance, security professionals were sharing information even before meeting on the ground.

It is notable that the EISF was created by Solidarists and Deontological NGOs (including SC-UK and OGB – later joined by MSF) in recognition of the fact that they did not feel represented by the US–based InterAction Security Advisory Group (SAG), composed essentially of Utilitarian and some Solidarist agencies (including CARE US and IRD).[155] This does not indicate a formal split of the epistemic community along the lines of Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian agencies, but underscores different visions of security, including differences inside the community of humanitarian security technical experts.

Another indicator of these differences in approaching security is the creation of an NGO Security Association by InterAction's SAG. Funded by USAID–OFDA, the aim of the association is, among others, to "create a certification regime for security professionals [and] create a career path for NGO security professionals" (InterAction, p.1, 2009). Although commendable, many Deontological and Solidarist NGOs in particular were critical of the project because its focus on the technical aspects of security were too narrow. As a consequence and in order to garner their support, the SAG eventually had to rephrase the project to account for these criticisms.[156]

Epistemic communities do contribute to the harmonization of practices but this does not necessarily affect the aforementioned polarization of IAAs' approaches to security. The reason for this

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[155] The author had the privilege to witness the creation of EISF and to take part in its expansion.
[156] This information is taken from internal communications among aid agencies and is complemented with the author's personal experience.

is that, while harmonization is often of a technical nature, the polarization is the result of political differences that cannot be tackled by security experts alone.

All of the humanitarian security networks are effectively linked through a non-centric web of regular and direct communications between members, some of whom participate in several of these networks. While each network has its own *raison d'être*, objectives, resources, and its own dynamic; they often engage in similar activities such as information sharing, security coordination and support, and all act as trust–building mechanisms. In addition, some also collect relevant data to improve their analytical capacity, they provide security and crisis management support, trainings, telecommunications and offer themselves for representation and liaison purposes as well as being a platform for lobbying and advocacy. In Afghanistan, the presence of ANSO for instance helps its NGO members not to have to interact directly with the armed forces; this is an added advantage for both the armed forces who prefer one interlocutor rather than three-hundred, and for the NGOs who then avoid taking risks by going to military bases and being seen as interacting with the military.

While (neo)realists in International Relations argue that states and organizations alike are driven by self-interest, the daily successes of the epistemic humanitarian security community prove that the (neo)realist view is not always true. There is little doubt that each aid agency is, to some degree, driven by its own interests, yet these networks effectively allow them to overcome suspicion through cooperation and reap mutual gains. This is particularly evident when aid workers' lives are said to have been saved because critical information or services were shared in a timely manner; or when each aid agency member of a network economizes on spending by sharing the cost of a given service.

The atypical character of such processes should not be understated. An organization that has just been victim of a kidnapping has little interest in informing others about it.[157] The organization is subsequently overwhelmed by the need to recover its staff as quickly and (usually) discretely as possible, and engaging with other aid agencies may be seen as an unnecessary burden. It also does not want to communicate any information before the family of the victims and relevant authorities are informed; it does not want to be confronted with media enquiry, and possibly criticism, that the kidnapping is the result of poor security management; and it is usually contractually forbidden by its insurance company (if it has one) to share any information about insurance or payment of ransom, etc. Yet, despite these severe constraints, the author witnessed repeatedly, at both HQ and field levels, that a minimum amount of information about a kidnapping case is rapidly shared among a trusted network of humanitarian security professionals (usually on a 'need-to-know' basis). Indeed sharing such critical information has proven crucial in many instances, allowing other agencies to immediately take appropriate measures in order to avoid facing similar incidents. These kinds of

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[157] As the anonymous Moderator of the NGO Security Blog put it, "Staff abductions are very complex, emotionally charged, and potentially life threatening events" (NGO Security Blog, 2009, website).

dynamics are typical of the way the immediate interests of an organization are being supplanted by overlapping and complementary goals of individuals and groups across agency boundaries.

These epistemic dynamics are a strong element of IAAs' harmonization of their security framework. For example the original author of the GPR8 has just updated it, but an Advisory Board of NGO security representatives was constituted to overlook and orientate the work. Beyond security professionals, epistemic communities allow agencies to be nodes in a multiplicity of networks, which gradually contributes to cross-fertilization and transfer of ideas, norms, and practices across agencies. There is for instance, anecdotal evidence that the year long research on NGOs' legal accountability by the Security Management Initiative (D'Aprile, 2009) led several organizations to pay more attention to their responsibilities toward staff.[158]

Networks however, are not to be taken for granted, especially as several initiatives to develop humanitarian security collaboration mechanisms have failed (Bickley, 2006). For instance the International Committee to Protect Aid Workers set-up in 1998, and the 1998 "Project for a humanitarian security network" were both short-lived and remained unknown to the wider public." A commonality in these failed attempts is that the initial momentum was lost, either due to lack of funding, lack of commitment and personal investment, or personality issues. Further barriers to security collaboration such as diversity in security approach, limited governance, suspicion and interference by authorities, staff recruitment and retention problems, and competing priorities and limited resources have also been identified by Shaun Bickley (2006).

This did not discourage the PMSC Control Risks from writing a proposal in 2006 to set-up a security collaborative mechanism in Aceh which was sent to DfID for funding. In the words of an interviewee working for the company, "we wrote a proposal as a benchmark to DfID, knowing that they won't fund it. The idea was to create a debate – and even though the proposal wasn't a competitive concept, it could have been useful; PSCs could provide security coordination, even if some NGOs would always refuse to be part of it."[159] Although the actual reasons leading to the refusal of funding the proposal are unknown, there is anecdotal evidence that DfID did not consider the provider as a legitimate representative of the aid community.[160]

Similarly, the Joint NGO Emergency Preparedness Initiative (JNEPI) - created prior to the 2003 Iraq war and indirectly supported by the US armed forces - quickly fell into near irrelevance since most of the aid agencies refused to operate under the umbrella of the US military, and it was soon outperformed by the newly created NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI). To encourage this move, a number of well-established agencies had called on "all NGOs operating in Iraq to contact NCCI at their earliest convenience, become members, and *actively participate in ensuring this body is truly representative of collective NGO interests and concerns*" (UNOHCI, 2003. Emphasis added).[161]

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[158] The evidence was informally noticed while the author was coordinating the European Interagency Security Forum.
[159] Interview 9.
[160] Interview 33.
[161] For more information see Hansen (2007a).

Significantly, the NGOs that founded the JNEPI were all Utilitarian with a few Solidarists[162], while the NCCI was created primarily by Deontologicals with a few Solidarists.[163]

Lastly, on a wider scale, individuals try at times to worm their way into the aid sector without really understanding it. A striking example is the case of "Stormhaven: a new idea in field security", a short-lived not-for-profit security collaborative proposal. Former Canadian soldiers offered to provide NGOs with training and equipment as well as close protection and other armed services for "little or no costs." The problem is that beyond an array of typographic errors and poor editing which may lead one to wonder whether this design was supposed to please 'sandal wearing hippies', the initiative explained that "We will also actively pusue [*sic*] and aprehend [*sic*] persons indicted by the ICC in or near our operational areas" and "endeavor to introduce non-lethal technologies [in order] to deal humainly [*sic*] with child soldiers while still protecting threatened populations from them."[164] Unsurprisingly, an NGO security advisor replied "Aprehending [*sic*] persons indicted by the ICC is of course a great objective, but it is incompatible with humanitarian mandate and objective." Although naively expressed, this initiative is representative of the views shared among security professionals, who typically do not understand the tenets of humanitarian action and only see it as a part of a vast smorgasbord of dynamics that 'do good'. As will be discussed in the next chapter, these kinds of views are frequent among security contractors.

These three attempts clearly illustrate that any outsider attempting to contribute to humanitarian security networks must be seen as legitimate by insiders, and abide by aid agencies' codes and cultural references. Epistemic communities are limited to entities who share common normative beliefs and common perspectives. But for the networks not to lose their relevance, outsiders' views and an open attitude to diversity are also necessary so that cross-fertilization does not end up in congenital biases.

The humanitarian security professionals comprise an epistemic community that is constituted from a variety of interrelated networks, which cover all aspects of security management. This epistemic community then plays a key role in the diffusion of ideas, values and norms; and as such, contributes greatly to the harmonization of IAAs' approaches to security, but does not necessarily affect the polarization of certain practices. The reason for this is that aid agency approaches to security are deeply engrained in each organization's specific identity and experiences and, as such, are of a political rather than a simply technical nature. Changes may occur but only gradually and in the long-term.

5.3.3.3.   *An analysis at the level of the agency*

In order to understand under what conditions aid agency preferences in security management develop, one must also look at internal power dynamics of agencies. Given the various aid agencies'

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[162] The five foundational members were IRC, Save the Children US, IMC, Mercy Corps, and World Vision (SC, Undated).
[163] The author had the privilege to participate in the early stages of the NCCI expansion.
[164] The concept was posted on an aid workers' information–sharing website (Williamray, 2009, website).

historical reluctance to get into security management and to recruit security officers, it is not surprising that this recruitment, and the subsequent interactions with the security officer, may be loaded. Tensions are sometimes perceptible before position becomes open, when managers debate the necessity of having a security officer or not. The arguments in favour of having an expert is that they will develop security strategy and policies; support the organization when crises occur; and be the cornerstone for building an organizational security culture. The arguments against this are: the reallocation of resources that the new position requires; or the risk of recruiting former military personnel with little understanding of the humanitarian ethos who will inevitably clash with their colleagues if they do not internalize the aid workers' mindset. Similarly and even if the security officer comes with a prior humanitarian background, tensions may still exist simply because staff within the agencies continue refusing to accept the need for security personnel. A security advisor who found himself in this situation explained that although the colleagues around him accepted him the board members were still opposed to him on the basis that the position should not exist in their view; this was in spite of the fact that he proved crucial in resolving a case of kidnapping soon after his arrival.[165] Significantly, he is being employed by a Deontological organization.

In the case of this research, 14 out of the 24 interviewees working as headquarter-based security managers did *not* come from a military or law enforcement background. Among the remaining 10, while only two were working for Deontological organizations, four were working for Solidarists and four with Utilitarians. This holds true if one looks at the five selected NGOs: while the heads of security of MSF and OGB have civilian backgrounds, the security managers of CARE and IRD were former-military and police officers. SC-UK, as usual, sits in the middle: its first head of security had a military background, but was later replaced by someone with a civilian profile.

The creation of a head of security positions at headquarter level has only spread gradually, starting with Utilitarian organizations and generally moving along the Spectrum. While Save the Children US created its position in 2002, IRC did so in 2003, and CARE International and IMC in 2006. Within Solidarist organizations, Tearfund created their position in 2005–6, Save the Children UK and Plan International in 2006 and Trocaire in 2007. Among Deontological agencies, ACF and the British Red Cross created their head of security positions in 2007 and MSF–Belgium in 2008. Two notable exceptions though are the ICRC (Deontological), whose Security Unit was created as early as 1994, and IRD (Utilitarian) whose was created in 2008. These exceptions however are to be qualified. For the ICRC "[w]hen the Security Unit attached to the Department of Operations was established …, an essential precondition set by operational field managers that responsibility for security management would not be taken away from them" (Krähenbühl, p.509, 2004). This eventually contributed to reinforcing ICRC's preferences for a 'situational judgment' organizational mindset. IRD was still a young organization in the early 2000s as it was only created in 1998. This explains how the process of maturation into accepting the idea of having a head of security and being able to fund it occurred only recently. Altogether, this gradual creation of head of security positions along the

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[165] Interview 146.

Spectrum is revealing of the initial reluctance felt by many Solidarist and Deontological organizations in particular. These organizations struggled with the idea of 'outsourcing' security to an expert, even if he/she is a member of staff.[166] This echoes concerns that such a move could contribute to lessening the sense of responsibility towards security felt amongst the remaining staff.

The title given, as well as the position offered in the organization's chart, are revealing of the way an agency understands security management. Typically, a 'Security Director' will have a more prominent positioning than a 'Security Advisor'. In broad terms, while the former can make mandatory decisions, the latter provides only recommendations. Interestingly, among the security positions occupied by the 24 aforementioned interviewees, all of the positions named by Deontological organizations were either 'advisor', 'delegate' or 'security focal point', which tend to give a rather low profile to the position. In contrast, all of the security positions named by Utilitarian organizations were 'director' or 'chief'. As per the Solidarist organizations, one was named 'coordinator', three 'director', four 'manager', and five 'advisor'. Similarly, in the case of the five selected NGOs, MSF-B had a 'Security Focal Point'; OGB a 'Security Adviser'; SC-UK a 'Head of Global Safety and Security'; CARE a 'Director of Safety and Security'; and IRD a 'Director of Staff Security'. This approach to naming the security position is another indicator of an agencies' ethos and subsequent views on security management. The evolution of the naming along the spectrum of agencies emphasises the correlation between an organizations' location on the spectrum and their views on security – noting that the closer an organization is to the Utilitarian end of the spectrum, the more likely it is to have a firm stance on security. It also highlights the relative level of *effective* responsibility which is left to field staff: while those working in Utilitarian organizations have a 'director' who provides them with commands, those working in Deontological ones are guided in their own situational judgment by an 'advisor'. These kinds of dynamics reinforce the dichotomy exposed earlier between the 'situational judgment' and 'process–based' organizations.

Also important in understanding an organization's approach to security management is the relationship between security managers and Country Directors (CDs). This relationship is critical as Country Directors are eventually those resisting or pushing for a security culture at field level. Even though the security manager is an employee of the same organization, he/she is often only seen as an 'external' who is not implementing or managing security on a daily basis at field level. Can the headquarters–based head of security contact the field–based CDs directly and enforce a security decision or does he/she have to go through the Operations Director or Regional Director for instance? Some interviewees shared that they have continual issues with Country Directors who are unwilling to follow their recommendations. It's revealing of organizations' differing approaches to security that among the few interviewees who reported being able to *directly oblige* a CD to follow their recommendations, three out of four worked for Utilitarian organizations. As the Director of Security of one of these explained "I have a lot of weight in all our field operations. Our policy specifies that I can

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[166] It is also worth recalling that although major aid agencies now tend to recruit full–time headquarters–based security managers (and also field based security advisors/officers, and occasionally make use of security consultants) many agencies still have not created such positions, usually because of the lack of resources and in a few cases, due to their ideology.

issue a security directive with very direct language, which I have used a few times; also, I'm involved in the performance evaluation of CDs and Programme Managers, whom I grade annually."[167] Most interviewees however stated that since they had no direct line–management responsibilities for CDs they needed to go through intermediaries. In the words of the MSF-Belgium Security Focal Point: "I don't have an operational mandate and can't tell a mission to 'not go there' for instance; I don't have a decision making role but a questioning role."[168] Yet again, these kind of organizational structures underscore different approaches to security across the Spectrum of aid agencies.

The location of a security position in the organizational chart, or the relationships built by the security manager within the agency, provide an indication of an organizations' attitude to security management. Several interviewees explained that the creation and support of their position has, in turn, had a positive impact on the organization's ability to deal with security issues. One interviewee explained that "our purpose is to enable the programmes to happen, and we achieve this through organizational change management – it's slower as we don't use the hammer, but it's more profound; there is a three year threshold: you work first with those willing to learn and because of this it will work and you can build on this success to attract more Country Directors to work with you: while the directors are supportive, the average staff member now also supports us."[169]

On many occasions, and even if the appointment of security manager is seen as a 'ticking-the-box' exercise, such a move effectively leads to the adoption of new policies and subsequent changes in beliefs, attitudes and norms. As an organization changes its attitude to security – from mere awareness to professional security management - this in turn, contributes to (re)producing values accordingly and in *gradually* shaping the organization's identity This remains true irrespective of an organization's location on the Spectrum: in the words of the IRD Director of Security, "in the beginning, it was staff concerns that brought leaders to consider investing in security, but now it's staff care as well as the dynamics set up by security management itself. We now feel better at what we do."[170] Similarly, the MSF-B HQ based Security Focal Point shared that: "there is still a culture/perception that the security manager is the one who forbids them doing what they want; so we are taking more collective decisions in particular when it comes to identifying the actors and risks and build a mitigating strategy accordingly. Such participatory process brings more ownership."[171]

This section has set out the processes through which some representations of humanitarian security become dominant, while others are gradually left aside. By doing so, it has demonstrated that the professionalization of IAAs' security management leads to a paradox where a harmonization and a polarization of security approaches are concomitantly observed. The internalization of either a

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[167] Interview 144.
[168] Interview 149.
[169] Interview 139.
[170] Interview 142.
[171] Interview 149.

'situational judgment' or 'process based' mindset then contributes to reproducing a certain approach to security. Each mindset in turn, contributes to gradually accentuating differences in identity that exist between agencies. In addition, this section has shown, through a study of agents and changes at two levels of analysis – epistemic and organizational – how aid agencies' preferences in security are (re)defined by their identity. It has revealed that their approaches to security are affected by interrelated dynamics occurring both externally and internally. Lastly, it has provided a body of evidence the contribution of which highlights the differences that exist between Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian approaches to security.

5.4. Conclusion

The objective of the chapter was to set out how aid agency representations of security and preferences in security management are shaped by their identity – and gradually shape this identity in turn.

The first section argued that aid agencies' approaches to security are shaped by both the values that drive each organization and the ways these values are put into practice. It then presented how each type of aid agency approaches security, indicating by doing so that differences in identity are paralleled with differences in interests. This was illustrated by a body of corroborating evidence presented in the following sections.

The second section focused on the threats that aid agencies are said to be facing and highlighted in particular the construction of these threats as well as their nature. It differentiated between the direct and indirect threats and also revealed that they are constructed differently by aid agencies, through processes of socialization and securitization. The analysis of aid agencies' threats demonstrated that the construction of threats encompasses both objective and subjective elements, in particular since the perception of threats *is* related to an agency's identity: depending on where an aid agency is located in the identity spectrum, it will not focus on the same threats as other agencies. The thesis then highlighted the fact that that norms, attitudes and values associated with certain approaches to security are internalized by the personnel of an agency, to the point where they become part of an organization's identity. Threat perceptions for instance, do not necessarily create a dramatic change in identity, but by gradually affecting aid workers' values, attitudes and norms, they do make some identity dimensions more salient than others. Lastly, the thesis iterated that while aid agencies perceive threats around them, they do not conceive these threats to be enemies.

The third section of the chapter offered a study of dominant representations of humanitarian security with a focus on agents and changes. It traced aid workers' security thinking and practices, and revealed how dominant representations have emerged, and alternative trends have been left aside. Four phases of this evolution were identified: disorientation, foundation, institutionalization, harmonization and polarization. Today's harmonization of humanitarian security management was underlined through the adoption by aid agencies of a common security management framework and

set of standards, while its polarization was highlighted through the revealing of two schools of thought, the 'process based' versus the 'situational judgment' one. The differentiation between these two mindsets reflects the distinction between the aid agencies' underlying ethoses, and underscores further the different approaches to security between Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian organizations.

This section also showed how aid agency preferences in security management are (re)defined by both the external environment and an organizations' internal dynamics. This was done through two levels of analysis: first the study of the humanitarian security epistemic community revealed the cross-fertilization among agencies. Then the organizational level of analysis drew attention to the power relationships within agencies and how these affect aid agency choices in security management. It revealed how the location of a security position in the organizational chart, the relationships built by the security manager within the agency, provide indicators of an organizations' involvement in security management, reiterating differences among the three defined–types of aid agency.

Understanding how international aid agency identities and representations of security are co-constituted is a necessary step to reveal the diversity of preferences in security management. This in turn will shed light on how aid agencies relate to private military and security companies.

Chapter 6 – Exploring the Manifestations of the Aid Community Identity and Interests in regards to Private Military and Security Companies

"Private security companies perceive Afghans as potential enemies while we see them as potential friends; maybe that's the fundamental difference"

NGO Country Director in Afghanistan[172]

Even though, historically, they descend from mercenaries, private military and security companies, such as those that appeared in the post–2003 Iraq war, are a rather recent development. Most international aid agencies, in turn, have been operating in wars and insecure environments for decades and, in the case of the ICRC, for more than a century. They have faced all sorts of potential risks; from petty criminal acts to targeted killing; from financial crisis to natural disasters. They operate in environments as diverse as the slums of Port-au-Prince; the tropical forests of the Congo; the deserts of Sudan; the urban environment of Lagos; the mountains of Pakistan; and the rural areas of Zimbabwe. They have gradually learned how to ensure the continuity of their activities through ever improving and evolving security management practices. Given their extensive experience in the formal and informal handling of security, one may wonder what they gain in dealing with PMSCs. Indeed, while the aid community benefit from a rather positive image, the private security industry is tainted by largely negative representations. Yet, aid agencies do use private military and security companies. Emily Speers Mears posits that, "there are three main reasons for the increase in the market for humanitarian security: in response to (perceived) humanitarian insecurity; as the natural outcome of a more general privatization of security; and as part of the wider professionalization of the humanitarian sector" (Speers Mears, p.3, 2009).

In neo-liberal societies, where virtually anything has the potential to become a commodity, the security needs of aid agencies have become commodified. The question then is to understand how the consumers of security meet the providers of security, and what the outcomes of these encounters are. This will prove particularly revealing in light of the arguments developed in the previous chapters, i.e. that the different approaches of aid agencies to security are interlinked with their respective identity. Furthermore, given the tensions that exist between IAAs because of their need for security on the one hand, and the generally poor reputation of PMSCs on the other, the thesis argues that studying aid agency engagement towards PMSCs is further revealing of the aid sector's differing approaches to security. In addition, while most research on private military and security companies is

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[172] Interview 75.

from the viewpoint of the state, the current thesis offers the perspective of non–state actors, namely aid agencies. This will put PMSCs, their ethics and attitudes to security, into a new perspective..

The first section of the chapter provides a detailed picture of the corporate security industry; revelaing its interests regarding the aid sector. It examines in particular the need to distinguish between different types of PMSCs and highlights how security companies use humanitarian ethics as a legitimising factor. The second section presents this thesis's findings regarding IAA engagement with PMSCs and then demonstrates that aid agency positioning towards PMSCs confirms the interplay between aid agencys' identities and their respective approaches to security.

6.1. The development of PMSC strategy regarding international aid agencies

Private military and security companies have increasingly been utilised by governments, armed forces, international organizations and the private sector; and aid agencies have not stood apart from this trend. As noted in Chapter One of this thesis, Stoddard *et al*'s research showed that "… over the last five years, humanitarian organizations have increased their contracting of security and security related services from commercial companies." It also argued that "armed security contracting remains the exception (most contracts are for unarmed guards and security consultants). However, all major humanitarian actors report having used armed guards in at least one context" (Stoddard *et al*, p.1, 2008).[173]

The authors further note that:

> … for international PSPs [private security providers], the services humanitarians used most were security training for staff, security management consulting and risk assessment/threat analysis. The most popular services from local PSPs were unarmed guards (for facilities, residences and project sites) and physical security for premises. [... However] in some of the most insecure contexts, such as Darfur, Sudan and Iraq, humanitarian agencies have used private security in only very limited ways if at all, relying more on the tactic of withdrawing, suspending operations and remotely managing their programmes to deal with security threats (Stoddard *et al*, p.19, 2008).

This implies that a number of aid organizations have, in some locations, preferred to alter the quality of their programmes by managing them at distance, or even stopped their activities altogether rather than use services provided by PMSCs. Financial, ideological or reputational considerations may all explain these choices. As shown in Chapter Two, the risks of using the security services of private companies are real – and diverse. Yet in the words of an Utilitarian NGO Head of Security, "humanitarians should learn from the private sector. Litigation, market forces and body bags will provoke changes."[174] While the majority of aid workers might not be interested in contracting a PMSC, they still need to understand who these providers of private security are. Security companies have

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[173] The present author was one of the peer reviewers of the report.
[174] Interview 20.

invaded the space traditionally occupied by aid agencies and international organizations. Blackwater proposed sending brigade–sized rapid reaction forces to support or replace peacekeepers in war zones; Pacific Architects and Engineers and Medical Support Solutions have provided logistical support as well as medical services for the African Union in Sudan since 2002. DynCorp recruited and trained the new Liberian armed forces as part of the reform of the country's security sector. Blue Sky supervised the cease-fire in Aceh; and for a number of years Centurion has been training humanitarians heading for high–risk zones. The current section will then examine who the private military and security companies are and what their interests towards the aid sector are.

6.1.1. Typologies of private military and security companies

Private military and security companies, like international aid agencies, do not constitute a cohesive block. There are differences among them that need to be taken into account for any relevant analysis. First however, one must also consider the differences between mercenaries and private security contractors. The current sub-section will break down the various protagonists occupying the field of corporate security.

