Master Thesis
in the frame of the
MA Program
in Peace, Development, Security and
International Conflict Transformation
at the
University of Innsbruck

The humanitarian
footprint &
humanitarian
space

In order to obtain the degree Master of Arts

Submitted by

Magne Bondkall

Supervised by

Daniela Ingruber

Oslo, 2019
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ................................................................................................................. 1

1 Introduction in a personal perspective ........................................................................... 3  
1.1 Observing the observers .......................................................................................... 5  
1.2 The road here .......................................................................................................... 8  
1.3 The beret and the gun ............................................................................................. 8  
1.4 Fighting for Norwegian interests .......................................................................... 10  
1.5 Single minded ....................................................................................................... 11  
1.6 The subject and its stage ...................................................................................... 13  
1.7 Why the humanitarian footprint ............................................................................ 15  

2 Aid, knowledge and social structure ........................................................................... 16  
2.1 Social structure ...................................................................................................... 16  
2.2 Aid for whom? ....................................................................................................... 17  
2.3 The problem reveals itself ...................................................................................... 21  

3 What is a humanitarian footprint? ................................................................................ 22  
3.1 What is a humanitarian footprint? ......................................................................... 22  
3.2 What it all comes down to ...................................................................................... 24  
3.3 What is good? ........................................................................................................ 25  
3.4 What affects the footprint? ................................................................................... 27  
3.5 The question .......................................................................................................... 28  

4 The local connection .................................................................................................... 29  
4.1 Can the voiceless be given a voice? ....................................................................... 31  
4.2 Voiceless? ................................................................................................................ 32  
4.3 Hearing the other side ........................................................................................... 34  
4.4 Desk Research ....................................................................................................... 35  
4.5 Experience and transpersonal connection .............................................................. 37  
4.6 The chosen road .................................................................................................... 38  
4.7 Look to Africa ........................................................................................................ 40  
4.8 Critical selection .................................................................................................... 41  

5 Discretion in practice, discretion in the thesis ............................................................. 42  
5.1 The term discretion ............................................................................................... 43  
5.2 Practical knowledge ............................................................................................... 45  
5.3 Three forms of discretion ...................................................................................... 47  
5.4 Discretion in this Thesis ....................................................................................... 48  

6 Interoperation of a footprint ......................................................................................... 52  
6.1 The relation between natural disasters and the footprint left behind .................. 52  
6.2 The conflict within the footprint ........................................................................... 54  
6.3 A micro example .................................................................................................... 55  
6.4 A meta-example ..................................................................................................... 57  
6.5 Diversity in literature ............................................................................................. 59  
6.6 The weight behind the humanitarian footprint ....................................................... 63  

7 Dissecting the humanitarian footprint ......................................................................... 65  
7.1 Health ..................................................................................................................... 66  
7.2 Economics ............................................................................................................. 68
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.3 First facet</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Repetitive errors, first facet again</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Failure to monitor</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 The second facet</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7 Facet two, first example</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8 Indirect support cost and goat plans</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9 Facet two, second example</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.10 War economy</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.11 Violence and goods</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.12 Providing for violence</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.13 How to circumvent the challenges</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.14 The ethics</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8 Humanitarian space</strong></td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 The shrinkage of the humanitarian space</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Respect for the provisions of International humanitarian law</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 The relative safety of humanitarian workers</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 The degree of access to populations at risk</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 Is the humanitarian space shrinking?</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6 Humanitarian space as a humanitarian agency</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9 The relation</strong></td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10 Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**List of abbreviations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Afghan national army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross national income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO</td>
<td>Governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International non governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International security assistance force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINUSTAH</td>
<td>United nations stabilization mission in Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSF</td>
<td>Médecins sans frontières</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic treaty organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NST</td>
<td>Norwegian support team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official development assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for economic cooperation and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDHR</td>
<td>Universal declaration of human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United nations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

From my early childhood, I have learned that helping others is a positive deed by itself. Any actions aiding others, in particular those in need, are a subject of self-justification, as no external validation is required to justify the action taken. In my opinion, this has become a meta-narrative. (Appignanesi et al. 2013, 103) An unchallenged fact, almost like a law of nature. Perhaps this view was passed to me from my parents, or perchance adopted through the stories I read in my early years.

A good example would be Robin Hood taking from the rich and giving to the poor. The story of Hood and his companions was both bewildering to me as well as exciting. To be fighting for the weak and less resourceful were in my eyes self-justified. If I was to be one of the good guys, I needed to help the weaker ones. I needed to sacrifice my comfort and wealth to aid the poor.

To aid the ones in need, and give to the poor is a task simple enough if one does not go into the depths of the subject. In my childhood identifying the poor ones was easy. I was, like so many other children in Norway after the aid boom (Adewunmi, Bim. 2014) often lectured with the phrase “Finish your food, think about the poor children in Africa” or “Don’t complain, think about the poor children in Africa.”

It seemed clear to me that the poor children in Africa were the victims I needed to help. And I did, a number of times. Together with my friends, I would collect money for the poor children. More often than not, we would choose to give some little sum, often collected by means of a bake sale or bazaar in the street where we lived, to the organization Save the children,
known to me at the time under the Norwegian name Redd barna. This way of aiding the ones in need was easy and comfortable. Give a little money to an organization claiming to aid the poor, and your conscious is clear.

As I grew older, entering adulthood, I became more aware of the implications of this simplified view. Segregating the world in two categories, the normal and the poor, no longer seemed like a suitable worldview. I started to see the depth and complexity of the so-called poor people.

After a rather random chain of events led me to work as a humanitarian worker on behalf of the Norwegian government in their governmental organization (GO), I started to question the simplified worldview. More about this development and change of thought will be described later in the thesis.

After starting my education at the University of Innsbruck, I started noticing multiple layers of the complex situations found on the ground while conducting humanitarian missions. I started questioning everything from the definition of poverty, to the rapidly falling facts I used to accept as meta-narratives.

In the search for answers, I started to see my surroundings with new eyes. I started to apply critical theory to everything I heard and saw during my humanitarian missions. I started rethinking my experiences as a soldier in arms attending the armed conflict in Afghanistan. The more I looked into these matters; the more questions arose in my mind. Acting within a strictly heretical GO, I started to run into cold shoulders whenever I would question our conduct during missions.
1 Introduction in a personal perspective

This thesis may not be like other theses, for many reasons. One could argue that every thesis ever written is unique. However, I find the precondition in this particular case to be extraordinary. The first obvious reason is the fact that it is written in the particular style of the Master Program in Peace, Development, security and international conflict transformation at the university of Innsbruck; written in a personal perspective and in first person. There is a consistent link between me, the author, and the written material throughout the thesis. The reader will time and time again discover a direct reference to personal experiences. The references may be to extraordinary situations familiar or unfamiliar to the reader.

This leads to the second reason why this thesis needs to be seen in a different light. While most theses are written by someone about to begin their professional life, this work is written by someone exiting the profession described in the material. Or, more precisely, written by someone who after four years brakes out of the world of governmental humanitarian organizations, to dedicate time and effort to an independent and somehow radical humanitarian organization, and then proceeds to work there for several years, before becoming a freelance humanitarian consultant.

This enables me to write freely about topics and events that may seem harmful to the organizations, and at the same time, could be found highly relevant for the humanitarian footprint. In this light, the thesis may seem more like a reflection and analysis of work already conducted, rather than research on a topic of interest and fascination. This does not mean that the
thesis will bear the form of a report, but rather a session mapping out and transforming more than eight years in humanitarian service. It is made clear to the reader why each and every one of the missions and encounters described in this thesis has formed not only the research problem and research question, but by the same token me, the person behind the questions, and the search to find the answers.

The last reason that makes this thesis stand out is that it is written in a challenging perspective. The first draft of the thesis proposal was submitted to cross reading session at the University of Innsbruck. This is perhaps a concept unknown to the reader not familiar with the academic tradition of the Master program in peace studies at the Innsbruck University.

I think that understanding the process of the cross reading might be central to understanding the process behind the creation of this thesis. I will therefore briefly explain the process, and how it affected the creation of this thesis.

The process of writing a thesis in the peace studies master program at Innsbruck University begins with writing a thesis proposal. This is an undertaking conducted by the student before showing up at the university for their last term, under the guidance of a professor. Once at the university, the students are separated into cross reading groups.

These groups will meet for four hours on a daily basis, where two students will be subject to a cross reading session. Before the cross reading, some tasks are given to the other students in the group. One will be responsible for giving feedback on form, one will be responsible for giving feedback on content, lastly one student will hold the role as the moderator,
making sure the session plays out according to the rules of a cross reading session, introducing the different speakers, and acting as the timekeeper for the different segments of feedback.

The moderator initiates the session, before feedback regarding the form is given. This will be ten-minute feedback regarding the form, punctuation, references, and the general structure of the thesis proposal. Then 20-minute feedback on the content of the thesis proposal is given before the floor opens for a 30-minute session of feedback from the other students not assigned any specific role in the cross reading session.

In the end, two professors give their feedback, before the last word is given to the author of the proposal. It is important to know that the writer is not given a chance to speak before s/he is given the last word at the very end of the session. This creates a very interesting situation for the writer as one has to sit and listen to a group of people discussing, giving feedback to, and debate the thesis proposal without the opportunity to answer, clarify or defend any parts of the work.

While this can be a bit of a challenge for some, it gives the writer the perfect opportunity to truly understand how their audience understands the thesis. Moreover, to see if the presentation was the correct one to give the readers the picture the writer was trying to convey.

1.1. Observing the observers

The cross reading was particularly interesting to me for several reasons. First of all, this was for me, like for any other student in the program, the perfect
chance to see how the readers experienced the material like I described in the subchapter above. However, this is not surprising as this is the intended purpose of the cross reading.

It was of particular interest to me because my thesis is chiefly touching upon the subject of how humanitarian aid is perceived. Many of the other students were involved in the humanitarian sector one way or the other. The ones that were not directly connected with the humanitarian trade would at least have a relation to the topic.

This gave me a unique chance not only to see how readers of my thesis proposal would experience it but also how people, with somehow the same connection to fieldwork, would relate to it. I was surprised to see that most of the feedback I got was not directly addressing the concept of the humanitarian footprint.

This might be because the concept of the humanitarian footprint was not to well presented in my thesis proposal, that it was presented in the wrong manner, or that the concept itself was somehow unknown to the group. It became clear to me at the later stage that the latter was the case. Even if they all had strong opinions concerning humanitarian aid, they somehow did not relate to the concept of a humanitarian footprint.

This was, perhaps, my first clue to how I had to approach and present the subject. It became evident to me at that point that while most people would have an opinion regarding the desired outcome of aid and humanitarian intervention, the idea of referring to that outcome as a concept of a tangible state seemed like a foreign idea. I had to keep this in mind while moving forward with the idea of the thesis. For this very reason, I ended up
rewriting most of the proposal, trying to twist it into a more tangible direction.

One of the things I became aware was that I wrote that it would be written in a strictly postmodern perspective. A worldview deeply fascinating to me. Nonetheless, during the cross reading, and in the weeks that followed, I came to understand that my thesis could not follow the postmodern perspective alone.

Therefore, I do not attempt, nor claim to write in a particular style, but rather choose to let it be what it is, on its own account. The observant reader will nonetheless find one of the fundamental ideas of postmodernity to be in found my words: the denial of any meta-narrative. (Appignanesi et al. 2013, 103) The thesis has an overall critical approach to every aspect of the humanitarian business. This does not imply that the thesis is opposing every aspect of the humanitarian trade and custom. Rather it can be seen as a challenge to established methods and routines. Not for the sake of rebellion, but merely to start off with a blank page.

Blending research with an analysis of personal experience, I strive to come to a conclusion regarding a more responsible way of conducting humanitarian relief work and humanitarian intervention. Just what a more responsible way is, is a question up for debate. Moreover, it is highly subjective. I will, for this very reason, offer the reader my best attempt to describe this later in the thesis. For now, however, I wish to continue the introduction to the subject without defining what I regard as a more responsible way, so a proper understanding of the background for the thesis
is established before we venture into the definition of responsibility in the context of humanitarian conduct.

1.2 The road here

To understand the intention behind the thesis and the desire to map out humanitarian relief work under a new lens, it is crucial to understand both my physical and emotional journey during the last eight years. By doing so, the attentive reader can observe an International security assistance force (ISAF) soldier in active duty in Afghanistan, becoming a peace student producing written work in the form of a critical thesis. Challenging both the way the western world have conducted their international politics in the context of state to state relation, bilateral aid, as well as the very foundation of humanitarian relief work the way most agencies operate today (Moyo 2009, 30-ff)

1.3 The beret and the gun

Till this day, I can still remember the feeling of firing an assault rifle for the very first time. The childish fascination of strapping on a bulletproof vest. The mixture of fear and the sense of playful adventure-seeking. I was a soldier; in a war in a foreign country. I will not, nor can I, go into details regarding my daily work and conducts while serving with ISAF under the banner of the Royal Norwegian Air Force. However, my doings there is not the center of my personal transformation. Even if I did experience shots being fired, carrying
gravely wounded personnel, tactical flying and death, I do not consider my experiences traumatic in any way. I was well prepared by the Norwegian armed forces and almost properly debriefed.

My transformation started with the local Afghani population. I did not speak much to civilian personnel while serving in Afghanistan. Being asked to mentor a squad of ANA (Afghan National Army) soldiers in fire and rescue operations, I had some access to military personnel. We quickly hit it on, but there was always an expected professional approach to our conversations and interaction. It was the civilians outside the gate that poked my interest; the women and children.

Afghanistan was at the time, a very patriarchal society. The women and children had little say in the conflict. (Nasimi, Shabnam 2014) Still, they were highly affected and were the ones to suffer the most from the struggles between the warring factions, including ISAF.

Even if my daily chores were in an airborne unit, I sometimes spent time in one of the guard towers. The tower in question was called Victor one and faced Meymaneh city. The houses of the suburbs were only meters from the perimeter and tower. From the tower, I could spy the life of the locals. I saw little boys herding goats, and small girls playing in the street. I saw women, or more precisely, I saw their niqab as they covered themselves to pass the tower. The fact that the women covered themselves was fascinating to me because it so clearly marked me as an outsider.

Despite what I had heard about the Afghani women continuously covering themself while being out of the comfort and privacy of their house or compound, I observed time and time again women walking through the city
uncovered, wearing their niqab more like a combined headpiece and cape. When they approached the guard tower, and me, they would flip down their niqab and cover their entire body. This puzzled me, as I clearly understood that I was an unwanted intruder there.

One could argue that soldiers are always unwelcomed by the local civilian population while living under the grasp of war. At the same time, I felt and believed that I was there to protect the local population. By force for sure, and by killing and arresting the local branches of Taliban, yes, but still, I was there to protect the local population. Why would I be there, if not for this reason? The question still echoes in my mind.

1.4 Fighting for Norwegian interests

Some ask why we must fight in Afghanistan. Sometimes people ask why we send troops halfway around the world, and how one can say we protect our country fighting a war hundreds of miles from home. How can choosing sides in a war that were not ours to begin with, be protecting Norway? Well, dear friends, it is simple; we are part of a global society. By standing with NATO in its struggles and fighting side by side with our allies, we are strengthening our position in the global society. Then, in turn, protecting our right to oil fields, our political standing, and our interests abroad. (Col. Miles 2012)

I heard these words in a speech during my military deployment to Afghanistan. Looking back, I am not sure how I related to these words then, and I am not utterly sure how I relate to them now. There is a clear indication
that the suffering of the local population is not the cause of a military presence. I see this to be obvious in modern warfare (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 2013). At the same time, there is a valid reason to raise the question if not military presence could better the situation for the local population.

Even if it seems futile to claim the international soldiers did not cause suffering for the local population, it must be said that the violations and violence the local community was subject to from the Taliban before the intervention was of an even graver and more brutal nature. Were not ISAF the lesser of two evils?

The question of military intervention, or the lack thereof, is not to be debated or elaborated in this thesis. Still, it is critical to understand where my journey started, and it is safe to say my humanitarian journey began in Afghanistan. It was my first experience with a single-minded view of a *them and us* view I later came to know as dominating within the governmental organizations (GO) of the humanitarian world. I now understand the risk of challenging the official agencies and entrenched truths of a trade. Asking the wrong questions will always have a price. (Zinn 2002, 43)

### 1.5 Single minded

After returning to Norway at the end of my contract with the Norwegian armed forces, I joined the Norwegian official humanitarian relief agency, Norwegian Support Team (NST). A job that led me to strange corners of the world, and that perhaps by serendipity, led me to the University of Innsbruck.
Then through the lessons, mind-opening events and transforming experiences, led me to question if I truly ended up in the strange corners of the world, or if everything I know to be normal in fact were odd. Moreover, that what I called home really where the strange corner of the world?

I worked my way through the world, often living and working in extremely harsh conditions in remote camps. Sometimes I worked in a civil war, and sometimes in emergency or hunger. I was out there to save the world. But somehow that sentence, to save the world, always gave me a sour taste in the mouth. Could the world be saved? And if so, was I doing it right?

To put these questions into a new light, I have to walk the reader through some of my rather strange thoughts during childhood. As a child, I would go to visit my grandparents every other week or so. My grandparents on my mother’s side were quite young and had active careers. My grandparents on my father’s side were retired and lived a quiet life in a cozy suburban area reserved for people over 60 years only. I loved visiting them, for conspicuous reasons, of course, but also because it offered a peek into a different world. They had different kinds of soda, food and furniture than found in the home of my nuclear family and friends. They talked about other things and debated other subjects. Visiting them was truly a taste of the different.

I remember, at one point in my life, perhaps around the time I was five or six years old, I started to wonder what my grandparents did when I was not around. Did they act differently, or an even more bizarre explanation; were they switched off? Would they stand ideal every time I did not hold them in my view? The memories of this idea are something that has
fascinated me later in life. Especially after coming to Innsbruck; starting my Masters degree. First of all because it holds an interesting philosophical aspect to it, but even more so because it says something about the way we see the world around us.

1.6 The subject and its stage

Even if we do not suspect the world to be a stage rigged to create the perfect background for our life stories, there is something alarming in the way we often see our surroundings. (Nguyen 2019) I find this to be true in my case, and according to my judgment, I furthermore observe it to be true for the people in my life. We see others to be actors in our life by reducing them to the functions they fill in our lives.

A shopkeeper will only be seen as a shopkeeper, existing only in the context of her shop and the merchandise it contains. A coworker will only be seen as a coworker, and so on. It is easy to forget that these people have a rich and complex life like us. We may not think they are switched off like I thought about my grandparents as a child. At the same time, I think it is safe to say we see them in a simplified manner, and only in the functions they fill in our lives. The roles are many; the weak ones, the victims, and so on.

I think this is similar to how I saw the people of Afghanistan. And later how I saw the people of South Sudan, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Ukraine, Nigeria, Syria, Iraq, The Philippines and other places I have passed through. They were the stage of my life. They were the background in a picture portraying my life. I made the grave mistake of seeing them as people in need. Weak ones
and victims of hunger, catastrophes or war, not like people. Not like people with unique ideas, hopes, and dreams. I made the mistake of venturing into their homeland and homes, thinking I came with some answers. This will be the heart of the thesis; if not only I, but moreover the agency I worked for, as well as the general humanitarian system see people as real people, or if they were reduced to a stage on which we can perform our act as humanitarians. If we came to help them or if we came to play the part of the good Samaritan. (Waters 2000, 49)

The idea of seeing people like actors, or more precisely, extras, to act as a background curtain in our life, leads me to the idea of the stage where life is accruing. This space can be seen as the space we live our lives in. And referring to the topic of this thesis, the space we conduct our humanitarian business. We can see this as the humanitarian space, a concept that entered the humanitarian discourse in the mid-1990s. (Wagner 2006)

This thesis will simultaneously deal with the humanitarian footprint and the space where the footprint is left. The humanitarian space. The concept of the humanitarian space can be understood without taking the humanitarian footprint into account. However, the concept of the humanitarian footprint cannot be properly understood without regarding the humanitarian space.
1.7 Why the humanitarian footprint

Understanding who writes these words is critical if one is to fully understand where my research question, research problems and answers are coming from, and where I intend the journey to take me.

I bleed for the others, literally, and metaphorically. Even if a sense of thrill-seeking and adventure lust can be found among my reasons and motivation in the context of conducting humanitarian missions, there is another driving force stronger and more present. I find relief in aiding others. I feel for anyone being subjected to violence, poverty, or any other means of disasters and catastrophes. When I set out to write a thesis regarding the footprint of humanitarian operations, it is not only because the line of trade interests me, it is because I care about the ones in need. Not my need to help, nor a state's political need for being involved in the right places at the right time, but need for shelter, food, medical care and safety. I need to investigate and find out; am I truly helping?
2 Aid, knowledge and social structure

As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, I have for a long time felt that there is something fundamentally wrong with how we conduct humanitarian missions. A reader with a critical mind or the reader open to ideas of the more post-modernistic nature will for sure by now ask who this “we” conducting the humanitarian missions are? This question draws us closer to the heart of the matter. There is a we and a them in the humanitarian world. Those who have, and those who do not. (Duffield 2014, 7-ff)

One could argue that this is the very foundation for humanitarian aid. The ones who have give to the ones who do not. In my post-Christian society, this starts with the Good Samaritan and ends with the last humanitarian mission executed per date. To begin with, this is in good intent. If you have something to spare, then you should give it to someone in need.

2.1 Social structure

The problem, however, presents itself when the ones who have, and the ones who do not, start forming a social structure, a social structure that can be seen as an international middle class and lower class. It may be the case that a dependency structure has already been formed in the international society. A system where we can see a clear pattern if we allow ourselves to simplify the situation enough to divide populations into these two groups, the ones who have and the ones not who do not.
The apparent egocentric attitude could be an interesting topic for a thesis. However, this is not the topic to be covered in this thesis. At the same time, it is of paramount importance to keep this egocentric attitude in mind when elaborating and unveiling the topic of the thesis. The underlying reasons why I believe this thesis needs to be written.

Like I strongly implicated in the first chapter, there is, in my eyes, something wrong with the way western GOs conduct their humanitarian aid. I do not believe it is in ill intent. Even if I suspect the research in this thesis will uncover to the reader some disturbing information regarding political and, moreover, economic motives being the driving force behind some aspects of our humanitarian acts and operations. I believe it is simply a question of information and understanding. I have often heard it has been said that the western world forces its way on so-called third world countries. This may not be entirely correct, but it is closer to the matter of the case than the impression most humanitarian operations give via media. This is mainly because there is an asymmetrical structure to the way we see the world, based on a first world and third world view. (Hosle 1992, 230-ff)

2.2 Aid for whom?

I do not believe in nation-states and see myself more as a creature of the world rather than Norwegian. The belief in nation-states, or more precisely, the lack thereof, is rooted in how I see the world around me. And it is, perhaps, deeply affected by how I have lived the years of my adult life. While traveling, I have found that there are people I feel deeply connected to coming
from all kinds of different backgrounds, all sorts of religions, and with a
diversity of professional trades. I have felt closer to some of them then I have
to many in my home country of Norway.

