Università degli Studi di Cagliari

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA

Storia, Istituzioni e Relazioni Internazionali dell'Asia
e dell'Africa Moderna e Contemporanea

Ciclo XXVI

Settore scientifico-disciplinare di afferenza SPS/13

Under a joint supervision agreement with

Ruhr-Universität Bochum

PHD COURSE

International Development Studies

Linking Humanitarian and Development Action in Ethiopia

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Esame Finale Anno Accademico 2013-2014

Linking Humanitarian and Development Action in Ethiopia

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD Degree in International Development Studies of the Institute of Development Policy and Development Research.

Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Under a joint supervision agreement with the University of Cagliari
PhD Course in History, Institutions and International Relations of Modern and Contemporary Asia and Africa

by Annalisa Addis

Supervised by:

Prof. Dr. Dennis Dijkzeul
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Declaration

I do hereby solemnly declare that this submission is my own original work, undertake independently and without any illegitimate assistance. To the furthest extent of my knowledge and conviction, it contains no material previously published by any other person in its current or similar form, neither has it been accepted as or part of a dissertation for the award of any other degree or qualification within the university or any other institution of higher learning. Where reference is made to previous academic work, due acknowledgement of the respective authors is made both in the text and in bibliography of this dissertation.

Furthermore, I endeavoured to maintain my study as adherent as possible to the "Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice" (*Leitlinien guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis*) cited under §9 of the *Promotionsordnung des Promotionsstudiengangs* "International Development Studies", to the best of my ability.

Errors and omissions in this document remain my personal responsibility.

Annalisa Addis

Cagliari, 7 May 2015

Abstract

The purpose of this doctoral research has been to analyse the integration of humanitarian and development action during the 2011-12 food crisis in Ethiopia. Historically, the two types of action have evolved as two different, yet intertwined, domains, with separate objectives and guiding principles. Yet, particularly since the 1990s, there have been debates on how to better integrate them, in consideration of the fact that they often operate in the same context, as was the case in the Ethiopian case-study. Following a neo-institutionalist approach, this study has analysed what hinders the bridging of the humanitarian-development divide, and what supports it, by analysing the interplay of institutional forces in the regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive domains in the Ethiopian case.

Grounded in critical realism and in neo-institutional theory, this research has adopted a novel theoretical approach to the issue of linking humanitarian and development action, and has been based on original empirical material. A key finding of this study is that, in the context of Ethiopia, integrating the two modes of action is possible and even encouraged at some levels, despite a broader funding architecture that hinders such linkages. By shedding light on practices of humanitarian relief and development in Ethiopia, this study contributes to scholarship in the broader fields of International Development and African Studies.

Acknowledgements

A proverb, apparently of African origin, says that *it takes a whole village to raise a child*. Similarly, this dissertation, while undoubtedly conceived and produced by myself, has benefited from the support, advice, and encouragement of many. Mistakes, it goes without saying, are all mine.

My academic supervisors have been crucial for me to get all the way through completion. Prof. Bianca Carcangiu of the University of Cagliari, who has coached me since my first degree, deserves a special mention for having always believed in my potential, and for having encouraged me to pursue a doctoral degree even when I was not sure myself of being up to the challenge. She has been incredibly supportive along the course of these last four years, allowing me to find my own way to carry out my research, and I am deeply grateful for that. Prof. Dennis Dijkzeul of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum cannot be thanked enough for accepting to jointly supervise my research and for dealing with all the resulting paperwork, and for welcoming me in his team. Most of all, I am grateful to him for giving me precious advice even before we met in person for the first time, for his patience, and for pushing me to constantly improve the quality of my research and of my writing. *Hartelijk bedankt*!

Apart from my direct supervisors, many other scholars deserve my gratitude. A special thanks goes to prof. Shiferaw Bekele of the University of Addis Ababa for welcoming me in Ethiopia and for giving me guidance and recommendations. *Amasaganallo!* A special word of gratitude goes to Dr. Barbara Bompani, not just for her advice on how to conduct field research, but also for – together with Prof. James Smith – making me feel at home in Edinburgh, and for being in attendance while I delivered my first presentation at an international conference. Apart from those already mentioned, many thanks for various tips on how to improve my research and how to be a better scholar go to: Dr. Gerhard Anders; Prof. John Cameron; Prof. Sally Cummings; Dr. Cristina Dessy; Prof. Paul Fryer; Prof. Eva Gerharz; Charles Kelly; Dr. Inger Mewburn;

appear next to me (or on Skype) when I wanted to take a break from all the thinking and writing.

I consider myself extremely lucky because, next to all these lovely people, I also had Filippo. Having obtained his own PhD only one year ago, he knows firsthand of the challenges, doubts, and self-criticism that accompany the process. He has taken my hand and helped me walk through all the difficulties, reassuring me of my abilities, and lovingly comforting me all along. I would have never made it this far alone.

Italian summary

Questa tesi di dottorato affronta la questione dell'integrazione tra azioni di soccorso umanitario e cooperazione allo sviluppo, prendendo in esame il caso della risposta alla crisi alimentare del 2011-2012 in Etiopia.

Nel corso della storia recente, le tipologie di intervento umanitario e di sviluppo si sono consolidate come due modalità diverse di occuparsi delle sofferenze altrui, la prima volta a trattare o quantomeno alleviare le sofferenze in tempo di crisi (la malnutrizione, le epidemie, le ferite di guerra, l'assenza di un riparo sicuro, e via dicendo), e la seconda al cambiamento delle condizioni strutturali che provocano malessere e crisi, per quanto spesso con un approccio limitato alla promozione della sola crescita economica.

L'Etiopia, con la sua storia di crisi alimentari ricorrenti, è un caso di studio particolarmente rilevante, in quanto i soccorsi umanitari sono spesso prestati in un contesto dove attività di cooperazione allo sviluppo sono già in corso. In aggiunta, la frequenza delle crisi ha portato ad una situazione in cui anche gli attori umanitari – teoricamente presenti solo per un breve periodo – rimangono attivi nel paese anche per decenni. Per di più, non è raro che una singola organizzazione si trovi a svolgere sia progetti umanitari che di sviluppo, anche se non necessariamente entrambi contemporaneamente.

Da almeno due decenni è in corso un dibattito relativo alla necessità o meno di integrare i due tipi di azione. Le voci a favore argomentano che solo attraverso un'azione congiunta che contrasti le cause delle crisi oltre a trattarne gli effetti sarà possibile prevenire ulteriori disastri. Dal canto loro, i contrari paventano il rischio che anche l'aiuto umanitario finisca per diventare uno strumento di politica estera come è già il caso degli aiuti allo sviluppo. Si configurerebbe pertanto una violazione dei principi fondamentali che impongono di prestare soccorso a chiunque ne abbia necessità, indipendentemente da qualsiasi considerazione relativa alla nazionalità o all'appartenenza politica.

In questa tesi di dottorato la questione viene affrontata da un punto di vista diverso, ovverosia, invece di assumere una posizione normativa pro o contro l'integrazione, si cerca di comprendere quali forze istituzionali spingano verso una maggiore complementarità dei due tipi d'azione, e quali invece favoriscano un mantenimento

della dicotomia umanitario/sviluppo. Nello specifico, si sono presi in esame tre "pilastri" (Scott 2008b) dell'analisi istituzionale, ovverosia: i) la cornice legislativa, per quanto limitata in un settore poco regolato come quello degli aiuti; ii) gli aspetti normativi, ed in particolare il ruolo dei discorsi nel definire l'appropriatezza o meno di un certo corso d'azione; iii) gli aspetti cognitivi e culturali che guidano le azioni di persone e organizzazioni operanti nel settore umanitario in Etiopia.

Questo lavoro si basa principalmente sulla ricerca sul campo svolta in Etiopia nel 2012 e nel 2013. I metodi di ricerca utilizzati sono stati l'osservazione partecipante alle attività di una Organizzazione Non Governativa umanitaria, combinata con interviste semi-strutturate a operatori dell'aiuto umanitario e della cooperazione allo sviluppo. Alla ricerca sul campo si è affiancata un'opera di ricerca secondaria su documenti, rapporti, e pubblicazioni accademiche.

La ricerca ha dimostrato che, per quanto riguarda la cornice legislativa etiope, vi sono poche differenze tra l'aiuto strettamente umanitario e la cooperazione allo sviluppo. Entrambe le tipologie sono soggette all'approvazione preliminare da parte delle autorità locali e nazionali, il che riduce la validità di argomenti legati alla differenza ontologica tra azione umanitaria e cooperazione allo sviluppo sulla base del grado di indipendenza della prima rispetto alla seconda. Dal canto loro, invece, le regole poste dai donatori internazionali tendono invece ad accentuare le differenze tra le due tipologie d'azione, per esempio per quanto riguarda la durata degli interventi, o i gruppi di beneficiari ammissibili. Allo stesso tempo, sono stati portati esempi di meccanismi recentemente introdotti da alcuni donatori, e che permettono un più agile passaggio dalla modalità "sviluppo" a quella di "risposta umanitaria", e viceversa.

Per quanto riguarda l'ambito normativo, si è esaminata l'esistenza di un discorso egemone che definisce l'azione umanitaria come di risposta alle emergenze, marginalizzando le opinioni favorevoli ad un approccio più olistico. L'insistenza sui principi fondamentali dell'azione umanitaria (*umanità, neutralità, indipendenza* e *imparzialità*) ed in particolare sulla neutralità, pur raramente rispettata nella pratica, rigetta come non-umanitario qualsiasi intervento che cerchi una soluzione di tipo politico alle crisi. Allo stesso tempo, si assiste all'emergere di discorsi che trascendono la divisione umanitario/sviluppo, come l'ormai onnipresente *resilience* (traducibile come elasticità), che potrebbero potenzialmente creare un punto di incontro tra le due comunità. Tuttavia, per quanto questi discorsi e sistemi di valori siano considerati particolarmente rilevanti a livello accademico e di formulazione e analisi delle

politiche, si è riscontrato come gli operatori umanitari e della cooperazione internazionale sul campo in Etiopia vi facciano riferimento con rarità. L'attitudine al pensiero strategico e alla riflessione sui principi sembrano diventare tanto più marginali quanto più ci si avvicina ai livelli "operativi", concentrati sulla realizzazione dell'intervento e sul raggiungimento degli obiettivi (spesso di breve termine) prefissati.

Per quanto riguarda il "pilastro" cognitivo e culturale, è interessante rilevare come la dicotomia tra azione umanitaria e cooperazione allo sviluppo risulti essere poco pronunciata tra gli operatori intervistati. La distinzione è stata spesso criticata come qualcosa di poco rilevante per chi opera "sul terreno", o come una preoccupazione diffusa tra i donatori, ma che risulta inintelligibile alle vittime di disastri e a chi cerca di portare loro soccorso. La maggioranza degli intervistati mostrava invece di avere opinioni favorevoli ad un superamento della dicotomia. In altre parole, gli operatori non condividevano l'idea di una contrapposizione tra aiuti umanitari e allo sviluppo, anche se di rado avrebbero formulato questo concetto in termini di *Linking Relief and Development* o di superamento del divario. In alcuni casi, gli intervistati hanno ammesso di aver dovuto adattare il linguaggio di progetti e rapporti per conformarsi alla narrativa ufficiale di tipo umanitario, o a quella "sviluppista". Nel complesso, gli operatori intervistati dimostravano nozioni di cosa sia "appropriato" o "legittimo" diverse da quelle promosse attraverso i discorsi dominanti, generalmente dimostrando un maggiore pragmatismo.

In aggiunta alle conclusioni strettamente legate alla questione di superamento del divario tra aiuti umanitari e cooperazione allo sviluppo, si ritiene che questa tesi possa contribuire a fare chiarezza sulle pratiche dei progetti di aiuto messi in atto in Etiopia, con particolare riguardo al livello delle organizzazioni umanitarie e ai loro rapporti con i decisori (sia i donatori internazionali che le autorità nazionali e locali) e con le popolazioni servite. Il contributo di questa ricerca è pertanto da considerarsi rilevante sia nell'ambito degli studi Africani, sia in quello degli studi sullo sviluppo.

La maggioranza degli intervistati aveva anzi opinioni favorevoli ad un superamento della dicotomia, pur considerandolo poco probabile in tempi stretti. In altre parole, gli operatori non condividevano l'idea di una contrapposizione tra aiuti umanitari e allo sviluppo.

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ARRA	Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs
CO	Country Office
CSP	Charities and Societies Proclamation
DFID	(United Kingdom's) Department for International Development
DGCS	Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (Italian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation)
DPPA	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency
DRR/DRM	Disaster Risk Reduction / Disaster Risk Management
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EDF	European Development Fund
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
EuropeAid	European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
FSCB	Food Security Coordination Bureau
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
HQ	Headquarters
HRF	Humanitarian Response Fund
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
IDLR	International Disasters Response Law
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LRD	Linking Relief and Duvelopment
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MERLIN	Medical Relief International
MSF	Médicins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPDPM	National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management
OCHA	United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	OECD's Development Cooperation Directorate
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PSNP	Productive Safety Nets Programme
RRC	(Ethiopia's) Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SHARE	Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (Regional State of Ethiopia)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations' Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	(United Nations') World Food Programme

Preface

The inspiration for this thesis came during my traineeship at the European Commission, back in 2011. I was assigned to the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office (ECHO), in a unit that was mostly dealing with food aid. During my five months there, I kept stumbling upon the expression "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development", or better, its acronym: LRRD. Rather than something clearly defined and present, the idea sounded as a sort of aspirational value. Yet, at the same time, there were many instances in which the same colleagues would proudly restate that ECHO's mandate was "humanitarian", limited to relief provision, and that "we were not doing development".

The concept of linking humanitarian relief and development assistance had first been introduced to me during my master's studies in International Cooperation. While the course had two separate specialisations, in "Emergencies" and "Development", we were all encouraged to reflect on the grey zones in between, and to be aware of what the others were doing. Eventually, I would end up having my first working experiences on the development side. I did not feel out of place.

When I started inquiring on the concept of linking relief and development, I realised that the idea was already more than one decade old, almost history in humanitarian thinking, and yet so contemporary. Thus, I developed a research proposal for investigating practices and conceptualisations of linking relief and development in Ethiopia. I was eventually admitted to the doctoral course of "History, Institutions and International Relations of Modern and Contemporary Asia and Africa" of the Department of Social Sciences and Institutions of the University of Cagliari, and which main focus is on African and Asian Studies in the widest sense. This course is where sociological and historical perspectives are dominant. Later on, a joint-supervision agreement was signed between the University of Cagliari and the Ruhr University Bochum. Following that, I enrolled in the PhD course in "International Development Studies" organised by the Institute of Development Research and Development Policy, becoming part of the research cluster on "Assessment of Development Interventions – Methods of Empirical Social Research". Furthermore, I also carried out part of my research at the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV), where my supervisor in Bochum is based. The IFHV combines Social Science with studies of International Law, and strongly focuses on humanitarian practice.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Humanitarian Assistance and Development Cooperation, although both concerned with providing assistance internationally, have different objectives and modes of implementation. Whereas the former is geared towards saving lives and reducing human suffering at immediate risk, the latter aims at promoting a general improvement of living conditions (mainly from a socio-economic point of view). Despite the differences, an integrated approach has long been advocated.

The idea that the two types of aid needed to be linked up in order to prevent emergencies and avoid their recurrence, can be traced back at least to the 1980s, and was further developed during the following decade (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994). The understanding that acute emergencies and structural poverty are related, and that the most appropriate way to avoid tragedies was to address their root causes, are however much older.

In this research on linking relief and development, I chose to focus my attention on Ethiopia mainly because it seemed to be a promising context where to apply, and thus study, this approach. On the one hand, due to its vulnerability to shocks, crises were frequent, and usually followed by humanitarian response. On the other hand, it also attracted huge development financing, not just because of the widespread poverty, but also because of its role in the so-called war on terror in neighbouring Somalia. With both humanitarian and development actors present, I assumed that collaboration would be easier than in contexts where the presence of international aid actors is dwindling, or where it is limited to either humanitarian or development efforts. Furthermore, Ethiopia was reasonably accessible and did not present major linguistic obstacles, as English is widely used in the aid sector as a *lingua franca*.

1.1 Purpose and originality of this research

The main purpose of this research is to understand:

Which institutional forces hinder, and which ones encourage, establishing linkages between humanitarian relief and development cooperation in Ethiopia?

Most scholarly contributions to the debate on linking relief and development have focused on analysing concepts and debating the the reasons why such a link should be pursued or avoided. Policy papers and guidelines also mostly take a normative stance,

affirming or restating the necessity of *bridging the gap,* without due attention to the context.

This doctoral thesis will take a different, more emprical approach contribute to fill in a gap in the literature, by looking at the reasons why the relief-to-development gap is still there, and what factors are nevertheless contributing to its reduction. The results might be of interest to scholars attempting to understand both development and humanitarian crises, to policy-makers seeking for ways to improve the humanitarian-development collaboration, and to practitioners wanting to improve their aid efforts. Furthermore, this dissertation will shed more light on practices of aid in Ethiopia, looking in particular at the operational *meso*-level of aid organisations, between the decision-makers – national government and foreign donors – and the affected populations. The meso-level of organizations should still receive more scientific attention in development and area studies, as organisations play important roles in the provision of aid (Pries 2008; Dijkzeul 2008).

1.2 Limitations

The main limitation of this research is that it does not attempt to study the full impact of linking relief and development, let alone to assess the costs and benefits to establish whether this approach would be intrinsically better than the perpetuation of the humanitarian-development dichotomy. Such an endeavour would have required a longer period of time than the one allocated for my doctoral studies, a bigger research team, and the full cooperation of aid agencies willing to give not just full access to their project records, but potentially open to let researchers devise different projects and monitor them over time. An assessment of the costs and benefits of linking relief and development compared to business-as-usual would likely generate a notable advancement of the debate, and remains one of the possible subjects for further research.

A second major limitation of this study is that it only takes into consideration one case, albeit a critical one. Again, time and resources would not have permitted otherwise, but extending the study to contexts other than Ethiopia would provide additional insights, and possibly corroborate – or contradict – the results of this research.

1.3 Definitions

Before moving on to the theoretical framework and methodology of the research, it is necessary to provide short definitions of key terms employed. Some of these concepts will be further analysed in chapter 3.

1.3.1 Development

Development is a disputed concept and, despite its wide use, remains fuzzy and loaded with different meanings. Sumner and Tribe (2008) have identified the three main ways of conceptualizing development: i) development as a long term process of societal transformation; ii) development as short- to medium-term outcome of desirable targets; and iii) development as dominant discourse of western modernity. In this context, it is not relevant to choose one meaning over the others, but it is paramount to shed the light on the fact that *development* can mean different things to different people. A simple way to define development could be Chamber's (2004), who recognises that development is just anything that can be considered "good change".

In addition, *development* is often used as shorthand for "development assistance" (see below), as it is often the case when discussing *linking relief and development*. Throughout this dissertation, the word *development* will be used in this latter meaning, unless otherwise specified.

1.3.2 Development assistance

In this study, the expression "development assistance" will be used to indicate all forms of international resource transfers that are undertaken with the professed purpose of promoting economic or social development (or both). Although the main objectives, intermediate outcomes and activities undertaken to achieve them can differ to a large extent, a common element of various types of *development assistance* is the confidence that the world can be changed for the better.

This meaning of *development assistance* differs from the more specific *Official Development Assistance (ODA)* defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as:

> *those flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients (available at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist) and to multilateral development institutions which are:*

i. provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and

ii. each transaction of which:

a) is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and

b) is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent) (OECD-DAC 2008)

Since the 1970s the term "development cooperation" has been introduced in order to highlight the fact that development cannot be imposed, and that the parties involved – often euphemistically called partners – for practical and ethical reasons are the agents of their own destiny and not just passive recipients of assistance. Instead, they – ideally – cooperate. It is questionable, however, how much the narrative of cooperation among partners is reflected in practice. More often than not, "development cooperation" is simply used as a synonym for "development assistance" or "development aid".

1.3.3 Humanitarian

The term "humanitarian" came into use in the early nineteenth century to refer to a form of compassion characterised by a transnational dimension, by a transcendental[1] view of such assistance, and by an increasing degree of institutionalisation (Barnett 2011:10). Humanitarianism is often associated with emergency relief, as opposed to development action which focuses on structural change, despite a long history of humanitarian thought and practice aimed at addressing the causes of suffering, besides its symptoms — what Barnett (2011) refers to as "alchemical humanitarianism".[2]

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[1] Transcendence refers here to humanitarians believing "in the existence of something bigger than themselves" (Barnett 2011: 237). This "something" can have a religious connotation – and it is undoubtable that religious sentiments have informed humanitarian involvement through the centuries – but can also be the possibility of improving the world (through humanitarian action).

[2] When Barnett uses the term alchemicial organizations, he refers to organizations that combine developmental with humanitarian work. These organizations are also often called multi-mandate organizations.

The word "humanitarian" has yet another nuance in the domain of international law, where it indicates the corpus of rules that seeks to regulate the conduct of hostilities, known as International Humanitarian Law (IHL) or *jus in bello*.[3] The objective of IHL is to make warfare more humane, and its scope has expanded progressively over time, starting from ensuring that wounded soldiers could be taken care of (and that medical staff were not shot at while serving in or near battlegrounds), to the prohibitions of certain warfare techniques (such as chemical weapons), to rules aimed at protecting civilians (Akehurst and Malanczuk 1997). Although this legal *corpus* might not, at a first glance, seem related to the provision of humanitarian relief (at least not in case of natural disasters), it is still pivotal during humanitarian crises resulting from conflict. The humanitarian principles (see below) are part of customary international humanitarian law.

Alongside specialist notions of humanitarianism, the word "humanitarian" is also used in everyday language — both as an adjective and as a noun — to indicate anything or anyone "concerned with or seeking to promote human welfare" (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010), and is therefore synonymous with "philanthropic". In this sense, it can encompass all acts of solidarity, including what usually goes under the "development" label; it might also include activities performed at national level, besides international efforts. Particularly problematic is the widespread use of the adjective "humanitarian" to refer to anything that purportedly aims at a greater good. This is the case, for instance, of "humanitarian" military interventions.

It is important to note that all these conceptions of humanitarianism originated within Western culture, and thus their roots are far from universal (despite their claims and ambitions). While notions of human solidarity exist in other cultures, only recently they have started to be considered as potential alternative discourses of humanitarianism, such as the work of Hirono (2013) on Chinese humanitarianism, or that of Moussa (2014) on Islamic humanitarianism.

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[3] The other component of what is sometimes referred to as "laws of war" is the *jus ad bellum*, which covers the rules aimed at defining when the recourse to armed conflict is lawful, and when it is not. The *jus ad bellum* include most notably norms on international and civil wars, as well as on the right to self-determination (Akehurst and Malanczuk 1997: 306).

1.3.4 Humanitarian action

Humanitarian action indicates "aid and action designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations." (Global Humanitarian Assistance). Typical forms of humanitarian action include the provision of healthcare, shelter, water and sanitation services, the distribution of food, tools and other necessary items. In recent years, the provision of cash (or vouchers) instead of in-kind goods has become increasingly common.

It is generally understood that humanitarian action should be guided by the four core humanitarian principles of *humanity*, *impartiality*, *neutrality*, and *independence*:

Humanity indicates the duty to save human lives and alleviating suffering *wherever* it is found.

- Humanity is intended as the key objective of humanitarian assistance, and the other three core principles are instrumental to achieve it.

- *Impartiality* indicates the prohibition of making any discrimination between or within affected populations, and conversely the obligation of providing assistance solely on the basis of need, and regardless of nationality, religion, gender and any other consideration.

- *Neutrality* indicates that humanitarian actors should refrain from taking any sides in conflicts and other disputes.

- *Independence* implies that humanitarian decisions should not be influenced by considerations other than humanitarian needs. In particular, humanitarian action should not become an instrument of foreign policy.

These principles originate from the seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, approved in 1965 (International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2013).[4] Despite general agreement that these principles

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[4] The three principles that only apply to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are: *voluntary service, unity* (there can be only one National Society in each country), and *universality* (all National Societies have equal status)

should guide humanitarian action, their implementation has always been inconsistent at best. This aspect will be treated more in detail in chapter 3.

The terms *humanitarian aid, humanitarian assistance, humanitarian relief* (or simply *relief*, as in the phrase *Linking Relief and Development*) are often used rather interchangeably to refer to humanitarian action. In this dissertation, I prefer to use the word *action* because it is less focused on external supply of funds or items, and also better encompasses the aspects of protection that are part of the humanitarian mandate.

1.3.5 Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)

The term *Non-Governmental Organisation* – also known by the acronym NGO – indicates any organisation that is not part of a government structure, and is not a business enterprise either. Typically, NGOs deliver some sort of public services and do not distribute profits. Some governments might require a form of registration for a non-profit organisation to be labelled as NGOs (or *charities*).

In the last decades, NGOs have become major players in both humanitarian and development assistance, often receiving grants from governments, intergovernmental organisations and private donors to implement aid projects.

1.4 Outline of the dissertation

In the following chapter, I will present the theoretical foundations and methodology adopted in this work. I will first discuss the implications of carrying out a research that spans across disciplines and fields of study, and clarify my own critical realist ontology. Next, I will introduce the framework, inspired by neo-institutional scholarship, adopted to analyse the forces that encourage, and those that hinder, the linkages between relief and development work.

Before delving into the empirical material, in chapter three I will summarise the historical evolution of humanitarian and development action as two separate domains, and examine the main differences and similarities between the two. I will also outline the evolution of "bridging the gap" discourse, presenting the main arguments and concepts employed to support or refuse it. In chapter four, I will expand on the context of the case study, providing an historical background to crises and humanitarian response in Ethiopia, as well as a descriptive account of the 2011-2012 food crisis. The following chapters will be based on the empirical material collected during field

research in Ethiopia. Chapter five will be dedicated to outlining an example of response to the 2011-12 food crisis in Ethiopia, based on participant observation at the NGO MERLIN. In chapter six, I will present material on linking relief and development in Ethiopia, organised along the three institutional pillars, which are to be introduced in chapter two: rules and regulations applicable to humanitarian and development action; norms and values of the different actors; and cultural-cognitive elements reproduced (consciously or not) by aid workers. Finally, in chapter seven I will discuss the findings and draw my conclusions on the impact of the different institutional forces against or in favour of of linking Relief and Development (LRD).[5]

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[5] In this dissertation, I have chosen to use the acronym LRD over Linking Relief , Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), because the latter is strongly associated to specific EU policies, whereas I wanted to remain open to different modalities of integrating the two modes of action. Furthermore, LRRD implies a linear sequence that moves from relief through rehabilitation to development, which is not always the case (see chapter 3). Nevertheless, I will use the term LRRD when referring specifically to the EU, or when reporting quotes from EU official explicitly using that expression.

Chapter 2. Theory and methodology

This chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings of my research, as well as its methodology and techniques used. Often, a researcher's disciplinary affiliation carries a luggage of theoretical assumptions, which – unless openly discussed in one's work – may seem to require little clarification, particularly when the study is intended for fellow scholars of the same discipline. Such assumptions, however, need to be made explicit when a study is not grounded in one single discipline, which is the case of the present study. In the following section, I will therefore introduce a general reflection on the cross-disciplinary status of both African and Development Studies, before delving into the presentation of the theoretical framework of this research, and of the research methods used.

2.1 Crossing disciplines

As a political scientist with a background in African Politics and Institutions, and who later on has developed an interest on International Development and Humanitarian Action, I do not identify with one single *corpus* of knowledge, but rather engage with a range of disciplinary fields. Furthermore, this doctoral research was carried out across different institutions, each one with slightly different, albeit compatible and complementary, domains. None of these alone has determined my theoretical framework, yet all together have contributed to shaping it.

This study, which looks at a specific aid practice (linking humanitarian relief and development cooperation) in an African context (Ethiopia), belongs to both African Studies and Development Studies. As argued by Sumner and Tribe (2008:65) neither of these fields constitute a discipline in the strictest sense, but they can rather be defined as subjects, kept together by a common interest (a geographical area or the broader issue of development, respectively). As a consequence, the research topic itself could have been analysed from different theoretical perspectives and using diverse methods. Hence, clarifying my own theoretical stance and the rationale behind my methodological choices becomes of particular importance.

One crucial similarity between Area and Development studies is that both draw from other disciplines[6] for theories and methodological tools, based on the nature of their specific research interest. Area Studies, of which African Studies is a branch, is commonly intended as research focussing on a geographical area, with a multitude of possible disciplinary approaches. These can typically include, but are not limited to, Historical, Sociological, and Anthropological works on (parts of) the given area. As a result of the focus on the area rather than on the methods, it is rather common among area specialists to combine approaches from different disciplines in order to gain a deeper understanding of their domain, for instance by studying the local language or the history of a country in addition to investigating its political institutions (Bates 1997).

**Figure 1: Area and Development Studies intersections with main disciplines.
Source: Author**

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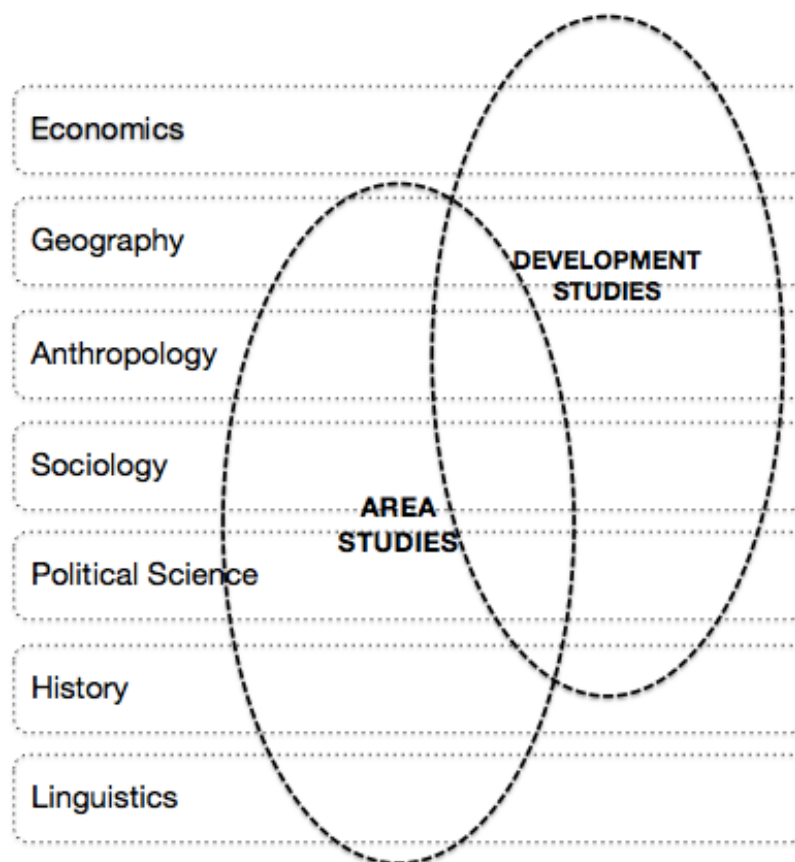
[6] Usually from within the broader Social Sciences, although Natural Science approaches to specific issues of development, such as climate change, are also being used.

Likewise, Development Studies does not constitute a discipline, but it is rather a subject of inquiry that draws from disciplines as diverse as Sociology, Economy, Anthropology, Geography (all of which have developed a "Development" branch), but also Political Science and International Relations. According to Sumner and Tribe (2008:35), cross-disciplinarity is one of the three main elements that characterise Development Studies, together with a focus on investigating "development", however defined, and an instrumental character, in other words, the desire to influence change. Such a broad definition allows for including Humanitarian Studies within the domain of Development Studies.[7]

As sketched in figure 1, Area and Development Studies themselves present overlapping areas as subjects of cross-disciplinary inquiry. This is due to the geographical concentration of many so called "developing" countries in Africa and Asia – the focus of African and Asian Studies, respectively. As mentioned, the present study lies at the intersection of the two areas, and has benefitted above all from insights from sociological and political science scholarship on humanitarian and development practices and institutions. This position leaves a range of possibilities as far as theories are concerned; I will now proceed to clarify my own theoretical framework for this study.

2.2 A critical realist study

This study is grounded in critical realism, a philosophical stance located in the middle ground between positivist/empiricist and relativist approaches (Sumner and Tribe 2008), overcoming the weaknesses of both. The former share with realists the assumption that a reality independent of human knowledge exists, but they postulate as well that such reality is accessible through sensory experience. Relativists, on the other hand, deny the existence of one objective reality, and focus instead on meanings, which can be different for each interpreter. As a result, no objective knowledge is possible, as the researcher and the researched are intertwined (Sumner and Tribe 2008).

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[7] In line with Chambers' definition of development as "good change", (2004: iii, 2–3), Humanitarian Studies can also be considered to concern itself with (some) aspects of development. Despite the fact that some topics, such as humanitarian law, are relevant to humanitarian affairs but not to development ones (and vice-versa), the boundaries between the two subjects are rather porous and it is difficult to draw a line in practice. As a result, relevant pieces of humanitarian research are published in journals that are primarily concerned with development.

Positivist thinking strongly shaped the development field after the Second World War, with theories that assumed a single, linear path to industrialisation (Sumner and Tribe 2008: 69) that could be triggered or facilitated by foreign aid. The word "development" itself already conveys the idea of a linear and almost necessary progression, is a product of positivist thinking. Yet, with its search for regularities (Sayer 2000) and generalisable "laws", positivism does not appear to adequately account for diversity and complexity observed in the social world in general, and in the field of development in particular.

Relativist thinking completely reversed the positivist worldview: instead of one objective reality that can be revealed to knowledge, there are multiple ambiguous "realities" based on different perceptions (Sumner and Tribe 2008). The focus of inquiry shifted to (subjective) meanings and discourses. Yet, arguing that there is no such a thing as objective knowledge, such relativism seemingly fails to address the ontological question of "what exists." Despite an overall tendency towards more relativistic approaches in development studies (Sumner and Tribe 2008), positivism remains evident in the search for technical fixes (by doing X, "development" will follow) and technocratic blueprint approaches, of which the logical framework matrix (see chapter 2) is one illuminating example.

A critical realist stance, in contrast, maintains that while "the world can only be known in terms of available descriptions or discourses" (Sayer 2000: 47), some descriptions are more accurate representations of reality than others. Furthermore, a critical realist approach maintains that an external reality exists, while rejecting any simplistic or naïve linear accounts of development in favour of a more nuanced analysis of complex phenomena. This approach appears to be particularly suited to the study of humanitarian and development affairs, as it allows to satisfactorily take into consideration the role of discourses, organisational culture, and expectations that influence actions of aid organisations and other stakeholders, while at the same time recognising the existence of epidemics, malnutrition, or financial and logistic constraints that shape the day-to-day working life of many aid workers.

2.2.1 Ontology and epistemology of critical realism

As far as ontology (*what exists?*) is concerned, critical realism – in line with other strands of realism – maintains that there is a reality independent of human knowledge of it (Sayer 2000:2). From an epistemological (*what can we know?*) point of view, critical realism postulates that while reality is not entirely accessible and intelligible,

knowledge – albeit fallible and always subject to revision – is still possible (Bhaskar 1979).

Critical realism notably distinguishes between an *intransitive dimension* (the object of knowledge) and a *transitive one* (the knowledge of the object) – or between referent and reference (Al Amoudi and Willmott 2011). *Epistemic fallacy* (Bhaskar 1979) is the term adopted by critical realists to indicate the conflation of knowing an object with the object itself. For critical realists, the experience of *hunger* (intransitive), for instance, is and remains separate from *conceptualisations* of hunger (transitive). At the same time, whether something is transitive or intransitive depends on context: different conceptualisations of hunger can well be the objects of inquiry themselves, and thus be, in that specific situation, intransitive.

From an epistemological point of view (*what can we know?*), the main feature of critical realism is that this reality is constituted of three stratified domains: the *Real*, the *Actual*, and the *Empirical* (Sayer 2000). The deepest layer, that of the Real, is the one that comprises structures and causal powers, or "the inherent dispositions of things to act in certain ways" (Clegg 2010:10). A key feature of causal powers is that their activation is contingent and not necessary (Sayer 1992: 104-107). For instance, being able to speak does not either imply talking all the time, nor rules out voluntary abstention from verbal communication. Normally, causal powers are not observable as such, but only through events that they might eventually produce (Mingers 2005:152). Such events constitute the domain of the Actual. Finally, the tip of the iceberg of the stratified reality is the Empirical, or the domain of experience (Sayer 2000: 12), which is directly observable.

Notably, for critical realists not only natural objects are real, but also social constructs, such as discourse, can be real (Fleetwood 2004:4), insofar as they are capable of transforming structures and events, as well as reproducing them (Clegg 2010:10). However, the production of effects will be contingent on whether causal powers will be enacted, and the magnitude of such effects will depend on the context (Sayer 2004: 13). The assumption of a stratified reality and the difficulty of accessing the deeper layers beyond the empirically observable result in the impossibility of objective knowledge. Perception is dependent on available concepts, but, as summarised by Andrew Sayer:

> [Concepts] do not determine the structure of the world itself. And
> despite our entrapment within our conceptual systems, it is still

possible to differentiate between more and less practically-adequate beliefs about the material world. Observation is neither theory-neutral nor theory-determined, but theory-laden. Truth is neither absolute nor purely conventional and relative, but a matter of practical adequacy. Differences in meaning need not render inter-theory or inter-paradigm communication and criticism impossible. Knowledge changes neither wholly continuously and cumulatively nor by comprehensive replacements of one monolithic paradigm by another. Theory does not order given observations or data but negotiates their conceptualisation, even as observations (Sayer 1992: 83-84)

As a result, knowledge can only be provisional, grounded on a specific historical, cultural and technical context, and multiple accounts of reality are possible (Maxwell 2012). Nevertheless, "the admission that all knowledge is fallible does not mean all knowledge is equally fallible" (Sayer 1992:67). It is precisely the rejection of the epistemic fallacy that allows critical realists to claim that rational judgements about contrasting theories on the same reality are possible (Al Amoudi and Willmott 2011). For critical realists, science should be concerned with understanding and explaining the underlying mechanisms of causality, rather than with discovering universal laws (Mingers 2005:152). The search for regularities, argues Sayer (2004) says little on the causal mechanisms. Despite a strong support for qualitative research, critical realism does not however dogmatically embrace any specific research technique, and is instead quite open to many.

2.2.2 Structure and agency in critical realism

Critical realism offers a useful approach to the longstanding debate over *structure* and *agency*. Social scientists have long argued on whether it is structures that determine individual and social action (a position favoured by objectivists), or if, following a subjectivist point of view, individuals and groups – all of them "actors" – are ultimately free to choose a course of action (Ebrahim 2005: 14). The notion of structure refers to "the tendency of patterns of relations to be reproduced, even when actors engaging in the relations are unaware of the patterns or do not desire their reproduction" (Sewell 1992:3). Agency, on the other hand, is, as elegantly put by Giddens (1979: 256, emphasis added), the "capability of intervening, *or refraining from intervening*, in a series of events so as to be able to influence their course". Clearly, whereas structure refers to the role of rules and the surrounding environment in influencing one's conduct, eventually leading to deterministic assumptions, using

agency automatically places greater importance on individual freedom (Ebrahim 2005: 14).

In the stratified reality of critical realism, there is space for both structure and agency. There are structures, yet there remains also space for exercising agency. More importantly, actions can either reproduce structures, or change them (Clegg 2010: 10). Critical realist scholar Margaret Archer has notably developed a theory of *morphogenesis* in which she explains the interactions between structure and agency over time: "structure necessarily predates the actions which transform it" (Archer 1995: 202), and "structural elaboration necessarily post-dates those actions" (ibidem). Archer's position might at first sight be close to that of Anthony Giddens, who had first tried to overcome the structure-agency debate by theorising that structure is both constitutive of agency and shaped by it (Giddens 1979). Yet, Archer criticises the absence of time-related considerations in Gidden's theory of structuration.

According to Archer, structure and agency are best examined separately, rather than conflated into one concept, in order to understand how they interact and influence each other over time (Archer 1995:252-253). Archer's morphogenetic approach to the structure-agency dyad is useful in examining practices of LRD because it allows to identify the current structures of humanitarian and development aid provision – including discourses, organisational mandates, donor requirements – as well as recognising the capacity of aid organisations of choosing among different possible courses of action (as well as non-action) and ultimately even contributing to the modification of these structures.

2.3 Neo-institutional theory and aid organisations

The research problem of the present study concerns practices of linking humanitarian relief and development. Considering that both types of action are normally implemented by aid organisations – mostly, but not necessarily, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – it appeared sensible to focus the analysis on these organisations, as they are the ones that may eventually establish such links.

Critical realism can be a fruitful philosophical stance for the study of such organisations (e.g., Fleetwood 2004; Sayer 2004; Leca and Naccache 2006; Al Amoudi and Willmott 2011), because it recognises beyond any ambiguity that both structures and actors exists and interact constantly (Leca and Naccache 2006: 643). More specifically, from a critical realist perspective, organisations are structures that are (re)produced by its participants. Yet, these structures have "their own distinctive real

properties" (Ackroyd 2004:136) which in turn, shape the pattern of relationships with and within the organisation itself. Critical realism acknowledges both "the influence of institutional embeddedness and the partial autonomy of actors' actions" (Leca and Naccache 2006: 643).

In line with critical realist thinking, this research has been influenced by neo-institutionalist theory, which constitutes one of the most influential schools of thought in organisational studies and the social sciences in general, which looks at the ways in which institutions shape organisations (Scott 2008a: 427). Institutions can be defined as "multifaceted, durable social structures made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources" (Scott 2008b: 48). In these neo-institutional theories structure and agency interact (see below).

Following Scott (2008b), neo-institutional scholarship has highlighted various elements of institutional forces that can be subsumed into three main "pillars": regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive. The regulative pillar refers to "explicitly regulatory processes" (Scott 2008b: 52) and is often studied by examining the political structure of a society. The normative pillar takes into consideration social obligations, and include both values and norms. Normative systems can both constrain and enable social action (Scott 2008b: 55). The cultural-cognitive pillar, in turn, stresses the criticality of "shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made" (ibid.).