6.1.1.1. PMSCs versus mercenaries

When talking about the current private military and security companies, the media frequently refer to 'mercenaries'; this is a historical reference laden with negative associations. Sarah Percy rightly notes that:

> … the word mercenary has evolved into a pejorative term used to denote a disliked soldier. The proscription against mercenary use is so strong that the word mercenary itself has become a powerful political tool, which can be used to brand another group's soldiers and attempt to make them appear illegitimate (Percy, p.51, 2007).

Security contractors are historically and philosophically the descendants of the mercenaries, but they are also different from them. It is necessary to acknowledge these differences in order to understand their present role in our societies.

Historically, mercenaries were seen as foreigners fighting for money. Nowadays, 'mercenarism' is defined in various international treaties, national laws and resolutions proscribing or condemning the use of mercenaries; from the UN General Assembly and Security Council; the Organization of African Unity Convention for the Elimination of Mercenaries in Africa; Article 47 of Protocol 1 additional to the Geneva Conventions; and the United Nations International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries.

Definitions of 'mercenary' are very specific, and are often credited with two characteristics: fighting in a conflict while being originally external to it, and second, fighting for financial gain.[175] Some

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[175] Percy argues that these definitions contain several pitfalls. She then proposes to define a mercenary as someone who *fights alone* and who are *under illegitimate control* (Percy, 2007).

countries, such as France or South Africa, have passed strong national laws against mercenaries. In all cases, engaging in or supporting mercenary activities is usually considered as both immoral and illegal. PMSCs in contrast are legal, and for many, legitimate entities. Being corporate entities, they need to respect many different types of regulation, ranging from the national laws where they are registered to the national laws in the countries where they operate, including international or European law. They are, for instance, obliged to follow the laws on the regulation of arms trade and control, military–type training or the domestic use of security services, etc (Krahmann, 2006). However, there is also a common agreement among experts that the existing regulation is not sufficient. The reasons lie in the fact that these regulations poorly address PMSC's activities and responsibilities in conflict zones; and because of this lack of enforcement mechanisms, authorities are prevented from effectively holding accountable a security contractor suspected of violation of these regulations.

Nevertheless, if the distinction between mercenaries and PMSCs is easy to draw from a legal vantage point, it remains controversial from philosophical and social science perspectives.

6.1.1.2. Existing distinctions between PMSCs

Peter W. Singer's term '*private military firms'* (PMF) encompasses not only security companies but also any type of company involved in supporting military enterprise, even if not armed or not dealing with security *per se* (Singer, 2003).[176] Halliburton, one of the world's largest providers of products and services to the energy industry, is for instance considered to be a PMF. Didier Bigo and Christian Olsson refer to *coercive semi-private companies*, in order to "highlight the fact that these companies are often part of personal networks which are transversal to the simplistic public/private dichotomy" (Olsson, 2003, website. Author's own translation). Sarah Percy (and others) differentiates between private *security* companies and private *military c*ompanies arguing that, contrary to the latter, PSCs do not engage in combat; are under a higher degree of state control than PMCs; and work alongside national military forces. However, by offering this kind of distinction, Percy does not take into account companies contracted not by states but by other private companies. She also ignores the fact that, in contexts such as Afghanistan, security companies are sometimes *de facto* involved in combat; they are not necessarily willing to engage in fighting, but their protective mission certainly involves this potentiality. Similarly, some authors also oppose *coercive* services to *defensive* ones (Spearin, p.56, 2005b; p.366, 2008). This distinction however is not valid in contexts such as Iraq. The September 2007 Nisoor Square incident in which Blackwater staff shot and killed up to seventeen civilian Iraqis, is a typical illustration of this. Their mission was of a protective, but it turned out that they had an offensive stance. One must consider that PMSCs are contracted for a specific mission: ensuring the security of their clients. They have to accomplish their contract, even if this is detrimental to the Coalitions' overall mission of 'winning the hearts and minds'. In the words of a contractor:

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[176] He then differentiates the 'PMF' into three broad sectors: Military Provider Firms, Military Consultant Firms and Military Support Firms.

"[w]hat they told me was, 'Our mission is to protect the principal at all costs'. If that means pissing off the Iraqis, too bad" (Singer, p.6 ,2007).

Other authors, including Mandel (2002), differentiate between security companies providing *domestic* services versus those providing services *worldwide*. This dichotomy is relevant in some cases – the guard working in a London shopping mall is therefore working for a different type of company than the contractor involved in the protection of State Department officials in Afghanistan. However, the lines between the domestic and worldwide PMSCs are becoming increasingly blurred: on one hand there are many '*guarding' security companies* operating in conflict zones; on the other hand there are many *international militarised companies* involved in countries which are not at war. Also the types of services, of personnel, of clients, of weapons, or the size of the company tend to be similar, one to another. The main difference lies in the fact that the 'guarding' security companies offer services that are closer to (although far less developed) and limited to law enforcement.

As explained in the introductory chapter, the choice of words is telling: 'private security company' is perceived as less dramatic, and less affiliated with the negatively connotations of 'the mercenary'. This is why companies providing security services (including armed protection) on the battlefield prefer to call themselves 'private security companies.'

The present thesis uses the term 'private military and security companies' (PMSCs) as it wishes to underline that most corporate providers of security operating in war zones are lead, managed, and composed of former military personnel. In both Afghanistan and Haiti, the author has observed that many of these personnel continue thinking, operating, and using weapons and postures that are reminiscent of military – not civilian – tactics. This in turn, contributes to projecting an image that is militarised rather than civilian, something that aid agencies are sensitive to when interacting with these providers of security.

6.1.1.3. A typology of private military and security companies

Private military and security companies offer services designed to have strategic, operational, or tactical impacts on the security of persons or property. These services range from logistical support, context analysis, crisis, and risk management; to physical protection of people and/or goods, training of armed forces, and even operational command and combat. This being said, there are differences amongst them and it is possible to offer a typology of PMSCs. The main criterion for differentiating them is their *function*, which equates to their prime sector of activities.

Guarding companies primarily provide local guards, who are often highly visible, uniformed watchmen to protect premises. They might also offer mobile and/or canine protection, but their objective remains the provision of law enforcement–type services with a local profile. This category encompasses companies as diverse as Securitas AB (260,000 people in 40 countries) or The Brink's Company (56,900 employees and operations in over 50 countries) to small companies offering services limited to one country, such as Khurasan Security in Afghanistan and Global Sécurité SA in Haiti.

Unarmed security providers offer non–lethal risk management or intelligence–type services ranging from analysis to private investigation and assistance with security audits and training. Executive Analysis; Risk&Co, Riskline[177] and Stratfor fall within this category.

Weaponised companies comprise the bulk of the international private military and security companies operating in conflict zones. The range of security services they offer is wide and diverse but they share the common characteristics of employing primarily former military personnel *and* being armed, *or* offering security services to an armed entity.[178] The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have brought these companies to international attention. Aegis, Control Risks, DynCorp International, L3-MPRI, Triple Canopy, Xe (formerly known as Blackwater) are representatives of this category. It should be noted that companies are included in this category as long as they or their clients are armed, regardless of their level of visibility (low or high profile).
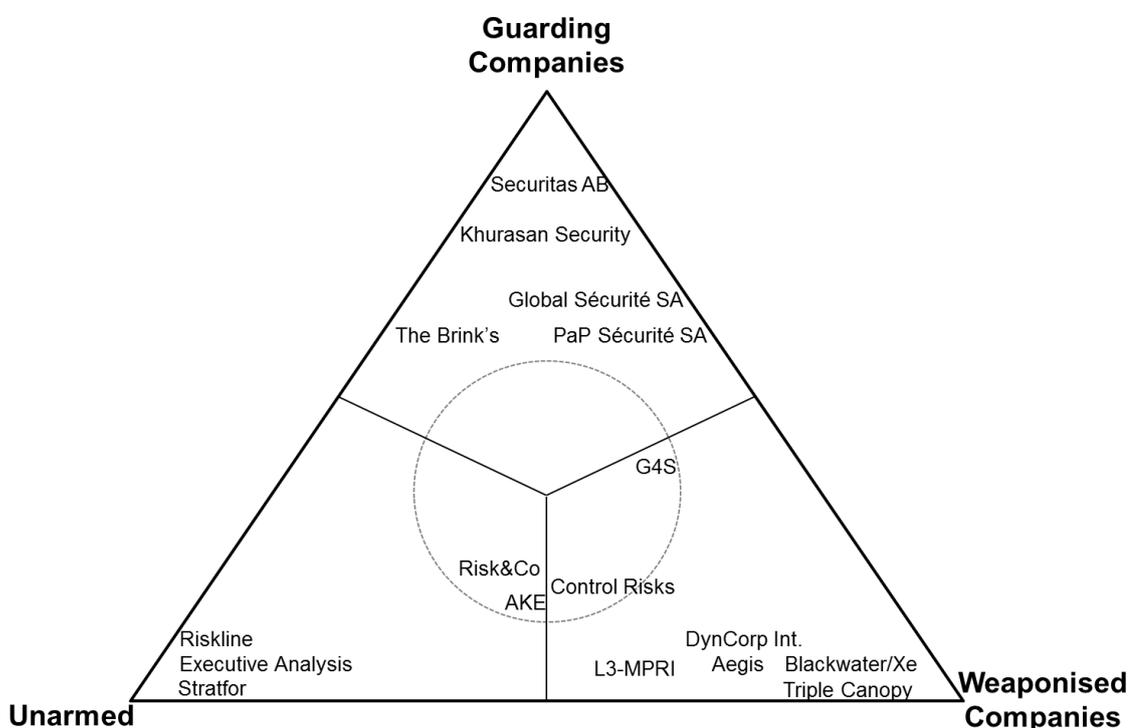
Figure 2 - Typology of Private Military and Security Companies

PMSCs are here organised into a triangle-shape typology, with each corner representing each of the three types of PMSC. The purpose of this diagram is to demonstrate that, while some companies offer services that are limited to one type of service only (for instance contextual analysis), most offer several types of service. In relation to this, companies are located in a corner of the triangle that signifies their prime sector of activities, but are located closer to the other basic types when they

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[177] Interestingly, Riskline's website specifically emphasizes their difference from Weaponised PMSCs: "unlike other major security risk firms – we have no physical security wing and our assessments are not aimed at selling additional security products: they remain as in depth and objective as we can make them" (Riskline, Undated, website).

[178] MPRI's involvement in support of the Croatian army in Krajina in 1995 exemplifies the category (Olsson, 2003). Similarly MPRI staff interviewed by the author in Afghanistan explained that although their main clients were the coalition's armed forces, their services were strategic in nature and did not included the handling of weapons. As a matter of fact, MPRI's staff were unarmed and their personal and premises' security was outsourced to another PMSC.

also share characteristics with them. This is particularly telling for companies located in the circle at the centre of the triangle.

Since the market for security is rapidly evolving, companies may be placed in different categories over time: some are expanding the services they offer; other companies have merged, been subsumed into umbrella companies, or ceased operating. G4S for instance was well within the Guarding category until they acquired the Weaponised ArmorGroup in 2007. Now, with more than half a million employees in over 110 countries, the ubiquitous G4S is the largest security company in the world. Though the media mainly portray the activities of the Weaponised companies, it should not be forgotten that, when talking about the privatization of security, these companies are only the tip of the iceberg. As Mandel explained, "a shocking statistic is that while national armies have shrunk about 20%, private groups providing security have expanded to a degree that they outnumber most national armies" (Mandel, p.8, 2002).

The criterion on which this typology is based is an objective assessment of the primary function of the company; this chapter will later emphasise how aid agencies often resort to more subjective criterion when judging the reputation of one PMSC over another.

6.1.2. Use of ethical arguments as a legitimising factor for PMSCs

Private military and security companies do have something in common: as for–profit organizations, they need to generate business and secure contracts to exist. However, the type of client or the type of contract they accept differs depending on each company's ethos. It is possible to make a distinction between companies that claim to abide by ethical business practices, and those whose contracts are not influenced by ethical considerations. The latter type consists of companies whose leaders are willing to sign a contract with anyone who requests their services and implement any type of service as long as it is legal – and sometimes when it is not. The former comprises companies with a focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and whose leaders refuse to enter into illegal or illegitimate contracts, *or at least claim that this is the case*. This issue of dubious claims of legitimacy is important since all of these companies have a motivation to represent themselves as ethical, yet they range from those that are truly guided by ethical considerations to those who pay it lip-service simply as a selling point. However, since we are not able to assess someone's sincerity and because the private sector's *raison d'être* is making profit, it is assumed in this thesis that PMSCs claiming to be guided by respect for ethics do so primarily for commercial purposes. Furthermore, even "if all companies in general claim their respect for a rigorous ethics, and for international norms and military codes, their social practices are not up to their claim" (Olsson, 2003, website. Author's own translation).

Nevertheless, PMSCs, in particular Weaponised ones, do make substantial efforts to improving their ethical reputation. The following sub-section will reveal how a number of them appropriate a humanitarian image into their business strategies through the use of marketing, the organization of international events, and even the provision of assistance.

6.1.2.1. The use of marketing to communicate a positive image

Ethical practice is expressed differently depending on the company, but the most visible example is the International Stability Operations Association (ISOA) – renamed in October 2010 from International Peace Operations Association - whose new name reflects a change in approach for international interventions (Chapter One). Although the name suggests otherwise, the ISOA is the most important United States lobby for (essentially Weaponised) PMSCs. As described in their mission statement, they aim to "engage in a constructive dialogue with policy–makers about the growing and positive contribution of these firms to the enhancement of international peace, development, and human security" (ISOA, Undated, a, website). The ISOA's President even argued that we should "recognize that there is a commercial value to humanitarian security" (Brooks, 2007, website). ISOA's ethical positioning is unique. Aware of the heavy focus on risks related to the outsourcing of security by academia, but also by stakeholders of all sorts – politicians and journalists in particular - this US private military and security companies association pays particular attention to its branding, and has created its very own publication, the *Journal of International Peace Operations*. However, as explained in Chapter Two, this so-called journal is more like a marketing magazine than an academic journal (that would be subjected to a thorough peer–reviewing system). Yet, it regularly publishes articles related to humanitarian assistance. Entitled "Humanitarian security and support", its September–October 2008 edition even focused specifically on issues related to the provision of aid. Furthermore, the ISOA has developed a code of conduct that maintains respect for the private sector's Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights and of the many international treaties on human rights; they have put into place a complaints system for anyone to use if they witness any illegal act by one of its members; they have also developed and provided regular courses on humanitarian issues in conjunction with Washington's American University.[179]

Similarly, the Unarmed company AKE has partnered with the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom to launch a short course in "Human Rights in Conflict, Reconstruction and Disaster Zones: Customs, Laws, Conventions and Practicalities" (University of Aberdeen, Undated, a). The University's press release announces that "[t]he course will provide an understanding of the complex political and legal context of human rights and international law; the issues raised and their practical implications, and the pertinence of these issues in terms of operation and commercial success" (University of Aberdeen, Undated, b, website).

In line with this trend some companies, such as the Weaponised ArmorGroup and Control Risks, have developed a specific strategy to attract humanitarian organizations, be it NGOs or United

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[179] Such as the "Humanitarian Conducted and Enhanced Operations: Specialized Training for Fields Managers and Independent Contractors" that took place on April 26–27 2007 (American University, Undated, website).

Nations agencies. While ArmourGroup claimed it "subscribed" to the NGO–focused *Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*, Control Risks states that its:

> … humanitarian sector practice is dedicated to helping non-governmental organizations and international organizations to overcome the difficulties associated with hostile environments. The team consists of consultants with NGO backgrounds and has experienced advisors from an NGO background and understands the unique situations in which humanitarian organizations find themselves across the globe (Control Risks, Undated, website).[180]

The Unarmed Risk&Co (formerly known as Atlantic Intelligence & BD Consultants) have put into place a security training for NGOs working in conflict areas, lead by an ex–ICRC staffer. Indeed, several PMSCs tend to recruit former aid workers, who are appreciated both for their experience and for the fact that they contribute to improving the company's image.

The Guarding company Wackenhut Services Inc. (WSI), for its part, offers annual 'humanitarian awards' to some of its employees.[181] A Guarding company has named itself "Humanitarian Security Solutions Inc.", and another "Sécurité Sans Frontières", an analogy to the well reputed "without borders" humanitarian movement. The Weaponised Greystone Ltd offers a "peacekeeping package" including "a flexible force with the ability to provide a properly trained force in a short period of time" (Greystone, Undated, website). The Weaponised GardaWorld prided itself on having won the first 'Prize for Peace in the Middle-East' offered by the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East (FRRME). It states that it is the "First private security company in the world to receive an international prize for its efforts in favour of Peace" (GardaWorld, 2007, website). It must however be noted that the FRRME is not an independent prize awarder dedicated to selecting and nominating laureates, but a client of GardaWorld in Iraq. This type of mutually beneficial link is also exemplified by Andy Bearpark, who is both the Director General of the British Association of [Weaponised] Private Security Companies (BAPSC) and who also serves as a member of CARE International UK's Board of Trustees.

Several companies also advertise themselves in ways that highlight their claims to contribute positively to 'a better world.' The Weaponised GardaWorld for instance had a full–page advertisement in the September–October 2009 edition of the *Journal of International Peace Operations*. It pictures a smiling child holding wooden boards and has several key messages including large letters stating "protecting those who help." Then written in smaller letters is "GardaWorld contributes to making our world more secure" followed by "we help clients in delivering government sponsored aid programs, infrastructure developments, governance support, economic development and national elections support" and then adds bullet points such as "Extensive experience with NGOs globally; Local engagement, Culturally sensitive; Low profile approach" etc.

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[180] Leaflet distributed to the author in 2006.
[181] As explained by WSI, "they were honored for their volunteer efforts in their local communities" (WSI, Undated, website).

The Weaponised Blackwater/Xe used a similar approach and published several full–page advertisements picturing the company in a way that would make one think that they are heavily involved in providing assistance. One of these ads pictures a cute black baby who is spoon fed, alongside a picture of the planet Earth. Then written in large capital letters appears "Afghanistan, Somalia, Congo, Bosnia, Sudan, Iraq" and in smaller letters "we live in a world that gets smaller each day. Inescapably there are clashes between cultures and value systems. … Through selfless commitment and compassion for all people, Blackwater works to make a difference in the world and provide hope to those who still live in desperate times" (JIPO, p.2, 2007).

It would be easy to argue that PMSCs engagement with the field of humanitarian assistance is always done with an eye on publicity. Yet, it is also the case that private military and security companies' do good deeds which are kept low–profile. In some of the most striking cases, several ANSO representatives (the NGO security coordination body in Afghanistan) confirmed that: "PMSCs provided extraction services [for NGOs] three to four times in the last six months."[182] 'Extraction' happens when outsiders are used to rescue people from a (life threatening) trap. In these cases, none of the NGOs had a contract or even prior contacts with the PMSCs, and had called ANSO for help. ANSO then turned to the closest candidates to the extraction, which, in these cases, proved to be security companies. Nevertheless, while literally saving aid workers' lives, these Weaponised PMSCs did not ask for money or publicity in return.

6.1.2.2. The use of international events

Seeking to normalise their relations with the aid sector, PMSCs also participate increasingly in international events and conferences which were once limited to traditional aid actors only. For instance, the Steering Committee of the October 2007 Humanitarian Development Summit includes Doug Brooks, the President of IPOA/ISOA. The summit claims to be working with "the leading inter-governmental organizations" including several United Nations agencies; it also makes claims to "having strong relations with the following organizations … : Care International, Catholic Relief Services, Christian Aid, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), *the International Peace Operations Association (IPOA)*, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Save The Children, World Vision" (HDP, Undated, website. Emphasis added). It is striking, and revealing of the security industry's efforts to be assimilated into aid agencies, that the IPOA/ISOA – the US lobby association for PMSCs - is included in the "NGOs" list.

Adding to this confusion, it is worth noting that on November 18, 2005, Blackwater/Xe and the American Red Cross jointly organized a fundraising evening for victims of the hurricanes, including Hurricane Katrina, that hit the US coasts in 2005. The guest of honour was the former head of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, Paul Bremer. The event gathered a complete mix of players, but nearly $138,000 dollars was raised during the evening.

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[182] Interview 82, made 2 April 2007.

More recently, following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, ISOA sponsored a summit in Miami, called "Haiti: Resources for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid." The event, at which the Weaponised PMSCs Sabre International and Reconnaissance Group were Gold and Silver sponsors, gathered "representatives from international organizations, aid agencies, NGOs, the US Government and the private sector" (GIS, Undated, website) and all profits were donated to the Clinton-Bush Haiti Fund.[183]

6.1.2.3. The provision of assistance by private military and security companies

In addition to building a positive image of the security industry by the use of humanitarian branding, one may well wonder whether the future of aid assistance will increasingly be dominated by the private sector, including PMSCs – and in particular the Weaponised companies.

According to the head of the UK Stabilization Unit, there are three evolving possibilities for 'civilian delivery models' and PMSCs play a role in all three of them. While their role is limited to the provision of security in the first two, the third model would occur when the "government contracts a single organization to be responsible both for the delivery of a service and arranging its own protection. This could either be a consultancy or engineering firm that sub-contracts a PMSC, or a PMSC that develops its own advisory skills" (Teuten, 2009, website). Such configurations are already happening: the large portfolio of development companies such as Chemonics and DAI – sometimes heavily protected by PMSCs[184] – have shown that the provision of aid can be profitable. At least two PMSCs have recently invested in these areas. In December 2008, the Weaponised L3-Communications, which presents itself as a "major provider of homeland defence products" (L-3, Undated), acquired the International Resources Group (IRG). IRG provides "International development services to the US Agency for International Development, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter–American Development Bank and others, governments, and organizations, including the United Nations" (IRG, Undated, a, website). Its paramaters of intervention are broad and include "relief and reconstruction." Similarly, Casals and Associates, a development company, was acquired in January 2010 by the Weaponised PMSC DynCorp International. A press release stated that "[t]he acquisition brings together the complementary skills, experience and capacity of Casals and DynCorp International to *strengthen the strategic expansion of DynCorp International into the international development field*" (Casals & Associates, 2010, website. Emphasis added). IRG stated in the immediate aftermath of the January 2010 Earthquake that their disaster assistance in Haiti will

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[183] While testimonials on the Summit's website praise its success, critics have raised concerns that "private military contractors are positioning themselves at the centre of an emerging 'shock doctrine' for earthquake–ravaged Haiti" (Fenton, 2010). According to an IPS news article, "Naomi Klein, author of "The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism," is concerned that the thesis of her best–selling book will once again be tested in Haiti. She told IPS … "Haiti does not need cookie cutter one-size-fits-all reconstruction, designed by the same gang that made such a hash of Iraq, Afghanistan and New Orleans – and indeed the same people responsible for the decimation of Haiti's own economy in the name of 'aid'" (Fenton, 2010).

[184] Interviews with representatives from Chemonics International, Inc. and Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) in Afghanistan have shown that they have both contracted PMSCs. The development companies selected are Edinburgh International, Global, Hart, Kroll and United States Protection and Investigation (USPI), contracted for a range of different services that go from training, assessment of security set-ups and provision of safety equipment to unarmed and armed protection, as well as armed mobile escorts. There is also evidence that other development companies operating in Afghanistan and Haiti had similarly made the choice to use private security.

consist of "damage evaluations, coordinat[ing] with local officials, and aid[ing] in the distribution of supply reliefs" (IRG, Undated, b, website).

The present research reveals that at least two PMSCs operating in Afghanistan – Aegis and Blackwater/Xe – are directly implementing assistance projects, respectively through the *Aegis Foundation* and *Aegis Hearts & Minds* charitable organizations and through the Christian organization *Foundation Stone Ministries Inc*. The President of a third PMSC, USPI, is also the founder and President of the *Help Afghan Women Project* (HAWP, Undated, website). Significantly, all three PMSCs are Weaponised companies.

The Aegis Foundation website states that it is:

… a UK registered charity which aims to bring immediate relief to communities in post–conflict environments, currently Iraq and Afghanistan, through small, grass roots, community projects which are low cost and high impact – our unique hallmark. Since we launched in 2004, we have carried out over 200 projects which include; installing water purification systems in schools; donating generators for hospitals and schools; equiping [*sic*] schools with basic stationery, backpacks, sports equipment, desks and lavatories; supplying hospitals with urgently needed medical supplies; and providing orphanages with basic furniture. We pride ourselves on making every single penny count by having a direct relationship with our beneficiaries and listening to what they really need, not just providing what we believe they need (Aegis Foundation, Undated, website).