Notwithstanding, I was born in Norway and hold a Norwegian passport. Hence, I am Norwegian concerning legal discourse and conduct. My first four years of humanitarian work was carried out with the Norwegian flag on my shoulder, and on behalf of the Norwegian government. Therefore, I find it relevant to investigate aid seen in this lens and examine the impression Norwegians carry of humanitarian aid to create a reference point for the thesis to resonate with. How much is known about the ones at the receiving end of the aid chain? To follow up on this question, I have inspected a report on the information given to the public in the context of humanitarian aid written for Access Info Europe by Lydia Medland, María Jaraquemada, and Irene Aterido Martín-Luengo. The report indicates that information regarding the actual use of humanitarian funds is laborious to come by in Norway. (Medland, Jaraquemada, and Martín-Luengo 2009, 22)

According to the report, Norway is ranked as number one in the context of the world ranking for gross national income (GNI) percentage spent on official development assistance (ODA). Meaning Norway is spending a higher percentage of their GNI than any other country in the world, at the time of the report. The report is interesting as it explores the relation between $\text{GNI}\%\text{ODA}$\(^1\). and the general publics knowledge regarding the usage

---

\(^1\) $\text{GNI}\%\text{ODA}$ is a way to measure how much a nation-state spends on humanitarian and development aid, so called *official development assistance*. This is then seen in context of the gross national income. Meaning that a nation-state having a $\text{GNI}\%\text{ODA}$ at 1 is spending 1% of
of the funds. However, the report is from 2009, so it is also relevant to see if Norway still ranks high in terms of GNI%ODA. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, (OECD) this is still the case. (OECD 2018)

On the other hand, the report from Access Info Europe states that of the five states included in the report (Norway, Canada, Spain, UK, and France), Norway has the least accessible information regarding the usage of the ODA. (Medland, Jaraquemada, and Martín-Luengo 2009, 10) I find it alarming that Norway rate so poorly in the general understanding and knowledge in relation to the usage of the funds, while simultaneously being the heights ranking country in the context of GNI%ODA.

Graphic 01
Graphic by author

GNI%ODA VS Accessibility

All numbers extracted from the Not Accessible, Not Available report. (Medland, Jaraquemada and Martín-Luengo 2009, 10)

GNI%ODA show in 0,01% of GNI
Accessibility shown in points from parameters given in the report.
Dark gray = indicated knowledge
Light gray = GNI%ODA
In the visual representation above we can see the general public knowledge regarding how the aid budget are spent on the darker gray bar, situated in the front and representing the public knowledge. We can clearly see that Norway, being placed in the middle of the graph, score the lowest of all the countries represented in the report. In the back, represented by the light gray bar, we can see GNI%ODA. This visual representation is a bit unsettling, as we can clearly see that Norway is the country in the report spending most of it gross national income on official development assistance while maintaining the lowest knowledge of how the money are being spent.

My concern is the lack of knowledge regarding the use of ODA, and the impact on the local society in question. This is further strengthened by looking into the different segments used to calculate the low score on accessibility and availability of the relevant information. In the report, one can clearly see that information on integrity mechanisms and recipient country information are the factors dragging the score to the low rating. (Medland, Jaraquemada, and Martín-Luengo 2009, 33)

It is particular integrity mechanisms and recipient country information that kindled my desire to research the humanitarian footprint to begin with. If the money is spent in the best possible way is by all means important. I also want to see the greatest possible amount of impact for every dollar spent on humanitarian missions. However, I find the footprint of the operation to be even more significant. To which degree can this lack of information lead to a lack of control when executing humanitarian interventions? If so little is known about what is happening out there by the
population and its government funding the operations, is it possible that an operation also could leave a negative footprint?

My time in the field serving the Norwegian GO NST does alas reinforce the suspicion that our humanitarian operations may cause harm to the receiving end of the humanitarian business. There are some factors that point in that direction. The sometimes poor language skill of the staff, the lack of proper pre-mission training, and planning could all be factors contributing to poor performance in the field.

2.3 The problem reveals itself

So far, I have elaborated on the problem with the lack of knowledge and information. Both within the humanitarian team conducting the intervention, and within the general knowledge on the donating side of the business. I have also targeted the suspected two-sided view of the ones who have and the ones who do not, as a possible problem. This simplistic two-sided view may, in its turn, give room for a social structure dividing people into groups. I believe this diversion of groups may lead to an unethical approach to humanitarian intervention. Of course, to say something is unethical implicates that there is a scale where one might measure the degree of ethics. It is necessary with a definition of what I perceive to be ethical to do so. More about this can be found in subchapter 3.3. Now, the next step is to narrow down my suspicions to tangible problems, which in turn can lead me to concrete questions.
3 What is a humanitarian footprint?

In the last chapter, I established my thoughts regarding humanitarian business and how it is conducted in some of the GOs dominating the humanitarian field. I now narrow the subject down to a particular question. Coming to a conclusion and a suggestion in the context of a more sustainable way to conduct humanitarian relief operation requires a question, a specific research question, to guide me in the process of writing, and aiding me to map out the right terrain.

3.1 What is a humanitarian footprint?

At the time when the idea of writing a master thesis about humanitarian footprint came to my mind, I cannot say that I had a very tangible idea about just what a footprint was, let alone a humanitarian footprint. I was, of course, referring to the impact on the local society. However, just what the impact would be, and how to measure it is a different story.

I observe my judgment to be colored by my beliefs, political opinion, as well as hundreds of other factors affecting my life. I need to be aware of this as I venture into my topic of study. Because I was born and raised in Norway, I hold a set of values closely connected to what might be seen as the Norwegian culture. I must, at this point, note that I do not see the Norwegian culture to be anything else but a construct. In the best of cases, it could be said to be the median of habits upheld by people living in Norway. Partly as a natural offspring of conditions in the territory known as Norway, and
partially constructed through nation-building, perhaps, in particular, the nation-building taking place after the liberation of the Norwegian state from the Danish state in 1814. (Seland 2019) I must make sure to maintain the requisite understanding of the culture I study the humanitarian footprint within, not the culture I grew up with. Keeping an open mind, and respecting that I do not hold any answers initially helps me maintaining a neutral and impartial perspective.

Because I set out to work on a personal level, I have to stay away from generalizations in terms of culture and look to the personal culture of the person in question. Therefore, I will pay more heed to the personally felt culture of the person involved in any of the case studies included in the thesis, rather than to the general perception of culture in the person's state of origin. The term culture will through out the entire thesis be understood as the personal culture unless specified otherwise. When I write personal culture, I am by all means not referring to the perceived culture of a given individual like their nationality, ethical background, religion and so forth, but rather their own felt culture. A culture that would be perceived to be heavily influenced by factors like nationality, ethical background and religion, but at the same time not limited to them, and not necessarily including them.

The term personal culture must be seen in relation to the person's surroundings and influencing factors. (Srite, and Karahanna 2005, 1-ff) I find people to be more than a stereotypical presentation of how they are observed by others. It is important through out the process of reading this thesis to remember that culture in this context will always refer to the personal culture. A personal culture is in no way obvious, as one cannot understand
the cultural background of a personal culture without knowing the person in question. This is, however, also the point. A person's culture should never be presumed. This is of course true in every situation, but it must be said to be of paramount importance in the context of the humanitarian footprint and the humanitarian space.

There are, like so often when it comes to understanding cultures and the interaction between these, many sides of the same coin. On the one hand, the footprint of a humanitarian operation needs to be seen in the context of the culture on the receiving end of the aid chain. The person living in the culture is the one who will have the last say in what seems like the best solution to her or him. On the other hand, we find our moral standards and interpretation of so call *good custom*. A narrative so subjective in my eyes that it hardly holds any meaning at all, but nonetheless so present in the modern mindset. These two principles, the needs of the person receiving aid, and *good custom* of the humanitarian, could at times be experienced as mutually excluding elements.

### 3.2 What it all comes down to

Trying to find a humanitarian footprint, we first have to determine just what the humanitarian footprint is. The humanitarian footprint can in the context of this thesis be said to simply be the changes and alterations left behind after a humanitarian intervention. Still, finding the humanitarian footprint is a task that requires tangible questions. In this case, the question is clear; I wonder if the humanitarian operations will benefit the receivers on the long run. So the
The question is, by all means, an impossible question to answer, as it requires a two-sided view. Something must count as bad, and something must count as good. The bad and the good (Nietzsche 2015, 9-ff) need to be added together, and the final sum will show us if the humanitarian intervention has a positive or negative effect. This is by all standards impossible; even if one could accept terms like good and bad, what is counted as bad or good is highly subjective. Something seen as good in the eyes of the humanitarian could be considered bad in the eyes of the aid receiver, and the other way around.

### 3.3 What is good?

I know I do not fully understand the complex situations found in the field, and that every judgment regarding what is good and bad is subjective. (Nietzsche 2015, 9-ff) Moreover, referring to a modern construct, I have to make a compromise. Even so, I will not make a subjective decision regarding what is good in my eyes and write the thesis from this perspective. To truly find the humanitarian footprint, I have to let the receiver of the aid make a subjective decision in this regard. This, however, would be impossible, as we are talking about millions of people on the receiving end of the humanitarian aid chain. Most of them living in conditions that defacto make them unreachable to me.

Even if I somehow could manage to reach them, cutting the diversity of millions of subjective opinions to one Omni subjective opinion would be impossible. It would also, in fact, lead me away from the initial idea of
listening to the subjective option of the receivers, as combining several subjective statements into one statement representing them all, would be the same as finding a median of the opinions. Hence it would no longer be subjective, but rather an empirical presentation.

What do I think is good? For the sake of the thesis, I determine that my individual opinion concerning what is good and substantial is based on my beliefs and personal culture. I find four aspects to be the most important in the topic of the humanitarian footprint: I use the universal basic human rights, as a guiding light regarding what humans need (United Nations General Assembly 1948). Everything that ensures the aid receivers these rights is seen as a success in my eyes. I also find Maslow's pyramid of needs to be a good indicator of what must be regarded as good, in terms of getting one's needs fulfilled. (Maslow 1943) I find the long-term effect of being more relevant than the momentary one, so I will put more weight on matters having a long-term effect than short-term. And last but not least, I do not place a plethora of value on materialistic values.

So what would this mean? To say I will not place a plethora of value on materialistic values is easy enough, yet a definition is in order for the sentence to be of any added value to the content of the thesis. The problem with talking about materialistic values is that it may be understood to represent all physical property. Yet this is not the intention behind the wording. Materialistic values in the context of this thesis should be understood to be items of wealth, not of survival, or the mere necessary items or property to maintain dignified living conditions. It should still be mentioned that I do place value on income-generating activities, but that
income-generating activities in this thesis should be understood as a means to lift individuals out of poverty, to ensure funding for education, or to secure retirement. This would include both M4\textsuperscript{2} and collective savings systems.

3.4 What affects the footprint?

Behind the question concerning what kind of footprint is left behind by a humanitarian operation is a complex web of issues. I set out to understand the impact on the local society. I favor the lower levels of society, as they are the ones mostly affected by, among other problems, the lack of proper medical care. (Cockerham 2007, 104-ff) Something I find essential in terms of personal security and wellbeing. I look especially into how actions performed by the humanitarians are affecting the local population. Women and children will be of the greatest interest to me because of their vulnerability in patriarchal societies. (ICRC 2007)

In the mixture of parameters I use to find and measure the humanitarian footprint, I hold the effect on the economy, in general, to be important. Loss of job and livelihood is another important aspect I hold to affect the receivers. I understand the degree of changes to customs and personal culture to be directly connected to the footprint. Changes in power structure may both be seen as a positive or negative development judging

\footnote{The M4 approach to income generating activities can in short be said to adjusting the local marked and economy to be able to facilitate for actors without the ability to invest, usually through access to free tools, transport or market management}
from the aspects stated above, so the effect on the society caused by the affected varies from case to case.

I exclude short-term solutions with a relief effect with a smaller span than six months. Even if an action of relief has a momentary effect of ease for the local population, it may cause harm to the receiver in the long run. It may lead to a dependency on relief, resulting in a crisis when the financial funds are being withdrawn, and the relief operation comes to its conclusion.

3.5 The question

To conclude this chapter and leave the reader with a tangible understanding, I will, in short, present my research question. My aim is to find the answers to the following questions:

After conducting humanitarian operations in several countries, or several years, a certain personal experience and understanding of the situation on the ground must be expected to occur. To what degree can this accumulated knowledge and experience be used to understanding the humanitarian footprint, the humanitarian space, and the relation between them? And can this understanding lead to a sustainable way of conducting humanitarian aid?
4 The local connection

The first element I take into account when picking my method of research is credibility. To obtain a correct, interesting and precise picture portraying the humanitarian footprint, I find credibility to be crucial. This is of particular importance to me during this process because of the nature of my topic. It is safe to claim the subject of the humanitarian footprint to be a unique one. Literature and reports are available, but often bias, taking their close connection with the humanitarian business and dependency of donors into account. (Roy 2004, 44)

When one finds a book or report, one must remember this while considering the written material. The main focus of this thesis is what needs to be done differently, changed, or stopped. Trying to find out what needs to be changed is to elaborate on what is not done right. I believe the term right to be too subjective; what is not done right is subjective as well, but could be seen as unbiased if understood on a personal level. This information cannot be found in reports accessible to the public for an obvious reason. Information regarding what went wrong is likely to be excluded from public reports due to the setback in donations and funding it may cause. (Easterly 2006, 16) Most agencies are funded by donation. Be it donations from private donors or nation-states.

This is true for most INGO, as well as many of the UN agencies and a few GOs. Some critical voices have been raised towards the business of humanitarian aid. (Bolton 2008, 147-ff, Moyo 2009, 29-ff) Negative attention regarding an agency’s usage of donor money is devastating and may put an
organization out of business. (Roy 2004, 44) Therefore, it is my observation that most reports one could find describing the agency's activities, conduct and operation are strictly positive. Afraid to lose their donors, only the success stories are presented. An NGO is highly vulnerable to negative attention as the competition for donors can be tough. (Islam 2016) It can be suspected that more critical reports and information can be found from the GOs operating in the humanitarian sector. However, I find this not to be the case. My personal experience is that GOs, or at least the GOs I have worked for or cooperated with, are even more circumspect when it comes to releasing information that may be experienced as negative to the agency in question, or may harm their perception. (Bolton 2008, 91) After all, we must remember that the agencies answer to their donors, not to the receivers of aid. (Easterly 2006, 15)

Even if the GO agencies often get their funds directly from the taxpayer's money, they seem to me to be even more careful to hide their mistakes and misconduct. Trying to find information, reports, blogs or articles regarding the room for improvement in the humanitarian sector for a GO perspective only bolster my impression; obtaining information with reference to what the INGOs or GOs need to change to achieve a longer-lasting, fair and substantial way of conducting their humanitarian relief operations from their own reports will not be possible. Nonetheless, some reports may be used to get targetable numbers regarding finance, time of deployment, and mission target.
4.1 Can the voiceless be given a voice?

Some time ago, when I concluded my professional relationship with the Norwegian GO NST and started working for MSF, I had a conversation with a friend of mine by the name of Alexander Buchmann. Being an experienced humanitarian worker with MSF, he laid out the land in terms of what MSF was all about, what I could expect from them, and what they would demand from me. He portrayed a question to check if what any agency is doing were actually the right conduct. The question was simple; –Will this benefit the ones in need? If the answer is no, then it is not the right path of action. I found this line of thought to be intriguing and representative of how one could find a substantial way to plan humanitarian relief efforts.

The idea of giving the voiceless a voice was kindled by this concept. If anyone is entitled to give an answer to what kind of footprint is left by the GOs and the INGOs acting on site, it is the local person living there. S/he is the one who experienced the crises in the first place. S/he is the ones feeling the frustration of aid coming too late, or the relief of aid coming soon enough. S/he is also the one who will see the GOs and INGOs leave after some time, and pick up the pieces when the humanitarian agencies leave. The voice of the person will be the voice of the true footprint observer, a voice that is seldom being heard.

This is part of the problem addressed earlier in the thesis. There is a gap between the receivers of aid and the givers of aid. In my time working for a GO within the humanitarian business, I have never been confronted with the
voice of the local person. Therefore, I wish, in this thesis, to bring forward the
voice of the local, the one affected. This will be done, not to create a median of
subjective opinions as described above, but rather by keeping all the
testimonies, stories, confrontations and conversations I have been lucky
enough the hear and have after I joined MSF and finally stood face to face with
the receivers of aid. Meeting them on their terms in their homelands.

4.2 Voiceless?

Calling the locals voiceless is, in my perception, a false statement. I find it
adequate to say that the problem is not that the receivers of aid do not have a
voice; it is that the giver of aid fails to hear it. I believe there are thousands of
strong voices out there. So the task at hand is not to give a voice to the
voiceless, but rather to find and listen to the voices that are there to begin
with. The very term giving a voice to the voiceless is somehow a violent
expression, as it truly reinforces the notions of them and us. The false
perception of the weak and voiceless ones in need, aided by the strong and
influential ones, giving them a voice. (Ingruber 2016) I believe this is close to
the heart of the problem within humanitarian aid today. To degrade the
receiver of aid to be voiceless, helpless and not seen as a whole person, but
categorized into only filling the role of the receiver of help. In this manner, the
receiver is reduced to one single persona, neglecting all other sides of the
individual.

The small town I served in while working in the aftermath of typhoon
Yolanda in the Philippines is named Guiuan. It is one of the poorest parts of
the Philippines, the local population in general, and the lower classes in particular, could easily be seen as practically voiceless if one were to follow the simplified mindset of the helper and the victim. Most of the local population does not have access to the Internet. On a national basis, 37% of the Philippine population has access to the Internet. (Macaraig 2014) No statistics are available in the context of Guiuan and internet access; however, judging from my observation during my mission in the Philippines, it is safe to say that this number is much lower for Guiuan. Meaning they do not have access to computers at home or access to an internet café. Hence, they are not taking part in the online debates and discussions regarding the typhoon and its aftermath. During the crisis, they did not have access to news regarding the crises in their own country, and afterwards, they are excluded from reading reports and articles about it.

Because they are not accessible per email, forums or Facebook, it is easy to suspect they are excluded from any online petitions and debates. I assume that some manage to get internet access through other channels as it is my impression that people manage the most incredible when the will is there. Notwithstanding, I find most of the people living there to be without an internet connection, and even if smartphones had made their entry into daily life in most parts of the world at this point in time, I was surprised to see that this was not yet the case here.
4.3 Hearing the other side

To gain the best possible overview of the footprint left behind, I must first gather relevant data. This data must be processed into information. By doing so, I might transform the information into knowledge and from there possibly come to an understanding of the subject at hand. (Heinrich 2016) Doing so includes staying natural and impartial. In order to stay natural and impartial, I must listen to different sides of the story.

Even if there are thousands of different stories and angles tangled up underneath the surface in the aftermath of a disaster, catastrophe or man-made misery like actions of violence and war, two narratives can be easily identified. The narrative of receiving help, and the narrative of providing it.

There is another party to the ones providing humanitarian aid. The masses providing the funds for the relief operations. Like we saw in chapter 2.2, according to the report ‘not available, not accessible’, Norway has a low score on knowledge in the context of funds spent on humanitarian aid. (Medland, Jaraquemada, and Martín-Luengo 2009) Therefore, I find it interesting to talk to the people in Norway. To what degree do they know how their tax money is being spent on humanitarian missions? And to what extent do they care. Also, in this context, I will aim for a personal experience behind the quantitative approach.

In other words, all data will be seen in the context of personal experience from my many missions, notes from conversations with affect people in the field, and conclusions of the professional meeting within the
agencies I have been working for. This way, I will qualify the empirical numbers with the personal experience conveyed to me by the people I have spoken with, and qualify the notes and opinions from these conversations by using the empirical data.

4.4 Desk Research

This thesis will mostly be based on bibliographic research for the immeasurable collection of available material written on humanitarian aid, development, ethical questions regarding aid, and the humanitarian space. Combined with my personal experience during my participations in humanitarian relief operations, alongside the personal experience of the people affected by different states of need or crises convoyed to me through my interviews, conversations and meetings in the field.

Yet no thesis exists in a vacuum. This thesis coexists with many reports, books, and other written works in relation to the humanitarian intervention. To qualify the information gathered and to gain a holistic picture, I have to see my work in relation to what others have written before me. Therefore, I review an extensive collection of literature concerning humanitarian intervention in general, and written works on the topic of transpersonal subjects.

While writing about the humanitarian footprint and the humanitarian space, the reader will not be surprised to find the writings of Mery B. Anderson among the material I have based my research on. While her writings elaborate on the norms of humanitarian conduct, (Anderson 1999,
105- ff) it is also often referenced in term of practical solutions when it comes to sustainable humanitarian conduct. (Anderson 1999, 37-ff)

Mary B Andersons Ideas and writings are in this thesis also evaluated side by side with the writings of William Easterly, especially in the question of the accountability of humanitarian agencies, when breaking the norms described by Anderson. (Easterly 2006, 5-ff) The writings of William Easterly, is by no means the only perspective referenced and sized up by the principle of doing no harm. Authors like Dambias Moyo engaging with the economic side of the humanitarian footprint are equally important. (Moyo 2009, 48-ff)

To add weight to the conclusions drawn from these writings, I have compared the conclusions and found material that strengthens my theories for the above listed works in the words of Victoria Fontan. (Fontan 2012, 14-ff) Victoria Fontan’s direct and honest description of certain sides to the humanitarian footprint is on its on accord a good reason to chose the humanitarian footprint and humanitarian space as a topic for this thesis.

More personal and less academic writings have also made its way into my research material, as it was necessary to challenge my subjective personal experience from the field, with the subjective and personal experience of others. This is among other articles and books referring to Mike Petrone and his writings regarding his humanitarian career. (Petrone 2015, 9-ff)

As stated initially, this thesis will sometimes present the reader with a slightly postmodern view. This is by all means based on my studies at the university of Innsbruck. It is, however, necessary to find a more academic context for these definitions. This is done through the works of Jean-Francois Lyotard. (Lyotard 1986) Another author lending a postmodern perspective to
the thesis is Gustavo Esteva, mostly through referencing the aspect of neoliberalism. (Esteva and Prakash 2014)

The relation between the bilateral humanitarian aid and politics described in this thesis is also influenced by Arundhati Roy’s skeptical vision on the humanitarian business. Roy’s writing, especially regarding economical side of the humanitarian footprint (Roy 2004, 32-ff) is also seen in the light of Moyo’s writing, and with the words of Giles Bolton (Bolton 2008, 73-ff)

The thesis will, to stay relevant to the situation for many organizations and agencies operating in the field, also refer to reports written by or for these organizations, as well as databases presenting collected data from the field. Reports from OCHA and other UN agencies will be important in this context. Tangible numbers used in the many examples in the thesis are mainly collected from databases like Humanitarian outcome, and other databases regarding security information for NGOs.

Many journals, both in physical format, as well as online journals, are also referenced to paint a detailed picture of the landscape where the thesis is attempting to find the humanitarian footprint and the humanitarian space.