The concept of *legitimacy* is particularly relevant in organisational analysis. Legitimacy is the (perceived) social acceptability of an organisation and of its actions, or in other words, the degree of cultural support for an organisation" (Meyer and Scott 1983: 201). Notably, legitimacy does not necessarily imply increased efficiency, and it can even entail worsening performances (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2008b; Oliver 1991; Rauh 2010). Sources of legitimacy can be found in each of the three institutional pillars. From a regulative point of view, legitimacy is equated with conformity to law and rules, whereas from a normative standpoint, legitimacy would imply also complying with established procedures, expectations of what is appropriate, and other non-binding norms. Finally, a cultural-cognitive approach emphasises "legitimacy that comes from conforming to a common definition of the situation, frame of reference, or a recognisable role or structural template" (Scott 2008b: 61).

For instance, aid organisations might adopt a certain behaviour simply because they are following a mandatory rule, such as a clause in a contract with a donor (regulative

pillar), or – in what can sometimes appear to be a somewhat opportunistic conduct – because they are aware that such behaviour is highly valued and regarded as just among their constituencies (normative pillar), or on a more subtle level, because they have internalised certain categories and scripts, and they believe them to be right or appropriate (cultural-cognitive pillar).

All three institutional pillars are normally observed in any institutional form, albeit in varying combinations. The alignment of the three pillars – when rules, norms and cultural-cognitive elements all point to the same behaviour – is believed to generate the strongest institutional forces. Yet in most of the cases, pillars can be misaligned, with some working in support of the existing order and other(s) against it (Scott 2008b: 62).

Earlier neo-institutionalist scholarship tended to emphasise structural constraints produced by institutional mechanisms. Their focus was on how institutional pressures push towards increased similarity (isomorphism) among organisations in the same field(s) (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). They thus focused more on the influence of structures than on independent actors. More recent contributions, often dealing with institutional change happening *despite* pressures to conformity, have brought agency back in the picture. Such positions, which acknowledge the relevance of both structure and agency, are compatible with the broader theoretical framework provided by critical realism.

Agency is exercised whenever a decision between two (or more) courses of action is taken, as well as in instances of selection of applicable rules, and interpretation of rules and norms (Scott 2008b: 78). It is worth remembering that institutional pressures are not necessarily aligned, and that different behaviours might be justified by competing pressures. And even when they are rather aligned, conformity to the expected/fostered behaviour(s) is recognisably only one among a wider range of possible responses to institutional pressures (Scott 2008b: 54). Christine Oliver (1991) identified five types of strategic responses to institutional pressures, varying in the degree of organisational agency from passive acquiescence to compromise, avoidance, defiance and ultimately to overt manipulation. Her typology shows how institutional theory can actually be compatible with a view that does not neglect agency. Ultimately, the search for legitimacy in itself is an interesting example of the interplay of structure and agency, where organisations exercise their agency by deciding which institutional pressures to follow, and might even only pretend to be complying.

2.3.1 Symbolic systems and discourses

Institutions can be conveyed in different ways, among which are the so-called "symbolic systems". According to Scott, these include "rules, values and norms, classifications, representations, frames, schemas, prototypes and scripts used to guide behaviour" (Scott 2008b: 80). The idea of symbolic systems resonates with the concept of "discourse", intended "as a category for designating particular ways of representing particular aspects of social life" (Fairclough 2010: 2). Lister (2003: 188) indeed notes that sociological institutional theorists often avoid the term *discourse*, and yet refer to similar concepts when examining "taken-for-granted scripts, rules, and classifications" or "rational myths" that exert pressures on organisations.[8]

Conformity to dominant discourses is arguably a source of legitimacy for organisations in a given field, and including those working in the humanitarian and development sectors. Such conformity does not necessarily imply – although it might – sharing the meanings and representations advanced by dominant discourses, but it can be enacted precisely to increase legitimacy. According to Cornwall (2005; 2007), popular *development buzzwords* often owe their success to fuzziness, which shields "those who use them from attack by lending the possibility of common meaning to extremely disparate actors" (Cornwall 2005: 1056). The intentional and opportunistic adoption of a popular discourse for the purpose of enhancing an organisation's legitimacy, without necessarily changing its practices, is a powerful example of how agency can be used to eschew institutional pressures. This resonates with Oliver's *concealment*, one of the tactics of avoidance, which consists in "disguising nonconformity behind a façade of acquiescence" (Oliver 1991: 154).

In addition, discourses can also work to reproduce structures that are not necessarily aligned with the currently dominant paradigms, thus working *against* organisational isomorphism, and at the same time *hindering* organisational change. For instance, Ebrahim (2005: 50) notes that NGOs remain influenced by discourses prevailing at the time of their foundation, to which he refers as "embeddedness of NGO behavior in development discourses". In this view, discourses act as structural factors that contribute to the constitution of organisational values, behaviours and established practices that ultimately get replicated. This could also partially explain differences among NGOs operating in the same field, but with different constitutive myths.

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[8] For exceptions, see Vijge (2013) and Schmidt (2008).

2.3.2 Aid chains as organisational field

Institutional analysis can be carried out at different levels. At macro level, it can focus on the world system or society more in general, while at the opposite end of the spectrum, it can take into consideration a single organisation or even a subsystem (e.g. department) within an organisation. The meso level in this continuum is represented by the concept of organisational field (Scott 2008b: 85-89). Organisational fields are defined by DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 148) as organisations that, taken "in the aggregate, constitute a recognised area of institutional life". As such, a field can comprise different organisations that operate in the same sector or business.

Organisations involved in the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance can be seen as part of an organisational field, and studied as such. I argue that the concept of aid chain (Wallace, et al. 2006) can be considered as a subtype of organisational field. An aid chain can be defined as:

> *the series of organisations and actors involved in the process of moving*
> *funds from their initial institutional source to be spent on behalf of the*
> *targeted beneficiaries in the recipient area, and the associated*
> *processes of accounting to donors for the use of these funds (Wallace et*
> *al. 2006:12).*

A typical aid chain usually features one or more institutional donors, an international NGO, which can often be further subdivided into the three different levels of the headquarters, the country office and "the field", local implementing partners, and communities. While money moves down the aid chain, from the donor towards the intended beneficiaries, there is also a movement of other types of resources, most notably information, going upwards (Ebrahim 2005). In the most common setting, the cost of any given project is split between one major donor – the one featuring in the aid chain – and the NGO's own funds. The latter can derive from diverse sources as private donations, commercial activities (e.g. selling of second-hand clothes), and overhead costs, and normally come without strings attached. However, the institutional donor that is providing most – although not all – of the funds needed for a given project, can frequently set conditions that apply to the whole project. These conditions may at times be more or less negotiable, and typically include specific formats for funding proposals and reports, timeframes of implementation and other requirements to be met in order for each instalment to be disbursed, as well as visibility measures for acknowledging the generosity of the donor. Hence, with the exception of projects

funded entirely through small private donations in their own public fundraising campaigns, NGOs rarely find themselves located outside of this aid chain.

The aid chain is a vertical aspect of the organizational field(s). It is important to note that it generally leaves out of consideration many actors, mainly local ones, and their impact – and thus part of the (everyday) politics – in crises. Examples of such actors include the national government, private enterprise warlords, traditional local leaders, and insurgents (see DeMars and Dijkzeul 2015: 1-37). In other words, a sole focus on the (humanitarian and/or development) aid chain gives the wrong impression that aid is a rather technocratic issue area neatly separated from local politics and other issue areas. In this dissertation, I will also explicitly focus on the Ethiopean government, which deeply influences the activities within the aid chain, as well as the impact of aid.

2.4 Research methodology

In examining the issue of LRD in Ethiopia, my working hypothesis is that *there are institutional forces pushing for maintaining the separation of humanitarian and development action.* This, despite the fact that the two often take place in the same contexts and frequently in the same (or adjacent) timeframe, and that are often funded and implemented by the same actors. Simultaneously, there are also relevant discourses – such as that of "resilience" – that apparently challenge the status quo, favouring a more integrated approach.

2.4.1 Operationalisation

Based on the theoretical framework outlined above, the operationalisation of the study examines symbolic systems (and their material impact) at work in the three pillars identified by Scott (2008a): regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive, by studying aid chains in Ethiopia. For each of the three pillars, I set out to highlight which elements perpetuate the division between humanitarian and development aid provision, and which work towards bridging that gap.

Looking at the regulative pillar, I will examine the systems created through the rules that both humanitarian and development organisations are bound to follow, and which can be grouped in two types: i) the applicable laws of the recipient country, that apply to all aid organisations in the country indistinctly, and ii) the contractual stipulations on the use of funding as they are determined by (or at best negotiated with) donors, that are defined on an ad hoc basis for each grant. As for international law, in this specific case it appears to be of secondary importance in defining day-to-day practices

of humanitarian and development assistance. In fact, despite the existence of the above-mentioned branch of international law called "International Humanitarian Law", its domain of applicability restricted to armed conflicts, and therefore its usefulness is questionable in a case study on a food crisis in peaceful times. As for crisis other than war, there is growing recognition towards the so-called "International Disasters Response Law" (IDLR). However, to date IDLR merely defines the possibility (not the right) for affected governments to receive assistance without establishing a corresponding duty for humanitarian agencies to intervene (Fisher 2007). As a consequence, its standing as "law", as well as its relevance to the case under examination, remain questionable.

For the normative pillar, I will examine the in which way norms and values that differentiate the humanitarian from the development mandate, as well as discourses that promote better integration between the two, were reproduced in the Ethiopian context. I will examine in particular the role of humanitarian principles, as they are key to defining the humanitarian "identity", despite the absence of formal sanctions in case of their infringement, and anecdotal evidence that violations have actually been rather frequent. The argument that linking relief and development would jeopardise the humanitarian principles is indeed one of the most frequently employed by critics of LRD approaches. In my overview of the uptake of norms and principles, I will focus specifically on three key actors: the Ethiopian authorities, international donors, and aid organisations.

Finally, moving to the cultural-cognitive pillar, the focus will be on categories, representations and interpretive schemas, often reproduced unconsciously, and that might work in one direction (maintaining the status quo) as well as in the opposite one (favouring LRD). The primary source of information on this respect would be the voices of aid workers themselves. In this regard, the focus has been placed on understanding what is considered as appropriate and legitimate and to unveil how – if at all – normative discourses related to the desirability (or not) to bridge the gap end up shaping the views of aid workers in the field, and how this contributes or hinders linkages between humanitarian relief and development.

2.4.2 Case study selection

This study has been carried out through a qualitative case study of the response to the 2011 food crisis in Ethiopia. Case studies examine a (set of) selected unit(s) of analysis in detail, producing context-related knowledge in a way that replicates the process of

human learning, and the creation of expert knowledge in particular (Flyvbjerg 2006; 2011). Case study research is also a method frequently employed within realist research (Ackroyd 2004: 144).

Case study research, and intensive research more in general, is primarily concerned with describing "how some causal process works out in a particular case or limited number of cases" (Sayer 1992: 242), as opposed to extensive research designs, which aim at discovering general laws applicable, ideally, to an entire population. Among others, Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011) has demonstrated that generalisation on the basis of a case study is possible, although he also points out that generalisation is often overvalued in science. Nevertheless, generalisation is possible in particular when using a *critical case study*, that is, a case designed in such a way to allow for logic deductions of the type "if X did not happen in this case, it cannot happen anywhere else" or "if Y happened in this case, then it will apply to all other cases".

In this research, I argue that humanitarian relief operations in Ethiopia can be seen as a critical case study to explore the practice of LRD, because the country has long suffered from recurrent crises, in particular in terms of adequate access to food. Such crises – often triggered by drought – exacerbate pre-existing food insecurity and leave affected populations even more vulnerable than they were before. In such a context, where the next crisis is not much a matter of "if", but of "when", linking immediate relief with longer-term poverty-reduction efforts seems to be more appropriate than anywhere else. In addition, the relatively stable political situation and low perceived risk have made Ethiopia a *donor darling*, which receives significant amounts of external aid both for humanitarian relief and development purposes. In other contexts humanitarian and development assistance are on a shoestring budget compared to needs,[9] which hampers planning even in the short term, let alone strategising for the switch to development programming. Indeed, most aid agencies that are present in Ethiopia have been operating in the country for several years (sometimes even decades), and do not have plans to leave any time soon. Given these characteristics, I argue that Ethiopia would make an ideal environment in which to link humanitarian relief with development assistance. Conversely, any difficulty in putting this approach into practice in Ethiopia would probably mean that linking relief and development is

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[9] At the time of writing, the World Food Programme has for instance announced that, due to insufficient funding, it will have to reduce the usual ration size and scale down the number of beneficiaries of its Syria-crisis operations, effective two weeks after the announcement was made (WFP 2014).

(or will be) downright impossible in contexts where the presence of either humanitarian or development actors is lower, or where donors are less than likely to provide support in the medium-long term.

The choice of employing qualitative data stems from the fact that it allows for in-depth understanding and interpretation of specific, context-bound causal processes better than the search for regularities and universal rules that hold across cases (Sayer 1992; 2000), and such processes are crucial in the critical realist view, because for critical realists looking for regularities or universal rules does not explain causality; they consider it more important to understand causality (even if applicable to a single case only) than to find regular occurrences that cannot be explained. In addition, the available quantitative data are not suited to answer questions on linking relief and development as datasets on aid projects are often limited to information on project's location, sector of intervention, and amount of money received/spent. Information on whether the projects transcend the categories of "humanitarian relief" and "development" is normally not required and provided in these data sets.

Furthermore, there is usually some degree of flexibility in how implementing agencies attribute their projects to different sectors. Except when the project's objective clearly falls into a specific category, the choice can be influenced by a variety of factors, including the mandate of the organisation[10] or of its donor(s), the overall aim of the budget line(s) being tapped for the financing of the project, or the host government's definitions, to mention a few. Large projects encompassing a range of different activities across sectors might be either entirely reported under one main sector, or roughly split into a few sub-projects, and reported separately. Humanitarian appeals for Ethiopia in years 2011-2012 notably referred to five sectors: food, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, agriculture and livestock, and education. Reports were mostly consistent with such categories. Hence, any of these sectors might offer chances for "linking up" the immediate relief response to development interventions, but the way data is presented does not allow to clearly distinguish projects with an LRD approach from more "business-as-usual" ones. Moreover, even if reliable quantitative

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[10] For instance, the World Food Programme (WFP) usually reports its cash-based interventions under "food security", because the organisation has the mandate of fighting hunger, and not something else. Yet, as cash is fungible, some beneficiaries use (part of) the money received from WFP to buy other items, such as medicines, shelter material, or assets for starting a small business.

data on LRD were available, from a critical realist perspective these would not suffice to holistically understand the phenomenon.

2.4.3 Data collection

Data collection was first conducted in Addis Ababa, where most, if not all, humanitarian and development organisations active in Ethiopia have an office, and, second, in the Borena zone, one of the areas stricken by the food crisis in 2011-2012, where some implementing organisations maintained a field presence. Besides being among the areas where humanitarian activity could be observed in early 2012, the Borena zone was selected because it was easily accessible thanks to a gatekeeper, the British NGO Medical Relief International (MERLIN) that supported my research.[11] This organisation was mostly active in the field of health and nutrition, with on-going projects in different areas of the country. Later in 2012 and 2013, I carried out additional interviews in Ethiopia.

In terms of data collection techniques, I employed a combination of participant observation semi-structured interviews, and an extensive literature search. All the conversations were held in English, the working language of all international aid organisations operating in Ethiopia, even though it was not the first language for most of the informants.

2.4.3.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is intended here as taking part in daily activities and interaction of a selected group of people in order to make sense of both explicit and implicit aspects of their routines (De Walt and De Walt 2011: 1). I carried out participant observation in the humanitarian NGO MERLIN, during my first field visit to Ethiopia in 2012. Participant observation started before any of the interviews had taken place. The selection of MERLIN depended on a combination of my interest in observing an organisation receiving funds from the European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), and their availability to host me both in their country office and in a field office. Other NGOs had been contacted, but they were not willing or able to accommodate guest researchers. As

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[11] MERLIN does not exist as an independent organizations anymore (see below). As an organization it has not been studied sufficiently (for an exception, see Dijkzeul and Lynch 2006), which is an indication of the importance and the relative lack of attention to the meso-level of organizations in Development, Humanitarian and Area Studies.

for the rationale of focusing on ECHO-funded agencies, this lay mainly in the fact that the European Commission, with its humanitarian (ECHO) and development (EuropeAid) arms, had itself coined the acronym LRRD, standing for *Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development* (see Chapter 3). As all ECHO-funded NGOs were required to include a paragraph on LRRD in their funding proposals, I expected personnel in these NGOs to be, at least to a certain extent, familiar with the topic, and therefore able to provide fruitful insights. In addition, having myself served as trainee within ECHO for five months in 2010-2011, I was already accustomed with their rules and procedures, and I was also able to use the network of former colleagues to reach out to NGOs working in Ethiopia.

Participant observation in Ethiopia lasted two months in total, with the first month (February 2012) spent in the country office in Addis Ababa, and the second (March 2012) in the Borana zone field office. In both settings, I was given office space, attended staff meetings, and supported the NGO work by performing clerical activities such as data entry or proofreading reports. I had access to project documents and proposals, and could informally discuss the activities with staff.[12] I was officially introduced to the staff as a doctoral student, and all the employees were aware that I was carrying out my own research. My previous experiences and training as an aid worker meant that the "participation" aspect – in terms of sharing a (sub)culture – was no less relevant than the "observation". During participant observation I took field notes which, coupled with organisational documents and information gathered through interviews, allowed me to build a better understanding of the specific context in which the response to the 2011 food crisis in Ethiopia was taking place, and provided me with empirical evidence of how work was organised, and what were the priorities of that organisation at country and field level.

2.4.3.2 Interviews
Whereas participant observation allowed a better understanding of the context, and in particular of regulative and normative aspects of LRD in Ethiopia, additional semi-structured interviews provided more insights on cultural-cognitive elements.

Overall, I interviewed thirty-one informants working for fifteen different organisations that had responded to the 2011 drought-related food crisis in Ethiopia, including staff-

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[12] Towards the end of my participant observation, I also formally interviewed five MERLIN staff members.

members of MERLIN. [13] The informants were mostly NGOs workers, but also representatives of the European Commission (both the humanitarian and the development branch), as well as staff of different agencies of the United Nations (UN).

The first set of informants, interviewed between February and April 2012, had been identified among NGOs that received funding from ECHO for the response to the drought-related food crisis of mid-2011, for the same reasons listed above. Some of the people contacted never reacted to my interview requests. Five of the interviewees were employees of the NGO where I was carrying out participant observation. In addition, in November 2012, I was able to interview two people of the same organisation, who were overseeing activities in Ethiopia (and elsewhere) from the NGO headquarters in London. A second set of interviews was held in April-May 2013 in Addis Ababa, with the aim of understanding whether, after the end of most (if not all) strictly humanitarian projects, the supposed transition to development interventions had happened, or was at least underway. Initially, I intended to go back to the same informants to assess what had changed in the past twelve months. However, only one of the persons interviewed in the previous year was still in the country (and she was leaving the post in a few months' time). In two cases, I managed to interview the person who had replaced the previous' year informant, while in a third NGO, I could interview someone holding a different position. In addition, I reached out to other organisations using a snowball technique, getting interviews with some UN agencies' and NGOs' staff that had not been available during the previous periods of fieldwork.

All the interviews were loosely structured, with the main topics covered revolving around relations along the aid chain, with donors and with an organisation's headquarters, as well as with Ethiopian authorities involved in the supervision of aid projects[14]. Particular attention was given to donor requirements as structural factors that may hinder or enable LRD more specifically, but also to possible spaces for exercising agency, such as the degree of autonomy in the proposal development process and in the project implementation phase.

Before starting the interview, the informants were given a brief introduction on the research, and they were asked to sign a consent form in which they agreed to participate in the study, which they all did. In the same form, they had the possibility

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[13] See annex 1 for the full list.

[14] See interview guideline in Annex 2.

of opting out of tape-recording, and they were allowed to choose among three different levels of privacy: 1) Public, meaning that any quote would list the full name and organisation of the interviewee; 2) semi-anonymous, with name of the informant and organisation hidden / changed, but some background information revealed;[15] 3) completely anonymous. Upon request, informants could receive a copy of their transcript, and they were allowed to add further comments and clarifications.[16]

2.4.3.3 Literature Search

Where possible, I also collected and studied the internal documents of the organizations involved in this study. The documents ranged from project proposals to policy and strategy papers, as well as flyers and webpages. This grey literature contributed to my other data-collection techniques and helped cross-check the other data that I had collected.

Needless to say, I also carried out a literature study of the academic literature relevant to the topics covered in this dissertation.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the theoretical underpinnings and methods adopted for this research. In the absence of a mainstream worldview for either African or Development studies, critical realism has provided the ontological and epistemological foundations for this study. The assumption of a stratified, complex reality works well in a context in which empirical, observable phenomena and discourses are both relevant and connected with one another.

Furthermore, Archer's morphogenetic approach to structure and agency satisfactorily balances the need of recognising the impact of structures with the recognition that individuals – and organisations, for that matter – are ultimately in charge of their actions and even capable to modify existing constraints.

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[15] There are cases in which data such as role, gender and nationality, and the date and place of the interview, can be sufficient to unequivocally identify the informant. This could happen, for instance, if one is the only expatriate working as nutritionist in a given zone/period, or the sole female country director.

[16] The template of the consent form is reproduced in Annex 3.

Building on critical realist foundations, I have described how I intend to use neo-institutional theory as the framework with which to analyse the interplay of institutional forces in the creation of opportunities for linking humanitarian and development actions. Using Scott's (2008b) distinction of three key pillars – regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive – I have outlined the operationalisation of this study, which will constitute the key backbone of chapter 6.

Finally, in the last part of this chapter, I have presented the rationale for the choice of Ethiopia as a case study for this research, and detailed the methods adopted for data collection. Before presenting and discussing my empirical data (chapters 5-6), in the next two chapters I will provide an extended background of the evolution of humanitarian and development action and of the discourses of bridging the gap (chapter 3) and of the broader context of the Ethiopian food crises (chapter 4).

Chapter 3. Discourses of humanitarianism and development

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, humanitarian and development action constitute two different modes of providing assistance to the needy, the former more focused on alleviating suffering, the latter geared towards improving living standards. Whereas both refer to broader ideals of solidarity, they differ in their overall aims, guiding principles, and in many cases also in the modalities of intervention. Yet there are also areas of overlapping, and there is a rather lively debate on whether they should converge (bridging the gap) or diverge.

After outlining the historical evolution of each "type" of action, I will summarise the main differences and similarities between the two in contemporary practice. Subsequently, I will present an alternative strand of discourses, which challenge the institutional setup that sees humanitarian and development efforts as separate and somehow juxtaposed. The debate on "bridging the gap" has been going on for at least two decades, with different approaches and concepts being introduced over the years. Yet, and despite having been formally incorporated into policy guidelines, it these alternative discourses have not really been able to affect the polarised aid architecture.

3.1 The evolution of humanitarianism

Although acts of solidarity have been reported during all of human history, international arrangements to provide relief to the suffering – the essence of the current understanding of "humanitarian" – only date back to a couple of centuries ago. In this section, I will provide a brief historical outline of the genesis and evolution of humanitarian discourses. Barnett (2011) distinguishes among three "ages" of humanitarianism: the age of "Imperial Humanitarianism" from the XIX century to the end of the Second World War; the age "Neo-Humanitarianism" during the Cold War; and the age of "Liberal Humanitarianism", from the Cold War to the present day. Roughly same periodisation is adopted by Walker and Maxwell (2009). The shift from one period to the other does not imply total rupture and, conversely, changes took place also within each period. Indeed, authors such as Davey, Borton and Foley (2013) identify the period between the two World Wars as a separate "era", which they call

Wilsonian. Barnett (2011: 82) himself indeed recognises that this phase constituted a period of transition. While recognising the value and merits of both periodisations, in this brief overview of the evolution of humanitarian discourses I will mainly follow Barnett's one.

Put in historical perspective, many elements of the current humanitarian system can be traced back to the past, and in particular to the early postwar period, even though not necessarily in their current shape (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 10). Barnett (2011: 5) also reached the conclusion that features of post-Cold War humanitarianism were "hardly unprecedented" and reflected well known contradictions and dilemmas, such as the debate on politicisation of humanitarian action, or the swinging balance between the arguments of emergency humanitarians and those of the alchemical branch. The evolution of humanitarianism shows that change in the humanitarian world was often the product of moments of self-reflection and debate, often triggered by failures of the humanitarians of the time to respond to major crises – the Holocaust, the secessionist war in Biafra, the Ethiopian famine of the mid-eighties, the Rwandan genocide and refugee crisis, and more recently the tsunami in South-East Asia. Clearly, agency has played a role at every turn, re-shaping structures with minor and major adjustments, which confirms the morphogenetic interaction of structure and agency theorised by Margaret Archer (1995).

3.1.1 From the nineteenth century to the Second World War

The birth of humanitarian action is often traced back to 1859, when Swiss businessman Henri Dunant witnessed great suffering among the injured soldiers after the battle of Solferino, in Italy, and tried to alleviate it. He subsequently advocated for the creation of "societies" in charge of providing relief to the wounded in combat. In October 1863, the "International Committee of the Red Cross" (henceforth ICRC) was established. While certainly a watershed moment, the foundation of the Red Cross is hardly the first event in the history of humanitarianism.

Barnett identifies in the late eighteenth century the moment in which "organised compassion became part of the everyday" (Barnett 2011: 50), as opposed to charitable acts as sporadic acts of benevolence, something that had existed throughout history. He relates this development to the emergence of discourses of "humanity" and of "natural rights", coupled with a positivistic belief in the "human capacity to make a difference" (Barnett 2011: 51-52). Religious sentiments were often part of the combination, and the desire to save people's souls went hand in hand with the efforts

to save their bodies. The anti-slavery movement was possibly the first instance of large-scale humanitarian-motivated advocacy movement, although many activists were driven by reasons other than pure compassion (Barnett 2011:58). In this period, all forms of formal, organised humanitarianism, united by a commitment to help strangers, were as much interested in addressing the causes of suffering as in treating its symptoms. In other words, the earliest manifestations of humanitarianism had a rather alchemical character.

The relationship between humanitarianism and colonialism was not necessarily confrontational; on the contrary, they often referred to the same discourses of civilisation – the "white man's burden" of the British, or the "*mission civilisatrice*" of the French (Barnett 2011: 61-62). The colonial enterprise, while fundamentally motivated by the self-interest of the colonisers, also "served as a laboratory for the techniques of later humanitarian action, including famine relief, the provision of cash assistance to the needy and colonial medicine and health services" (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 6). A notable example was the British empire response to the 1837 Indian famine, which included both the distribution of food aid and the setup of "public works" schemes, not dissimilar from today's "cash-for-work" and "food-for-work" programmes, to ensure that food reached the tables (Walker and Maxwell 2009:18).

Christian evangelical missions represent another grey zone in the relationship between colonial powers and humanitarianism. Colonial powers allowed, and in some instances encouraged, priests to establish missions in colonised lands. Many missionaries shared the view that colonised peoples were backwards, but they also maintained the belief that they were part of one humanity, and that they could achieve progress. Apart from spreading the gospel, missionaries also brought schooling and basic healthcare to the remote provinces of colonial empires, (Barnett 2011: 64-66) *de facto* foreshadowing what many NGOs would do in the second half of the twentieth century.

3.1.1.1 The ICRC and emergency humanitarianism

Even though the ICRC was by no means the first humanitarian organisation, it was remarkably different from those that existed before it. The ICRC encouraged the formation of voluntary committees in each state – the so-called National Societies – which would assist the army medical services in their respective countries. During peace times, these societies would focus on preparatory activities such as the training of volunteers (Walker and Maxwell 2009: 22-23). Apart from that, the ICRC was involved, since the beginning, in the promotion of what would later become International Humanitarian Law (IHL). In its campaign to make warfare more

humane, the ICRC successfully promoted the *Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field* (signed in Geneva in 1864), which established that wounded and sick combatants should receive care (art. 6) and that medical personnel and facilities should be considered neutral (art. 2) and thus inviolable. The 1864 convention also introduced the red cross on a white background (art. 7) as the distinctive symbol that would identify medical staff, hospitals, and ambulances.

More than directly providing relief, the ICRC focused its work around setting up a framework for international relief activities (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013). It is however crucial to recognise that Dunant's success was not merely the product of his actions (*agency*), but that they matched a broader *Zeitgeist* of the period (*structure*). Not only was humanitarianism already in vogue, but national states themselves were open to finding ways to improve war, particularly at a time when their constituencies were concerned about the treatment of conscripted soldiers, who were progressively replacing mercenary troops. Indeed, out of Dunant's proposals, only those that worked in favour of states end up being accepted (Barnett 2011: 79). Furthermore, the ICRC's insistence on international agreements was in line with the increasing relevance of treaties as sources of international law (Akehurst and Malanczuk 1997).

Because the provision of relief during wartime depended on the willingness of national States to allow access to battlefields, the ICRC was always particularly concerned with its relationship with states (Barnett 2011: 80). Had it been seen as too critical of a government, or too friendly with another, the organisation could have jeopardised its capacity to deliver medical care among warring factions. Impartiality was key to fulfilling its mandate – and yet National Red Cross Societies had a necessarily close relationship with their own militaries. Even though forms of humanitarianism, mostly of the "alchemical" type, already existed, the Red Cross represented the birth of a wholly new attitude to relief, which would rapidly become "the official face of international humanitarianism" (Barnett 2011: 76).

3.1.1.2 Humanitarianism and the World Wars

During the First World War, the ICRC and the National Red Cross Societies, alongside a variety of faith-based organisations, strived to provide assistance to a huge number of wounded soldiers and prisoners of war (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 7).

Humanitarianism was not much concerned with civilians yet[17]. A remarkable exception to this tendency was the creation of the Commission for Relief to Belgium, created in 1914 to provide famine relief in occupied Belgium, and headed by Herbert Hoover, who would later go on to become President of the United States. After the end of the war, the organisation was repurposed as the American Relief Administration (ARA), with a mandate to provide relief to Europe and to post-revolutionary Russia.

Between the two wars, the main humanitarian issues were associated with statelessness – above all people who had fled Russia after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 7) – and widespread poverty. The creation of the League of Nation in 1919 prefigured the establishment of an "international community", although the organisation proved to be dramatically ineffective in its mission to maintain peace. Another notable event of the interwar period was the creation of the High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) in 1921, although with a mandate initially confined to the assistance to Russian refugees. However, its competence was on the protection end of the spectrum, rather than on provision of humanitarian assistance in the strictest sense. Its major competence were the negotiation of refugee's rights, and the provision of special travel documents to eligible refugees – the so-called Nansen passport (Barnett 2011: 88-89).

During this period, relief was still mostly provided along identity lines, as noted by Barnett (2011: 82), such as assistance to fellow citizens and allies, or to people sharing a religious or ethnic identity. This practice was openly challenged for the first time by Eglantyne Jebb, the English woman who in 1919 founded the first humanitarian NGO, Save the Children. Jebb notably insisted that relief should be provided to all needy children, including German ones, which were suffering from the consequences of a naval blockade (Barnett 2011: 85-86). Her commitment to impartiality, however, went hand in hand with political engagement: she lobbied against blockades and drafted the *Declaration for the Rights of the Child* (Walker and Maxwell 2009:25). Again, the separation of humanitarianism and politics, or between humanitarianism and human rights, was not yet particularly pronounced as it would become in the following decades.

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[17] At the time, the bulk of humanitarian action was still focused on "man-made emergencies", i.e. those resulting from wars and blockades. Nevertheless, there had also been a few examples of international relief efforts delivered in the wake of natural disasters, such as the earthquakes in San Francisco in 1906, and Kingston and Messina in 1908 (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 6).

Despite claims of universality, humanitarianism was mostly a Western affair, made up by US Americans and Europeans stepping in to assist fellow Europeans. Notions of "civilisation" still permeated the field, and it is not without reason that Barnett refers to this era as "Imperial Humanitarianism". Particularly telling is the ICRC's neglect of the Italian aggression to Ethiopia – an independent state, member of the League of Nations, predominantly Christian (even though orthodox), which even had its own national Red Cross society. Barnett reports that one high-ranking ICRC official had questioned the "civilisation" of Ethiopia and stated that the Ethiopian Red Cross was just a *façade* (Barnett 2011: 92).

Relief operations during the Second World War showed little organisational and conceptual breakthroughs, but humanitarianism would change dramatically after its conclusion. The League of Nations had failed in preventing the war. The Holocaust had happened, and the ICRC policy of discretion showed its limits – even though the organisation technically lacked a mandate for intervening whenever people were oppressed by their own governments (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 9). These failures would trigger much debate within and outside these institutions.

In parallel, however, some changes were already happening on the ground. In 1942 a group of British citizens founded the Oxford Famine Relief Committee (later to become OXFAM), a group campaigning for shipping food aid to German-occupied Greece, where people were starving. Their argument was not dissimilar from Eglantyne Jebb's position concerning German children, and constitutes the essence of the principle of impartiality: relief should be provided to people in need, regardless of any other consideration. After the war, OXFAM would keep the same line, and insist that aid should be provided also to eligible Germans (Barnett 2011: 117).

3.1.2 Humanitarianism during the Cold War

The international system that emerged from the Second World War reflected in many respects the new world order. Europe, the once powerful Old Continent, was in ruins, facing widespread poverty, hunger, and disease. The United States stood as the major international player, challenged only by the Soviet Union. The Allies, who had succeeded in defeating nazi-fascism, established a new intergovernmental body, the Organisation of the United Nations (UN). Other than its constitutive organs, the UN system comprised a number of semi-autonomous agencies, some of which had a humanitarian mandate. Apart from newly established agencies, some pre-existing organisations from the League of Nations were also absorbed in the UN system.

A unique case is that of the United Nations' Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), created established already in 1943 to coordinate aid to liberated areas, and replaced in 1947 by the short-lived International Relief Organisation (IRO), with a mandate to assist refugees in Europe. The IRO subsequently gave way to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Barnett 2011: 110-112), which adopted the same name (plus the "UN" prefix) of the organisation founded under the auspices of the League of Nations.

A number of new agencies were created under the United Nations' umbrella in the years immediately following the war, in order to face the huge needs. Among these, there were the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), with a mandate to rebuild Europe's food production systems; the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), initially intended as a temporary instrument to cater for the needs of children; and, in 1950, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), with a mandate limited to Palestinians displaced after the creation of the state of Israel. It is worth noting that all of these agencies, including the above mentioned UNHCR, are still active today.

In parallel, private charities were also mushrooming, with about 200 NGOs established between 1945 and 1949 alone (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 10). Once the emergency phase in Europe was over, these humanitarian organisations were faced with the choice of disbanding or extending their mandate beyond the provision of immediate relief. Many went for rehabilitation, partly because they believed it was the right thing to do, and partly because there was an increasing amount of money made available by states, and the U.S. Government in particular, specifically for the purpose. These were also the years of the Marshall plan, the unprecedented scheme of loans given by the U.S. to Europe to support reconstruction and allow for import of (American) goods and machinery (Walker and Maxwell 2009: 36). Clearly, governments had motives other than pure compassion for providing assistance – from pursuing foreign policy interests to disposing of agricultural surpluses.[18] Being dependent on public money, humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies alike faced difficulties in maintaining their independence and impartiality (Barnett 2011: 104).

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[18] Indeed, food aid has become the default option of innumerable humanitarian and development assistance projects not because of its efficiency, which was often questionable, but because it served the primary objective of disposing of agricultural surpluses, thus *de facto* subsidising farmers in industrialised countries, most notably in the U.S. (Barrett and Maxwell 2005).

Once European reconstruction was underway, humanitarian attention started to turn towards Asia and Africa, which were facing poverty and other legacies of colonial times. Cold war logics essentially prevented the involvement of Western-based organisations in communist countries (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 10), but the officially "non aligned" – the majority among the newly independent states – remained fair game. In this context, discourses of economic "development" started to flourish, together with interventions aimed at promoting it. It is relevant to note that humanitarianism did not exist in a vacuum, and therefore humanitarians were exposed to, and influenced by, ideas on how to overcome global poverty and inequality (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 10). Furthermore, it is worth restating that humanitarian organisations of the alchemical type were already quite open to the possibility of working to address the causes of suffering, and thus ready to embrace developmental concerns.

3.1.2.1 Humanitarianism and sovereignty: Biafra and beyond

A major turning point for humanitarianism was the war in Biafra. Being an internal conflict between the central government of Nigeria and the secessionist Ibo government, it was technically outside of the sphere of competence of the UN and of the ICRC. The situation was remarkably politicised: on the one hand, the central government had provoked a famine by imposing a blockade against the secessionist province, and it would only consent to relief operations under strict conditions, allegedly to prevent rebels from benefitting of the assistance. On the other hand, the secessionists saw foreign relief as an opportunity for gaining visibility and resources, and tried to lure relief agencies to stand on their side. Both parties acted with little – if any – regard for the plight of the affected population. But once disturbing news of mass starvation in the Biafra province started being broadcasted abroad, the pressure to act increased. Church-based groups were keen to support Biafra because of its Christian identity, whereas the rest of Nigeria was predominantly Muslim. OXFAM was the first major humanitarian player to intervene, *de facto* siding with the rebels, and other NGOs followed suit (Barnett 2011: 134-135).

The ICRC, which had survived the legitimacy crisis due to its silence during the Holocaust and had restated its role by solemnly stating its seven fundamental principles in 1965, kept trying to negotiate with the government to be allowed access to Biafra, with no success. In August 1968, in a rather surprising move, the organisation decided to launch relief operations without the government's consent. The government reacted by attacking an ICRC-run refugee camp and, some months afterwards, by shooting down an ICRC aircraft which was transporting relief supplies. The ICRC

eventually stopped all its operations in Biafra until an agreement with the Nigerian government was reached (Barnett 2011: 135-137). Meanwhile, NGOs kept running their humanitarian interventions, even though their assistance ended up supporting the secessionist government, to the detriment of the civilian population (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 10). UN agencies, instead, mostly distanced themselves to what was perceived as an internal issue of a sovereign state; with the exception of UNICEF that decided to provide relief to Biafra. Instead for asking permissions to the Nigerian government, which might have refused to allow the activities, UNICEF cleverly turned the vague wording of some government's declarations of concern for Biafra into justifications for their uninvited intervention (Barnett 2011: 142).

All the things that had gone wrong in Biafra sparked a rethinking of humanitarian action. A first strand of criticism was directed towards the inadequacy of a humanitarian system that did not have appropriate means to intervene in an internal conflict. With the exception of UNICEF, the UN had used legal arguments to steer clear of any involvement with the Biafra crisis (Barnett 2011: 137). The vacuum would only be filled in about one decade later, in 1977, with the signature of an additional protocol to the 1949 Geneva conventions dealing with the protection of civilians and former combatants in internal conflicts.

A second, and related, issue arising from the Biafra war was related to the principle of neutrality. When suffering is caused by human decisions, or when parties to the conflict obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance, should humanitarians remain silent, or should they speak up? The official position of the ICRC was to maintain confidentiality, so as to be perceived as neutral. A number of NGOs, such as OXFAM, had instead clearly and publicly taken the side of the Ibo rebels, perceived to be defending the Biafran people (Barnett 2011: 134-135). Later on, it would be widely recognised that the presence of humanitarian actors gave legitimacy to the rebels, and that relief goods themselves were being manipulated for political reasons, to the point that it is now recognised that humanitarian assistance had prolonged the war itself (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 10).

As a reaction to the ICRC policy of discretion, a group of French doctors returning from Biafra, led by Bernard Kouchner, broke the vow of silence and started publicly expressing their outrage for the acts of the Nigerian government. In 1971, as a direct result of their dissatisfaction with the ICRC way of conducting humanitarian operations, these doctors would eventually establish a new humanitarian NGO, Médecins Sans Frontières (henceforth MSF). What made MSF unique compared to

other humanitarian organisations, was that it combined adherence to the humanitarian principles as defined by the Red Cross with a commitment to speaking out about injustice – the so-called principle of *témoignage*, or *witnessing* (Barnett 2011: 143-146). In other words, MSF humanitarianism was born as a humanitarian organisation with an openly political mission, as long as it judged that it could help to address the needs of people suffering in a humanitarian crisis.

As De Waal (1997: 77) notes, another effect of the crisis in Biafra was to consolidate the role of NGOs. Despite all the ethic issues that the humanitarian intervention had raised – above all, that aid does sometime harm its intended beneficiaries, in this case by prolonging conflict – it was also the first time NGOs had entirely managed an operation of that magnitude, boosting their self-confidence. Many of the NGOs that had worked in Biafra subsequently moved to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), first to respond to the 1970 cyclone, and later on to provide relief during the 1971-1972 secessionist war. Since then, humanitarian NGOs have never stopped moving from a disaster stricken location to the next.

Politics kept interfering with humanitarianism all along, and NGOs were often pretty close to their home governments foreign policy lines (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 11). Nevertheless, there were instances in which humanitarians were able to challenge the Cold War dynamics, such as when OXFAM led a coalition of NGOs to carry relief within Cambodia, despite the vehement opposition of the US, because the country was *de facto* under Vietnamese control. However, the amount of aid that the NGOs were able to channel to Cambodia was minimal if compared to the assistance received by Cambodian refugees in Thailand, assisted among others by the UN and the ICRC with US funding. This, despite the fact that the camps were controlled by the Khmer Rouge, the former rulers of Cambodia that had caused a famine in the country (Walker and Maxwell 2009: 50-51).