Acknowledging that assistance provided is often mutual, an Aegis' official explained that the "Aegis Foundation [in Afghanistan] tends to work where Aegis works as we know that thanks to them we can earn some money."[185]

Blackwater/Xe's representative in Afghanistan explained that:

"Blackwater wanted to start a humanitarian programme in Afghanistan so they've combined their efforts with the Foundation Stone Ministries Inc. since August 2006. Projects are on-going. We buy food, mattresses, beds, stoves, desks, and give them to the Red-Crescent orphanages. We also try to teach widows some skills in order for them to get a career. Every day, we also provide busses to teachers working at the Sheikhan school. We work with a local partner Foundation Stone of the Homeland. The source of funding comes from Blackwater (which is the biggest donor at this point), the Foundation and through solicitation of Afghan businesses."[186]

A visit to the Foundation's website complements the picture:

We also provide spiritual teachings for those we work with. We have been in the ministry for 17 years as pastors, evangelists, teachers, and now missionaries with hearts to teach the word of God in all nations

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[185] Interview 41.
[186] Interview 47.

of the world. One of those ways is through practical Christianity (Foundation Stone Ministries, Undated, website).

In addition to financial support, the Foundation's representative also receives logistical support from Blackwater: "I'm staying inside Blackwater's compound and when I go outside, I'm accompanied by its staff" explained the representative of the Foundation. It is not known how Afghans receiving relief items from armed Christian civilians perceive their benefactors.

The Blackwater website at one time stated that "Blackwater responded to the humanitarian crisis created by hurricane Katrina in 2005 [and] can provide a wide range of consulting, manpower, and material support in response to humanitarian events worldwide" (Blackwater USA, Undated, a, website). It then added that:

> Blackwater is capable of supporting U.S. and foreign government humanitarian agencies as well as supporting non–government aide [*sic*] organizations. We can respond as required, setting up a safe, *Secure Zone* environment complete with the entire infrastructure necessary to initiate humanitarian assistance in extremis (Blackwater USA, Undated, a, website).

This company, famous for the scandals it has been involved in, also had a "humanitarian outreach" programme. Its Mission Statement stated that:

> Blackwater Worldwide is committed to finding inventive and effective ways for people to help themselves around the world. We support global stability by providing assistance to worthy charities and philanthropic organizations whose goals include the betterment of human conditions. Our outreach programs support human development, health, education, nutrition, housing and disaster relief the world over. When crisis or disaster strikes, Blackwater is ready to reach out and help those in need (Blackwater USA, Undated, b, website).

It continued, providing examples of their projects, such as their involvement in the Convoy Support Center Scania clinic, in the South of Baghdad, and finished by stating that:

> Though the Global War on Terror continues unabated, acts of kindness like Operation Backpack prove that there is still room for hope in the world, even in war–torn Afghanistan. Blackwater Worldwide is proud of its employees and their dedication to humanitarian efforts throughout the world (Blackwater USA, Undated, b, website).

In a similar vein, the Unarmed RA International, a company member of ISOA that provides a range of logistical services in complex environments, plays the 'altruistic' card strongly. Its website has an extensive presentation of all its good deeds in the section "RA International – The Spirit of Volunteerism", which boasts:

Lead by example, is a well known saying and this is exactly what RA International's Managers in Kabul, Afghanistan has taken to heart. Over the last couple of years, they have voluntarily gone the extra mile organizing donations and supporting charitable organizations throughout Afghanistan (RA, Undated, website).

More significantly, Soraya Narfeldt, the RA International Chairman of the Board of Directors explained in an aid focused journal that "[I]ike all companies, we are in business to make a profit but we are committed to humanitarian causes, ensuring a return to the communities in which we work, and we encourage other companies to do likewise" (Narfeldt, p.67, 2007).

In another example from another company; according to USPI's website, HAWP's current projects are "humanitarian support for a program that will sponsor 750 women in teaching them English and computer skills for a year, hiring a teacher for an orphanage and paying her salary, purchasing and distribution of a truckload of coal, keeping 500 families warm for a month in the depth of winter" (HAWP, Undated, website). It further states "HAWP is continuing their mission to give a helping hand to those in Afghanistan with the greatest needs."

The involvement of private military and security companies in Haiti is less common than in Afghanistan. A senior representative of the Association Professionnelle des Agents de Sécurité (*Professional Association of Security Guards*, APAS), the local Haitian guarding companies' lobby group, claimed that although most of the Association's member companies have a few aid agencies as clients, "there is no collaboration between PMSCs and NGOs; exchanges are limited to the provision of the security services."[187] APAS however pushed its members to get involved in "social activities" including the *pro bono* provision of security guards to NGOs during aid distributions. Mario Viau, the CEO of PaP Sécurité also created the *Fondation Haiti Secours*, whose activities are said to have included food distribution during floods in Gonaïves.

Similarly, the Weaponised PMSC Reconnaissance on its side, claims to have adopted a "Social Responsibility scheme, through which [they] have made significant donations on a monthly basis to schools, orphanages, medical centres and regional charities" (RG, 2010, website).

The post–earthquake phase however has seen the appearance of a new type of security provider. The response to the Haitian disaster proved to be the first project of the newly founded NGO *Humanitarian Defense (HDF)*, a US–based not-for-profit organization that claims:

We can go anywhere and perform any humanitarian task, on our own. If people are hungry, we will take them food; if they are in danger, we will protect or relocate them; if they are ill, we will provide the best medical treatment. We can dig wells, install septic systems, and teach indigenous people how to maintain anything we provide (HDF, Undated, website).

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[187] Interview 101.

Further to this, their stated mission is: "to facilitate humanitarian and NGO operations through the provision of local intelligence, transportation and logistical support and effective, low–profile security" (HDF, Undated, website). HDF's Director is also the Business/Political Manager of the Weaponised PMSC Precision Risk Management Group. HDF's experience in Haiti however, serves as a reminder that optimism and willpower are not enough. It was reported in March 2010 that HDF:

> … is in need of help after a series of missteps during its inaugural mission – providing security and logistics support in Haiti after the Jan. 12 earthquake. "We did whatever we could to get there on the ground because we thought the situation was dire, and now we have these bills hanging over us and I don't know how we're going to deal with it," director Charles Clifton said yesterday. Over 25 days, the group racked up $15,000 in bills for a rental car and phone calls from Haiti to the United States, and it's appealing to donors to cover the expenses (Gibson, 2010, website).

Overall, the implementation of assistance projects is perceived positively by private security contractors; in the words of an employee working for a Weaponised company: "I hope that PMSCs will be more involved in humanitarian activities since there is so much more to do than only security."[188] Similarly, another Weaponised PMSC staffer explained that, "because Afghanistan is a conflict setting, PMSCs will always be involved in assistance projects."[189] In addition, PMSCs are sometimes also perceived by contractors as *indirectly implementing* assistance projects, since "PMSCs are mainly here to protect companies that are in general present to rebuild the country."[190]

The assistance provided by PMSCs in Afghanistan and Haiti is extremely limited and humanitarian action is not at stake because of it. However, given the existing debates about the competing involvement of the private sector in relief activities (see Chapter Two), the increasing involvement of by private military and security companies in the field needs to be addressed. According to a 2005 study on the perceptions of international efforts by the local population:

> … local communities were more concerned that aid was delivered, and less concerned about who delivered it. When assistance was needed, it did not much matter whether it was provided by military personnel or civilians. Yet local people were quite able to distinguish among international institutions. … In Afghanistan, people made fewer distinctions among NGOs, perhaps reflecting comments by a senior government official that all NGOs were corrupt, and a growing disenchantment with the aid effort (Minear and Donini, 2005, website).

The assistance provided by PMSCs is often either financial or involving the distribution of non–food items. The capacity–building oriented projects (teaching skills to widows or women), which imply medium to long–term involvement show a marked commitment from PMSCs. The existence of the

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[188] Interview 47.
[189] Interview 40.
[190] Interview 44.

needs they are assisting in is not contested here, though it is worth noting that the selection and implementation of the projects remains *ad hoc*, that there are no signs of comprehensive pre-intervention needs assessments, no coordination with other actors, no quality control and also no ambition to address the underlying causes of the problems. Also, most of the PMSC assistance is provided by Weaponised companies. This is both because they have an operational footprint in areas where populations are in need of support, and because the provision of aid is seen as contributing to the improvement of their reputation and a move away from the image of blood-thirsty mercenaries.

Branding a positive image is a common feature of the private sector. Corporate social responsibility, whereby businesses embrace responsibility for the impact of their activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere, is now commonly practiced. However in the case of the private security industry, one notices in addition to 'traditional' corporate social responsibility activities, there is a gradually emerging phenomenon whereby PMSCs are appropriating and integrating humanitarian representations into business and security strategies.

6.1.3. Private military and security companies' approaches to the humanitarian sector

The author observed in both Afghanistan and Haiti that, *irrespective of the type of companies they work for*, private security contractors have a rather negative perception of both aid workers' and aid agencies' management of security. Furthermore, most contractors interviewed in the course of this research proved critical of the aid sector at large. Humanitarians are seen as not intervening enough in dangerous areas – where contractors say the needs are most critical. Some, such as the Security Manager of a Weaponised company in Afghanistan, also don't understand why "NGOs don't give more importance to PMSCs. I don't see why having armed guards on your compound alter[s] your neutrality."[191] Similarly, the Director of a Haitian Guarding company explained that "NGOs don't understand that the nature of insecurity has changed; they see themselves like missionaries and believe they are untouchables because they are here to help. On the other side, NGOs that worry me most though are the proselyte ones. They believe that they are protected by the archangel Gabriel – and that he replaced his broadsword with a Kalashnikov."[192]

The most commonly shared view is that NGOs are "disorganized, arrogant and narrow minded"[193] while the UN are often criticised for being "ineffective."[194] By contrast the ICRC stands out and is perceived as doing a "good job" and having a "good understanding of the security necessary."[195]

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[191] Interview 49.
[192] Interview 97.
[193] Interview 43.
[194] Interview 42.
[195] Interview 43.

In addition, and this will be developed in the next section, interactions between aid agencies and private military and security companies are limited by the fact that the two sectors have distinctly different security cultures. As Spearin rightly put it:

> NGOs prefer the acceptance model whereas PMSCs are more comfortable with the protection and deterrence models. It is true that for NGOs, reliance upon PMSCs implies recognition of the current limitations of the acceptance model. … In contrast, retired military personnel now working for PMSCs are more inclined to adopt the aforementioned "hardening" stance towards security. … What is striking is that these differences exist even though one might believe that PMSCs would readily respond to the particular requirements of their NGO paymasters. Various reports, however, find that PMSCs are often unwilling to change their expectations and are wilfully ignorant of the deep "epistemic" differences pertaining to humanitarian security (Spearin, p.7, 2007a).

As outlined in Chapter Two, a majority of security contractors interviewed for the thesis believed there is a culture clash between themselves and the humanitarians. This holds true, irrespective of the type of company they work for. The reason for the clash is most often said to be due to the differences in their backgrounds: "most of the security guys are ex-army members. Most armies are right-wing while most of humanitarians are left-wing. Most security groups are dismissive of tree huggers and the reciprocity is true"[196]). Disputes are also due to differences between their personalities: "a lot of time it has to do with the individuals"[197]. However, all believe the relationship is workable. This clash can be overcome "if people discuss more with each other"[198]; "when NGOs see the quality of our infrastructure, training, their relations with us improve since it's a matter of perception"[199]; "they can work together but it requires, on both sides, a type of person that understands this kind of stuff. You have to understand what NGOs are doing and where they are coming from. NGOs probably see PMSCs as mercenaries. While some PMSCs will have cowboys' behaviour, others will go underground"[200]; "we have to realise they are not blue–flower students of Arts, they have to understand we are not mercenaries."[201]

As a contractor employed by a Weaponised company pointed out, "regardless of how we perceive humanitarians, we have a commercial interest to keep in touch with them."[202] A pragmatic approach is, therefore, often adopted. Personal relationships and expertise are then used to bridge the gap between contractors and aid workers: contractors believe that the cultural clash is eventually overcome when their offer of security meets an existing demand.

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[196] Interview 49.
[197] Interview 50.
[198] Interview 41.
[199] Interview 42.
[200] Interview 52.
[201] Interview 40.
[202] Interview 42.

A number of security companies from all three types of PMSCs see the aid sector as a potential market, and therefore try to engage with it for that reason. One respondent employed by a Weaponised PMSC even explained that its company had actively, yet unsuccessfully, lobbied USAID in order to get funding for providing security for NGOs.

Efforts to get closer to IAAs are both formal and informal as PMSCs try to develop a "gradual relationship by interaction and with time."[203] The provision of training as well as the free sharing of services and products such as situation reports, are seen as entry points to the aid market. In addition, informal contacts and exchanges are also used to get closer, to the extent that some contractors admit that their company recruits among ex–UN or ex–NGO staff specifically for this purpose. Most interviewees stated that PMSCs are more proactive in getting aid agency interest, rather than aid agencies soliciting for their services. There is however anecdotal evidence that the level of solicitation from PMSCs toward the aid sector has decreased in the last few years; this may be due to the fact that many companies have realised that their efforts to attract the aid clientele have not really paid off. A few contractors highlighted the fact that NGOs in particular can't always afford the services offered by PMSCs. While some PMSCs try to adapt their services, or ask NGOs to club together in order to share the costs, others simply chose to not include NGOs as potential clients.

Although the aid market will never be the most lucrative for security companies, several contractors interviewed insisted that PMSCs are gaining more respectability *vis-à-vis* the aid workers. In turn, PMSCs are well aware that in addition to potential contracts, developing links with humanitarians may also help in improving their own reputation and image. Increasedinteractions of all kind with the aid sector are seen as contributing greatly to their normalization and overall legitimization.

As is evident from the above section, private military and security companies do not constitute a cohesive or uniform block. They can then be divided in three categories, namely the Guarding companies, the Unarmed security providers and the Weaponised ones. Each has its major sector of activity, even though there are close interactions amongst them. They nevertheless all share a for–profit motive and, as such, many, in particular the Weaponised companies, try hard to build a positive image around them; this is done through an appropriation and branding of humanitarian values, and, for a minority, the delivery of aid projects. Although security contractors have similar views about aid workers and how to interact with the aid sector irrespective of the type of companies they work for, the next section will argue that, in contrast, aid workers' receptiveness to PMSCs' differs.

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[203] Interview 46.

6.2. In search of security: when consumers of security meet providers of security

Critical approaches to security highlight the concrete effects produced by particular representations of identity and interests. In light of this view, the current section first presents the thesis's findings regarding aid agencies' engagement with PMSCs, and will then examine how aid agency identity and approaches to security affect their relation with private military and security companies. Second, it will discuss the nature of aid agencies' orientations towards PMSCs. Lastly, the section will shed light on how aid agencies deconstruct the security industry's efforts to appropriate humanitarian values.

6.2.1. IAA engagement with PMSCs is relative to the ethos of each humanitarian organization

This thesis has found both a harmonization and polarization of aid agency approaches towards PMSCs, although polarization was far more prevalent. The reason for such a prevalence is that for most aid agencies, the use of a corporate security provider, in particular Weaponised companies, is seen not only as a technical option in the search for the improvement of security but as a political issue that concerns all managers – as opposed to only the security personnel.

Harmonization happens at a technical level, while the polarization occurs at a political one. At the technical level, the author observed a harmonization of practices, through the development and sharing of internal policies regulating agencies' interactions with the corporate security industry. For instance 'good practices to contracting PMSCs' were regularly shared among EISF and SAG members. From a political standpoint however, not all aid agencies have the same approach to PMSCs. Indeed, although all three of the types of aid agency examined have used corporate security services, their respective approach to the security industry differs significantly.

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Deontological organizations* approach security in a way that is heavily conditioned by their humanitarian principles. This requires them to reach out to the parties in conflict in order to explain their ethos, and forge agreements on operating modalities. Deontological organizations are rather more reluctant to either outsource their security to a third party, or favour options that entail the use of weapons. Resorting to either option would entail that they would have to rely on companies that do not share the same mindset as them. It would also put them at risk of being seen as a party to the conflict or of having something to protect or hide, and as such, of losing their perceived neutrality. This in turn would likely prevent them from operating in areas controlled by opposing armed forces.

Since they would only favour the deterrence strategy in exceptional circumstances, meeting points with PMSCs may occur but *only rarely*. In the words of a Red–Cross worker, "PMSCs are not a

first option for us – even our guards are our employees."[204] Likewise, the MSF CD in Haiti explained: "both the humanitarian principles and our professional ethics forbid us to use private security companies."[205] Oxfam's head of security argued that "we need to understand PSCs precisely to maintain distance from them."[206] The Security Advisor of another Deontological organization explained: "the Board took the decision to not use PMSCs on principle, but when we had staff kidnapped, we realised that our networks would not be enough to free them and that negotiations were necessary. We had internal discussions and concluded that we didn't have the experience for it. We consequently used a [Weaponised] PMSC, but that's a one-off."[207]

The *Solidarist* approach to private military and security companies is ambiguous. The majority are inclined not to use corporate security services, in particular if these services involve the use of weapons. This position is driven firstly by their values: both their humanitarian principles and their wider charitable ethics. Though it is also driven by financial considerations: many of the smaller Solidarist NGOs cannot afford corporate security services as a long term operating strategy. Nevertheless, a few Solidarists also adopt a practical view on the privatization of security and are not against outsourcing elements of their security to a PMSC if need be. This is particularly true for aid agencies that sit between the Solidarist and Utilitarianapproach. As a result, Solidarist approaches to PMSCs are divided: some categorically refuse to have anything to do with them, while others support contractual relationships with PMSCs.

For instance, while a representative of an agency explained that "we have no contract with any PMSC, but if we had funds for it, we would buy some of their analysis"[208], others stated that "we have no contracts with PMSCs … because there is a sense that it is inappropriate"[209]; "we wondered at some point whether we should have an armed guard, but we decided against it, for the principle of it"[210]; or "our concern regarding PMSCs relate to their values. They are much driven toward commercial interests. They may have problems with acceptance/cultural sensitivity. We don't feel very secure with the macho guys."[211]

On the other hand, another Solidarist NGO Security Advisor claimed: "PMSCs have significant knowledge, capacity, even without using guns. If they have the expertise and you have the resources, why not use them – but you have to manage them very properly with clear terms of reference."[212] Likewise, the Safety and Security Advisor of another Solidarist/Utilitarian NGO explained that "we usually rely on our guards, but having a guard force is difficult to manage, so if PMSCs are accepted I'd be in favour of using one (such as in Haiti or in some African countries). But only for non–armed

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[204] Interview 137.
[205] Interview 127.
[206] Interview 18.
[207] Interview 146.
[208] Interview 151.
[209] Interview 143.
[210] Interview 112.
[211] Interview 19.
[212] Interview 136.

services though."[213] CARE's head of security in Afghanistan explained that "we don't like working directly with [PMSCs] but in some places we use them for the provision of guards; it's more a logistic hassle that is resolved."[214] The view of Save the Children's head of security best epitomises the tensions and contradictions that exist among Solidarist organizations: she commented that: "traditionally we hire our own guards. The problem with PMSCs is that they are highly difficult to trust. Yet, we outsource increasingly as it is easier to manage. We'd however never employ Blackwater or anybody associated with them. Would we use them more in the future? There is a huge internal resistance on the ground of principles – using them does not fit easily with the acceptance policy."[215]

As explained in Chapter Four, respect for humanitarian principles is not considered as *essential* by Utilitarian organizations, as long as they perceive themselves to be 'doing good.' Since they tend to adopt a pragmatic approach to security management, whereby achieving the objective takes precedence over *how* to achieve it, Utilitarian organizations are more likely to go private – but only if this option is seen as getting them closer to their objective.

The Director of Security of IRD explained for example that: "we have five contractual relations with PMSCs [including four Weaponised and one Guarding], in Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti. Although the PMSCs we use are lumped in the same group as Blackwater, there is no comparison possible: they have a lower profile and no visible weapons, strict rules of engagement, different types of weapons and ammunitions, training, etc – we needed to fine tune some aspects but are now very comfortable. I believe we'll still have these contracts in the future – it puts us ahead of the game because we've already accepted them and shaped them to our advantage; NGOs are blocking themselves in not working with them."[216]

Similarly the Deputy Chief of Security of a UN agency commented that "the UN are already using local armed guards – does it mean we crossed the Rubicon already? What's the difference with using more experienced American guards? It is more a normative and emotional issue rather than a security one. PMSCs are always considered as an option by us, and the UN are increasingly happy to use them."[217]

As explained in the previous chapter, aid agencies' differences in approaching security are not clear–cut between the three types of organization. The same applies to IAA approaches to PMSCs. Trends however have been traced, and the following sub-sections will provide a body of corroborating evidence that support these.

6.2.2. Aid agencies' engagement with the private security industry

The present sub-section offers an overview of the thesis's findings regarding aid agency use of PMSCs' services. A distinction is made between findings at field level, originating from interviews and

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[213] Interview 147.
[214] Interview 66.
[215] Interview 148.
[216] Interview 142.
[217] Interview 13.

observations in Afghanistan and Haiti, and information collected through interviews with headquarters–based humanitarians. As the headquarters staff have a wider perspective than those based in a particular country, it is not surprising that some agencies that are cited as not using PMSCs in either Afghanistan or Haiti are still named as using corporate security services in other countries. Altogether, these findings provide a picture that nevertheless remains consistent from headquarter to field levels.

It is worth nothing however, that given the limitations of the methodology used for the present research (see Chapter Three), and given that the field of humanitarian security is rapidly changing, the author recognises that these findings are not exhaustive. Present and possible future evolutions are acknowledged, and the next chapter of the thesis will offer an analysis of the future of humanitarian security management.

6.2.2.1. Aid agency engagement with PMSCs – headquarters' perspective

Table 2 below illustrates the use of the three types of PMSCs by aid agencies globally – as per the information provided by headquarters–based interviewees.

	Guarding companies	Unarmed companies	Weaponised companies	Has not used any PMSC
Deontological	ACF / CRF / ICRC / IFRC* / MDM* / MSF–B / MSF–H* / OGB	ACF / BRC / IFRC / MDM / MSF–H	ICRC / MSF–B / MSF–F	–
Solidarist	AA / CARE US / CARITAS / CRS / CWS* / PLAN / SC–N* / SC–UK* / TROCAIRE* / UNHCR / WHH / WV	CA / CARE US / CARITAS / DACAAR / PLAN / RI / SC–UK	CARE US / CARITAS / UN–IOM / UNHCR	Mission East / Tearfund /
Utilitarian	CHF / IMC* / IRC / IRD / SC–US	IMC / IRC / IRD / MC / SC–US	CHF / IRC / IRD / UN WFP	–

* = provision of unarmed guarding services

Table 2 - Overview of IAA use of PMSCs

What one notices is that all types of organization use PMSCs. Apart from two Solidarist NGOs (Mission East and Tearfund), all aid agencies that have been consulted as part of this research have used, or are using, security services provided by PMSCs in some form.

A few distinctions are nevertheless necessary and two major aspects need to be emphasised: first, when using Guarding companies, Deontological organizations tend to use armed services less than Utilitarians do; second, Weaponised companies are mostly being used by Utilitarian agencies as well as by organizations sitting at the margin between the Solidarist and Utilitarian types.

In addition, many Deontological and Solidarist organizations such as ActionAid, Action Contre la Faim (ACF), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), have used both Guarding companies and Unarmed ones, but refused to engage with Weaponised companies. A

notable exception however is the use by MSF–France of a Weaponised company in Iraq. Much decried by other sections of the MSF, this remains an exceptional case due to the particular history of the agency in Iraq, and does not represent a trend. Similarly, after much heated internal debate, MSF–Holland has used the services of a PMSC to provide advice in the release of one employee who was held hostage for nearly two years in the Russian Caucasus. Several employees explained off-the-record to the author that the experience was not successful and it subsequently remained a one–off. In contrast, the use of Weaponised companies by Utilitarian organizations appears to be part of long–term operating strategies and is accounted for in plurennial budgets.