4.5 Experience and transpersonal connection

When I decided to undertake the task of writing a thesis regarding the humanitarian footprint and the humanitarian space, I thought that it would be relevant to use my experience from the field. My involvement with humanitarian operations in post-conflict areas, areas of disaster, as well as in fields of ongoing-armed conflict and war, were the flame that kindled the idea
of investigating the quandary of humanitarian business. Four chapters into the thesis, I still want to stay true to this idea.

Even if not unique, I do believe I hold an uncommon experience being both an ex-soldier who was acting in an armed conflict, and a humanitarian worker with experience from a GO owned and controlled by a nation-state. Moreover, later to work for an INGO known to be rather radical regarding providing aid based only on the humanitarian accord, in the same country where I previously served as a soldier.

I am also a student of peace. This put me in a somehow unique position and gives me a broad specter of perspectives and initial ideas regarding aid. Nonetheless, I know my practical experience will not be sufficient in the matter of writing a thesis. There are a need and demand to combine my ideas with others, academic writings, and references to other studies conducted by the many big names among the peace, conflict, and development scholars.

4.6 The chosen road

After establishing the need for a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach, I continuously feel the need to base my studies also on the research of others. Numerous studies, research projects and articles are written regarding the humanitarian field — not to mention, books and reports.

To narrow down the topic and move in a direction of rather digging deeper in the heart of the subject, than brushing the surface of a wider topic, I made the active choice to research reports, papers and books written by, for
or about NGOs and GOs acting in the field, as well as material written by writers not associated with one of the organizations. From my experience, I perceive reports written by the NGOs and GOs to be more about donor visibility, than reporting the actual events. Often black painting the stories to attract donors. (Rothmyer 2011) At the same time, I find material written by writers not associated with the organizations in question to present an academic angle, alienated from the core information of the actual situation in the field.

Therefore, I cannot completely overlook any written material, but must take them all equally into account as I see them in the context of my personal experience and the experiences of the affected population explained to me in person. Through out the thesis, the reports in question will be referenced and can be found in the bibliography. There is a certain need for general information from these reports. Mission goals, duration of deployment and a general understanding of the host country can be extracted from this kind of written material.

Because my thesis cannot be seen as singular regarding the topic, but needs to be seen both in context with, and side by side with every paper and book written in this regards, I turn to written material in the field of humanitarian operations, in general, and written material in the context of multilateral aid in particular.
4.7 Look to Africa

The attentive reader may by now have noticed several references to Africa. This is not by chance. I have deliberately made a choice to look to Africa. Books like *Dead Aid* do provide an interesting and honest lens pointed at the humanitarian business and its many pitfalls. (Moyo 2009) Africa has been the focus of humanitarian aid from the western world since 1970 and in mainstream interest since 1980, more often than not seen in a misunderstood single-minded view. (Adewunmi, Bim. 2014) As a reaction to this, there have been produced a satisfying number of books not only on the humanitarian operations there, but on the topic of the long term perspective, and long-term effects of relief efforts.

The aim is not to come up with a solution to a particular problem, but to map out how to leave a humanitarian footprint representing the interest of the local population more so than in the interest of the humanitarian agency. Therefore, examples from all over the world are relevant. They all represent the outcome of an operation in a location where the humanitarian agency was regarded as successful or unsuccessful in adapting to their surroundings. Under this scope, each example will be seen in its own context and be relevant in its own regard.
4.8 Critical selection

I am aware of my critical way of thinking. All my life, and have been asking myself what could be done better in every situation. In the later years, I have come to adopt a somehow more transrational and postmodern perspective where I no longer find the grand narratives of better or worse satisfying. I am not in need of a negative result. Nor is the thesis an attempt to tell the world of wrongdoings I have witnessed in my professional life. It is simply a pursuit of a better way to help those who need it the most, by observing the humanitarian footprint, and suggesting a more supranational way of conduct.

Relevant books and literature for me to base my studies on would be of authors that do not benefit from covering up mistakes or negative results. I need to know the idea of the literature I am reviewing is not to present an agency in a good light or to attract potential donors. Therefore, I make sure to remember the nature of the book while reading anything written by any agency in need of donors. And when I say in need of donors, I do not necessarily exclude anyone receiving donations, but those agencies that are small enough to be heavily affected by negative attention on the scale a critical report or book would cause. On the same note is it important not to invest my research in the literature clearly written to harm or hurt any actors in the humanitarian field.
5 Discretion in practice, discretion in the thesis

When writing a thesis on humanitarian footprints, or more precisely, the footprint of a humanitarian field operation carried out by agencies acting within an area foreign to its members on the ground. Furthermore, foreign in the context of culture and custom, maintaining a sustainable and ethical approach always represents a challenge.

On the surface, it may seem that the challenges are confined to misunderstandings in terms of communications, knowledge regarding local customs, or sensitivity towards local beliefs or values. However, the obstacle to maintain a holistic picture of the situation and a sustainable long-term plan may be even more vast, as it is far more difficult to map out the long term consciences of a humanitarian operation, than solving the tangible problems at hand during the mission. Even if the tangible problems are solved in a good manner, the follow up can be a different matter. (Fontan2012)

Initially, it seems like providing aid is a so-called *good deed* in its own value. The problem, however, is to determine just what aid is. What may be helpful at the moment to relieve suffering immediately may cause harm in the long run. And how do we determine what is harmful and what is a necessary burden to achieve a certain goal? The answer is simple and difficult at the same time. It is simply discretion.

This thesis seeks to elaborate on the consequences of the choices made during a humanitarian operation by looking at the aftermath of the aftermath. The chaos created in the process of bringing order to a chaotic situation created in a man-made or natural catastrophe.
It is close to impossible to determine what is sustainable, what a good outcome is, what are acceptable burdens for the local population, and where the line for doing no harm lies, without the use of discretion. Every situation, or at least every situation that is subject to judgment or evaluation, is also automatically also subject to discretion. Questions regarding the harm done to the local economy, to what degree one can offend local beliefs or customs in the process of providing lifesaving aid, or if certain suffering inflicted on a few local residents of the affected area can be accepted for the greater good will always be subject of discretion. Therefore I find it necessary to establish an understanding of the term discretion that may act as a guideline throughout the thesis.

5.1 The term discretion

The term discretion can be found in our daily speech, in addition to professional guidelines and legal documents. Grasping just what discretion is can be seen as a devious task. Definitions can of course be found, and we will look into those definitions in this chapter. At the same time it is interesting to observe that discretion often is a term that emerges where guidelines, definitions, instructions or empirical numbers end.

Often one can be told that everything not covered by the rules, instructions, or guidelines is a question of discretion. It seems common to accept this use of the term; however, the fact that the desecration is put to action in the cases where standard procedures do not apply also leaves room for abuse of discretion. It is difficult to map out exactly what the situation at
hand was, and what means were justified or suitable when seen retrospectively.

Because discretion, more often than not, comes to play in situations so unique, random, or odd that no law, procedures or guidelines where pre-written, the possibility of finding an academically correct solution to the challenge may be impossible. (Davis 2005) Guidelines may, therefore, be created in the aftermath of a surprising or unwanted situation. In cases like this, there is a chance that guidelines or instructions may be written based on the need to avoid the situation in question according to the discretion exercised when the situation accrued, and not according to an academically justified analysis of possibilities and consequences.

It is often said that practice makes perfect when it comes to handling difficult situations, also during a humanitarian mission. I here feel the need to stress that repeating a pattern does not make the unjust just, nor the unsustainable sustainable. To quote the words of the poet Sarah Kay, “Practice does not make perfect, practice makes permanent.” (Kay 2011)

My experience is that agencies on the ground tend to make a routine out of a solution to an unpredicted problem solved with discretion during deployment. When this is the case, agencies may handle situations poorly and regard them as right based on a routine established in discretion during previous deployments. If they adopt a solution to a problem as a standard and apply the same method to other challenges, there is a danger the solutions will no longer be suitable. Still the discretion is now regarded as the right way and becomes a procedure. Be that as it may, if one were to judge the solution seen in the context of the situation at hand, because one appreciates the
standard operational procedures to be a result of discretion in different situations, one could state that an action is wrong even if guidelines, standard operating procedures or rules describe them as right. This would interestingly enough lead us back to discretion once more. Revealing in this duality the need for guidelines and discretion alike. The two concepts do compete, yet they are not mutual exclusive elements.

5.2 Practical knowledge

After establishing the need for discretion in the field, the conflict between discretion and routine, and understanding the connection between the two, it is valuable to look into the definition of discretion. As stated above, the term discretion is used in the common tongue as well as in legal lingo. Even if a legal definition of the term can be found, I question if this definition is kept in mind in our everyday language, and if it is in harmony with the meaning we give the term on a daily basis.

Discretion and its definition are debated among theorists; per contra, there seems to be a general understanding that it is closely connected with Aristoteles' understanding of phronesis, which one can freely translate into practical knowledge or common sense. (Humerfelt et al. 2010, 24) My experience working in the field with diverse humanitarian agencies is that the sensation of common sense and practical knowledge is very present within the circles of humanitarian workers. The idea behind the so-called common sense seems less developed, and the link to Aristoteles is missing. (Rosen 1966) In my opinion, common sense is accepted as meta-narrative and
therefore, never questioned. This leads the person executing the common sense down a dangerous road. Once something, be it common sense, is regarded right or true becomes an ultimate truth, there is no longer any room for questioning the grounds of which the discretion is executed.

Accepting something as a meta-narrative may be sufficient in a local setting, even with all of its generalistic and totalitarian aspects. But it demands the person accepting the meta-narrative to act within her or his own culture, costumes, religion and heed, among other parameters. This represents a problem in the context of international humanitarian aid, as more often than not, the person or agency in question will conduct their discretions outside their culture, costumes, religion and all other parameters affecting their surroundings. Therefore, it must be regarded as a criteria of success that the humanitarian agency and its members hold an extensive understanding of the culture in which they are acting. There is trouble inbound if one makes decisions based on common sense in a foreign location, where the idea of common sense differs a lot from the perception of common sense held by the international humanitarian worker. What she or he regards as normal, sensible and just, will in many locations be seen as strange, senseless and unjust. (Maisel 2011) If the humanitarian agency or its members see their worldview as the right and sensible one, their discretion will fail as it is based on other principles and truths than the subject of their discretion.

---

3 While it is true that most employees in an INGO working in the field are national staff, the INGO’s code of conduct, standard operation procedures, and sometimes leadership, is often of foreign origin.
On the same note, their practical knowledge must be adjusted to their surroundings. Judging an action to be practical or not, may not differ a lot from location to location. Be that as it may, practical knowledge requires local knowledge, as conditions often are different from the conditions under which the practical knowledge was developed. It is, therefore, important that practical knowledge must be revamped.

5.3 Three forms of discretion

There are three forms of discretion: professional, moral and clinical (Humerfelt et al. 2015). One could debate the difference between them and there seem to be blurred lines separating one from the others. Still, it is my opinion that regardless if the discretion seems to be of professional, moral or clinical nature, it must be carried out with local understanding. When making discretions in the field, it is crucial to adjust standards and approaches to local customs and needs. There are multiple examples of humanitarian missions failing because the involved agencies put their western approach into practice when practicing discretion in the field. Failing to practice discretion according to the standards of the host state of a humanitarian mission, may lead to failure to achieve the desired goals of the mission or less impact on the target problem, one which the mission or campaign was launched in the first place. Examples of this will be provided in the thesis, as I do believe there are plenty of examples throughout the missions that I have attended.
5.4 Discretion in this Thesis

Throughout the thesis, the reader will find a number of discretions and evaluations. The discretions in this thesis are made on diverse personal experiences. This experience is, at the same time, not limited to, military operations as well as civilian humanitarian missions. It is also based on the many lessons, exercises and seminars I have attended at the Master program in peace, development, security and conflict transformation at the University of Innsbruck. Last but not least, it is based on the many books I have read during my research for the thesis. When practicing discretion in the context of writing this thesis, I hold three principles constant throughout the thesis.

I emphasize more on written material from independent sources. Even if I do appreciate reports from agencies regarding specific humanitarian operations, if they are conducted in remote areas and other sources of information may be hard to come by. While doing so, I will, by all means, remember to take into consideration their need to present their merits more so than their lesson learned. (Easterly 2006 5-ff)

At this point, it is necessary to start looking into the anatomy of the humanitarian footprint, or perhaps put better, the content of the footprint. The term or concept of a footprint must relate to something tangible to bear any meaning. It is, therefore, essential that the thesis provides this definition.

The process of mapping out this anatomy must be said to be a rather interesting one. Even if I had a clear impression that I related to the concept of the humanitarian footprint as something tangible while beginning the
process of writing, it became clear to me that I did not. I knew there was a footprint, and I knew it would affect the host community of any given humanitarian operation. Yet I was unsure just which parts it would consist of, and how those parts would come into play.

To answer my own question, I began the backward process of writing this chapter. First, I needed to look into my findings in the rest of this thesis, and try to identify the places where a change to the host community would be likely. Then I had to identify the kind of change possible. This would, by all means, mean that I needed to exclude the intended effects of the humanitarian intervention if fulfilled. It bares little interest to say that an operation to distribute food in a starving community did, in fact, distribute food. The idea of the thesis is to identify results not participated by the conductor of the operation or long-term effect following as a natural result of the intervention.

Early on in the process, I was asked by my peers if what I intended was not to expose the negative side effects of the humanitarian trade. This might sound like an avail definition. However, it would go against the very nature this thesis is written in. If I were to identify the negative side effects, I would first have to deem what is good and bad. Not only would this mean I would have to use meta-narratives, which I clearly stated I would avoid in the thesis. But it would, moreover, mean that I would first have to act as the judge of what can be considered good and bad for communities I don’t even belong to. Even if I would hold a well enough developed understanding of these communities in question, I still could not deem the results of humanitarian operations without taking sides or a particular interest. To illustrate this, it is
feasible to imagine a water project in a given area like the Nigerian slums I served in during my mission to Nigeria. Providing clean water with a steady supply would be fantastic for most inhabitants of the slums. Especially when thinking about the slums high death numbers as a result of cholera. Nonetheless, for everyone involved in the water trade of the slum, it would mean the end of their business and possible starvation for their family supported by the income of the water trade.

Even if I determine it to be most likely that the reader will feel that securing the steady supply of clean water for the 140 000 people living in the slums would be more pressing that the income of the few hundred making a living from selling dirty water with a false promise that it is clean, it would still be picking sides. And the idea of this thesis is not to judge the humanitarian footprint, but rather to measure and define it.

Looking into the aspects described above, I found the humanitarian footprint to be most economical. And it is for this very reason that a large part of the thesis is dedicated to that aspect. I also found it to have a severe impact on the health of the local population. Not necessarily thinking about the result of humanitarian health programs like the construction of a hospital, a clinic, or establishment of mobile clicks or traveling health professionals. This would, in this context, be regarded as the natural desired outcome of a health operation, and not an unanticipated side effect. Lastly, I found that there is an ethical side to the humanitarian footprint. (Slim 2017) This aspect is, nevertheless, a little different from the health and economic footprint. The subchapter addressing the ethical aspect will, to a larger degree, deal more
with how things are done than the result of what is done. This is due to the nature of ethics.
6 Interoperation of a footprint

6.1 The relation between natural disasters and the footprint left behind

In the humanitarian world, there is a pre-given conflict in the very nature in the foundation of the work itself. The need for humanitarian aid is often a result of human-made disasters and willful actions. This would to some extent exclude the settings described as natural disasters, like earthquakes, typhoons and tsunamis. This statement may however not be entirely true, as some voices claim natural disasters to be caused by humankind. (Cox 2013) In addition, one does not have to go too far into environmentalism to find a connection between natural disasters and human intervention. One aspect of natural disasters that is hard to write off as natural is the effects of the natural disaster if we compare materialistic resourceful societies to materialistically poorer ones. A good example of this can be found in Senior fellow and co-director Elizabeth Ferris from St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, Texas, USA, in her paper Natural Disasters, Conflict, and Human Rights: Tracing the Connections. Where she connects the dots and draws parallels between different natural disasters:

The evidence is clear that poverty is an important factor in understanding the effects of natural disasters. On 10 December 1988, an earthquake registering 6.9 on the Richter scale hit Armenia, killing some 55,000 people and leaving 500,000 homeless. Less than a year later, on October 1989, an even stronger earthquake, 7.1 on the Richter scale, hit San Francisco, California,
killing 62 and leaving 12,000 homeless. Within countries, it is almost always the poor and marginalized who are disproportionately affected by natural disasters. They tend to live in less safe environments and in a less safe shelter. Shoddily-constructed slums are more vulnerable to earthquakes, landslides, and flooding that the homes where the rich are more likely to live. (Ferris 2010)

Based on Ferris's research and observation, it is safe to say that even when there is a natural disaster, there will be other factors affecting the situation. Politics, economy and customs are in my perception all factors that will influence the impact of a natural disaster. In fact, if we look to one of the biggest actors within disaster relief, the UN, we find that the very definition of a natural disaster implies that there is a human factor that we are able to manipulate. The UN has, through an Interagency Standing Committee, and the Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters, determined a natural disaster to be the consequence of events triggered by natural hazards that overwhelm local response capacity and seriously affect the social and economic development of a region.

As Ferris interestingly enough points out in her paper, an incident like a cyclone cannot be called a natural disaster if it only hits an uninhabited island. Nor can flooding be classified as a natural disaster if the local community has the resources to handle it. In the light of this, it becomes evident that a natural disaster does not exist without the aspect of the humans affected by the catastrophe. Realizing this, one can again trace the consequences of a disaster and the need for humanitarian intervention into power and resource structures.
6.2 The conflict within the footprint

There is a Norwegian saying that comes to mind when looking into these matters. Translated to English, it would be; *the death of one will be the bread of the other*. Meaning the misery or death of one person will be the success of someone else. One will often find that the distress of someone is benefitting someone else in the humanitarian field. The exploitation of laborers in the cobalt mines of DRC, where the local workforce is not only placed under tremendous stress physically and mentally, but is also subject to accidents causing loss of life or serious injuries, is an excellent example of this. (Frankel 2016)

In a country clocking in at only 0.28 physicians and 1.91 nurses and midwives per 10,000 population, it is not controversial to assume these severe injuries and sickness is a tad more complicated than one might think coming from a western perspective regarding access to health facilities and medical care. (WHO 2015)

Another example could be the gruesome other end of the circle of the electronic business, the collection of electronic waste gathering in Ghana and Nigeria. (Akbar 2015)

Many other examples could be found with ease; a situation where someone profits from the exploitation of others. This is the heart of the matter. Humanitarian aid has an inbuilt conflict. One can often not help someone without hurting the interests of someone else. In these two cases, it is safe to say that putting an end to the roughshod treatment of the cobalt
workers in DRC, and providing them with proper working conditions, insurance, safety equipment and payment would in all actuality be a bane-wound to the profit of the battery industry, hence both the industry of mobile phones and laptops would be affected, causing an unacceptable cut in the profit.

In the other example, much imagination is not needed to see how stopping the dumping of electronic waste in Ghana and Nigeria would force richer countries to recycle their electronic waste properly (if we exclude the possibility of moving the problem by finding another victim for the dumping). Seen in the light of this, it becomes apparent that providing a solution to these problems will be considered as an attack on the economic interest of someone. Leaving us with a conflict rooted in the core of humanitarian aid.

**6.3 A micro example**

A self-experience situation, briefly mentioned in the previous chapters, where I was faced with this portrayed conflict of interest, took place in my mission in Nigeria for MSF in 2016-2017. Tasked to move into Onitsha, in the heart of Biafra, I was charged with the task of implementing water and sanitation relief in the slums of Onitsha while negotiating access to land and permission to construct a large trauma center. The slum of Onitsha is called Okpoko and had more than 140,000 inhabitants. (Okoye, Ezeokonkwo, and Mbakwe 2017)

The sanitation situation was dreadful, with human waste running openly in the streets. Yet one of the biggest problems we identified in the
slum was the lack of access to clean water. This presented a problem, as the water was accessible for sale, even if it was unclean and in some cases, dangerous to drink according to the samples we took. The water business was booming and in many cases, controlled by gangs. The slum as a whole was inaccessible to the police and was controlled by vigilantes.

Even if we saw the lack of clean water to be one of the chief problems affecting the local population, establishing clean boreholes represented a problem. If we started giving out free water, we would doubtlessly make enemies among the gangs and individuals making profits from the water sale. Softening the impact by selling the water was not an alternative, as selling water would break our code of conduct, and possibly put us in trouble with our donors. Nonetheless, not dealing with the water situation was never a real option as we had identified the problem and felt obligated to try to prevent the health challenges drinking unclean water would inflict on the local population. For us, the situation seem to be that we, by doing our work as humanitarian workers, would hurt the economic interest of gangs in control of the water trade.

While observing this challenge, I must simultaneously strive to disregard the economic loss and the compromised interest that will doubtlessly be a result of certain humanitarian intervening operations for the sake of the thesis. I firmly believe that if one is to call oneself a humanitarian, and hence be conducting humanitarian relief operations, one must accept to choose sides with the affected population. Even when this means meeting stiff resistance from parties holding an economic or cultural interest in the affected situation.
Now, after looking into this problem on a micro-scale affecting the workers in the field, it is time to zoom out to a meta-perspective and look at another example where this conflict of interests is affecting an organization on the donor side.

**6.4 A meta-example**

I personally experienced a situation where my own place of work, MSF, was faced with this decision. While I was working in Lesvos, Greece receiving an average 1400 refugees per 24 hours in the reception and transit camp I was managing, Turkey came to an agreement with the EU in the context of restricting the refugees access to the EU zone. (Collet 2016) MSF determined this deal to be violating basic human rights and the right to seek asylum. Therefore the Norwegian branches of MSF refused to receive any financial support from the Norwegian government.

This caused MSF Norway to fall under accusations that MSF was no longer focused on helping people in need, but rather interested in becoming a political actor. The allegations came from Jørund Rytman, a member of parliament and the aid political spokesperson from the Progress party, one of the two right-wing political parties currently in government. It is interesting to see how defending a vulnerable group like the refugees causes MSF to be the subject of political attack. (Holm 2016)

Still, there is another matter inbound into the conflict of the humanitarian conduct of aiding someone and concurrently hurt someone’s economic interests. I resolutely believe it is an ethical principle not to sell
water like it was debated in my self-experienced example from Nigeria. At the same time, I must say there are valid arguments against this policy.

According to Conor Foley, a veteran humanitarian worker having served with Liberty, Amnesty International and UNCHR, there are examples in the history of humanitarian aid where selling relief supplies could have been the right path of action. He mentions Somalia in 1994 in particular, where famine is caused by the armed conflict tearing apart the country. His arguments are based on the fact that famine is caused not solely by the lack of food, but rather high food prices. Injecting underpriced food into the situation, one might stagger the famine, while handing out food for free often means paying off different warring factions, as there is no natural way of taxing free food. (Foley 2010, 62-ff)

This can be seen as a way of keeping the conflict going as the food delivery is partly ending up feeding the fighting factions. It should however be said that according to Tobis Hoenger, the situation with Somalia is somehow unique in regards to the almost total lack of control exercised by the Somali government at the time. The government was practical only in control of a couple of blocks in the capital, and therefore unable to intervene in the famine. (Hoenger 2013, 10) Still, one might ask if allowing a flow of underpriced food in through the established networks already in place, might be better than providing free food supplies. (Foley 2010, 62-ff) Selling food to a population starving to death would be a very hard concept to gain acceptance for in the countries of the donating end of the aid chain. This raises another question; should the opinion of the donor govern the way we
conduct humanitarian aid, leaving strategy and actual possibilities on the ground to a secondary position when it comes to decision-making?