3.1.2.2 African food crises and the growth of the humanitarian system
Another major turn in humanitarianism followed the so-called African food crises in the 1970s-1980s. By 1972, following a few years of drought, countries along the Sahel – in particular Mali, Niger, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and Chad – were facing famine[19] (Walker and Maxwell 2009: 51-53). A couple of years later, northern Ethiopia

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[19] It is worth remarking that at the time there was no agreed upon definition of famine (Walker and Maxwell 2009: 52), thus the label might have been used in situations that by today's standards may or may not qualify as famines.

also found itself in the grip of famine (see chapter 4 below). Amartya Sen would later frame these crises as problems in *access to food* for everyone, that is, as fundamentally political issues, rather than of an outright food shortage. Nevertheless, the latter was the dominant view at the time and as a result, the crises were addressed from a merely technical point of view. Apart from NGOs, on this occasion the response was dominated by United Nations' agencies, namely the FAO and by the World Food Programme (WFP). The latter had been founded in 1961 to effectively dispose of agricultural surplus in industrialised nations (most notably the USA), and its role had been since then limited to development, not humanitarian initiatives (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 61-62). This first attempt at humanitarian response to slow-onset crises has been judged as uncoordinated and amateurish (Walker and Maxwell 2009: 52), shortcomings that still haunt humanitarian activity today.

The African food crises impacted humanitarianism on many level. First of all, they prompted a depoliticised, technocratic understanding of slow-onset crises and of "natural" disasters more in general, only later to be challenged by Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen (1990), among others. Secondly, the realisation that these crises had been a long time in the making led to the development of famine early warning systems. Again, politics were taken out of the equation, and attention focused hard data such as rainfall patterns. Moreover, it has been argued that data collection was more strongly geared to the needs of the international aid community than to local governments (Walker and Maxwell 2009: 55). The fact that humanitarians were starting to think about preventing crisis, instead of arriving once the situation has turned into an emergency, was also a sign that alchemical thinking was still present.

Finally, and on a slightly different note, these crises – which reached the Western public just a few years after the pictures of starving Biafran children – contributed to the consolidation of the image of Africa as the *locus* of hunger, which still permeates mainstream representations of the continent. This despite the fact that mass starvation had also occurred elsewhere. The largest famine ever recorded, claiming the lives of an estimated 15 to 30 million people, had actually happened in China, as a result of Mao Tse-Tung's "Great Leap Forward", even though its occurrence remained a well-kept secret for decades (De Waal 1997:18).

The Ethiopian famine of the mid-eighties demonstrated in the worst possible way the shortcomings of early warning systems, barely a decade after these systems were put in place following the 1972-74 famine. It is questionable whether an early warning system based on rainfall patterns could have ever predicted the crisis, as the causes of the

famine were political rather than ecological (see chapter 4 below). However, a widespread drought did indeed happen in 1984, resulting in an even worsening situation in Tigray, and in famine reaching other parts of the country (De Waal 1997). Leaving aside what could have (and what could have not) been predicted in advance, by 1983 there was sufficient evidence of localised starvation, "in the form of destitute migrants [from Tigray] turning up at feeding centres" (De Waal 1997: 114).

Humanitarian response, however, was very late. The reluctancy of Western donors to send aid to a country that had recently shifted alliances and sided with the USSR played a role in the delay (Barnett 2011: 155). However, there were NGOs already operating in the country, and their late response to the emergency remains puzzling. Tony Vaux (2001) attributes the delay to the prevalence of *developmentalist* discourses over humanitarian ones. As he effectively points out, at that time "[t]o belong to the 'teach a man to fish' school carried much greater status than to belong to the 'give a man a fish school'" (Vaux 2001: 46). He even recalls that in 1984, when the famine was already ravaging northern Ethiopia, OXFAM board of trustees recommended to avoid relief activities and focus on development instead (Vaux 2001: 46). While this attitude may not have been present in all NGOs, it has probably contributed to the initial disregard for humanitarian activities aimed at saving lives.

The situation suddenly changed once the BBC aired a reportage presenting the Ethiopian famine in biblical terms. Pop stars also contributed to the visibility of the crisis, by organising unprecedented fundraising efforts, and particularly the famous *Band Aid* and *Live Aid* initiatives. In the following months, money – including from private donors – started pouring in, and Ethiopia was invaded by all sorts of organisations providing relief, more than in any previous emergency. Some of these were proper NGOs, other were groups of volunteers with little or no humanitarian experience, which contributed to the disorganisation and duplication of efforts (Barnett 2011: 156). Adding to that the government, who had played a role in causing the famine, wanted to manipulate aid for their own purposes, namely to break the insurgencies by relocating populations to other areas of the country. Only MSF dared to speak out against the practice, which led to its ban from the country in December 1985 (Barrett 2011: 156-157).

On their side, insurgent militias in Tigray also benefitted from relief being channeled through their charitable arm, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST). By distributing food aid provided through covert cross-border operations, they undoubtedly increased their legitimacy in the eyes of the population (De Waal 1997). Crucially, notes again De Waal

(1997: 130), "these political dynamics were not made explicit to the donors. On the contrary, an elaborated charade was played whereby the superficial requirements of neutral humanitarianism and NGO-ism were established to protect the operation from the perils of publicity". Once again, humanitarianism and political action could not be easily disentangled.

3.1.3 Liberal humanitarianism

For many Third World countries, the end of the Cold War meant the termination of the financial and military aid they had received for decades in exchange for loyalty to either of the superpowers. These resources had been crucial to maintaining internal stability through clientelistic practices; once the money was gone, it became more difficult for states to provide basic services and to contain the rise of paramilitary organisations (Barrett 2011: 161-162). The early 1990s saw a rapid increase in internal conflicts, particularly in Africa, Easter Europe, and in Near and Central Asia (Duffield 1994). It was immediately apparent that these conflicts were different from the past. Rather than ideologically motivated insurgents wanting to replace the government, there were paramilitary militia thriving in the absence of a state. The UN Security Council, whose prerogatives had been long limited by the exercise of veto powers, suddenly became a privileged forum for discussing intervention in what were now labeled "complex humanitarian emergencies". Humanitarian arguments began to be used to justify not only life-saving relief measures, but also efforts at peace-keeping and peace-building (Barnett 2011).

With humanitarian emergencies becoming more frequent, more disruptive, and more visible to Western audiences, humanitarian funding sharply increased, at the expense of development budgets (Duffield 1997; Carbonnier 2013). In 1992, the UN created a Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) mainly to deal with issues of coordination arising from the increase in humanitarian activities. Similarly, the European Community also established its own Humanitarian Office (ECHO); and other donors institutionalised some form of emergency response capacity (Duffield 1997: 42).

3.1.3.1 Complex humanitarian emergencies

Somalia was one of the first *complex humanitarian emergencies* of the early nineties, proving to be a major challenge for the international community, and it still remains the epitome of the *failed state*. In the previous decades, the country had been ruled by Siad Barre. Barre used the aid money coming from the USA to maintain his grip on power, rewarding his clientele, and played the country's different clans one against the

other (Duffield 1997). Once Barre had been ousted in 1991, Somalia fell into the hands of warring factions. Apart from militiamen looting food stocks, the conflict caused displacement and the paralysis of productive activities, which resulted in limited food availability and starvation in what used to be Somalia's granaries (Duffield 1997: 162-164). The ICRC, working in partnership with the Somali Red Crescent Society, mounted an unprecedented relief operation by feeding an estimated two million people. However, it had for the first time in its history to accept the presence of armed guards, and tolerated high rates of food aid diversion on the grounds "that 'flooding the country with food' would bring down the price and thus reduce the famine" (Duffield 1997: 170). MSF and other NGOs also had to hire armed personnel to protect food supplies (Barnett 2011: 173).

The UN, which had withdrawn its entire staff for security reasons in late 1990, only resumed operations in 1992, through a food aid operation run by the WFP in partnership with the NGO CARE. The program however was remarkable more for the length of time supplies remained stuck in the warehouses, rather than for its impact on the hungry populations (Duffield 1997). At the political level, the UN Security Council established a peacekeeping mission with the double aim of monitoring a ceasefire reached in April 1992, and of providing protection to UN humanitarian operations. As the security situation remained precarious and there were reports of massive relief diversion, the UN accepted a US-led task force to protect humanitarian activities, followed by an enhanced UN peacekeeping operation. However, the international forces did not remain neutral, but engaged in combat activities (Duffield 1997). The international involvement in Somalia would eventually come to an end in 1995, leaving the country at the mercy of warlords.

Meanwhile, and for the first time since the Second World War, war was back to Europe. The first conflict erupted in 1991 between Croatia – which had declared independence in 1991 together with Slovenia – and the Serbian-dominated Yugoslavian federation. Many ethnic Serbs who used to live in Croatia fled, receiving assistance from UNHCR. In the following year, Bosnia-Herzegovina also split from Yugoslavia. Bosnia-Herzegovina's own Serb community fought back and attempted an ethnic cleansing, which resulted in the displacement of millions of Bosnians. UN peacekeeping forces sent to the region were given the objective of enabling and protecting the delivery of relief supplies, which were being targeted by the Serbs. The UNHCR – which for the first time was assisting people who had not yet crossed an international border – was appointed as the lead agency, coordinating other UN agencies and scores of international NGOs. Humanitarian assistance allowed the

international community to claim they were involved in the Bosnia, without actually taking any step to bring the conflict to an end (Barnett 2011: 174-179).

In 1994, another major crisis shook the foundations of the humanitarian world: the Rwandan genocide. Tensions had been escalating, and immediately following the assassination of the country's President, the ethnic *Hutu* majority turned against the *tutsi* minority (and moderate *Hutus* as well), killing an estimated 800,000 people within a few months. Despite a longstanding presence in the country, which included a UN peacekeeping mission, the international community remarkably failed at both anticipating the genocide and at providing an adequate humanitarian response. What is even more remarkable is that when NGOs and UN agencies eventually intervened, they did so in support of those who had left the country after the genocide was over. These fugitives were mostly *Hutus* abandoning Rwanda for fear of retaliation after *Tutsi* militias eventually gained control of the country, and included the very perpetrators of the genocide (De Waal 1997; Barnett 2011).

De Waal (1997: 195) notes that among the over one million people who fled, only a few fit the legal definition of *refugee.* The mass exodus itself had been orchestrated by the *génocidaires,* who then were able to control the camps and the international assistance that soon poured in. The Western public was shocked by the genocide and responded with the expectation that humanitarians "do something", while misleading media and NGO reports had supported the belief that these "refugees" were genocide survivors. Yet, despite the fact that the situation was a blatant violation of the principle of neutrality, the pressure to be on the ground was such that only a few organisations, among which there was MSF, came to the decision of shutting down operations (De Waal 1997; Barnett 2011).

As if the militarisation of camps and diversion of aid was not enough to call the relief operation a failure, international aid agencies were not able to respond to a cholera epidemic that ultimately claimed lives of about 12,000 refugees within the course of three weeks, in July 1994. It would later be established that the fatality rate in some of the camps was much higher than in the facilities managed by local authorities in the nearby town of Goma, due to the fact that some of the aid organisations lacked the professional skills to tackle the disease (Siddique, et al. 1995). Indeed, of about one hundred NGOs operational in Goma at the peak of the emergency, a significant number had never previously worked in Africa, lacked relevant experience in crisis response, or both. Furthermore, with so many actors on the ground, duplication of efforts does not strike as unexpected (Borton et al. 1996).

3.1.3.2 Humanitarianism after Rwanda

The failures in Rwanda and subsequently in the Rwandan refugee camps in then Zaire led to reflection and self-criticism within the humanitarian community, so acute that Barnett (2011: 212) points out that there is a "before Rwanda" and an "after Rwanda". With the backing of the Danish international cooperation agency, DANIDA, an independent and comprehensive joint evaluation of the humanitarian response in Rwanda was carried out. The findings confirmed that whilst some organisations had performed well, others had been so "unprofessional and irresponsible" that they may "have contributed to an unnecessary loss of life" (Borton et al. 1996: 161). In other words, there was indication that humanitarian action had not just failed at its primary mission of saving lives, but that it had actually caused more suffering that it would have been the case otherwise. Reflecting on unintended consequences of aid, influential scholar Mary B. Anderson would later suggest humanitarians to abide by the same principle that binds medical action: "do no harm" (Anderson 1999).

The reaction of the humanitarian world to the public shame of such strong condemnation was, indeed quite commendably, to undertake reforms aimed at raising the bar (Barnett 2011). The most notable outcome of this climate was the SPHERE project, aimed at improving the quality of assistance by setting some minimum standards, to be used particularly in a refugee camp setting. Sphere also contained a "Humanitarian Charter" which even affirmed a "right to humanitarian assistance" (Barnett 2011). Even if it did fit into a broader movement towards improving humanitarian effectiveness, SPHERE was quite a unique product of a very specific moment (Buchanan-Smith 2003). In the years immediately before Rwanda, humanitarians had agreed on a Code of Conduct, launched advocacy networks such as VOICE, and even established a joint master's degree in Humanitarian Action (NOHA). Even more initiatives aimed at an increasing professionalisation, efficiency, and accountability would follow, including for instance the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP). In this respect, Rwanda "directly and fundamentally shaped the conduct of humanitarian practitioners today" (Davey, Borton and Foley 2013: 14).

Despite its merits, the move towards increasing professionalisation of humanitarian action – a path already followed in international development – also implied depoliticisation. If what matters are such things as the litres of drinking water per person or the appropriate configuration and location of latrines, independence and neutrality seem to be of less use than a degree in engineering. Furthermore, by shifting the focus on material output, it actually became obvious that organisations other than

humanitarian ones, most notably the military, were well placed to deliver items from A to B. Armed forces had indeed a long history of involvement in the response to natural disasters at home and abroad (Walker 1992), but it can be argued that in such cases the ethical implication of the lack of neutrality and independence were less pronounced. More recently, military personnel had been deployed to protect humanitarian convoys, such as in Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The relationship between humanitarians and armed forces was only to become more blurred with the NATO intervention in Kosovo.

Kosovo, once part of Yugoslavia, had voted for independence in 1991, roughly at the same time when other republics had split from the federation. As opposed to Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where conflict erupted immediately following the declaration of independence, the situation in the region remained relatively calm for a few years. Tensions mounted in 1996 between the Kosovo Liberation Army and the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which led to civilian deaths and mass displacement of Albanian Kosovar people. In 1998, the UN Security Council passed resolutions aimed at promoting a peaceful settlement of the dispute, but it could not approve the use of force because of Russia's veto. Given the situation, and anxious to find a new role for NATO in the post-Cold War environment, Western countries launched the first ever "humanitarian war": air strikes against Serbia to avoid another ethnic cleansing (Barrett 2011). Yet, ethnic cleansing of Albanian Kosovars was precisely what followed the NATO intervention, although the relation of causality has been questioned. A refugee crisis ensued, and although the needs were not as dire as in other parts of the world, the plight of Albanian Kosovars received disproportionately high attention and funding (Rieff 2000).

In another unprecedented move, NATO took over from UNHCR the task of coordinating humanitarian response. NATO entrusted camp management to different national contingents, which then subcontracted part of the relief work to NGOs – often selected on the basis of nationality rather than technical expertise – and UN agencies. Surprisingly, the intrusion of armed forces in the domain of humanitarian action was received fairly well by most humanitarian organisations. Many NGOs openly supported the intervention, and benefited from a considerable amount of funds, while dissenting voices – among which there was, once again, MSF – remained a minority (Barnett 2011; Rieff 2000).

Shortly after Kosovo, the idea that the international community had the right to intervene to prevent crises or provide relief even against the will of the sovereign state evolved in the concept of a "responsibility to protect". This concept, first formulated in 2001, maintains that states are primarily responsible for keeping their citizens safe from humanitarian catastrophes, and that in case they fail to do so, the international community is not just entitled, but *required* to step in. Eventually, the idea of a responsibility to protect would be adopted by the UN at the 2005 World Summit. However, it has been noted (Stahn 2007) that whereas there is substantial consensus on the fact that states should be considered responsible for protecting their citizens, the exact obligations of the international community are more vague and remained questionable.

Some of the most recent instances of humanitarians and foreign military forces touching elbows have taken places during what is known as the "War on Terror" that followed the 11 September 2001 terror attacks in the US. The boundaries among military forces, humanitarian actors, and the broader international community, have become increasingly blurred. Governments involved in the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and mainly the US, have been trying to "win hearts and minds" by embedding humanitarian assistance and development cooperation in their military operations. This has taken place both by having military forces deliver relief items, and by subcontracting relief, reconstruction and development projects to NGOs (among other types of implementers). In particular, it is to be noted that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a government agency and major humanitarian and development donor, sits in the so-called "Provincial Reconstruction Teams" established in Iraq and Afghanistan with the main aim of stabilising the countries. Many NGOs, including some mostly development NGOs, have expressed unease at the prospect of being funded by governments involved in combat operations. Furthermore, it has been argued (Barnett 2011; Carbonnier 2013) that the confusion generated by the coexistence of foreign troops occasionally involved in humanitarian-like activities and "truly" humanitarian organisations might increase the risks for the latter to be targeted by enemies of the former.

3.1.3.3 The Indian Ocean Tsunami and Humanitarian Reform

Compared to the humanitarian involvement in conflict situations, the response to natural disasters is usually less controversial. In December 2004, an earthquake triggered a series of tsunamis in the Indian ocean – which remain, to date, the most destructive ever recorded. Even though it is possible to conceive early warning systems tailored for the risk of tsunamis (there is one in the Pacific Ocean), no such a system

existed in the affected area. Within hours, the waters claimed the lives of about 230,000 people across 14 countries. Although media attention focused on the fate of Western tourists in the area (of which some two thousand perished in the disaster), the overwhelming majority of the victims were citizens of the affected countries. As a matter of fact, the disaster disproportionately affected vulnerable groups, with the highest mortality rates among elderly people, children, and women (Telford et al. 2006). As it is usually the case in sudden-onset disasters, in the hours and days that immediately followed the catastrophe, local communities carried out most *search and rescue* operations and provided assistance to the survivors. Shortly thereafter, national institutions – including the military – joined in, followed by foreign humanitarian organisations.[20]

The sheer magnitude of the disaster, the extensive coverage provided by news outlets, as well as the fact that some of the countries were tourist hotspots the Western public could easily relate to, led to a massive outpour of private and public donations matching or even exceeding assessed needs for both relief and recovery (Telford et al. 2006; Brown and Minty 2006; Brauman 2006). In a move that generated some controversy, less than ten days after the disaster MSF announced that they had already raised the necessary funds for the operation, and advised their supporters to revert their donations to underfunded crises. Most of the other humanitarian organisations, however, kept raising funds for the tsunami response (Telford et al. 2006; Brauman 2006).

With funding so readily available and public pressure to intervene, hundreds of humanitarian organisations descended upon the affected countries, in what has been referred to as a"second tsunami" (Brochard 2006, quoted in Telford et al. 2006: 38). Apart from UN agencies and established NGOs, there were also newly-founded charitable groups, and even individual philanthropists. Given the diversity in size, organisational mission, and capacities of the relief agencies, the effectiveness of the response also varied considerably. Overall, the extent of damage and needs was poorly collected, with spotty geographical coverage, duplication of efforts, and a general attitude towards prioritising each agency's own sectoral mandate. In terms of actual response, the most accessible communities got a larger share of the assistance compared to those lying farther afield, regardless of the extent of needs. Nevertheless,

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[20]Understandably, organisations with a presence in the affected countries or in the region were able to deploy their staff faster (Telford et al., 2006).

the humanitarian response was also praised for being fast and effective, even though there were instances of inappropriate aid,[21] duplication of efforts, and poor targeting.

The size of the humanitarian operation triggered, as it had happened in the past, a phase of reflection on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the response. For the first time since Rwanda, a comprehensive joint assessment of the humanitarian response to the tsunami was undertaken, under the leadership of a group of donors, UN agencies, NGOs and research institutes that formed the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) (Telford et al. 2006). Furthermore, the tsunami response was one of the case studies used in the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review (Adinolfi et al. 2005), which would inform the process known as the Humanitarian Reform. This reform had two main related components: the streamlining of funding processes and the improvement of coordination. To address the former point, the UN established an international pooled fund – known as the Central Emergency Response Fund or CERF – to quickly disburse grants for emergency response, as well as pooled funds, also called humanitarian response funds, at the country level. As for the latter, an entire new mechanism for humanitarian coordination was established, known as the "cluster approach". Clusters are sort of pre-arranged working groups to be activated in the aftermath of an emergency to facilitate coordination and improve effectiveness. Clusters are of three different types: thematic (Emergency Shelter, Health, Nutrition, WASH, Education, and Agriculture); cross-cutting (Early Recovery, Camp Coordination/Management, and Protection); and common services (Emergency Telecommunications and Logistics). The lead agencies for each cluster are defined in advance, and they are almost always UN organisations, except for the Education Cluster, which falls under the joint responsibility of UNICEF and Save the Children (Stoddard et al. 2007). Although the cluster system is mostly a UN-led effort, NGOs are expected to participate as well. The system emerged from the 2005 humanitarian reform has, by and large, remained until the present day.

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[21] A wide range of items can be considered inappropriate for distribution in the context of an emergency response, but also during development interventions, because they do not match local needs and put an unnecessary strain on logistical capacities. Examples of inappropriate aid include, for instance: drugs that have expired, have information leaflets in foreign languages, or are not necessary given the epidemiological situation; clothes that are culturally inappropriate or that are not suitable for the local climate; food items that are past their "best before" date, that violate religious prescriptions, or that are not part of the local diet.

3.2 The evolution of development action

The history of development action is inevitably linked to that of humanitarian action. As stated, this is first and foremost because the two types of action are often intertwined in practice, and refer to broader concepts of philanthropy and solidarity. In addition, many development organisations have a dual mandate (humanitarian and developmental) or, as Barnett (2011) puts it, are "alchemical humanitarians". A number of organisations, the most notable of which are UNICEF, Save the Children and Oxfam, were founded to provide emergency relief, but have expanded their mandate to include also development activities. Having already presented the historical evolution of humanitarian action, in this section I will focus on the aspects and events that have shaped development assistance more specifically.

In this section I give an account of the evolution of development thinking that is clear without merely providing a chronology of events. As Ellis and Biggs note, "development ideas are not trapped in time capsules conveniently organised in decades. Ideas that first appear in one decade often gain strength in the following decade" (Ellis and Biggs 2001: 438). Therefore, I have avoided giving an account by decade, and preferred to distinguish four main, partly overlapping periods: i) the origins of development, encompassing the years since the late colonial period through the Bretton Woods conference to the Marshall Plan; ii) development and decolonisation, starting with the birth of the Third World to the mid-1970s; iii) the debt crisis and Structural Adjustment Programmes, which looks at the policies of multilateral lending between the late 1970s and 1980s; and iv) Development after the Cold War, examining the period from the fall of the Soviet Union till the current day.

3.2.1 The origins of development

Development action, compared to humanitarian relief, is a relatively recent product of international relations, as it was established only after World War II. The use of the word "development" to indicate the funding of initiatives to improve the economy of overseas territories can be traced back at least to the 1929 British Colonial Development Act (Morgan 1964). In that setting, however, "development" of the colonies was intended to have positive repercussions on the empire. The main change that took place with decolonisation was that what once was a matter of internal affairs (of the empire) became international politics (Finnemore 1997: 205-206). At that time, the main idea behind the concept of development was that there is one linear path that leads countries to towards modernisation, which was *de facto* equated to

industrialisation. In his classic work on economic development, Rostow (1960) identified five "stages" of growth, that all industrialised countries had experienced. In this perspective, "underdeveloped" countries were simply behind schedule, but they could and should copy measures from already industrialised countries to catch up.

The primary indicator of industrialisation – and, by extension, of development – was economic growth, measured in terms of Gross National Product (GNP) or GNP per capita. The main reason why some countries were not yet industrialised, it was argued, was a scarcity of capital accumulation, which in turn implied low investments levels. Following this diagnosis, the cure was to inject external resources into economies lacking internal savings, in order to boost investments and then growth. Development projects, then, were mostly "large infrastructural projects, such as dams or highways, designed to have large secondary industrialisation-promotion effects" (Finnemore 1997: 207). Macroeconomic performance was the main objective of development action, whereas poverty alleviation was regarded as "a happy byproduct of expanded production and efficient industrialization" (Finnemore 1997: 205).

The 1944 Bretton Wood Agreements, which led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, now part of the World Bank Group), are believed by some scholars (Moyo 2010; Helleiner 2006) to have marked the birth of international development. There is some controversy on this respect, because as Finnemore (1997: 206) notes, "development was not a major concern at the Bretton Woods conference". Indeed, the Bretton Woods agreements focused on establishing a new monetary policy, and on promoting European reconstruction. However, as Helleiner (2006) demonstrated, there is evidence that during the negotiations "developmentalists" concerns were discussed. This is for instance demonstrated by the fact that Latin American delegates objected to the priority given to European reconstruction, arguing that their development was also worth funding (Helleiner 2006). Furthermore, she argues that the international system created at Bretton Woods was modelled on existing policies adopted by the US towards Latin America since the 1930s.

In any case, "development received little international attention in the years immediately following the war" (Finnemore 1997: 206). It is possibly for this reason that other scholars (Sachs 1992) post-date the birth of development to US President Truman's inaugural speech in 1949. In that occasion, Truman announced a "bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas" (Truman 1949).

Despite referring to the "primitive" economic lives led by people in those countries, a concept reminiscent of colonial narrative, Truman stated that his programme would not be aimed at increasing profits at home, but to improve living standards abroad through increased production, fostering "prosperity and peace" (*ibidem*).

These themes resonated with those of the Marshall Plan, launched during Truman's first term as a President. The Marshall Plan – as the European Recovery Program is most commonly referred to – was a major funding instrument intended to support Western European post-war recovery while at the same time preventing the expansion of Communism. Between 1948 and 1952, the US disbursed over 13 billion US dollars, most of which constituted by grants (Wood 1986: 29). Apart from the (disputed) impact on European recovery, it is believed that the Marshall plan has contributed to the constitution of the world order during the Cold War, and given legitimacy to the idea of the usefulness of concessional external financing (Wood 1986: 31), institutionalising aid practices. In this sense the Marshall plan can be considered the prototype of (bilateral) development cooperation (Wood 1986, Finnemore 1997). Thus, development action was born as an interstate (often bilateral) resource flow, intended to help states – not people – in their industrialisation processes, and strongly influenced by political considerations.

3.2.2 Development and decolonisation

With the first wave of decolonisation in Africa, the scope for development action grew further, as the number of "eligible" countries suddenly increased. At the end of the 1960s, the number of independent states had more than doubled compared to 1945,[22] and most of the newly-born countries were undoubtedly "underdeveloped" former

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[22] The number of members of the United Nations offers a good proxy of the waves of independence, with the caveat that not all independent states are necessarily part of the organisation (Germany and Italy, for instance, were not immediately part of it, whereas Switzerland only joined in 2002). The United Nations were founded in 1945 by 51 members; in 1968, membership had expanded to 126 countries. In the year 1960 alone there were as many as 17 new members, 16 of which former African colonies. The "second wave" of African independence took place around 1975, with the dismantlement of the former Portuguese colonial empire. UN membership continued to grow steadily until 1990, averaging one new member per year. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and that of Yugoslavia led to another wave of newly independent countries joining the UN in the early nineties. In 1993, UN membership had expanded to 185 states, well over three times the number of original founders. Since then, the rate of accession has slowed down, with just ten new members in over twenty years, the last one being South Sudan in 2011 (United Nations website).

colonies. In an effort to distance themselves from Cold War policies, most states in Africa and Asia, together with Yugoslavia, formed the "Non-Aligned movement". This was a group of states that, in the name of anti-imperialism, rejected both the Western bloc (where their former colonisers stood) and the Soviet one[23]. Nevertheless, their efforts had mixed results at best, as in most of the cases they would enter either of the two superpower's sphere of influence. Development aid, along with military assistance, were relevant aspects of such a relationship (White 2012).

The 1960s were optimistically hailed by the UN as the first "Development Decade", with industrialised countries expected to contribute one percent of their GDP to development aid (Black 2007). Bilateral aid from capitalist countries remained the major source of development assistance, although a growing proportion of aid was being disbursed through multilateral agencies such as the United Nations and the World Bank (Wood 1986). The narratives of poverty reduction, of defeating hunger, and of human rights began to be used to justify aid expenditure to the western public. Most third world economies did indeed grow in the 1960s, even without the level of aid promised[24]. Yet, towards the end of the decade, it became evident that growth itself had not made those countries more industrialised, nor sensibly reduced the levels of poverty (Black 2007). Disillusionment towards the potential transformative impact of development aid emerged for the first time. A commission led by Lester Pearson was given the task to investigate the impact of development assistance. In its final report (Pearson, 1969), the commission recognised the shortcomings of aid policies until then, most notably the fact that aspects other than economic growth – robustness of local institutions, political stability – had been neglected. In its critique of development programmes, the Pearson Report maintained however a pro-aid stance, advocating for the abolition of import restrictions and against tied aid.[25] The report also introduced

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[23] It is precisely the fact that these countries sought to distance themselves from both the "First World" (capitalist bloc) and the "Second World" (socialist bloc) that led to the use of the expression "Third World". Given the conditions of most of the non-aligned countries, "Third World" soon became synonymous with "developing countries", or simply "poor countries". It is mostly in this meaning that it is sometimes still used today, even though it has become obsolete since the end of the Cold War (Black 2007).

[24] With the caveat that ODA data was not thoroughly collected in the 1960s, it is however possible to conclude that, on average, total aid remained lower than 0,6% of donor's gross national income (OECD 2011).

[25] Aid is labelled as "tied" when it is offered on the condition that it is used to procure goods or services are from the donor country itself (OECD-DAC 2008a), thus representing an instrument for industrialised

the target, for donor countries, of devolving 0,7% of GDP to development assistance. This has remained until today the reference value for assessing donors' commitment, despite having been largely unmet.

A more radical critique to the development model came from the so-called "dependency theorists".[26] Drawing on the arguments advanced by Prebisch (1950) and that focused mostly on Latin America, these scholars maintained that the existence of "underdeveloped" areas of the world was not due to their backwardness or late industrialisation, but rather a necessary feature of the capitalist international system, which required some countries to be "dependent" in order for others to flourish. Dependent countries had to sell their resources at cheap prices and import more expensive manufactured good from industrialised countries, and thus the underdevelopment of the "periphery" was functional to the development of the "centre". Furthermore, according to Cardoso (1973) economic growth in dependent countries did not trickle down to the poor, but remained a prerogative of the elites. Rather than providing "solutions" to the development conundrum, however, dependency scholars have focused on challenging the mainstream analysis of (under)development (Palma 1978).

The disillusionment with the record of development led to a shift in focus of development policy priorities, from investment aimed at promoting industrialisation towards programmes aimed at tackling "basic needs", such as improving access to water or launching immunisation campaigns. Even the World Bank, through its president Robert McNamara, pledged for more aggressive measures to reduce poverty (Black 2007; Ebrahim 2005). The refocusing of priorities, however, did not imply the abandonment of the economic growth objective or the adoption of radical policies. Much to the contrary, initiatives aimed at fulfilling basic needs were technocratic and apolitical, and did not challenge social, political and economic systems. Arguments in favour of attending to basic needs even focused on their expected economic benefits, such as increased productivity (Ebrahim 2005: 36-37). Another notable characteristic of development aid was also that it was being increasingly provided as soft loans

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countries to export their products abroad, and not necessarily a benefit for the beneficiaries. Put differently, tied aid is never impartial.

[26] Some authors, such as Palma (1978) claim that it would be more appropriate to refer to a "dependency school" rather than to a "dependency theory", given the variety of positions among the scholars who have studied dependency.

(whereas the Marshall plan had been largely financed through grants), to the point that in 1970, the IBRD "received more in debt service on past loans than it disbursed in new loans" (Wood 1986: 77).

3.2.3 The debt crisis and Structural Adjustment Programmes

A turning point for the Third World were the oil crises of the 1970s, when a group of oil-rich developing countries united under the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) banner formed a cartel, leading to a sharp increase of oil prices. As a result, a handful of Middle Eastern states suddenly transitioned from a situation of "underdevelopment" to one of extreme wealth, and reassessed their power relations with oil-importing countries. While the move demonstrated that developing countries were not necessary hopeless and that there were alternatives to the "Western" way of development, it also resulted in a worsening of the situation for those developing countries which could not count (at least not at the time) on an oil-extracting industry (Black 2007). Many of the latter experienced difficulties in their balance of payments, and had to resort to external debt, while OPEC countries, flooded with oil dollars, gained a prominent place among development donors (Wood 1986).

In parallel, another group of former developing countries – dubbed as the "Newly Industrialising Countries" (NIC) – experienced rapid economic growth even in the absence of oil resources. The NIC most notably included the four Asian "tigers" (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) (Black 2007: 24). Meanwhile, African and most Latin American countries were facing economic decline, and were accumulating massive debts (in some cases taking out new loans to pay interest on pre-existing ones). Due to increasing interest rates, several countries – Mexico being the first in 1982 – defaulted on their loans (Wood 1986; Black 2007). Debt renegotiations in the early 1980s substantially hardened the conditions for the lenders. The IMF and the World Bank required developing countries to adopt extensive packages of reforms – which go under the name of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) –, consisting mainly in the reduction of state budgets and privatisation of formerly public services. Presented as apolitical, technocratic solutions to economic problems (Wood 1986), SAPs were actually informed by the same neoliberal agenda that was being implemented by the US under Reagan and by the UK under Thatcher, to name the most relevant advocates of these policies (Black 2007). Rather than putting into question the established practices of development and the relationships among developing countries, industrialised donors, and multilateral organisations, the debt crisis had the paradoxical effect of consolidating the "aid regime" (Wood 1986: 313).

Meanwhile, the neoliberal emphasis on downsizing state apparatuses and outsourcing service provision to private actors presented an opportunity for NGOs to gain a more prominent place in the development arena. The number of international and local development NGOs increased exponentially, and so did their capacity to attract more and more institutional funding. Edwards and Hulme note that the proportion of aid from OECD-DAC donors "channeled through NGOs rose from 0.7 percent in 1975 to 3.6 percent in 1985" (Edwards and Hulme 1996: 962). NGOs did not only fit well in an environment that was supportive of non-state actors, they also seemed to be particularly well placed to bring about "participation", which was gaining relevance as a development discourse (Edwards 2005; Lewis and Kanji 2009). For a while, NGOs were acclaimed as the "magic bullet" (Vivian 1994) that could fix development. The trend continued well into the 1990s, although gradually the limits of NGOs began to be recognised (Lewis and Kanji 2009).

The 1980s had been a "lost decade" for development, during which there was little progress on either the economic front or the living conditions in most Third World countries. Furthermore, the value of debt repayments from developing countries to their creditors had been much larger than that of aid flows, despite the steady increase of the latter (Black 2007: 25). Towards the end of the 1980s, the attention of the development community moved towards considering a wider variety of elements apart from economic performance. The discourses of environmental protection and of sustainable development gained strength, and provided new sources of legitimation to NGO work (Ebrahim 2005).

3.2.4 Development assistance after the Cold War

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between developing countries and the rest of the world changed significantly. During the Cold War it had been common practice, for both the Western and the Soviet bloc, to prioritise alliances over actual economic and socio-political record in the allocation of "aid" money. On the one hand, developing countries, and Africa in particular, rapidly lost their strategic importance, and thus the capacity to attract external aid. On the other hand, however, the new geopolitical scenario gave donors more leverage, making aid conditionality – the option of disbursing or withdrawing development aid based on a country's performance – more credible (Ake 1996; Dunning 2004). Indeed, "good governance" has become a key theme of development policy since the 1990s, with more attention given to structural reforms.

The end of the Cold War also meant that the capitalist/neoliberal paradigm, which had already been dominating development policies, remained virtually unchallenged as even former communist states opened to markets. At the same time, and despite the prominence of economic arguments in the development debate, the equation of economic growth with development became increasingly contested, as GDP per capita alone could not account for differences in living standards worldwide. Drawing on the work of the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, the UN launched in 1990 the "Human Development Index" (HDI) –, a composite index meant to take into account different aspects of wellbeing: health, education, and income (UNDP 1990). The three dimensions were intentionally given the same weight in the calculation of the index, to underline that wealth alone could no longer be considered ad a proxy for development (Sagar and Najam, 1998).

The turn of the millennium represented a major milestone for development policy, as for the first time, a set of goals – known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – was agreed upon at global level. The eight goals were inspired by a multidimensional vision of development, reminiscent of the 1970s focus on "basic needs".[27] Each goal is accompanied by one or more quantifiable targets to be achieved by the end of 2015, with a baseline set in 1990. For instance, the target for goal number three, "reducing child mortality", is to reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five years of age. While it is too early to draw definitive conclusions on the success (or not) of the MDGs, there is substantial agreement that they have contributed to shaping the development agenda in the last years (e.g. Clemens et al. 2007; Kenny and Sumner 2011), as well as provided effective tools for advocacy, including on previously neglected themes such as child mortality (Lancet Commission 2010).

Another feature of development policy in the third millennium has been an increased attention towards aid effectiveness. Through a series of high-level forums, consensus was built around a set of key principles, centred around the idea that aid recipient governments should become the key actors in the formulation and implementation of development policies (OECD 2011). This was the first attempt of development actors

[27] The eight MDGs are to: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development (UNDP 2010).

and stakeholders at agreeing upon a set of guiding principles – something that the humanitarian sector had had since at least the mid-1990s. As opposed to the humanitarian principles, however, the aid effectiveness ones did not formalise an existing norm, but introduced a new framework, substantially different from prevailing practices of development. In the light of the emphasis placed on receiving countries, aid delivery through "budget support" gained popularity. In essence, budget support consists of predictable contributions to a government's state budget (or, in the case of sectoral budget support, to that of a given ministry) for the implementation of a development-oriented programme, usually with some form of conditionality (Koeberle et al. 2006).

3.3 Two sides of the same coin

As a result of their different paths, humanitarian and development action have remained differentiated until today, despite being both inspired (or at least justified) by solidarity with other human beings, and being often implemented by the same actors.[28] In this section, I will give an account of what humanitarian and development action are in contemporary practice, highlighting common aspects as well as major differences.

A useful analogy to explain the relation between humanitarian and development action is that of an hospital: the priorities and working styles of an emergency room surgeon and those of the doctor specialising in the treatment (or prevention) of a chronic disease are clearly different, yet both work to improve patients' health, and can be legitimately called colleagues. Furthermore, there will be occasions in which their paths will cross; for instance, when the two will happen to be treating the same patient, even if for two unrelated pathologies. In short, humanitarian action incorporates much of the "emergency room" attitude, i.e. trying to save lives and operating quickly; whereas development action aims with a range of interventions at improving the living conditions of its beneficiaries. Yet, much like the doctors in the analogy, they often operate on the same "patient", even though not necessarily at the same time.

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[28] Although normally motivations other than pure solidarity often play a role in the decision to provide aid and other forms of cooperation.

3.3.1 Ideal types of humanitarian and development action

My aim here is to provide a brief description of the two modalities of action. I will start by outlining the main characteristics of each ideal type of action, highlighting the main differences between the two, and then proceed to examine the common aspects. It is useful to start by outlining two very simplified and juxtaposed ideal types of action (see figure 2 below). In this exercise, I will take into account three main aspects, where differences are particularly noticeable: objectives, guiding principles, and operational frameworks.

Figure 2: Ideal types of action. Source: Author

	Humanitarian action	Development action
Objective	Save lives & alleviate suffering	Promote "development"
Principles	Humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence	Ownership, alignment, harmonisation
Operational frameworks	Disaster response and/or crisis prevention; Short term (6 months to 1 year)	Poor countries; Medium to long term (3-5 years).

3.3.1.1 Objectives

As mentioned above, a first, major difference lies in the overall objectives of the two types of intervention. Humanitarian action, particularly if intended as "emergency humanitarianism" (Barnett 2011: 37-38), has the clear aim of saving lives and reducing suffering. Even by accepting the broader notion of "alchemic humanitarianism", the objective is still limited to the eradication of the causes of suffering and, by extension, to the prevention of future disasters. By definition, the objectives of humanitarianism – both emergency and alchemical – are met whenever all people are able to survive with dignity, regardless of how this achievement was brought about. Provided that those basic needs are met, humanitarianism is compatible, at least theoretically, with any socio-political system or rate of economic growth.

By contrast, the objective of development action is development itself, which is problematic as a number of competing views exist over what development is, or should be (see also chapter 1). As Chambers (2004) put it, development could be just about any type of good change, which obviously encompasses the most disparate views over what is "good". Another problem arising from the genesis of the "development" concept is that it leaves room for interpretations of the process as a necessary sequence

of events that might be slowed down or accelerated, but that will have to happen (Sumner and Tribe 2008).

As I have shown in the previous section, for decades the idea that development is, in essence, economic development, has been dominant. This conception is, however, increasingly challenged by views that development should aim at poverty reduction, if not at its elimination altogether, something that does not automatically follows from the experience of economic growth (Toye 2010). It is also increasingly common, particularly following the MDGs,[29] to frame development as the achievement of a discrete set of goals, which brings it closer to some forms of humanitarianism.

In other words, humanitarian action must address suffering and possibly prevent it from happening in the future, including, but not necessarily, through structural changes. Development action, on the other hand, must spark off some kind of change (in terms of income, or living standards) and in doing so it might as well contribute to the reduction of suffering. In both cases, the main objective of one type of action is a possible, but not necessary, side-effect of the other.

3.3.1.2 Guiding principles and discourses

Guiding principles are of the utmost importance, as they constitute and reflect norms and values, which can shape the institutionalisation of practices from a normative perspective (Scott 2008b). The sets of principles adopted by humanitarian and development organisations have different scopes and reflect fundamentally different priorities. Even if they are rarely followed to the letter, principles are relevant because they contribute to define what is legitimate, and therefore to shape action. At the same time, principles can (and are) "interpreted and reshaped" (Hilhorst and Schmiemann 2002: 493) though everyday practice. It can be argued that the persistence of two separate, and in partially mutually contradictory, sets of principles for humanitarian and development action contributes to perpetuating the separation between the two.

As anticipated in chapter 1, as well as in section 3.1 above, the humanitarian community grounds its actions on the principles of *humanity, impartiality, independence,* and *neutrality.* What is relevant to note here is that these principles stem from the ones elaborated by one major player, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which has embodied the so far hegemonic approach to (emergency)

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[29] At the time of writing, talks are being held to discuss the "Sustainable development goals" (SDG), or the framework that has been envisioned to replace the MDGs after the 2015 deadline.

humanitarian action (Barnett 2011). Nevertheless, as Hugo Slim (1997) noted, there has been some leeway in the interpretation, let alone implementation, of these principles.