Like other Deontological organizations, the ICRC has used and uses PMSCs. This use is essentially limited to guarding services, provided either by local Guarding companies or local branches of international Weaponised companies (for example, the ICRC employed ArmorGroup in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Lifeguard in Sierra Leone). Nevertheless, as the recognised guardian of international humanitarian law (IHL), the ICRC engages with PMSCs in different ways to other IAAs. It began studying PMSCs as early as 1997 when the activities of Executive Outcomes first shed light on PMSCs. A working group incorporating different departments from within the ICRC was created in 2001 with the objective of framing the organization's approach to the corporate security industry, particularly with regards to the rights and obligations delineated under IHL. According to several ICRC interviewees, the aid agency constantly looks for a balance between the need to engage with PMSCs and the unwillingness to debate the legitimacy of their actions.[218] As such, it has refused to provide training to PMSCs regarding their rights and obligations towards IHL, but the publication of legal papers and the participation in international conferences have contributed greatly to clarifying the status of PMSCs and their employees vis-à-vis IHL. As an ICRC staffer put it: "if you throw people out of the realm of law, you can't expect them to respect the law."[219]

Altogether, these findings do reiterate the different approaches taken by the three different types of IAAs' with regard to the the use of PMSCs.

6.2.2.2. Aid agencies' engagement with PMSCs in Afghanistan

The following table presents the findings of the thesis regarding the use of PMSCs by aid agencies in Afghanistan.

	Guarding companies	Unarmed companies	Weaponised companies
Deontological	-	-	-
Solidarist	CARE US / CARITAS / UNHCR	CA / CARE US / CARITAS / DACAAR	CARE US / CARITAS / UN–IOM / UNHCR
Utilitarian	IRD / UNDP	IRD / MC	IRD / UNDP

Table 3 - Overview of IAA use of PMSCs in Afghanistan

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[218] Interviews 30, 34, 152.
[219] Interview 34.

While a few aid agencies have contractual relations with PMSCs in Afghanistan, some have informal contact, and most of them have no contact at all. Among the twenty-three NGO representatives that were interviewed in Afghanistan for this research, six representatives – working for Care International, Caritas Germany,[220] Christian Aid, DACAAR, International Relief and Development and Mercy Corps – acknowledged that their organization is using, or has used, corporate security services. Among these six NGOs, two are Utilitarian, one is sitting between the Utilitarian and Solidarist delimitation, and two are Solidarists. In other words, no Deontological organizations were found to be using PMSCs in Afghanistan.

Only one of these NGOs (a Utilitarian) used a PMSC for the provision of armed guards, and two organizations had contracts that included the possibility of calling for an armed Quick Reaction Force (QRF). Training (first aid, security…) of guards, drivers or general staff was the most commonly used service. Some contracts are limited to, or include, the sending of electronic daily situation reports, access to a web portal of information, fortnightly security meetings, pre-trip approval or management in the case of kidnapping. Five different companies were used for the provision of these services: ArmorGroup, Centurion, Control Risks, Global, Hart and Strategic Security Solutions International.

Regarding United Nations agencies, each operates within a framework specified in their Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). These are designed in the headquarters in New York but contextualised for each country of operation. If the MOSS specifies that the agencies need guards, it is then up to agencies to recruit them, based on a recommended list. In other words, strategies regarding UN's interactions with PMSCs in Afghanistan change from one agency to another. However most UN officials interviewed in Afghanistan for this research acknowledged their agency is using private security services. These agencies include, but are not limited to: IOM, UNAMA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNOCA, and UNOPS[221] – amongst which, the humanitarian agencies are all Solidarist or Utilitarian organizations. The services provided included training, mine clearance, but also armed and unarmed static protection as well as armed mobile escorts. Campus Integrated Logistics & Security Ltd, Compass, Global Strategies Group, IDG Security, Kroll, Ronco Consulting Corp., Strategic Security Solutions International and US Protection and Investigations, LLC are the PMSCs that are currently employed or have been hired in the past.

The use of PMSCs by UN agencies nevertheless differs from one agency to another. As an example, following the May 2006 riots, the UNHCR decided to use a local PMSC to protect its main compound in Kabul. The choice of a local Guarding PMSC was made on the basis of cost. In contrast, armed Ghurkas from the Weaponised IDG–Security have been used to protect the UN compound in

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[220] Caritas Germany shares its office in Kabul with other NGOs from the Caritas movement, which means that the PMSC contracted indirectly served additional NGOs.
[221] International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Operation Centre in Afghanistan (UNOCA) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). UNMACA (United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are also said to be using the services of a PMSC but this information could not be verified.

Kandahar. A UNOPS respondent explained that by transferring the risk to a third party (the PMSC), it allowed the UN to operate in dangerous places. The contract with IDG started at the beginning of 2006 following the deterioration of the situation in the South and lasted until the beginning of 2007. In charge of the security for the compound, Ghurkas stayed inside the compound and supervised inner Afghan unarmed guards (*chowkidors*) as well as outer armed Afghan guards. Compass Security replaced IDG in February 2007. The new contract, whose value reached over USD3 million[222], was signed for one year.

In addition, exchanges of information also exist between some agencies and PMSCs, even though respondents have complained that the flow is mostly going one way: to put it bluntly, contractors are demanding information while the UN security staff are kind enough to share it. However, two high-ranking officials working for the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) both complained that some PMSCs are "directly copy–pasting our information and then selling it."[223] Both respondents explained that they talked to the companies and tried to make them respect the copyright, but were unsuccessful.[224]

6.2.2.3. Aid agencies' engagement with PMSCs in Haiti

The table below reveals the use of PMSCs by aid agencies in Haiti. It nevertheless focuses on NGOs as opposed to the UN, as the latter had a specific set-up whereas all UN agencies in Port-au-Prince were located in the same compound, under the same security rules (see hereafter).

	Guarding companies	Unarmed companies	Weaponised companies
Deontological	ACF / OGB / Red-Cross society	-	-
Solidarist	AA / CRS / Plan SC-US / WHH / WV	-	-
Utilitarian	CHF / IMC / IRD	CHF / IRD	CHF / IRD

Table 4 – Overview of IAA use of PMSCs in Haiti

The majority of humanitarian agencies in Haiti do not use any services provided by private military and security companies. However, twelve international NGOs – ActionAid, Action Contre la Faim, Catholic Relief Services, CHF International, International Medical Corps, International Relief and Development, Oxfam GB, Plan International, Save the Children US, Welthungerhilfe, World Vision and a European Red–Cross society[225] – were identified in this research as using the services of a security company (though two had ceased doing so after a year). There is anecdotal evidence that this number increased with the influx of aid organizations after the 2010 earthquake. All three types of

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[222] See the list of contracts awarded by UNOPS, http://www.unops.org.
[223] Interview 17 and 19.
[224] Interview 19.
[225] Employees of the society insisted that the name of their organization should not be disclosed under any circumstances.

aid agencies are using or have used PMSCs in Haiti, even though only Utilitarian agencies were found to contracting Weaponised companies.

The situation of the United Nations was slightly different from NGOs since most of the UN agencies were sharing the same central compound (known as Hotel Christopher) until it collapsed during the earthquake. According to a UN Security staff member, the UN were (prior to the disaster) using 170 non–armed UN security personnel, in addition to 180 armed guards provided by PaP Sécurité and Global Sécurité, two local Guarding companies.[226] In addition, several UN interviewees have reported that: "the UN recommended that we use a guarding company to protect our home."[227]

Overall, the services used by aid agencies were limited in scope and consisted of the provision of armed and unarmed guards, armed escorts, training, risk assessments and risk analysis. Two Utilitarian NGOs also used close protection services for its international staff travelling in hazardous areas. The companies used were the Guarding Caffington Services, Condor Security, Corvington Sécurité, National Security, PaP Sécurité, PSS, Quality SA, Thomas Sécurité and three Weaponised: Control Risks, Blue Hackle, Virtual Defense and Development International, Inc (VDI).

It is worth noting however, that the quality of the guarding services – by far the most popular of the services provided to aid agencies – is rather low with poorly trained, ill equipped, badly paid and mis-managed guards. In one case, the (only) guard at a UN staff house nearly killed the expatriates who were spending time in their garden; this happened in July 2006, when he accidentally fired while cleaning his shotgun. On other occasions, the author observed that many guards were inadvertently pointing their guns at staff and guests around them. It was also noticed several times that, due to the guards' limited understanding of French, as well as the expatriates' inability to speak Creole, they could not always interact with one another.

Altogether, the various approaches towards PMSCs by the five selected NGOs are indicative of the different IAAs approaches to corporate security. Among the Deontological NGOs, MSF and OGB have hired security companies, but this only happened rarely and was mostly limited to the contracting of Guarding and Unarmed companies. Among the Solidarists, while SC-UK had a similar stance to MSF and OGB, CARE on its side hired Guarding, Unarmed and occasionally, Weaponised companies. The Utilitarian IRD repeatedly contracted all three types of PMSCs, at both headquarters' and field levels.

Overall, these findings reveal that all three types of aid agencies have contracted, or are contracting, private military and security services, yet the extent of this interaction, as well as the types of companies being used, vary significantly from one type of agency to another, underscoring aid agencies' different identities and approaches to security. Though again, subtleties need to be acknowledged, as do localised contexts, in order to explain explain counter–intuitive findings. Altogether, interactions between aid agencies and PMSCs are mainly determined by a mix of

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[226] Interview 102.
[227] Interview 103.

principled and pragmatic considerations. The difference lies in the weight that agencies lace upon their values compared to practical considerations of security.

6.2.3. Aid agencies' interests in private military and security companies' services

The following sub-sections will present the thesis's findings related to aid workers' interests in PMSCs. While doing so, the ideal–type of humanitarian organization that aid workers who are being quoted work for is specified. This allows underscoring how the personnel of each ideal–type of organization has internalised its organization's views on security, reproducing by doing so the three aforementioned different approaches to PMSCs.

6.2.3.1. Aid workers' perceptions of PMSCs

As a general trend, whether at headquarter or field level, aid workers raise more concerns about PMSCs than praise their qualities. This negative perception is more prevalent among employees of Deontological and Solidarist aid agencies than Utilitarians, and is explained by diverse reasons. The first reason relates to the image security contractors create, in particular the 'cowboy' attitude ascribed to Weaponised PMSCs. As the Head of Mission of a Solidarist NGO in Haiti stated, "I once met personnel from [the PMSC] Steele Foundation, and I had the impression that I was in front of international bandits."[228] In the words of a Deontological organization employee, "I see PSMCs as providers of armed services. But as an NGO, our professional ethics require that the people see us as a non–armed organization."[229] These often–heard criticisms nevertheless show that aid workers' awareness of PMSCs is mostly limited to the visible presence of private security personnel in the streets and that the average aid worker does not know that some PMSCs adopt a very low profile – making them virtually unnoticeable to an inexperienced eye.

Some aid workers – a majority of whom were working with Deontological organizations – also argued that not only do security contractors look dangerous, but their presence actually *feeds* insecurity. As the Oxfam Country Director in Haiti argued "a whole industry benefits from insecurity, and has an interest in the continuation of insecurity. Actually, there've been cases where security guards contributed to security incidents."[230] These kinds of claims are explained either by the fact that PMSC employees are poorly trained and poorly paid, or by the fact that they contribute to the confusion between the military and the civilians and, with their military profile, create resentment among the population against all foreigners. The lack of accountability, regulation and training, as well as security guards' poor weapon handling, were also frequently heard criticisms. A few respondents also explained that by bringing in more weapons, through their links with local existing militias, or in Afghanistan by "sucking away the personnel we wanted to disarm through DDR [Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration]"[231], the presence of PMSCs makes the disarmament process more difficult. Similarly, an Oxfam employee in Afghanistan questioned PMSCs' activities: "are contractors

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[228] Interview 121.
[229] Interview 124.
[230] Interview 108.
[231] Interview 61.

protecting warlords? You never know who is inside their cars."[232] Last but not least, several employees of Deontological and Solidarist organizations underlined that using PMSCs – usually to seek protection against Taliban or affiliates in Afghanistan, and against criminal gangs in Haiti – contributed to rendering aid agencies in a oppositional stance, irremediably closing the doors to future negotiations. And since a hard stance is not a guarantee of full security, this meant, in turn, that they couldn't access areas under armed groups' control.

Despite the criticisms, positive elements of PMSCs were also noted by some interviewees. Interestingly, these were expressed mostly by respondents working for Utilitarian or a few Solidarist organizations. They argued that PMSCs are technically skilled[233] or, in the words of a security officer working for a Utilitarian/Solidarist UN agency, they "serve a very important role which is risk absorption."[234] As an employee of a Solidarist NGO pointed out that many perceive PMSCs as a "necessary evil"[235] or, in the words of a Utilitarian NGO Country Manager in Afghanistan, "a fact of the landscape."[236] Some respondents acknowledged that PMSCs will be increasingly needed, in particular, and as the Country Representative of a Solidarist NGO in Afghanistan expressed, "there is not much difference whether we have our own guards or if they are provided by a company."[237] Also, several interviewees highlighted that without PMSCs the organization of safe elections in Afghanistan would not have been possible.[238]

Aid representatives, *whose organization has used the services of a PMSC,* have mixed views on the companies. The CARE security officer in Afghanistan explained his satisfaction with the services provided by a PMSC: "it's more legitimate than I thought it would be. They use weapons but as long as they don't have a cowboy behaviour it's ok. They are quite disciplined and organized. [They offer a] reassuring professionalism."[239] Another interviewee, working for a Solidarist NGO, added that "the industry needs to evolve more; for the moment their evolution is expanding and restrictive; but it has to be [a] cost effective innovative solution."[240] The Security Manager of a Utilitarian NGO in Haiti explained that he felt confident working with security contractors as "they are very professional."[241]

Other respondents however articulated quite a negative attitude towards the company they had hired. A head of mission in Afghanistan employed by a Solidarist NGO shared that: "a PMSC *per se* is not a bad thing. … [but] personally I don't like these people, essentially because of their appearance: it creates a distance and superiority (they wear sunglasses, they drive cars without plate

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[232] Interview 66.
[233] Interview 55.
[234] Interview 54.
[235] Interview 138.
[236] Interview 73.
[237] Interview 86.
[238] Interview 15, 53, 68.
[239] Interview 85.
[240] Interview 86.
[241] Interview 126.

numbers, etc.). I can understand why Afghans feel bad".[242] For others, such as the Country Director of a Solidarist NGO, the muscular approach of several PMSCs was deemed problematic: "PMSCs just provoke people to shoot at them".[243] As will be developed in the following sub-section, two concepts of security – deterrence versus acceptance – confront one another.

"Yes for sure", this is the most commonly heard answer among Deontological and most Solidarist organizations' staff to the question of whether they perceive a cultural clash between aid agencies and private military and security companies. Several reasons are given to explain this view. First, the PMSCs' *motivations* are questioned; as the CD of a Solidarist/Utilitarian agency put it, "NGOs are here for the benefit of Afghan people while PMSCs are here for financial reasons or ill–political reasons even if individuals might be sincerely willing to help Afghanistan."[244] Second, the different *backgrounds* are also emphasised: "usually NGO staff comes from the middle classes, with postgraduate backgrounds, while most PMSC are ex-military or police or wannabe military or police."[245] Third, respondents have pointed at the different *conceptions of security*, according to a Solidarist–NGO employee, "contractors don't give importance to the same things that we do; in terms of security they will first consider their clients' security, possibly to the detriment of the population; we always reconsider the relevancy of our work, of our presence."[246] Fourth, PMSCs' *relations to the host country* also present a challenge , as the head of office of a Deontological organization explains: "they feel the need to carry guns at all times as they don't trust the locals."[247]

Despite the perceived clash, several aid workers who were interviewed kept an open attitude toward contractors. Further revealing of the differences in aid workers' approaches to PMSCs, those respondents were almost exclusively working for Solidarist or Utilitarian agencies. In the words of a Utilitarian agency staffer: "yes there is a cultural clash, but yes we can work together; we can figure out how we can share space, especially if they were providing the type of security we could really use, that would match our needs."[248] Similarly, the security officer of an organization sitting between the Solidarist and Utilitarian divide explained that, "the business is rather flexible so I don't see a cultural clash happening."[249] This view was shared by other Solidarist organizations' employees: "there is definitely a difference of culture, but not a clash as long as you clearly define where you work together"[250]; "the existence of a clash depends on the type of services provided."[251] Another interviewee working for a Solidarist agency claimed that, "it's like the militaries; if there is some

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[242] Interview 86.
[243] Interview 78.
[244] Interview 73.
[245] Interview 73.
[246] Interview 65.
[247] Interview 75.
[248] Interview 81.
[249] Interview 54.
[250] Interview 86.
[251] Interview 83.

transparency in their work you have to consider all possibility to improve security, perhaps not directly but through ANSO and joint meetings."[252]

6.2.3.2. Different conceptions of security risks

While all actors involved in insecure environments seek security, their understanding of what being safe means varies greatly. Private security contractors and aid workers look at security from their respective vantage points, and these function according to their mandate or respective objectives. That there is some tension between them on security matters is no surprise given the very different nature of their responsibilities. An aid worker employed by a Deontological organization illustrated this by saying that "private military and security companies perceive Afghans as potential enemies while we see them as potential friends; maybe that's the fundamental difference."[253]

In contrast, when asked whether aid workers should armed protection, one contractor explained that "it's their call. But on my side, it's a difficult call because I have a duty of care for my guys; in Iraq and Afghanistan, you need weapons, but in other situations, it's not necessary."[254] According to another contractor, "it's best to be protected by the local population but it's also highly naïve [to believe they can protect you]."[255] Similarly, a Haitian security provider noted: "security guards without weapons are like lame ducks waiting to be shot at."[256] Some PMSCs believe that, thanks to their militarised profile, they are less likely to be attacked than NGOs, who are being perceived as soft targets.

Handicap International's guarding system in Afghanistan is at the polar opposite of most PMSCs' concept of ideal security. Present in the country since the 1980s, this Deontological organization supports the physical rehabilitation of victims of war using local health structures. Seizing the opportunity to offer jobs to the disabled people they help, most of their guards are actually handicapped. But as specified by their representative, thanks to their low profile: "the guards did save us during the May 2006 violent riots."[257] The contrast here with the Weaponised PMSC DynCorp International is striking: it has adopted a highly visible stance that was widely perceived as aggressive and disrespectful (Schmeidl, 2007). Few were surprised when a vehicle-born improvised explosive device – a car bomb that was among the first major attacks in post–Taliban Kabul – shook their heavily protected Kabul office on the 31st of August 2004 and killed 17 people and wounded 45. These kind of differences in approaching security are critical in a country where the insurgents have shown interest in negotiating with aid agencies regarding the issue of humanitarian access, but have warned that "they would attack aid convoys which use armed escorts from the Afghan police or private military and security companies" (IRIN, 2010b, website). As Fabrice Weissman argues,

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[252] Interview 79.
[253] Interview 75.
[254] Interview 42.
[255] Interview 49.
[256] Interview 99.
[257] Interview 76. Rioters were about to smash in the office to destroy it and kill the foreigners inside, but the guards stood their ground, explaining (lying) that no foreigners were working there.

[m]ilitarizing humanitarian convoys or facilities simply transform them into military targets. The medical aid organizations currently operating in Afghanistan, closely protected by international forces or pro-government security forces, have bitter experience of this logic. Seen as legitimate targets by insurgents, healthcare facilities have become part of the battlefield and deserted by the local population. We should remember that one of the great innovations introduced by modern international humanitarian law is to proclaim the demilitarization of health and relief facilities and their personnel, which is the only way of guaranteeing impartial access to all victims of a conflict (Weissman, In press).

Nevertheless, an observer adopting a strictly technical understanding of a context may conclude that a threat can be countered or protected from by adding a line of defence in between, be it armed personnel, fences with barb wire, armoured cars or aggressive driving. For instance it was observed that IRD send international staff to monitor their projects –even if these are being implemented in insecure areas – but in order to ensure their security, a private security company is sent ahead of the internationals so that they could 'secure the site'. Once is done, the expatriates are flown in by helicopter. In other cases, and when available, the internationals were being protected by soldiers from the Coalition. While these mechanisms may provide a sense of protection to the international staff, it undeniably contributesto: a) putting further distance between the community and the international staff visiting them, and most importantly b) endangering the communities by identifying them as (seemingly) collaborating with the 'international forces'. Yet, accomplishing the mission remains the priority: in the words of a Utilitarian NGO staffer "when we arrive with PSCs and by helicopter, the communities are initially sceptical, but we send community outreach people before we start our projects; we ask for their specific needs, we try employing them for cash for work – and *at least we are there doing the work*."[258] Such a view aptly illustrates the Utilitarian tendency to focus on the goal regardless of the means used to achieve it.

The Country Director of a Solidarist organization summarizes the issue in a few words: "when you put your security in PMSC hands it changes your own understanding of the situation. For business purpose as well as based on their background, I have the impression they see thing as more dangerous than they actually are. … PMSC approach to security management is often making the target harder and forcing on deterrence. A major challenge for these PMSCs is NOT to make the target harder."[259] Two conceptions of security here confront one another. While aid workers evolve in a community where the concept of 'enemy' is not even considered; security contractors, predominantly former military and law enforcement personnel, tend to (re)produce security discourses and practices based upon the figure of the enemy and the relationship between 'them' and 'us'.[260]

6.2.4. Deconstruction of the use of ethical arguments by PMSCs

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[258] Interview 142. Emphasis added.
[259] Interview 81.
[260] For more information about the confrontational view of armed forces and police, see Bigo (1996).

Does the use of ethical arguments and practices by PMSCs make a difference? Do humanitarian organizations hire PMSCs that emphasise their regard for ethics over ones that do not? The answer to this question is again, a nuanced one.

Deontological organizations have a strict understanding of humanitarian principles and believe that these principles can only be respected by truly not-for-profit non-governmental organizations. Therefore they are critical of any kind of organization that claims to respect humanitarian principles, but does not abide by an actual 'principled' approach. As a result they are not receptive to PMSCs' ethical/humanitarian discourses, they are more likely critical of it.

At the other end of the Spectrum, Utilitarian organizations share with PMSCs a blurred common ground over ethics, and are more receptive to the private security companies' ethical discourses.[261]

Solidarist agencies often have a divided view regarding PMSCs' ethical arguments. While a majority do not buy into the idea PMSCs propogate about themselves, for the same reasons as Deontological organizations, a few nevertheless put their distrust aside and adopt a practical stance towards PMSCs.

6.2.4.1. Arguments opposed to PMSCs' appropriation of humanitarian values

There is a global debate amongst security contractors, governments, and civil society that revolves around the regulation of the private security industry: primarily how regulation might be enforced and violations sanctioned. Since the private security industry is not about to disappear, the best approach might therefore be to regulate PMSCs' activities through national and international laws and ensure that these laws are enforced, particularly in war–torn areas. However, despite both the existence of such laws in a few countries and international efforts toward regulation, as well as the private security industry's own efforts to regulate itself, PMSCs remain *de facto* largely unregulated.

A closer look at ISOA's strategy to "transfer the legitimacy of international organizations and humanitarian NGOs to the private military industry" (Olsson, 2003, website. Author's own translation) thus gives rise to an uneasy feeling. Somehow, and despite its intentions to produce the opposite effect, ISOA's effort looks like an *aggressive way of promoting peace*. Why so? One of the main ways by which PMSCs (supposedly) involved in the promotion of peace, yet seeking to appropriate humanitarian values for financial gain, attempt to derive legitimacy, is through their ethical positioning. They do this in a number of different ways; from implementing self-imposed codes of conduct and self-regulation; respecting the laws of war; attempting to brand their corporate social responsibilities, including the provision of assistance. These strategies have in common the attempt to seem like they are pursuing a moral obligation that exists in all cultures: to save lives. At such an abstract level, no one can question the rectitude of this claim. However, as Wolf-Dieter Eberwein adeptly explains,

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[261] Incidentally yet significantly, the only two organizations that have participated in the ISOA journal May–June 2010 edition dedicated to the Haitian reconstruction are Utilitarian. While one article was written by a World Food Programme staff-member, the NGO IRD actually advertised their services, including for integrated community stabilization programmes.

"morality is [usually thought of as] compatible with law, but it can always justify behaviour that is not in accordance with it" (Eberwein, 2006, website. Author's own translation). In other words, by focusing on relevant, but somehow *secondary* issues, PMSCs divert the debate away from the main issue: regulation. By seeking legitimacy through their moral and ethical positioning, PMSCs are able to avoid committing themselves to stricter standards of respect for the law.

The case of the British Association of Private Security Companies (BAPSC) is a perfect example. The BAPSC is a lobby group composed of Weaponised companies whose objective is "to promote the interests and regulate the activities of UK–based firms that provide armed defensive security services in countries outside the UK" (BAPSC, Undated, website). In order to achieve this, "the BAPSC and its members recognize that their objectives will best be achieved through effective self-regulation" (BAPSC, Undated, website). Self-regulation consists of imposing certain standards of quality in their recruiting, training and other activities, all of which is perceived as a proof of their ethical standards. Thus PMSCs pushing for self-regulation gain greater legitimacy, and, consequently, more contracts. Self-regulation however, is based on a system of self–proclaimed legitimization rather than law. In contrast to a system of sanctions established that is law and is based upon an enforceable regulatory framework; the sanctions in a self-regulated system are not legally binding but constitue a, unenforceable, moral code.