6.5 Diversity in literature

While conducting my research, I have made an interesting observation. While searching for documentation regarding the humanitarian footprint, I have read a number of books touching upon benchmark humanitarian operations and different outbreaks of violence and catastrophes, raising the demand for humanitarian intervention. An interesting observation is the way these occurrences are described in the various sources and literature. A good example is the situation with the Hutu refugee camp described in the chapter about economic footprint making account for the Hutu refugee camp in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) during the refugee crises in 1994 till 1996.

The literature listed in my references describes the situation in a very grave manner. Going so far as to indicate the UN to be financially backing the perpetrators of the genocide in Rhonda, and feeding groups of armed men actively attacking and killing civilians. (Lischer 2003) The case of the Hutu refugee camp is in this light seen as a rather grotesque example, one that might cause anger in the reader, and be used as an argument of the failure of UN and its ability to conduct humanitarian aid in a substantial way generally approved by, and accepted by the public.

Notwithstanding, I find the same case described in the writings of Michael VanRooyen. (VanRooyen 2016) The experienced and academic
rooted humanitarian in the profession of an emergency doctor is well suited to be mentioned here. Not only is VanRooyen one of the more experienced humanitarians I know of, but he is also the son of a survivor of the Bergen Belsen concentration camp, bearing the horror of war and genocide as part of his family heritage. The very same camp in Zaire is described in his writings. They are, however, defined very differently. While VanRooyen does mention the problems in the camp, and the presence of Hutu militia, he portrays it in a much more diplomatic and discreet matter than Lischer.

To add complicity to the diversion of the two different perceptions of the same camp, I look to a third source describing the same problematic situation. Revealing intense arguments inside UN, and the commander of the UN forces in Rhonda, Dallaire, threatening to shoot down French UN fighters. Flights he said were facilitating the escape of many directly involved in the genocide from Rhonda to Zaire, UNHCR being criticized for “feeding killers” in the refugee camps in Zaire, and the number of NGOs and GOs acting in the camp declining from 150 to five. Including the withdrawal of NGOs like MSF, Care, and IRC. The main difference between these three presentations of the same situation can be taken as an indication of different perspectives one can behold while assessing, judging or evaluating a situation or the outcome of an operation. Lischer is mainly focusing on the atrocities allowed to continue as a result of the humanitarian aid, almost placing the responsibility of them on the humanitarian actors. VanRooyen, even with his family history of captivity and torture, does not focus on the atrocities of the Hutu refugees, but rather on the political dilemma they present. In the case of Dallaire, focus is placed
on the problem of protecting the perpetrators in the first place. I find all these different views to be valuable and all part of the same humanitarian footprint.

While observing the disparity, I find them to be complementary rather than ostracize one another. Even if I recognize the discrepancy between the three statements, I do not find them to be mutual exclusive elements. They can all be correct and be contradicting at the same time. I artlessly find them to be different sides of the same coin.

The fact that we see the same situation portrayed in a different manner must for sure come as no surprise to the observant reader. It is merely a question of perception. If we abandon a strictly modern worldview and see the case through a set of more postmodern lenses, we can certainly agree that there is no absolute truth. (Foucault 1980, 118) Every description of a situation is nothing but a perspective. Following the understanding that every description of any situation is utterly subjective perception, we can utilize the inequality seen between the different narratives not to question one narrative over another, but rather to understand the nuances and diversity in the situations and cases portrayed in various ways by different actors. Even if it seems evident that different actors can understand the same situation in a multitude of ways, it is my experience that whenever two narratives collide, people tend to look for the right version, rather than see the different narratives as a representation of a complex situation. I find this to be one of the major threats to conducting humanitarian operations in a sustainable manner. If the humanitarian actors are able to enter a culture, situation, or setting with an open mind and respectful manner, the chances of understanding the multitude of needs, interests, and possible courses of
action will, in my opinion, improve to a greater extent. I find the understanding of the situation to be crucial, for a humanitarian actor to be able to identify and meet the needs during a humanitarian intervention.

That being said, one element that might affect the eye of the beholder to a sizable degree is the pre-conditioning of the person in question. (Pritlove Ala-leppilampi and Parsons. 2019) We all see the situation at hand through lenses of our own experience and understanding of the situation. As explained in the first chapter of this thesis, I have experience both as a soldier and humanitarian worker acting on foreign ground. The way I experience the perception of operations and interventions abroad, seen in a military perspective versus the perspective I observe on the other end of the scale while working with MSF, makes a great difference in how one relates to the act of intervention, and the effects of the intervention. Of course the two agencies mentioned here; the Norwegian military and MSF, are two extreme examples. And the perception of humanitarian aid, or more precisely, the humanitarian intervention, will differ significantly between the two factions.

Nonetheless, if I turn to my experience once more and compare my military experience and experience from MSF with my time serving with WFP, UNHCR and WHO through the Norwegian GO Norwegian support team, (NST) I find it to be yet another unique interpretation of the situation on the ground, and what might be recognized as proper intervention and conduct in the field.

While doing research for this thesis, I have engaged in material written by ex-military personnel. Personnel with similar experiences like I have from my time in the Norwegian armed forces. Often I find this material to be
disturbing. Not necessarily because of the military lingo or discourse, but rather because of the simplified view presented in the material. I find it thought-provoking to see how ex-military personnel like myself fail to identify the conflict between their actions in the past, and their newfound compassion for humanitarian work.

War and armed conflict is a massive contributor to human suffering. Reading the writings of Mike Petrone, a former soldier in the US Army, serving five years in the armed forces, including two trips to Iraq and receiver of the Purple Heart medal, I detect a strange and intriguing duality or even contradiction in his works. On the one hand, he writes about the honor of the soldier’s profession and the noble act of sacrificing oneself for the greater good by serving abroad, while he, on the other hand, writes about all the horrors he has seen caused by war and conflict. (Petrone 2015, 8-ff)

6.6 The weight behind the humanitarian footprint

I will not venture down into all the different narratives portrayed by the various actors within the humanitarian business. These brief introductions to some of the mindset and mentalities are only meant as examples of how diverse I experience the humanitarian trade to be. And perhaps it is in this very diversity we can find the weight leaving the humanitarian footprint on foreign soil?

Often when one speaks of the clash of cultures, (Hamedani 2019) one refers to two different cultures. One culture on the receiving end of the aid chain, and one culture on the donating side of the aid chain. I find this to be an
oversimplified picture of the reality on the ground. (Esteva and Prakash 1998)

I firmly believe that there will always be a multitude of cultures, depending on the people involved on both sides of the aid chain. The topics discussed in this chapter are a good indication of this. Comparing the philosophy of MSF to the Norwegian armed forces alone is a good indication that there is a myriad of cultures within the giving end of the aid chain alone.

If we admit that there might be an equal myriad on the receiving end of the aid chain, it becomes evident that the possible number of cultures involved in the same humanitarian relief operation or intervention is legio, and sets the scene for a complicated situation indeed. If we, on top of this understanding, take into account all the subcultures of the different groups and individuals involved, we are facing a very complex situation culture wise. Our actions as humanitarian workers are judged not only by us, our coworkers, but more than anything else they are judged by the one receiving the aid.

Between the many cultures involved, the room for misinterpretation must be said to be ever so present. What the humanitarian agency sees as efficiency might be observed as rudeness. Identified security threats to the humanitarian agency might be everyday life for the receivers of aid and so on. Therefore, when discussing the humanitarian footprint, it may be wise to focus on the footprint in the soil and not the pattern of the sole. Between the two, there is a gap of interpretation.
7 Dissecting the humanitarian footprint

One grave question that is in need of an answer is a question in relation to the affect humanitarian interventions and operations have on the population of the affected area. The catechism that is finding the humanitarian footprint can, to a larger degree, be said to relate to the question: *are we doing more harm than good?*

In this context, we need to work with several different aspects of the affect of humanitarian intervention. I am now mainly referring to the different effects of our intervention. It is important to understand not only that every action taken, and every decision will affect the situation, but moreover that it can be toilsome to comprehend where to look for the effect caused by our actions. When the idea of a thesis concerning the humanitarian footprint, and humanitarian space first was born in my mind, I did not see the problem to this extent. I saw how humanitarians springing into action were prone to step on some toes, changing the structure of a society or otherwise negatively affect the lives of people. I did not, however, see that harm could be done in a multitude of ways, and work identifying the problems coming from humanitarian intervention was necessary.

I believe the reader will better understand all the layers and sides I find to affect humanitarian footprint if I use an actual humanitarian intervention as an example rather then simply listing the implications possibly following the intervention. The example is of course not covering all the possible sides of the humanitarian footprint, but it is nonetheless a good case study as it presents the possible botheration.
7.1 Health

The reader may not be surprised to be reminded that there was an earthquake in Haiti in 2010. Earthquakes are unfortunately not uncommon in Haiti, but this can be determined to be one of the bigger ones. As UN and other NGOs moved in, the strain on the infrastructure became tense. To maintain order and keep their aid workers safe, some military personnel were also present in the aftermath of the earthquake. Several UN units were spread throughout the country, but one, in particular, left a stronger footprint than the others in terms of the health situation of the Haitian people.

The unit in question is a Nepalese UN unit accused of starting a cholera epidemic. The UN unit of 1280 soldiers had most likely been exposed to the cholera epidemic in Nepal, October 2010, during their three months training in Nepal, or rather during their ten days of leave before deploying to Nepal. (Frerichs, Barrais and Piarroux 2012) According to the accusations, they drained black water into a local river. The black water had traces of cholera and is commonly believed to be the origin of the cholera epidemic. (Baron 2014) We can also see the problem of the black water that was admitted by the UN according to Time:

The question of who is responsible for Haiti’s cholera epidemic — the first that the Caribbean nation, the western hemisphere’s poorest, has seen in a century — has raised tempers since the first case was detected in October 2010. Rumor spread quickly
afterward that the unsanitary conditions at the Nepalese UN peacekeepers’s base, located northeast of Port-au-Prince, was at fault. Scientific studies later seemed to confirm those suspicions. The UN deflected blame to a local contractor, Sanco Enterprises, responsible for waste disposal at the base; but Sanco denies culpability, insisting it was just following MINUSTAH\textsuperscript{4} guidelines. (Ferreira 2011)

This fact taken into consideration, there can be little doubt the UN has responsibility for the cholera epidemic, even if they tried to blame it on Sanco Enterprises. I will not draw any conclusion on this matter in this thesis, in regards to if the UN or Sanco Enterprises is to blame. At the same time, it is widely believed that the UN unit from Nepal is responsible for the epidemic. (Ferreira 2011, Cockburn 2012, Katz 2016)

This is, however, not what is of paramount interest in this context. For me, writing a thesis on the humanitarian footprint, it is enough to know that it could have started the epidemic. The unit did release black water into the river, and the black water did contain the cholera bacteria. This is enough to conclude it could have started an epidemic. Hence, the UN intervention has the potential to cause harm even if deployed to aid. In this case, the harm caused was clearly medical, as it was a threat to the health of the people of Haiti. Unintentional for sure, but nonetheless a health risk unnecessary inflicted on the local population through a failure to conduct a humanitarian operation or intervention without doing harm. This brief example testifies

\textsuperscript{4} United Nations Sabilization Mission in Haiti
that it is justified for this thesis to look into the health and medical aspect of the humanitarian footprint.

7.2 Economics

The cholera epidemic was not the only factor affecting the humanitarian footprint on Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 7.0 magnitude earthquake. There is cause to look a little closer into the aspect of economics in the humanitarian operations in Haiti as well. Humanitarian intervention is costly. Not only will countless metric tons of food, relief supplies and equipment be donated and shipped, but also humanitarian workers will move in, calling for the payment of salary, accommodation, transportation and so forth. In February 2011, 2.5 billion USD had been spent on financial aid. (Datablog 2011) With this considerable amount of financial aid, I find it important to look into the footprint of the economics.

Among the financial aid received by Haiti after the earthquake was 140 million USD worth of food. (Kushner 2012) The attentive reader will, by now, perhaps already have reacted to the phrasing “140 million USD worth of food”, and with good reason. It was like the phrasing indicates not 140 million USD that was sent to Haiti but rather crops bought in the US for 140 million USD. Meaning the actual money stayed behind in the US, while Haiti got crops, 9000 metric tons of crops from the US. (Kushner 2012)

Even if one acknowledges the value of relief supplies and the shipment of food to a country struck by the earthquake and currently suffering from broken infrastructure and therefore the lack of food, one might still ask if
sending 9000 metric tons of crops from the US to Haiti were the right path of action. The first obvious catch to this path of action is while the US can bookkeep 140 million USD used for humanitarian aid, lending the country some credibility in the discourse of the humanitarian business, the money spent is actually being redistributed into the US economy. While this is in no way shocking to the reader familiar to economics, I find it to be rather misleading to label the money spent this way humanitarian, when they in actuality rather are boosting the US economy through selling off surplus production in the name of aid. This is, unfortunately, not uncommon (Fontan 2012, 34) It can be done because the US is both the seller and the buyer of the product. This means they are free to determine not only what they are going to sell, but also the price. Haiti is paying the price through the value set by USaid, without the opportunity to argue about the price or product. We must, in this regard, remember that a product only holds the value it can be sold for. Nine thousand metric tons of crops have a value of zero if there are no buyers.

Still one might claim that even if this seems a little unprincipled, as people might be under the impression that the 140 million UDS actually are being spent in Haiti, it is still up for debate if it is actually harming the local population affected by the earthquake. However, if we dig deeper into the story of Haiti and the American crop sent as aid after the earthquake in 2010, we find that not only did the USA buy surplus crops from North American farmers, and by doing so boosting their own economy, this is not the first time they did so. (Bases 2019, Kushner 2012, Morsy 1986)

According to the farmers in Haiti, the food aid from the US is putting the Haitian farmers under stress, possibly putting them out of business. The
earthquake did not only destroy markets, shops and infrastructure, but moreover left a devastating blow to the local production of food, leaving Haiti unable to feed itself. If one sees the destruction of the rice fields in comparison with the food aid and the cheap import of food, it is no wonder the Haitian agriculture struggled after the earthquake.

It is an interesting observation when one starts an investigation of these matters. We have already covered the diversity of perception and a multitude of ways to interpret the same situation earlier in this thesis. The situation with the donated and imported crops are no different. In a report from US Department of State, we find the intention of the food donation where the US Department of State laid out their plan to aid the Haitian people by means of food aid in their report Haiti Rebuilding and development strategy:

The overall goal of the food and economic security program is to increase incomes through improved agricultural productivity and encourage the growth of micro-, small-, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs). Focusing in selected geographic corridors, the US Government is helping Haitians increase the productivity of selected crops, improve watershed stability, improve agricultural infrastructure and build the capacity of local and national government bodies to provide agriculture-related services. (US Department of State 2012)

Yet, if we look at the situation on the ground in Haiti, faced with the food aid program actively preventing the Haitian farmers for sustaining their food production within the borders of Haiti, the result of the food aid seems to be very different than how the US government of State claims the result to be.
If we are to believe the statement of Associated Press, the result of the food aid is a much graver undertaking for the Haitian people in general, and the for Haitian farmers in particular.

Riceland defends its market share in Haiti, now the fifth-biggest export market in the world for American rice. But for Haitians, near-total dependence on imported food has been a disaster. Cheap foreign products drove farmers off their land and into overcrowded cities. Rice, a grain with limited nutrition once reserved for special occasions in the Haitian diet, is now a staple. (Associated Press 2010)

It seems evident that the food aid did not benefit the Haitian people in the long run, and that economic interest of the US was the main driving force behind the food aid. The whole idea behind the food aid becomes clear in the words of former US president Bill Clinton, now UN special envoy to Haiti, who went so far to publicly apologized to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March the 10th 2010.

It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked. It was a mistake (...) I had to live everyday with the consequences of the loss of capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people because of what I did; nobody else.” (Associated Press 2010)

The case of the food aid from US aid to Haiti after the earthquake in 2010 must be said to be a good example of an economic footprint left behind after a
humanitarian intervention. And it is possible that the Haitian people are suffering from this aid until this day. (Cook 2017)

After going through the findings in this subchapter, I find it adequate to say that there definitely is an economical part of the humanitarian footprint. This taken into consideration, there is a need to dive deeper into this part of the humanitarian footprint.

The amount of money being spent on humanitarian intervention is by its own account of interest, and of even greater interest is the effect the money being spent has on the society it is spent in. When it comes to humanitarian aid, it is my observation throughout the many debates and forums I have attended, that there is a general conception that any given dollar is a good deed. (Cowen 2006) Seen in this light, we can measure the effort to relieve any suffering in a particular situation by counting the number of dollars spent on an operation, or the amount donated to a certain cause. This perspective is quickly proven wrong after only glancing at scandals connected to the humanitarian world. More often than not, these scandals are linked to the use of humanitarian funds. And the problem seems to be an urgent and very present one. (Transparency International 2014, 164) To question the idea of humanitarian aid being measurable on the scale of dollars, I choose to venture into two different facets of the topic.

7.3 First facet

The problem of knowing where the donated funds will end up is the first facet I will investigate. Initially, I find it effortless to determine the potential of any
financial aid to end up in the wrong place. The observant reader may, by all means, ask what the wrong place is. And perhaps this is something that needs to be clarified before we move on to the topic of spending humanitarian aid. I find the term right and wrong to be irrelevant on its own account. I accept this to be one of the strongest grand-narratives found among humans. As mentioned by Nietzsche: “No greater power did Zarathustra find on earth than good and bad” (Nietzsche 1997, 55)

Therefore, it is necessary to look beyond the concept of good and bad as grand-narratives, and try to find meaning in the concepts without the aspect of the grand-narratives. I believe it is highly subjective when one attempts to regulate the meaning of the two words good and bad. If we welcome the conception of good and bad, moreover, right or wrong, to be nothing more than the subjective judgment of the speaker who is currently using these concepts in their discourse. Then we may come to an understanding of these concepts and be able to include them in our discourse when debating and elaborating on the topic of humanitarian aid.

Seen from my subjective perception, I find any use of humanitarian funds ending up increasing violence against, or prolonging the general long term suffering of, the targeted population, to be the wrong place.

To use a term like the wrong place might call for a little more explanation. Even if I have established the so-called wrong place to be any investment that will increase violence, or prolonging the general long term suffering, we need to look deeper into that very wording. Direct increase of violence is perhaps something that could be spotted easily, like if the funding meant to purchase food and medicine were spent purchasing weapons, or if
used to pay the salary of vigilantes or armed forces. But the prolonging of suffering might be a tad more difficult to uncover.

This is where instrumentalization comes into play. We have a tendency to instrumentalize in humanitarian aid, meaning that humanitarian actors, the receivers of aid, or the donors, start functioning as a tool. The donors instrumentalize the humanitarian actors, using them to portray their business in a certain way or to advance their strategic or political interest in a given area or field. A good example here could be Santander’s “Løpedugnad mot barne-ekteskap” which translates to running cooperative action against child marriage. Santander is one of the biggest providers of short term/low-security loans in Norway. They are under accusations of creating poverty and economic problems for Norwegians with low purchasing power. (Struksnæs 2019, Ringard 2019) By organizing a running event where everyone participates by running around a lake in Oslo, and Santander will pay 25 USD (250 NOK) per person/round) By doing so, they use their humanitarian partner in the event, Right to play, as an instrument to clean their own name. The irony being the well-documented connection between poverty and child marriage. (International Center for Research on Women 2006)

This is, however, also true when it comes to the relationship between the donating side of the aid chain and the receiving side, or to be more precise, the humanitarian actor in the field, and the people receiving the aid. The humanitarian actor, acting according to these values and ideology, will provide aid for all the victims of a certain situation. Be that the role of civilians caught in a warzone, the role of a person without proper access to clean drinking water, or basic medical services. The point being the
humanitarian actor has one, or several criteria for being a beneficiary to the humanitarian program they are running. To receive the goods, assistance, attention or aid the humanitarian has to offer, the people of the targeted area has to fill the role of a victim, a victim of a particular kind. Regardless of whether or not, they truly fit into that victim role, and they might regardless be dependent on the humanitarian aid. This means that they are instrumentalized as victims by the humanitarian agency, and it is in their interest to remain in the role of the victim. (Donini 2012)

It is my guess that no one remotely connected to the humanitarian trade would see the prolonging of the suffering of the target population as the right investment. Still, it is a difficult path to maneuver. It must be understood that humanitarian organizations also need business. Without access to suffering people, hunger, disaster, victims of war, abuse or violation of basic human rights, the humanitarian organization would go out of business. This is true for the international humanitarian workers and the different coordination offices. But it is, even more, crucial for the national staff accounting for almost 90% of the humanitarian workers. (Stoddard, Harmer and Haver. 2011)

They are completely dependent on the continuation of whatever disaster, abuse, violence or trouble creating the need for humanitarian intervention. It is true that acts of violence in a conflict area are the root of tremendous suffering, and that in theory, anyone connected to the line of thought and the idea behind humanitarian work would want the violence to stop. At the same time, it is true that a trauma center or any other medical facility will have not only doctors, nurses, cleaning staff and office personnel, but also watchmen, drivers, bookkeepers, logicians, translators and so on.
There is a large number of people in any given humanitarian organization that are dependent on the continuation of the suffering to secure their income and livelihood. Without the victims, they could run the risk of being victims of poverty, hunger or displacement themselves, as the NGO they work for may be the only opportunity for them to earn a decent living. In this context, I must point out that I do not accuse any humanitarian worker, nor organization for willfully continuing the suffering of their target group. But we must take into account that, there are people, categorized as victims, which have it in their best interest to remain in the victim role. Moreover, there are people, categorized as aid providers of the victims that have it in their best interest that the victims remain victims.

I see this to aid them short term, but never long term as they are trapped in the victim role. The same can be said for the humanitarian workers. They might not wish the target group to be suffering, nor to be trapped in a situation they can not get out of, yet, they do benefit from the suffering, as they are dependent on this very suffering to remain in a job with a steady income, vacation, sick days and general job security. One might argue that they simply could work somewhere else. And I would agree if we are talking about a bigger city or even a country where labor laws are actually being enforced. However, from my own experience, any humanitarian operation takes place in very remote areas. Areas that might not have a well develop job market or labor laws.

Looking into these sides of humanitarian intervention will perhaps not lead us closer to understanding what is regarded as the wrong place. In fact, all I have proven in the paragraph above is that there is a tendency of
instrumentalization of victims and well as humanitarian agencies. The point of the paragraph above was nonetheless not to exhaust all possibilities of pitfalls within the humanitarian business, but rather to set light to the fact that there are pitfalls, and that any humanitarian operation must be aware of the dangers of derailing.