The *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief* (henceforth "Code of Conduct", IFCR and ICRC 1994) is a non-binding document to which hundreds of humanitarian organisations worldwide have signed up. Donor organisations represented in the OECD-DAC group have formalised their own commitment towards humanitarian principles in 2003, through the *Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)* initiative. In both cases, signatories include organisations with a dual humanitarian-development mandate, which raises the question of whether they think the code is applicable to the whole of their activities, or only to humanitarian ones (and how do they tell the latter from the former).

It is worth noting that the humanitarian principles are particularly functional to providing relief in the context of international conflicts, to which International Humanitarian Law (IHL) applies. In such circumstances, humanity refers to the duty to provide relief to the suffering; being defined as a duty, it implies a corresponding right to intervene. In order for doctors and nurses to gain access to the wounded in combat, it was necessary to ensure that they would support none of the parties to the conflict (principle of neutrality), that they would provide care to any injured person solely on the base of needs (principle of impartiality) and regardless of any external pressure (principle of independence). In other words, humanitarian principles are critical for the fulfilment of ICRC's mandate, and indeed, much of the ICRC's work revolved around the promotion of the advancement of IHL. The strength of this discourse is such that isomorphism can be seen not just among NGOs based in Western countries, but also among Southern NGOs. The latter have been complying with prescribed norms and procedures, and have adopted the language of humanitarianism to enhance their own legitimacy. Even organisations that do not fully agree with all the tenets of mainstream humanitarian doctrine cannot fully disengage, as their own structures are embedded in the system (Donini 2010).

It is worth noting that the Code of Conduct does not explicitly list the principle of neutrality, that is the prohibition of taking sides in hostilities, while it is present in both the Red Cross Movement's own principles and in the more recent GHD initiative. The Code of Conduct only includes a watered down obligation of not considering the adherence (or lack thereof) of the affected populations to political or religious opinions

held by the humanitarian organisation when taking decisions on aid allocation. This resonates with Hugo Slim's (1997) observation that relief agencies have abandoned neutrality, either because they misunderstand the concept as "indifference", or because they see it as unfeasible.

More recently, consensus has been built around the principle of "do no harm", which Mary B. Anderson (1999) has borrowed from medical ethics. The "do no harm" approach is featured in the SPHERE handbook (SPHERE 2011), and has also been adopted by a number of major humanitarian players including UNICEF, the ICRC, OXFAM, and Save the Children. There are in fact numerous examples of relief turning out to be damaging its own intended beneficiaries; a case in point is humanitarian supplies being diverted and used to support militias, leading to the continuation of conflicts – and thus human suffering – that may have otherwise come to a halt. At the same time, it must be recognised that the "do no harm" principle bears the risk of providing a justification for disengaging from complex crises.

On their side, development actors do not have such strong guiding principles as humanitarians do. It is only in the last decade that the principles of aid effectiveness have been formally adopted, and they have been reworked over the years since the first formulation in the Paris Declaration. The most recent formulation (Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, 2012) settles for four main elements:

1. Ownership of development priorities by developing countries;

2. Focus on results;

3. Partnerships for development;

4. Transparency and shared responsibility.

It is worth noting that these principles have been negotiated by donors (governments and multilateral institutions) and recipient governments, together with a handful of civil societies organisations, while some NGOs have denounced the fact that they were not involved in the process (Concord 2008). As a consequence, they are applicable to external aid (including when implementation is sub-contracted to NGOs), but not to the entire domain of actions undertaken with the aim of promoting development. This means that their scope is not universal as that of humanitarian principles, which aim at guiding *any* instance of humanitarian action. Even if the aid effectiveness principles were applicable also to activities carried out by NGOs with private funding, as argued for instance by Koch (2008), they still differ from humanitarian ones for being geared

towards supporting recipients in implementing their own development-oriented policies.[30]

In other words, development action does not aim at following any of the humanitarian principles. It cannot be neutral, as it sides openly with a government (or other local partner), and not with others. It is not bound to impartiality, as need is not the main rationale for the decision to provide assistance (or not); development action can only be as impartial as its counterpart chooses to be. Furthermore, development action does not have to be independent nor humane, although it might be. Similarly, humanitarian action might take into consideration local priorities, focus on results, establish partnerships and promote mutual accountability, but none of these elements is essential. In other words, there can be instances in which a given course of action ensures the respect of both humanitarian and development principles alike; however, this alignment would not happen *because* of some feature of the principles themselves, but *despite* them. The fact that humanitarian and development actions are guided by fundamentally different norms contributes to the institutionalisation of a two-pronged aid system in the normative domain, by promoting contrasting discourses of legitimacy.

3.3.1.3 Operational frameworks

An element that corroborates the humanitarian/development distinction refers to eligible countries and situations. Development action can only be provided to countries meeting – or better, not meeting – a certain number of characteristics, mostly related to economic development, and which have presented a development strategy deemed acceptable by the donor. If bilateral relations are strained for any given reason, however, there may not be any agreement, and thus, no assistance. Humanitarian aid, in turn, does not imply acceptance of the local government's policies, and can be delivered everywhere provided that some minimum conditions are met. These conditions refer mainly to the possibility of directly accessing people in need, and to the absence of major aid diversions. In addition, humanitarian aid may be provided, in theory, also to industrialised countries, if struck by a disaster they are unable to cope

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[30] Even though it can be argued that donors can shape the way development policies look like, by influencing the debate and, potentially, by refusing to finance anything that does not comply with their own views.

with. Therefore, there can be (and there are) situations in which only one type assistance can be provided.[31]

Another evident dissimilarity between the two kinds of action, which directly descends from the different operational settings and objectives, is in the timeframes of action. Humanitarian projects generally cannot last for more than twelve months,[32] while development ones normally last about three years, and often more than that, as promoting structural change is reasonably considered to be a longer-term task. There are cases in which humanitarian assistance has been provided to a given community for years if not even decades in case of protracted crises. Even in those cases, however, it is not the deadline of each project that gets extended, but "new" projects are elaborated year after year, ideally taking into account the variation of needs.

Furthermore, as a result of the fact that humanitarian projects are often "emergency" response, the approval mechanisms for humanitarian funding are normally streamlined to ensure rapid disbursement of funds, at least if compared to development projects. The time between the first submission of a proposal and the actual launch of a humanitarian project can be as short as a few days or weeks after a disaster is declared, and normally it does not take more than a few months; whereas the same process for a development proposal may even take years. It is worth noting that timeframes for implementation are included as clauses in funding contracts, and therefore operate as regulative elements. As such, they influence the institutionalisation of the humanitarian-development dichotomy on a different level than discourses, which operate in the normative domain.

Not surprisingly, also the type of activities and services delivered by humanitarian and development actors are often different, and conform to often contrasting views of what is appropriate. By and large, humanitarian actors try to fulfil their mandate by ensuring that basic needs are met, such as providing food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, or medical care to the sick. Nowadays, most humanitarian organisations

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[31] For instance, the European Commission does not provide any humanitarian aid to Eritrea – even though there are humanitarian needs – on the grounds that humanitarian space is not being respected (European Commission 2014). The same institution, through its development arm, does however finance projects in the country, which have been agreed upon with the government.

[32] It is normally possible, however, to ask for an extension of the project, or to get funds for a similar one year after year. As a result, humanitarian action is being provided year after year in chronic crises.

refer to the SPHERE "Minimum Standards" which provide clear and quantified guidance on what each person should be entitled to in order to survive with dignity. Others (Dufour et al. 2004) criticise the Standard's blueprint approach, which could result in distortions in humanitarian practice – such as providing assistance in a culturally-insensitive fashion, or not responding to needs in situations where it is clear that standards cannot be met – and argue that SPHERE responds more to the concerns of Western/Northern aid agencies than to the priorities of affected populations.

Development actors often despise the supply-driven, band-aid approach of humanitarians, and try to address underlying problems with a range of interventions, shaped according to the nature and scale of the identified problem and the mission and vision of the implementing organisation. The variety of possible approaches is reflected in the amount of different types of activities which can all be counted under the label of "development": large infrastructural projects; monetary contributions to a State's budget; service provision (such as education or healthcare) at local level; micro-finance schemes; advocacy and promotion of human rights; just to mention a few.

3.3.2 Common aspects

Despite the above-mentioned differences between humanitarian and development action, the two also share some common aspects and can sometimes overlap, even if they are undertaken with different objectives. For instance, cash distributions can be carried out as an emergency response to a shock in which people have lost their source of income (e.g., with a natural disaster or with displacement) or as a development initiative aimed at preventing further descent into poverty (safety nets). In such cases, even though the activities look similar, the rationale behind targeting of beneficiaries can be different, reflecting different priorities. Here I will focus on two main aspects under which the differences between humanitarian and development action are less pronounced: actors and tools.

3.3.2.1 Actors

A common aspect of both humanitarian and development assistance is that they are made possible by private and public donations – ultimately, they both originate from the same pockets (of taxpayers and of magnanimous citizens). Even from a financial point of view, public contributions for both humanitarian and development purposes are both accounted as Official Development Assistance (ODA). To be sure, ODA is framed in terms of fostering economic development, humanitarian aid is typically

included in ODA statistics. These flows include also resources given by official agencies to NGOs to carry out development or humanitarian activities (see also definitions in chapter 1).

What is more, these funds are often administered by the same donor organisations, even though there are often different units in charge of humanitarian and development activities, respectively, as it happens for example in the UK Department for International Development (DFID). One notable exception is represented by the European Commission, which has two separate Directorate-Generals (DGs), one dealing exclusively with Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) and another for Development Aid (DG EuropAid, also known as DEVCO), with completely separate decision-making processes. In the past, however, the distinction was sometimes blurred by the appointment of a single Commissioner (equivalent to a Minister) for both DGs. Sometimes, Italy being the case in point, the structure overseeing external aid – the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (*Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo*, DGCS) – is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which may jeopardize the neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian decisions, as foreign policy considerations may be prioritized. In contrast, the German Foreign Office, which is responsible for humanitarian funding, operates independently from the Ministry of Development Cooperation, and even the Minister of Foreign Affairs officially only has limited influence on its funding decisions.

As far as implementing partners are concerned, there is also a good deal of overlap. In both areas, particularly after the 1980s, NGOs are key players. Whereas some NGOs specialise in either humanitarian or development assistance, others have a "dual mandate", meaning that they operate both as humanitarian and as development agencies according to the context. On this respect, Donini (2010) recognises four main types of NGOs, of which only one (which he refers to as *dunantist,* from the name of the founder of the Red Cross) limit their scope to humanitarian assistance alone. All other NGOs are characterised by considerations other than respect of humanitarian principles: *wilsonian* ones are aligned with their home country's foreign policy; *faith-based* organisations refer to religious values as their founding principles; *solidarist* NGOs promote human rights alongside strictly-speaking humanitarian action. Similarly, Dijkzeul (2004) recognise that not all "humanitarian" NGOs are equal even in the application of two of the core humanitarian principles: independence and impartiality. His typology, reproduced in figure 3 below, shows that there is a considerable amount of variation even among the largest international NGOs. Only the

ICRC (which is not technically an NGO but holds a special status) is fully independent and impartial, with MSF following suit. All other NGOs are, in general, open to implementing some kind of development activity, and are more keen to be influenced by their national governments or influenced by(other) government donors.

Figure 3: A Mental Map of NGOs. Source: recreated from Dijkzeul (2004: 218)

The fact that humanitarian organisations can and do differ from each other on so many aspects, is not just a matter-of-fact observation that defies isomorphism, but has an effect on humanitarian action. As pointed out by Heyse (2006), NGOs operating in the same context, but with different identities, tend to adopt different decision-making strategies and end up with different aid chains and outcomes.

It is relevant to note here that a number of organisations have expanded their mandate over time. For instance, NGOs such as Save the Children, OXFAM or CARE were founded as emergency humanitarian organisations dealing with wartime hunger, and it is only during the Cold War that they have added development initiatives to their mandates. The same holds true for UNICEF. Interestingly, at certain points in time the development mandate has come to overshadow the humanitarian one. For instance, Vaux (2001) recalls that when the mid-Eighties Ethiopian famine was unfolding, OXFAM had been reluctant to intervene with emergency relief because that type of

action did not quite fit into the organisational values of the time, which favoured development.

Furthermore, even when an organisation remains strictly on one side of the humanitarian-development divide, it can still have staff members with working experience in the other side, and therefore exposure to different discourses of legitimacy. Moreover, also the final beneficiaries of the two types of aid may, in some cases, be the same communities, which can lead to humanitarian and development organisations discussing and possibly coordinating aspects of their activities. In addition, humanitarian and development workers operating in the same area — and expatriates in particular — are likely to spend part of their free time together, and will probably get familiar with other organisations' activities, which might contribute to increasing mutual understanding , thus possibly favouring more interactions across the divide.

3.2.3.2 Tools

The fact that humanitarian and development aid are funded by the same donors and implemented by the same (or similar) actors makes the adoption of comparable tools and procedures more likely. This is true in particular of tools related to the tools required to account for the use of public money, which go under the label of "new public management" (Barnett 2011: 215). The adoption of such instruments is not of course limited to aid, as most public funding, including in the academic research field, has similar requirements. One telling example is that the unit of funding is almost universally the *project*. Although there is some degree of variability, formats for project proposals are often very similar, especially if issued by the same agency. As a result, familiarity with donor requirements and project management tools is relevant to all NGOs, regardless of whether an employee has gained that experience on the humanitarian or the development side. This in turn contributes to the establishment of a larger organisational field, where the distinction between humanitarian and development action is blurred.

In terms of common tools, one in particular has gained almost universal acceptance: the *logical framework,* frequently referred to as *logframe.* The logframe is a matrix that shows the overall aims (or general objective) to which a project contributes, the *specific objective* that the project will attain if everything goes well, the *results* or intermediate *outcomes* that will be produced, and the *activities* The logframe matrix also indicates the *objectively measurable indicators* for each of the steps, as well as the sources of such information, and includes a column on *assumptions* and *risks* – what

should and should not happen, respectively, in order for project activities to go as planned. An example of logframe, in this case a template from the European Commission is reproduced in figure 4 below. Other donors have adopted slightly different versions of logframe.

Figure 4: Typical Structure of a Logical Framework Matrix. Source: Recreated from European Commission (2004: 58)

Project Description	Indicators	Source of verification	Assumptions
Overall Objective - The project's contribution to policy or programme objectives (impact)	How the OO is to be measured including Quantity, Quality, Time?	How the information will be collected, when and by whom?	
Purpose - Direct benefits to the target group(s)	How the Purpose is to be measured including Quantity, Quality, Time?	As above	If the Purpose is achieved, what assumptions must hold true to achieve the OO?
Results - Tangible products or services delivered by the project	How the results are to be measured including Quantity, Quality, Time?	As above	If Results are achieved, what assumptions must hold true to achieve the Purpose?
Activities - Tasks that have to be undertaken to deliver the desired results			If Activities are completed, what assumptions must hold true to deliver the results?

The logframe was introduced in development programming 1990s, and by the following decade it had become the norm in any project proposal, only recently challenged by the emergence of the so-called *theories of change* (e.g., Valters 2014). The logframe has been criticised for its deterministic underpinnings that do not recognise the complexity of development processes, for being a burden that requires specialsed staff and interferes with the provision of development and humanitarian services, and for not being useful during the project implementation phase, once the funds have been granted, except for reporting purposes (Wallace et al., 2006). Despite its shortcomings, the logframe has been adopted *en masse* by NGOs, as major donors require it in the applications for funding.[33]

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[33] However, a community of aid workers – arguably those who have been trained during the 2000s – has emerged, for whom the logframe is no longer just a tool, but the only way to correctly organise and present project information.

At the same time, the plain fact that most (if not all) large NGOs adopt similar practices – particularly logframes – does not necessarily imply that they are all the same, much less that structure wins over agency. A number of scholars have set to explain instances of organisational choices that do not follow passively – or even overtly contrast institutional pressures. In Oliver's (1991) typology, passive compliance is simply one extreme along a continuum of different responses to institutional pressure, with active manipulation as the opposite extreme. Oliver assumes that the greater the gains (in terms of legitimacy or of resources) that derive from adhering to a given standard, the more likely compliance becomes. Similarly, if an institution exerts a high degree of control over an organisation, the latter will be more prone to conform to the rules. Consistency between organisational and institutional goals is yet another factor that would enhance the possibility of non-confrontational compliance. When, instead, there is a multiplicity of stakeholders with different requirements, or the degree of enforcement is low, other strategies might be pursued, from seeking compromise to avoid the implementation of a given norm (or implementing it only as a *façade*), to overtly challenging its value or trying to change it (Oliver 1991: 160-171). Following Oliver, Ohanyan's (2009, 2012) network analysis shows that NGOs supported by more donors, and with their own independent goals, tend enjoy more power and independence than those dependent on only one or two funding sources, or that have adopted the same view as their donors.

The logframe has brought a significant degree of uniformity in the way projects are conceived and represented to the prospective donor. The use of a common tool implies that humanitarian and development workers have to come to terms with it, and even more significantly, that they end up giving value to the same competences, enhancing the possibility of project management staff to work in either "side" of the divide.

3.4 Discourses of "bridging the gap"

This section discusses some of the main debates and approaches to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development action. As previously seen, humanitarian and development action evolved as two separate domains during the Cold War, even though the linkages between crisis and structural poverty became increasingly clear. These linkages became particularly evident in Sen's (1981) groundbreaking work on poverty and famine, which shifted the attention from food availability to access to food ("entitlement approach"). By pointing to the socially determined lack of capacity of some groups to gain access to sufficient food, Sen was able to explain the occurrence of famines in situations of overall normal or even above-normal food production. Yet,

relief interventions continued to focus mostly on the provision of food and other life-saving items. Lautze and Raven-Roberts have explained that "concerns that livelihoods interventions could conflict with humanitarian principles" (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006: 388) and the identification of livelihoods as part of the development, post-crisis domain reified this distinction between the two domains.

The two sides operated rather separately until the end of the Cold War, when the challenges posed by reconstruction rekindled the contention over the meaning of humanitarianism (Barnett 2011). Open discussions on "bridging the gap" humanitarian and development action, or "Linking Relief and Development" (LRD) gained strength in the early 1990s. The emergence of arguments in favour of better integration between the two domains was mostly related to two elements: the growing realisation of the linkages between poverty and vulnerability to crises, and the emergence of "complex humanitarian emergencies" in which the boundaries of humanitarian action were being overstretched. Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet bloc also implied the fall of the distinction between Soviet clients only eligible for humanitarian assistance, and Western allies where both humanitarian and development aid could apply as appropriate.

Interestingly, it was mostly humanitarians who took part to the debate, whether in favour or against LRD (Harmer and Macrae 2004; Buchanan-Smith 2005), with limited involvement of development scholars and practitioners. Among the possible reasons for this neglect was the fact that development actors were not interested in working in crisis contexts: "Relief aid was deployed in many protracted crises because donor governments wished to avoid engaging with states that were perceived to be repressive or undemocratic, that were belligerents in active conflicts, or that were subject to massive corruption" Harmer and Macrae (2004: 3). Additionally, I suggest that humanitarians have invested more energy in the debate because it questioned the applicability of their fundamental principles, whereas – at least when the debate started – the development arena did not even have any formalised principles at all.

The early arguments in favour of LRD were built along the understanding that there is a somewhat linear progression from crisis through various stages of recovery towards a stable situation where development can take place. Traditionally-conceived humanitarian and development action focused only on the two ends of this *continuum*, leaving a "gap" in between, sometimes referred to as "grey zone", that had to be bridged (Crisp 2001). However, the linearity of the *continuum* was soon recognised as an oversimplification (Anderson and Woodrow 1988). Moreover, the linear approach

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received criticism for aiming to restore the pre-crisis situation, thus failing to recognise the endogenous factors that contributed to the crisis, as well as that lasting development also depends on geopolitical factors.

Some emergency humanitarians simply rejected the idea that relief and development should be bridged. This position has been summarised as "back-to-basics", as opposed to a "broader" conceptualisation of relief (Jackson and Walker 1999). The main argument of back-to-basics humanitarians is that broadened relief can result in an erosion of the humanitarian principles (Macrae 1998). As discussed above, when humanitarian actors have to work more closely with development ones, they run the risk that priorities are being set for political reasons, or that beneficiaries are selected for considerations other than their needs. This can cause political opposition and threaten both access to people in need and security of humanitarian workers and aid recipients. However, Barnett (2011) questions the view that this was the first time humanitarian agencies were confronted to dilemmas regarding the limits of their actions. Through his work on the history of humanitarianism, he had in fact demonstrated that there had been clashes over principles before, as well as that alchemical or dual-mandate organisations had been delivering both types of assistance all along. He agrees, however, on the fact that the 1990s saw an unprecedented "identity crisis" among humanitarians (Barnett 2011: 268).

Overall, however, there has been little agreement on what a non-linear LRD would entail in practice (Jackson and Walker 1999). Over the years, different frameworks aimed at promoting integration between humanitarian and development action have been conceived, among them the European Union's "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development" (LRRD), and the UN's "Early Recovery". While none of these two frameworks has actually been mainstreamed, the idea and hopes behind integration have survived. Recently, the growing popularity of "resilience" thinking has raised expectations that it might eventually be the key to successfully "bridging the gap" (IRIN 2013; IFRC 2012). In the following sections, I will provide an overview of these three approaches, which all imply some degree of integration between humanitarian and development action

3.4.1 Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)

The concept of LRRD was coined in the mid-1990s by the European Commission (EC 1996), and eventually adopted by its implementing partners, as well as some member states. Until the early 2000s, the term was relatively common within aid agencies and

think tanks based in Europe. Despite becoming part of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative and being used by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, LRRD has almost disappeared from the vocabulary of the aid community, as "resilience" has become increasingly common. Even the European Commission has resorted to "resilience" to label its recent "SHARE" and "AGIR" initiatives,[34] aimed at facilitating the transition from relief to development in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region respectively. During internal discussions or interviews with fellow practitioners and experts, EC officials often refer to those initiatives as "LRRD", but the acronym is nowhere to be found in the information material published on the European Commission's webpages.

The LRRD approach was conceived after roughly a decade of debate on the necessity to overcome the compartmentalisation of aid between humanitarian relief and development aid, and to work more on rehabilitation (Moore 1998). The expression itself indicates that it was envisioned with the linear *continuum* concept in mind. Even though the European Commission rejected the linear model (EC 1996), project proposal formats issued by ECHO referred to LRRD as the "Continuum strategy" at least until 2011. This seems to indicate an understanding of LRRD as a linear process, despite declarations to the contrary, was still rather common within the institution itself.

While contrasting views even originated within the organisation that developed the concept, confusion reigned among implementing partners. Misled by its ambiguous name, some practitioners dismissed LRRD as unrealistic on the grounds of its perceived linearity. For some field staff, less exposed to theoretical debates than colleagues in headquarters, or working for organisations funded by donors other than the European Commission, LRRD was just a vague acronym. As will be shown in the empirical chapters, most of the NGO staff interviewed in Ethiopia was in favour of humanitarian organisations transitioning to development assistance, but no one ever framed these activities in terms of LRRD.

In addition, there is little agreement on who should be ultimately responsible for LRRD. As the debate has mostly taken place among humanitarians, they share a widespread belief that development agencies should become more humanitarian, or at

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[34] Which stand for "Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience" and "Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative", respectively.

least bear a larger share of the LRRD burden, rather than vice-versa: "We still believe that the main responsibilities [...] lie with the development side of the house" (interview EC_12_001).

Several institutional gaps, however, hinder the implementation of LRRD approaches. The first institutional gap is the absence of an international body, or convention, responsible for ensuring that LRRD is put into place at a global, or at least regional, level. The communications issued by the European Commission on LRRD (EC 1996; EC 2001) notably aimed to set a standard not just for European institutions, but also for individual European countries in their bilateral humanitarian and development initiatives. Nevertheless, LRRD's domain has remained rather limited to the relevant European Commission's Directorate Generals, ECHO for humanitarian assistance and DEVCO / EuropeAid for development cooperation. Secondly, even ECHO and DEVCO lack instruments, and often the will, to ensure compliance. For example, until 2011 ECHO required humanitarian agencies to indicate an "LRRD strategy" in funding proposals, but in daily practice considerable discretion existed regarding what was accepted as viable. A third, major institutional gap is the fact that most donors, including the European Commission itself, have different organisational structures for humanitarian and development aid. While this responds to the different characteristics and objectives of the two types of aid, it certainly makes it more difficult to ensure their integration.

The persistence of the separation is recognised by ECHO officers as well, albeit sometimes in positive terms, in the sense that the organisation did not compromise its humanitarian principles and integrity. After the Lisbon treaty entered into force, ECHO managed to prevent its integration into the newly created "External Action Service", which oversees development policy as an element of foreign policy. Even at the field level, ECHO often maintains a separate office, while development cooperation is managed by the local EU Delegation. Quite often, NGO personnel refer to EuropeAid as "the European Commission" (or even "the European Union"), and to DG ECHO as ECHO, failing to notice that both are part of the Commission operating at the same level. Thus, LRRD also falls in between the cracks in the very institution that launched it. More generally, the institutionalised linkages between development and humanitarian organisations are weak. In the DRC in 2011, for example, the World Bank did not participate in formal and informal coordination meetings with the main humanitarian donors, DG ECHO, USAID/OFDA, and DFID.

3.5.2 Early Recovery

"Early Recovery" is a concept developed by – and overwhelmingly used within – the UN system, as part of the humanitarian reform launched in 2005 (see section 3.1.3 above). One of the eleven clusters devised with the reform is dedicated to Early Recovery, under the lead of the United Nations Development Programme. The choice of placing this responsibility with a development agency is peculiar, as the general trend has been for humanitarian agencies take the lead on integration.

Conceptually, early recovery is defined as "a multidimensional process guided by development principles that begins in a humanitarian setting, and seeks to build on humanitarian programmes and catalyse sustainable development opportunities" (CGWER 2008: 9). It officially – and ambitiously – aims to generate self-sustaining, nationally owned processes for post-crisis recovery, encompassing the restoration of basic services, livelihoods, shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and social dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations. The concept of early recovery particularly addresses the importance of reinforcing local capacities is emphasised from the beginning of a humanitarian operation.

Similarly to LRRD, early recovery has the drawback of implying a linear or parallel path between a humanitarian crisis and development. In addition, it mainly focuses on post-crisis recovery, but rarely addresses issues like integrating crisis-prevention mechanisms and DRR into development action. Still, the concept of recovery is so broad that the early recovery cluster tends to become the "what else needs to be done during and after the crisis" cluster (e.g., Calvi-Parisetti 2013). In this sense, the broad concept of early recovery remains quite undefined.It has functioned primarily as a way of framing activities, strategies and approaches that take place in humanitarian and transitional contexts; its added value is often not clear (Bailey et al. 2009).

A major reason for the difficulty to apply Early Recovery is that its conceptualisation, as well as its realisation, is dominated by UN agencies, as it is the case for the entire cluster system. So far NGOs have been rather marginalised in this process as they were in the whole process of humanitarian reform, which was reflected by the composition of active global partners of the IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery. The whole concept and its application were highly dependent on UN bureaucratic structures and funding mechanisms. This UN-led process and concept, as well as pressure from donors, created risks for NGOs, as they can become exposed to instrumentalisation, when UN agencies become driven by the political agendas of the (main) member states, in particular those in the Security Council. In addition, member states also approve

programs, provide—earmarked and other—funding, have great influence on high-level personnel appointment, and officially set policy for all UN bodies.

This fear of instrumentalisation is probably one the main reasons why NGOs are still keeping their distance towards the concept of early recovery and its application although it offers a good opportunity to respond to the humanitarian critique (Bailey 2011: 9). Finally, the establishment of an Early Recovery cluster for each given crisis is not automatic – all remaining clusters are supposed to integrate Early Recovery into their planning, but the Humanitarian Coordinator can decide whether a dedicated cluster is also needed. All in all, implementation of and compliance with early recovery policies have been limited.

3.5.3 Resilience

The concept of resilience has gained prominence in aid debates, and is often used to advocate better integration between humanitarian and development efforts (among donors, DFID 2011, European Commission 2012, USAID 2012, and among UN organisations, OCHA (no date) and UNDP 2012). The term, borrowed from ecology and psychology, slowly gained popularity in disaster studies in the 1990s, but has been used since the 1940s (Manyena 2006). During the last decade, and especially after it became one of the goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005), resilience has become ubiquitous humanitarian jargon. In line with the Hyogo Framework, but in contrast with LRRD and early recovery, it also includes pre-crisis activities, including DRR and prevention.

The popularity of resilience is so impressive that some observers argue that it may well be the next development buzzword (Grünewald and Warner 2012). Yet, like most buzzwords, it is quite "fuzzy" and likely to be defined and interpreted in different ways by different actors (Cornwall and Brock 2005; Cornwall 2007). Resilience "puts the agency of those most in need of assistance at the centre, stressing a programme of empowerment and capacity-building" (Chandler 2012), thus marking a difference with bridging-the-gap frameworks, where the focus is mainly on the organisations providing external assistance. However, when resilience is presented in terms of something to be built, the main agent still tends to be an external actor.

In this dissertation, I focus on the use of the concept of resilience to inform aid programmes, and particularly as a way to bridge humanitarian relief and development cooperation, but reference will also be made to resilience as a characteristic of societies, regardless of external "resilience-building" interventions.

Despite its wide use in policy forums and academia (e.g., Chandler 2013a; Ponomarov and Holcomb 2009), there is little agreement on what resilience means in practice; its fuzziness constitutes a knowledge gap. A commonly used definition of resilience developed by the ICRC (2012) refers to "the ability of individuals, communities, organisations, or countries exposed to disasters and crises and underlying vulnerabilities to: anticipate, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from, the effects of adversity without compromising their long term prospects." This definition is very broad. It covers the whole range of activities from disaster preparedness to post-disaster development, but does not provide detail on what (building) resilience means in practice.

A major source of confusion in the use of resilience is related to its literal meaning: the word comes from the Latin *resilio*, which means "to jump back" (Manyena 2006: 433) and returning to a previous state. This concept is problematic when referred to people and communities who survived a crisis. Here, bouncing back would often imply returning to the very situation of vulnerability from which disaster unfolded (Manyena 2006, 2012), which is far from ideal. Understanding resilience as "bouncing back" bears the risk of favouring quick disaster-response solutions based on providing supplies to ensure pre-disaster levels. However, this ignores the legitimate aspiration of affected people not just to go back to normal, but to improve their living conditions (Manyena 2006). Alternatively, and moving away from the literal meaning of the word, resilience can be understood as "capacity to bounce forward" (Manyena 2012), a notion that implies change and adaptation.

In response to the lack of conceptual clarity, Bourbeau (2013: 8) identifies three different strands of resilience thinking, the first one ("engineering resilience") related to the idea of bouncing back, the second ("ecological resilience") defined as "the capacity of a system to experience disturbance and still maintain its ongoing functions and controls", and the third ("socio-ecological resilience") related to the capacity of self-reorganisation. The latter is closer to "bouncing forward" and is arguably the type of resilience that humanitarians and development workers would like to see, but the popularity of alternative meanings in other disciplinary fields adds to the confusion.

The relationship between resilience and vulnerability is also conceptually problematic. Vulnerability is a key concept that has revolutionised disaster studies since the 1970s (e.g., Bankoff et al. 2004). Before, disaster risk was mostly framed in terms of hazard (event), while it is now widely accepted that vulnerability is what makes a hazard into a disaster. Often, resilience is conceptualised as the opposite of vulnerability: the more a

system is resilient, the less vulnerable to shocks it will be, and vice-versa. However, Manyena (2006) suggests that the two concepts could be viewed as discrete entities, thus allowing the possibility of vulnerable systems that are also resilient.

Additional ambiguity has been identified by Brand and Jax (2007), who listed ten different nuances of resilience, broadly falling into three categories: descriptive, normative (or "boundary object"), and hybrid. While descriptive resilience is a measurable variable, defined as the magnitude of disturbance that a system can absorb, normative resilience is a very generic and desirable goal or approach, close to the idea of "sustainability" (another development buzzword). The use of the word resilience in the humanitarian field tends to be normative, as something inherently good. Yet, such a normative content does not automatically foster critical analysis of its contents (cf. Harrell-Bond 1987: 26).

Resilience gained prominence in 2005, when the United Nations Assembly approved the Hyogo Framework for Action (United Nations 2005). However, as was the case with LRRD and Early Recovery, there are no enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance. Resilience has become institutionalised in the sense that many humanitarian and development agencies now feature resilience departments, employ resilience advisors, or have included resilience building into their strategic plans (e.g., UNDP 2013). Whether or to which extent they are able to achieve an impact "on the ground" with these policies remains an open question. Being a prominent theme on the global development agenda does not automatically translate into more resilient communities.

One of the major limitations of resilience is that, similarly to LRRD and Early Recovery, it does not fit into either the traditional relief or development budget lines. Still, compared to one or two decades ago, there are now more funding channels that can (also) be used for building resilience, such as Climate Change Adaptation or Disaster Risk Reduction budget lines, and the EC-led "Resilience" initiatives in protracted crises (the afore-mentioned SHARE and AGIR initiatives). Nevertheless, the usefulness of these instruments also depends on how they are designed and managed.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the evolution of discourses and norms related to humanitarianism and development action, as well as a description of the frameworks that have been suggested to bridge the gap between the two. In neo-institutionalist theory, in fact, the normative pillar is crucial for defining values are

legitimate and acceptable. In addition, norms and values also contribute to shaping identities and beliefs that, once internalised, act at the cultural-cognitive level.

The mainstream view of humanitarianism, based on the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, clearly reflects the hegemony of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and of the emergency/dunantist approach to humanitarianism. Yet these principles were not the only ones constitutive of humanitarianism, as alternative discourses – in particular the "alchemical" desire to address causes of suffering apart from its symptoms – were present since its infancy (Barnett 2011). Nevertheless, humanitarian principles have become part of a humanitarian identity, to the point that they have been accepted also by dual-mandate organisations as their guidance in how to conduct during humanitarian crises.

Development action, in turn, has been built upon rather different foundations. First, there was the belief that providing external investments would promote economic growth – for long synonymous with development – which in turn would help poorer countries catching up with the more industrialised ones, included in terms of standards of living. In the following decades, more attention was given to the problem of how to reduce or eliminate poverty, and development practices turned to fulfilling basic needs. Despite subsequent evolution of development thinking, views of development as growth is still present. Crucially, the development community never actually built an identity as strong as the humanitarian ones, with its principles of aid effectiveness only being introduced in the 2000s.

I argue that principles, and particularly humanitarian ones, have played a role in reinforcing, and possibly institutionalising, the view that humanitarian and development action are two separate domains. Indeed, criticism from emergency humanitarians has been a permanent feature of any attempt to "bridge the gap" with development. In chapter 5, I will analyse how these conflicting discourses of emergency versus alchemical humanitarianism influence everyday practice of humanitarian action in the Ethiopian context. Before presenting the empirical material, however, I will turn to the history of humanitarian crises in Ethiopia.

Chapter 4. Ethiopian food crises

As I have argued in chapter 2, Ethiopia makes a critical case study for linking relief and development, as it provides a setting where both humanitarian and development action take place, often simultaneously. Therefore, arguments insisting on the fundamentally different settings of humanitarian and development action do not necessarily apply in this context. Furthermore, as humanitarian crises – and food crises in particular – have proven to be recurrent in Ethiopia, humanitarian organisations are often involved in the country over a number of years, when not decades, thus invalidating the "humanitarian as short-term intervention" idea.

In the first part of this chapter, I present a brief historical overview of food crises in Ethiopia, focussing in particular on the ones that happened after the Second World War. After a digression on the structural causes of famines, I will proceed to examine the dynamics of aid provision in Ethiopia. The final part of this chapter is dedicated to the description of the 2011 food crisis and of the related humanitarian response. This will serve as a general background to the empirical research, which will be the subject of chapters 5 and 6.

4.1 Historical overview of food crises in Ethiopia

The purpose of this section is to put the 2011-2012 food crisis, which is at the centre of this research, into broader historical context. Mass starvation, in fact, is not a recent development for Ethiopia; on the contrary, it appears to have punctuated its history all along. Kiros (2006), for instance, finds that the earliest references to starvation following a crop failure in what is now Ethiopia date back as early as 253 B.C.; whereas Pankhurst (1985), in his work on famines and epidemics prior to the XX century, considers some legendary accounts referring roughly to the period between 831 and 849 as the earliest evidence of famine in the area. However, more reliable records of famines and other calamities are only available from after the establishment of the Ethiopian Empire in the XII century, and particularly from the XV century onward (Pankhurst 1985; Kiros 2006).

Therefore, even though it is likely that famines afflicted Ethiopia even before, the following historical overview will start from the Imperial times, providing an account

of frequency and characteristics of famines, as well as on any sort of relief measure undertaken. A caveat is necessary here, because, as pointed out by Kiros (2006: 11) it is impossible to judge whether the reported events would qualify as famines today. In fact, most historical documents do not contain accurate estimates of mortality – sometimes the only indication is that many people had perished, or that the suffering was widespread. Furthermore, the Amharic language even lacks an equivalent of the term "famine" itself, which is usually referred to with the same word used to indicate "hunger", *rehab*. However, notes again Kiros, the fact that these events of starvation were considered worth being included in chronicles can be taken as a proxy of their magnitude.

4.1.1 Famines before the twentieth century

According to Kiros (2006:13-14), an appalling series of famines characterised the rule of Ethiopia's first imperial dynasty, the Zagwe, who ruled between the the XII and the XIII centuries, and in the following decades under early Solomonic rule.[35] In particular, there would have been as many as five famines between 1252 and 1275, an average of about one every five years. However, Kiros duly notes that records do not provide sufficient details on the type and magnitude of such calamities. In fact, the lack of information on famines in the XIV century is likely to be due to the overall scarcity of historical documentation, rather than to an exceptional period of plenty. It is therefore safe to assume that famines and other pestilence continued to happen, yet went unrecorded (Zewde 1976: 52). With historical records increasingly becoming richer and more reliable, there is progressively more documentation available on the catastrophes that affected Ethiopia.

Pankhurst (1985: 25-27) brings evidence of at least two epidemics that happened during the fifteenth century, a pestilence that occurred around 1435 (although probably earlier), and a major one towards the middle of the century, under the reign of Emperor Zara Yaeqob;[36] the latter also mentioned by Kiros (2006:14). Although it is impossible to make an estimate of the death toll of this disease, whose nature is not known, according to Pankhurst it might have been one of the worst in Ethiopian history. Various accounts agree on the fact that people were decimated to the point that there was hardly anyone left to bury the dead. Interestingly, among references to

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[35] The Solomonic dynasty took power in 1270.

[36] Also spelled "Yaicob".

religious ceremonies and temples built to appease the wrath of God, there is mention of the fact that the emperor ordered that the dead be properly buried – a sensitive measure of public health *ante litteram*.

The situation was not bound to improve any soon. "No less than six famines and nine major epidemics seem to have ravaged the country during the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth", notes Pankhurst (1985: 28). Descriptions of causes and effects of famines also became more accurate. Some, for instance, were triggered by droughts, such as one that took place around 1540, or the extended failure of rains for three year in a row around 1559. Invasions of locusts were also rather frequent, particularly in northern provinces of the Empire. Portuguese missionary Francisco Alvares (quoted in Pankhurst 1985: 32-33) described the sight of people who, having lost everything to the locusts, tried to reach safety in some place spared by the plight:

> *The people were going away from this country, and we found the roads full of men, women, and children on foot, and some in their arms, with little bundles on their heads, removing to a country where they might find provisions (it was a pitiful sight to see them).*

It is difficult not to note the eerily resemblance between these words and contemporary accounts of disaster-induced displacement. Similarly, reports of spikes in food prices, or the adoption of coping strategies such as eating roots resonate with the more recent past. Kiros (2006) and Zewde (1976) also observe that wars, particularly the one from 1528-1543, had a devastating impact on the country, which added up to "natural" causes of starvation. Soldiers were described to be even more devastating than locusts, because they would not just seize crops from the fields, but would also confiscate any supplies kept at home. As far as the provision of relief is concerned, early accounts are remarkably rare. Imperial chronicles, for instance, note that emperor Galawedos "fed his entire people as a father feeds his son" during a famine that took place in 1543-44 (Conzelman 1895, quoted in Pankhurst 1985: 33).

Accounts written by Portuguese Jesuits are remarkably more detailed in the description of various plagues and their consequences. They detail, for instance, yet another invasion of locusts, noting that the insects began to appear in late 1626 and continued to ravage the fields throughout 1627. However, from the account of Father Almeida (as quoted by Pankhurst 1985: 39) it is clear that their impact was not homogeneous, for they did not cause much damage in Gojjam (north of present-day Addis Ababa), while destroying the province of Bur near the Red Sea (in what is now

Eritrea). Father Almeida also described the mass arrival of thousands of people to the Emperor's residence, noting that many more had died along the way, and that those who arrived were in desperate conditions. The emperor ordered the distribution of grains and valuable cotton cloth, but above all, he ordered the survivors to be relocated in different districts, where they would have to be fed until they recovered (Pankhurst 1985: 40-41). Furthermore, foreign Jesuit priests where reportedly providing handouts to the destitute, as well as converting them to Catholicism.