Moreover, where violations are uncovered through the ISOA's complaint's system or the BAPSC's principle of self-regulation, sanctions consist at worst of being expelled from the lobby group. A company that loses its membership from these groups might fear a negative report in the media – yet no eviction has occurred to date. Furthermore, the ISOAs' complaint-filing system presupposes that someone who has witnessed an abuse committed by a security contractor in a war zone, knows which company the contractor belongs to, knows that the company is a member of ISOA, knows that such a complaint system exists, has access to the internet and is able to understand the English website and launch a procedure in the United States. It also requires that the PMSC does not retire from the lobby group, as Blackwater/Xe did following the aforementioned Nisoor Square shooting scandal. This is not to say that the system of filing complaints or the push for self-regulation are not positive steps, but it's unsurprising that no complaints have ever been filed.

While ISOA's development of a Code of Conduct can be seen as a constructive step toward appropriate behaviour, it must not be confused with the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. In simplistic terms, while the latter is based on the principle of "saving lives", ISOA's Code of Conduct emphasizes the doctrine "watch what you shoot." Article 9.2.2, for example, specifies that "[a]ll Rules of Engagement should be in compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law and emphasize appropriate restraint and caution to minimize casualties and damage, while preserving a person's inherent right of self-defence" (ISOA, Undated,b, website).

The concept and practices of corporate social responsibility have both their defenders and their critics. The former argue that CSR contributes to broadening companies' interests beyond immediate, short–term profits. The latter contend that in their pursuit of the bottom line, corporations are distracted by CSR; or that CSR serves only as a fig leaf. While the PMSC Kroll states that it "is extending its contributions to the public good through its Corporate Social Responsibility initiative" (Kroll, Undated, website), Joel Bakan notes that although

> … today's leading CEOs cultivate passion and seem genuinely concerned about how their corporations' actions affect social and environmental interests, not just their stockholders', … the 'best interests of the corporation' principle [is] now a fixture in the corporate laws of most countries [... and compel] corporate decision makers always to act in the best interests of the corporation, and hence its owners. *The law forbids any other motivation for their actions*, whether to assist workers, improve the environment, or help consumers save money. They can do these things with their own money, as private citizens. As corporate officials, however, stewards of other people's money, they have no legal authority to pursue such goals as ends in themselves – only as means to serve the corporation's own interests, which generally means to maximize the wealth of its shareholders (Bakan, p. 37, 2004. Emphasis added).

The author goes on to argue that CSR "holds out promises of help, reassures people, and sometimes works. We should not, however, expect very much from it. A corporation can do good only to help itself to do well, a profound limit on just how much good it can do" (Bakan, p. 50, 2004). As Bakan aptly demonstrates, corporations are *legally obliged* to put their interests before 'others'. It is then not surprising that PMSCs' 'humanitarian' branding does not receive a very positive response from aid workers.

From a broader perspective, a PMSC's ethical actions (namely self-regulation, implementation of codes of conduct, assistance projects) might be said to seduce two types of people: those already predisposed to believe in their ethical position, who consider that private military and security companies do indeed offer the best option for improving peace and stabilization operations; and those that have a limited understanding of the exact nature of humanitarian action, who see it as a technical operation that entails few skills besides logistical efficacy. In other words, it is only those that are not aware of the historical debates and issues regarding humanitarian action who will be seduced by this kind of behavior.

Aid workers have struggled with ethical considerations and complexities since the very inception of humanitarian action. And still today, aid workers are involved in continual debates over moral considerations. Therefore, they are all too well aware of ethical issues and, as such, are much less likely to concur with PMSCs presentation of themselves as 'ethical', seeing it merely as a marketing strategy. Nevertheless, as underscored in the two previous chapters, Deontologist and Solidarist aid agencies are more sensitive than Utilitarians to any discourse or action that can threaten, or cause more confusion, about the values and operating modes of humanitarian action.

6.2.4.2. Provision of assistance by private military and security companies

The assistance projects implemented by foundations supported by PMSCs, often confused with 'humanitarian action' by some, are seen merely as a functional task by Deontological and Solidarist employees. These projects are implemented without consideration for the basic principles that guide humanitarian action, protect beneficiaries and focus on the needs of populations.

PMSC assistance is often provided in a manner contrary to humanitarian principles since these projects are primarily implemented for self-interest – in order to improve the public image of the organization, get closer to the communities in order to be accepted and protected (or at least, not targeted), or to ensure PMSC employees maintain positive morale, etc. In the words of two contractors, "humanitarian activities done by PMSCs are done for public relations' purposes"[262], "these projects are always helpful in order to get information."[263] Another explained – off the record – that his company would distribute presents to families of people they'd killed, but that the main reason for such 'generosity' was to be able to continue operating in the area without further antagonizing local populations. Similarly, as a leaflet from the Weaponised PMSC Opus Risk Management states, "[we] implement Community Programs to manage issues of mutual interest between stakeholders. The aim is to contribute to community development by involving people with the project in collaboration with host communities and their representatives while enhancing social and economic development. By involving communities in the project, clients can benefit from: a human intelligence gathering tool; a better understanding of the community's perspectives and a leverage to enhancing its commitment; a better knowledge of business partners and stakeholder relations risk factors" (Opus Risk Management, Undated, website). It is doubtful whether the company would present the same arguments to the communities they utilise while pretending to help them.

These findings echo the widely heard criticisms of aid exploitation by militarised actors, leading to poor quality projects. As a Deontological NGO employee summarized it, "[PMSCs' assistance] is more of a marketing strategy than actual assistance."[264]

Similarly, several organizations have noted the limited (or negative) results of 'quick impact projects' (QIPs) made by military–dominated institutions – including PMSCs. For instance a collective of NGOs in Afghanistan denounced these QIPs, saying that:

> [d]evelopment projects implemented with military money or through military–dominated structures aim to achieve fast results but are often poorly executed, inappropriate and do not have sufficient community involvement to make them sustainable. There is little evidence this approach is generating stability and, in some cases, military involvement in development activities is, paradoxically, putting Afghan lives further at risk as these projects quickly become targeted by anti-government elements (Action Aid *et al*, p.1, 2010).

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[262] Interview 100.
[263] Interview 40.
[264] Interview 76.

Significantly, all of the NGOs signatories of the pamphlet are Deontological and Solidarist aid organizations. This positioning is revealing of the polarization of practices that exist among aid agencies, in particular when the debate involves political considerations. As will be demonstrated below, employees of Deontological and Solidarist organizations are more preoccupied with the impact of PMSCs on the conceptualization of 'humanitarian space' than those working for Utilitarian agencies.

Asked what they think of PMSC initiatives to provide assistance, several humanitarians interviewed for this thesis criticised them. Interestingly – and further revealing of aid agencies' different approaches to PMSCs - respondents critical of PMSCs' involvement in aid were all employees of Deontological or Solidarist organizations. For instance the Coordinator of a Solidarist NGO in Afghanistan argued that "individual contractors probably do so with a charitable intention but certainly don't respect the principles of 'do no harm'; they give without knowing the structure or the real needs."[265] Similarly, a Deontological organization staff member explained that "I don't think they do so to save lives, but rather to be accepted; it's hypocritical. Everyone to his trade; doing humanitarian action requires knowledge of the field, the projects, the population, the needs, etc."[266] A Country Manager working for a Deontological NGO, echoing the concern of others, was more preoccupied by the negative impact privatization of this type of aid has on humanitarian space: "I don't know of any PMSC doing 'humanitarian' activities, but if they do so, they certainly destroy our humanitarian space."[267]

In contrast, a few respondents (employed by Solidarist and Utilitarian organizations) had developed a pragmatic approach to PMSCs' assistance projects. For instance, the Head of Mission of a Solidarist NGO explained that "it does not bother me if they provide some assistance, especially if aid workers are absent; if there is an emergency and they are the only ones – and if they clearly say who they are – why not?"[268] The Country Manager of a Solidarist/Utilitarian NGO argued that "at a personal level, I see there are so many needs that I understand; I don't think charity is bad, but I don't think it will improve the situation in the country. [However,] if a company wants to do charity, they should have a full time dedicated person working with locals."[269]

Some private security contractors do not understand why humanitarian organizations are not implementing projects in certain dangerous areas, despite the difficult living conditions of the population. They believe that they could provide the necessary protection for the aid workers to intervene, even in the most remote and hazardous places. While this position is both understandable and honourable, it reduces aid agencies to service providers and humanitarian action to a purely technical task, seeing it as merely providing goods. Humanitarian action is however far more complex

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[265] Interview 84.
[266] Interview 72.
[267] Interview 75.
[268] Interview 63.
[269] Interview 70.

than that, and humanitarian projects are full of pitfalls. Indeed, it is precisely because they take place in complex political, social and economic environments that aid agencies have been struggling since their very inception to operate within some kind of coherent framework. As interviewees working, in particular, for Deontological and Solidarist organizations have repeatedly explained, humanitarian principles and humanitarian codes of conduct are precisely what generate this framework.

6.2.4.3. PMSCs' use of marketing strategies

The pictures available on the Aegis Foundation website (created by the PMSC Aegis) are noticeably unique in their character. While the faces of the Iraqi and Afghan beneficiaries of the foundation's projects are clear, the faces of the (armed and geared-up) security contractors delivering the supplies are blurred. Although anecdotal, it illustrates contradiction between the will to 'promote' an overall image of a 'good doer', and the belief that it is necessary to blur the donor's face to protect his identity. Incidentally, it also encourages the viewer to think that security companies are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Throughout their history, aid agencies have received much criticism because of their emotion–oriented, a-historic, victim–focused marketing strategies – to the point that some called it 'disaster–porn' (Bear, 2009, website). As a result, it was specifically included in the aforementioned Red Cross and NGO Code of Conduct that humanitarian marketing should be respectful of disaster victims. Its article 10 states that:

> In our information, publicity, and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects. Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never be lost. In our public information, we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears (Code of Conduct, Undated, website).

Although there is still room for improvement (Kennedy, 2009), it has long been accepted that, as far as they are able, disaster victims are the primary agents of their own survival and recovery. Lilie Chouliaraki notes that IAAs "offer a trajectory of humanitarian communication, which suggests a clear, though not linear, move from emotion–oriented to post–emotional styles of appealing" (Chouliaraki, p.117, 2010). Although not all PMSC advertisements are as troubling as the aforementioned Blackwater's spoon fed African baby, there is little doubt that security companies would do well to take heed of the lessons learned by aid agencies. Not only are such ads disrespectful to the people portrayed, but they are also counterproductive to their objectives in the sense that they literally horrify aid workers who see it.

6.2.4.4. PMSCs' perceived professionalism is more important than their humanitarian branding

The majority of aid organizations are not convinced by the use of ethical arguments by PMSCs. This does not mean they are insensitive to PMSC corporate branding. Indeed, further distinctions ought to be made between companies, *even within the same type*.

Although Weaponised companies tend to adopt a harder stance towards security management than Guarding and Unarmed firms, not all Weaponised companies use muscular approaches in dealing with security issues. To illustrate the point, Control Risks and Blackwater/Xe offer similar types of services, but they differ in the way they deliver these services. Control Risks is seen as indulging in less 'cowboy' behaviour than Xe – and this is why aid agencies opting for a Weaponised company use them rather than Xe. All of Xe's efforts to brand itself with an ethical/humanitarian image fall short in comparison to Control Risks' perceived professionalism – and lower profile. A head of Security working for a Solidarist/Utilitarian NGO explained that: "we did use Control Risks for a review of our procedures after an incident. We went through a very long process of selection as we wanted someone who would truly understand us – their recommendations were actually very relevant; they fully understood our principles and ways of operations and offered different options."[270]

From the humanitarian security professionals' perspective, a further distinction can be made inside each of the three types of PMSCs. Most security managers will distinguish between those that have a good reputation and those that do not. In the word of an NGO Global Security Manager: "PSCs' reputation is one of the most important elements for NGOs to consider when contracting them."[271] Reputation however is not built on the humanitarian branding of the company – as shown earlier, most aid workers are insensitive to these types of marketing; reputation is built on the perceived professionalism of the company, in particular its capacity to understand aid agency–specific mindsets and security approaches. In the words of a Solidarist/Utilitarian NGO employee, "there is a value in distinguishing between PMSCs; when comparing PMSCs we look at their Code of Conduct, Rules of Engagement, registrations, etc. Some NGOs are guilty of putting all PMSCs in the same bag without distinguishing between them."[272]

Inevitably there are cases when a less reputable or flexible company is contracted by an aid agency. This may be explained by a poor understanding of the corporate security market on the part of the aid workers hen they made their choice. Several interviewees based at headquarters level explained that they faced cases where a field office would hire a security company – sometimes armed – without informing the headquarters about it. This inevitably led to a poor selection process and often poor supervision of the company. This happens when little consideration is given to the fact that the cheaper option is not necessarily the best – in particular when it comes to security. Training, equipment, the retention of good staff are usually reflected in the prices. Therefore, the less expensive companies are usually not those with greater integrity. It is however likely that with the increasing attention given to security management and subsequent staff sensitization, associations between aid agencies and 'cheap' security companies will gradually decrease.

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[270] Interview 147.
[271] Interview 24.
[272] Interview 147.

It is striking to notice how aid workers internalise and reproduce the views of the organization they work for, whether at field or headquarters level. Interviewees' attitudes towards PMSCs have repeatedly fallen in line with the attitudes of the aid agencys who employ them. A noteworthy example of this is the former Security Manager of a Solidarist NGO who was interviewed again after he became the Director of Security of a Utilitarian organization.[273] While he vehemently opposed the outsourcing of security in the former position, he openly supported it when in the latter position. As he explained, "I was initially critical of PMSCs as many were new and not trustable, but working with them showed me we could benefit from them. [Using them] puts us ahead of the game."[274]

Nevertheless, for a majority of aid workers – particularly those employed by Deontological and Solidarist agencies - PMSCs' efforts to integrate humanitarian values into their corporate strategies are merely seen as cynical marketing methods rather than a genuine subscription to the tenants of humanitarianism. Furthermore, these aid workers would probably prefer that PMSCs abstained from such moves as this also contributes to rendering indistinct the differences between the aid sector and the security industry. There is little doubt however, that this is precisely what motivates the appropriation of humanitarian values by security companies.

In other words and to most aid agencies' dismay, PMSCs are unlikely to cease appropriating humanitarian values in their corporate branding strategies.

6.3. Conclusion

This chapter's objective was to reveal the respective approaches and interests towards security of IAAs and PMSCs. As part of the assessment, further distinctions within the security industry were necessary, which were discussed in the first section. The second section then examined the diverse ways IAAs relate to PMSCs and looked in particular at how their ethos affects their interaction with them.

The chapter first highlighted distinctions between PMSCs and mercenaries, as well as different labels ascribed to security companies. It then offered a functional distinction of security companies by differentiating the Guarding PMSCs from the Unarmed and Weaponised ones. It offered further distinctions based on PMSCs appropriation and integration of humanitarian representations into business and security strategies. Several cases were used to illustrate the point, such as ISOAs attempts to blend in with aid agencies, or the industry's use of 'humanitarian marketing' and international events to create a positive image around them. The first section closed by underscoring PMSC efforts in the provision of assistance as well as their pragmatic rapprochement with aid agencies.

The chapter's second section revealed that despite the security industry's efforts, aid workers are more critical of PMSCs than supportive. Similarly, it underscored that PMSC 'humanitarian'

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[273] Interviews 29 and 142.
[274] Interview 142.

branding does not receive a very positive response among aid workers. It nevertheless highlighted that even though all three types of aid agencies use corporate security services, they do not share the same approaches to private military and security companies. Deontological organizations are those who try hardest to 'operationalise' the humanitarian principles. As such, they are the least receptive to PMSC discourses and approaches, and contractual relations happen only at the margins, in particular with Weaponised companies. Solidarists try to follow a similar stance but they struggle to do so. This is because they are multi–mandated or don't have enough private funding, they are not as able to abide by their principles as much as they would wish. They tend not to be attracted to using PMSCs but have less difficulty than Deontological organizations in using them. Utilitarians for their part are most prone to using PMSCs for two reasons: they share with PMSCs a generic ethical representation and they are less reluctant to use a deterrent approach if it helps them achieve their objectives. The section then deconstructed the use of ethical arguments by PMSCs and underscored aid agencies' different interests in PMSC services, providing by doing so a body of corroborating evidence in support of the main argument.

Collaboration with PMSCs occurs when aid workers and security contractors both share the same understanding of the origin of their insecurity (the risks) and how to deal with this insecurity (risk prevention or mitigation). Yet, as seen in previous chapters, aid agencies' perception and management of risks differ from one ideal–type to another. This however is not widely understood and explains why contractual interactions between security companies and aid agencies remain limited.

Part III: Implications of the Findings

Chapter 7 – Conclusion and Implications of the Research

"Who you choose to manage your security impacts how you perceive the environment and how the environment perceives you"
NGO Country Director in Afghanistan[275]

"The search for static security … is misguided. The fact is security can only be achieved through constant change, adapting old ideas that have outlived their usefulness to current facts"
William O. Douglas[276]

The overall aim of this research was to understand international aid agencies' approaches to security. This aim was catalysed by the author's field observation that aid agencies confronted with the same security threat often reacted differently to it, despite having a similar conceptual security management framework.

Upon discovering that the existing literature on humanitarian security fails to explain the processes that lead organizations to approach security differently, the thesis provided a qualitative analysis of aid agencies' conceptions and practices of security. By doing so, the research has underscored that aid agencies do not constitute a cohesive block – nor do their views on security exhibit great cohesiveness. In addition, it has further highlighted the process of co-constitution between aid agency identity and their interests in security. Three different approaches to security were discussed, each of which resulted in different preferences on the part of IAAs in their dealings with private military and security companies. Altogether, the findings of the research shed light on both aid agencies' approaches to security and the concept of 'humanitarian security' itself. Indeed, the preceding chapters have demonstrated the contingency of security by highlighting how an understanding of aid agencies' approaches to their security necessarily implies looking at who they are and where they come from.

Concluding this thesis, this chapter provides a reflection on the research and delves into the implications of these findings. A summary of the key findings is provided in the first section of this chapter, followed by a discussion of the main theoretical and empirical contributions. The third section looks at the ways that this thesis' facilitates a deeper understanding of 'humanitarian security', and also addresses the potential for future research. The last section looks at the policy implications of the thesis for international aid agencies' approaches to security.

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[275] Interview 81.
[276] Douglas, W.O. (1949), p. 735.

7.1. A summary of the key findings

The main aim of this thesis was to form an understanding of the different approaches to security that exist within the aid sector; what the implications are of each approach for both the aid sector and for the targeted populations; and, given that some security practices are deemed controversial, how are these approaches being conceived – in other words, what are the processes that lead an organization to adopt one practice over another.

The research was underpinned by two main premises (based on the author's prior experience as an aid worker): first that there exists a relation between aid agencies' identity and the way they practice security; second that 'security' is a social construction rather than a fixed concept.

Implementing a critical constructivist approach, the thesis studied the co-constitution of aid organizations' identity and interests. It argued that IAAs' identity and approaches to security are mutually shaped, and evidence of this was clarified into in three steps. First, it offered a typology of three ideal–types of IAAs (Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian) and highlighted dominant discourses framing each type's identity as well as processes by which particular views are reproduced. Secondly, it identified the dominant representations in security management and revealed how they relate to IAAs' identity. The thesis found that the evolution of IAAs' security management leads to a paradoxical situation where harmonization and polarization of security approaches can be concomitantly observed. Two approaches to humanitarian security management were then contrasted: 'process based' versus 'situational judgment'. The former focuses on reducing uncertainty, while the latter advocates for context–specific decisions. The difference eventually lies in the level of responsibility which is effectively given to aid workers on the ground and this reflects the distinction between IAAs' identities. This contrast within IAAs' approaches to security is repeatedly found from headquarter to field level. Additionally, after distinguishing between three types of private military and security companies (Guarding, Unarmed, and Weaponised), the thesis revealed that IAAs' interactions with PMSCs is indeed contingent upon their identity. It underscored that Deontological, and some Solidarist, organizations' 'political' approach to security lead them to minimise the use of corporate security services that might put them at odds with a 'principled' understanding of humanitarian action. On the other hand, the thesis also underscored that the Utilitarian, and a few Solidarists', 'technical' attitude to security results in contracting security providers that adopt a harder stance on security measures.

In the end, what is seen from the empirical data collected at headquarter and field levels significantly supports the main argument of the research. From their inception, down to the implementation of their programs, humanitarian organizations build and reproduce a dominant discourse that is transmitted and internalised by their personnel. This discourse, along with the material and financial constraints faced by each organization, gradually shape aid agencies' identities. When it comes to security, IAA's identity does frame their approach to security, including the way they engage with PMSCs. In turn, the successes or failures of these approaches to security contribute to shaping aid agency identities through a subtle (although very real) feedback mechanism. The findings

of the research then confirm that aid agency identity and their approaches to security are mutually shaped.

This thesis has demonstrated the necessity and value of identifying distinctions among aid agencies when studying humanitarian security, otherwise one would find it difficult to understand the reasons behind the concomitant harmonization and polarization of their practices. It also gives hope that aid agencies' approaches to security may be reconciled, but only if IAAs first go through a thorough self-reflective analysis of their conceptions and practices of security. Such self-reflection may nevertheless be challenging given that all actors are caught in their own subjective framework. Researchers – as external stakeholders – may play a role in accompanying aid agencies down this path.

This thesis also demonstrated the relevance of using a critical constructivist framework to study humanitarian security practices. Adopting this kind approach allows humanitarian security to be studied as a construct, this subsequently allows for reconstructionist suggestions on how 'humanitarian security' can be defined. This thesis then suggests that IAAs require a more comprehensive understanding of how their identity and practices affect their security and offers hereafter a definition of 'humanitarian security' that is grounded in the findings of the research. As will be seen, the main contribution of this definition is to highlight the necessity to approach security reflexively. While this holds true for humanitarian security, the thesis also implies that competing concepts of security (national security, human security, environmental security, collective security, etc.) are all valid, but only within the limitations of their frame of reference. As such, any conceptual framework used should then adopt a reflexive approach, including the conditions for this frame to be asserted.

7.2. A discussion of the thesis main theoretical and empirical contributions

Humanitarian security is a fairly recent and little explored field of study. Yet there is a definite push towards a deepening of the topic by a number of authors and practitioners and the present research continues this 'dialogue'. However, it does not 'oppose' the main strand of thinking on humanitarian security but adds to it, in particular since no author had previously studied the interplay between identity and security. A few (Barnett, 2004; Bruderlein and Gassman, 2006) have mentioned it, but their analysis remains limited. In contrast, this thesis confirms the co-constitution between aid agencies' identity and their approach to security; it also underscores the processes through which humanitarian security is conceived, leading to the current paradox of a harmonisation and polarisation of practices. Similarly, very few authors have studied the interactions between aid agencies and PMSCs; by studying the processes that lead IAAs to conclude that outsourcing their security to a private entity is their best option, the thesis provides another means of approaching the existing

understanding of IAA-PMSCs interactions. Altogether, the present research makes original contributions at both theoretical and empirical levels.

7.2.1. Contribution of the thesis to the discipline of International Relations

First, the picture that emerges from this research helps identify the merits of a core concept of critical constructivism, namely the co-constitution between identity and interests. While identities provide the basis for interests in 'dominant' constructivism, critical constructivists maintains that identities and interests are mutually constituted. Indeed, the identity of an actor implies their preferences, but they also the product of these. In line with a critical constructivist view, this thesis has underscored the co-constitution between aid agencies' identity and interests through the identification of dominant discourses and practices. It has argued that aid agencies can be organized into three different types and revealed how each type of aid agency approaches its security accordingly. Aid agencies approach security in ways that is framed by their understanding and 'operationalisation' of humanitarian principles. Their identity is, in turn, confirmed or undermined by the outcomes of their security choices; this however is a very subtle mechanism which is hard to pinpoint at the level of the agency (but easier to observe at field level, where a country-mission's survival may be at stake). The thesis then confirms, through the underscoring of these constitutive processes, the relevance of a critical constructivist analysis in the field of International Relations.