I do nonetheless believe that there are many examples to be found, where the core outline of the situation affected by the humanitarian aid is so directly linked to human suffering, that most readers are willing to accept that the funds are being spent in the wrong manner, or perhaps more precisely, in the wrong place. One of the more outstanding examples of questionable use of aid must be the humanitarian aid delivered to the Hutu refugee camp in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) during the refugee crises from 1994 till 1996.

The camp housing Hutu refugees from Rwanda became a training ground for Hutu militants. Hutu refugees were trained in combat, and weapons were stockpiled in the camp. Militant leaders in the camp openly advocated for the continuation of the genocide in Rwanda 1994, and moreover, the final eradication of the Tutsi population. Food and supplies were delivered to the camps throughout this period, also while armed Hutu refugees were crossing the border into Rwanda and executing attacks on the Tutsi. (Lischer 2003) It seems that the fine line between aiding people in distress and acting as the supply line for a rebel army in training is a difficult task. Not suggesting political orientation should ever prevent the humanitarian aid of any group, nor that being guilty of any crime should lead to exclusion from basic human rights or the loss of opportunity to receive aid,
it must also be noted that the Hutu inhabitants of the camp must be regarded as poor, and in need of humanitarian assistance.

Nonetheless, any agency acting within the humanitarian sector must execute care not to end up as the supplier of an armed force in an active conflict. Even if the UN officially were running the Hutu refugee camps in the North of Zaire, aided by many NGOs, among them, American Charity CARE, whose chief exclusive openly admitted they were feeding the perpetrators of the genocide, the ones running the camps were, in all actuality, the militant Hutu leaders. The situation escalated to the point where Rwanda invaded Zaire to attack the refugee camps. (Thom 1999) By doing so, the Zaire-Congo civil war was kindled, a conflict ending up presenting the local population with a toll of 3,3 million lives. The deaths were mostly caused by malnutrition and untreated preventable diseases, not acts of fighting. (Lisher 2003)

7.4 Repetitive errors, first facet again

It is easy to see these incidents of supplying armed groups with food and supplies during an active armed conflict to be the exception rather than a frequently made mistake. To determine if this is the case or not is close to insurmountable, as it would require us to subjectively decide the role of any involved partner in any given conflict before we could even phantom counting the cases, ending up with an analysis. That would be to return to the concept of right and wrong. Still, without trying to sum up the number of incidents like this, I find one incident like this to be one too many.
While reflecting on this topic, I find it alarming to see the similarities with my own field experience. Fifteen years after the end of the UN supply line to the Hutu camps in northern Zaire/Congo, I found myself in South Sudan. More precisely on the border between South Sudan and Sudan, in a location called Yida. The brutal civil war in Sudan had resulted in the creation of South Sudan as a nation-state. One of my tasks was to do an assessment on the possibility of moving the Yida refugee camp further south, close to the village Adjuong Thok. The reason for requesting information regarding the possibility of moving a refugee camp holding at the time more than 70,000 refugees, (Refugees International 2013) were feasibly a little too close to the mistake made in North Zaire. The Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) is known to be the official army of South Sudan. Nonetheless, the SPLA has its roots as an armed guerilla movement established in 1983. (Scott 1985)

Taking part in the second Sudanese war ending in 2005, and resulting in the reaction of the South Sudanese state six years later. The border between Sudan and South Sudan were drawn just south of the Nuba mountains, efficaciously splitting SPLA into one faction south of the border turning into the official armed forces of South Sudan, and one faction North of the border still considered guerilla, illegal combatants, and now known by the name SPLA-North or SPLA-N. Many of the still guerilla fighters of SPLA-N are fighting north of Yida. (Totten 2017)

At this time, the World Food Program (WFP) issued food packs once a month. This practice encouraged the guerilla in the north to once a month put down their weapons and travel to Yida, where they were registered as refugees and entitled to have the monthly food pack from WFP before they
would transport the food back to the frontline and continue their fighting. It seems that once again, that UN was acting as a supplier to armed forces in active conflict. Even if moving the camp was considered, it was, in the end, never actually done, and everything points to a continuation of the fighting. (Amnesty International 2015)

The questions arising from these two cases must be asked. Why are UN and NGOs providing humanitarian aid to warring factions in active armed conflicts? Especially while we know the price of the violence for the civilian population? Or, to ask the question in a more humble manner; How can the UN or NGOs distinguish fighters from refugees? And it is appropriate for NGOs and UN branches to brand a person as a fighter and therefore deny them food or aid? Still, these questions are not the voice of this thesis. I do not set out to debate these questions directly, or at least not in detail.

Before we can find any answers to these questions, there must be an understanding of the humanitarian footprint, also the financial one. The money and goods humanitarian operations bring to the table do play an active part in the future of not only an area but ever more so for the people living there.

7.5 Failure to monitor

To place humanitarian funding in the wrong place, or financing a group continuously committing violence or abuse to another group is a mistake easily spotted, due to its structural flaws. Which group receiving aid can effortlessly be traced, and this can be seen in the context of activities carried
out by the group in question. If a mistake is made, then it is made on a structural level. And the structure of a humanitarian mission is both known and documented. At least within the agency controlling the mission. Therefore, placing independent monitoring agencies could potentially put an end to misplacement of funds. Still, it requires that the monitoring agencies know the operation well, and understand the trade of humanitarian aid. It also requires the general public to know and care enough about humanitarian aid to demand the creation of monitoring agencies. In actuality, it might not be possible to ensure the independence of a monitoring agency like this.

Seen in the light of the "Not Accessible, not Available" report, it must be said that even if there is of public interest in these matters, the public knowledge is, at least in Norway, too little to trigger the creation of monitoring groups. (Medland, Jaraquemada, and Martín-Luengo 2009) Perhaps is this one of the biggest problems faced by humanitarian agencies today? The knowledge about their business among the donors is too low to put proper pressure on the acting agencies on the ground. (Easterly 2006, 16) This might be caused by the concept of instrumentalization accounted for in the subchapter on the first facet. This is what triggered the idea to write a thesis regarding the humanitarian footprint and humanitarian space in the first place, the lack of control, the lack of results, and the tendency to see every effort as positive.
7.6 The second facet

Another facet I find alarming is what I choose to refer to as charlatanic economical humanitarian aid. By claiming economic, humanitarian aid to be charlatanic, I intend to point out that the financial aids given do not benefit the receiving end of the aid chain. This is in my eyes a way to use funds for kindling economic growth in the host country on the giving side of the aid chain, while simultaneously claiming it to be benefitting the receivers of the humanitarian aid. I believe this is possible for the very reason given at the beginning of this chapter, every dollar used on humanitarian aid is considered a good deed. Therefore, the general will to follow up and analyze not only the use of the dollar, but the actual long-term result of it may be neglected. It is my understanding that this seldom is done with ill intent, but rather as a result of lacking knowledge like the one illustrated in chapter two regarding Norway’s high humanitarian aid donation compared to gross national income and low public knowledge regarding official development assistance.

To best explain this convoluted problem, I will now elaborate on two different examples. One example is portrayed by Dambisa Mayo, Zambian-born international economist with and Ph.D. from Oxford, known for her theories on Macroeconomics, through her research. (Mayo 2009) The other is personally experienced by me during my missions working with a GO.
7.7 Facet two, first example

Mayo presents us with a straightforward and definite example, which refers to a micro-macro paradox. Essentially, she guides the reader through a scenario where malaria increases in a given sub-Saharan African country. As malaria is a disease spread via mosquito bites, it is important to apply an overall strategy where the prevention of spreading is as important as treating the infected. (WHO 2015, 8) As Malaria spreads by mosquitoes transferring the virus by first biting an infected person and then later transmitting the virus by biting an uninfected person, mosquito nets are one of the best ways to prevent the escalation of an outbreak or increase in malaria cases. In Dambisa Mayo's example, an increase in malaria cases is affecting a given country. (Mayo 2009, 44)

The increase draws attention, and a humanitarian operation is initiated. Purchasing mosquito nets in the western world and shipping them to the African continent is the essential rundown of the operation. One hundred thousand mosquito nets are being bought for the sum of 1 million dollars. (Mayo 2009, 44) By default, this is a so-called good act as it prevents the further escalation of the malaria increase and therefore prevents the local population from suffering and death.

However, if we look closer at Dambisa Mayo's example, we see that she also mentions that the 100 000 mosquito nets cannot be expected to last for more than five years. In fact, she claims that almost every net is either destroyed, lost, or is being reused for something else within five years.
Judging from my experience in the field, I find this to be true. Moreover, she imagines a local mosquito net manufacturer in the affected area, with ten employees producing a maximum of 500 nets a week. This business is surely doomed when 100,000 free mosquito nets are entering the market, causing the ten employees to lose their jobs. She further explains that at many rural locations in sub-Saharan Africa, one worker supports an average of 15 family members. (Mayo 2009, 44) Therefore, it can be assumed that ten local workers losing their jobs mean 150 locals are losing their livelihood.

In this regard, the result of the operation is only benefitting the country of origin of the deployed agency. On the giving side of the aid chain, 1 million dollars have been injected into the economy through the purchasing of the nets from local vendors in the host country of the deployed agency. On the receiving side of the aid chain, the local population has indeed experienced five years with fewer infection cases of Malaria. However, the donated mosquito nets are now gone, and there is no mosquito net production in the local area. This may lead to an increase in the attack rate of the infection cases seen in comparison with the infection rate before the humanitarian operation, as the production of mosquito nets has decreased from 500 a week to zero.

Even if the outcome may be considered harmful for the sub-Saharan country receiving the aid, the agency or nation-state donating the mosquito nets may write off the 1 million dollars they spent on the nets as humanitarian aid, while in fact, the aid was mostly benefitting the mosquito net manufacturers in the western world. This is why I refer to these operations as charlatanic. Activities like this give the impression of being
relief operations conducted in a humanitarian mindset. While they, in fact, only boost the economy of the giving side of the aid chain.

When I first encountered Mayo’s research, I was deeply bewildered to read how humanitarian quick-solution operations, in fact, could harm the society they were meant to help. Even after years of working in the field, I was oblivious to the negative effect of poorly planned operations. I was by all means aware that humanitarian operations often were ineffective and that there might be some funds ending up in what I perceived to be the wrong place. Yet, I did not fully appreciate the graveness of the consequences.

7.8 Indirect support cost and goat plans

The case of the malaria outbreak and mosquito nets are by no measure unique in the history of humanitarian aid. Personally, I have heard about funds spent in an unwise and ineffective manner ever since I started my career as a humanitarian worker. The discussion often revolves not only around the impact of the humanitarian operation, but at the administration of the logistical cost of it. A concept addressed as indirect support cost (ISC).

(Good humanitarian donorship 2008)

In the social media and tabloid newspapers, the debate usually revolves around accusations regarding the percentage spent on administration fundraising and HR versus the funds actually spent on the ones receiving the aid. (Kval 2016) Through the research I have conducted in the context of this thesis, I’m not sure if I can say that this is the case. Speaking on a general level is, by all means, futile as the diversity between the
different NGOs, GOs, UN branches and unorganized volunteer groups spans too wide to make any general assumption.

The discourse regarding how the funds are spent seem to bear few nuances. (Good humanitarian donorship 2008, 23) This strikes me as being more of a political issue than humanitarian. I have also observed that the accusation of aid money often is used as an excuse to decrease bilateral aid, or as an argument not to donate to charity privately. (Walne 2008)

According to my observations throughout my research, also illustrated in the mosquito net case, (Mayo 2009, 44) as well as in the numbers I will go into detail on in the next chapter, I find that the poor use of funds as a result lack of understanding is a far more significant problem than the amount spent on administration. On the contrary, one might argue that the lack of understanding itself may be a result of weak administration on field-oriented agencies acting within the humanitarian field. I find the accusations of spending too much on administration to be the direct cause of the increase in the so-called direct donation we have seen in the last decade. (Adugna 2009)

The suspicion that our donated funds in multilateral aid, and our tax money in bilateral aid are wasted on administration and not directly benefitting the beneficiaries, makes us prone to earmark aid money. A tactic soon enough picked up by the NGOs now selling donation concepts where the donor can be sure her or his money in actually directly benefit the beneficiaries. Examples here can be NGOs allowing us to adopt a homeless child by giving 20 USD a month. The NGO will, in return, ensure us we are directly paying for the education of the child, and send us yearly pictures and
reports of the child’s progress. Another popular trend is to buy a goat, a well or square meters of a school. (Edemariam 2005)

While I understand the urge to know exactly where our money is spent, I believe it makes the conduct of humanitarian aid cumbersome and inefficient. (Canadian Feed the children 2019) I see the value of buying a goat for a family somewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, at the same time I must point out that I think it is a mediocre idea without ensuring there is an administration in place to make sure the goat is bought at a reasonable price. Giving the NGO a decent impact for the money spend, while simultaneously ensuring the herdsmen is paid a fair prize for his livestock. Moreover, I would like to know the family receiving the goat is given the proper training to handle it, and that they are given veterinarian assistance to keep the animal healthy. If we look beyond the case of donating a goat, we quickly enough find grave examples of the impact earmarked funds and humanitarian aid has on the beneficiaries.

7.9 Facet two, second example

The second example is more of a personal experience. While it was necessary to bring up Dambisa Mayos mosquito net case both to lend some weight to the suggestions I am making in this chapter and to place my voice among other and greater voices speaking up regarding the way humanitarian aid is conducted today, it is now time to present the reader with a more personal and self-experienced example. This need to be seen in the context of Dambisa Mayos words, as my second example bear no reference other than mine.
There are nonetheless email correspondence, copies of mission budgets, and a diverse set of documents from my time conducting missions for the ministry of foreign affairs to confirm my story.

My findings during my missions are similar to the ones portrayed in Dambisa Mayo's example. The findings are the same for all of my missions conducted under the Norwegian flag; nonetheless, I choose to use one of my missions as an example, the mission in the Philippines. I find it necessary in this regard to correspond with my old employer to combine my experience with their impressions and tangible numbers from their records. By means of email correspondence, I found out that the DSB Norwegian humanitarian forces deployed from Norway spend approximately 14 million NOK on the mission in the Philippines. (Tom Lein. Official email from the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB), May 2016) This equals about 2,3 million USD.

DSB informs me in an email that roughly two-thirds of the funds were spent on equipment and transportation. (Tom Lein. Official email from DSB, May 2016) This equals about 1,5 million USD. Knowing the DSB system, being tasked to inspect the shipment list, and moreover using the equipment on-site, I find the gear to be entirely purchased in Norway from Norwegian vendors. (Fright documents. DSB) Further on, I have calculated the cost of paychecks to be about half a million USD. This calculation is only based on my monthly salary multiplied by the numbers of workers and the length of the mission. Based on my wages and the fact that all members of the team were given the same salary, except the team leader, who were given slightly more.
The sum of dollars spent on the salary may not be entirely accurate. However, it is close enough to provide us with a rough estimation.

By adding the number given by DSB spent on equipment and transportation and the calculated sum of salary, I conclude that the total amount of dollars spent in Norway or sent home as salary is about 2 million USD. Bearing in consideration that the worker is either eating field rations bought in Norway and brought to the field, or enjoying free meals of high quality in the camp kitchen, it is safe to presume they do not spend their salary paying for food on site. Not to mention, they are given any supply they need in the field. This includes but is not limited to clothes, transportation and medicine. Minuscular items like soap, sunscreen, painkillers, and nasal spray are also provided for free. Seen from this angle, it can be determined that of the 2,3 million USD being used in the humanitarian operation, 2 million USD stays behind or are being sent back to Norway. This leaves 0,3 million USD in the Philippines. (Tom Lein. Official email from DSB, May 2016, Fright documents. DSB)

Looking into the records of the budget I find 20 002 USD to be spent on local workers and the purchasing of equipment and local food in one months. As the mission went on for five months, a rough estimation of 100 020 USD was spent locally. This equals to less than 5% of the total budget of the mission.
While the funds injected into the economy of the humanitarian workers country of origin accounts for about 90% of the missions total funds. 7% of the mission budget is unaccounted for in this calculation. This may be due to the fact that all team members spend between one and five nights in a luxury hotel arriving and leaving the field.

### 7.10 War economy

While investigating the economic consequences of humanitarian aid, or rather put more directly according to the thesis; the financial footprint of a given humanitarian intervention, there is one aspect we need to take into account. This is the aspect of war versus peace. This condition of a war context, or the lack thereof, will, to a paramount degree, affect the economic footprint. We will, in this subchapter, look deeper into mechanisms that come to play in the financial specter when structured violence is introduced to the
mix. The topic of the economic effect on a community in peacetime and wartime are vastly different, to the degree that they might be seen as completely different topics altogether. Still, in this thesis, we will deal with them in the same chapter to be able to measure them up side by side. This way, we will be able to understand, not only that there is an economic side to the humanitarian footprint, but also how the presence or abstinence of violence and war will affect the situation.

To begin the inquiry of how war will affect the economic aspect of the humanitarian footprint, one would first need to agree just what is meant by the word war. It is interesting to observe that while most people would answer yes if asked if they know what war is, it is extremely difficult to give an explanation.

It is easy to think that refusal to use the term war or to declare war is somehow limited to the shady warlords and armed criminal gangs. Yet this is not correct. I have experienced this first hand while being a soldier in Afghanistan. I might have thought I was a soldier in war, yet technical this was not correct. The Norwegian government flat out refused to use the term “war”. The prime minister at the time, Jens Stoltenberg, now the secretary-general of NATO, would only refer to the situation as a “warlike” situation without ever using the term war. Another member of parliament, Kristin Halvorsen, would claim the situation could not be addressed as war, as war was something between nation-states. (Skaar 2010) The prime minister’s unwillingness to refer to the situation of the Norwegian soldiers in Afghanistan as war, and Kristin Halvorsen’s attempt to define war to be something between states indicates the lack of desire of a warring faction to
be associated with the term *in war*. Still, Norwegian troops were engaging in combat. They killed enemy soldiers, and some of them lost their lives to enemy bullets and roadside bombs. (Gjestad et al. 2010)

Another problematic facet with the term war is how the term is used in everyday life. Terms like the war on drugs, war on terror and so on must be said to water out the concept of war. (Black 2007)

Even if the definition of war seems hard to determine, and the exact meaning of the word is lost to a certain degree. However, the definition of war is not important to us in this context. We only need to understand war as something that affects the humanitarian footprint in a given manner. For the purpose, it is enough to simply determine war to be organized violence altering the general security situation for the receivers of aid in an affected area. (Hoelscher, Miklian and Nygård 2017) We will, for the sake of ease of reading, use this definition as the definition of war through out this chapter.

### 7.11 Violence and goods

The presence of organized violence does affect the situation in any area as the nature of violence increase the insecurity of the given area. (Moser and Rodgers 2005) The increase in insecurity calls out for added security. The added security will, in turn, open up a whole new specter in the marked. The need of guards and security personnel will change the job market. The need for other goods will also be present as there will be a need for other merchandise in wartime than in peace. The need for concrete, weapons and the need to stockpile goods are a good example of this change in the market.
The introduction of new merchandise in the market will affect the accessibility of certain products and materials. War is also a tremendously costly affair, and additional recourses are needed. In actuality, the real fuel for war is food, diesel and logistics. An army must be feed, and its vehicles, generators and equipment must be kept running. The needs of an army are, in fact, the same as the civilian population. They both need food, fuel and other mundane supplies. The problem, however, is that as the armed forces are introduced, it will not only raise the demand for supplies, but also increase the insecurity.

The increased insecurity will call for added security like security personnel, protection structures and so on. This increase in security stresses the market. Shifting the focus from agriculture, trade and other peacetime income sources to security professions, transportation and catering for other new needs arising with the increase in violence. (Anderson 1999, 40-ff) The acts of war will also raise the need for a fighting force, and a fighting force consists of soldiers. The trade of a soldier will often be better paid, and it will not require any ownership of land or tools. Agriculture is also a very vulnerable form of income. (Devereux Hall and Solomon. 2019) The crops or livestock are subject to theft, unless steps are taken to protect it. This would probably raise the cost of the product above the possible income generated. This will result in a crash of the food production in the affected area, resulting in increasing food prices, and for the poorest part of the population, perhaps starvation.
7.12 Providing for violence

We have now looked into war economy mostly from a war faction’s perspective. This was necessary to firmly establish the mechanics behind the change in the humanitarian footprint and space in relation to violence and war. We can now go back to the topic of NGOs in the humanitarian space and investigate how they are affected by the presence of war, and how that, in turn, will change how they affect the humanitarian footprint and space.

The main effect on the humanitarian footprint and the humanitarian space in the presence of war are related to distribution, food supply and transportation. These different topics will all affect the footprint in different ways. However, there are two main ways they can affect the footprint seen in relation to NGOs, GOs or other humanitarian actors:

- By not taking the situation into account, and continuing operations as normal. This could be a result of the conditions debated in this thesis under the chapter regarding discretion and the implantation of routines and procedures based on discretion used in ad hoc solutions. It could also be a result of failure to identify the situation as a result of a lack of access to knowledge or good Intel. Regardless of the reason for a humanitarian actor not to adjust to the current situation, the result might be the same.
• The second way war could affect the humanitarian footprint is if the humanitarian actor does take the situation into account. This would mean an adjustment to how the distribution is done. It could mean the closure of programs or the start-up of new ones. It could also mean a partial or complete withdrawal for the humanitarian agency from the given area.

We will start by looking into the first facet of this topic. The humanitarian agency not being able to adjust to the war situation for any given reason. The greatest danger here is that the humanitarian agency will act as the supplier of one or more of the warring factions. Again, the example of the Hutu rebels in the refugee camps in Zaire comes to mind. This example is, however, a little extreme. There are many ways a humanitarian actor could supply a warring faction without realizing they are actively feeding into the cycle of war.

One way would be to distribute food and other goods directly to warring factions without knowing it. It can be difficult to separate a hungry civilian from a fighter without his uniform and weapon. Another way could be theft. Goods being stolen, either by force or by cunning, from the receivers of goods after the distribution is done. This could mean warring factions are taxing the civilian population or civilian families catering for their fighting relatives with food and goods provided by a humanitarian organization. There are several implications to this situation. First of all, there is an obvious result of the provided resources given to the warring faction. More resources will plainly mean they will be able to fight longer, broader or more efficiently. More efficient fighting means more violence. In this case, the humanitarian
Another and perhaps more convoluted way for the unknowing humanitarian intervener to affect the situation negatively, is to enforce the so-called war market. The presence of war will always change the market, as briefly explained above. If a humanitarian actor are unaware of their role in the conflict, it will be impossible for them to determine if their actions are pushing the market in the direction of a war market, or a peace market. The war market then stops a peace market for developing. An example of this could be the fact that a humanitarian actor is injecting crops into the market. The crops are then distributed for free directly by the humanitarian actor or circulated in the market for an under production price. (Levine 2017) This will prevent anyone from trying to grow crops as the production price will be higher than the crops introduced by the humanitarian agency. As long as the trade of weapons, the practice of soldiering and the thief of goods are more profitable than the production of food, agriculture and peacetime trade; the market will be held in arrest in a war market state.