Epidemics and famines similarly characterised the Gondarine[37] period, which goes from 1635 to about 1750. Kiros (2006:12) lists ten periods of drought or famine during this era, although he does not provide further details. He specifies that little is known about the larger socio-economic consequences of these events,[38] but that it is reasonable to assume that they had negative impacts on the whole society (Kiros 2006: 15). Pankhurst (1985: 51) presents evidence of a famine in 1636, during which prices of grain went up about five times compared to normal times, and many heads of livestock perished. According to Pankhurst, another period of famine, which affected the entire country, took place in 1706. The emperor of the time, Iyasu I, is said to have provided relief to the starving who gathered in Gondar for about two months, while others' needs were being catered for by other aristocrats. Two successive invasions of locusts in 1747 and 1748 brought once again starvation to Ethiopian people, affecting inhabitants of both highlands and lowlands. As in previous instances, chronicles do not provide details on the number of the affected, but merely state that there were not enough survivors left to bury the dead.[39] The famine was followed by an epidemic of influenza; similarly, other diseases, included smallpox, would often spread after famines (Pankhurst 1985: 52). The following century, known as the age of the princes as the empire was merely a façade (Marcus 1994), was similarly punctuated with calamities. In particular, famines broke out in 1752, 1772-73 (known locally as "my thinness"), 1788-89, which affected all the provinces, and 1796, this time following yet another locust invasion (Pankhurst 1985: 52). Furthermore, various plagues continued to affect the country throughout the first half of the XIX century, including a deadly

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[37] The period is named after the capital of the empire was moved to the city of Gondar (also spelled Gonder), founded by emperor Fasiledes around 1636 (Markus 1994: 41)

[38] This might be related to the fact that the main sources of the period were imperial chronicles.

[39] This argument of not being enough people to bury the dead might as well be a literary *topos,* as it is found also in reference to the epidemic that took place in 1434, under emperor Zara Yaeqob.

combination of cattle disease, loss of crops, famine and cholera epidemics that took place in 1828-29 (Kiros 2006: 15).

4.1.2 The "evil days" of the 1888-1892 famine

Another famine, this time of impressive proportions, broke up again in 1888, a few decades after the restoration of the Empire,[40] and remains known as the Great Ethiopian Famine, or *kifu wan* ("evil days") in Amharic (Zewde 1976: 52). Documentation on this event is plentiful, and allows for tracing the multiple concurrent causes of the catastrophe. One of these causes, and the most widely referred to, is the epidemic of rinderpest that broke out in 1887, and which might have been spread by infested cattle imported by the Italians (Zewde 1976; Kiros 2006). Horses and mules had in fact been shipped to the port of Massawa, in today Eritrea, which had recently fallen under Italian control, and were used in their colonial expeditions towards the coastal lowlands. The rinderpest epidemic was particularly virulent, and from the north quickly spread throughout the entire country, reaching the neighbouring Somali region as well (Pankhurst 1985: 58-59). Various accounts of the time testify of the severity of the rinderpest, which would cause the death of almost entire herds in matter of days. According to some estimates of foreign visitors to Ethiopia, only about 7 to 10 percent of the heads of livestock survived (Pankhurst 1985; Kiros 2006). Understandably, the cattle disease inflicted a heavy toll on pastoralist populations, as it destroyed their sole source of livelihoods (Zewde 1976: 54).

The cattle epidemic coincided with a period of drought and unusually hot weather throughout the country, which led to harvest failure in agricultural areas. Crop production was also being harmed by the lack of oxen – decimated by the rinderpest – for ploughing. Some farmers reportedly stopped working their land altogether, particularly among formerly pastoral populations, the Gallas, who had recently taken up agriculture, "and knew no other agricultural implement than the plough" (Pankhurst 1985: 69). To add more misery to an already bleak situation, large swarms of locusts and caterpillars also contributed to the devastation of the fields. By 1890, in the words of Italian diplomat Pietro Antonelli:

> *it is one continuous desolation. Except between Harar and Burka where there are still a few inhabitants and occasional areas of*

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[40] In 1856, one prince, Tewdoros, had managed to establish his rule over all of Abyssinia, and eventually became the "first emperor of a new age" (Markos 1994: 68)

cultivation, the remainder up to Menta Cara in Minjar is absolutely a
desert; no more inhabitants, no more cultivation, no more flocks, but
low acacias and tall grass rendering the beautiful valleys of Chercher
and the Ittu unrecognisable (quoted in Pankhurst 1985: 70)

Yet, as Zewde (1976: 54-55) observes, the various plagues that affected the country, while being critical to triggering the catastrophe, constitute only one part of the story. The other element of the recipe for the disaster, often overlooked in official chronicles, were the socio-economic conditions of the peasant populations. Peasants were, for instance, required to devolve half of their produce, and sometimes even more, to the landlords, technically in exchange for the seeds that they had planted. Left with barely the minimum necessary to feed their families, peasants did not have any surplus to withstand adverse weather events or other calamities, which themselves were not rare. The landlords, instead, always had more than enough to eat, and would even pride themselves of feeding the starving – yet the produce being distributed had likely been harvested by the same people who were now begging for alms.

In such a situation of chronic food insecurity, any external shock could easily precipitate the conditions of the poorer population. And external shocks that time were particularly hard and unusually occured simultaneously. In particular, the combination of the rinderpest and of the harvest failure (which as seen above where interrelated), together with the bad road conditions hampering trade, led to generalised scarcity of food supplies. As a result, prices of available commodities rose dramatically. Even in the relatively accessible port town of Massawa, food prices doubled between 1887 and 1888. In the interior of the country, instead, the reported prices for cereals in 1890 were a staggering one-to-two hundred times the value recorded only one year previous. Price dynamics were also negatively influenced by people stockpiling large quantities of grain for speculation purposes, a behaviour that was only put to a halt by the imperial order of confiscating all concealed grains. Livestock prices also skyrocketed, up to a forty-fold increase in the case of cattle (Zewde 1976; Pankhurst 1985).

The magnitude of this crisis was such, that even richer people, since then relatively unaffected by famines, reportedly faced hunger or had to sell all their possessions in exchange for food. A priest who had lived in Ethiopia for twenty years, recounted that while having seen several occurrences of the various calamities that periodically affected the country, from locusts invasions to conflicts to epidemics, he had never witnessed anything comparable to the what he saw during the Great Ethiopian Famine. No province was spared the devastation. To make things even worse, towards the end

of the famine, in 1892, the country was ravaged by yet another plight of locusts and by an invasion of rats (Pankhurst 1985). The horrors and misery were such, that they were difficult to describe, although some accounts can be found in poems and songs (Pankhurst 1985: 74-80). Lasting five years in total, the famine is estimated to have caused the death of approximately one third of the Ethiopian population of the time, or about 3-4 million people. Death was not always caused by starvation itself, but also by the epidemics of typhus, cholera and dysentery that accompanied it (Kiros 2006: 16; Zewde 1976: 57; Pankhurst 1985: 89). Furthermore, many people abandoned their lands to search for food somewhere else – not always with success (Pankhurst 1985: 93-97).

As far as relief was concerned, Emperor Menilek, who had ascended to the throne in 1889 following the death of emperor Yohannes (Markos 1994: 89), opened his granaries to the destitute. As thousands of starving people were reaching Entoto in a desperate search for food, a building was erected to host them, and the emperor himself is said to have personally distributed *injera*.[41] Yet, imperial granaries were depleted after just a year of famine, to the point that lucky were those who received a piece of injera large as a hand. Local chiefs were also giving away large quantities of grains. Menilek also established a policy of austerity at court, reportedly abstaining himself from beef for three years – although a banquet including red meat was given on the occasion of the moving of the capital to the recently built city of Addis Ababa (Pankhurst 1985: 98-102). Furthermore, believing that the cattle disease and the resulting famine were due to the wrath of God, the emperor ordered his subjects to pray – and once the situation appeared to be spiralling out of control, he even scolded them for not being praying enough (Zewde 1976: 52-53). Menilek also tried to encourage his subjects to work the land even in the absence of any oxen, setting the example by showing how to hoe the soil with a axe (Pankhurst 1985: 102-103). Despite the buzz around humanitarianism in Europe, there is no indication of relief coming into Ethiopia from abroad, with the exception of some missionary congregations trying to alleviate the suffering of those around them.

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[41] The typical spongy bread made from the flour of a cereal named *teff*, which constitutes the staple of the Ethiopian diet.

4.1.3 The 1972-74 famine and the end of the empire

Repeated periods of drought and famine continued to plague Ethiopia also in the XX century, although with far less intensity than during the "evil days". An average of about one occurrence of drought and famine per decade is reported by Kiros for the period between 1900 and 1970 (2006: 12), although not many details are provided. Kiros only mentions that some of the major famines that happened during these decades were localised to a few provinces of northern Ethiopia, and particularly to Tigray (Kiros 2006: 17). Plenty of documentation exists, instead, on the major famine that took place in the early 1970s, and which would lead to the end of an almost millenary empire, whose history had only been interrupted by a few years of Italian occupation.[42] The 1972-74 famine was related to the drought that swept across the Sahel in the early 1970s, triggering the so-called "African food crises". Causing the death for starvation of an estimated 100,000-200,000 people and affecting several millions (Kumar 1990: 187-188; Kiros 2006: 18), this was the most severe famine in Ethiopia since the "evil days", and is still remembered as worse than the more recent famine of the mid-eighties (Gill 2010: 31).

Far from affecting the entire Ethiopia, the crisis was rather localised, affecting in particular the north-eastern provides of Wollo, which suffered the most, and Tigray, as well as part of the south-eastern region of the country. Wollo and Tigray experienced the failure of the main rains – known as *kremt* – in mid 1972, and exacerbated by the near total failure of the *belg* rains, expected in spring 1973. While Wollo was undoubtedly suffering, the rest of the country was by then relatively unaffected. Once rains came back to the North East with the 1973 *kremt* season, the drought moved southwards, taking hold of the eastern province of Hareghe, which is known today as Somali region (Holt and Seaman 1976; Sen 1981). Given the temporal sequence of the crisis, Sen (1981: 87) argues that there were actually two famines, whereas Kumar (1990) refers to two "phases".

While the drought had an almost immediate negative impact on food production in Wollo and other of the most affected areas, agricultural yields in other parts of the country were normal, with even some localised pockets of surplus production (Holt and Seaman 1976; Hussein 1976). It follows that the root causes of widespread

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[42] The Italian fascist regime occupied Ethiopia in 1936. After five years of exile, former emperor Haile Selassie, with assistance from the British government, successfully managed to be reinstated as the legitimate head of Ethiopia in 1941 (see for instance Markos 1994).

starvation had to be identified in factors other than drought and subsequent crop failure. Not unlike the previous generations, peasants were still oppressed by a semi-feudal system, in which they had to surrender to their landlords – and to a lesser extent to the church – a substantial portion of their produce, which left them prone to starvation even in "normal" years. The recent introduction of commercial farming and mechanised techniques in the late 1960s also played a role, as it resulted in the eviction of both peasants and pastoralists from lands suitable for cash crops (Hussein 1976). Another element of vulnerability was related to price dynamics, with cereals becoming more expensive following the failed harvests, while the relative value of livestock decreased (Holt and Seaman 1976; Sen 1981). All the while, the rural rich were able to take advantage of the market situation, accumulating land and cattle that poorer people were selling to purchase food (Hussein 1976: 15).

All this contributed to a situation where subsistence farmers had no food on their own, and no money to purchase it from the markets. Pastoralists were doubly affected by the loss of livestock – due to a combination of drought and lack of access to the best grazing lands – and by the devaluation of the surviving animals; as a result, they were not able to purchase sufficient food. Miller and Holt, in a conference paper presented only one year after the end of the famine, observed that people had "died in Ethiopia not because of an extreme shortage of food, i.e. famine, but because of an extreme shortage of money, i.e. poverty" (Miller and Holt 1975: 170). The first signs of distress became apparent when people – mostly Afar pastoralists – were seen lining the highway that transverses Wollo from North to South, stopping vehicles to ask for food. Others set up to reach Addis Ababa to receive assistance from the court, following a somewhat established pattern – "the Ethiopian tradition of mass supplication", as defined by de Waal (1997:107). By December 1972, a thousand refugees from Wollo were receiving assistance from the Ethiopian Red Cross in Addis Ababa (Holt and Seaman 1976; Sen 1981: 87).

The mounting of an adequate relief response was hindered by the authorities, who despite having had early warning alerts on the deteriorating situation did not take any countermeasure (Holt and Seaman 1976; Sen 1981), and even covered up reports about the crisis to avoid "political embarrassment" (De Waal 1997: 107). The government started to take action in April 1973, with the formation of a National Drought Relief Committee (Miller and Holt 1975: 169) and the establishment of relief camps in the famine-stricken areas. These structures were however understaffed and did not have sufficient resources to attend the needs of the displaced, mainly "women and children from the surrounding agricultural lands" (Holt and Seaman 1976: 4). At the peak of the

famine in August 1973, over 60,000 people were living in overcrowded camps equipped to deal with less than 20,000, while many more had moved to towns.

International humanitarian actors initially did not take action, possibly out of fear of straining relations with the government. A UNICEF report detailing the plight of the starving in Wollo in August 1973, which had caused the anger of government officials, was later rejected also by the organisation's headquarters in Geneva with the motivation that data were unreliable. There is evidence that the U.S. Embassy had informed its government of the deteriorating situation, and the same might be true of other diplomatic missions, yet no official reaction followed. It was only in September 1973, after the broadcasting of a very graphic documentary shot in Wollo and titled *The Unknown Famine*, that the world became aware of what was happening, unleashing a wave of charity donations (Gill 2010: 30; Kumar 1990). When international relief finally arrived to Wollo in late 1973, however, the worst had already passed. Many had left the relief camps, whose population had decreased to a more manageable 15,000 people. Nevertheless, relief efforts concentrated in the northern regions, largely ignoring the needs in Harerghe, which had become the epicentre of the second phase of the famine.[43]

The famine, or as accurately pointed out by de Waal (1997: 108), the symbolism related to a regime insensitive to the suffering of its subject, would eventually lead to the end of the Ethiopian empire. The revolution was not led by the famine victims, but by a largely urban, intellectual movement of students and junior army officers. These groups used the famine both for discrediting the government and to reinforce their own image of proponents of social justice. Their actions included exhibitions of pictures of the starving, to call out the denial of the government, as well as protests over the lack of relief. Particularly telling of this symbolic use of famine was the fact that, the night before deposing the emperor in September 1974, the revolutionaries broadcasted on Ethiopian television an edited version of the documentary *The Unknown Famine,* in which the images of the starving in Wollo were contrasted with footage of the luxurious life of the emperor and the aristocracy. To reach the masses

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[43] Sen (1981: 88) points out that the patterns of food aid distribution were not related to needs. Out of 12,000 tonnes of food distributed by the government by November 1973, only about 6,500 tonnes reached Wollo, which was suffering the most. Equally startling is the fact that the much larger donations received between November 1973 and December 1974, amounting to about 126,000 tonnes of food, were sent predominantly to Wollo and Tigray, whereas only a tiny percentage reached Harerghe, by then the most affected area.

who did not own television sets, public screenings of the documentary were organised (Gill 2010: 35; De Waal 1997: 108). In its early days, indeed, the revolutionary government – later known as Derg – showed commitment to changing the situation that had led to famine, for instance by setting up a committee of inquiry on the causes of famine, as well as a largely independent agency to oversee relief distribution, known as the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). One of the first major measures taken by the new socialist regime was the abolition of the feudal system with the land reform approved in March 1975 (De Waal 1997).

From the perspective of a scholar analysing the links between relief and development, it is relevant to note how the research produced on the wake of the famine, as well as the first measures undertaken by the government, all point to the necessity of addressing the root causes of vulnerability to food shocks. Miller and Holt (1975), writing shortly after the end of the crisis, after noting that some of the delays in relief provisions were related to the logistic constraints of buying and transporting large quantities of food, and that early warning systems were not sufficient to avoid another disaster, conclude their paper arguing that:

> *[t]he most sensible method of preventing famine is to provide the peasant with the means to save himself. This would require an extent of development that might also reduce the annual toll of 500,000 deaths that occur in Ethiopia as a result of chronic undernutrition and lack of public health engineering, and which pass almost unnoticed (Miller and Holt 1975: 172)*

Unfortunately, their predictions about the risk of a new famine would prove true less than a decade later.

4.1.4 The 1982-5 famine

The famine that affected Ethiopia in the mid-eighties has been already briefly examined for its impact on the evolution of humanitarianism (see section 3.1.2.2 above). Here I will focus on the internal dynamics of the catastrophe. It is difficult not note the paradox of a regime that came into power denouncing the inability of the emperor in addressing a famine, only to let its people starve again after less than ten years. One could conclude in a facile manner that the feudal system had been wrongly blamed for the peasant's impoverishment, or that famines in Ethiopia are actually impossible to prevent. However, evidence suggests that also in this case, there were clear political responsibilities in the making of the crisis.

By the end of the 1970s, the Derg regime led by colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam had effectively created a new dictatorship, ruling by force and shattering the opposition under the so-called "Red Terror" (De Waal 1997; Marcus 1994). To avoid the risk of urban riots and insubordination among the military, the Derg established a system to ensure steady (and cheap) food supplies to the centre, to the detriment of the rural areas. No longer forced to devolve their produce to landlords, peasants were now obliged to pay heavy taxes and had to comply with a number of restrictions, most notably on trade and on migrant labour, two important sources of income. Ultimately, these policies resulted in a general impoverishment and increased vulnerability to shocks of the rural populations (De Waal 1997: 110-111). Adding to the destitution, were the conflicts that Ethiopia was fighting in the Somali-inhabited region of Ogaden, as well as with insurgent militias in the north (Kumar 1990; De Waal 1997).

The famine that eventually unfolded was not triggered by any massive drought or natural catastrophe. As observed by De Waal (1997: 122-120), rains had been overall normal in the previous years, with the exception of Tigray. By early 1983, however, signs of starvation started to appear, with destitute people reaching feeding centres for relief. At that point, the RRC – no longer the independent agency it once was – revised its previous statistics, claiming there had been a shortfall in production. This way, the government was able to claim that the crisis was a natural disaster due to drought. Ultimately, rains did fail in 1984, further aggravating an already severe situation, and giving credibility to the apolitical narrative of famine as a natural disaster. Yet, as de Waal points out,

> *The principal cause of the famine was the counter-insurgency campaign of the Ethiopian army and air force in Tigray and north Wollo during 1980-1985. The zone of severe famine coincided with the war zone, and the phases of the developing famine corresponded with the major military actions* (De Waal 1997: 115).

Counter-insurgency techniques included restrictions on grain trade in Tigray, which led to heightened food prices, as well as the forced relocation of people, known as "villagisation". The latter, whose implementation was entrusted to the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, was justified as an attempt to provide rural populations with "modern" services. In practice, it consisted in forcing people to abandon their lands and settle in specifically created villages alongside the road, which would make for a much easily controllable population (Marcus 1994: 209).

In a move that tragically resembled the behaviour of the emperor and his court, the government initially refused to acknowledge the famine, and organised instead the celebrations of the ten years anniversary of the revolution. To prevent foreign dignitaries from viewing the effects of famine, groups of starving people who were – as usual – trying to reach the capital to obtain relief were intercepted before they could enter Addis Ababa. Foreign journalists were banned from visiting the northern provinces until about a month after the end of the celebrations (Kumar 1990; Gill 2010). Yet there is evidence that despite the government efforts in covering up the famine, foreign governments and international humanitarian agencies knew what was happening. Indeed, the RRC itself had been issuing appeals for food aid all along, but these were usually downplayed by the FAO on the grounds of the lack of logistical capacities to deliver it (Kumar 1990). Similarly to what had happened in 1973-74, it was once again a documentary that would finally catch worldwide attention and unleash the outpour of relief money (see also section 3.1.2.2 above).

The delivery of humanitarian assistance fell short of meeting the principles of impartiality and neutrality. Initially skeptical of foreign attention, the government soon turned international relief to its own advantage, diverting supplies to enforce its villagisation programme, rather than using it to feed the starving in Tigray (De Waal 1997). On their side, insurgent groups in Eritrea and Tigray became the interlocutors for foreign agencies that actually wanted to deliver relief to these areas, although their primary objective was military and not humanitarian (Gill 2010). Eventually, the insurgents would have their victory, overthrowing the government in 1991. It is commonly accepted that, in this case as with the downfall of the emperor, the famine had played a major role in the mobilisation of forces against the government (Lautze and Maxwell 2007).

4.1.5 Food crises in the 1990s and beyond

The very fact that famines had contributed to the fall of two regimes within less than thirty years has made famine prevention – or better, famine avoidance – a key concern of the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the party in power since 1991. To a certain extent, this anti-famine political contract has proven successful, for there has been no instance of famine in Ethiopia since then, despite the occurrence of several localised crises. In the 1990s, the main measures undertaken have been the strengthening of early warning systems and of an emergency reserve of food stocks. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission was rebranded as Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission, signalling the shift from a predominantly

response mode to one of prevention (Lautze and Maxwell 2007). Furthermore, a range of policies were adopted, most notably the 1993 National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management (NPDPM) (Lautze et al. 2009). However, Lautze and Maxwell (2007) observe that these efforts have been overwhelmingly oriented to the prevention of the famine as an isolated event, rather than to significantly improving the situation of the rural poor.

Amidst the optimism that famine vulnerability could be reversed, an alarm bell was set off by the occurrence of a major crisis in 1999-2000, which affected pastoral areas of Somali region. The crisis had been triggered by erratic rainfall, which early warning systems, by and large set to detect changes in agricultural highlands, failed to anticipate. Furthermore, the emergency food stocks had not been replenished, which prevented the mobilisation of adequate food supplies in the first months into the crisis. As a result, malnutrition and mortality had a peak, as well as cattle deaths (Lautze and Maxwell 2007). It appeared that the government was more concerned with a war it was waging against Eritrea than with the plight of Somali pastoralists. On its side, international donors were also hesitant to intervene in support of a country at war, and did not trust the government. Indeed, international relief only took off after the end of the war in 2000 (Lautze et al 2009). The response was overwhelmingly food-based, with 10 million people across Ethiopia are reported to have received food assistance during 1990-2000 (Kiros 2006: 20).

Contrary to an inaccurate narrative according to which famine strikes Ethiopia once every decade, new signs of distress have become evident as soon as mid-2002, following the failure of the *belg* rains in Afar and other pastoral regions. This time early warning systems worked better, but with hiccups particularly in politically marginalised areas such as the SNNPR regional state. Donor response was faster, possibly due to two foreign policy changes, the first being the end of the war with Eritrea, and the second the post-2001 positioning of Ethiopia as a key Western ally in the "war on terror". The humanitarian response, however, was once again largely based on food aid, neglecting other needs, such as health care and access to water. Furthermore, once the crisis was over, aid agencies quickly returned to "development-mode" as if nothing had happened in the previous couple of years (Lautze and Maxwell 2007: 227-232).

Internally, the crises led to a rethinking of the food security strategies, with the aim of tackling chronic food insecurity and decoupling it from emergency response. These efforts resulted in the ambitious Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP) launched

in 2005. The PSNP aimed at providing a predictable supply of food assistance (either in kind or cash) to millions of chronically insecure, which would otherwise be counted as eligible for humanitarian food assistance year in and year out (Lautze et al 2009). The PSNP, which is still active, has received overall praise, despite reported shortcomings in its targeting system and in the predictability and of payments. Another weakness remains the low rate of people that successfully "graduate" from the programme, achieving food security (Berhane et al 2013). To date, these policies have successfully managed to avoid the occurrence of famine, even during the crisis of 2011-12, which caused much less suffering in Ethiopia than it did in Somalia (where it reached the level of famine).

4.2 Current understandings of famine

Before delving into the details of the 2011-2012 crisis, which constitutes the case study for this research, it is worth clarifying the current understandings of famine, as well as its causation processes and larger implications.

4.2.1 When is a famine a famine?

Famine is a word that evokes biblical disasters, and in a broad sense indicates large-scale starvation. But this word has also political implication, and its use is influenced by political considerations. Defining a situation as a famine, in fact, points at the failure of a government to protect its citizens, and it is not surprising that famines have been followed by the fall of a regime unwilling or unable to prevent the famine, as it was the case of Ethiopia in 1974 and in after the mid-eighties famine. Hence, it should not be surprising that governments, even if unable to prevent the famine-event, tend to be sensitive regarding the use of the famine-word. It is telling that the only recent instance of a famine that has been internationally and unambiguously recognised as such has taken place in Somalia, the quintessential failed state.

The potential ambiguity of the word and the need to prioritise among different crises, as well as a general tendency towards standardisation, has prompted the need of defining clear thresholds. The United Nations and most humanitarian agencies adopted the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which identifies five levels for the severity of the food security status, ranging from "generally food secure" to "famine / humanitarian catastrophe" based on various indicators. In this classification, a famine – or phase 5 – is described as a situation where:

- The mortality rate is more than four times "normal" levels, that is a crude mortality rate of two people per day out of a population of 10,000 (whereas the "normal" should not surpass 0,5 deaths), alternatively measured as a mortality of four of more children under five years of age per day in a population of 10,000; and

- The prevalence of global acute malnutrition surpasses 30%, whereas in a food secure situation the value should remain below 5%; and

- Over 20% of the households in the surveyed area are experiencing an extreme lack of food and other basic needs.

While the current understanding is that all three criteria should be present for a situation to be defined a famine (IPC Global Partners 2012), there remains some leeway, particularly in case of localised pockets of starvation, which could meet the definition of famine if taken in isolation, but not if considered as part of a broader region. For instance, a few aid workers confidentially indicated that famine thresholds were being surpassed in some refugee camps hosting people who had escaped from Somalia; however, average values in the region were lower and thus not qualifying as such. Other factors that can play a role are the accuracy and representativity of the data. Ultimately, the decision of calling a famine a famine is taken on a case-by-case basis.

4.2.2 Famine causation

Until the 1970s, the dominant paradigm for understanding famine causation drew upon the work of Thomas Malthus, published at the end of the eighteenth century. He argued that since food production growth is slower than demographic growth, there will be a moment in which the food globally available will be not enough to feed all the human beings. Mass deaths by starvation will then bring back their number to a level compatible with food production. However, empirical evidence demonstrates that the number of deaths by starvation during famines is less than it would be required to fulfil Malthus' prophecy (De Waal 1997). Nevertheless, the idea that famines are essentially inevitable, and that they are characterised by a general lack of food remained mainstream for a long time. After World War II, this approach provided the formal justification for North American (and in general western) agricultural surplus disposal in the form of food aid, although the real, "hard" reasons are to be found in donors' political interests, such as keeping the farmers' lobby content (Barrett and Maxwell 2005).

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Even though the Malthusian approach was not (yet) formally challenged as a general theory, root causes of famine other than food scarcity were sometimes recognised and, in a certain number of cases, addressed. A significant example is provided by famine responses in India already under British rule. Along with provision of food rations, the Famine Codes and the Scarcity Manuals listed measures intended to protect the ability of purchasing food, like interventions in the grain market to cool down food prices, and public employment schemes (Drèze and Sen 1990). It is also relevant to mention the accurate analysis published by the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission in the immediate aftermath of the famine that hit the country in the mid-seventies (Hussein 1976), which showed that drought-induced harvest failure had been limited to certain areas of the country, while in others food production had been more than average. Other factors, such as land tenure systems and speculation were to be blamed for the disaster.

There is now solid evidence base proving that mass starvation does happen when and where human action has created vulnerabilities, either by the deliberate denial of food, water or land to some groups (Edkins 2007), or as a consequence of unfair socio-economic systems and relations which result in some people not having sufficient resources (Sen 1981). In other words, vulnerability to famine is man-made. In the early eighties, Amartya Sen – who would later be awarded a Nobel Prize for his work on welfare economics – developed a radically new theory understanding famine causation. His work "*Poverty and Famines. An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*" is opened by the following statement:

> *Starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there being not enough food to eat. While the latter can be a cause of the former, it is but one of many possible causes. Whether and how starvation is related to food supply is a matter for actual investigation (Sen 1981).*

Sen explained why some people sometimes go hungry (and why others do not) using a new concept, the "entitlement" to command food, i.e. the (legitimate) possibilities that an individual has to obtain food in a given society and in a given situation. Farmers who grow maize in their fields are normally entitled to eat at least a part of what they produce, wage labourers are entitled to get food in the markets in exchange for the money they earn, other individuals are entitled to the food voluntarily given to them by someone else (for example, young children or elderly people). Sen calls "entitlement failures" those situations, when one's ability or right to command sufficient food is

compromised. This is not only the case of the (subsistence) farmers losing their crops due to natural or man-made disasters, but it can also result from a change in the terms of trade (for instance, higher food prices, not accompanied by increase in wage levels), or by regulations limiting employment possibilities for some groups of people (restrictions to work-related migration, ban of female employment, etc.).

Sen himself recognises that there are cases in which his entitlement approach is not (fully) applicable. The first exception is deliberate starvation, as it may be the case in protracted hunger strikes, when one has the entitlement to command food, but decides not to use it. Sen also considers the case of those who do not fully exercise their existing right to command food, due to a variety of reasons, which may go from ignorance to fixed food habits, to laziness. Another limitation to the entitlement approach results from the vagueness of property rights, which can result in unclear definition of each one's individual entitlements. A much more relevant exception, since it is quite frequent in times of war, is the existence of substantial misappropriation of food (or extra-entitlement transfers, as put by Sen), which implies that people without the legal "right" to that food, end up eating it, while "entitled" people go hungry (Sen 1981; Devereux 2007b).

Although Sen's approach was not exempt from criticism, it laid the foundation upon which current famine understanding still relies. However, the word "entitlements" has more or less disappeared by academics' and practitioners' vocabulary, usually replaced by the broader and less normative concept of "access to food". Since then, other famine causation theories have been developed, but normally they complement, rather than radically challenge, Sen's entitlements' approach.

It is also noteworthy to mention the resurgence of "neo-Malthusian" theories, which blame climate change, environmental-unfriendly practices (like overgrazing) and (again) overpopulation as the main causes of food availability decrease and then possibly famines. It is certainly true that these factors contribute to increased vulnerability, but Malthusian and neo-Malthusian theories fail to address the political aspects of famines and more generally the social construction of vulnerability of specific groups, or more simply put, why some groups go hungry and others have plenty of food.

4.3 Concepts of famine and famine response

Despite the academic findings on famine causation, journalistic and operational reports from the Horn of Africa (as well as other crises) tend to emphasise the

"natural" causes – such as the drought – over man made ones. If in the case of mass media this oversimplification may be explained as an attempt to catch the public's attention, the fact that a number of reports published by specialised agencies share the same approach requires careful consideration. This may be related with the general problem of politicisation of famines, or with more operational considerations in the humanitarian world, or a combination of the two.

As already explained above, famine is a politically sensitive issue, and NGOs or journalists publicly accusing local authorities or other institutions of having caused or not averted the catastrophe can undermining their relationship with them, and in many cases risk expulsion. Moreover, admitting that more could have been done to prevent the escalation of the famine may even turn against such an NGO, jeopardising its reputation and complicating fund-raising activities. Blaming the weather, instead, does not imply anyone's responsibility, and therefore encounters less resistance.

At the same time, the "famine as natural hazard" narrative is functional to the continuation of a well-established pattern of humanitarian response: Food aid. As long as the problem is conceptualised as a lack of food deriving from a sudden shock, with limited or no influence of other political considerations, massive shipping of food aid will be justified to the general public. The concern here is that response is often served with the needs analysis: "10 millions of people are in need of food aid", a common statement in emergency appeals, leaves little space for discussing other interventions, or debating if it is the most appropriate response or not. Many donors tend to privilege food aid over alternative aid modalities because it gives massive visibility (everyone remembers pictures of cereal bags with the donor's logo), but also because it is perceived to be functional to their own economies.

In reality, Barrett and Maxwell (2005) demonstrate that an economy as a whole does not benefit too much from food aid, but that small, powerful elites do. Leaving aside the local purchase of food to be distributed – a growing practice, but still marginal – the availability of commodities to be distributed as food aid depends upon the existence of an agricultural surplus. Such surplus is artificially created by subsidising national farmers in order to maintain high production levels and keep market prices low. Market distortions create barriers for foreign agricultural products, possibly hampering their agricultural development, and therefore, in a certain way, the mechanisms that enable the existence of stocks to be deployed in an emergency may well be one of the root causes of that same emergency. Moreover, if food aid has to be inter-continentally transported, it involves high costs, which only benefit shipping

companies. Nevertheless, food aid remains a major element of emergency response and even development cooperation[44], although its pertinence, especially in the latter case, is in many cases questionable.

In the case of famines, acknowledging that aggregate food availability is not necessarily the main problem, and analysing the root causes for each case, could lead to choosing different responses. Clearly, once a situation has reached the scale of a famine, any humanitarian action worth its name should focus on immediate life-saving measures, including (but not limited to) providing food to undernourished people. This food does not need necessarily to come from Europe or North America; when food stocks are present in the country or in the region, best practices recommend to buy and distribute those commodities, thus helping also local producers. Other interventions that brought about positive results, but are still far from becoming the norm in the provision of aid, are the distribution of cash or vouchers to purchase food and other basic items on local markets (provided that they are functioning), or livestock interventions aimed at protecting the most valuable assets for pastoral communities (for example, providing fodder and veterinary services, or buying animals to reduce herd sizes in times of drought).

In addition, since malnutrition is closely related to health and water-related issues, it is crucial to intervene in those sectors as soon as possible. Unfortunately, non-food responses generally not only constitute a limited part of the planned response (see for instance Lautze and Maxwell 2007), but they are also the first to suffer from lack of funding. Addressing underlying causes, for example with agrarian reform, would probably not be appropriate at the peak of a crisis, when people are too destitute to work, or move away from home in search of better conditions. Nevertheless, famine may – and actually should – induce thinking about the measures to prevent the occurrence of similar crises, and lay the foundation for their implementation.

The way in which famines are understood contributes to shape responses, and insisting that there is a food availability deficit serves the purpose of advocating for in-kind food transfers. Admitting that food is available, but that some groups have not access to it in reasonable quantities, or cannot fully benefit from its nutrients, calls for finding a

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[44] WFP, which is the largest food aid agency worldwide reported using about 70% of its food aid for emergency response purposes in the year 2012 (the latest year for which the report is available), which means that the remaining 30% has been used in development or transitional contexts, such as school feeding programmes or food-for-assets schemes (WFP 2013)

different response, which could entail, depending on the specific case, land reform, protection of human rights (for instance, removing barriers to employment of women or of discriminated ethnic/social group members), improving primary health care and access to markets, and so on. It is self-evident that these types of intervention are far more complex than delivering items. Their adoption requires in fact the political will, both on the international community's (donors and implementing agencies) and on the local government's side, to change the current situation, and by doing so taking a clear stance *against* those who may benefit from the *status quo,* often politically crucial constituencies (De Waal 1997).

4.4 The 2011-12 food crisis in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian food crisis in 2011-12 was part of a broader regional event that affected 13 million people across the Horn of Africa. Triggered by drought – following erratic rains in 2010 and early 2011 – the crisis exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. Even though rainfall patterns were similar in south-eastern Ethiopia and Somalia, for instance, only the latter experienced a full-blown famine. This difference in outcomes has been explained by the fact that Ethiopia could count on its large PSNP safety-net programme, functioning early warning systems, and on the availability of humanitarian relief. In contrast, vulnerability in Somalia was higher to begin with, early warning data was not accurate, and humanitarian operations were hindered in area controlled by the islamist group *al-Shabaab*[45], resulting in unnecessary deaths and suffering (Slim 2012).

In Ethiopia, the crisis hit 4.8 million people, of which about 240,000 were refugees from neighbouring Somalia (Slim 2012). The most affected areas werelate and insufficient rains in the south-eastern part of the country resulted in poor (and delayed) harvests in agricultural areas, whereas the water shortage put the predominant pastoralist livelihoods under heightened stress. As a consequence, the nutritional situation rapidly deteriorated, with increasing rates of admissions to therapeutic feeding programmes across SNNPR, Oromyia and Somali regions, with a

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[45] The effect of al-Shabaab presence on humanitarian assistance is twofold. On the one hand, al Shabaab evicted foreign humanitarian agencies perceived as bringing an unwanted "Western influence". On the other, some large donor countries, such as the US, have anti-terrorist policies in place, which forbid forbid implementing agencies from letting aid money reach, even indirectly and unwillingly, groups listed as terrorist organisations such as Al-Shabaab. Given the difficulty of ensuring that level of control, as well as the safety risks posed by al-Shabaab itself, some aid agencies chose not to work there at all.

Figure 5: Humanitarian Hotspot Map of Ethiopia as of 21 November 2011. Source: OCHA (2011)
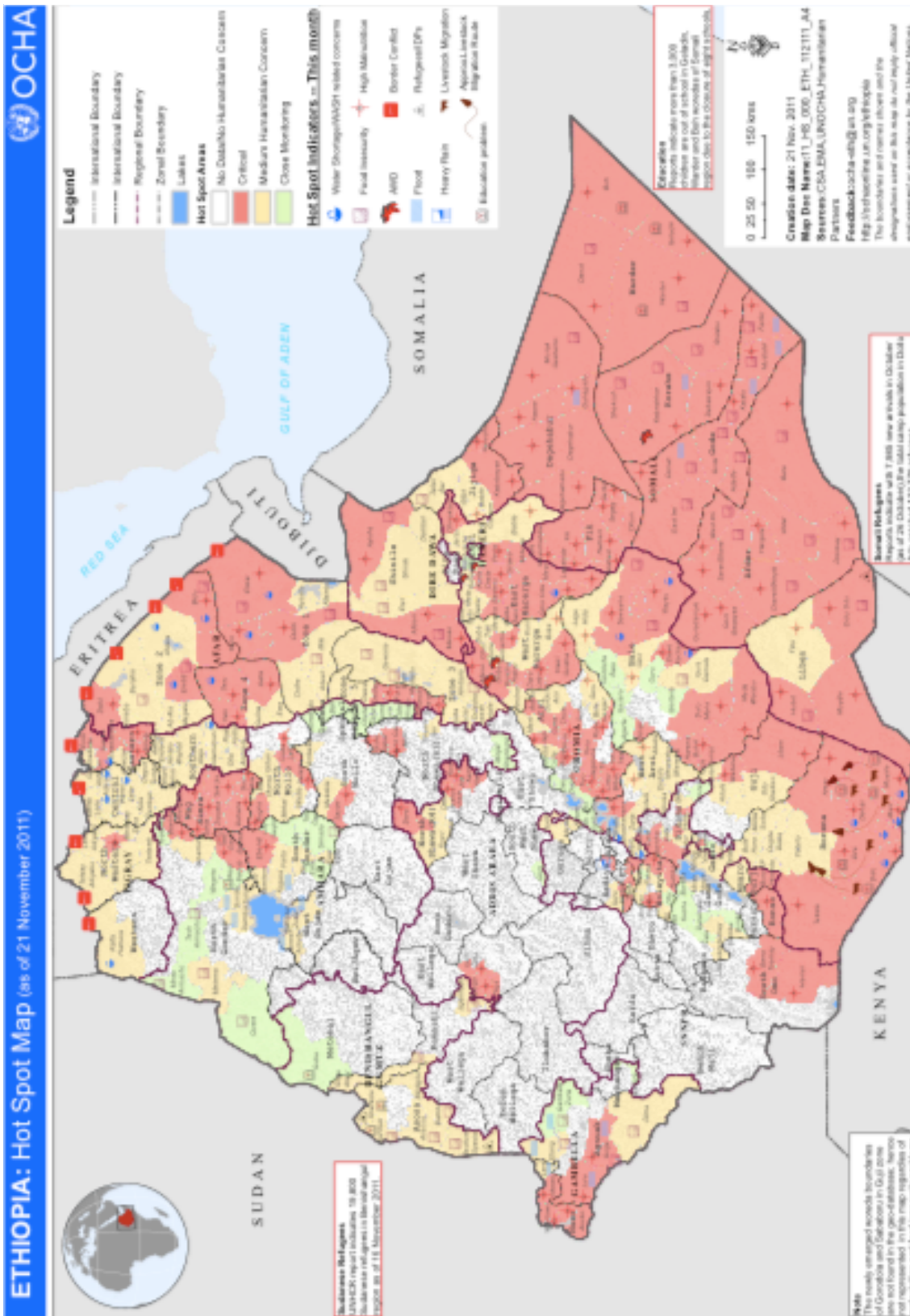
peak of up to 90% more cases of acute malnutrition between March and April 2011 in SNNPR (Joint Government and Humanitarian Partners 2011). The most affected areas are showed in figure 5 above, which indicates in red the areas of critical humanitarian concern, and in yellow stands those of medium concern as of late 2011. Overall, the crisis hit 4.8 million people, of which about 240,000 were refugees from neighbouring Somalia (Slim 2012).

One crucial issue have been restrictions in mobility – and particular cross-border mobility – which hamper opportunities for maximising range management and access to water (Levine et al 2011). Despite the availability of early-warning reports months in advance of the crisis, response did not immediately follow, which Levine et al. (2011) have attributed to poor planning and late decision-making. As a result, windows of opportunity for undertaking measures to prevent the loss of pastoral livelihoods were missed.[46] Indeed, one informant observed that once the situation further deteriorated and money arrived, the pattern of humanitarian response were not much different than in rapid-onset emergencies. One NGO staff member observed:

> *"[W]e started our emergency drought response in February, but even by then [...] it was very difficult to get interest and funding by donors, because often donors wait for numbers, a crisis. This is what they want to see because they can fund us, it's their mandate, which I totally understand. But what it means is that the crisis built and built and built, and then in July it [...] got the attention of media, and this is when everything started (snaps fingers, n.d.A.): and then it was a rapid-onset, everyone was coming in, [asking to] submit proposals in two-three days. A lot could have been done sooner, to prevent loss of lives, loss of livelihoods" (interview NGO_12_A_002)*

The progression of donations is indeed interesting to look at, particularly if one notes that Ethiopia has long been considered a "donor darling", which every year receives funds from a plethora of institutional and private donors for both humanitarian and development assistance. According to OECD statistics, in fact, total ODA flows to

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[46] Levine et al (2011) list a number of possible interventions, which, if undertaken within a certain window of opportunity, can prevent the loss of livelihoods in pastoral areas. These include, for instance, the provision of veterinary services, fodder and water to maintain healthy herds and improve their value in case of sale, which can only be possible as long as the conditions of the animals have not deteriorated beyond a certain level. Once the opportunity has been missed, that type of activity becomes useless.

Ethiopia in the period 2008-2012 have averaged 1.9 billion dollars per year (OECD 2014). Of these, humanitarian assistance represents a portion fluctuating between about 500 million and one billion U.S. dollars per year (FTS 2014). While allocations of development aid are normally programmed over multi-year cycles, humanitarian assistance can be expected to fluctuate according to the situation on the ground.