By doing so, the findings complement the existing literature about humanitarian security. Authors have already helped develop an understanding of humanitarian security (in particular through the analysis of incidents and through the provision of a conceptual framework such as Brabant's Security Management Framework). They have also helped in developing an understanding of IAAs' relations with PMSCs (in particular by studying differences in their identity, ethics, and conceptions of security), but none had yet tackled the interplay between IAAs' security and their identity. Rumours existed in the aid sector about differences between American and European NGOs and between NGOs and United Nations agencies, but no study had analysed these differences. The present research confirms – and qualifies – these differences, and demonstrates the mechanisms that lead agencies to adopt one security posture over another.

A second contribution of this thesis to the wider field of IR is that it brings a new perspective to the concept of security. Indeed, as is seen in the research – with the identification of three ideal–types of aid agencies, their ethoses and subsequent approaches to security – the ways to conceive and practice security change from one organization to another. These findings reinforce the view, expressed in Chapter Three, that security is necessarily *contingent*. There is no concept of security which is independent from the subjects, or from the context, in which they evolve. The interpretation of the context itself is framed by the identity of the subjects – i.e. identity is defined by the subjects' cultural, social and symbolic baggage, as much as these are being shaped by identity; this constant inter-subjective exchange is the final arbiter of meaning.

Another component of the contingency of security is that it depends on how the 'other' perceives the 'self' – security is then subject to perceptions. This is the crux of the security dilemma. A defensive behaviour can be seen as offensive by an outsider – which in turn complicates confidence building and favours suspicion, and may lead interlocutors to an increased perception of insecurity. Security is potentially a major concern where perception is misguided. Yet in complex environments, threats are diffuse. Actors are hardly able to identify their threats' capability and intent, and as such, rely essentially on perceptions – with all the flaws that implies.

As a matter of fact – and this constitutes another aspect of the subjective dimension of security – perceptions are inherently subjective, and as such, are very susceptible to bias. As Schneier puts it, "[w]e worry about the wrong things: paying too much attention to minor risks and not enough attention to major ones. We don't correctly assess the magnitude of different risks" (Schneier, 2008a). In a paper called 'The Psychology of Security' (Schneier, 2008a), Schneier has identified a number of biases that have been scientifically demonstrated and showed how these affect our perceptions. He highlights among others the *framing effect* ("peoples' choices are affected by how a trade-off is framed. Frame the choice as a gain, and people will tend to be risk averse. But frame the choice as a loss, and people will tend to be risk seeking"); the *control bias* ("people are more likely to accept risks if they feel they have some control over them"); or the *availability heuristic* ("people assess … the probability of an event by the ease with which instances or occurrences can be brought to mind. In other words, in any decision–making process, easily remembered (available) data are given greater weight than hard–to–remember data"). Indeed, Stewart rightly argues that, "perceptions remain a fundamental component of security calculations and although the reliance upon them may be reduced it cannot be removed" (Stewart, p.7, 2006). This means that biases must be taken in consideration when dealing with security.

In addition to confirming the co-constitution between identity and interests, this research has also revealed that this co-constitution is a constant process. Identity and interests continuously fuel each other in a feedback loop – even this is more subtle in the case of IAAs. Aid agencies approach security is, based on who they are; yet, the successes and failures that they face also shape who they are and how they view the world. This in turn highlights the *continuous evolving nature of security*: it is inherently dynamic, and is context and actor dependant. From an external perspective one can see that security is both the fruit and the seed of this constant power dynamic. And from the perspective of the subject, one can observe that security must also be continuously maintained since, a) threats and vulnerabilities vary in time and space, and b) our relations to others and to the wider environment also affect our security and perceptions of it. Security can be compared to a river: its flow is composed of constantly 'new' water yet it remains the same river. In addition, depending on the volume and depth of water, the declivity, the nature of the river's bank as well as the surrounding obstacles, its scope is also always changing. Any conceptualization of security must take into account the ever-changing nature of security.

The most important consequence of the contingency and subjectivity of security is that any conception or practice of security must be *reflexive*. This reflexivity has to be acknowledged in two ways: first assumptions and biases about oneself and the environments one faces must be identified. As demonstrated, human beings, like aid agencies or states, are prone to deceptive perceptions and bias. Secondly, any approach to security must not only confront 'others', but itself too. In other words, any entity engaged in security must understand what its responsibilities are in the secure or insecure character of a situation and how does its approach contributes to further (in)security.

Claiming that security is necessarily contingent and subjective renders impossible any attempt to define security solely as a fixed, objective concept. Nevertheless, and despite critically deconstructing the concept of security, a *resolutely reflexive* approach to security allows for its reconstruction. This implies that any definition of the concept of security has to be contingent *and* to recognise this contingency. What is crucial for this kind of approach is that the acknowledgement of epistemological limitations necessarily changes the very nature of the assertions being made.

The research has argued that any definition of 'humanitarian security' must take into account the contingent, subjective nature of security: the fact that security is a continuous process, and must be reflexive. On the basis of the preceding analysis, this thesis offers, in the next section, a definition of 'humanitarian security' which takes these aspects into consideration.

7.2.2. Contribution of the thesis to the study and practice of humanitarian aid

This thesis' contribution to the study and practice of humanitarian aid is twofold. First, it offers a unique typology of international aid agencies. Second, it also offers a new angle of analysis for private military and security companies. Both contributions prove essential for a relevant understanding of humanitarian security.

Even though the thesis' distinction of international aid agencies as Deontological, Solidarist or Utilitarian builds upon previous academic contributions, it adds significantly to these existing distinctions. First, the thesis' typology includes both international non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies; this reveals the relevance of studying these organizations together. Second, by actually locating a high number of organizations in each of the three ideal-types, the typology goes beyond previous contributions which remained too generic to be applicable. This in turn allows for an empirical use of the typology, as it is done in the present research. Though this thesis concurs with the existing idea that aid agencies can be distinguished based on different approaches to ethical values, this thesis adds to these existing typologies by examining organizations' actual capability to live by their stated values. This permits the author to underscore the incoherence which sometimes exists between aid agencies' stated values and their actual practices.

Additionally, the typology offered here, allows for an exploration of the relationship between identity and security, with particular regard to PMSCs. As such, it is the first research which

underscores how dominant representations in security were devised, eventually explaining why today's security practices are concomitantly harmonised and polarised.

This thesis' analysis of the privatisation of security from the perspective of international aid agencies sheds new light on private military and security companies and their attempt to use humanitarian ethics to improve their legitimacy. It reveals however that aid workers' receptiveness to these efforts is limited at best, and negative at worst. As such, the research underpins that instead of instrumentalizing humanitarian representations, PMSCs should rather focus on their core activity – the provision of security – in ways that grant them respect for the quality of their work.

In addition, the thesis is also the first piece of work which looks at security contractors' perception of aid workers, and reveals that *irrespective of the type of companies they work for*, private security contractors have a rather negative perception of both aid workers and aid agencies' management of security. Additionally, the thesis underscores that PMSCs, despite this negative perception, adopt a pragmatic approach towards aid agencies, as multiplying interactions of all sorts with the aid sector is seen as contributing greatly to their normalization and legitimacy. In contrast, the thesis reveals that if all three types of aid agencies have contracted PMSCs, they do not share the same approaches to them. Deontological organizations are the most critical of PMSC discourses and approaches, and contractual relations happen only at the margins, in particular with Weaponised companies. Solidarists tend not to be attracted by PMSCs but have less difficulty than Deontological organizations in using them. Utilitarians for their part are most prone to using PMSCs. Such differences in approaching PMSCs need to be underscored if one wants to understand the implications of each type of IAAs attitude to security.

7.3. Implications of the thesis for the study and practice of humanitarian security and for future research

In order to understand the implications of this research as regards to the concept of humanitarian security, one must look at what may be inferred from the research regarding the interplay between identity and security. This section first provides a new definition of humanitarian security based on the findings and implications of the research and then reflects on the thesis' implications for future research.

7.3.1. Implications of the research for a definition of humanitarian security

As explained in the Chapter Three, the thesis aims to serve both academia and the real world, in this case the humanitarian community, and as such, aims to offer a reconstruction of the concept of humanitarian security. As Mustapha explained:

> [f]irst, acts of reconstruction can be critical in the most fundamental ontological sense …. Second, and perhaps most important of all, acts of reconstruction can emanate directly from post-structuralist

commitments, where deconstruction is seen as both a first step and as an ethic to bring to engagement with the *status quo* (Mustapha, p.21, 2009).

However, in line with the critical approach of the research, it is contended that reconstruction necessarily implies adopting a reflexive approach as a condition for these claims to be asserted.

Any definition of 'humanitarian security' would benefit from previous work on the conceptualization of security. Korkmaz recalls that "the debate on the understanding of security is not simply supposing that security is [an] 'essentially contested' concept. Rather, the task is to eliminate the vagueness "by giving a definition of the term that will permit a decision as to its applicability in a given situation" (Korkmaz, p.25, 2007). During the Cold War, IR scholars relied to some extent on Wolfers' definition[277] and 'security' was essentially studied as an attribute of the state, and as such, linked to military perspectives.[278] The post–Cold War era has seen a proliferation of attempts to define the concept of security in isolation and in relation to other concepts. However, despite Mesjasz's identification of four attributes that constitute the core concept of security (Mesjasz, 2008), security' is more often than not defined in relation to other concepts, such as the state (national security), the human (human security), the environment (environmental security), etc. As introduced in Chapter Three, this remains an area of active attention, with contributions to the debate from a number of perspectives: including constructivists; the so–called Copenhagen school; critical security studies, which includes post-structural perspectives; the Welsh school and feminist positions.[279] However, despite the many definitions of security encountered in the IR literature, Gibson nevertheless argues that, "the key constituents of security that theorists do agree upon, include: some referent object – an asset – to be made secure; a wilful, malicious, capable agent that threatens this asset; and, some form of counter–measure, or protection, deliberately placed to oppose the threat in defence of the asset. Where these three components intersect is what theorists understand by the concept of security" (Gibson, 2010, website).

Up to this point, humanitarian security has been defined in this thesis as "the study and practice of safely accessing vulnerable populations for humanitarian purposes. It includes the security of humanitarian personnel, and of the aid organization's humanitarian programmes, as well as of its assets and reputation. The onus is not only on aid workers' security, but on their ability to safely access and serve populations in need." However, given the findings of the present research, such a definition now proves incomplete. It does not recognise the contingent and subjective nature of

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[277] "Arnold Wolfers has offered an adequate, dual, definition of 'security'. In 'an objective sense', according to Wolfers, security 'measures the absence of threats to acquired values'. In a subjective sense, it measures 'the absence of fear that such values will be attacked'. The concept thus combines a physical condition with a state of mind. This helps to explain why discussions of security can often turn on whether there is any objective validation for a subjective claim of insecurity" (Freedman, 2004, p.247).
[278] For instance according to Ian Bellamy, "Security itself is a relative freedom from war, coupled with a relatively high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur" (cited in Buzan, 1991, p. 16).
[279] For an overview of each of these perspectives, see Smith (1999).

security and its implications for aid agencies; it does not refer to the populations and wider environments in which aid agencies operate; nor to the ways and means necessary to achieve and maintain security; and because it is made unreflexively, it does not acknowledge the value–laden and normative character of its expression.

Given the findings of the research, several additional points have to be taken into consideration for the definition to be complete. First: the onus must be on the possibility of reaching people who, given contextual circumstances, are deemed potentially vulnerable and are, as such, likely to appreciate and benefit from external support. It must not preclude the nature of this vulnerability, and must acknowledge that the group of people whose lives has been severely disturbed and harmed are the primary agents of their own survival and recovery.

Second: the definition must emphasise that the objective of the external interveners is to provide assistance, which will contribute to improving, or giving them the means to improve, their situation. This implies that assistance to these populations is conditional upon this prime objective; however, it must be done in accordance with basic human needs that have been identified and/or were commonly expressed, *and* in ways that are politically, socially, ethically and culturally appropriate. In other words, assistance cannot be imposed, or used for other purposes such as political or financial gains, or provided in ways that go against the interests of the populations concerned.

Third: the definition must specify the referent object(s) of security; in other words, who and/or what is to be secured. By doing so, it must recognise aid agencies' shared identity, but in a way that also acknowledges the diversity of the aid sector.

Fourth: the definition must refer to threats that may prevent external interveners from reaching and supporting the populations deemed vulnerable given contextual circumstances.

Fifth: it must consider the ways and means to do so. Additionally, it must specify that, given aid agencies' ethos, these approaches must be harmless to local populations and respectful of local concerns and particularities; likewise, a definition of humanitarian security should be inclusive, rather than exclusive of populations.

Sixth: the definition must show elements of reflexivity, i.e. demonstrate that both the thinker and practitioner of humanitarian security are aware of the contingent nature of security, as well as of their responsibilities in rendering the situation more or less secure.

Seventh: for the definition to be pertinent for both thinkers and practitioners, the definition must be theoretically sound *and* policy relevant.

7.3.2. A new definition of humanitarian security

What then is humanitarian security? On the basis of the analysis provided in the previous chapters, it can now be defined as: "Collective approaches that ensure humanitarian aid agencies safely access and support vulnerable populations in their own recovery. While also ensuring that aid

agencies' staff, programmes, assets and reputation are protected as much as is possible from real or perceived threats. These approaches must be conceived and implemented in ways that effectively do, and are seen as doing, no harm. The approaches must be respectful of local considerations; ethically coherent with agencies' declared values; inclusive, as is realistically possible, of the local populations; and contribute to improving the overall situation."

Some would argue that, although specific, this definition remains too wide as it leaves itself too open to interpretation. First, what are the 'approaches' and how many are needed? Do they refer to a necessary respect for humanitarian principles, or is the use of military force (done in a way that it could be said by some to be respectful of local considerations) considered acceptable? Such criticism would be relevant, yet any further specifications on the 'ways and means' would then not be representative of the whole spectrum of non-profit, non-governmental and international aid agencies. Indeed, given the normative power of definitions, it would not be surprising that Deontologicals in particular, would restrict the definition and include an explicit reference to humanitarian principles. But the effect of such a strict definition would be likely to exclude aid agencies that are not seen as sharing their values.

Secondly, the notion of a 'threat' could be more specific. As it stands now, two interpretations are possible. Either the context of the definition makes clear that threats refer to 'security threats', or it implies that anything can be a threat; from a criminal act, to a natural disaster, but also including lack of funding or available human resources. The latter interpretation implies that security a) necessarily encompasses more elements than just physical considerations circumscribed by technical answers, and b) that security is a collective responsibility that is shared across an organization. This does not however, preclude its daily management being delegated to a security manager. Although the second interpretation widens the scope of humanitarian security, both interpretations are plausible.

Thirdly, given its 'emancipatory' connotation, the reference to 'contributing in improving the overall situation' would certainly raise the eyebrows of IR scholars' who are critical of Ken Booth's emancipatory project (Booth, 2005). It is nevertheless included a) as a reference to *aid agencies'* claimed emancipatory objective, and b) in order to emphasise the normative power of security (Huysmans, 2006) and the subsequent responsibilities of security thinkers and practitioners. In addition, it is done reflexively, i.e. in ways that acknowledge its contestable nature.

Fourthly, some could be ironic about the length of the definition. Yes, it is long, but this is a consequence of both the inherent complexity of humanitarian action, and the need to underscore the contingent, subjective and reflexive dimensions of security.

In the definition, the reference to 'collective approaches' is made to emphasise a) the interconnectedness between aid agencies, and in particular the fact that one agencies' security choices is likely to affect other agencies'; and b) the fact that security is necessarily a collective responsibility that is shared across an organization. However, it does not refer to the concepts of

'common security' or 'collective security' as developed by the Palme Commission's 1982 report "Common Security – A Blueprint for Survival. Neither does it refer to some critical security authors (Møller, 2000), as these conceptualizations would imply that the security needs of all aid agencies are similar, or could be transferred to a 'super-agency', while as the research has revealed, their security is contingent upon their respective ethos.

The reference to 'doing no harm' refers to Mary Anderson's approach (1999) whereby aid agencies are encouraged to limit the potentially negative effects of their actions. Not only is this approach well known amongst aid workers, but, by requiring aid agencies to assess their own practices and their unintended consequences, it also puts an additional emphasis on the necessity to implement security reflexively. It does not, however, preclude them from using violence in cases of self-defence, solely as a very last resort.

The focus on the marginal value of security is based on the acknowledgement that resources are finite and that their distribution across an organization is the result of political choices. In order to prevent an agency – or manager – from making ill-informed decisions that could jeopardize the safety of their constituency, the definition refers to the marginal value of the costs of security as explained by Baldwin:

> The marginal value approach is the only one that provides a solution to the resource allocation problem. This approach is not based on any assertion about the value of security to all actors in all situations. Instead, it is rooted in the assumption that the law of diminishing marginal utility is as applicable to security as it is to other values. Asserting the primacy of security is like asserting the primacy of water, food, or air. A certain minimum amount of each is needed to sustain life, but this does not mean that the value of a glass of water is the same for a person stranded in a desert and a person drowning in a lake. As King Midas learned, the value of an increment of something depends on how much of it one has. … According to the marginal value approach, security is only one of many policy objectives competing for scarce resources and subject to the law of diminishing returns. Thus, the value of an increment of [... security ... will vary ...], depending not only on how much security is needed but also on how much security the [subject] already has. Rational policy–makers will allocate resources to security only as long as the marginal return is greater for security than for other uses of the resources (Baldwin, p.20, 1997).

In other words, the marginal value approach is used as a benchmark so that 'enough' resources are invested in security despite competing priorities.

Last, it is understood that the definition is contestable. The research offers a foundational claim about what is humanitarian security, but acknowledges both the changing nature of security as well as the contingency of the definition to this thesis's findings. It therefore remains open to alternative interpretations. As Møller claims:

> [e]ven though a consensus thus seems to be emerging on the need for a certain widening [of the concept of security], disagreement persists about where to draw the line. As will be argued in the following … there is no 'correct' answer to questions such as this. It is a matter of definitions, which may be more or less useful or relevant, but neither right nor wrong. To expand the notion of security too far—

say, to include the absence of all types of problems—would not be practical, since it would merely create the need for an additional term for 'traditional security', now relegated to being merely one species of the genus 'security'. Not to widen the concept at all might, on the other hand, relegate 'security studies' to a very marginalized position, if (as seems likely) traditional security problems will be perceived as having a sharply diminishing salience (Møller, p.3, 2000).

This is a similar approach to the the definition of humanitarian security to the one used in this thesis here. Expanding or narrowing the definitionare both possible options and neither endevor would be right or wrong. However, in doing so, the key factor would be to do it reflexively and to acknowledge how the expansion or diminution is contingent to one's views.

The research has offered a definition of 'humanitarian security' which can be used by academics and practitioners alike. By doing so, it recognises both the specificity of humanitarian action – in particular the claim that genuine aid is based on needs/rights, not political, financial, or other considerations – and the responsibilities of aid agencies and humanitarian security managers in their approaches to security.

7.3.3. Implications of the thesis for future research

The present research has provided a framework for analysis as a preliminary step to engaging in further substantive empirical research; while also acknowledging the inherent limitations of such an exercise. As such, it recognises that there is a need to research which of the three aforementioned approaches to security best balances all the factors: aid agency needs to safely support populations with the necessity of doing no harm; being respectful of local considerations; being ethically coherent with their stated values; being as inclusive as is realistically possible of the local populations; and contributing to improving the overall situation. This kind of research may be done through a further comparative study between the different approaches to security. For this, a number of aid agencies from each ideal–type would have to be selected; their practices of security studied in a number of different contexts; and their achievements in terms of humanitarian operations would have to be comparatively assessed, including a comparison of populations' and stakeholders' perceptions and satisfaction.

Equally, research has to investigate other gaps in the knowledge about humanitarian security. This thesis has posited that very little is known about the motivations and intentions of the perpetrators of violence against aid workers. Filling this gap can be done at two levels. First, through direct interactions with instigators of violence. Naturally any such encounter would have to be well prepared and would have to be based upon a comprehensive risk analysis; and if the risks were deemed too high, an alternative option would be to interact with former instigators of violence – such as demobilised and reintegrated militiamen. Secondly, the lack of systematic and thorough post–incident analysis needs to be dealt with. Filling this gap would help to better understand the circumstances that lead to incidents. This however cannot happen without the aid community's active involvement.

Fortunately, such efforts can be built on the basis of existing collaborative efforts. A positive outcome would be that such research would set forth the basis for determining the threshold point above which the cost of security is too high – whether in terms of the potential violence it underpins, or in terms of the negative effects it produces. Such processes would, in turn greatly contribute to aid agencies' adopting a reflective analysis of their practices.

Lastly, the thesis also sets forth the basis for a reflective conceptual analysis of security. By confirming that security is necessarily contingent and subjective, the thesis challenges current positivist views that analyse security as a fixed concept. As attested in this research, there is no concept of security which is independent from the subjects or from the context in which they evolve. This opens the door for the analysis of security to adopt a reflective view. Understanding this would, hopefully, help us to understand the premises and assumptions behind theories of security. Similarly, it would also allow practitioners of security – including states' armies, police forces, private military and security contractors, etc – to question what their responsibilities are in the secure or insecure character of a situation and how their approaches to security contribute to further (in)security.

7.4. Implications of the thesis for international aid agencies' approaches to security

As revealed in the research, each ideal–type of aid organization has definite preferences regarding security management. As such, humanitarian security is shaped differently depending on aid agencies' respective priorities. Approaches to security reflect an aid agencies' respective cultural and social baggage. This in turn implies that aid agencies' approaches to security are nevertheless based on premises and assumptions which need to be explored in order to reveal their implications for aid agency security. Understanding what these premises and assumptions are helps reveal the weaknesses of humanitarian security management and highlights areas that need further improvement.

The current section first deciphers the premises and assumptions present in each type of aid agencies' humanitarian security management, and subsequently offers suggestions for aid agencies to improve their security.

7.4.1. The premises of Deontological, Solidarist and Utilitarian organizations' approaches to security

The approach to security by Deontological organizations is strongly framed by the conviction that close respect for, and application, of humanitarian principles is the best way to ensure the safe continuation of their work. However, such views are based on the premise that humanitarian principles in and of themselves offer 'protective power' (Hammond, 2008). This is because Deontological organizations believe that potential authors of security threats are sensitive to an agencies' identity and posture. This in turn is based on the assumption that these potential perpetrators of insecurity are a) interested in differentiating aid agencies; b) are aware of the differences among agencies; and c)

have a specific interest in not harming aid agencies which adopt a 'principled' approach. The present research has underscored that, when appropriately implemented and communicated, humanitarian principles can surely be powerful tools for operating safely in difficult environments. However, the protective power this provides is dependant on a number of conditions. First, it necessitates that aid agencies who frame their security approach within humanitarian principles need an excellent understanding of the contexts in which they operate and know in particular who the different stakeholders are and what their interests are. Secondly, an agency must have, and maintain, coherence between their principles and their operations (including the source of funding, the staff selection and transmission of values, their advocacy profiles, and the types and ways their programs are being implemented) and ensure that parties to the conflict perceive this coherence. This in turn implies that such 'principled' approaches are deeply engrained in organizations' policies and operations and are proactively and constantly explained to relevant parties. One can only observe that this proves difficult to achieve for a number of aid agencies.

In addition, not only is the protective power of humanitarian principles conditional, but, independent of aid agencies' efforts to respect these, the respect for these principles may, in certain circumstances, be pointless. This is particularly true when the rationale for acts of violence against aid agencies is criminal in nature – robbers and rapists are most likely to be indifferent to an organization's aim or posture. While a 'principled' approach might appeal to politically motivated perpetrators, it bears little weight with criminal offenders, who are particularly difficult to reason with.

Having said that, it is nevertheless worth recalling that according to Donini *et al,* "[w]hile humanitarians would like to think that more rigorous respect of humanitarian principles acts as their best protective shield, this remains true more in the negative than in the positive in the sense that non–respect of principles increases staff insecurity." (Donini *et al*, p.25, 2008). In other words, if the relevance of humanitarian principles in providing security remains unclear, any re-conceptualization of humanitarian approaches to security would benefit from adopting a precautionary stance: aid organizations have an interest in recognising that the internal coherence built upon a 'principled' approach to security is likely to affect how they are being perceived by perpetrators of violence. The trick is to find – and constantly reproduce – the fine balance that exists between the principled framework and the need for flexibility. Nevertheless, and even if IAAs are able to keep a consistency between their claims and practices, they should also be cautious about developing a false sense of security based on holding a coherent posture.