Another way the footprint could be affected that should not be forgotten, is the possibility of the humanitarian intervening part to be associated with one of the warring factions. This could, by all means, give the warring faction the sensation of fighting a just cause with the support of the international community. (Uvin 1999) And therefore, promoting more violence as the warring faction continues their efforts with renewed commitment. But it could, perhaps more likely, lead them not only to the state where they are seen supporting one side, but also as enemies of the opposing
faction. This could, in turn, develop a situation where the humanitarian part is seen as a legit target for one or several warring factions. This could be detected by the agencies’ security advisors proceeding to advise leaving the area as a result of the possibility of the use of violence against the organization. Even worse is the situation where the security advisor would fail to identify the threats, and the humanitarian organization becomes the subject of an attack. This will most likely provoke a full withdrawal from the area. Regardless of whether the humanitarian organization withdraws as a result of advice, or as a result of an attack upon them, the result will be the same. The humanitarian organization is leaving, and this must be said to affect the humanitarian footprint to a paramount degree.

A humanitarian organization might also affect the situation negatively by not understanding which need they are filling. If the lack of production of necessary goods is indeed not a result of the lack of production materials or ability, but rather a result of the humanitarian sector providing these items or goods, then there is no need for them to be produced. After all, who would want to produce goods that are already available for free? By providing goods for free, the humanitarian organizations are freeing up the time of the local society and allowing them to spend their time and efforts on the war rather than the production of goods and agriculture.

Another way the humanitarian footprint could be affected by war is if the humanitarian actors on the ground are aware of the situation and actively trying to navigate the situation. Also, in this situation, there is a real danger for the agencies to push the market in the direction of a war market. The use
of security guards or even worse, private security companies providing the security of the organization will undermine the peace market.

### 7.13 How to circumvent the challenges

The presence of violence may also affect the humanitarian footprint in a more positive manner. It is possible to circumvent the challenges and actively reduce humanitarian operations boosting the war effort. The key here lies in understanding the logistics of a family in comparison with the logistics of a war band or army. Goods stolen, taxed or taken by warring factions are often not used directly by the warring faction. And if when they are used, they will often be stockpiled first and then later distributed. A family on the other hand, are consuming the good more directly. (Anderson 1999, 23-ff) Examples of how humanitarian organizations have used this difference to avoid adding to the war effort, are as diverse as it is creative. Some examples could be the Red Cross in Somalia doing distribution of blankets. (ICRC 2008)

After understanding that the blankets often were hijacked during transport and sold on the black market, the Red Cross decided to cut all the blankets in two before shipping them. Stitching together two halves of a torn blanket is not a problem for a freezing family. The blanket will provide the same heat even if cut in half and stitched together. However, the market value of a torn apart blanket was low enough for the interest of stealing and reselling blankets to disappear. It seems almost ironic that ruining the blankets to the point where the receiving families had to repair them, in the end, was the step
necessary to ensure the families would receive their blankets. (Anderson 1999, 23-ff)

Another interesting example utilizing another technic, is how aid workers experiencing the food, oil and grains they tried to distribute to a starving population, to be taken by force by warring factions. The solution was found by looking at the logistics of a war band in comparison to the logistics of a family. The warring part would transport large quantities and stockpile the grain and oil. While a starving family would carry their single grain bag and oilcan home. The humanitarian workers then started removing the lids of the oil containers and punching a hole in the grain bags. Carrying a grain bag carefully while covering the hole with your hand is more than possible for a family carrying one bag. At the same time transporting many bags of grain with large holes on a truck is close to impossible. The same goes for oil containers. It is more than possible for the family to carry the oil container upright in their hands, while transporting a large number of containers without lids on the back of a truck is close to impossible. (Anderson 1999, 40) Again, the humanitarians managed to circumvent the possibility to add to the war effort by lowering the quality of their service through distributing goods in unsuitable containers. (Anderson 1999, 40)

Lastly, we have a very interesting example, not playing with the inconveniences of the warring faction like the two previous examples. This example involves a West African country and the distribution of radios to women. The idea being that they would be able to listen to a weekly read show regarding the rebuilding of civil society. The problem, however, was that most of these radios were stolen. Thinking on their feet, the
humanitarian agency decided to distribute new radios, but this time they would paint them all pink first. Making it clear that anyone trying to sell a pink radio was a thief. Using the society’s strict view on thieves, the humanitarian actor managed to circumvent the problem of theft of their goods. (Anderson 1999, 41)

Even though this subchapter regards the war economy, it becomes evident that a humanitarian footprint is not only a matter of where the funds are spent. In the field, or in the home country of the acting humanitarian actor, but also how it is spent, when spent in the field. This observation feeds back to my initial thoughts on good deeds as self-justifiable. Giving the starving food must be seen as a good deal on its own accord, as well as handing out blankets to freezing refugees must be a good deed. Yet we see that this is not necessarily true. In fact, the opposite could be the case. (Lyons 2014) If distribution of food is done incorrectly, then the food will end up feeding a warring faction. Perhaps a warring faction actively committing atrocities against the very population targeted by the humanitarian agency providing the food. Seen in this light, we could say that all the humanitarian agency is defacto doing, is ensure the continuation of the suffering.

Looking into this facet of the economic aspect of the humanitarian footprint, it becomes evident that within the humanitarian footprint, there is room for acting not only according to the humanitarian space given by the context, but to act according to a specific strategy to avoid the continuation of the suffering and playing within the framework given. In this context, it would be accurate to say that the humanitarian space, which we will look into on a deeper level later in the thesis, does not necessarily determine the final
footprint of an operation. But that the humanitarian footprint is a result of a given humanitarian actor to understand its soundings and act accordingly.

7.14 The ethics

In the next part of the humanitarian footprint, we move back to the meta-example of the humanitarian intervention in Haiti. There we find a grim example of how ethics can affect the humanitarian footprint. An example that in my perception is not harming the local population indirectly and over time, but rather harms locals directly and with severe effect. I am referring to the sexual abuse and rape conducted within the framework of the humanitarian relief effort.

I find it necessary to start with a disclaimer, and moreover, an argument in the context of this very disclaimer I am about to present. It is an equitable argument to point out that the atrocities we will be discussing in this subchapter are unmistakably committed by UN armed forces, and not by classic unarmed humanitarians. That being said, I do find the line between the two to be rather blurred. If we again turn to Michel VanRooyens writings, where he makes account for the changes in the humanitarian world lately. We quickly find that the humanitarian business changed after the twin towers attack in 2001, with the clear message from the US claiming that anyone not standing with them were in fact against them. By electing this policy for all their foreign politics, they were actively forcing humanitarians to pick a side in the conflict they are operating within. (VanRooyen 2016)
The change of the humanitarian field and the increased risk to humanitarian aid workers is a topic for another chapter. It is, nonetheless, important for the sake of this subchapter to understand that the two concepts, humanitarian aid workers and humanitarian armed forces, are two concepts that cannot easily be separated from one another. This argument is one that might be hard to swallow for some humanitarian workers and supporters of humanitarian work, as the values behind the interest in humanitarian conduct often conflict with the idea of armed personnel. Still, I would argue from my own experiences that the two concepts often walk hand in hand.

During one of my first humanitarian missions, in Yida South Sudan, I came to notice the armed personnel guarding a camp that would serve as my home for the next month. Mongolian UN soldiers, poorly equipped according to western military standards but still armed and combat-ready. I was at the time a rather young and careless humanitarian worker, excited to go to the deep field in South Sudan. Even if I had a burning desire to help, I did not fully understand the complex mechanisms behind the situation I was acting within. I did not spend too much time contemplating the presence of armed personnel. I did nonetheless react to another diversity in this situation. Liaisoning with an NGO called the Nonviolent Peace Force (NP), I found their attitude to be rather disapproving of the presence of military forces. This bewildered me as I saw the armed personnel to be my own excuse for security.

South Sudan is an incredibly violent society. (Jok 2012) Reflecting on my stay in Yida makes it all too clear that even with the security of the
Mongolian forces, my security was severely compromised. This made itself evident by the violence the camp was the subject of, in 2011 and 2014, when the camp came under aerial bombardment. (UNHCR 2014) Furthermore, I was informed on a later point in time, that one of my friends in the camp, a local gentleman working for an NGO in the camp, were shot dead in a ground attack on the camp only one year after my departure. I have, however, not been able to find any recordings of this event, besides the death of my former college. Nonetheless, I see this as an indication of the violence found in South Sudan.

This subchapter is by no means a subchapter making account for the violence in South Sudan. At the same time, it is a good example to understand the link between humanitarian operations and armed forces. Some missions and humanitarian interventions are simply placed in a context were armed protection is needed. Even MSF who refuse armed protection at all costs, also when operating inside areas where there is a significant security risk, proves this point by making an exception to their rule by hiring armed guards in the case of Somalia. (MSF 2014, 81)

Looking at these examples, it becomes evident that armed protection and humanitarian intervention sadly sometimes walk hand in hand. If one is to help people in an area where one will be the target of violence, one must consider using armed protection. It is a fact that rests heavy upon my heart, but it is nonetheless the case in some locations. Therefore I find it necessary to include the footprint of the armed forces in the humanitarian footprint as a whole, based on the thesis that the armed forces are there to protect the humanitarian workforce. If the humanitarian workforce would not intervene,
the armed personnel would not have been there either, leaving the local population with the presence of military forces as a direct result of the humanitarian intervention. Therefore, the actions of the armed protection and its footprint must be counted as a result of the humanitarian operation.

Now, let’s leave South Sudan and move back to the meta-example of Haiti, and the effect on the local population there. As we now engage in the topic of ethics, and in specific the topic of rape and sexual abuse, I will present examples of a grave and disturbing footprint left behind by the humanitarian intervention in Haiti. Unfortunately, finding distressing cases did not occupy much of my time. One of the first cases I found while looking into if any negative ethical footprint was set in Haiti, I came across a case that disturbed me to my very core. The rape of an 18 years old local boy, conducted by four UN soldiers. To add insult to injury, the foul act of sexual violence was recorded on a mobile phone belonging to one of the perpetrators. The video was leaked and was soon available online to any who desired to watch it. (LiveLeak 2011) Even if I have chosen to include the reference and the URL to the video for academic reasons, I would advise the reader against following up on the reference, as the content of the clip is very graphic, and in my opinion, extremely disturbing. Notwithstanding, the movie clip stands out as proof of one of the most devastating parts of the humanitarian footprint.

Regrettably, this incident does not stand alone in the context of humanitarian intervention, even if it stands out because of the young age of the victim, and the number of perpetrators. Looking further into the matter of rape conducted in Haiti by UN personnel, I came across more discouraging material. One of the best examples is perhaps the documentary Haiti by
Force, investigating the many sexual assaults on the local population by UN personnel. Stating that the number of assaults is currently increasing. (Aljazeera 2017) Seen in this light, I find it clear that there was an ethical part of the humanitarian footprint in Haiti. Hence I find it necessary to also conduct research on this aspect as well.
Unfortunately, we cannot speak about the humanitarian footprint without addressing the humanitarian space. I say, unfortunately, because I see the humanitarian space to be one of the biggest challenges the humanitarian sector faces today. This is a challenge different from the internal turmoil described in the chapters regarding the possible negative effects of the humanitarian footprint. Yet, the topic of humanitarian space and humanitarian footprint are not only closely related; they are, to a certain degree, codependent.

The topic of the humanitarian space cannot be seen in a vacuum. There is a link between the space given for humanitarian aid and the role the aid is given in the context of the situation. The space given for humanitarian intervention is, by all means, contributing to forming the shape, nature and impact of humanitarian aid. To better understand this concept, we must start by setting our parameters. We must define just what the humanitarian space is before we can determine the effect it has on the humanitarian footprint.

The term humanitarian space first made its appearance in Central America during the cold war. (Collinson and Elhawary 2012) Yet it is commonly connected with the term ‘espace humanitaire’ used by a former president of MSF, Rony Brauman, to describe the space given humanitarian workers. (Tennant et al., 2010; Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau, 2010) A space in which they could operate unaffected by politics to cater to humanitarian needs. After the attack on the twin towers on 9/11, the term got a more negative sound to it. The USA then stated they would be branding
anyone, not aiding them in their war on terrorism as terrorists. This, in turn, led to an unhealthy mix of armed forces and humanitarian aid, questioning the very independence and neutrality of humanitarian agencies. It is difficult to come up with a definition of the word, yet one definition or rather, an argument to illustrate the difficulties of determining the concept humanitarian space can be found in *Defining the Humanitarian Space through Public International Law* paper by Sylvain Beauchamp.

She directly addresses the problem of using the term humanitarian space by stating that there is no real definition behind the concept of humanitarian space. She writes, “With time and the multiplication of actors involved in the delivery of international aid, as well as their working methods, the notion of humanitarian space has increasingly been used in different manners and for different purposes.” (Beauchamp 2008) One might say she adds to the confusion surrounding the concept. At the same time, I would say she hits the mark when it comes to how the term is experienced by humanitarian workers in the field, including myself. It is a term that, in my opinion, is often misunderstood, and there is no doubt the term plays a part in the unfortunate mix of humanitarian intervention and military intervention the aid branch has seen in the last 15 years. (Foley 2010, 4) I will therefore proceed to look further into the meaning of the term.

By misuse, I am referring to the use of the word that justifies political or military intervention to protect the humanitarian space or using the so-called lack of humanitarian space to exclude a certain area from a humanitarian relief operation, efficiently discriminating the population living
there. Yet one cannot simply set aside the term as an abstract concept, as one will come across it time and time again navigating the humanitarian world.

Perhaps a broader definition less affected by politics can be found in the Humanitarian Policy Groups report *Humanitarian space: a review of trends and issues*. (Collinson and Elhawary 2012) The report is written in 2012 and might seem outdated when this thesis is put to the pen. I do, notwithstanding, find the release time of the report to be interesting. Even if far older, the term Humanitarian space truly started entering the discourse around the year 2012, and I find much relevance in looking into the meaning of the term when first introduced to the mainstream media. The period the report is written represents a change in the humanitarian sector, and it is therefore relevant while investigating the concept of humanitarian space. The report starts by giving a definition to the term. Or, in fact, several definitions.

While the definition *Humanitarian space as a complex political, military and legal arena*, the definition regarding *Humanitarian space as affected community space*, and the given definition on *Humanitarian space as international humanitarian law* is interesting indeed, I also deem it best to leave them out until we have firmly established the basic value of the term humanitarian space, and for now stick with the definition given plainly to *Humanitarian space as agency space*. While the humanitarian space, by all means, is affected by the very principle and political forces either calming to set the definition of the word, or using it in a certain context, I see the injection of political, military, law, affected community space and legal arena to be interpretations of the term adjusted to the given setting they are
currently used in. Looking at the report, we find the definition of Humanitarian space as agency space to be:

“Humanitarian space as agency space: The humanitarian agency is at the center of this definition, with humanitarian space delineating the agency’s ability to operate freely and meet humanitarian needs in accordance with the principles of humanitarian action.”

(Collinson and Elhawary 2012, 1)

I recognize this definition to be a very good starting point for understanding the humanitarian space, and furthermore, how it is affecting the humanitarian footprint. The definition addresses what I find to be the most commonly understood perception of humanitarian space, judging from my experience in the humanitarian business. A humanitarian agency’s ability to freely operate to meet humanitarian needs. Or, if you will, the freedom of movement given to a humanitarian operation or agency. This can, also, be experienced to be freedom of movement, meaning physical movement in the field.

An example here could be the agencies access to certain areas of conflict or disaster as of practical reasons, security reasons, ease or lack thereof bureaucratic procedures in the question of visa, entry permissions, or custom clearing of emergency equipment and materials. It could also, by the same token, be experienced to be a restriction in a more political sense, where the access could be hindered not by actual restriction of movement, but rather an ill will to see the humanitarian operation intervention in the area targeted for the operation. It is, however, of no consequence if the
restriction of the ability to operate freely is caused by physical restrictions or political reasons. The result is the same; shrinkage of the humanitarian space. Or is it?

8.1 The shrinkage of the humanitarian space

While reading articles in the newspaper or online, one will hastily enough get the impression that the humanitarian space is shirking. It is, in all actuality, a very popular narrative. Nevertheless, as we now dive into this topic with a certain academic approach, it is valid to ask if this is really the case. In the process of writing this thesis, I have time and time again come across commonly known facts that, in the end, turns out to be completely false. I find this to be a result of the way humanitarian aid finds its ways into politics via discussions on our national budgets; at least this is a popular topic in Norway. A topic that provides fertile dirt for the growth of alternative facts, numbers, and truths. Be that as it may, I find it necessary to disregard this popular view of humanitarian aid (Hjort 2010) and investigate if the humanitarian space is really shrinking.

A good starting point in this regard can be the article Shrinking Humanitarian Space? Trends and Prospects on Security and Access in the Journal of humanitarian assistance. What is interesting about this article is that it, after establishing its definition of humanitarian space, proceeds to directly identify three factors affecting the size of the humanitarian space. (Brassard-Boudeau and Hubert 2010) Of course, talking about the size of a given humanitarian space may seem a little subjective. Be that as it may, one
can hardly speak of shrinkage of space and circumvent the term space. The size of the humanitarian space is a term that, in this thesis, only will be used as a reference to the popular discourse of shirking humanitarian space. The article mentions three elements affecting the size of the humanitarian space.

- Respect for the provisions of International humanitarian law
- The relative safety of humanitarian workers
- The degree of access to populations at risk. (Brassard-Boudeau and Hubert 2010)

These three factors can hardly come as a surprise to anyone. Nonetheless, they are worth looking into to find a deeper understanding of shrinkage or lack thereof, in terms of humanitarian space, looking into the first aspect; Respect for the provisions of International humanitarian law.

8.2 Respect for the provisions of International humanitarian law.

My first impression is that our current time offers little respect for International humanitarian law. Recent events in Syria and Afghanistan alone have shown us that the International humanitarian law is somehow forgotten in modern warfare. Personally, I experienced this first hand during my time as a security advisor in Kunduz, Afghanistan, during my mission there late 2017 and 2018. One of my tasks was to analyze the new rules of engagement used by the U.S. Army, Air force and Navy, to make account for how it would affect the security of our staff, clinics, and operations. I was shocked to see
changes in the rules of engagement (RoE), when it comes to limiting civilian casualties. While the old RoE obligated the commanders to limit civilian casualties, the new RoE only obligated commanders to consider limiting civilian casualties. (Mehta 2017)

This is also reflected in the words of Gen. John Nicholson, commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan. When he addresses the fact that the new RoE opens the possibility to air striking a building, area or field without having eyes on the target, something that may increase the case of civilian fatalities: “If they are in an assembly area, a training camp, we know they are an enemy and they are going to threaten the Afghan government or our people” (Mehta 2017)

One could, by all means, argue that even the first RoE had little respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and I would not protest against this comment. However, the new RoE must be deemed to have even less respect for UDHR as the commanders in charge are not obligated to limit civilian casualties, only to consider it. This change will doubtlessly increase the number of civilian deaths in Afghanistan. Still, my personal experience, even if seen as first-hand field experience, can hardly provide us with the academic valid indications we need to determine the level of respect for UDHR. It seems evident that the respect of UDHR declines with the increase of armed conflicts. And this is where we meet our first indicator. Even if one might have the impressions that there is more armed conflict now than ever, this must be said not to be the case. There seems to be a broad consensus among empirical researchers that the number of armed conflicts has declined since the mid-90s. (Melander et al. 2009)
Another point touched upon in the article in the Journal of humanitarians assistance is the popular perception that modern warfare has more civilian casualties than the warfare we saw in past wars. This perception might come from the increased, and easily accessed information flow coming out of modern warzones through social media. Perhaps it originates in the fact that modern weapons are more effective; hence, there is a general perception that they will harm more civilians. Both of these lines of thoughts are, however, completely incorrect. Looking at the writing of Adam Roberts solidly contradicts the notion that warfare in the past was more civilian friendly than modern warfare. (Roberts 2010) On the contrary, recent research indicates that since 1990 both fewer civilians and soldiers have died in armed conflict than ever before. Following that logic, it seems like it can be hard to claim that the respect for UDHR has decreased, as the UDHR is, in part, made to ensure the survival of civilians. If the civilian death toll is declining, then one could reckon there is a respect for the UDHR.

This, however, would be an résumé to simple. Especially when taken the new RoE into account. I feel it is safe to say that even if the UDHR is there to ensure the survival of civilians, its success cannot be measured on the civilian death toll alone, and the number of killed civilians is dependent on a number of other factors. To find out if the humanitarian space really has been shrinking, we must look further and investigate the two other aspects said to be in relation to the size of the humanitarian space — the relative safety of humanitarian workers, and the degree of access to populations at risk.
8.3 The relative safety of humanitarian workers

The relative safety of humanitarian workers is a topic quite subjective. I must therefore make sure to relate to the topic not only as a reaction to the many cases of kidnappings and killings of humanitarian workers portrayed in the current newsfeed, but also rather see it in a larger context. The question I must ask is not if humanitarian workers are subject to danger, but rather if that danger is increasing or decreasing.

Before we can venture into the topic, there is one more definition we must conduct. To ensure the findings in this thesis are correct and a good representation of the actualities in the field, I need to set parameters to clearly define what we talk about in specific. It is my experience that when I speak of the term humanitarian worker, people from my country of origin automatically thinks of expats, or internationally deployed humanitarian workers if you will. This is, however, not an adequate assumption. From my own experience, I know the humanitarian projects I have been working on to have far more national staff than international staff. My personal experience is further backed up when one looks in a report from OCHA concerning the very topic of humanitarian workers and the danger they are subjected to. According to their estimates, national staff accounts for about 90% of the humanitarian workers. (Stoddard, Harmer and Haver 2011) National staff is defined in the following manner:
“National aid workers are defined here as paid personnel working on assistance programming in their own home countries. This includes both the national staff of international organizations and the personnel of local or national aid organizations.” (Stoddard, Harmer and Haver. 2011)

Finding this to be a fitting description of the so-called national staff, I see my estimate on the high percentage to be justified. Now that the term humanitarian worker relates to everyone working for a humanitarian agency, I deem it safe to proceed with the question regarding the safety of humanitarian workers. If the danger is increasing or decreasing is, by all means, an easy question to answer. However, indications can be observed in the graphical representations found in the following sub-chapter.

I find that the increase in focus on the humanitarian sector, plus the increased access to information, could easily lead one to believe that the attacks on humanitarian workers are increasing. This has also been my impression. However, this thesis will not present my initial impression, but rather trends identified through the research I conduct. By looking into numbers collected by Humanitarian Outcomes presented in their report Aid Worker Security Report 2016: Figures at a glance, an observation can be made in the context of how we measure safety risks of the humanitarian worker. The presented statistics measures two factors, the number of attacks and the number of victims. It then becomes clear that we do not measure risk by the death toll, but rather by the number of attacks and victims created by those
attacks. I find this to be a much better method of measuring the safety of humanitarian workers.