Figure 6: Cumulative Donations Towards Ethiopia Humanitarian Appeals in 2011. Source: author's elaboration, based on FTS data
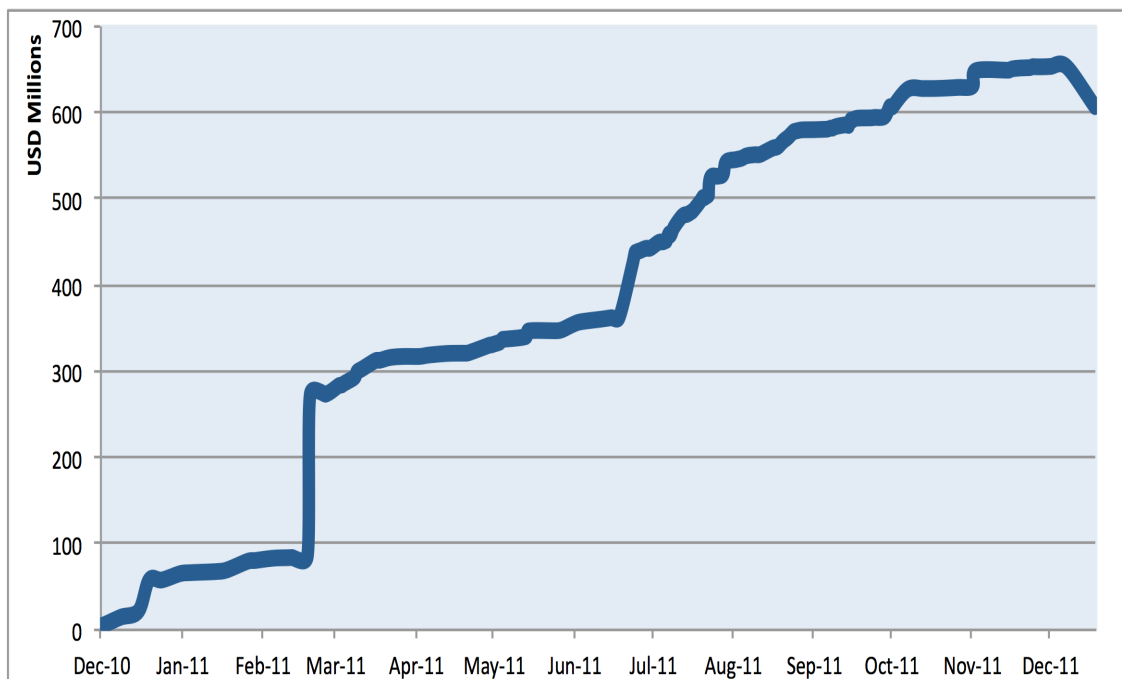
The donors' humanitarian response to needs arising from the 2011 food crisis in Ethiopia was relatively positive, with about 80% (FTS 2014) of the money required to provide relief eventually raised.[47] Yet, and despite well-functioning early warning systems, the bulk of the money was only mobilised when the scale of the emergency had become clear (Slim 2012). In fact, forecasts of a forthcoming *La Niña*-related drought were made public as early as as August 2010, but aid money started to flow in only months later. Some NGOs were able to secure funds by early 2011, but the turning point was reached around July 2011. By that time the Horn of Africa was already in the

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[47] Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the humanitarian response for Somali refugees in Ethiopia was substantially underfunded.

midst of an emergency, and the drought was dubbed as "the worst in sixty years" (UN News Centre 2011; BBC 2011), although it was not possible to go back to the original source of this quote, let alone find out the methods and data used for this calculation. While mass media largely ignored the situation in the Horn of Africa until June 2011,[48] donor attention picked up earlier, with some USD 200 million coming in around March, which however includes a single USD 106 million donation from USAID to the World Food Programme. As shown in figure 6 above, which presents the cumulative funds donated in response to the 2011 crisis in Ethiopia, at the peak of the crisis in July, over half of the money that would eventually be raised had already been secured. The pattern of donations rapidly increased between July and September, but it can certainly be said that some donors were responding to the crisis already in the first months of the year, before media started reporting about it.

The humanitarian response to the food crisis continued into 2012 and the first evaluation reports were getting published (see for instance Slim 2012; Sandison 2012; Humanitarian Coalition 2012). Overall, the response to the crisis in Ethiopia was judged to have positively responded relatively well to the crisis, and it was credited with saving thousands of lives. Major shortcomings were highlighted in the response to the needs of Somali refugees, as mortality rates in refugee camps remained worryingly high, with a peak of seven times the emergency threshold in the month of August 2011 (Slim 2012). Furthermore, there was room for improvement in areas such as early response and strategic planning.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a comprehensive historical backgroundoverview of food crises in Ethiopia, starting from an historical overview of those that took place in the past until the most recent one. These crises have deeply impacted on Ethiopian society through the ages. Although the available data only gives and incomplete overview of the loss of life, displacement and other forms of suffering, the crises clearly disrupted economic and social development processes. The interrelations between chronic poverty and vulnerability to shocks are of particular relevance in a study that

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[48] The database LexisNexis returned less than twenty newspaper articles mentioning the ongoing drought in the entire Horn of Africa between August 2010 and May 2011. On the contrary, there are about two thousand entries from June to December 2011.

sets to examine the issue of LRD, as they make it particularly difficult to define with precision when does an emergency starts and when does it end.

Furthermore, this historical overview also shows that it is not only the inconsistent weather patterns that cause famines. These are actually grounded in a complex interaction of structural factors – such as inadequate agricultural techniques or heavy taxation – which lead to increased vulnerability, and human agency, in the form of speculative actions (hoarding) or intentional denial of relief. By highlighting the multidimensionality of the causes of famine, I have sought to counter the narrative of "natural disasters" that all too often is used to describe these crises, and which effectively hides their political nature.

Politics also play a role in disaster response. Until the XIX century, emperors took pride in distributing food to the hungry in what can be seen as early local forms of humanitarianism, and Menilik's court austerity policies during the "evil days" of famine were the subject of propaganda. In more recent years, inadequate response to famines has sometimes even led to regime change, as happened with the deposition of Haile Selassie in 1974, and contributed to the the defeat of the Derg. Arguably, avoiding a new famine has been a key concern of the EPRDF for the past quarter century, as noted by Lautze and Maxwell (2007). It is interesting to note that it is not necessarily the famine itself that can lead to political crisis, but its symbolism, strategically employed by revolutionary forces. Furthermore, the overthrow of regimes is a key example of how agency can change existing structures, whereas the fact that the Derg repeated some key mistakes made by the imperial regime is a testimony to the power of structures.

Finally, I have presented the context of the 2011-12 food crisis, and outlined the pattern of humanitarian response. This constitutes the background of the empirical research, whose findings will be detailed in the next chapters, starting with the experience of the NGO MERLIN in chapter 5, and moving on to the analysis of LRD across the three institutional pillars in chapter 6.

Chapter 5. MERLIN's response to the crisis

To further understand the context in which humanitarian action takes place, and aid workers' identity as humanitarians is construed, this chapter explains how a humanitarian NGO, MERLIN, which originally stood for Medical Emergency Relief International, responded to the 2011-2012 food crisis in Ethiopia. This chapter is based upon my participant observation at MERLIN in early 2012.

5.1 Overview of the NGO

MERLIN was[49] a medium-sized international NGO based in the UK and specialised in the provision of healthcare, including nutrition services. As opposed to other medical relief organisations such as Doctors Without Borders / Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) which can be counted among the *dunantist* or emergency humanitarians, MERLIN's mission explicitly referred to a commitment to provide support during and after an emergency — "we stay for as long as it takes [...] to help rebuild the health infrastructure" (MERLIN website). Some visibility material even included the tagline "medical relief, lasting healthcare" under the organisation's logo. Its broader mandate convinced me that it would offer a productive environment to study LRD. The organisation had been present in Ethiopia since 2003, mostly delivering primary health care, water, sanitation and health (WASH) interventions, as well as emergency preparedness and response. In early 2012, the organisation had a staff about one hundred people, of which a dozen were based in the country office in Addis Ababa, and the remaining deployed to the field. Most of the personnel was Ethiopian, with the exception of five people, in part because of restrictions posed by Ethiopian authorities on the recruitment of foreign personnel. From a functional perspective, staff was organised in the following areas: programme, administration, health workers, and support staff. Programme staff could further be split into two categories, programme management staff on the one hand, and health advisers on the other. The former,

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[49]. In 2014, MERLIN was absorbed by the larger Save The Children federation.

headed by the Country Director, would mostly take care of all the tasks related to planning, proposal writing, supervision of project activities, reporting, and coordination with other agencies as well as with the government. The latter, under the supervision of the health director (reporting directly to an health advisor in the headquarters), would monitor epidemiological and nutritional data, advise on therapies and protocols to be followed in any operation, supervise the procurement of drugs, and train health workers. These workers — mostly nurses, all of them national staff — were based in the health facilities supported by the projects, or roaming among a few of them, and were tasked with assisting in scaling up screening and treatment of malnutrition. Administration staff, also all Ethiopian, would deal with accounting, logistics, procurement, human resources, and office administration. In February 2012, MERLIN was operating in two states of Ethiopia: Oromyia regional state, more specifically in its Borena and Bale zones, and the Somali regional state, in the Eastern part of the country, bordering Somalia. As shown in the map above, these regions had been among the most affected by the 2011 crisis, showing critical rates of malnutrition. MERLIN was implementing nutritional interventions in both states, supporting health facilities in the screening and treatment of malnutrition. In Somali region, the NGO was also providing basic health services (mobile clinics), in consideration of the fact that the health system in the area was judged to be almost non-existent. The situation in Somali regional state was further complicated by the on-going conflict between the Ethiopian Government and the insurgent movement Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF).[50]

5.2 MERLIN's setup in Ethiopia

MERLIN's organisational presence in Ethiopia consisted of a country office in Addis Ababa, even though no projects were on-going in the capital city, and three field offices in the areas of intervention. Such a structure is indeed quite common in large countries such as Ethiopia, and was adopted by all the organisations contacted for this research. As mentioned earlier, I was able to conduct my participant observation at both the Addis Ababa country office and at the Borena field office. In this section, I will be presenting how the two offices were structured, how the workload was shared, and which role each played in the planning of new interventions. Having only visited one of

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[50] The insecurity in the Somali region was behind my decision of only visiting the Borena zone, which is relatively safer, although cross-border clashes do happen occasionally.

the field offices, the description may not entirely apply to all of them, as the context of operation and the human resources available were different.

5.2.1 The Country Office

The country office had a role of planning interventions and ensuring overall coordination and support of the activities of the organisation in the country. The country director would normally meet with the most senior staff, the country health director and the operations manager, on a daily basis, to discuss priorities and organise the work. In particular, the operations manager was in charge of dealing with any issue arising from the field offices, as well as of liaising with the different departments to make sure that plans are being followed, that supplies are arriving on time, and so on. Support services such as general administration, procurement, logistics, bookkeeping and financial reporting, were in fact coordinated at country office level, although some tasks were decentralised to the field level. Staff meetings were held on a weekly basis, giving an opportunity to all employees to provide brief updates on progress or difficulties in their respective areas of responsibility. Duty trips to field offices, involving either management or more technical staff, were quite frequent, about twice a month. The country office played a pivotal role in the development of new project proposals. In addition to planning and supporting operations, the country office was responsible for ensuring coordination with authorities at the federal level, and with other humanitarian and development actors, including donor representatives, as well as with liaising with the headquarters of the organisation.

The allocation of working time was not much based on routines, but rather re-defined on an almost daily basis in order to address issues as they arose — such as a delay in customs clearance, a request to share epidemiological data, a car accident involving staff members, or the approaching deadline for sending out a report. "It's different most of the days. When I come to work on a typical day, first of all I check the email, because sometimes there are urgent issues that I need to respond to", said one employee. Such *ad-hoc*ness is by no means a unique characteristic of MERLIN, but is a frequent feature in crisis management (Johannisson and Olaison 2008: 257); and it can be regarded as another example of humanitarian agencies adopting an "emergency work style even in non-emergency situations" (Hilhorst and Schmiemann 2002: 497).

5.2.2 The Borena field office

To supervise its activities in the Borena region, MERLIN had opened its base in the town of Yabello, where a handful of international NGOs were also based. Other organisations had set up their offices in the larger town of Moyale, located along the border with Kenya, a few hundred kilometres away from Yabello, where they were also responding to distress migration of people across the border. At the peak of the 2011 crisis, other humanitarian NGOs had established a presence in the Borena zone, but by March 2012 they had already shut down their operations and closed their offices. One informant bitterly remarked that some of these organisations only came for a quick assessment and gave money to local implementing partners. Six months later, their projects were closed, sometimes even without anyone coming back to see what had been done with their money. MERLIN, on the contrary, was launching a new initiative in the area.

At the time of the visit, MERLIN's facilities were reasonably good for a remote town. The base was in a fenced compound, with some rooms used as offices and others for storing relief items; cars could be safely parked for the night in the internal courtyard. The organisation had also rented a house for the project manager, which doubled as guesthouse for the occasional visitors. The office had a generator that guaranteed reliable electricity supply, and access to Internet was ensured by USB mobile sticks, which allowed for regular exchanges of documents and information with the country office.

MERLIN's activities in the Borena region were coordinated by an expatriate project manager, the sole foreigner employed by the NGO in the area, and one of the few expatriates still based in Yabello. Among the personnel based in the office, there was a national health advisor, as well as a few administrative staff members. The majority of the people employed for the project were nurses and other health workers assigned to provide support to a total of about seventy health facilities across the Borena zone, sometimes in very remote areas, and who would only visit Yabello office occasionally. Their daily routine would see them monitoring the health facilities under their responsibility.[51]

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[51] The number of health centres and health posts under a nurse's responsibility would vary according to the area and distance to be traveled. In towns such as Moyale, one nurse could be allocated up to 3-4 different facilities, but not too far from one another, so that a daily visit (or even two if necessary) could be possible. It shall be highlighted that this description only refers to the setup of one field office at a

5.3 MERLIN's activities in the Borena zone

As mentioned above, my participant observation included a four-week stay in the MERLIN office located in the Borena[52] zone, in the southern part of Oromyia state, along the border with Kenya. The Borena zone takes its name from the Borena people, pastoralist communities that were historically based in the southern lowlands of Ethiopia all the way through northern Kenya (Markakis 2011:66). The zone now known as Borena, administratively split into eight *woredas* or districts, does not cover the entirety of the lands originally inhabited by Borena peoples, and yet it remains the largest zone in Oromyia (Markakis 2011:66). The administrative centre of the zone, Yabello[53], is located about 600km from Addis Ababa, and about 200km away from the larger border-town of Moyale, which is split into an Ethiopian and a Kenyan part. The Borena zone is a predominantly semi-arid area characterised by the absence of perennial rivers and by irregular rainfall, which results in the area being subject to frequent droughts. There are two rainy seasons, *Gaana*[54] or long rains between March and May, and *Hagaya* or short rains between September and November, but precipitations have been erratic, with rains sometimes not occurring at the expected time, or with abnormal intensity, either far above or far below average (Lasage et al. 2010: 9-11). The Borena zone had been one of areas stricken by the 2011 crisis, with worrying rates of acute malnutrition. One MERLIN employee of Ethiopian nationality described the context by saying:

> *"[E]ven if there is rain they would still need humanitarian assistance [...] They have critical water shortages, which is also a problem for the pasture, [and] most of them, about 70%, are pastoralists, so completely dependent on water" (interview, March 2012).*

MERLIN had launched a first nutritional intervention in the Borena zone in 2010, with funding from ECHO, and had obtained a grant from the same donor to respond to the worsening situation in 2011. The main difference between the two projects, and among

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particular point in time, and that arrangements in other MERLIN field offices were not necessarily similar, considering the different operational contexts

52. Also spelled "Borana"

53. Also spelled "Yabelo"

54. Which roughly corresponds to the *Belg* rains in other parts of the country

these and another proposal that at the time was being considered by the donor, lied mostly in the progressive shift from direct implementation towards supervising and supporting local health systems. In terms of main objectives and beneficiary population, however, differences were minimal, which led one staff member to describe the different projects as "more or less the same [...] actually a continuation of the same thing" (interview NGO_12_B_002). Another informant within the organisation explained that the main difference between the old projects and the new ECHO proposal was in the targeted areas, which had to be reduced because two districts were no longer considered eligible for funding by the donor. Despite the efforts in moving towards capacity building of local health services, however, MERLIN's then country director expected that external support would still be needed, even in the absence of major crises, because of the magnitude of needs as well as the absence of actors active in the nutrition sector in the zone. He was positive about the chances of the project to realistically improve health staff capacities, but expected that issues like health staffing, or procurement of essential drugs would still require longer term support. He suggested that with two more years of continuous support, the governments' staff would have greater capacities to handle even a nutritional emergency, although they would probably still experience difficulties in managing stocks and procurement.

5.4 Funding sources

At the time of my participant observation, MERLIN was running operations in the Borena and Somali regions with funding from ECHO. Both projects were set to end by mid-2012, but in consideration of the fact that the local health systems would not be able to take over all responsibilities that early, the NGO was actively looking for additional resources. By April 2012, they had secured funds from UNICEF to carry out a two-year project to support the local health system in the diagnosis and treatment of malnutrition in the Borena zone. While it could be questioned whether the project would manage to bring about a substantial improvement in local capacities, one positive aspect was that it would enable MERLIN to keep monitoring closely nutritional and epidemiological data, allowing the organisation to be ready to scale up its intervention if needed. In addition, MERLIN was applying for a 4-year grant from DFID to continue operations in Somali region, all this while also awaiting decisions from ECHO regarding follow-up proposals to their current interventions. Furthermore, they were negotiating with ECHO another proposal focused specifically on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in the Borena and Bale zones.

In addition to institutional funds, MERLIN could also use some private donations, but these were rather limited, averaging 10-12% of their total funding. MERLIN had also considered a contingency plan to carry on some activities in case the proposal submitted to ECHO would end up being rejected, namely accessing the United Nations' Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF). Being a facility for short-term interventions of usually no more than six months' project duration, the HRF would not allow the NGO to complete all the activities in the ECHO proposal, but would at least ensure some continuity in service provision. On a positive note, being the HRF a "fast-track" system, MERLIN would be able to obtain funds within two months, compared to the six months usually necessary with ECHO between submission of the proposal and availability of funds. Another option to fill in smaller gaps would be applying for contributions from the United Kingdom's Disaster Emergency Commitee (DEC). The strategy of seeking development funding to go alongside emergency projects was coherent with the double mandate of the organisation and responded also to the need to avoid that its permission of operating in Ethiopia would be revoked. Yet, getting development funding to try to stay longer after emergencies was easier said than done:

> *"[We try] to design programmes in such a way to facilitate transition to development [but] sometimes we have a bit of difficulties in trying to raise resources for some of the long term programming, and it is not only us: it is quite across, because of the way the donor environment is structured. [...] It is much much easier to raise funds for acute emergencies than for long term development"* (interview *NGO_12_B_006*)

The "diversification" strategy of working with different donors and different budget lines in order to always have cash flow implied that MERLIN had to constantly apply for funding, sometimes with very short windows of opportunity, even just a couple of weeks. This resulted in poorly written documents, and subsequent requests from the donor for integrations and clarifications, all of which could have been limited if more time had been granted in the first place.

5.5 Relations with local authorities

A characteristic of Ethiopia was that there was a strong engagement from the Government, with clear strategies outlined at national level, and with a system requiring formal approval of each and any aid project.

As a rule, MERLIN carefully followed the general rules, as well as the strategies defined by the Ministry of Health. Ensuring compliance helped maintaining positive relations

with the authorities, as all proposed interventions would be in line with their own policies. In this respect, MERLIN was already adopting a behaviour that is typically associated with that of a development organisation, as ensuring local ownership of projects is also one of the main tenets of contemporary development discourse. The problem of working in a setting where the government has such a strong involvement with aid projects was that occasionally the NGO would be caught between conflicting policies promoted by the local administration and the donors, respectively. They therefore would have to negotiate which parts of the locally approved strategies could be implemented taking into account donors' limitations. Sometimes reconciling the different views would prove difficult, but "we are obliged to discuss it and to [operate] according to the rules of the game which are given to us" (interview NGO_12_B_004).

MERLIN staff also lamented that turnover within their counterparts in the Ethiopian bureaucracy often meant that due to institutional memory loss, they would have to renegotiate their projects multiple times, as the new person would not necessarily be aware of what their predecessor had agreed upon. The problem was exacerbated by the lengthy procedures of proposal assessment and approval typical of some donors. Furthermore, some MERLIN staff members reported difficulties in complying with the Ethiopian rules of devoting no more than 30% of the budget dedicated to administrative costs, particularly if training of health personnel had to be considered as "overhead". In fact, one of the key elements of MERLIN interventions was capacity-building of local health staff.

5.6 Staff turnover

Due to the relatively short-term nature of its projects, as many other humanitarian agencies MERLIN also had to deal with staff turnover. In discussions with management, the issue was split into two separate points: expatriate and local staff. As for the former group, turnover was taken almost as a given — "Turnover for expats will not change, because they don't want to spend their life in very remote areas" (interview NGO_12_B_004). At the same time, the presence of some expatriates, even if just a handful of them, was deemed necessary to ensure "neutrality of judgement". The key would then be to have some expatriates, and not necessarily to retain the same people in the same position or office for longer than their initial contract. Managers would normally be contracted for a period of two years, even when that duration exceeded the time remaining to completion of all the projects. The organisation in fact had no plans on leaving Ethiopia in the short term, and these positions would be needed anyway. According to an informant the turnover rates had declined in the past eighteen

months, following the appointment of a new country director, which may lead to think that the change might have been related to the management style of the country director himself, although the increased availability of funds following the 2011 crisis might have also played a role. Nevertheless, four out of the five expatriates serving for MERLIN Ethiopia at the time of my participant observation would eventually leave the country in the following year, and at least one of them remained within MERLIN a different country. One of the four people was the country director himself, who had completed his two-year contract. As for the fifth expatriate, he stayed within MERLIN Ethiopia, although in a different capacity, for about one year and a half, when he also left for a new assignment.

As for local staff, MERLIN was faced with the structural problem of only having short-term funds. Usually they would not offer contracts for periods exceeding the duration of the projects their salary was charged to. For country office staff, who provided support to more than one project at a time, money from different projects would often be pooled to fund a single position. Yet, the duration of a contract could not exceed the time left on the project(s) that would end last. At the time of my visit, that implied that the maximum duration of a contract could be the two years of the recently approved UNICEF-funded project. One employee in the country office recounted having been hired for a short-term contract in late 2011, and subsequently getting reappointed for an additional year, with a clause allowing for earlier contract termination with three months' notice. Because her role was not directly linked to a single project's lifetime, she was unable to make predictions regarding her prospects after the end of her assignment. Yet, she judged this working arrangement as more stable compared to her previous experience in a larger international NGO. There, she had worked for almost one year on three-month contracts, never knowing for sure whether she was going to get an extension or not.

Back to MERLIN's way of addressing staff turnover, the country director explained that he made sure key people in finance, logistics, and human resources in the country office were aware that the NGO intended to remain in the country, and that their contract would be renewed for several years, as long as funds were available. In the field offices, the strategy would be of empowering some of the supervisors in the hope they would be satisfied of their work and remain within the organisation, maintaining some degree of institutional memory. Even so, there were instances of people leaving their jobs before the end of their contract, possibly due to the hardship of working in rural areas when their families remained in Addis Ababa.

Figure 7: Simplified proposal development flowchart within MERLIN. Source: Author's own elaboration.
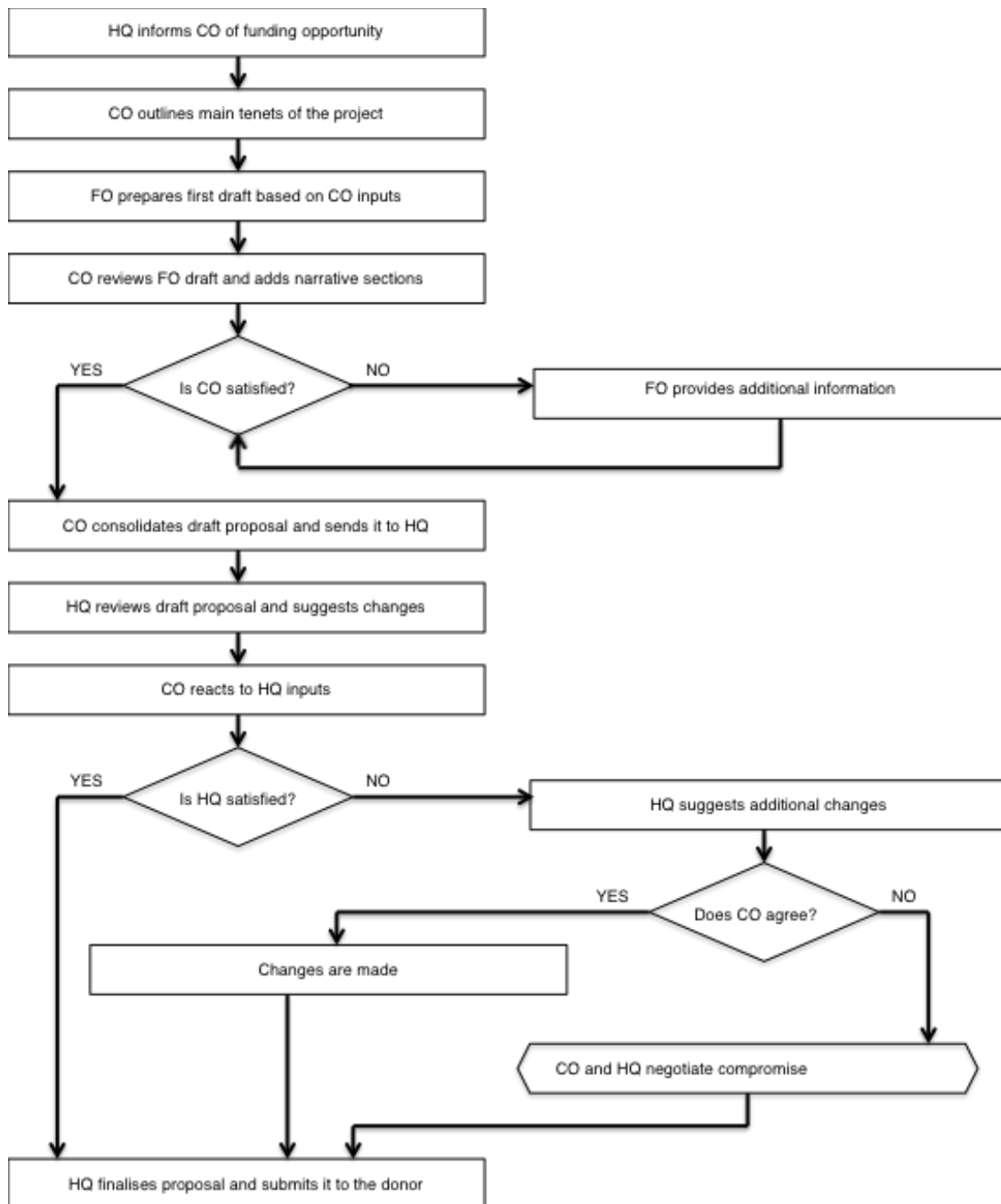
5.7 Proposal writing and decision-making

The development of new project proposals for activities in Ethiopia was usually dealt with in country, with the participation of both country and field office staff, rather than at headquarters level. Usually, after having received notice of an open call for proposals, the first step would be for the country office (CO) – in the person of the country health director – to liaise with the relevant field office(s), sharing with them the key ideas and instructions for them to develop a first draft. This document would normally only contain the logframe and the technical aspects of the proposed intervention, such as number of beneficiaries and location of the health facilities to be included in the project. Sometimes, FOs would have to undertake surveys and assessments specifically geared towards collecting data for a given proposal, or they might use information already in their possession. The CO would then add the "narrative" parts of the proposal, such as the context analysis or the description of the activities of the organisation in the country – "All the crosscutting issues, monitoring and evaluation, those things that need a lot of writing [and] no technical background" (interview NGO_12_B_002).

Programme staff at CO level would also be responsible for editing and reviewing the parts of the proposal written in the field, so to ensure consistency and readability, as well as compliance with the donor's criteria. Sometimes the CO would require additional inputs from the FO before finalising the proposal. The CO would then share the draft proposal with the headquarters (HQ) for additional rounds of reviews before final submission to the donor. Reviews would focus particularly on the strategy, indicators, and internal coherence, and they would be particularly thorough in case of activities in new geographical or thematic areas. Proposals could go back and forth several times between London and Addis Ababa, in the search for consensus.

In case of unresolved disputes between the CO and the HQ, the latter, and more precisely the Head of Region, had in principle the power of imposing their own view. However, informants stated that the COs would normally have the final say, in the belief that they should only run operations they were willing and able to implement, as they would ultimately be responsible for their success. Yet, one source within the organisation hinted at a less inclusive decision-making process, explaining that mismatches between the views of the management as opposed to those of field staff were frequent, and that the former would usually end up prevailing over the latter: "sometimes they don't care if it matches with the needs at field level or not. Sometimes

they need to fit: field people just modify the thing so that they get some funding at least to continue the operation.

The proposal development process described, and whose main steps are detailed in figure 7 above, was not necessarily followed step-by-step, but it could be adapted according to necessity. For instance, in case of particularly complex proposals or very tight deadlines, the first draft could be developed in its entirety by the country office, and only sent to the field for comments and validation. In other occasions, staff based in the field might outline "concept notes" based on locally assessed needs on their own initiative, "in case there is any other funding available" (interview NGO_12_B_003). Of course the concept note would still have to be reviewed, expanded and adapted to the format required by the specific donor, but "it would make no sense to develop a [full] proposal" (interview NGO_12_B_003) without any sense of the specificities of the donor requirements. The informant went on to explain that in essence, all donors required more or less the same information, although the template would be different. Particularly in case of templates with a strict word or page limit, more work would be necessary to decide what really needs to be said and what can be left out. Furthermore, because of the absence of donor representation in the field, all the information related to upcoming calls for proposals and other funding opportunities was normally not directly available to field-based staff, but handled at headquarters and country office level.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an example of humanitarian response drawn from my participant observation at MERLIN in early 2012, and shows that how the organisation managed to combine humanitarian with development work, despite the former being its predominant mode (at least at that specific point in time). The description of its organisational settings, while not necessarily representative of all humanitarian actors, can nevertheless provide insights on the challenges faced by foreign humanitarian NGOs in Ethiopia. The example of MERLIN is particularly significant to highlight the interplay of structural factors, such as laws, rules and procedures that need to be followed, and the organisational agency, expressed for instance in the diversification of the donor base, aimed at allowing the NGO to pursue its own objectives.

This review will serve as a background for the next chapter, where I will focus on presenting empirical data to illustrate the persistence – or not – of the humanitarian-development gap in the three institutional pillars.

Chapter 6. Bridging the gap?

In this chapter, I will be presenting the empirical data collected in Ethiopia on what hinders and what enables LRD approaches. I will first describe several way in which development and humanitarian activities have been linked in the response to the 2011-12 food crisis. The empricial material will then be described along the three institutional pillars discussed in chapter 2: i) *regulative*, or the (binding) rules that define how humanitarian and development aid is provided; ii) *normative*, which includes the (non-binding) norms and values that shape aid practices; iii) *cultural-cognitive*, referring to what aid workers know and define as desirable.

6.1 Practices of LRD

In this introductory section, I will present a few examples of how aid organisations active in Ethiopia in the period under observation were integrating their humanitarian and development efforts. From the responses provided during interviews and informal conversations, three main avenues for aid organisations to implement LRD have emerged: i) ensure continued presence by diversifying their donor base; ii) invest in capacity building (including during emergency response); and iii) integrating livelihoods and disaster risk management perspectives in their approaches.

6.1.1 Long term plans and diversification of the donor base

None of the organisations contacted for this study shared with me any plans of voluntarily closing their operations in Ethiopia anytime soon. On the contrary, some organisations reported having a multi-year framework that included some form of engagement with development or disaster preparedness. Faced with the fragmentation of funding opportunities, a common strategy to ensure continued presence was that of seeking to diversify their donor base, reaching out to different institutional and private donors, and accessing both humanitarian and development funding lines.

For instance, as seen in chapter 5, MERLIN intended to stay in Ethiopia for as long as necessary to achieve their goals of lasting healthcare, and had already secured both humanitarian and development funding to do so. Apart from enabling longer-term capacity building, continued presence was also seen as a way to be ready for scaling up

interventions in case of a new crisis, avoiding the need to re-apply for a permission of working in the country (see section 6.2 below). These concerns had led some NGOs to continue carrying out activities after the end of a project and pending the donor approval of a follow-up proposal, using other funds available to the organisation. Other NGOs had more formal plans for longer-term involvement, as in the case of Action Aid:

> *Once it is decided [to open a field office], it will stay there for a minimum of twelve years [...] It is not a short term intervention, it is not a 1-year or 2-year project. In most cases, the amount of money coming from individual supporters is not enough to address the gaps, so [...] we write a proposal and ask [...] institutional donors [for funding]* (interview NGO_13_D_001)

The informant, whose role was Food Security and Emergency Coordinator, later pointed out that the decisions on where to intervene and how were not donor-driven, but rather based on their own internal analysis and plans.

The country director of another NGO reported having a five-year plan for Ethiopia, which was itself part of a larger five-year global strategy, including both development and emergency components. Funding would come from a plethora of different institutional and, to a lesser extent, private donors.[55] The NGO would constantly be on the lookout for funding opportunities with a whole team dedicated to proposal writing. Nevertheless, they would only accept funding in line with their overall strategy and mandate. For instance, the NGO did not engage in food aid and nutrition projects, and thus they would not apply for funding that had to be employed in one of those sectors.

> *Sometimes it's a perfect fit, we write the proposal, we get the funding, we implement a great project. Sometimes it's not a great fit, because maybe the donor wants to fund something we don't actually do [...] It could be we don't know the donor, or there is a lot of reporting requirement, it could be very labour-intensive [...] Sometimes we write the proposal and we don't get the funding* (interview NGO_13_E_001)

By their own admission, other NGOs would instead work on a more donor-driven agenda, planning their interventions based on the available budget and priorities.

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[55] The informant noted that they would sometimes turn down small private funding opportunities, if they came with excessive reporting requirements, as they would not be worth the additional work required.

"When we know there's an opportunity [we convene staff from] all the sectors that the donor is willing to fund" (interview NGO_13_H_001), explained the head of Food Security of a major NGO. The same NGO was also involved in the ECHO "cluster" approach, in a few cases with the role of cluster lead – and thus the relative certainty of steady funding for the next three years at the very least. Despite the differences among them, none of the organisations involved in the study was reliant on a single donor. This is indeed consistent with Ohanyian (2009, 2012) finding that NGOs with a larger donor base are able to exercise a greater degree of agency, and are less pressured to follow priorities set by any donor.

6.1.2 Capacity building

One possible way of making relief more "developmental" is focusing, whenever possible, on capacity-building. This is a mode of action that, while not inherently developmental nor in contrast with humanitarian principles, is mostly associated with development programmes. Nevertheless, supporting local capacities can also be done in humanitarian setting.

An example of humanitarian capacity-building is that of MERLIN in Borena. First of all, and this even during the initial phase of more direct involvement, MERLIN had not set up separate health facilities, but provided nutritional interventions through existing structures responding to the ministry of Health. This way they avoided duplication and started familiarising local staff with treatment protocols. By early 2012, thus still formally in "emergency mode", the NGO had abandoned direct implementation and focused on supervision. For instance, a nurse hired by MERLIN would not be the one to directly screen the children for malnutrition, nor engage in the distribution of the appropriate nutritional supplements, but would carry out daily supervision visits in each facility, sitting next to the local nurse to verify that protocols were being followed and only stepping in when necessary. In other words, at that point implementation modalities did not differ much from the typical development project. Within MERLIN, it was recognised that the national health service staff would eventually be able to independently recognise and treat malnutrition, but that they would likely still need external support in the procurement, transportation and storage of drugs and other supplies, which are crucial for effective recovery. Considering that LRD does not necessarily means transition from a situation of humanitarian concern to full self-sufficiency, and also taking into account the fact that the NGO planned to maintain its support from a more "developmental" point of view, it could be argued that MERLIN

was indeed trying to bridging the gap. Nevertheless, the topic of LRD as such was notably absent in the day-to-day of most of MERLIN's personnel, as in other NGOs.

Examples of capacity-building activities carried out by other NGOs reportedly included teaching pastoralist communities innovative rangeland management techniques, which would then turn useful in times of drought, such as how to prepare pasture and ponds which can be filled up with rain. Another example was that of teaching how to build latrines with locally available materials. The latter initiative, for instance, has the immediate effect of providing adequate sanitation and avoiding the spread of diseases, just like any other type of latrine regardless of the constructor, but with the added advantage that communities would then be able to fix them in case of malfunctioning, or build additional ones in case of demographic increase or migration to other areas. An NGO employee found that community involvement helped "protect" the gains of the project, compared to initiatives perceived to be imposed from above.

Another NGO had instead launched a humanitarian programme that would transition its beneficiaries to a livelihoods project. The humanitarian "phase" included cash distributions aimed at addressing immediate needs. Similarly to a cash-for-work scheme, such distributions would be conditional upon attendance of training courses – from basic literacy and numeracy to vocational training. The newly acquired skills would then ideally be put to use in the second phase, under a livelihoods project where beneficiaries would develop their own small businesses. The idea, remarked the NGO adviser, was not just to serve the same communities, but also to track people and accompany them over a longer period of time.

6.1.3 Livelihoods and disaster risk management

For organisations working in the area of food security, LRD often translated in heightened attention to livelihoods and income-generating activities, or disaster risk reduction activities more in general.

For one NGO, a way of integrating disaster risk management was planning each activity in drought-prone areas, such as the Somali region, with the issue of water scarcity in mind. In other contexts, for instance in Amhara region, the approach would be that of facilitating information exchange related to early warning, ensuring that such messages could reach farmers in the villages. This would be done within a development project aimed at addressing food security by promoting production and marketing of vegetables. Disaster risk management, explained a food security officer

"is cross-cutting for all interventions" and that in practice "it is a mix of activities" (interview NGO_13_C_001).

In other cases, disaster risk reduction was the primary objective of a project, but again, what it entailed in practice would vary across geographical areas and thematic sectors. In the Borena region, there were a few interventions focusing on rangeland management and in particular on best practices of bush clearing.[56] I interviewed staff from two different organisations carrying out this type of project. In both cases, it all boiled down to explaining the most appropriate techniques and providing training if necessary. The actual work would be carried out by the local communities themselves, which, being mostly pastoralists, had a clear interest in how to address a problem that had a critical impact on the survival of their animals. In such cases, NGO staff expected that, once adopted the innovative rangeland management practices, communities would likely continue carrying out the activities by themselves with no additional inputs from outside, because they would directly benefit from the preservation of grazing lands. But the reverse also applied: in case of activities not clearly addressing a need felt by the community, there were little chances for continuation beyond the project's timeframe.

Finally, on the UN front, it is worth mentioning a scheme being piloted by WFP, known as "Purchase for Progress", in which the agency would buy cereals from local small farmers, in addition to more established overseas suppliers. Cereals acquired locally would then be used for humanitarian purposes, and could constitute a link between relief and development – or to be more precise, from development to relief. On the development side, the programme included capacity-building on aspects such as quality control, which was expected to improve marketability of local produce. On the humanitarian side, the source of food should not influence the way activities were planned and beneficiaries targeted. As locally sourced cereals were complemented by produce shipped from abroad, using WFP regular channels, the ability to feed the needy was not dependent on the output of the development activities. Such a scheme demonstrated that there are cases in which it is possible to link humanitarian activities and development ones, without neither side having necessarily to compromise on key

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[56] Bush clearing and bush thinning aim at limiting bush encroaching, or the presence of invasive species in lands used for animal grazing. Experts consider the occurrence of an ecosystem dominated by woody vegetation, rather than grass, as one of the major forms of degradation in rangelands in arid and semi-arid regions (Lukomska, Quaas and Baumgärtner 2010)

objectives and values. Support to small farmers would aim to promote economic growth at household level, while humanitarian relief could remain needs-based; targeting of beneficiaries would follow different criteria and would not interfere with each other.

6.2 The rules of the game

The first of the three pillars examined is the regulative one. Before delving into the rules governing the provision of humanitarian and development aid, it is worth noting that these fields, and more in general the domain of international relations, are characterised by the obvious lack of a global government (Weiss 2013: 1). As a consequence, enforcement becomes problematic even in case of "hard" rules, which are supposed to be binding. Indeed, Weiss argues that "compliance gaps" reduce institutionalisation. Nevertheless, and regardless of compliance, various sets of rules applicable to the humanitarian and development aid chains do exist.

Traditional international humanitarian law (IHL) is one most obvious source, but being only applicable to situation of armed conflict, it not relevant to a case study on a food crisis in peaceful times. Even though, as mentioned in chapter 2, there is a growing body of regulations going under the label of "International Disasters Response Law" (IDRL), it is more a "rather scattered and heterogeneous collection of instruments" (Fisher 2007:353). These regulations, notes Fisher (ibid), establish that affected governments can receive assistance, but there is no corresponding duty for humanitarian agencies to intervene, nor affected governments are obliged in any way to accept such assistance. As of now, IDLR deals mostly with procedures for the delivery of assistance (provided that the affected government requires it), such as establishing special procedures for custom clearance, or waiving custom duties (Fisher 2007: 358).

Apart from international law, the main sources of binding rules for both humanitarian and development organisations are, on the one hand, the applicable laws of the recipient country and, on the other hand, contractual stipulation on the use of funding determined by (or at best negotiated with) donors. The former apply to all aid organisations in the country indistinctly, whereas the latter are defined on an *ad hoc* basis for each grant. Taken together, these two sources, more than international law, establish the regulative framework that defines day-to-day practices of humanitarian and development assistance, and have come up frequently in my interviews and during my participant observations.