Although the Solidarist organizations' approaches to security are said to be similar to Deontological organizations, the thesis has shown that this is not always true in practice. Their views are based on the premise that they have the means to implement a 'principled' approach to security, yet this approach is necessarily conditional. The relevance of humanitarian principles in providing security to Solidarists may be questioned if one looks at the discrepancy that exists between the number of aid agencies that claim to abide by the principles, and the lack of strict commitment to

putting them into practice. The problem lies in the fact that many aid agencies refer to the principles but *cannot* implement them. In the words of a member of SC-UK staff, "do we respect the humanitarian principles? Yes absolutely. But if the rhetoric is easy, their practical application is difficult…"[280] The impossibility of their implementation does not come from aid workers' un-willingness, but is due to three factors. First, organizations which rely heavily on institutional funding have less flexibility in designing and implementing their operations compared to those with private funding. As such, they are more susceptible to donor pressure and policy framework for interventions - as illustrated by a CARE employee: "CARE is donor oriented and as such it's very difficult to remain respectful of our principles."[281] In addition, even if they manage to be effectively independent from their donors' policies, they might not be perceived as such – particularly by the instigators of violence. Secondly, putting humanitarian principles into action is resource and knowledge intensive. Small organizations in particular may not have the in-house capacity to engage in proper situational analysis or proper relationship building. Likewise, working 'on both sides of a conflict' requires additional capabilities for an effective presence. Thirdly, it may prove difficult for multi-mandate organizations (whose activities are not purely humanitarian) to strictly follow humanitarian principles while being concomitantly involved in other activities. For devotees of a strict interpretation of humanitarian action, the only ambition of this kind of action is to provide a decent means of survival – not rebuild countries, support political processes or prosecutions against human rights' violators (Hofman and Delaunay, 2010). It is indeed challenging to remain neutral – and be perceived as such – when engaging in activities which may go against a party's interests.

Additionally, as explained in Chapter Five, Solidarist aid agencies are more prone than others to use local partners, either because they are 'risk avoiders' as opposed to frontline organizations, or because, as Denominational organizations, they rely more on religious networks. This risk avoidance is often characterised by a reliance on remote management of their programs.[282] Remote management is a commonly used practice yet it is not devoid of its own problems (Stoddard *et al*, p.10, 2010). In addition, the management of security risks in remote management practive is a challenge, and depends broadly on an organization's approach to security and attitude towards risk. Even if remote management decreases the vulnerability of some staff, it also has the potential to skew perceptions of insecurity by the now–distant staff – which then makes it difficult to go back to prior modes of programming and can prolong the arrangement longer than may be necessary. In addition, remote management also affects the quality and effectiveness of the programmes, as well as their efficiency and accountability (Stoddard *et al*, p.8, 2010). Eventually, a poor response to the needs will negatively impact an organization's legitimacy, and therefore security.

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[280] Interview 148.
[281] Interview 134.
[282] An organization may be said to operate remotely or not depending on the scope of the definition of 'remote management'. Since aid organizations employ far more national staff than international ones, the use of a majority of national staff or of local partners is therefore not an indicator of remote management *per se*. The defining criteria leading to call a given practice 'remote management' is *insecurity*.

As can be seen, Solidarist approaches to security generally lack overall coherence. The tension comes from the discrepancy between organizations' wish to be respectful of the principles, and their limited ability to actually put them into practice. Yet, they might not be aware of such a discrepancy – and therefore not be aware of the lack of coherence they project. Understanding this lack of coherence is then, a first step, before any reconceptualization of their approach to security can take place.

Utilitarian organizations' approach to security is based on a conception of ethics which is far broader than humanitarian principles and that comprises basic moral considerations of 'right' versus 'wrong'. On this basis, the rationale behind their security approach can be divided simplistically into three steps: a) Utilitarians consider they need to get the job done; b) they nevertheless acknowledge that they can't be accepted by all parties; c) partiality or deterrence are consequently understandable.

In other words, their views on security are based on the premise that, given the moral rectitude of their programs, a confrontational approach might sometimes be necessary. As such, they assume that they have the right to defend themselves through favouring a side or adopting a firm stance. These views are further compounded by the fact that, as major recipients of institutional funding, they are also under pressure from their donors to achieve their projects, regardless of the field dynamics and security situation. As a result, the political aspect of their approach remains unquestioned and security is reduced to the provision of technical fixes aiming at achieving the 'right' goal.

Nonetheless, there is a major flaw in Utilitarian approaches to security: their moral rectitude is inherently subjective. What is considered to be the 'right' thing in their view is not necessarily seen as right by others. For instance, aid workers working for a Utilitarian organization in the conservative areas of Afghanistan might consider that implementing projects that empower women is a good thing, but may find themselves in conflict with local traditions – and facing violent resistance.[283]

In addition, Utilitarian approaches to security tend to rely too much on external providers of security, be it armed forces or PMSCs. One may wonder what happens to these organizations if these security providers have other interests. In fact, this is a question which urgently needs an answer in Afghanistan: following the recent government's decision to close down PMSCs, aid agencies like IRD which were heavily relying on their protection will have to find alternatives rapidly.

Utilitarian aid organizations need to understand that, though their overall aim is charitable, they must nevertheless question both the actual rectitude of this aim and the approaches they use to achieve it. The image they project is a possible cause of acts of violence perpetrated against them. Ryfman explains that NGOs' "legitimacy is now being much more widely questioned" (Ryfman, p.34, 2007) and argues that their legitimacy must be promoted. Aid agencies do not benefit from a natural legitimacy, but from history and customary practices that give them the 'benefit of the doubt'. Legitimacy in other words is not granted, but is obtained through operational capacity, relevance and

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[283] In the words of Solidarist/Utilitarian NGO employee: "we have been specifically targeted in some areas by people whose interests are threatened by our programmes such as women training" (Interview 139).

expertise. As Sørensen reaffirms (p.13, 2006): "[i]t is clear that the humanitarian project is no longer self–justifying or safely located in a moral domain beyond the debatable". In other words, 'what is done' is no longer enough to legitimise aid agencies; 'how it is done' is just as important. Here, a *comprehensive* approach to security may play a role in ensuring that agencies adopt practices that are both safer for and more respectful of the local populations. Duffield has for instance argued that:

> In considering [fortified aid compounds], it is legitimate to ask what sort of impression they make on the public and, not least, those aid beneficiaries that agencies claim to empower and better? In their appearance and intent, these buildings are the very opposite of empowering; they are intimidating structures designed to keep the public out (Duffield, p.12, 2010).

Similarly, authors have argued that donors and aid agencies' 'partnership strategies' which aim at involving local actors often ignore existing social institutions and favour instead new organizations that fit better with their liberal political culture (Sørensen, 2006). A technical approach to risk management would most likely not identify these kinds of dynamics. Indeed, security managers often define their response to situations in terms of what they individually can do best. This means that the response frequently reflects not what the situation itself may require, but rather the way a security manager has interpreted it. A management of risks based on sociological or anthropological analyses, including the awareness of one's own premises and assumptions would certainly be helpful.

7.4.2. Implications of aid agencies' approaches to security for their own security

In theory, aid workers' risk assessments take into consideration the impacts of their organization on the local dynamics and include the questioning of their organization's legitimacy in a given context. In reality aid agencies admit that their understanding of the contexts is often insufficient and their analytical capacities limited. As confessed by a Country Director, "Haiti is so complex that even as CD I'm not sure that I'm competent to manage security; we often put programmes on standby because it's the most sensible thing to do."[284] While providing an honest assessment, such an anecdote highlights the need for more investment in developing analytical capacity as well as overall security management. As discussed in Chapter Three, IAAs generally lack knowledge regarding the actual factors underpinning the origins of the insecurity and of perpetrators' intentions.

This in turn, has grave implications for IAAs' approaches to security. Indeed, premises and assumptions about the causes of insecurity often hide this lack of knowledge, and influence the way each agency deals with insecurity. Yet, as underscored in the thesis, agency approaches to security are related to their respective identity and view of the world. As Fast rightly states:

> The obvious danger is that we develop policies and agendas that wrongly identify the problems and causes, and thus the appropriate and corresponding responses. In literature emphasizing factors outside the influence of agencies, humanitarians become reactive to external threats and passive actors

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[284] The interviewee insisted to remain anonymous.

subject to 'forces outside their control.' Translating this perspective into security management strategies would result in approaches that primarily or exclusively work to harden the target or deter attacks — a more militarized approach — as opposed to working proactively to gain community support for programs and activities. Ensuring community support places security management within the wider context of other programs and policies. In acknowledging the contributions of personal conduct and organizational policies, procedures, and programs to security issues, humanitarian actors regain a measure of control over their fates and serve as active participants and agents in their own safety and security. Security management strategies, therefore, become more contextualized and responsive to the particular threats and risks of the situation at hand (Fast, 2010, in press).

In addition, aid agencies' awareness of the impacts of their *security approach* is very limited. Although project evaluation and monitoring are done regularly, evaluations of security management practices are often done only after an incident has happened. As seen earlier however, each approach to security has its own premises and each has its own weaknesses. While nobody is perfect, aid agencies need be more aware of these, and take into consideration how their respective approaches to security affect the global and local dynamics. The hard approach to security is an obvious point in case, in particular the contracting of Weaponised companies. Similarly, risk avoidance may well discourage international donors from funding an agency unwilling to operate in dangerous areas and convince local populations that these organizations are not interested in their fate. The danger for aid agencies is that they lose their legitimacy in the eyes of both the international and local actors. This in turn potentially threatens their access to both sources of funding and areas controlled by armed opposing groups. Any loss of legitimacy in turn, may jeopardise agencies' security and, ultimately, survival.

While many authors claim that aid agencies should seriously question their respective and collective approaches to humanitarian action, aid workers employed by Deontological organizations go a step further and call for multi-mandate organizations – most of them being Solidarists and Utilitarians – to reconsider their portfolio of activities in war zones: "For the sake of preserving the space for impartial humanitarian assistance in war zones, multi-mandate organizations should make a choice between relief and development assistance, a choice between saving lives today or saving societies tomorrow" (Hofman and Delaunay, p.6, 2010). As Donini *et al* argue,

> … our case studies highlight the fact that coherence/integration agendas increase the risk that humanitarians will be seen as "guilty by association" with political and securitization agendas and, more broadly, with the failings of internationally supported peace and reconstruction processes. The security of humanitarian personnel may be compromised by donor–driven pressure for coherence, by their linkage to agendas that are not strictly humanitarian, and by the use of humanitarian action as a tool to achieve political objectives (Donini *et al*, p.24, 2008,).

This is particularly concerning when one considers that an organization's security stance inevitably affects others around it.

The tensions between a strict, limited approach to humanitarian action and a more expansive, inclusive one (both of which have been underscored in Chapter Four) remains unresolved. Several authors and practitioners argue that the aid sector as a whole is at a critical juncture and, depending on a number of variables (such as the amount of future funding available, the increasing numbers of disasters, the appearance of a multiplicity of new aid actors, etc), it may not be able to adapt itself quickly enough to survive as it is (Bishop, 2008; Donini *et al*, 2008). A good starting point would therefore be for aid agencies to study the premises and assumptions underlying their respective approaches to security and to understand the implications that these have for security. Self–reflexion is considered a necessary first step in the process of improving aid agencies' security conception and practices.

Similarly, aid agencies should question the premises that lead them to outsource their security to PMSCs. Most security companies used by aid agencies are Guarding companies. Unfortunately, many aid workers, used to interacting with 'innocuous' shopping-mall guards in their respective country of origin, do not realise that the stakes are higher when such companies are used in contexts where the rule of law is non-existent. These difficulties are compounded when warlords register their militias as a local guarding company to make sure their troops will avoid entering the DDR process, and where obtaining weapons means necessarily making use of the black market arms trade as is the case in both Afghanistan and Haiti.

In addition, and as was argued in Chapter Two, PMSCs' clients are more prone to being influenced by contractors' approaches to security since the clients' expertise and capabilities are reduced when outsourcing security functions. Security providers have an epistemic power that impacts on how their clients see the world in general and the risks around them. They provide information and, even if they are sincerely convinced that this information is true, their information, as well as the way they provide it, is shaped by their own assumptions, yet influences others people's perceptions. As an NGO Country Director in Afghanistan explained, "who you chose to manage your security impacts how you perceive the environment and how the environment perceives you."[285]

7.4.3. Implications of aid agencies' approaches to security for the local populations

There is little doubt that the acceptance approach remains the preferred one among aid agencies. However, as discussed in Chapter Five, it is expected that under the current leadership, UNDSS will push for further protection and deterrence postures within the UN system. It is likely that major NGOs, in particular Utilitarians and a few Solidarists will follow. As Duffield argues, "[a]necdotal evidence … suggests that donor governments and UN agencies, again concerned over litigation, are tending to favour subcontracting NGOs that follow formal security guidelines" (Duffield, p.15, 2010). This may eventually play against aid agencies' traditional acceptance strategy.

Being 'accepted' implies having political and social consent from all stakeholders, ranging from foreign and host governments to armed groups, local administrations, civil society and the

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communities themselves. Getting the communities' acceptance is not easy. Indeed, despite a clear preference for acceptance, most aid workers interviewed in the course of this research placed conditions on it. For instance, it was said that acceptance could only work on an individual and contextual basis, and was dependent on the organization's programmes and disposition towards their environment.

While the concept of 'community' itself rests on the assumption that a group of people is (peacefully) organized and has legitimate representation, assumptions regarding aid agencies' relations with 'communities' are also present among aid workers. First, 'communities' are sometimes foreign conceptual constructs that have little to do with real social structures. According to an NGO security adviser in Haiti, for instance, "there are so many social differences between populations that it is difficult to say what a actually community is and to build any cohesion."[286] In addition, communities may not be organized according to the same value systems as those of the external interveners. Although not everyone would agree with the following viewpoint, an aid worker explained in Haiti that "we implement our projects with a horizontal value system (with participation, equality, etc) but the society is organized vertically (there is a leader and that's it)."[287] In addition, while a leader may be seen as legitimate by the community members, they may not be representative of the 'truly' vulnerable (widows, handicapped, underprivileged, etc). Lastly, some have argued (De Berry, 2001) that the way the concept of community is used in aid discourse often ignores the realities of community dynamics or bypasses legitimate leaders in favour of those who think along the same lines as the aid agencies. Engaging with communities then necessarily involves a deep local understanding of their dynamics and a direct engagement with the 'truly' vulnerable. Rather than preventing such interactions, security measures could encourage them.

Similarly, it should be noted that the concept of 'civil society' is contested, and depending on its definition, may contribute to excluding some actors or activities. Several authors (ACSF, Undated; Harpviken *et al*, 2002; Borchgrevink, 2007; Howell and Lind, 2008; Coburn, 2009) have shown that local civil societies are often seen through a western prism where local groups are essentially seen as service–delivery agents while 'traditional institutions' such as elders, jirgas, mosques and shuras, are poorly incorporated into the development processes. Similarly, Howell and Lind have aptly revealed that in Afghanistan, civil societies are in constant evolution and are frequently shaped by external actors, including aid agencies (Howell and Lind, 2008).

Acceptance cannot be assumed but must rather be continuously and proactively pursued. This implies that resources must be allocated and programmes designed accordingly. As argued in Chapter Five, in addition to necessitating financial and human resources, building relationships and networks also needs another precious resource in emergency–laden environments: time. Ensuring proper community participation and ownership might, for instance, imply extending tightly scheduled

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[286] Interview 115.
[287] Interview 120.

programmes. 'Proactive acceptance' also means that engagement should not focus only on those who benefit from the aid projects, but also and perhaps more importantly, it should focus on those who are ignored. At field level this consists of 'communities' who do not share the same identities as those who are the beneficiaries of assistance; people who only see aid convoys transiting without stopping in their own areas. At the international level, 'proactive acceptance' must take into consideration regional and global actors, including governments, symbolic leaders, armed groups, networks or diasporas, etc. Aid agencies' presence in certain regions (central Africa, Middle-East, Latin America, etc), is likely to endure for several more decades, so acceptance is of vital importance to them. Yet, few of these organizations have developed systematic exchanges with entities as diverse as the influential TV channel Al Jazeera, renowned intellectuals and religious leaders, regional organizations, Arab donors and Chinese foreign assistance organizations; or developed civil–military exchanges with armed forces from Asia, first providers of Blue Helmets. Existing efforts could be substantiated with further collective comprehensive initiatives such as the Islamic Relief's drive in creating the Humanitarian Forum.[288]

Lastly, implementing protection and/or deterrence postures does not mean putting aside the acceptance approach. On the contrary, increased outreach could serve as a positive counter-balance to the negative perceptions that may arise when emphasising attitudes perceived as distant or aggressive. As Baldwin puts it: "[t]he most rational policies for security in the long run may differ greatly from those for security in the short run. In the short run, a high fence, a fierce dog, and a big gun may be useful ways to protect oneself from the neighbours. But in the long run, it may be preferable to befriend them" (Baldwin, p.17, 1997).

As seen in this thesis, when it comes to humanitarian security management, there is room for improvement. However, before rushing to provide fixes for identified issues, aid agencies would benefit from taking a step back and questioning their practices, including the premises and assumptions upon which these are built. Without it, one may well witness an increasing distancing among aid agencies as well as a permanent disconnect with the local populations.

7.3. Conclusion

Presented as both a reflection on the research and a conclusion of the thesis, this chapter has first provided a summary of the thesis' findings as these relate to the key research questions and hypotheses laid out in the introduction. In the end, it underscored that the empirical data significantly supports the main argument of the research, which is that when it comes to security, IAA identity does frame their approach to security, which includes the way they engage with PMSCs. Equally

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[288] The Humanitarian Forum role is to "empower civil society groups at all levels, by creating dialogue and understanding between organizations from Muslim countries or denominations and their Western and multilateral counterparts" (Humanitarian Forum, 2010, website).

importantly, the relevance of using a critical constructivist framework to study humanitarian security practices was also demonstrated by the thesis.

Secondly, the chapter has provided a discussion of the main theoretical and empirical contributions of the thesis. Indeed, theoretically, the research confirms the relevance of a critical constructivist analysis in the field of International Relations, and by doing so, adds a new perspective to the existing literature about humanitarian security. A second contribution of this thesis to the field of IR is that it sheds new light on the concept of security. In particular, the research has argued that any definition of 'humanitarian security' must take into account the contingent, subjective nature of security; the fact that security is a continuous process; and must be reflexive. Empirically, this thesis' contribution to the study and practice of humanitarian aid is twofold: it offers a unique typology of international aid agencies and provides a new angle of analysis of private military and security companies. Both contributions prove essential for a relevant understanding of humanitarian security.

Thirdly, this chapter has delved into the implications of this thesis for the study and practice of humanitarian security and for future research. It has offered a reflexive definition of humanitarian security that takes account of its contingent, subjective nature and by doing so, confirms that a critical approach can be constructionist. One may use critical argumentations and empirical cases to deconstruct a given claim but this does not mean that the theoretical effort has to cease there. As the research has shown, one can offer a definition of security – in the present case of humanitarian security – which is sufficiently stable to work with, yet simultaneously reflexive, i.e. highlighting a contingent approach to the assertions that are made.

Lastly, the chapter has discussed the implications of this thesis for international aid agencies' approaches to security. By doing so, this chapter has underscored the premises and assumptions of aid agencies' approaches to security and has outlined that humanitarian security management is not limited to technical discussions, but comprises wider political considerations including questions of legitimacy, organizations' coherence, as well as ethical and sociological preoccupations. Considering the findings of the research, the current chapter has made several suggestions for aid agencies; it has focused in particular on the fact that 'what is done' is not enough to bestow aid agencies with security and legitimacy – 'how it is done' is equally as important. This then reaffirms the need for aid agencies to question critically their respective approaches to security and look in particular at whether these are *actually* contributing to implementing their projects safely.

100.000 words

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Appendixes

Appendix 1.1. Accountability and regulation of PMSCs

Providing security services in complex environments is a challenge, regardless of the service provider. However, the stakes are raised when these services are provided by the private sector, in particular in countries were the rule of law is effectively non-existent. The potential to be involved or be the cause of wrongful behaviour is real and the consequences can be severe. Acknowledging the specificity of security as a private good, academics are involved alongside governments, international organizations, civil society and private security companies in a debate that is occurring at the global level. Starting with the acknowledgment of the lack of accountability of private military and security companies operating in complex environments, the aim is therefore to establish some regulation of activities. This regulation can be done through international agreements, national laws, extraterritorial judiciary procedures, as well as internationally recognised codes of conduct and lastly, with self-regulation.

The subject of regulation is a broad one, and cannot be treated in all its different facets here. It should be noted however that academics are well involved, providing both strategic and technical input. The following points are therefore only a brief selection of authors' arguments and positions.[289]

Suggesting that a company that violates its contract or is involved in wrongful activities would not get further contracts, the industry initially claimed that market forces provide sufficient regulatory guarantees. However, as Carbonnier argues,

> the market evidently has no intrinsic ethics: the law of supply and demand applies just as much to the market for child prostitution or cocaine as to the stock market or the coffee market. It is up to the state to prohibit or regulate certain markets for reasons of law and order, security, morals, health and so on. ... The reality in the field tends to show that to protect victims of armed conflicts, it is imperative that states adopt an appropriate legal framework to prevent the rapidly expanding market for private security companies from being accompanied by a weakening of international humanitarian law and a growing number of violations of IHL by the employees of private companies who would enjoy de facto impunity (Carbonnier, 2006).

Several authors join him in pushing for further regulation of PSCs.

The ICRC was instrumental in recalling companies' rights and obligations vis-à-vis international humanitarian law – i.e. the laws of war. There was a spike in publications and conferences on this subject in 2005-2006, many of which now serve as guidance. Gillard in particular has shown the subtleties of the applicability of IHL to PSCs, their employees, and the states where PSCs are registered or operating (Gillard, 2006).

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[289] For more information, see: Holmqvist (2005); Kinsey (2005); Gillard (2006); Lehnardt (2007); Krahmann (2007).

As early as 1998, Shearer recalled that there was no international (nor national) applicable regulation of PSCs, and ever since authors such as such as Spearin, Mingst, and Carbonnier have maintained a constant push for greater controls. Singer suggested in 2003 that a group of international experts (which would include representatives from all the parties involved: private security contractors, academics, government and NGOs) elaborate a comprehensive database of the PSCs and tools of regulation and evaluation under a UN mandate.

Although there is still much room for improvement (Cockayne, 2009), several initiatives have since been successful, in particular the *Montreux Agreement*, led jointly by the Swiss government and the ICRC. Also, the subsequent efforts of the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Centre (with Swiss funding) have successfully brought together an array of stakeholders, eventually leading to the publication of a Global Code of Conduct for PMSCs.

The push toward greater regulation has unfolded. It has been surprising to see scholars, at times accused of isolation in their ivory towers, being so heavily involved in the regulation debate – and implementation of its findings. It seems that in front of a certain ineluctability of a further privatisation of security – and associated risks – scholars considered that warning is not enough and therefore needed to become actively involved in framing this shift.

Appendix 1.2. Peace operations and related issues

Along with the question of the private security industry's regulation, the question of the privatisation of peacekeeping operations is among the most debated. However, the debate is not limited to peacekeeping, but extends to the place of private security companies in peace operations. Given the weaknesses of the current United Nations peace operations system,[290] some academics are advocating for an increasing role of PMSCs in peace operations. Doug Brooks, director of the International Stability Operations Association, a United States-based lobby group for PMSCs, is the most prominent supporter of such a solution. Brooks has written several articles and made the traditional arguments that privatised peacekeepers could be deployed under the auspices of the UN – for greater legitimacy and thus public acceptance – with better quality troops, faster deployment, more efficiency and lower costs. Acknowledging however that "the world is not ready to privatise peace" (Koffi Annan in Singer (2003)). Brooks argues that the private sector could provide all sorts of support to UN peacekeepers, from training to transport and /or providing medical services. This actually, is already happening. According to Avant, "[e]very multi-lateral peace operation conducted by the UN since 1990 included the presence of PSCs" (Avant, p.7, 2005).

In light of the current conflict in Darfur, privatising the peacekeepers, or more realistically, using PSCs to support the existing peacekeepers is an option which is supported by many. Singer has summarized nicely the possible options when it comes to peace operations:

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[290] The reasons are diverse: lack of political will, ill-trained and poorly-equipped troops contributed by countries from the Global South, poor control and command structure, etc.

There are three primary scenarios for privatizing peacekeeping. … In the first, firms would provide active protection to humanitarian workers and their operational assets, such as convoys or warehouses. … Indeed, since humanitarian organizations operating in places such as Somalia have been forced to contract with local warlords, the more formal business alternative might be preferable. … The second scenario for international organizations bolstering themselves by the PMF market is where a firm would act as a "Rapid Reaction Force" within an overall peacekeeping mission. … The third and most controversial scenario involves privatizing the entirety of an operation. The proposal is that, when states choose not to undertake humanitarian interventions and UN forces are neither ready nor willing, the operations would be turned over private firms. On their hire, the PMFs would deploy to a new area, defeat any local opposition, set up infrastructures, and then, only once the situation was stabilized, potentially hand over to regular UN peacekeepers. … This very scenario was a live option during the Rwandan refugee crisis in 1996 (Singer, p. 185, 2003).