The term *victims* still needs to be addressed, as it does not hold a self-explanatory definition in our discourse. The report presenting the statistics clarifies this by defining victims to be the ones directly affected by the attacks. And it must be mentioned that we are talking about major attacks, meaning warlike actions of open violence directed towards humanitarian workers. This would include both killed and wounded staff. Looking at the numbers we can see the following diagram of major attacks on humanitarian staff from 2010 till 2015 (Humanitarian outcomes 2016)

![Graphic 03](image)

*Graphics by the author*

*Attacks on aid workers*

All numbers extracted from Aid worker security report 2016 (Humanitarian outcomes 2016)

Light gray: Number of incidents per given year
Dark gray: Number of Victims per given year

Five years is by no means a satisfying amount to conclude anything on the increase or decrease of attacks on humanitarian workers, especially if we are
attempting to see it from a historical perspective. But the numbers do, notwithstanding, tell us that there has not been an increase in the short term. There is, of course some fluctuation, like the spike of violence in 2013, but the numbers are generally stable. The numbers of 2010 and 2015 are about the same both when it comes to incidents; 130 in 2010 and 148 in 2015, and when it comes to victims; 245 in 2010 and 287 in 2015. (Humanitarian outcomes 2016) Even if there is a slight increase, looking at the rest of the diagram, one can hardly claim there is a noticeable increase. In fact, if one looks at the question of an increase or decrease in terms of violence against humanitarian workers, one will see that 2015 was the second consecutive year with a decrease both in terms of the number of attacks and numbers of victims, with 22% fewer attacks and 42 fewer victims.

To obtain a deeper understanding of the realities behind the numbers, it is feasible to perform a closer inspection of the victims. We know both international humanitarian workers and national humanitarian workers are included in the statistics. It would, therefore, be interesting to know the percentage of victims being national or international. Luckily, this information is also collected in the report. But before we can proceed to those numbers, we need to address another aspect of the report. We need to look, not only at how many attacks are carried out on an annual basis, but also at where the attacks are occurring. It seems, according to the report, that there are three countries dominating the list of attacks on humanitarian workers in 2015; Afghanistan, South Sudan and Somalia. The report even provides us with a chart (graphic 04) presenting the number of attacks where carried out
in different countries, firmly showing that in 2015, 71 of the 148 attacks took place in those three countries alone.

In other words, 48% of the attacks on humanitarian workers, both international and national ones, happen in Somalia, Afghanistan and South Sudan. As I mentioned earlier in this paragraph, five years are not really a decent period to gingerly confirm a trend. The observation of Somalia, Afghanistan, and South Sudan are confirmed in earlier reports from HPG. The provided chart in graphic 5 confirms that these three countries where also top three ten years earlier, in 2005. Now that we have a certain idea concerning where the attacks are taking place, we can return to our initial question regarding whom it is that is the subject of the attacks. In the paraphrases above, we looked at the number of expats in humanitarian service in comparison to the number of national staff in humanitarian service.
And found out, according to OCHA calculated estimates, about nine in ten humanitarian workers fall into the definition of national staff.

Conveniently, detained information for the ratio of humanitarian workers being the subject of attack in the three top countries in the context of attacks, is available in statistics of humanitarian outcomes.

According to the report, there were 13 times as many national as international staff being victims. Yet, the international staff had a higher risk of attack because of their low number of staff. (Humanitarian outcomes 2016) The exception is Somalia that had zero attacks on international humanitarian workers in 2014-15. (Humanitarian outcomes 2016) This is, however, most likely because of the extreme low presence of international humanitarian

Graphic 05
Graphics by the author

Location of attacks on aid workers 2005
All numbers extracted from HPG (Stoddard 2009)
Note that Sudan is listed instead of South Sudan, As South Sudan was not yet separated from Sudan
workers in Somalia at the time, and the location of their workplaces in Somalia.

Judging from the fact that most new articles and publications regarding the shrinkage of humanitarian space are written recently, and that the term first comes into common after late in the 2000s I find the numbers presented in the OCHA, HPG and Humanitarian Outcome reports to at least give us an indication of the trend. (Stoddard, Harmer and Haver. 2011, Humanitarian outcomes 2016, Melander et al. 2009)

According to the reports available, it can be said that the risk of being harmed or killed in an attack have not increased lately. Therefore the risk for humanitarian workers cannot be said to affect the humanitarian space efficiently. One reservation should, however, be kept: the possibility that the general perception of increasing attacks on humanitarian workers could affect the perceived risk, even if it is not rooted in the statistics. The only demanded parameter for acting as there is an increased risk is the opinion that the risk is increased, not the factual increase of risk. Meaning that it is not the factual risk, but how the security advisers understand the space they are working in, that determines the risk level experienced by the humanitarian agency on the ground.

8.4 The degree of access to populations at risk

It seems self-evident that the degree of access to the targeted population for the humanitarian intervention directly affects the humanitarian space. I claim this to be the case as the very ability to enter and operate in an area is directly
linked to several of the definitions for humanitarian space found in the different reports and articles I have been reviewing in my research, of which several have been presented in this chapter. This does not only mean the literal possibility to enter an area physically, but moreover the political possibility to enter an area. In some cases, we see that an NGO or other humanitarian agency will withdraw from a region or from a country altogether, as a reaction to an attack on their staff, the staff of other NGOs or humanitarian agencies operating in the same area. In the Providing Aid in Insecure Environments 2009 update written by Abby Stoddaerd, we find the following remark: “Of the 380 incidents in the AWSD (Aid Worker Security Database) for 2006–2008, 82 resulted in suspension, withdrawal or relocation, in 15 countries.” (Stoddard 2009)

This corresponds well with my own experience. The question of humanitarian space is like everything else dependent not only to the context in question, the actors involved, and the location of the humanitarian operation intervening with a given community. It is also dependent on the agency caring out the representative operations. In this regard I would like to invite the reader to take my personal experience into account. In one of my missions, I experienced shrinkage of the humanitarian space in the area I was working in. Or more precise, I experienced a perceived shrinkage of the humanitarian space.

If we allow ourselves to go back to the report Humanitarian space: a review of trends and issues, written by and for Humanitarian Policy Group, and proceed to their definition of Humanitarian space as an agency space, we find the following definition: “humanitarian space delineating the agency’s ability
to operate freely and meet humanitarian needs in accordance with the principles of humanitarian action.” If we look closely at the wording of this definition, we rapidly see that we are talking about an agency’s ability to operate freely. And this is the heart of the matter when we take a more adjacent look at my experiences in Kunduz in the winter of 2017. I was currently working as a security implementer in the Kunduz construction team, tasked with establishing a new trauma hospital after the tragic bombing of MSFs old hospital in the Kunduz province, killing 14 staff and a matching number of patients in 2014. (Smith 2015)

By the time left my first footprints on the Kunduzian soil, the area was subject to a low intensity, but active war between Taliban and the official Afghan forces. There were clashes a couple of times every week, and the area must, at the time, be deemed volatile. Taliban controlled around 80% of the total area of the Kunduz province, while the official forces were controlling the cities of the province, accounting for about 20% of the total province area. Because of the constant combat actions and occasional shelling of the area, there were only two international humanitarian agencies operating in the area; MSF and the Red Cross5. During my stay, an international humanitarian worker, Lorena Enebral Perez, was shot at point blank range by her 21-year-old polio patient, and was killed instantly. This was the seventh international humanitarian worker killed in Afghanistan working for the Red Cross, and the fifteenth international humanitarian worker killed altogether in Afghanistan

5 The UNHCR was also present but had no international staff actively engaging with the public. The same can be said for some international security personnel advising NGO across Northern Afghanistan
in 2017. The shooting and killing of Perez triggered a reaction in the humanitarian sector. (DW 2017) The sector had presently been under a lot of stress as a result of the many humanitarian workers killed, raped or kidnapped across the many fields of humanitarian intervention, and there was a demand for a reaction to the killing. In the end, the Red Cross ended up evacuating all their international staff on a permanent basis.

I was personally involved in this process as I had several meetings with the Red Cross representatives in Kunduz at the time. My last meeting with the Red Cross was in their abandoned compound, as I was looking into the possibility of taking over their compound. My employer, MSF, had decided to stay as the only international humanitarian agency with international staff on the ground. In fact, I was looking into acquiring a new compound as we were planning to scale up our activities and double the team of international staff present in Kunduz. And this, by itself is an interesting observation. How come Red Cross deemed it necessary to evacuate its international staff, while MSF was doubling their number of staff on the ground in the very same moment?

For me, it is evident that there is a discrepancy between the way the Red Cross and MSF see security. At the same time, I must stress that it is not merely a question of how great a risk the two different organizations are willing to take. Nor is it a question of politics or prestige. Or, to be fair, it is a question of politics and prestige as well. At the same time, I want to point out that there is another reason why the two organizations act very differently to the killing of Lorena Enebral Perez. When the Red Cross evacuated their entire international team from North Afghanistan, it was for sure perceived as
shrinkage of the humanitarian space. Especially if we stay true to the
definition of humanitarian space as agency space. After all, the connection
between the killing of a Red Cross worker and the restrictions on the agency’s
ability to meet the needs in the given area is clear. As the northern region of
Afghanistan loses one of its two major players in the humanitarian field, the
ability to meet needs must go down. However, the evacuation of the Red
Cross had several impacting factors on the situation in northern Afghanistan.
Modern warfare has developed to a state were winning the hearts and minds
of the local population are crucial to achieving military goals. While this goes
without saying for international forces operating abroad, it is likewise
important for local warbands, factions, and armed opposition groups. In
modern asymmetrical warfare, an armed force or opposition group cannot
hope to control any area without the willing support of the local population
inhabiting the area in question. The areas surrounding Kunduz city were
under the control of the Taliban. This is particularly true for an area called
Chardara to the northwest of the city. MSF were already operating a remote
stabilization post in Chardara. However, the stabilization post faced severe
problems as it was only meant to be just that; a stabilization post. And one
does not need a medical degree to understand that a stabilization post
requires a referral system. The problem was that crossing over to the
government side of the front line involved passing several checkpoints both
from the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. According to

6 Even if military actors in the war on terror (especially ISAF) have declared they will fight an
asymmetrical war, there can be, when one regards the weaponry used on all sides, little
doubt that the military operations are extremely asymmetrical.
our reports, on-spot interrogations, harassment and request for bribes were common for the civilian population to pass these checkpoints. Escorting someone with war traumas could mean arrest or detention; the stabilization station was, therefore, de facto without a referral system. This resulted in war trauma surgery being conducted in the small clinic never intended for those kinds of activities. After establishing contact, I traveled to Chardara to talk to the Taliban.

Not surprising, I found them very willing to guarantee my safety alongside the safety of any of our staff. The fact that Red Cross aborted all their operations in North Afghanistan made MSF extremely important, as one could not hope to achieve winning the hearts and minds of the local population without making sure they had access to basic medical healthcare. Therefore, what Red Cross perceived, and perhaps rightly so, to be shrinkage in the humanitarian space did actually expand MSF’s humanitarian space, indicating that access to the targeted population is highly relative to the complexity of involved actors and cannot be said to uniformly shrinkage or expansion in a given area without taking into account the relativity of the context.

Still, the determination of access for the humanitarian workers, and how one agency’s access to the affected population may be compared to, and perhaps affected by, the access of another humanitarian agency like we saw in my personal example from Afghanistan cannot provide us with the findings we are seeking in this regard. It is my intention to firmly illustrate the complexity of the topic by giving the reader a description of my first-hand experience. Yet, to fully apprehend how the degree of access to populations at
risk, together with the relative safety of humanitarian workers and respect for the provisions of International humanitarian law can help us measure if the humanitarian space is indeed shirking or not, we must look to other sources of information outside my personal experience.

The degree of access to populations at risk can be seen in the context of budget and number of staff as well. This is, however, a different approach than the one I have been investigating so far. While I in the subchapter above concentrated not only on the access to populations at risk, but comparatively on the limitation of that access, it is true that there is a restriction of access to the affected population generated by the threat of physical violence. This is something I made account for in the previous subchapter on the topic of the relative safety of humanitarian workers, and now I deem it correct to focus on other aspects of access to the population targeted by humanitarian intervention.

Even if the two topics can be found to be so intertwined that it is tempting to discuss them as one topic, in order to be able to reach the receiving end of the humanitarian chain, the providing parts must have the personpower to handle the operation.

Infrastructure, even if temporary, must be set up, and someone must handle the fieldwork, the back office work, and the logistics of the humanitarian operation. This takes personpower, and the best tool for measuring the personpower is to measure the number of staff. Surely, if an agency hopes to carry out operations in the field, they must have the staff to do so. It is self-evident that a humanitarian agency being understaffed only will be able to access a smaller percentage of the population if the quality of
their services stays the same, and they do not make use of more advanced equipment, allowing them to work more efficiently with less staff.

Seen in this light, we can conclude that there is a link between the staffing of the agency and their access to the targeted population. If this is the case, then one must look at the number of staff in the humanitarian sector. The number of humanitarian workers in the field is doubtlessly increasing. And it is increasing drastically. One figure that can be found on the matter is presented by Abby Stoddard, telling us that there has been an increase in humanitarian staff in the field of 77% in eight years. (Weiss 2007, 74) Seen from this angle, it is safe to say that following the suggestion that the number on the ground has a direct link to the access of the affected population, this number is a strong argument in the direction of increased humanitarian space. Yet, a humanitarian agency of any kind must have recourses to be able to provide humanitarian aid, and as I have already made account for, the recourses in terms of workforce. Now it is time to look at recourses in terms of funding. It seems that also the financial funds has drastically increased over time. (Stoddard 2009) One could ask if the increased financial funding directly improves access to the population targeted for humanitarian intervention. This is, by all means, a valid question. And my thoughts on the matter are that an increased budget does not guarantee improved access, as I find this to be a complex mixture of many aspects. Notwithstanding, it must be said to be something that can improve access. And it will most certainly not cause more restrictions. While the increase in budget and staff alone can provide us with an indicator that the access in terms of humanitarian space is
increasing, I feel the need to look at other factors that could determine if this is the case or not.

One aspect that could provide some enlightenment on the matter is the question regarding where the humanitarian operations are taking place. Meaning where are the humanitarian interventions trying to get to. This is, in addition, a question that takes us back to the topic of safety in the field. The facet of the relative safety of humanitarian workers is already covered in the subchapter by the same name. And even if it is hard to separate the two subtopics, I will attempt to do just so for the sake of this thesis. If we look at the question of where humanitarian agencies are operating, then it must be said that they are now accessing areas deeper in the field and areas associated with greater risk. (Stoddard, Harmer and Haver 2011)

If humanitarian agencies are increasing their area of operation, then this would far along the way indicate that they are accessing more areas or bigger areas. This would, in all actuality, mean that the access to the population at risk, in fact, is increasing. Publicly known occurrences like the Red Cross suspending their operations in Pakistan after the killing of a Red Cross doctor in 2012, (Nebehay 2012) or the decrease in international humanitarian staff in north Afghanistan after the killing of Lorena Enebral Perez in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2017, (DW 2017) may lead the general assumption that the access to the population at risk is decreasing. The reality is, however, that the access seems to be increasing. The given example regarding north Afghanistan could also be an indication that even with the decrees in present staff, this is first of all one example collected for a myriad of humanitarian operations, many of whom are expanding. It is also true that the access
increased in terms of the area accessible to humanitarian workers when MSF proceeded into Chardara after the killing of Lorena Enebral Perez.

8.5 Is the humanitarian space shrinking?

At this point in the thesis, it is time to shift focus, and combine the topic of humanitarian space with the main thesis topic, the humanitarian footprint. The two topics cannot be seen separately as I find them to be codependent. That being said, I find it natural to provide a conclusion to the topic of humanitarian space, before we venture on to combine it with the humanitarian footprint.

Looking at all the indications I have found while investigating the concept of the humanitarian space and the question regarding whether or not it is actually shrinking, it is my conclusion that there are several factors speaking against the suggested shrinkage. Going back to the three parameters chosen to measure humanitarian space in this thesis; respect for the provisions of UDHR, the relative safety of humanitarian workers, and the degree of access to populations at risk, I will sum up my findings in each topic separately before concluding altogether.

When it comes to respect for the provisions of UDHR, I must say that even if we touched on some problematic indications like the new RoE, there is really nothing to suggest that the respect held by International humanitarian law has gone down on a general basis. I find this to be in conflict with the popular view on the matter, yet I strongly feel I did not find proof of a decline in respect of UDHR.
Looking at the second parameter, the relative safety of humanitarian workers, I deem this also to be a case where I hardly can find evidence that the humanitarian space is shrinking. On the contrary, if one goes to the heart of the matter regarding the safety of humanitarian workers, meaning do humanitarian workers get killed or wounded in the field, then the answer is clear. In the subchapter regarding this topic, we could see that humanitarian workers are pressing ever deeper into areas with greater risk, and they are getting new colleagues every year, increasing the number of workers in the field. The number of people being killed or wounded at work should, therefore, go up in accordance with the increased number of workers in the field, especially if one takes into account that they are now working in areas deemed more dangerous. Still, the number of humanitarian workers coming in harms way is going down. This leads me to conclude that in the context of this parameter, one cannot claim the humanitarian space is shrinking. As for the last aspects, the degree of access to populations at risk, I find it hard to claim that the humanitarian space is shrinking.

Seeing that all the three parameters, more or less, are indicating an expansion of humanitarian space, it could be tempting to say that the humanitarian space is, in fact, growing.

There is of course still one aspect that needs to be taken into consideration while debating the shrinkage of humanitarian space. An aspect that leads us closer to the question of the humanitarian footprint. The question; how can we determine what is actually shrinkage of the humanitarian space? If we go back to the definition concerning humanitarian space as agency space, then we are talking about an agency's freedom of
movement, or ability to operate freely according to the humanitarian need. In this context, I would like to present the case of the earthquake in Nepal in 2015 and the humanitarian intervention carried out by NORSAR (Norwegian search and rescue). NORSAR is a task force mostly consisting of personnel from the Oslo fire department and Norwegian search dogs association. They are specialized in search and rescue in the context of building collapses and earthquakes. After the earthquake in Nepal, it was quickly decided that NORSAR should send a delegation to the affected area. (Svendsen 2015) A rented aircraft soon took off for Katmandu, with rescue workers and search dogs. The aircraft was, however, grounded in Baku after refueling. (Næss 2017) The aircraft was held there for a couple of days before it was cleared to land in Katmandu.

This caused a reaction, as many failed to understand why an important mission like NORSAR’s operation to rescue wounded people from the rubble could be halted in this way. Accusations were made that the governing forces of Nepal failed to welcome the given help and therefore hindered access to the affected population. I must say I very much agree with the decision.

Coming from a relatively safe country like Norway, where our recourses to handle a crisis almost always exceeds the demand for handling it, it is hard to understand how an operation like this can be stopped. However, from my understanding and experience working in war and catastrophes across the world, I regard the breakdown of water and food distribution, access to medical assistance and medicine to be much more pressing than the need for rescue operations. The reason being that while a rescue team of, let’s say 12 people could manage to dig out some people from
the rubles, and hence, save their lives. It would still be a rather small number of lives saved. Earthquake rescue is a labor-intensive and time-consuming task. A team of 12 people coordinating emergency food distribution, water purification, or clearing airfields and roads might save not only thousands of people, but also prevent the outbreak of waterborne diseases like cholera.

Given the deployment time and flight time from Oslo to Katmandu, it is unlikely that the team will be able to make a notable difference to the community as a whole. In the end, the mission managed to rescue one single person from the rubbles. I see the decision to put the aircraft on hold in Baku and allowing other agencies to use the much-pressed runway in Katmandu to be the correct one. I think, however, that the members of NORSAR might see it differently. (Svendsen 2015)

The question of humanitarian space as an agency space is by no means revolving around NORSARs grounded aircraft in Baku. However, it represents an interesting case from which we can identify different perspectives. The example presents us with the question of who should be permitted to determine the humanitarian space. While the rescue workers most likely would complain about being stuck in Baku, it must be assumed that the airfield controller believed her or his choice to be the best for the population of Nepal. The same question can be asked for a number of situations where we might feel the humanitarian space is shrinking.

Another good example of this can be South Sudan. The state of South Sudan has several times asked humanitarian workers to leave the country.

One of the reasons given was the security situation for foreign workers. This was met by accusations of South Sudan trying to limit the
ability of humanitarian agencies to meet the needs. However, soon after, a UN compound was attacked and several humanitarians were severely beaten, three were raped repeatedly and one was killed. (Patinkin 2016) Now the question was, did the governing forces of South Sudan shrink the humanitarian space by asking all aid workers to leave, or were they expressing an honest concern for the safety of the expat humanitarians and taking action to prevent violence? Knowing the government army was the one who carried out the atrocities, (Patinkin 2016) one might wonder if this is an indication of intent to set an example, or if the governing forces knew they had a lack of control of their own forces and tried to take action against it? The lesson that can be learned from the situation is that the question of shrinkage of the humanitarian space is not a black and white question of if it is actually shrunken, or who is to blame for it, but rather a question with a multitude of questions and nuances, and no answers set in stone.

The question still remains: is the humanitarian space shirking? In my perception, this is a question with a subjective answer. As I have illustrated in this chapter, it is so complex and so tedious to try to define just what the humanitarian space really is, and who gets to determine who gets to measure it. Yet some conclusions have been attempted. Cynthia Brassard-Boudrau and Don Hubert present us with some conclusions in their article Shrinking Humanitarian Space? Trends and Prospects on Security and access. Among other conclusions, they find the humanitarian space not to be shirking, as budgets go up, and more humanitarians can be found in the field every year. But perhaps of even greater interest is their statement that the term is unnecessary. They write:
When pressed, all humanitarians would concede that humanitarian space is not an end in itself, but a means to ensure the survival and dignity of vulnerable populations. The consolidation of a broad range of disparate challenges under the banner of ‘humanitarian space’ reinforces the already existing tendency of outsiders to view crises from their own perspective. Emphasis on the perspectives and priorities of beneficiaries can help to correct this imbalance. (Brassard-Boudrau and Hubert 2010)

This is perhaps were the humanitarian space, or the lack thereof, meaning the shrinkage of the humanitarian space debated in this chapter merges with the main topic of this thesis, the humanitarian footprint. Looking at Cynthia Brassard-Boudrau and Don Hubert’s statements in the quotation above, we can understand that it is their intention related to the humanitarian space, not as a physical space given the agency in question, meaning whoever is currently conducting a humanitarian intervention in a given context. In fact, one can trace from their words that this is a chosen perceptive from the agencies or the intervener’s point of view. This is, by itself, a very interesting description of how the term humanitarian space can be perceived. The arguments of Cynthia Brassard-Boudrau and Don Hubert in this context is that even if we are relating to humanitarian space in context of a humanitarian NGO’s, agency’s or GO’s ability to operate freely and meet humanitarian needs in accordance with the principles of humanitarian action, we find the very heart of the problem in the very definition found on humanitarian space.
We are simply talking about the agency’s ability to operate freely. Meaning we are not actually talking about the affected population and their needs, but rather the agency’s ability to intervene. Admitting, the Humanitarian Policy Groups report *Humanitarian space: a review of trends and issues* does mention the needs as the paragraph goes on, stating that it is the agency’s ability to meet humanitarian needs in accordance with the principles of humanitarian action: the needs can therefore not be said to have been forgotten in the relation.