6.2.1 Ethiopian rules on the provision of aid

Ethiopia is quite unique insofar it has developed a rather strong governmental presence in the domain of disaster prevention and response, as well as development. The Ethiopian state was involved in various forms of disaster relief since imperial times, and since the 1974 famine, a series of national institutions dealing with disaster prevention, response, and development have been established (Lautze et al. 2009). As one informant noted, "the government is driving the train. And we are not even in the train: we are in the back, pushing the train. They make the decisions: it's their country, it's their government, it's their people, and they take the issue of sovereignty very seriously" (interview UN_13_006, May 2013).

The most relevant pieces of legislation in terms of humanitarian and development assistance are:

- The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution which, in its article 89§3, states that the "Government shall take measures to avert any natural and man-made disasters, and, in the event of disasters, to provide timely assistance to the victims".

- The "Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009" (henceforth CSP), which regulate the various aspects of the establishment, registration, and functioning of NGOs and other charitable organisations.

- The 1993 "National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management" (NPDPM),[57] which outlines the basic principles that have to be followed in the provision of humanitarian assistance in the country.

Furthermore, and not surprisingly, aid agencies are bound to respect any other applicable laws, such as those related to employment, as well as regulations relevant for their sector of intervention, even though not necessarily developed for use by external agencies. As far as nutrition is concerned, one informant explained that the Ministry of Health has a "very strong nutrition unit that has to approve all proposals, all protocols for nutrition services, they have to revise and approve any [nutritional] surveys that has already been done before it gets published" (interview

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[57] After the 2011-2012 crisis, the NPDPM has been replaced by a National Policy And Strategy on Disaster Risk Management, approved in July 2013 and therefore not relevant to the present study.

NGO_12_B_006), commenting that it would almost impossible to start a programme without local authorities giving it a blessing.

An important element of the Ethiopian regulations on charitable activities is that they do not differentiate between humanitarian relief and developmental activities. In terms of LRD, this means that NGOs can carry out both types of projects as they deem appropriate. Indeed, the 1993 NPDPM explicitly encouraged linkages between disaster relief and rehabilitation, disaster prevention, and development objectives.

CSP is the single piece of regulation that impacts most on NGO practice. The proclamation, in fact, regulates in detail the procedures required to constitute and run an NGO (sections V and VI). In particular, all charities are expected to submit every year a statement of accounts (art.78) and an annual report (art.80) to the Charities and Societies Agency (CSA). The CSA is mandated with supervising charity work, and it has the authority to issue, renew, or revoke the licence to operate, which in any case has a maximum duration of three years (art. 76).

Moreover, in its art. 14, the CSP defines the sole admissible purposes of charitable action. It is worth noting that the most sensitive (such as the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution, and the promotion of justice) are reserved to Ethiopian charities, which in turn are defined in art.2§2 as those that:

> *"are formed under the laws of Ethiopia, all of whose members are Ethiopians, generate income from Ethiopia and wholly controlled by Ethiopians. However, they may be deemed as Ethiopian Charities or Ethiopian Societies if they use not more than ten percent of their funds which is received from foreign sources"*

The obvious aim of this provision is to prevent any foreign influence, even if indirect, on controversial themes, particularly considering that it was included in the draft law after post-electoral turmoil in 2005 (Lautze, et al. 2009). This provision has created difficulties particularly to alchemical humanitarian NGOs and human rights groups. This has not necessarily stopped NGOs from getting involved on these issues. For instance, an NGO employee noted that they had a project on "Civil Society Development – which would be called *Governance and Human Rights* if we were not in Ethiopia".

Furthermore, the Charities and Societies Proclamation stipulates that all NGOs – regardless of their sector of work – cannot use more than 30% of their funding for

"administrative" costs (art. 88§1). While 30% might seem a fair amount of money, this depends on what gets to be labelled as "administrative". I was informed that in some cases, training costs had been counted as "administrative costs", even though it was apparently no longer the case.[58] Such an interpretation, based on the fact that training (in the case in point, of health workers) was not considered to bring a direct benefit to the affected populations, would make it impossible for any NGO to focus solely on capacity-building. Overall, the "70-30 rule", as it is usually known, was cited often times by NGO staff as a major obstacle in project design.

6.2.1.1 What it takes to play by the rules

All projects have to be approved by the relevant authorities at federal, regional, and zonal level. The authorisation can only be granted once an NGO has secured funding, but earlier talks are encouraged, which should minimise the risk of incompatibilities between local authorities and donor requirements. Ethiopian authorities have their own proposal format, which differs from the ones used by institutional donors, and requires all expenses to be converted in local currency (birr). Some informants reported that the three levels of administration do not necessarily communicate among each other, which can be become a problem during audit. In fact, if an NGO is found to have spent money in ways other than what agreed upon in the project document – even if acting on the request of zonal or regional authorities –, their licence can be revoked. An NGO country director reported that sometimes "If we continue, we might have the Government telling us 'You don't have the right to work on this aspect because (the agreement) it is not signed', while if we don't continue […] another office will say 'You are doing nothing, malnutrition has a peak'" (interview NGO_12_B_004). Yet, another informant – a country director with twenty years of experience in the country – dismissed the latter problem, claiming that they enjoy good relations with Ethiopian authorities precisely because of their "can-do attitude":

> *My experience in Ethiopia is that mostly the government would be flexible; they do want an agreement, which is right and correct, but they are flexible on the timing. It is rare that people insist that you cannot respond until you have the agreement signed […] Some organisations themselves can over-emphasise the bureaucracy and […] would insist*

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[58] Only in 2015 the Charities and Societies Agency would specify that costs incurred for salaries, transport fees, and training can be considered as "project" rather than "administrative" costs.

they cannot operate without an agreement, but we rarely had that
experience (interview NGO_13_F_001, April 2012).

Nevertheless, even if his personal experience was that authorities are not actually interested in NGOs following the rules, others were not willing to take the chances. In doing so, however, they might as well establish a self-fulfilling prophecy, as argued by the same country director. Having good relations with the authorities, in his view, was a consequence of being always ready to intervene, which at every turn reinforced the mutual trust and gave his NGO the option to conduct activities even if agreements were still pending. On the contrary, he observed,

a lot of NGOs are caught in the paradigm, trying to get a government
agreement, and trying to get funding to come in, and then, sometimes
the government guys at woreda level can get upset, annoyed that
response is delayed, and that can cause problems in the relationship
(interview NGO_13_F_001).

NGO employees were usually ambivalent on the role exercised by the Ethiopian government. Some informants praised the industriousness of the national authorities in coordinating relief and development efforts, often noting that this stood in contrast with their experience in other countries. One informant commented that the fact that with the authorities being in the know, they manage to avoid duplication, which is "is a win-win situation" (interview NGO_12_A_001). More frequent, however, was criticism towards the excessive control on proposals exercised by authorities. Other informants also lamented the long waiting times before a project is approved, and the fact that high turnover in the Ethiopian bureaucracy often results in institutional memory loss, meaning that an officer would often not be aware of what had been agreed by their predecessor(s), unnecessarily lengthening the negotiations. Furthermore, there can be inconsistencies in the interpretation of the rules, particularly if different regions are compared with one another. According to an NGO project assistant, for instance, regional authorities in Oromyia authorities are tougher and more meticulous in checking proposals than those in Somali region. Furthermore, some were skeptical about the authorities' not being impartial in the definition of needs and of priority areas, noting that in SNNPR region state, known for political antagonism to the government, the number of eligible beneficiaries had been cut down dramatically, and that "if a village where you want to operate is not on the list, you can't do anything" (interview NGO_12_D_001).

Recruitment of expatriates is allowed only if there are no suitable candidates from Ethiopia (local authorities do check and may not issue work permits if they do not agree). The problem is that in some cases it is hard to demonstrate the lack of skilled workers in Ethiopia. The country director of an NGO recalled that he had been unable to demonstrate the need for an expatriate senior humanitarian logistician, as authorities pointed out that there are Ethiopian nationals with multi-year experience in logistics. His argument that experience in organising the logistics of non-perishable goods does not necessarily build the capacity to oversee appropriate transportation and storage of drugs and other medical equipment was not considered relevant.

6.2.2 Donors and contractual clauses

Contractual clauses on the use of project grants complete the landscape of binding rules that NGOs and other aid organisations are required to follow. These rules are particularly relevant insofar public funding constitute the biggest source of funding for humanitarian and development assistance.[59] Of the people interviewed during my fieldwork in 2012 and 2013, no one worked for an organisation that was entirely funded through private donations; and barely two reported that their organisations received less than half of their funding from government donors. While the detailed contractual provisions vary from case to case (and according to the donor), they normally include, at the very least, some criteria to determine the eligibility of expenses, the timeframe for project implementation, and reporting requirements.

As stated in chapter 3 above, there is a major distinction between humanitarian and development budget lines in terms of timeframes for project implementation. Indeed, the contrast between humanitarian funds which have to be spent within 12-18 months and multi-year development programmes was frequently cited as an element that perpetuates the institutionalisation of the divide.

> *"Part of our problem now is that donors are very siloed, […] so emergency donors [only want] short-term interventions, not longer-term. The development donors, again, they have their own agenda, it's more of a long-term agenda" (Interview NGO_13_E_001, April 2013)*

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[59] In comparison with public funding, private donations can be spent more freely, even though, in an effort to improve transparency, most NGOs allow private donors to earmark their donations for a project or sector of intervention of their choice, thus limiting flexibility on how to use such funds.

All the organisations involved in this study used a combination of grants from different donors, and in most cases were benefiting from both humanitarian and development budget lines, or were planning to do so in the future. To illustrate the differences between the different rules that apply to humanitarian and development grants, I will illustrate the example of the European Commission, one of the major players in Ethiopia for both types of assistance.[60] While these are by no means representative of the requirements set by other donors, they are proposed here with the intent of clarifying how detailed such provisions can be, and in which ways they contribute to the institutionalisation of the humanitarian-development divide. I will then close this section by discussing options for increase flexibility, which according to informants is a key element of any successful LRD strategy.

6.2.2.1 Humanitarian grants: ECHO

The European Commission provides aid to Ethiopia through both its humanitarian arm, ECHO, and its development one, EuropeAid. The two are not just separate budget lines, but two different Directorate Generals – roughly equivalent to ministries – with different managers. In Ethiopia, the distinction is exacerbated by the fact that ECHO has its own office, whereas the focal point for development grants sits within the European Delegation compound, that is the institution that represents European foreign policy interests in the same way embassies do for States. The separation between the two directorates is such, that some NGO staff fail to appreciate that they are actually part of the same organisation. Some of the informants incorrectly referred to EuropeAid as "the European Commission" or even "the European Union" (interview NGO_13_H_001); whereas ECHO was never equated with the Commission as a whole.

ECHO provides humanitarian funding, which according to Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 encompasses not only emergency relief and humanitarian protection, but "may also include an element of short-term rehabilitation" as well as disaster preparedness". ECHO grants can be disbursed to NGOs, UN agencies, and the ICRC, provided that a preliminary framework agreement has been signed. The process leading to the framework partnership agreement involves a screening of the applicant organisation, which assesses its overall administrative, financial, and technical capacities, as well as its humanitarian credentials (Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96). The process is meant to speed up grant negotiations in times of the emergency, as

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[60] Furthermore, also due to the selection criteria, the majority of respondents were familiar with EC funding lines.

partners do not need to be re-assessed before a grant can be awarded. Nevertheless, according to some sources, it still takes about four to six months to get ECHO's approval,[61] to which one must add the time necessary to get the green light from the Ethiopian authorities. In total, it can sometimes take almost a year between the outbreak of the crisis and the start of the activities, and in the meantime the situation may have changed significantly (either in positive or in negative terms).

As a general rule, ECHO provides only partial financing of a proposed project, meaning that the remaining costs must be borne by the implementing organisation through other funds, which can be private donations or grants from other institutions. ECHO can consider 100% funding only in urgent cases – when a delay could lead to loss of lives – if no other contributions are available. It is crucial to note that even when ECHO's contribution covers only a portion of the total costs of a project, it still requires that the entire project budget fulfil its own eligibility conditions.[62] In order to be considered eligible under ECHO rules, expenses must be: i) actually incurred during the established period of eligibility specified in the grant agreement; ii) "essential for the performance of the operation", whereas the operation has to be humanitarian in nature. Proposals must fit within the general priorities outlined in the relevant Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP), a document outlining ECHO's operational priorities and budget allocations per each crisis. HIPs normally cover a two-years timeframe, but are subject to periodic revisions.

For 2011, single-country HIPs were used, whereas in 2012 a regional HIP for the entire Horn of Africa was launched. The HIPs also define the earliest possible date starting from which expenses can be eligible, and the maximum duration of the projects. As the starting date can be prior to the publication of the HIP, it can also precede the signature of the contract. Such retroactivity has the purpose of enabling reimbursement of (appropriate) humanitarian activities carried out by partners prior

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[61] This estimate applies to projects in response to slow-onset crises such as the one that hit Ethiopia in 2011-2012. Different rules apply for the provision of relief after sudden disasters (such as earthquakes), in which case ECHO can release funds almost immediately, but these types of projects are limited to a 3-6 months duration (depending on the type of decision) without possibility for an extension.

[62] As a consequence, an organisation that wishes to use private (or otherwise non-earmarked) funds to carry out activities that do not fit within ECHO's guidelines would not be able to include them in a single project. Instead, they would have to prepare two separate projects: one that follows ECHO's eligibility criteria; and a second one including the activities that ECHO would not fund.

to securing the grant. Project proposals can be submitted on a rolling basis during the period of validity of the HIP, provided that there are unallocated funds. All project proposals have to be presented using ECHO's own template, called "Single Form". Subsequent amendments to the project are allowed, but have to follow specific procedures. ECHO requires its partners to submit an interim report for any project of duration exceeding ten months. Final narrative and reports are due within three months from the end of the Action; without them, ECHO would not proceed to disburse the final instalment, usually 20% of its contribution. A wealth of additional prescriptions regulates the various aspects of project implementation, including obligations related to donor visibility.

As for the length of the projects, ECHO can set the maximum duration between three and eighteen months. Implementation timeframes of 3-6 months (without the possibility for an extension) are normally reserved for sudden-onset emergencies; whereas 12-18 months are typical maximum durations for other humanitarian crises. In the case of Ethiopia, different rounds of funding allocations had different timeframes. The 2011 Ethiopia HIP established that food aid and other humanitarian aid initiatives could start as early as 01 January 2011, and last for up to 15 months (with the possibility of a further extension of up to nine additional months); whereas assistance to refugees and IDPs was eligible could not start earlier than 01 December 2011, and had a maximum duration of twelve months (except in case of an extension). The 2012 Horn of Africa HIP, with an earliest eligibility date of 01 January 2012, could last as long as eighteen months, with the possibility of a further six months extension.

6.2.2.2 Development grants: EuropeAid

The procedures for being awarded a EuropeAid development grant differ from those described above in many respects. First of all, applicants do not have to be necessarily organisations devoted to development action, but in principle any natural or legal person can apply (with some restrictions based on nationality). Secondly, there is no preliminary screening of applicants,[63] but administrative and technical capacities are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, grants are usually awarded on a multi-year basis. Different development funding lines were activated in Ethiopia, the largest of which was the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), running from 2008 to

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[63] Applicants are encouraged to register some basic data (such as statutes or financial statements) in an online system, but this only serves the purpose of avoiding the need to submit multiple times the same pieces of information (EuropeAid website).

2013. It must be noted that the large majority of the EDF is allocated to infrastructural works, support to the Ethiopian government's budget, and financial contributions towards the PSNP safety net programme (ECO Consult et al. 2012), which leaves a relatively small amount of money open to subcontracting for smaller development initiatives such as those run by NGOs. Furthermore, a small part of the EDF, called "envelope B", is usually left unallocated so that it can be used to supplement humanitarian response.

The timing of the 2011-2012 crisis was particularly unfavourable in terms of integration of humanitarian and development budget lines, as it happened towards the end of the period of validity of the 10th EDF. As explained by an EC official, the EDF "is a program that is designed and runs for the next five-six years, and then when you have decided priority sectors and the things you need to do, there is no other money [available]" (interview EC_12_001). As a matter of fact, some EUR 15 million from envelope B were allocated to humanitarian response in June 2011. Another interesting funding line activated in Ethiopia during the period under consideration was the "food facility" adopted in response to the 2007-2008 food prices crisis, and which was used to fund projects in support of small agriculture between 2009 and 2011. The food facility aimed explicitly at bridging the gap between humanitarian relief and longer term development (European Commission 2010), and it had a short-term timeframe reminiscent of the humanitarian budget lines; yet it was administered by the development "arm" of the commission independently from ECHO. However, the relatively short timeframe for implementation of a "development" project, 18 months extended to 24, implied a trade-off between the complex responses that some NGOs felt were needed, and what was achievable without risking to infringe the contractual terms. Contract management procedures, in fact, are reportedly cumbersome, particularly as far as procurement regulations are concerned, which according to the amount might require the contract holder to organise an international tender. "We have a full-time staff member, an international staff member, just on contract compliance for the office". It's not just [for] the EU, it's also others, but I think we would not have [this position] if we hadn't substantial EU contracts", revealed one interviewee (interview NGO_13_I_001).

Proposals can only be submitted in response to a call, and sometimes with very tight deadlines. Once a contract is signed, project changes are permitted, but in case of significant alterations of the original project (more than 10% variation on any of the budget lines, or modification of any of the objective), permission ("raider") must be obtained from the European Commission, which might take long. The NGO source

quoted above recalled having requested such raiders in past projects, and that it took them "between six to nine months" to get the approval, on a project whose initial duration was of 18 months (interview NGO_13_I_001).

6.2.2.3 Options for flexibility

In spite of the differences highlighted in the sections above, there was growing openness towards better integration between funding lines, something that was indicated by virtually all informants as a key element of any successful LRD strategy.

The EC itself embarked in a three-layered approach aimed at increasing collaboration between its two branches. The first layer was entirely funded by ECHO, and looked at increasing intersectoral collaboration in eight "clusters",[64] identified as priority areas together with the government. In each cluster, one NGO would take the lead for the implementation of a multiagency and multi-sectoral programme based on a common logframe. Such programmes would have duration of three years, although formally would be made up of two separate contracts of 18 months each, as this is the maximum upper limit for funding decisions taken by ECHO. The second layer would be the joint ECHO-EuropeAid SHARE initiative for drought response in the Horn of Africa. The details of this initiative – also known as RESET within Ethiopia – were not yet clear during my fieldwork, and only in late 2014 some draft concept notes have been circulated to start clarifying the process. The underlying idea would be to continue focusing on the geographical clusters identified by ECHO. Finally, the third layer should be ensured by earmarking part of the 11th EDF, running from 2014 to 2020, to development activities in those same clusters, so to reduce vulnerability. At the time of writing, details on the allocation of the 11th EDF were not yet known, and therefore it is not possible to assess how those areas will be targeted.

An example of programme flexibility that was often brought up by informants was the "crisis modifier" mechanism introduced by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in its Pastoral Livelihoods Initiative, one of the several development programmes running in Ethiopia during the period under observation. The crisis modifier enabled the implementing agencies to respond to external shocks intervening during the course of their projects, by authorising them to access additional emergency funds and to alter the planned activity according to the new

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[64] These clusters bear no relation or similarity to the humanitarian clusters often set up in the wake of emergencies. A senior EC officer admitted that this was poor naming choice that could generate confusion.

situation. The activities enabled through the crisis modifier would be geared towards protecting pastoral livelihoods under stress, such as for instance commercial or slaughter de-stocking, or provision of veterinary services and fodder.

According to the website of the US Embassy in Ethiopia, in 2011 USAID provided over 2 million USD through this crisis modifier, equivalent to two-three medium sized projects. The crisis modifier mechanism did not require the formulation of a new concept paper, let alone a full proposal, but allowed NGOs to request changes simply by informing USAID of the proposed new activities and related expenses. According to a source within an NGO that had used the mechanism, USAID would release the additional funding within two weeks, an impressive speed if compared to the normal process of approval of a funding request. The flexibility of the mechanism also implied that the emergency activities allowed with the help of the crisis modifier could be stopped at any moment (and money returned to USAID) if the situation improved.

> *"If an emergency happens, you have a mechanism to access funds quickly, and then you can respond in a much more efficient manner than if you have to do the whole thing again, proposal writing, discussing with the donor. This is done in advance". (interview NGO_12_A_003)*

> *[With] USAID, we [...] were able to build on some flexibility within our programming, we would say 'We think that in year two we will do restocking, and farmer's production, livestock growth', but there is a drought, so instead of that we actually have to do emergency de-stocking [...] We were allowed to have flexibility based on changing conditions". (interview NGO_13_D_001)*

In this respect, USAID was a unique case, as no other institutional donor had a mechanism comparable to the crisis modifier, although others were reportedly looking into possibilities for allowing more flexibility. An EC officer stated that his dream "would be to have the possibility to co-fund the same project between humanitarian and development EC funding, with crisis modifier rules embedded, and the same reporting, but so far it doesn't exist yet" (interview EC 13_002).

This appreciation for crisis modifier mechanisms contrasted with the difficult reality of getting changes approved. NGOs are often wary of requesting them because of the time necessary for approval, as well as the perceived risk that it could jeopardise their relationship with a donor. The willingness to submit a budget modification request depends in part on the perceived legitimacy and acceptability of the request. The

process was reportedly rather straightforward if activities are disrupted by an unpredictable disaster, in which case contingency funds – which are a fixed percentage of all grant contracts – could be accessed. Things could get more problematic in case of predictable disasters, such as droughts, which are normally anticipated about a year ahead. Declaring that something that was one year in the making has disrupted activities, explained a programme manager, could be easily read as a failure in appropriately planning activities or monitoring the situation: "So, do we admit bad programming and get the change, or we continue as we are and hope for the best?" (interview NGO_13_I_001). Furthermore, even if the decision to apply for a change is taken, one should consider the time needed for having it approved, which can easily amount to six months or more. Legally, the NGO should continue with the original project until the change is either approved or rejected, but, as the same programme manager noted,

> *you cannot stop your activities in that period, so you are submitting a budget that is already false. So we predict what we need in the next six months, build that in the raider request, and hope that it does not take any longer, but also hope that no other big change happens in the meantime. […] And then, if they refuse, you're in trouble. (interview NGO_13_I_001)*

6.3 The normative framework

As discussed in chapter 3, the different mandates of humanitarian and development action have been one of the main arguments of LRD critics. Discourses emphasising the different objectives and guiding principles, or contrasting norms and procedures, might contribute to perpetuating the humanitarian/development divide. At the same time, however, discourses of resilience and "bridging the gap" could push in the opposite direction. In this part of the chapter, I will examine the normative narratives used to justify humanitarian and development action produced by three different types of actors: Ethiopian government, donors, and implementing organisations.

6.3.1 A political contract against famine

In a country were famine has precipitated the fall of two regimes in less than two decades, ensuring that people do not starve has become a key function of the state, as demonstrated also by the detailed regulative framework referred to above. Such an

"anti-famine political contract" (De Waal 1997) is pursued not just for the good of the population, but also for the government's own survival. From this perspective, famine is not just a humanitarian catastrophe, but also a political one, which has to be avoided at all costs (Lautze and Maxwell 2007). A major consequence is that that Ethiopian governments have taken ownership of setting up early warning systems and maintained a relatively strong disaster risk management agency (Lautze et al. 2009). The insistence on weather-based early warning system is also related with a tendency to rationalise famines as inherently natural disasters (see for example the 2013 National Strategy on Disaster Risk Management), which tries to take politics out of the equation.

Furthermore, as noted by Lautze et al. (2009:8) if "the very existence of government's disaster management institutions represents a failure of the state" by some Ethiopian authorities, this is even more blatant of foreign international humanitarian organisations distributing emergency relief in the country. This has contributed to an ambivalent relationship with humanitarian organisations, frequently considered to be – not entirely without reason – acting in a patronising and unaccountable way.[65] The Government remains adamant in its preference of disaster prevention and overall development over disaster relief.

In addition to proper disaster prevention and risk reduction policies, the Government also took shortcuts to demonstrate progress towards reducing the number of people reliant on humanitarian food aid. An example cited by several informants[66] was the decision to change the basis for calculating yearly humanitarian needs, switching from the number of people below the "livelihoods threshold" (i.e. those who do not have sufficient income to meet nutritional and other basic needs such as medicines or clothing) to the number of people below the "survival threshold" (i.e. people unable to meet their nutritional needs). This change has implied a reduction in the number of humanitarian beneficiaries of about one million, without proof of any material improvement in their lives.

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[65] Lautze et al. (2009) suggest that the diffidence toward international humanitarian organisations is partially grounded in the fact that the forces that are now part of the ruling party, the EPRDF, know all too well how opposition movements can benefit from special relations with foreign NGOs, having benefited of this kind of assistance themselves in the 1980s, when they were the rebels fighting against the government of the time.

[66] Among others, interviewees NGO_12_C_001 and UN_13_006.

"[W]e all know that the government clustering system and hotspot woredas is politically motivated. They lost 1 million hungry people in SNNPR [regional state] in one day: the survey was done, the government took it, the figures went out and one million people went off the list. We know it's political. If you look at how many people receive aid in places like Tigray, and look how many people are receiving [it] in somewhere like SNNPR, there is no similarity, even though in some of those areas, malnutrition rates would be similar" (interview NGO_13_E_001).

In terms of development policies, Ethiopia is undertaking an ambitious development programme centred on massive economic growth as the key to reduce poverty. The Growth and Transformation Plan, which outlines the government's development strategy for the period 2010-2015, set the staggering target of an average GDP growth in real terms of 11% per year (Government of Ethiopia, 2010). The vision set by the Government is that Ethiopia should become a "Middle Income Country" as early as 2025. Apart from its efforts in terms of promoting macroeconomic growth, the Government of Ethiopia is also tackling chronic poverty at household level, with a short-medium term timeframe. The key instrument is the massive Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Launched in 2005, the PSNP targets chronically food insecure people, providing them with cash or in kind assistance to close their food consumption gap. The majority of its beneficiaries are required to take part in public works; whereas more vulnerable households that cannot count on able-bodied members receive their assistance unconditionally.

Policy guidance and supervision of relief, rehabilitation, and development activities are entrusted to different bodies. Broader humanitarian response falls under the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA), which depends upon the Ministry of Agriculture. As the name itself says, the DPPA oversees preparedness and prevention; the fact that relief, which is also one of its responsibilities, is not even mentioned in the official name might be telling of the attitude of denial towards this aspect. The absence of any reference to relief is even more striking if one notes that the DPPA is an evolution of what was formerly known as "Relief and Rehabilitation Commission" (RRC). Compared to the DPPA, the RRC had also an higher status (reporting directly to the Council of Ministers rather to a Ministry), and was larger in size (Lautze et al. 2009). DPPA has no oversight on activities related to refugees, which must instead be coordinated with the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), part of the larger Security, Immigration and Refugee Affairs Authority, which reports directly

to the prime minister. Rural development initiatives, including the PSNP, are supervised by the Food Security Coordination Bureau (FSCB), which similarly to the DPPA falls under the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition, relevant line ministries can be involved in the supervision of humanitarian and development projects falling under their area of competence (for instance, the Ministry of Health in case of health-related activities). Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has an overall responsibility in defining the country's economic development strategies.

If this fragmentation might reinforce divisions – and indeed I was informed of problems arising from conflicting priorities among different agencies –, it is also worth noting that the refusal to treat emergency relief as a standalone entity appears to be conducive to a more integrated treatment of disaster prevention, response, and early rehabilitation, not dissimilar to some views of "bridging the gap". And indeed, interviewees never referred to the governmental structures as hindering LRD efforts;[67] if anything, complaints rather focused on the difficulty of remaining impartial when it is the Government that decides who is eligible for humanitarian aid, and who is not.

6.3.2 Donors and the perpetuation of the divide

In a context where the boundaries between humanitarian and development action were rather blurred, the main outlier were international donors. Most had separate organisational units in charge of humanitarian and development action respectively, of which the European Commission is one blatant example. While sharing the same management and accountability lines might contribute to better integration – in the words of one interviewee, it would help to have "the humanitarian and the development side of the house physically in the same place" (interview UN_13_006), even more relevant under a normative point of view is the fact that donors exacerbate the division by legitimating contrasting discourses.

Several informants referred to the distinction between situations of humanitarian or development concern as a donor construct. Donors had very clear mandates, whereas

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[67] Only in one case, one source who worked for a dual mandate organisation that has been subcontracted the delivery of PSNP assistance in some areas, alongside their own humanitarian projects, referred of difficulties in reconciling the two approaches. Their point, however, was that PSNP and humanitarian assistance are mutually exclusive, but considering that the value of humanitarian assistance was higher than what PSNP beneficiaries received, they were uneasy with the resulting disparities (Interview NGO_12_A_002).

implementing agencies tended to perceive a more nuanced situation, one that does not allow for answering questions on the boundaries between the types of action: *When do emergencies begin? When do they end? When does development start?* One interviewee went as far as labelling the way the donor environment is structured a "forced dichotomy", explaining:

> *While there may be some clear-cut situations (an earthquake for example), in others [including Ethiopia] you have sort of resilient crises: they're almost always there, and then you have peaks coming over. If you go to the people, they don't have a distinction between humanitarian [and development], they would always have issues, whether it is water, whether it is their livestock, whether severe or acute food shortages. The dichotomy exists only at donor level, for funding issues. You cannot blame ECHO, because their mandate is purely humanitarian, that what's their name says. When you put in a programme design that has a strong long term development issue, they tend to discuss that with you and say 'maybe in that case you should actually apply to [EuropeAid] funding', because they have this division (interview NGO_12_B_006).*

Another interviewee highlighted the issue of the different narratives of humanitarian and development response typical of some donors:

> *There are two very distinct sets of languages that separate development and emergency. So if you make a development proposal, everything is brilliant [...] we talk about the strengths of communities, their ability to cope, their ability to manage, the opportunity that working together will bring. If you read an emergency proposal, the community is weak and vulnerable.[...] because we can't go to ECHO and be talking about the wellbeing and success of these communities in solving their own problems, 'cause ECHO won't fund us" (interview NGO_13_F_001).*

This long comment unveils a powerful example of how discourses can contribute to shaping reality. Regardless of the actual nature of the situation, choosing a narrative of "crisis" instead of one of "poverty" could determine whether the NGO would get funding for a project from a certain donor, and as a result, what might the project be about – as there needs to be a logic in the intervention. Surely, this was also a reminder

of the intertwining of structure and agency: despite donors being polarised, NGOs could instrumentally choose to adapt narratives to pursue their own objectives.

Other informants focused more on the fact that they had difficulties in raising longer-term funding to complement their emergency response projects, attributing their struggle to "the way the donor environment is structured" (NGO_12_B_006). What donors are open to finance becomes crucial when NGOs themselves structure their priorities around "the available budget, on the priorities to fund" (Interview NGO_13_H_001).

Sources at ECHO, however, maintained that humanitarian action differs from development action not just for how it is described, to the point that often they would often take place in geographically different areas. And, even when working in the same community,

> *development actors would use a growth objective [and] the humanitarians would look at those who are at the bottom of the society. That means for example we will look not only at pastoralists, but we are obliged to look at ex-pastoralists, [...] whereas the development side would say: 'If we invest in those who have lost everything, we won't get any result'. It is two ways of thinking that are not always coherent, and that definitely causes a lot of problems.* (interview EC_13_001)

Rather than rejecting the possibility of collaboration on the grounds of conflicting principles and operating modalities, the informant suggested that humanitarian and development actors should as much as possible collaborate with joint planning of several different interventions targeting different groups, resulting in one integrated framework.

Interestingly, the three interviewees in European Commission institutions (two at ECHO and one at EuropeAid), agreed on the fact that humanitarian and development action should be better integrated. This should not necessarily mean making humanitarian action more "development-like", but perhaps the reverse, as suggested by an ECHO officer, who defended the humanitarian character of the organisation ("We are here, we follow our mandate, we 'repair' the emergency needs, immediate needs, we save lives"), and then expressed the need for someone else to come after and "address these structural problems, in order to avoid that we have to continue coming every single year when there is a particular shock (interview EC_12_001). Despite

having defended the importance of the two mandates, he also admitted that NGOs that have a double mandate are better prepared for LRRD than those that stick to emergency response only.

6.2.3 Mandates and identities among implementing organisations

Most NGO employees interviewed for this research were working in dual-mandate organisations, and so did some of the UN officers. Perhaps it is for this reason that the issue of different mandates was rarely used during the interviews, and mostly dismissed as a something relevant at donor level, but less so in the field.

Not a single interviewee expressed the preoccupation that working on development could negatively affect the delivery of humanitarian relief on the grounds of their different mandates or guiding principles. Actually, references to an ontological difference between humanitarian and development actors were completely absent. The humanitarian-development distinction was mostly ascribed to different contexts (the "emergency" versus the "normal" year), rather than to incompatible values. Occasionally, some respondents would mention the fact that they mostly operated as humanitarian actors, referring to such things as having a humanitarian "first mandate" (interview UN_13_001). Another UN officer, while rejecting the either-or juxtaposition, maintained that in his view, humanitarian concerns should be prioritised over development ones:

> *We have to address the child who needs therapeutic feeding because of acute malnutrition first, before we address the child who graduated from therapeutic feeding centre. [...] No matter what, you can't take the food from the baby who's acutely malnourished, and give it to the baby who just graduated from the therapeutic feeding centre. No matter what, the humanitarian component needs to be funded, if resilience is going to have any chance, because it's the same baby, entering or exiting the feeding centre. And if it doesn't get the food to start out with, there will be no recovery, no resilience, no livelihoods improvement (UN_13_006)*

The disaster risk management and food security advisor of a large NGO even lamented the fact that since the organisation he worked for was mostly known for its

humanitarian efforts, it was difficult to prove to donors that they were well placed to carry out development activities as well.

Apart from the distinctions resulting from the funding sources, interviewees mostly recognised that humanitarian and development action operate in different contexts and with different objectives and implementation modalities. The issue of different principles, however, was rarely brought up. Only one person used the word "humanitarian" to describe herself and the mandate of the NGO in which she held a managerial position. She also added that she did not really believe in development, whereas she maintained that humanitarian relief had proven to be effective at its main objective, saving lives. Ironically, her NGO had been carrying out development projects alongside relief interventions.[68]

The country director of a large NGO talked of humanitarian "settings", situations in which response had to be provided according to needs, as opposed to development projects, where other considerations would take priority, possibly resulting in targeting different groups. A similar position was expressed by a food security officer of another NGO, who explained that in agricultural development projects they target "producers, and also those farmers who can potentially produce", while those who don't have any potential — but perhaps greater humanitarian needs — have to be left out.

Other informants, however, totally rejected the humanitarian/development divide, pointing to the fact that for affected people, there is rarely a clear-cut divide between what is an emergency situation, and what is poverty-as-usual, except in cases of sudden shocks. "They don't have a distinction between humanitarian [and development], they would always have issues, whether it is water, whether it is their livestock, whether severe or acute food shortages", affirmed NGO officer (interview NGO_12_B_002), who also defined Ethiopia as a place of "resilient crises", crises that remain latent, with "peaks coming over" from time to time. Another aid worker provided a very poignant example of why the distinction could not be applied on the ground: "if you're working with the community and [they] say 'You know, this water point development is all good, but do you know that the crops just failed?', [you cannot answer] 'Yes but we only do development, so... sorry'" (interview NGO_13_F_001).

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[68] Reached for a follow-up conversation one year later, in April 2013, the same informant further elaborated that she was not actually skeptical of development *per se*, but that she did not believe that Ethiopia would be able to reach the development objectives set by its government, let alone in the short timeframe proposed — that is, she added, unless statistics were manipulated.

The humanitarian-development distinction, when explicitly acknowledged, was mostly dismissed as a donor feature, related to the situation on the field only to a limited extent.

Interestingly, then, the "back-to-basics" argument that LRD approaches would put humanitarian principles in jeopardy was not much relevant in this case, not because it had been proven that there is no such effect, but because humanitarians themselves were seemingly not recognising the principles as their main guiding values.

6.4 Cultural-cognitive aspects

In this section, I will examine the cultural-cognitive elements that emerged from participant observation and interviews to aid workers. Considering that the majority of the informants worked for implementing organisations, in this section I will only focus on their own views of what is culturally appropriate and legitimate. The key point of interest here is to understand whether discourses based on cultural norms or scientific knowledge of the separation between humanitarian and development assistance, or of *bridging the gap* are shaping the views and actions of aid workers in the field, and how this contributes to or hinders linkages between humanitarian relief and development.

As anticipated above, the humanitarian-development divide was rarely acknowledged as something inherent to the situation, and was instead viewed as a donor-driven concern. A consequence of donors' polarisation, however, was that NGOs sometimes resorted to instrumentally adopting different different narratives when interacting with different donors. However, as one NGO country director lucidly noted, this brought risks of unconsciously perpetuating the views that are supported by those narratives.

> *Even internally at [our NGO] this is something we have to manage. We have a set of staff that they think everything is nighttime, and then another set of staff that think everything is daytime. We endeavour within [the NGO] to have staff that understand the economic sense of describing communities separately for a donor, [but we] have to be extremely careful on how we describe communities internally with staff, 'cause it can compound a disaster-based prejudice, and it can cause even more problems with the disconnects between emergency and development, because like I said communities are described fundamentally different" (NGO_13_F_001)*

Although findings tended to differ according the interviewees (and their roles), three main topics emerged: the neglect of the "linking" debate by most of the field workers; (as of 2013) a growing popularity of the concept of resilience; and the almost unanimous support for better integration of humanitarian and development efforts.

6.4.1 The debate in the "field"

One of the first observations that I could make after the first batch of interviews in 2012 was that the people I spoke with were seemingly oblivious to the debate about *bridging the gap*. Almost no one, with the notable exception of EC officials, would use expressions such as LRRD, or Early Recovery for that matter. Some of them would not even know what this jargon was supposed to refer to, which among other things led me to use longer explanations in my interview questions. Even the existence of a divide between humanitarian and development work itself was rarely explicitly brought up.

Quite understandably, given the fact that the European Commission had coined the acronym LRRD, the expression would still be used by its staff. Support went beyond the adoption of the LRRD narrative, although it was recognised that implementation of the approach was rife with obstacles: "LRRD is a concept, which is a very interesting concept in theory, but sometimes very difficult to put in practice [...] Despite we all agree that we need to do it, it is not always possible. We push a lot for this" (interview EC_12_001). ECHO was also requiring all its partners to indicate an LRRD strategy in their project proposals; yet, in the 2011 version of their project proposals, there was no instance of the acronym. Instead, applicants had to outline a "Continuum strategy (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development)" under section "5. Cross-cutting issues" (ECHO 2011)[69]. Whether this was a consequence of the fact that the acronym was not particularly known among partner NGOs, or instead one of its causes, it is interesting to note the reference to the problematic notion of a linear continuum. In the following year, the word LRRD appeared in a slightly revised version of ECHO's project proposal format. The title of section 5 became "Transition (LRRD) and cross-cutting issues", but in the relevant subheading – re-christened as "Transition and/or exit strategies (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development)" – it was again spelled out. More importantly, the notion of "Continuum" was abandoned, although its

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[69] The remaining cross-cutting issues being: "Describe the expected level of sustainability and/or connectedness", and "Mainstreaming (e.g. Disaster Risk Reduction, Children, Human rights, Gender, Environmental impacts, others to be specified)".

replacement stood out for its vagueness and for failing to clearly indicate, for instance, whether not-developmental exit strategies would be considered acceptable.

An NGO source explained that in her experience, the donor would not seemingly be interested in what had been written under the cross-cutting section of the proposal – to her own relief, she added, as she maintained that some effective humanitarian interventions would have never been funded, had donors been serious about integrating relief and development. In most cases, she explained, the actual exit strategy was more on the line of "funds are over, goodbye" (interview NGO_12_C_001). In some cases the difficulty would be finding someone – local authorities, or maybe the community themselves – who can take over the project, if resources are not provided. In other cases, the exit strategy would happen without any action from the NGO: such as when refugees decide to leave the camps and go back home. Sometimes, she added, the situation was just too unforeseeable to allow for making plans. This account is corroborated by my own experience at ECHO, where I saw several project proposals getting approved, despite not sufficiently elaborating on LRRD.[70] This scarcity of details does not necessarily denote unwillingness of bridging the gap, but might also be related to lack of attention or understanding of the LRD issue. For instance, a few project proposals that I could examine at MERLIN were not very specific nor realistic about LRD. A proposal written in 2011 – thus possibly in a rush due to the urgency of starting the activities – only mentioned that the NGO would shift from direct implementation to supervision, thereby hinting at the possibility that the local health facilities could be able to function independently within the 12 month duration of the project, something that was unrealistic. The second proposal I examined was a follow-up of the previous project, which quite understandably had not yet managed to build "lasting health care" in the project area. In this, the LRD strategy was more holistic and focused on the continuity of MERLIN's presence in the area, including mentions of projects that the NGO intended to carry out in parallel. Nevertheless, it also remains notably vague on how the links with rehabilitation and development were to take place. Overall, neither of the two proposals detailed an actual, realistic action plan, as if whoever wrote that section did not know exactly what was expected from them.

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[70] In 2010, a major humanitarian organization, when applying for ECHO funding for a project in Somalia, indicated in the "Continuum/LRRD" section of the project proposal that there was no need of a continuum strategy, as that was only a "one-off food distribution". This notwithstanding, the project had been approved.

Among NGO staff, the few who demonstrated some familiarity with concepts of "bridging the gap" were invariably senior expatriate staff or people working in the headquarters. Even during my participant observation at MERLIN, which had a clear LRD-inspired mandate – "medical relief, lasting healthcare" – concepts of bridging the gap were notably absent from everyday discourse at country and field office level, despite the widespread use of jargon. The fact that the debate had been going on for decades was explicitly mentioned by only one NGO staff member, who responded to one of my questions saying: "This [how to link relief and development] is the perennial question, you'll be asking it in 20 years [...] If anybody had the magic bullet on this question, it would have been answered at least 20 years ago, but everybody still struggles" (interview NGO_12_A_001). As for staff members of Ethiopian nationality – the majority of the staff – they normally had not had any exposure to the debate. This was consistent to a general attitude within NGOs, where only a handful of people in the country office (as well as those in the headquarters) were expected to have a strategic view. Everyone else, including people in positions such as programme manager or field coordinator, were not required to think strategically or know the big picture, but only had responsibilities related to implementation (interview NGO_12_C_001). Another informant also expressed her disappointment over the fact that – possibly related to high turnover and lack of capacity-building – finding people with a strategic view was rare.