The literature on PMSCs has engaged with this – at times hot – debate. Looking into this topic implies a new framework of analysis which extends well beyond the scope of this thesis.[291]

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[291] For more information see: Brooks (2000); Brooks and Laroia (2005); Bures, (2005); (Spearin, 2005a).

Appendix 2. Overview of International Aid Agencies

	Organization	Year of creation	Multi OR Single mandate	Mission	Areas of operations	Annual budget	Source of funding	Number of staff (if known)	Signatory of the RC & NGOs CoC	Reference to other values than the humanitarian principles	Source
1	**Action contre la Faim**	1979	Single (hunger)	Notre objectif est de combattre la faim sur tous les fronts : Par des opérations d'urgence, pour subvenir aux besoins vitaux des populations les plus vulnérables, Par des programmes de post-crise pour favoriser l'autonomie des populations.	19 countries	€ 50.3 M	55.9% Grants and others; 37.2% Private donations	2461 (2089 Nationals (NatL); 230 Internationals (IntL); 142 HQ)	Yes	Professionalism / transparency	Charte / Rapport Moral et Rapport Financier 2008
2	**ActionAid**	1972	Multi	To work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice.	40+ countries	€ 182.9 M	Around €102.8M Committed giving; €38.1M Other donations; €35M Official income	2633 (2020 Programme; 565 Fundraising; 48 Governance)	Yes	Eradication of poverty / injustice / solidarity, equity / transparency / humility / respect / courage of conviction	Annual Report 2008 / Website
3	**Adventist Development and Relief Agency**	1956	Multi	ADRA works with people in poverty and distress to create positive change and justness through empowering partnerships and responsible action.	113 countries	$ 116.2 M	55% donated material & other revenue; 29% US Gov	?	Yes	Social injustice / deprivation	Annual Report 2008 / Website

4	**Aide Médicale Internationale**	1979	Single (health)	To defend fundamental human rights according to the 1948 universal declaration of human rights. As it has always been throughout its history, A.M.I.'s priority is the protection of the universal and inalienable right to health care, i.e., the fight against physical disease and psychological injury; education in health and hygiene; medical training to local populations where required; and all these in geographic areas where health care systems are inadequate, inefficient or non-existent. A.M.I. strives to accompany populations in their quest for self-sufficiency and thus in the implementation of their own system of health care, and encourages local populations to participate in its work.	9 countries	€ 14 M	For every 100 € of resources: 91.4 € came from public entities; 2.9 € came from private organizations (foundations, associations, local authorities); 1.1 € came from donations; 3.5 € came from deficit; 1.2 € came from other sources (investments, extraordinary income and recovery of provisions)	2290 (20 HQ, 70 Intl; 2200 NatL)	No	Fulfilment of fundamental needs / Respect for human dignity / Human rights / Adaptability / Access to health care / Training / Evaluation / Independent Financing / Dialogue / Cooperation	Annual Report 2009 / Website
5	**British Red Cross**	1870	Multi	We are a volunteer-led humanitarian organization that helps people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are.	23 countries	£ 182.1 M	Voluntary income £91.6M; Trading activities £ 24.9M; Emergency response: £23.8M; Short-term crisis care: £30.5M; Movement £6.5M; Other 4.8M	3398 (working in UK + expatriates only)	Yes	Humanity / voluntary service / unity / universality / Courage / Inclusiveness / Dynamism / Compassion	Annual Report 2009 / Website
6	**CARE US**	1945	Multi	Our mission is to serve individuals and families in the poorest communities in the world. Drawing strength from our global diversity, resources and experience, we promote innovative solutions and are advocates for global responsibility. We facilitate lasting change by: •Strengthening capacity for self-help •Providing economic opportunity •Delivering relief in emergencies •Influencing policy decisions at all levels •Addressing discrimination in all its forms. Guided by the aspirations of local communities, we pursue our mission with both excellence and compassion because the people whom we serve deserve nothing less.	72 countries (Care International)	$707.8 M (from July 07 to June 08)	Total support & revenue: $267 177 000 US Gov; $149 228 000 US pop; $59 189 000 Grants & contracts	?	Care International yes, but not the USA Section	Fighting global poverty / Emphasis on Women / Respect / Integrity / Commitment / Excellence	Annual Report 2008 / Website

7	**Cesvi**	1985	Multi	In Italy and Europe, Cesvi carries out educational programs to develop global solidarity awareness, to increase the pool of donors and volunteers, and to influence private companies and public institutions to support cooperation projects for development. Cesvi mission to people in need around the world can be divided into three main categories: - Immediate help to ensure survival and to overcome emergencies; - The rehabilitation and reconstruction of systems destroyed by war or natural calamities.- Cooperation programs and projects for the development of underprivileged social groups and poor communities.	30 countries	€ 23.6 M	26% Private donors; 25% Italian Gov Bodies: 19% Org IntL; 14% UE; 14% UN	870 (744 NatL; 83 Intl; 43 HQ)	Yes	Human solidarity / social justice	Annual Report 2008 / Website
8	**Christian Aid**	1945	Multi	We are an agency of our churches in Britain and Ireland and are mandated to work on relief, development and advocacy for poverty eradication. Christian Aid's work is founded on Christian faith, inspired by hope and acts to change an unjust world through charity – a practical love and care for our neighbours.	Grant to partners in 48 countries	£87.7 M / €94.4 M	£28.5M General donations (33%); £25.7M Institutional income (29%)	816 (347 overseas; 469 in UK & Ireland)	Yes	Elimination of extreme poverty / Faith	Annual Report 08-09 / Website
9	**CHF**	1952	Multi	To be a catalyst for long-lasting positive change in low- and moderate-income communities around the world, helping them to improve their social, economic and environmental conditions.	29 countries	$ 246 M	Grants $207M; Contracts £1.3M; In-kind contributions $2.7M; Interest and investment income $11.7M; Other: $0.5M; Contributed services and goods $22M	?	No	Community based / Demand-led / Locally / Self-sufficiency / Partnership	Annual Report 2009 / Website

10	**Concern Worldwide**	1968	Multi	Concern Worldwide works with the poorest people in the poorest countries of the world to enable them to transform their lives. Sustained by the concern of our many supporters, we seek out those who most urgently need our support, and work with them through thick and thin to tackle poverty, hunger and disaster.	30 countries	€132.3 M for 2008	€ 66.3 M from Gov and co-funders (50%); €53.6 M fundraising (41%); 11.2 M Donated Commodities (8%); 1.2 M Other income (1%)	3.656 (3149 NatL; 202 IntL; 305 UK/Ireland)	Yes	Elimination of extreme poverty	Annual Report 2008 / Website
11	**Catholic Relief Services**	1943	Multi	Catholic Relief Services carries out the commitment of the Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas. We are motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to cherish, preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, foster charity and justice, and embody Catholic social and moral teaching as we act to	103 countries	$ 611.2 M	Around 45% US Gov grants; around 30% private contributions; idem Commodities & freight	?	Yes	Dignity / Rights & responsibilities / Social nature of humanity / Common Good / Subsidiarity / Solidarity / Stewardship	Annual Report 2008 / Website
12	**Church World Services**	1946	Multi	Church World Service works with partners to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world.	?	$ 70.9 M	$30.2M US Gov (42.6%); $26M Public appeals (36.7%)	?	Yes	Love / respect all faiths / dignity / social justice / working oecumenically / responsibility	Annual Report 2008 / Website
13	**French Red Cross**	1864	Multi	La Croix-Rouge française, ce sont 52 000 bénévoles et 17 000 salariés présents sur l'ensemble du territoire. Auxiliaire des pouvoirs publics dans ses missions humanitaires, la Croix-Rouge française mène un combat de tous les instants pour soulager la souffrance des hommes.	7 countries	€ 56.4 M	€ 42.9M Private donations; € 10.7M Legacies; €2.9M Other	17 000 (incl. in France)	Yes	Humanity / voluntary service / unity / universality	Annual Report 2009 / Website
14	**Goal**	1977	Multi	GOAL works towards ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable in our world and those affected by humanitarian crises, have access to the fundamental needs and rights of life, including, but not limited to, food, water, shelter, medical attention and education. It is non-denominational, non-governmental and non-political.	12 countries	€ 66.5 M	€10.6M Unrestricted; €55.9M Restricted	100+ IntL	Yes	N/A	Annual Report 2008 / Website

15	**Handicap International (Federation)**	1982	Single (Handicap related)	The association aims to contribute to development co-operation, more specifically the integration and autonomy of people with disabilities and assistance in the rehabilitation of people whose physical, mental and/or social integrity has been harmed or who are in destitute situations in regions across the world where people are in need. It endeavours to involve the person in taking charge of their own life, notably by recognising their rights.	60 countries	$114.3 M	$ 52 M Donations; $ 22.7M IntL Organizations; $ 19.3M Natl Organizations; $5.6M Private organizations; $7.9M Other	3599 (3433 NatL; 267 Intl)	Yes	Solidarity / justice / equity	Annual Report 2008 / Website
16	**International Medical Corps**	1984	Single	Its mission is to improve the quality of life through health interventions and related activities that build local capacity in underserved communities worldwide. By offering training and health care to local populations and medical assistance to people at highest risk, and with the flexibility to respond rapidly to emergency situations, International Medical Corps rehabilitates devastated health care systems and helps bring them back to self-reliance.	22 countries	$ 94.8 M	$53.2M Contract & grant support; $37.9M Donate medical supplies	Around 3500	Yes	Capacity-building	Annual Report 2008 / Website
17	**International Relief Committee**	1933	Single (displaced people) (yet multiple activities)	The IRC is a global leader in emergency relief, rehabilitation, protection of human rights, post-conflict development, resettlement services and advocacy for those uprooted or affected by violent conflict and oppression.	42 countries	$ 260.7 M	79% Grants and contracts; 17% contributions	?	Yes	N/A	Annual Report 2008 / Website
18	**International Relief and Development**	1998	Multi	IRD's mission is to reduce the suffering of the world's most vulnerable groups and provide tools and resources needed to increase their self-sufficiency.	29 countries	$ 539.1 M	Refers specifically to its work with US Dpt of State, Defence and PRTs	?	No	Reducing suffering / increasing self-sufficiency	Annual report 2008 / Website

19	**InterSOS**	1992	Multi	To give immediate response to humanitarian crises, by bringing relief to victims of armed conflicts and their long-term consequences (poverty, disability, mines and explosive devices, etc.), and of any other natural or man-made calamity. To begin, along with the relief intervention, laying the groundwork for return to stability, reconstruction and development. To activate, stimulate and involve Italian society, in order to develop and spread the culture of international solidarity.	10 countries	Around € 15 M	Most of budget come from official funding such as EC or Italian Gov	?	Yes	Solidarity / justice / dignity / rights & opportunities / diversity	Website (English part only)
20	**Islamic Relief**	1984	Multi	Inspired by Islamic humanitarian values, Islamic Relief Worldwide aims to help meet the needs of vulnerable people and empower them to become self-reliant so that they can live with dignity and confidence. We help individuals, groups and institutions to develop safe and caring communities and make it possible for those who wish to suppor t others to reach people in need of their help.	25 countries	£ 47.7 M	$17.2M Donations from overseas partners (36%); $11.4M Grants (24%)	1600+ (1500+ field, 100+ HQ)	Yes	Alleviating suffering / social development / sustainable economy	Annual Report 2008 / Website
21	**Medair**	1989	Multi	Medair brings life-saving emergency relief and rehabilitation in disasters, conflict areas, and other crises by working alongside the most vulnerable.	7 countries	$ 29.9 M (2007)	?	1.000 (1093 Nat; 118 IntL)	Yes	Faith / Hope / Compassion / Accountability / Integrity / Dignity	Consolidated 2007 Annual Financial Statement / Annual Review 2008 / Website

22	**Médecins du Monde – France**	1980	Single (medical)	La première mission de MDM est de soigner. Les volontaires de l'association s'engagent à venir en aide à toutes les populations vulnérables : les victimes de catastrophes naturelles, de famines, de maladies (endémies ou épidémies, notamment le sida), victimes de conflits armés, de violences politiques, réfugiés, déplacés, peuples minoritaires, enfants des rues, usagers de drogues et tous les exclus des soins. Nous savons qu'il n'y a pas de guérison sans justice, pas de secours durables sans lois sociales. Pour être efficace, la mission de Médecins du Monde va au-delà du soin : à partir de sa pratique médicale, et en toute indépendance, Médecins du Monde témoigne TBC	55 countries	€ 57.8 M	56% Private; 35% Public Grants; 6% Private Grants; 3% others	1.767 (1413 NatL; 134 IntL; 220 France)	Yes	N/A	Rapport Moral 2008 / Website
23	**Mercy Corps US**	1979	Multi	Mercy Corps exists to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people build secure, productive and just communities.	40 countries	$ 196.9 M	$ 131.2M Government and Intl Organizations; $ 65.6M Private	3700	Yes	N/A	Annual Report 2009 / Website
24	**Merlin**	1993	Single (health)	Merlin specialises in health, saving lives in times of crisis and helping to rebuild shattered health services.	16 countries	£ 43.8 M	Majority comes from institutional donors (DfID, USAID, EC)	?	Yes	N/A	Annual Report 2008 / Website
25	**Mission East**	1991	Multi	Mission East is a Danish international non-governmental relief and development organization which works to help the vulnerable through humanitarian relief aid, development assistance, the linking of relief, rehabilitation and development and through supporting communities' capacity to organise and assist themselves.	6 countries	DKK 62,7 M	DKK 6,8 M Private donations; DKK 9.3 M Private grants; DKK 33.1M Public grant payments; DKK 13.4 M Accrued grant income	?	Yes	Honesty / integrity / compassion / valuing the individual / respect for all people	Annual Report 2008 / Website
26	**Musllim Aid**	1985	Multi	Muslim Aid provides not just emergency relief, but sustainable development programmes which tackle the root causes of poverty	70+ countries	£ 25 M	Reference to DfID, World Bank and 'generous donations' in the FAQ	1241 (59 HQ)	Yes	Alleviating poverty / flexibility / partnership / accountability / compassionate	Annual Report 2008 / Website

27	**Muslim Hands**	1993	Multi	To be at the forefront in delivering relief from poverty, sickness and the delivery of education worldwide. To provide an ethical service for the collection and distribution of funds in an effective, efficient, transparent and wholly accountable manner.	40+ countries	£ 8.9 M	?	?	Yes	Right to a life of dignity, free of poverty and oppression / Eradication of poverty	Website
28	**Médecins sans Frontières – France**	1971	Single (medical)	Les Médecins Sans Frontières apportent leur secours aux populations en détresse, aux victimes de catastrophes d'origine naturelle ou humaine, de situation de belligérance, sans aucune discrimination de race, religion, philosophique ou politique. TBC	38 countries	€ 180.7 M	€179M Private; € 1.7M Institutional	4.618 (4.175 NatL; 443 IntL; 166.5 HQ)	Yes	Right to humanitarian assistance	Charte / Rapport Annuel 2008 / Website
29	**Médecins sans Frontières – Holland**	?	Single (medical)	MSF is a private, international organization made up mainly of doctors, nurses, paramedics and other professionals who can support us in our mission. They subscribe to the following principles: MSF provides aid and assistance to population groups in need, victims of natural and man-made disasters and (civil) war. We pursue our mission without differentiating on the basis of race, religion, ideology or political convictions. MSF is entirely neutral and impartial. TBC	?	?	?	?	Yes	?	Website (English part only)
30	**Médecins sans Frontières – Belgium**	1980	Single (medical)	Les Médecins Sans Frontières apportent leur secours aux populations en détresse, aux victimes de catastrophes d'origine naturelle ou humaine, de situation de belligérance, sans aucune discrimination de race, religion, philosophique ou politique. TBC	68 countries	€ 144.9 M	€72.2M Donations from partner sections (50%); €18.7M Donations from other sections (13%); €18.2M Donations in Belgium (13%); Public funding: 16%	?	Yes	Right to humanitarian assistance	Charte / Rapport Financier 2008 / Website

31	**Norwegian Refugee Council**	1946	Single (refugees)	NRC shall promote and protect the rights of all people who have been forced to flee their countries, or their homes within their countries, regardless of their race, religion, nationality or political convictions. This will be achieved by acting as an independent and courageous spokesman for refugee rights nationally and internationally, by providing humanitarian assistance in emergency situations, and by strengthening the capacity of the UN organizations to offer and coordinate international aid and protection. NRC shall in all ways seek to provide viable, durable solutions with regard to both its spokesman activities and its emergency relief efforts	20+ countries	NOK 776.8 M	NOK 736.8 M Institutional donors	Around 2600	Yes	N/A	Annual Report 2008 / Website
32	**Norwergian People's Aid**	?	Multi	NCA is a diakonal organization working for global justice. This mission has been given to us by churches and Christian organizations in Norway, and is expressed as follows: TBC	Around 30 countries	Nok 610.5 M (2007)	NOK 140 M private donors; "the rest from come from NORAD and Norwegian MFA)	1100 to 1400 (959 overseas; 153 HQ)	Yes	Compassion / justice, participation / peace / responsible stewardship of creation	Annual Report 2008 / Website
33	**Oxfam GB**	1942	Multi	Oxfam works with others to overcome poverty and suffering.	70+ countries	£ 299.7 M	£103.6 Donations & Legacies; £70 from Gov & other publc authorities; £65.7¨trading sales of donated objects	5.955 (3.797 overseas payroll, 1.155 GB payroll at HQ + 1.003 in Trading division)	Yes	Overcoming poverty / Right-based approach / Empowerment / inclusiveness / Accountability	Annual Report and Account 07-08 / Website

34	**Plan International**	1937	Single (children) (yet multiple activities)	Plan aims to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries, through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives	48 countries	€ 468 M (2008-2009)	More than 70% of Plan's income comes from child sponsorship	?	Yes	Best interests of the child / child rights and human right / ethic / honesty / transparency / integrity / personal empowerment / teamwork and mutual partnerships / accountability / learning and improvement	Website
35	**Première Urgence**	1992	Multi	Dans le cadre de la défense des principes du droit à la vie et à la dignité, du droit humanitaire international, dans l'impartialité et la non-discrimination, nous engageons des actions concrètes et directes d'aide en faveur de victimes civiles mises en péril, marginalisées ou exclues par les effets de catastrophes naturelles ou causées par l'homme de guerres, guerres civiles, conflits d'effondrement économique consécutif à un bouleversement politique international ou national	15 countries	€ 21.6 M	82% Public; 12% payments in kind	1125 (1000 NatL, 100 IntL, 25 HQ)	Yes	N/A	Website
36	**Save the Children – UK**	1919	Single (children) (yet multiple activities	Save the Children fights for children's rights; we deliver immediate and lasting improvement to children's lives worldwide.	50 countries	£ 216 M	£102M Institutional grants (47%); £56.3M Donations & gifts (26%); £29.3M Gifts in kind (14%)	5.430 (456 HQ)	Yes	Rights based / Justice / Respect for children / Ambition	Annual Report 08-09 / Website
37	**Save the Children – US**	1932	Single (children) (yet multiple activities)	Our mission is to create lasting, positive change in the lives of children in need. With your support, Save the Children will ensure that children in need grow up safe, educated and healthy, and better able to attain their rights.	50+ countries	$ 446.8 M	48% Private gifts, grants & contracts; 24% US Gov grants & contracts	?	Yes	Accountability / Innovation / Collaboration	Annual Report 2008 / Website

38	**Solidarités International**	1980	Multi	SOLIDARITES est une association d'aide humanitaire internationale qui, depuis 29 ans, porte secours aux populations victimes de conflits armés et de catastrophes naturelles en répondant à leurs besoins vitaux – boire, manger, s'abriter.	14 countries	€ 45.2 M	67.8 % Public; 21.3% Payments in kind	1980 (1800 NatL; 140 IntL; 40 HQ)	No	Solidarity	Website / rapport d'activités 2008
39	**Tearfund**	1968	Multi	We have a vision to see 50 million people released from material and spiritual poverty through a worldwide network of 100,000 local churches.	50+ countries	£ 64.8 M (2009-2010)	£ 41 M Donations; £ 22 M Grants	1487 (414 IntL; 1073 Natl)	Yes	Professionalism / Christianity /	Annual Report 2009 / Website
40	**Trocaire**	1973	Multi	When the Bishops of Ireland established Trócaire in 1973, they issued a pastoral letter on development. It is striking that the issues raised by the Bishops in 1973 are still relevant today. Trocaire website presents the full text of the letter.	34 countries	€ 47.7 M (2009-20010)	€ 25 M Unrestricted; € 22.6 M Restricted	?	Yes	Christianity	Annual Report 2009 / Website
41	**Welhungerhilfe**	1962	Single (hunger) (yet multiple activities)	All the people of this world leading their lives autonomously in dignity and justice - free from hunger and poverty	46 countries	€ 147.4 M	€101.9 M Public grants (61.9%); €37.1 M Donations (25.2%)	?	Yes	Overcoming hunger and poverty	Annual Report 2008 / Website
42	**World Vision (US)**	1950	Multi	World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.	Nearly' 100 countries	$ 1.109 M	42% Private cash contributions; 33% gifts in-kind; 25% Gov grants	?	Yes	Christianity / solidarity with the poor / diversity,	Annual Review brochure 2008 / Website
43	**International Committee of the Red Cross**	1863	Multi	The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.	Around 80 countries	CHF 1.146 M	?	More than 12.000 staff (11.000 NatL; 1400 IntL; 800 HQ)	Yes	N/A	Annual financial Report 2008 / Website

44	**International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**	1919	Multi	Our mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.	More than 150 countries	CHF 539.7 M	CHF 417 M voluntary donations (2007)	(30.000 *Volunteers*)	Yes	Humanity / voluntary service / unity / universality	Annual financial Report 2008 / Website
45	**United Nations Children's Fund**	1946	Single (children)	UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.	180/191 countries	$ 3.3 BN	60% Gov; 29% private sector & NGOs; 8% Inter-organizational arrangements	Around 7.200	N/A	Core Commitments / Convention on the Rights of the Child & others	Annual financial Report 2008 / Website
46	**United Nations Development Programme**	1965	Multi	UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges.	166 countries	$ 5 BN	(averages) $1.1 BN Multilateral donors; $1.2 BN Bilateral; $0.9 BN Local resources; $0.3 BN Other; £1 BN Core	?	N/A	N/A	Annual financial Report 2009 / Website
47	**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**	1950	Single (refugees)	UNHCR shall assume the function of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting Governments and, subject to the approval of the Governments concerned, private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities.	110/118 countries	$ 2 BN (2009)	93% coming from Gov - 2009 Budget: US$1.3 billion: annual budget & US$765 M for supplementary appeals	Around 6.600 (4900 NatL; 1750 IntL; 740 HQ)	N/A	1951 UN Convention Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. IntL refugee law provides framework of principles for its humR activities.	Website / Statute

48	**World Food Programme**	1962	Single (food)	WFP's key mission is to deliver food into the hands of the hungry poor. The agency steps in during emergencies and uses food to aid recovery after emergencies. Our longer term approaches to hunger help the transition from recovery to development.	74 countries (2009)	$ 5.115 BN	The bulk of funding came from a limited number of donors. 10 largest donors during the year accounted for 82% of the resources received; 18 % was non earmarked	Around 10.200 (90% in the field)	N/A	N/A	Annual report 2008 / Website
49	**World Health Organization**	1948	Single (health)	WHO is the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations' system. WHO experts produce health guidelines and standards, and help countries to address public health issues. WHO also supports and promotes health research. Through WHO, governments can jointly tackle global health problems and improve people's well-being.	150+ countries	$ 4.227 BN	(2007: budget 3.3 BN; 67% member states; 17% UN & IOG)	8.000+	N/A	NA	Introduction to WHO Brochure / Website
50	**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**	1991	Single (coordination)	OCHA's mission is to mobilise and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to: • alleviate human suffering in disasters and emergencies • advocate for the rights of people in need • promote preparedness and prevention • facilitate sustainable solutions.	30 regional and field offices	$ 234 M	57% earmarked	1.795 (1.182 NatL; 613 IntL)	N/A	Resolution 46/182	Annual Report 2008 / Website / What is OCHA Brochure