Furthermore, I find Cynthia Brassard-Boudrau and Don Hubert to raise an interesting question mark to the whole definition pointing out the fact that humanitarian space is, in fact, only relevant if we are talking about the means to ensure the survival and dignity of vulnerable populations. The difference separating this quotation from others in the discourse of humanitarian space might be subtle, and perhaps hard to spot at first hand. I will, nonetheless, consider this an important observation. While the definition given in the report, Cynthia Brassard-Boudrau and Don Hubert comments on the fact that this is seen from the intervening partners point of view.

The observant reader will for sure now think that my arguments are easily arrested while observing the wording in the definition in the *Humanitarian space: a review of trends and issues* report. After all, we are looking into the definition of humanitarian space as an agency space. I will for now allow this counter-argument, and investigate if the report offers other definitions were the term humanitarian space is seen from the receiving end of the aid chain rather than the viewpoint of the intervening partner, I will then address the chosen viewpoint as a potential problem affecting the
humanitarian footprint. Looking at the report, once more, we find three other definitions.

The definition of humanitarian space as affected community space, the definition of humanitarian space as humanitarian space as international humanitarian law, and the definition of humanitarian space as a complex political, military and legal arena. Using the reports as a starting point for understanding the current understanding of the term, I deem it necessary to investigate if any of these three other definitions can put to shame my remark on the connection between the humanitarian space and the humanitarian footprint. The last definition on the topic of humanitarian space as a complex political, military and legal arena is the one that by first glance, is the one less likely to offer a viewpoint for the receiving end of the aid chain. Nonetheless, it must be given a proper inspection before it can be ruled out as offering a different point of view than the definition of humanitarian space as an agency space. Looking at the report, we find the following definition:

Humanitarian space as a complex political, military, and legal arena: the definition put forward by this HPG study highlights the context in which humanitarian action takes place. It highlights the highly political nature of the task humanitarian agencies seek to achieve and that humanitarian needs (and their relief) are a product of the dynamic and complex interplay of political, military and legal actors, interests, institutions, and processes. (Collinson and Elhawary 2012)

If we see this definition in the context of the question at hand, looking at the remark of Cynthia Brassard-Boudrau and Don Hubert in their
article *Shrinking Humanitarian Space? Trends and Prospects on Security and access*. I find it hard to see that this definition offers us a perspective closer to the one we are looking for; the perspective of the affected population in an area we are trying to define humanitarian space. This definition plainly reduces the receivers of aid to be a product of the dynamic and complex interplay of political, military and legal actors. It also clearly says that this definition of humanitarian space is a space for politics. While observing the word of the definition to clearly state that the humanitarian space we are talking about here is nothing more than a political, military and legal arena. In this context, I feel compelled to remark that the report in question does not try to define humanitarian space to be a political, military and legal arena but rather points out that this way, humanitarian space is actually perceived by some actors in some areas.

I do not believe it is the opinion of Sarah Collinson and Samir Elhawary, the writers of the report, that this is what humanitarian space should be perceived as, merely that it is a perspective present with some of the actors in the humanitarian field. An observation that strengthens my growing suspicion that humanitarian space or lack thereof is something I must take into account when writing a thesis on the humanitarian footprint. If actors in the field are seeing the space of the humanitarian field, then this is something that will affect the humanitarian footprint — failing to find a perspective representing the affected population in the definition of *Humanitarian space as a complex political, military and legal arena*. (Collinson and Elhawary 2012) We move on to the next definition.
While inspecting the different definitions for the ability to represent the receivers of aid rather than the providers, it is of paramount importance that I do not conclude before properly understanding the definitions. The definition of Humanitarian a space as international humanitarian law must, in all honesty, be said to bear a tad for political cling to it. In the report, we find the following wording of the definition:

Humanitarian space as international humanitarian law: humanitarian space is analogous with respect for international humanitarian law under this definition, and therefore focuses on the actions of warring parties with regard to their responsibilities in upholding the law. This includes their responsibilities to meet humanitarian needs or allow impartial humanitarian organizations to provide relief and protection of civilians. (Collinson and Elhawary 2012)

I would say this is a bit more promising point of view given the fact that we are looking for a definition defending the perspective of the receiver of aid, rather than the provider. Seeing the wording explaining the responsibilities to meet humanitarian needs, and moreover, the responsibilities to allow impartial humanitarian organizations to provide relief and protection of civilians presents us with a definition putting the interests of the affection population targeted for humanitarian aid to be remembered and protected. After all, this sits well with the comments of Cynthia Brassard-Boudrau and Don Hubert, reminding us that the survival and dignity of vulnerable populations is the main focus of humanitarian aid. Even if useful and in accordance with humanitarian principles, if faces the same problem as the
other definitions. It is focused on the intervening parts nonetheless. Therefore, it cannot be said to represent the viewpoint of the affected population, even if it clearly represents a will to protect the interests of the affected population by trying to secure both their survival and dignity. It might be that the definition of humanitarian space as affected community space brings us closer to seeing the matter from the perspective of the affected population and not the perspective of the intervening agencies.

Looking at the wording, we find the following definition:

- Space as affected community space: the affected community is at the center of this definition, with humanitarian space delineating their ability to uphold their rights to relief and protection. The humanitarian agency is still essential; however, it recognizes the role that other actors play, including the affected community themselves, in meeting humanitarian needs.” (Collinson and Elhawary 2012)

This definition offers an approach much closer to the one we have been missing in the others, as the definition clearly says that the center of the definition is, in fact, the affected community. Moreover, it mentions their ability to uphold their rights, relief and protection. I find this to be most interesting as this is the first definition found in the Humanitarian Policy Groups report placing the affected community at the heart of the humanitarian space.

Yet, this is but one report, and it does not represent the myriad of definitions and perspectives on the humanitarian space. To put the report in context, one must see it only as one report among many. I find it necessary to examine the report’s definitions in detail, to give both the reader and me a
thorough understanding of the term humanitarian space, but also to put these definitions in the context of other definitions. Looking through other reports, articles, and books on the same topic, I see a tendency for the writer to define the term at the very beginning of the report or article. This leads me to believe that there is a general confusion regarding the term. It is not uncommon for an author to clearly define her or his definition of certain expressions or terms in order to avoid confusion.

In the context of humanitarian space, I find that the writers are even more eager to define just how they experience the term. This might be because the term, while commonly used, does not have an agreed-upon definition. If we decide to continue to look for a definition in other reports or articles, we will, as stated above, mostly find definitions deeming the humanitarian space to be the space of humanitarian law or agency space. However, by looking into the definition of Harvard’s humanitarian initiative’s Humanitarian academy at Harvard, we can, among other definitions regarding humanitarian law and humanitarian space as an agency space, find a definition that represents the affected community. According to Harvard’s humanitarian initiative, humanitarian space can be defined as the physical space in which crisis-affected communities can exercise basic rights, including the right to receive humanitarian assistance. I find this to be interesting for two reasons. The first one being that even if we are looking at the humanitarian space as a community space, it is still oriented around the ‘agencies’ freedom of movement.

By looking at the wording we see that while Harvard’s humanitarian Initiative’s are to some part focusing on the community they are simply
writing it off as a right they have to ensure the agencies have access to them, the second observation I make and my second point of interest in this context is the fact that the focus is on their right to be accessed by humanitarian aid. It does not, however, say anything about who should be allowed to access them, other than the loose term humanitarian agencies. Therefore I find it to be an important step to investigate this access. If the affected community have a right to be accessed by humanitarian aid, and Harvard's humanitarian initiative's define this to be their humanitarian space on the one hand, and the humanitarian agencies define it as their humanitarian space to be given freedom of movement on the other hand, then the case should be clear. The question then becomes what part will the warring factions play, as they are the ones hindering or allowing the access. This is of course not only a question of access being given or denied. It is another connection point to the true topic at hand, the humanitarian footprint. As humanitarian agencies access to a given community will, by all means, be affected by the humanitarian footprint in two ways; first of all by the perception the armed forces have on the humanitarian agencies while debating to provide them with access or not. The impression left with the state officials and military leaders by the current humanitarian footprint will, for sure, affect this decision. Secondly, the footprint left while utilizing the access in the first place will doubtlessly affect the possibility of repeated access.
8.6 Humanitarian space as a humanitarian agency

The question remains if we can attempt to see humanitarian space as an agency. Can we simply conclude that humanitarian space is space for humanitarians? I believe this is how many, also within the aid sector, perceive the humanitarian space. However, if we look at the term, we find that it has also been used in military discourse. Perhaps the best example of this is the safe spot created in by NATO in its campaigns in the Balkans. Described by some as a “humanitarian space”. (Dubernet 2001) The operations of NATO in the Balkans and the tragic outcome of the safe spot is another matter worthy of its own thesis, yet it is interesting to see the use of the term humanitarian space in this context without venturing into the topic of NATO and the Balkans. Another example of the military use of the term can be found in Northern Iraq, where military forces were enforcing a no-fly zone to protect the humanitarian operations in Kurdish areas. (Landgren 1995) One could say that the military forces created humanitarian space by enforcing the no-fly zone. Looking further into the world of conflict, war actions and military, we can find several examples of armed forces forcefully creating what may be seen as humanitarian space. This is by no means a surprise to the reader, holding in-depth knowledge of what is commonly known as the rules of war. If we look to the Geneva Convention, we can see that the state or its occupier is accountable for ensuring the survival and wellbeing of the civilian population according to Geneva Convention IV 1949: Art.55. Moreover, we see that if the state or its occupiers are unable to cater for the survival and wellbeing of the
civilian population, they are obliged to allow humanitarian and impartial relief to reach the population according to Protocol I 1977: Art.70. The second Protocol also makes it clear that this is also the case, even if the conflict is between two non-state warring factions when we have a look at Protocol II 1977: Art.18. Therefore, it is not strenuous to see why military and armed forces are carrying out operations to ensure the humanitarian space. They are simply obliged to. Be they the state military or the occupier, they can cater to the needs themself. If they choose not to, they must allow other impartial humanitarian partners access. There can be little doubt that one of the main challenges the humanitarian sector has faced in the last 20 years, are the unhealthy mixture of humanitarian and military operations. (Foley 2010) Often military forces or staff closely associated with any entity controlling military forces are perceived to be stepping on the toes of the humanitarian sector by venturing into their area of conduct. (Olson 2006) Perhaps with different motives altogether. Many voices are calling out the risk laid on humanitarian workers when they become associated with military forces. It also raises several questions in the context of the impartiality of the aid if state or occupying forces provide it.

It is a valid concern to enquirer if an armed force providing the humanitarian space is, by default, a good solution. Yet the question remains if the armed force were not obliged to provide the humanitarian space, would it even be possible to provide it? Even if stated side by side in the Genève convention, it is an immense difference between military forces allowing humanitarian agencies to access the affected population as described in Protocol I 1977: Art.70, and the state of the occupants them self providing the
relief according to Convention IV 1949: Art.55. In one case the warring factions are allowing humanitarian agencies to freely operate, with or without being under the state or occupier’s protection. The protection or lack thereof should, as we understand Protocol I 1977: Art.70, be determined by the need for protection of the humanitarian staff and operations, not by the state or occupiers who provide the protection. Additionally, an interesting remark can be made if we look at Protocol II 1977: Art.18, openly telling us the state or the occupier must provide this protection even if the fighting is exclusively between internal non-state factions, and the state is in no way part of the fighting. One could imagine this to be a situation where a state or occupant would be able to provide protection, even if one hardly could imagine how they could be so without the ever-present risk of being pulled into the fighting simply by protecting the humanitarian staff. The other given precondition is the situation where the state or the occupier are catering for the needs of the population, the insurance of their survival and dignity, by their own means. There is an aspect important to take into consideration in this regard. The latter seems to be the desired solution according to the Geneva Convention, given the fact that the article deeming either the state or the occupier to have the clear responsibility to ensure the survival and wellbeing of the civilian population were written I 1949, while the article deeming that if they cannot meet this responsibility, they are obliged to allow humanitarian and impartial relief to reach people in need were written in 1977. Meaning 28 years later. This could indicate that the Protocol I 1977: Art.70 is nothing more than a failsafe solution for Convention IV 1949: Art.55. As a humanitarian worker, I would much rather see the humanitarian aid
carried out by purely humanitarian actors under the protection of the state, than the state providing the humanitarian aid themselves. Much imagination is not needed to suspect that difference in ethical heritage, political or religious association between a given governmental warring faction and an armed opposition of a different creed could be a reason for discrimination in the regards of aid distribution. Another facet one must take into account is the possibility of humanitarian intervention to be the justification for military intervention. In the examples above mentioning North Iraq and Balkans, it is impossible to deny the involvement of western humanitarian agencies in the conflict. Especially when it comes to the question of advocacy. (Slim 2015, 2)

Even if one takes these troublesome aspects into account, a counter-argument hard to pass by is the question of how things would have been different if the humanitarian space were not an obligation laid upon the warring faction. In the previous section, we looked into the discrepancy between humanitarian space seen from the perspective of the affected population and the humanitarian agencies. From that line of thought, we got the understanding that part of the problem could be the fact that humanitarian space is a topic only seen from the aspect of the humanitarian agencies. If we allow ourselves to follow that school of thought, it is likely that we will come to the conclusion that seeing humanitarian space as a state or military space must be even worse than seeing it as an agency space, given that we try to achieve a perception from the viewpoint of the affected population. Holding that thought, we must ask ourselves if it would be possible for the state or occupant forces not to be responsible for the survival and dignity of the affected population. If we allow purely humanitarian
agencies, meaning agencies not taking part in the fighting, representing a state or group taking part in the fighting or associated with any certain state or their allies, to claim monopoly on the term and usage of humanitarian space, we remove the responsibility of those actively causing suffering to the affected population. Seen in this light, even while taking into account the argument that humanitarian space should be the humanitarian space of the affected people, it seems unwise to remove the warring faction from their involvement in the humanitarian space. Both their ability, responsibility, will to provide it, and to act within it. Doing so would, in my opinion, indirectly harm the affected population and lessen their chance to have their survival and dignity protected, simply by not holding the warring factions accountable for the suffering their action is causing the civilian population.
9 The relation

Now the question is how the humanitarian space and the humanitarian footprint can be seen in relation to each other, and if the perception of the humanitarian footprint in any way is formed by the humanitarian space? It seems evident that the nature of the surface will contribute to the form of the footprint, in the same manner the sole of the shoe will. The point is that the result of a humanitarian intervention, or any humanitarian operation for that matter, is a highly subjective matter, just like we discovered in the chapter regarding the economic footprint concerning the Hutu refugees in Zaire. One record portrays them as active combatants, stockpiling weapons, and training to reenter Rwanda to proceed with the final eradication of the Tutsi population. (Lischer 2003) While another record downplays that part of the story completely, mentioning only that there were some problems in the camp. (VanRooyen 2016) The way this incidence is portrayed in a completely different light from one source to the next tells us something about the power of perception. Any happening, story, or occurrence can be spun in a myriad of directions. Not only affecting how we see them while reading about them, but moreover how history will remember them.

Some may argue this paraphrase regarding the difference in perception is unnecessary as it only states the obvious; perception differs from person to person. Be that as it may, I see a direct link from the topic of perception and the topic of humanitarian space. The humanitarian space is where the humanitarian footprint will leave its marks. And this is where it gets interesting. The humanitarian space can here be understood to hold two
different meanings. The first one being the one we normally refer to when speaking of humanitarian space, which means the room for humanitarians to act. This could be seen as any of the different definitions of humanitarian space found in the chapter regarding that very topic. But it could also be understood as the physical space where the intervention or operation is taking place.

The perception of any action taken within this space will be subject to perception in both of these ways of seeing humanitarian space. For the physical humanitarian space, it seems given that the success, failure, or degree of either of these will be judged according to the perception on-site, not according to the perception of the host country, or the deployed staff. Even if this is something that should be remembered in any attempt to succeed with a humanitarian undertaking, it is the other aspect of the humanitarian space that will, for the most part, affect the perception of the intervention.

The space given the humanitarian agencies will, to a large degree, affect how they will be able to operate. This could mean their freedom of movement, their freedom of speech or their freedom of operation. A narrow humanitarian space will limit the actions of an agency to stay closer to the norm of the given area. Ironically enough, this would mean that a strict, narrow, or small humanitarian space would leave little wiggle room for the agency in question, and therefore limit their chances of falling out with the local community. In this regard, it is of paramount importance to remember that we are strictly talking about the flexibility of the humanitarian space, not the strictness of the host community.
In any case, the perception of the humanitarian footprint is the perception of the humanitarian intervention or operation seen in a retro perspective. In other words, the footprint does not exist without the humanitarian space. And for this very reason, one cannot separate the two subjects. Doing so would mean taking the humanitarian footprint out of its context.
10 Conclusion

Concluding this thesis leaves me with a surprising discovery. When the idea of writing a thesis about the humanitarian footprint and humanitarian space first occurred four years ago, I had a strong impression that the lack of knowledge and respect for the local community in the deployed team was the major negative factor affecting the humanitarian footprint.

Now, after researching the matter for several years, I find the major threat to the positive outcome of a humanitarian operation to be, in fact, not on the personal level in the field, but rather on a structural level. Throughout the thesis we have time and time again found the economic motivation to be a major negative factor. We saw this in the malaria case given as an example by Moyo, we saw it in the USAid's food aid to Haiti after the earthquake in 2010. More than anywhere else, we saw it in the cases refried to a charlatanic aid. Humanitarian aid must be determined to be big business, and the possibility to engage in humanitarian aid only to boost its own economy is tempting for a nation-state.

While the motivations behind the biggest factor negatively affecting the humanitarian footprint may be economical, there are, for sure other factors affecting the humanitarian footprint, manly ethics and health. The introduction of humanitarian workers with a different cultural background will provoke ethical challenges, and the failure to conduct a mission in a sustainable matter may lade a community to face health challenges.

There is a danger that the humanitarian footprint is chiefly formed through instrumentalization. This may happen because the desired outcome,
or more precise, the reason for humanitarian intervention, is not necessary
the relief of suffering, the aid of others or the improvement of living
conditions, but rather the sale of surplus products, continuation of the
humanitarian business or other international interests. The humanitarian
trade is a trade that should seek to make itself irrelevant and unnecessary, yet
it seems to be self-sustaining.

This idea is strengthened when we look into the definitions of
humanitarian space. The humanitarian space seems more often than not to be
understood as a space for agencies, putting the aid-conducting agency at the
heart of the definition. We are here talking about an agency's ability to
conduct its business of humanitarian aid, not the receives ability to protect
their life and dignity. One might argue that this is two sides of the same coin,
yet the many examples in this thesis make it clear that there is a critical
difference between meeting need of the people receiving aid, or the aid-
providing agency's agenda.

There is a strong need to look at the humanitarian business with new
lenses. To avoid using a term like voiceless, victim, receiver and so on. To look
away from the temptation to categorize people as they become dependent on
the victim status and provide a fertile ground of development rather than
short-term relief.

It should also be said that the humanitarian footprint cannot be seen
without taking the humanitarian space into account. The humanitarian space
is after all the very ground that will hold the form of the footprint. And the
humanitarian space is mostly a political space for instrumentalization, more
so than the arena for humanitarian aid.
Unfortunately, it seems, that the interest to inspect the humanitarian footprint is not held by the public directly, but by the humanitarian agencies. And the importance of the humanitarian footprint may not be directly focused on the wellbeing of the beneficiaries in the field, but rather the footprint’s ability to present a positive outcome to the donor. The donors are, after all the ones writing the paychecks and the one that can secure continuations of the humanitarian business.

To obtain a substantial humanitarian trade, the make of the footprint must not be measured by its ability to uphold the humanitarian business, but rather by its ability to meet the needs of any given person, only for the sake of meeting the needs and nothing else. This must be done in a humanitarian space focused on that person, not on the agency accessing the space.
Bibliography

Books:

Foley, Conor. 2010. The thin blue line. London: Verso
Peterone, Mike. 2015. Leaving footprints behind. Pennsaunke: Bookbaby

Lectures:

Colonel Miles. “Contingent turnover” speech. Norwegian aeromedical detachment, Maymanhe August 2012
Heinrich, Martin. “Native challenge HQ training” Lecture. MA Program in peace, development, security and international conflict transformation, Innsbruck, Winter Term 2015-16
Ingruber, Daniela. “I am what you want me to be.” Lecture. MA program in peace, development, security and international conflict transformation, Innsbruck, February 8, 2016.
Journals:


Esteva, Gustavo and Madhu Suri Prakash. 1998 “Beyond development, what?” Development in Practice 8:3 280-296


Roberts, Adam. 2010. “Lives and statistics: Are 90% of war victims civilians?” Survival global politics and strategy. 52:3


Stoddard, Abby. 2009. “Providing aid in insecure environments” HPG Policy Group. 34


Online Journals:


Cook, Jesselyn. 2017. “7 Years After Haiti’s Earthquake, Millions Still Need Aid” Huffpost. Accessed November 11, 2019. URL: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/haiti-earthquake-anniversary_n_5875108de4b02b5f858b3f9c?guccounter=1&guesse_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAK6Y0ELDsHzHxayX6DxNv8rQQQK0rqGNSo7fCBINKh5UXJyghjfr0WwDrKRXx1BmGr1D-wkC81Vgvd7x9peX9DitsCepPy3PtNWW_p2rsMAihs5XX01htX6d176s-B5I05gUdApw1RqmiyD1O85Yj3IWiJebG1Cm4px_4_2HrX


Devereux, Stephen, Hall and Solomon. 2019 “The farm workers who produce our food are the most vulnerable to hunger” Mail & Guardian Accessed November 11, 2019. URL: https://mg.co.za/article/2019-10-08-00-the-farm-workers-who-produce-our-food-are-the-most-vulnerable-to-hunger

URL: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2005/nov/08/voluntarysector.christmas2005


URL: https://www.dagbladet.no/kultur/bistand-kan-ikke-males-i-smil/64547226


Walne, Toby. 2018. “Paid for a farm animal to help a poor family over Christmas? Here’s the truth about a charity ploy that will really get your goat” This is money. Accessed October 05, 2019. URL: https://www.thismoney.co.uk/money/article-6474797/Heres-truth-credit-charity-ploy-really-goat.html

Reports:

Amnesty International. 2015 “Forget me not, experiences of civilians in war -Torn South Kordofan State” London: Amnesty international.


ICRC. 2008 "ICRC in Africa" Geneva: ICRA.


Jok, Jok Madut. 2012 "Insecurity and ethnic violence in South Sudan: Existential threats to the state?” Juba: The Sudd Institute


Moser, Caroline and Dennis Rodgers. 2005 "Change, Violence and Insecurity in Non-Conflict Situations” London: Overseas Development Institute


USaid. 2011 “Fact Sheet #10, Fiscal Year (FY) 2011” Washington: DCHA, OFDA

Videos:


Theses:

Islam, Carolyn A. 2016. "Non-governmental organization vulnerabilities: Donors and resource dependence" CMC senior theses, Claremont McKenna College.

Web pages:

Canadian Feed the children. “Buying a goat for a family in Africa: The pros & cons”  