In one case, a local project assistant mentioned that she had written some parts of a proposal recently submitted to ECHO, including the section on "cross-cutting issues". Knowing that ECHO required listing an LRRD strategy under that section, I inquired about it, only to find out that the informant was clueless about the acronym. Even after some further clarifications, she could not recall having written anything related to a "transition" or an "exit strategy". Considering that writing a proposal was, by her own admission, the product of collating inputs from various sources from within (and sometimes outside) of the NGO, it is actually possible that she wrote the paragraph on LRRD, and then forgot about the contents. Furthermore, she gave an indication that cross-cutting issues were not particularly important by commenting that, as a recently recruited person lacking any experience on nutrition or food security, she would be in charge of the sections "that need a lot of writing [and] no technical background" (interview NGO_12_B_002), whereas more experienced colleagues would define the logframe, the number of beneficiaries, and the details of the activities – that, is, the parts that everyone considered to be the most relevant.

Such obliviousness was by no means limited to the debate on "bridging the gap", but touched also upon the very notion of humanitarianism. In one case, in particular, I used the word "humanitarian" in a question directed to an otherwise very knowledgeable food security advisor working for a major humanitarian organisation, [71] only to have him staring at me blankly, and then asking back: "Hmm... Humanitarian... You mean, emergency?" (interview NGO_13_C_001). His reaction came totally unexpected to me, as I had previously met an expatriate worker of the same NGO, who had struck me for her passionate defence of the importance of humanitarian principles. And yet, she had perhaps failed to convey the same beliefs to her colleagues. Other informants also conflated of humanitarian action and emergency response[72], seemingly equating the humanitarian identity of an NGO with "responding primarily to crises" or "having emergencies as entry points", without reference to the principles. Emergency response certainly constitute a major element of humanitarian action, and the "emergency" branch has been hegemonic in shaping humanitarianism (see chapter 3), but this does not mean that humanitarian action only happens in emergency context, nor that such action is always based on the principles.

Overall, the closer to the field, the more NGO workers were concerned with day-to-day implementation issues, and less to more theoretical and strategical thinking. Identity, if at all mentioned, was more likely to be related to the personal background – being a medical doctor, or an agronomist – or to the sector of intervention of the organisation.

6.4.2 The emergence of resilience

Countering the experience with the neglect of LRD and of broader "identity" issues, in the interviews held in 2013, I noticed that more and more people – including local, "technical" staff – were increasingly referring to the concept of resilience, something that had been rarely mentioned only a year before, and only by senior, expatriate aid workers. It must be noted that 2013 I was not able to conduct interviews in remote

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[71] I was rephrasing a previous statement by the interviewee, who had explained that his NGO had difficulties in accessing development funds because of its reputation of being a major player in emergency settings, and I asked: "You mentioned earlier that [your NGO] here in Ethiopia is considered to be more of a humanitarian organisation; is this the case also in other parts of the world?"

[72] Such confusion is quite frequent and by no means limited to Ethiopia. I myself have attended a masters on "International Cooperation" where each student could focus in either "Development" or "Emergencies", the latter being used as a synonym to "Humanitarian Action".

field offices as I had done one year before, and therefore I am not in the position of assessing the spread of the resilience buzzword at the more grassroots level. However, by talking to country office staff, I noticed that even local NGO staff who would have never referred to "LRRD", were seemingly at ease in discussing how their projects were aiming at building resilience.

"Resilience is becoming more attractive than response" (interview NGO_13_D_001), stated an Ethiopian food security officer who referred to "resilience" six times over the course of a forty-minutes interview. He explained enthusiastically that the NGO he worked for was advocating for resilient programming "at household level, at community level, at regional level, and at country level as well". The country director of a different NGO, too, affirmed proudly that "resilience is also one of our strategies" (interview NGO_13_E_001). Similarly, UN staff claimed that with their interventions they wanted to "allow people to build their resilience against any calamity that may come" (interview UN_13_001). Another NGO country director even regarded as positive the plain fact that resilience was high on the agenda "We talk a lot about resilience, and that is good. We prepare, we work towards this goal", even though, he admitted "We still are in a phase where we need to work quite a lot" (interview NGO_13_B_001).

The European Commission was also quite proactive on resilience, as it was launching the SHARE initiative in the Horn of Africa – which had the word "resilience" rather than "LRRD" in its name. Nevertheless, EC staff would put resilience in relation with their own LRRD concept. According to an ECHO officer, "Resilience is a beautiful laboratory in which the issue of LRRD is now getting a further chance to be developed, and I think that the integrating power of the concept of resilience is helping a lot" (interview EC_13_001). He further explained how in his view the concept of resilience would help overcome the old-fashioned continuum idea, stating:

> In my opinion, resilience building is something that is on the humanitarian side as well as on the development side. It's not We start and they pick it up, it's something that really goes in parallel together. There are aspects in the resilience building, which I think will always be on the side of the humanitarians, and there will be definitely aspects – even more aspects – that belong to the development side. We have to find a way to make those two articulate, to make those two reinforce each other and be complementary (interview EC_13_001)

Among the more humanitarian aspects of resilience, he counted the aspects of disaster risk management and disaster response, whereas safety nets, assets protection and social protection programmes would fall more into the areas of responsibility of development actors.

As far as the actual implementation of resilience programming was concerned, most descriptions could easily fit into pre-existing categories, such as "livelihoods programming", or more in general looking at the drivers of vulnerability and trying to address them. The examples ranged from the provision of less water demanding seeds to communities living in drought-prone areas[73], to fixing water systems to avoid the need for expensive water trucking, to train community health workers or build local veterinary capacities. Another informant, assuming a gender perspective, maintained that "for most women" a resilient household could not be reduced to assets – herds, or access to rangeland – but had to include such things as having basic literacy (interview NGO_13_I_001).

While all of these interventions might indeed contribute to the wellbeing of communities over the long term more than one-off interventions, none of them could possibly strike as particularly innovative. In fact, some of these initiatives would have been launched before the resilience-frenzy, and they were not much dissimilar from activities that just one year before were presented under the "livelihoods" banner. Indeed, a UN officer, who had contributed to drafting a resilience strategy paper, admitted that the novelty of resilience was not in its contents ("frankly it's not a new thought, anything new"; interview UN_13_006), but in the fact that it was drawing a lot of attention. He also noted, however, that resilience programming still made up a very small component of the myriad of programmes and projects on-going in Ethiopia, and that in any case it could not be thought as a magic bullet that would solve all issues.

Furthermore, another argument that frequently emerged in relation to resilience, and which echoes a claim often made about disaster risk reduction more specifically, is that it would be more cost-effective than "traditional" response. On this respect, some assumed that resilience would be more cost-effective by default, whereas others argued

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[73] The actual degree of "resilience" built through this project remains unclear. The informant, in fact, reported that these seeds led to an increased agricultural production in dry years, but admitted that crops failed after above average rains, noting that the type of seeds "is not something we can change overnight" (interview NGO_13_D_001)

that it would only become mainstream after having proven its comparative advantages. As discussed in chapter 2, aid effectiveness, of which cost-effectiveness is a key element, has recently reached the status of a key principle of development action. From a humanitarian standpoint, however, a line of reasoning that priorities saving money over saving lives remains problematic. This concern, however, was never aired by any of the informants.

6.4.3 Willingness to "bridge the gap"

Despite the fact that most of the people I interviewed were not particularly informed about the debate on bridging the gap, nor about the discourses of emergency *versus* alchemical humanitarianism, for that matter, most of them would advocate for better integration of the emergency response with more longer term efforts of development. Indeed, as described above, many quickly embraced the idea of resilience. The gap, which would rarely be described as such, was mostly framed in terms of difficulty to access funds to further the engagement with a specific community after the conclusion of an emergency response project.

Of all the people interviewed, only one openly criticised the idea that humanitarian relief should become more "developmental". In our first conversation, she maintained that, whereas humanitarian action can be effective reaching its primary goal of saving lives, she had doubts about development action. Furthermore, she feared that putting too much attention on the aspects of sustainability and connectedness to development could be detrimental to hardcore humanitarian initiatives. In a second interview one year later, she expressed a more nuanced position, even presenting herself as a supporter of the idea of resilience. Her position about development had shifted from being skeptical of development action *per se*, to not being convinced about development strategies pursued by the Ethiopian Government[74]. Regardless of her (initial) views on bridging the gap, the NGO she worked for was not only carrying out "standard" relief activities such as delivering food and nutritional supplements to refugees, but also projects with a component of disaster risk reduction, and this even before the 2011 crisis. This included, for instance, activities related to improved

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[74] She justified her change of mind explaining that at the time of the first interview in 2012 she was under a lot of stress and still recovering from the overwork related to the emergency response, which perhaps led her to being overly pessimistic about development prospects.

rangeland management and animal health in pastoral areas, or access to water and sanitation systems.

Most interviewees were positive about carrying out developmental initiatives, and agreed on the fact that longer-term involvement in Ethiopia would be crucial to both strengthen local capacities and maintain an operational presence that can enable quick response in the (quite likely) case of another crisis. For instance, one informant presented a new four-year project proposal as a good opportunity "to be positioned in a strategical point [...] to be ready to scale up again" (interview NGO_12_B_004). Many complained about the short timeframes of humanitarian projects, explaining that even if project extensions are granted, a couple of years would not suffice to tackle all the recovery needs (interview NGO_13_C_001), nor to strengthen local response capacities to a level in which they can be fully in charge in case of crisis (interviews NGO_12_B_003; NGO_12_B_004). In the context of nutritional interventions, according to a programme manager, two years could be enough to ensure all health workers in the targeted facilities knows the appropriate protocols and is able to put them in practice without supervision, but problems related to staffing levels or procurement of necessary supplies will likely remain, requiring external support (interview NGO_12_B_003).

Talking about Borena zone, one Ethiopian project assistant explained that it "needs more of a sustainable response than just a one year [project] or a very short term response" (interview NGO_12_002). One of her colleagues, in a separate session, explained that pastoral communities such as those in Borena zone would have to face some kind of difficulties every year, which required a longer-term involvement of the NGO. The ultimate goal, however, would be for aid organisation to become redundant: "NGOs at one point should not be needed" (interview NGO_12_B_004). However, none of the organisations reached during this study – some of which had been in Ethiopia since 1984 – had any actual plan of leaving the country anytime soon. On the contrary, some had even developed longer term frameworks for their involvement in Ethiopia, reportedly ranging from five to ten years. Another NGO staff member admitted: "Emergency is good, you have to save lives, but if you have the resources [...] it's better to have a longer term approach" (interview NGO_13_C_001).

When discussing some of the mechanisms that donors were offering for increased flexibility reactions were usually very positive. USAID crisis modifier, for instance, was appreciated because it allowed for adapting programmes to changing conditions on the ground. "We think that in year two we will do restocking, and farmers' production,

livestock growth, but [then] there is a drought, so instead of that we actually have to do emergency de-stocking" (interview NGO_13_E_001). Another person noted that a key feature of the crisis modifier mechanism is that the emergency response activities would be not constitute a separate intervention, but, being part of the same larger programme, they would be carried out in parallel with more developmental activities if appropriate (interview NGO_12_A_003).

A further element that has raised by attention has been the general acceptance of the "famine as natural disaster" narrative, both among national and expatriate staff. References to drought and erratic rains were frequent, and other facts frequently mentioned were overpopulation and overgrazing. Some interviewees also indicated progressively decreasing size of agricultural lots as one cause of vulnerability, even though the recent crisis (and several of the previous ones) had mostly affected pastoralist populations. The narrative of climate change, while dramatically real in Ethiopia, might have inadvertently provided arguments to depoliticise the root causes of disasters. From a perspective of linking relief and development, this can contribute to finding a common ground, but it also bears the risk of underplaying the necessity of impartiality and neutrality of humanitarian action. Finally, a key difference between staff of Ethiopian nationality and expatriate workers was related to the actual capacity of the Ethiopian government to deliver on its development promises. The former would often express the belief that the country would be able to meet its ambitious goals of economic development and reduction of dependency on food aid. On the contrary, expatriate aid workers were much more skeptical, pointing out that targets and timeframes were unrealistic, and that statistics could not be always trusted. "If they admit that [benchmarks will not be reached on time], and maybe extend the Growth and Transformation Plan from its 2015 deadline, that's one way of doing it. The other way is manufacturing statistics" (UN_13_006).

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an account of the elements that are relevant to the institutional perpetuation or the eventual obsolescence of the "gap" between humanitarian and development action. First, I have examined a few instances of how, despite remaining constraints, LRD seems to be actually possible. In many cases, implementing organisations were actually linking their humanitarian and development programme; only, this was mostly done without explicitly referring to concepts of bridging the gap.

Secondly, I have taken into consideration regulative, normative, and cultural cognitive frameworks, highlighting how sometimes these forces operate with mutually opposing tendencies. In particular, while I certainly noticed that the aid architecture, most of which is determined by donors, accentuates the differences between what is humanitarian and everything else, I did not find substantial evidence of a strong cultural clash between humanitarian and development actors on the ground. On the contrary, most actors were already involved in both types of action. When the humanitarian-development gap was acknowledged, it was usually in terms of different funding lines, rather than of different missions. However, the gap existed and was reproduced, for instance through the discursive schizophrenia – talking humanitarian with humanitarians, development with development donors – sometimes used by NGOs when addressing different donor organizations. All in all, differences between the two realms did not seem to be much larger than the differences that exist among interventions in different sectors. For instance, the treatment of acute malnutrition, which falls into the humanitarian realm, is likely to have more points of contact with interventions aimed at addressing chronic malnutrition (normally ascribed under "development"), rather than with a humanitarian shelter programme.

Chapter 7. Discussion and conclusions

This thesis was set up with the purpose of understanding *which institutional forces hinder, and which ones encourage, establishing linkages between humanitarian relief and development cooperation in Ethiopia.* In this final chapter, I will discuss the evidence presented in the previous chapters, and most notably in chapter 5, and present the key contributions of this study, as well as its limitations and issues that remain open for further research.

7.1 The research question unwrapped

In setting out the study of LRD in Ethiopia, I had taken as working hypothesis that *there are institutional forces pushing for maintaining the separation of humanitarian and development action,* while at the same time recognising that other forces might be pushing in the opposite direction (see section 2.4 above). Following the operationalisation of this research, I will be discussing the findings in each of the three institutional pillars: regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive.

7.1.1 Regulative Pillar

From the evidence presented in this study, it appears that some regulative frameworks, and most notably those set by donors for the management of grants, can constitute powerful forces that work against the integration of humanitarian relief and development action. By setting different rules that implementers have to follow in their humanitarian and development projects – for instance related to the timeframe of the implementation or the eligibility of beneficiaries – these rules contribute to the institutionalisation of two separate modes of action. It is crucial to note here that the two modes may or may not reflect substantial differences in the situation on the ground. Particularly in case of slow-onset disasters as the one experienced in Ethiopia in 2011-12, it is difficult to draw a line between deteriorating conditions of chronic poverty, and a situation of humanitarian concern. Indeed, if sometimes humanitarian activities are carried out in the same communities were development projects are on-

going, it is clear that, at least to some extent, boundaries are defined by the aid community and for the aid community.

It would nevertheless be misguided to dismiss the humanitarian-development distinction as something created by donors and necessarily determined by empirically observable differences on the ground. Following a critical realist approach, in fact, whatever is capable of transforming structures and events, and to reproduce them, is real (Clegg 2010:10). And indeed, the application of different rules has consequences at many levels. The type of activities that can be undertaken within the framework of a humanitarian project are usually different from the ones that are admissible in a development project; and this applies even more for their duration. The impact of donor rules is such, that some aid agencies reported planning their interventions in order to fit into donors' schemes.

Following Ohanyan (2009, 2012) it can be argued that organisations not relying on a single donor (or a limited number of donors, for that matter) can enjoy greater independence, and thus more easily escape the humanitarian-development divide if they feel it is not beneficial to a given situation on the ground. This is confirmed by evidence that NGOs considered expanding their funding base as a key element for maintaining their presence in the country, which is a key example of their agency. Furthermore, a few organisations that were reportedly receiving a substantial part of their funding from private sources were more confident in planning activities over a longer period of time, or piloting approaches that may or may not be readily accepted by donors. At the same time, the emergence of some flexible funding schemes – of which the USAID crisis modifier and the joint ECHO-EuropeAid SHARE initiative were two key examples – signalled that donors might be increasingly open to change some of the rules, allowing for easier integration of humanitarian and development efforts.

As far as the Ethiopian rules and regulations are concerned, some, such as the need of having every project approved by different entities, certainly contributed to an additional layer of complexity for the management of aid projects. However, Ethiopian rules did not foster the institutionalisation and perpetuation of the humanitarian-development gap and, if anything, they contribute to establishing a common platform. In fact, the same rules apply to all non-profit organisations, regardless of the type of intervention, which contributes to reducing the distinctions between development and humanitarian activities. This is particularly relevant when, as some aid workers pointed out, the complex bureaucratic procedures result in delaying the start of

humanitarian activities, inadvertently further dismantling the juxtaposition of rapid (and short-term) humanitarian relief *versus* more carefully planned, longer-term development. At the same time, some rules could affect the viability of some development actions, considering that foreign-funded organisations are not allowed to work on human rights and other politically sensitive issues that would otherwise be part of the domain of development action. Similarly, some capacity-building activities – itself a mode of action that is particularly suited to development – might be barred on the grounds that their costs are entirely "administrative" and thus violate the 70-30 rule on budgets. Whether Ethiopian authorities were actually willing to enforce all their rules to the point of discouraging the implementation of aid initiatives is beyond the scope of this work. From a critical realist standpoint, what matters, as noted also with reference to donor rules, is whether the existence of such rules might induce aid organisations to change their plans. For instance, even if one of the interviewees reported that it is sometimes possible to start activities without waiting for formal approval, other informants would not do so for fear of breaking the rules and being revoked the permission to operate in the country. In this sense, the mere existence of the rule was having an impact on aid practices, delaying the start of emergency response. However, Ethiopian laws do not seem to actually contribute to the institutionalisation of the humanitarian-development divide. All things considered, I conclude that Ethiopian rules are compatible with "bridging the gap" approaches.

7.1.2 Normative Pillar

In the normative pillar, the focus has been on the non-binding norms and values that can reinforce the institutionalisation of the two-pronged system, or instead promote LRD. In particular, the hegemonic discourse of emergency humanitarianism, despite having long represented a minority of the actors that identify as humanitarian, appears to be one of the main obstacles to "bridging the gap", as it could be difficult to conciliate respect for the humanitarian principles when carrying out more developmental tasks. And indeed, the strongest opposition to the very idea of LRD has come from emergency humanitarians asking for a return to "basics", i.e. principled emergency response. On the other hand, the various discourses of "bridging the gap" could be employed to promote and justify integrated approaches.

By analysing policies and official narratives of Ethiopian authorities, donors, and implementing organisations, I have found strong indications of the relevance of the mandate only among donors. This finding was possibly influenced by the fact that most of the informants were receiving funds from the European Commission, and that the

only donor representatives interviewed were also from that organisation. In fact, and despite having been the creator of the "LRRD" approach, the European Commission is also one of the organisations where the divide is the most pronounced. Specificities of the EC aside, those who openly discussed the different narratives of humanitarian and development action tended to ascribe them to something that exist "at donor level", without referring to anyone in particular. Other than people from within the EC, only one UN officer and one NGO representative ever openly adopted narratives of humanitarian mandate, or identity. Otherwise, adopting a "humanitarian" language rather than a "development" one was merely a tool instrumentally adopted to further one organisation's chances of getting funded.

As far as the Ethiopian authorities were concerned, while I could not find any explicit reference to bridging the gap as such, their policies and official narratives all went in the direction of preventing famine rather than addressing its symptoms. This has led to the development of policies and narrative that, while sometimes poorly connected with each other, all contribute to foster a culture of prevention, risk reduction, and development – all elements that are key to LRD approaches.

7.1.3 Cultural-cognitive Pillar

In the cultural-cognitive pillar, the dichotomy between humanitarian and development action is less pronounced than in the normative one. There was relatively little convergence between normative discourses and frames of reference of aid organisations on the ground. Discourses might have been instrumentally used to pursue practical objectives, such as getting funded, but were not necessarily shared by – or sometimes, not even known to – aid workers on the field.

In most of the cases, the humanitarian-development divide was not referred to as a problem of different mandates, but either dismissed as a donor concern – with the contrasting narratives used as tools to please different donors – or framed as an issue of different contexts, not particularly relevant to the situation on the ground. In other words, they did not share the same frames of reference and meanings that are produced by polarised discourses of humanitarianism and development. In some cases, aid workers explicitly admitted to have instrumentally used development discourse to appeal to development donors, and humanitarian discourse to humanitarians. Overall, the aid workers' notions of what is appropriate and legitimate rarely referred to "values" of any kind, and were instead more pragmatical and flexible than the broader narratives.

A significant finding related to the cultural-cognitive elements is actually that their humanitarian (or development) identity is of relatively little relevance for aid workers focused on (and perhaps obsessed by) the practical details and challenges of day-to-day project implementation. These aid workers rarely question the broader logic of their intervention. Indeed, the very ideas of humanitarianism and of principled action appeared to be foreign to some interviewees, and they almost never referred to them. It emerged instead a conflation of the idea of humanitarianism with that of emergency response, where the defining element of humanitarianism was not the way it is carried out (the principles), but the context (the emergency). In other words, rather than "being" humanitarian, some organisations "do" emergency response, alongside development action. Yet, not all emergency response is necessarily humanitarian, whereas it is possible to act according to humanitarian principles in situations that do not constitute an acute crisis. Furthermore, it was somehow surprising to almost never hear any reference to humanitarian principles when discussing with staff members of organisations signatories of the 1994 Code of Conduct. Perhaps neglect constitutes a greater threat to the integrity of the principles than their voluntary abandonment. The paradox is that confining humanitarianism to emergency response has not necessarily translated in a systematic application of humanitarian principles in the framework of humanitarian projects.

Similarly, references to concepts of "bridging the gap", such as LRRD or Early Recovery, were rare, particularly among people occupying non-managerial roles. These concepts did not have much influence in shaping aid workers' views, as only few were aware of their meaning, and even less referred to them spontaneously. Conversely, I brought evidence of an increasingly frequent use of the concept of "resilience", signalling that they were exposed to discourses of resilience, at the very least in interactions with donors and other elements of the international community, if not also in their programmes. Overall, and despite their choice of words, interviewees were supportive of the idea of integrating humanitarian and development action. The desirability of bridging the gap would usually be linked to the difficulty of drawing a line between the two when working at the community level in the field.

Overall, I gathered the impression that the word resilience was merely a catch-all term with little meaning – that is, one of the definitions of buzzwords according to Cornwall and Brock (2005) – or, at best, a rebranding of existing ideas. However, for some aid workers it was perhaps the first concept for them to refer comprehensively to every action that did not fit neatly in either the "emergency response" box nor in the "development one". Resilience, in a way, could bring together a range of different ideas

about holistic programming that had remained confined to their own domains. It might, for instance, help different sectors develop their own versions of what is known as "livelihoods programming" in the realm of food assistance, or "building back better" for shelter (particularly in natural disasters settings).

Through this research, I brought evidence of how the integration between humanitarian and development assistance in Ethiopia is most strongly hindered by institutional forces that operate in the regulative and, to a certain extent, the normative pillar. As far as the cultural-cognitive pillar is concerned, there seem to be little trickle-down of the very idea of humanitarianism as principled action, which has always been the main argument against LRD.

7.2 Originality and relevance

The main element of originality of this research lies in the approach taken in examining the issue of linking relief and development, which differs from previous scholarship. Rather than taking a normative stance as to whether the humanitarian-development divide should (or should not) be overcome, I have sought to examine the institutional factors that contribute to the perpetuation of the gap, as well as those that promote its reduction, by using original empirical material from my case study in Ethiopia. To the best of my knowledge, this is a unique attempt that could potentially contribute to scholarly reflections on the boundaries between humanitarian and development action in 2015. We are in fact at a critical juncture, when negotiation of both the Sustainable Development Goals – the objectives that will replace the Millennium Development Goals after 2015 – and of a new humanitarian agenda to be adopted at the World Humanitarian Summit are taking place almost in parallel. Considering that a number of actors, such as dual-mandate organisations and several recipient countries, are stakeholders in both processes, the theme of bridging the gap could potentially be relevant.

In addition, this study contributes to shedding a light on practices of aid to Ethiopia, emphasising the constraints and incentives that shape the day-to-day implementation of humanitarian work at the *meso* level of aid organisations based in-country. These concerns, in fact, are usually absent from both academic research and project documentation, both mostly focused on assessing the results (or lack thereof) rather than the processes with which the former are attained. A notable exception is the work of Lautze et al. (2009) on humanitarian governance, which coincidentally has also taken Ethiopia as a case study. Their work, however, focused more on the regulative

and normative aspects set by the government, whereas my research has taken aid organisations as the main point of reference. With Ethiopia being a prominent stage for humanitarian and development action, I feel that research on how these are – and can be – carried out fills a critical gap in literature.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are also expected to be of interest to policy-makers and aid organisations seeking to promote better integration of humanitarian and development efforts. Finally, by bringing to the surface the widespread lack of awareness about humanitarian principles, particularly among field-level aid officers, this study could also be employed by both emergency and alchemical humanitarians to justify the need for improving their dissemination efforts.

7.3 Generalisability, limitations, and issues for further research

The issue of generalisability of the findings of a single case study has been satisfactorily addressed by Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011), who, despite arguing that generalisability should not be the primary aim of scientific research, nevertheless demonstrates that some case studies can satisfactorily produce results that are relevant to different contexts. This is true in particular of *critical case studies,* where the case examined presents some prominent features. In this dissertation, I have argued that Ethiopia is a critical case for LRD, because it is characterised by an exacerbated vulnerability to food crises, by the simultaneous and longstanding presence of both humanitarian and development actors. In addition, it has been demonstrated that the government is not hostile towards bridging the gap, but it is rather in favour of a more developmental approach to crisis response, provided that it fits into its own policies. As a result of these factors, Ethiopia appears to be unusually suited for LRD; and any difficulties experienced here are likely to be even more pronounced elsewhere. While it will be impossible to extrapolate from this case study detailed predictions on the feasibility of LRD approaches elsewhere, some elements can be nevertheless relevant, particularly if one considers the transnational dimension of the humanitarian and development "industries".

The empirical findings of this study have shown that LRD approaches are possible in Ethiopia, and they have indeed been implemented during the recent food crises – even though often they were not necessarily labelled as such. Donors appear to be the key

obstacle, for they hinder integration by imposing different regulations to their humanitarian and development grants respectively, as well as by having different policies for each type of action, and different accountability lines. Considering that donors, with their rules and policies, are more or less the same for all the developing world, this specific finding is of the utmost importance for any discussion about LRD, regardless of the country of implementation. Conversely, implementing organisations rarely posed issues of "identity" as humanitarians, and were instead interested in keeping a presence in the country, to both try to reduce vulnerability and prevent, to the extent possible, the worst effects of crises, as well as to be present and ready to scale up their activities to respond to the next emergency. In order to do so, they were open to pragmatically exploit the features of the current donor system. Given the fact that aid organisations have also a transnational presence, and that most of the decision-makers at local level are expatriate staff members who would usually rotate among different duty stations, it would not be surprising if similar considerations could apply elsewhere.

Indeed, my own professional experience in humanitarian and development actions in countries other than Ethiopia is consistent with the findings of this study. Only during my time at ECHO I found strong insistence on humanitarian identity; this was not true of any the other organisations I worked with. At the Italian Cooperation I was personally only involved in development assistance, but emergency relief was also part of the office's portfolio, although managed by a different team and with different procedures. There was no juxtaposition of the two identities, and some staff moved from humanitarian projects to development ones with ease. The NGO COPE was only doing development, and had a stronger development identity, yet it was not prejudicially against humanitarian assistance – it was just something outside their expertise and, possibly, capacities. The WFP, which has a strong humanitarian identity, has also always carried out development projects. Indeed, while most donors recognise and praise the humanitarian competence of WFP – particular in terms of logistical capacities, rapid deployment, and scale – one of the challenges in terms of donor relations is for the organisation to be seen as a valuable player in the development domain, particularly during times of spending cuts and added emphasis on concepts such as value for money.

Importantly, Ethiopia constitutes a very peculiar case in terms of the degree of control exercised by local authorities over international aid, as well as for their overall preference for approaches aimed at crisis prevention and at tackling chronic hunger. Furthermore, the local leadership of the government in both the humanitarian and

development realm is virtually uncontested, despite timid criticism from some NGOs. In the absence of an interventionist government, or in presence of rules that exacerbate rather than dilute the differences between emergency response and development action, bridging the gap could prove more challenging than it is in Ethiopia. The limited awareness of the specificities of humanitarian action (as opposed to development) can also be linked to a situation in which natural triggers of disasters are emphasised over the political dimension. The same would probably not be true in situations of clearly "man-made disasters" such as conflicts, where humanitarians are more likely to adhere to principles that were indeed developed for wartime assistance. All in all, issues at stake when trying to bridge relief and development in situations of conflict, weak state institutions, or following sudden natural disasters, will likely raise different concerns than the ones examined here.

Therefore, a first major limitation of this study is that, while some of its findings can be generalised, others are only relevant to Ethiopia. Furthermore, by design this study has focused on implementing organisations and, to a limited extent, to donors present in country. All other actors along the aid chain – donor headquarters, aid organisations headquarters, local authorities, and obviously beneficiaries – have been looked at from the standpoint of the implementing organisation. While maintaining the relevance of my approach, which has showed some significant results, despite being carried out as an individual research project with only limited availability of time and funds, I recognise that it i salso useful to listen to other voices along (and outside) the aid chain. Finally, as anticipated in the introduction, another limitation is that I have taken an agnostic stance as to whether a systematic adoption of LRD would actually be better than a two-pronged system.

Recognising these limitations, I believe that further research could be beneficial in all three areas. Two of them would constitute expansions of the present research, either by replicating this study in one or more contexts other than Ethiopia and then compare the findings, or by adding more "layers" of interviews to actors holding different positions in the aid chain. The third issue that could deserve additional research, establishing whether LRD is a more desirable approach, would require a completely different research design, focused on monitoring and evaluation, as well as active collaboration of aid organisations, who should be open to share their internal documents and allow for field visits. Furthermore, the involvement of a larger team of researchers would be necessary, even more so in case of a comparative study undertaken in different countries.

7.4 Final remarks and recommendations

The key finding of this research is that, in the case of Ethiopia and possibly in others, there is an interplay of factors, some favouring the perpetuation of the gap, while others working in the opposite direction. The factors hindering LRD are most significant in the regulative pillars, where donor regulations remain critical to the institutionalisation of a humanitarian-development divide. Additionally, regulative frameworks at the country level may further deepen the divide, but this effect was not significant in the Ethiopian case study. Discourses of humanitarianism as separate from development, while much emphasised in literature and policy documents, had limited influence at the operational level, where pragmatic and instrumental approaches were common, and willingness to link relief and development widespread. However, this might be related to the common perception of Ethiopian food crises as natural disasters, compounded with the high involvement of the government in both humanitarian and development action. In other contexts, the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars might play a more substantive role in maintaining the gap. Nevertheless, this study has demonstrated that LRD is, at least under certain conditions, possible, yet still subject to a number of challenges. If aid organisations are indeed willing to bridge the gap whenever possible, there are a number of recommendations that could make this effort easier.

First of all, from a regulative point of view, implementing organisations should seek to enlarge their donor base, including private funders. The availability of different types of funding would likely increase their capability of carrying out different types of activities across the humanitarian-development divide and, more broadly, it would enhance their capability of exercise agency and pursue their own strategies rather than becoming mere executers of donors' priorities. Donors, on their side, should take steps to allow for more flexibility in funding, such as allowing for rapidly switching from development-mode to humanitarian-mode, considering extending the maximum duration of their humanitarian projects, or creating specific budget lines as "bridges" between different projects. Additionally, options for non-earmarked contributions to trusted implementing partners could be explored.

Secondly, from a normative perspective, considering that many implementing organisations are already pursuing a dual mandate, it could be time to consider whether humanitarian principles can be maintained also in when undertaking activities that are not strictly-speaking humanitarian, and whether they could benefit from being complemented with aid effectiveness principles. This is in part already

happening, for instance with the recent launch of the new Core Humanitarian Standard, which integrates previous humanitarian standards, and which is open to use also in the context of development operations, or with the recent interest in the concepts of resilience and disaster risk reduction. The discussion would benefit from pragmatical insights on the extent to which humanitarian principles are actually applied in current humanitarian operations. Finally, given the rather limited uptake of normative discourses at field level, aid organisations, regardless of their views on the specific issue of bridging the gap, might want to invest in dissemination of principles and standards for accountability among their staff members.

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Annex 1 - List of interviews

Interview code	Date	Place	Type of organisation	Role	Nationality	Gender	Privacy level
NGO_12_A_001	14-Feb-12	Addis Ababa	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 12 A 002	14-Feb-12	Addis Ababa	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 12 B 001	15-Feb-12	Addis Ababa	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 12 B 002	29-Feb-12	Addis Ababa	NGO	Programme assistant	Ethiopian	F	2
NGO 12 C 001	29-Mar-12	Moyale	NGO	Logistics and operations supervisor	Ethiopian	M	2
NGO 12 A 003	02-Apr-12	Yabello	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 12 B 003	03-Apr-12	Yabello	NGO	Programme Coordinator	non-Ethiopian	M	2
NGO 12 D 001	09-Apr-12	Addis Ababa	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
EC 12 001	11-Apr-12	Addis Ababa	EC	Head of office	non-Ethiopian	M	2
NGO 12 B 004	12-Apr-12	Addis Ababa	NGO	Country Director	non-Ethiopian	M	2
NGO 12 C 002	19-Apr-12	Addis Ababa	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 12 B 005	12-Nov-12	London	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 12 B 006	12-Nov-12	London	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 13 C 001	09-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO	Food Security and DRM Advisor	Ethiopian	M	2
NGO 13 D 001	11-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO (Action Aid)	Food Security and Emergency Coord.	Ethiopian	M	1
NGO 13 B 001	11-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO	Country Director	non-Ethiopian	M	2
NGO 13 E 001	12-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO	Country Director	non-Ethiopian	M	2
EC 13 001	16-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	EC	Head of office	non-Ethiopian	M	2
NGO 13 C 002	17-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 13 F 001	18-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO (GOAL)	Country Director	non-Ethiopian	M	1
UN 13 001	19-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	UN	Deputy Country Director	non-Ethiopian	F	2
UN 13 002	25-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	UN	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
UN 13 003	25-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	UN	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
UN 13 004	25-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	UN	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 13 A 001	25-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
UN 13 005	25-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	UN	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 13 G 001	26-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
NGO 13 H 001	29-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO	Head of Food Security	Ethiopian	M	2
NGO 13 I 001	30-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	NGO	Programme manager	non-Ethiopian	F	2
EC 13 002	30-Apr-13	Addis Ababa	EC	Head of Food Security	non-Ethiopian	M	2
UN 13 006	01-May-13	Addis Ababa	UN	Humanitarian Affairs officer	non-Ethiopian	M	2

Annex 2 - General Interview Outline

PRESENTATION & ETHICS

Introduction of the research

Explain the purpose and modalities of the interview

Explain that the interviewee can opt out of the interview anytime

Explain the levels of confidentiality and ask the interviewee to sign the consent form (annex 3)

Ask permission for tape-recording

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Ask the interviewee to introduce themselves and explain their role within their organisation.

Follow up (if/when appropriate): Ask to describe a typical day at work

Ask to describe the on-going activities of the organisation in Ethiopia

MAIN INTERVIEW TOPICS/QUESTIONS

(note: modify order or include additional questions based on the interviewee's responses)

Ask whether their organisation is linking humanitarian activities with development ones, or if they are planning to do so in the future. Invite them to elaborate on how they do it and/or what hinders such linkages.

Ask about the organisations' funding sources

If appropriate to the role: inquire about how projects are developed and/or about relationships with headquarters

Ask about the organisations' relationships with Ethiopian authorities

Ask to elaborate on the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia. Follow up on themes related to chronic crisis, underlying vulnerabilities.

CONCLUSION

Ask about their expectations on their organisation's work in the country.

Ask whether they want to add something and/or ask any questions themselves

Thank the interviewee and remind that they will be sent a copy of the interview summary for their reference (they will have the chance to expand or clarify on their answers if they wish so.

Annex 3 - Consent form template

Consent form for interviews

Researcher: Annalisa Addis

Date and place:

Interview code:

General information

The objective of this interview is to gather information and insights on how relief and development can be linked. Participation is voluntary, and the interview can be terminated at any moment. Some quotes may be published in a thesis or article, and will be referenced according to the privacy level chosen (see below).

I understand the purpose of the interview, and agree to take part to it.

            YES   **NO**

I accept tape-recording (no one but the researcher will have access to the files)

            YES   **NO**

I choose the following privacy level:

       1 Public: name and role within the organization disclosed

       2 Semi-anonymous: some details provided, but NOT real name

       3 Completely anonymous: no personal details disclosed

Signature   _____

e-mail address for follow-up (optional)   _____

Annex 4 - Curriculum Vitae

Annalisa Addis - CV

EDUCATION

2015 (expected)	**Ph.D., African and Development Studies (joint degree)** *Linking Humanitarian and Development Action in Ethiopia* University of Cagliari, Italy Department of Social Science and Institutions with Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany Institute for Development Research and Development Policy
2007	**Master's in International Cooperation – Emergencies** Institute of International Politics (ISPI), Milan, Italy
2006	**Master's degree, International Relations** University of Cagliari, Italy, Faculty of Political Science
2003	**Degree in Political Science** University of Cagliari, Italy, Faculty of Political Science

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Jan – Jul 2014	**Information Management Officer** World Food Programme Roxas city, Philippines
May – Dec 2013	**Intern to the Senior Policy Advisor** World Food Programme, Government Partnerships Division Rome, Italy
Oct 2010 – Feb 2011 Protection	**Trainee** European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Affairs and Civil (ECHO), Food Aid / Special Thematic Policies Unit Brussels, Belgium
Mar – Aug 2010	**Health Programme Officer** Italian Embassy, Development Cooperation Office Maputo, Mozambique
Jan – Dec 2009	**UN/DESA Fellow - Health Programmes** Italian Embassy, Development Cooperation Office Maputo, Mozambique

Jul – Oct 2008	**Intern – Health programmes** Italian Italian Embassy, Development Cooperation Office Maputo, Mozambique
Oct 2007 – Jun 2008	**Project Management Volunteer (Italian Civilian Service)** Co.P.E – Cooperazione Paesi Emergenti Benguela, Angola

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2013	**Research School Plus, Ruhr-University Bochum** Travel Grant for Conference Participation (EUR 670)
2011	**Sardinian Autonomous Region** ESF 2007-2013 Doctoral Grant (EUR 45,000)
2009	**UN/DESA Fellowship** Design and Management of Programmes and Projects in Developing Countries (USD 22,000)
2006	**Sardinian Autonomous Region** "Master&Back" Grant for postgraduate studies (EUR 15,000)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2014	**NOHA Guest Lecture on *Linking Relief and Development*** Ruhr-University Bochum, Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) Audience: Master students; Language: English
2013 Peace	**Module on *Linking Relief and Development* (NOHA Master)** Ruhr-University Bochum, Institute for International Law of and Armed Conflict (IFHV) Audience: Master students; Language: English
2012-2013	**Seminars on *International Cooperation in Africa*** University of Cagliari, Department of Social Science and Institutions (DISSI) Audience: Master students; Language: Italian

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Oct 2014	**Workshop on Research Methodologies** Tallinn University, Estonia Presentation: *Linking Relief and Development assistance: a case study from Ethiopia*

Oct 2013	**III World Conference of Humanitarian Studies**
	Khadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey
	Presentation (with Prof.Dr. Dennis Dijkzeul): *Comparing Resilience and LRRD frameworks*
Sep 2012	**II Conference of African Studies in Italy**
	Pavia University, Italy
	Presentation: *Nuove crisi alimentari, risposte vecchie. Spunti di riflessione dall'Oromia, Etiopia (New food crises, old responses. Reflections from Oromiya, Ethiopia)*
Sep 2012	**Development Studies Association Scotland Conference**
	Edinburgh University, United Kingdom
	Presentation: *Researching the link between Humanitarian Aid and Development*
Jun 2012	**Centre of African Studies (CAS) @ 50 Conference**
	Edinburgh University, United Kingdom
Oct 2010	**European Development Days**
	European Commission, Brussels, Belgium

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND SHORT COURSES

2013	**"Basic Security in the Field (BSITF II)" and "Advanced Security in the Field"**
	United Nations
2013	**"Einführung in der Diskursanalyse" (Introduction to Discourse Analysis)**
	Ruhr-University Bochum, Faculty of Social Science
2012	**"Clear and Competent: Academic Presentations for Fellows from the Humanities and Social Sciences"**
	Ruhr-University Bochum Research School / Impuls Plus
2011 (Evaluation	**"Evaluation de la Qualité de l'Action Humanitaire" of Quality of Humanitarian Action)**
	Groupe URD, Plaisians, France
2007	**"SPHERE Minimum Standards in Disaster Response"**
	Institute of International Politics (ISPI), Milan, Italy

MEMBERSHIPS

- International Humanitarian Studies Association (IHSA)
- Association for African Studies in Italy (ASAI)
- Centre of African Studies in Sardinia (AFFRICA)

IT SKILLS

- Proficient in the use of common office software (word processor, spreadsheet, presentations, email and calendar clients)

LANGUAGES

- Italian: mother tongue
- English: full proficiency
- Portuguese: full proficiency
- French: good working knowledge
- German: intermediate knowledge
- Spanish: intermediate knowledge