



**AALBORG UNIVERSITET**

**Humanitarian Diplomacy:  
A Challenge to Humanitarian Actors in  
Conflict Areas**

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## Abstract:

This thesis is an analysis of non-governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations more specifically their humanitarian diplomacy. Humanitarian diplomacy is a new field of the non-governmental sector. It is a tool applied by humanitarian actors when operating in emergencies to assist people medically, socially, and economically. In this paper the emergencies will be specified in operating in conflict areas. Any kind of humanitarian assistance provided by a party other than the government is put under control and restrictions by the military entity or any kind of political representation of the area. Humanitarian diplomacy is a tool that enables humanitarian assistance entities to get access in a conflict area and provide the assistance needed, all acting fast under the pressure of time.

This paper aims at discussing humanitarian diplomacy by non-state actors, namely NGOs and INGOs, using an IR theory: Constructivism and Human Needs Theory as a practical theory. The discussing is limited to analyzing humanitarian diplomacy practiced by the World Food Program and Médecins Sans Frontières in Somalia. Since humanitarian diplomacy is a new field, it is difficult to have rules to follow, although The International Committee of the Red Cross has put its model public as an example since the influence of the Committee is great on the humanitarian field.

## List of Acronyms :

AMISOM: African Union Mission to Somalia  
HNT: Human Needs Theory  
HPG: Humanitarian Policy Group  
ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross  
ICU: the Islamic Courts Union  
INGO: international non-governmental organization  
IR : International Relations  
MSF : Médecins sans Frontières  
TFG: Transitional Federal Government  
TNG: The Transnational National Government  
UN: United Nations  
WFP: The World Food Program

## Introduction:

Conflicts in the last two decades has known a change in their nature on many levels. Direct violence is still a present criterion, but the duration of warfare and how it is dealt with has changed since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The end of the Cold War was the end of an era and the beginning of another. The World has been labelled as the Orient and the West. The West as its name indicates is the Western part of the world that is dominating in terms of power, economy, and technology; and the orient is the rest of the world that has been dominated and put into a category of being inferior forgetting all the historical and cultural treasure that it holds. The orient is also an appellation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> world nations that has been struggling with power and most of them had been colonized before. These countries still follow political systems of the colonizer. The problem with these systems is they are not adapted to the countries which is due to the country's situation weaknesses such as the intellectual level of the nation to keep up of the system and better understand it. Conflicts in the Orient in the last decade are an outcome of all these accumulations. They are a natural consequence of years of human rights abuses, economic mismanagement, inexistent freedom of speech and forgetting about human dignity. Considering all these factors, a revolutionary rage was created and awakened people to shout for a radical change. The Arab Spring movement as the perfect illustration of the turmoil. And unfortunately, it has been a fertile environment for armed conflicts which drew the attention of international politics. Civil society represented by NGOs and INGOs are among the actors advocating for human rights and dignity in these circumstances. Their work consists of participating in talks, conducting development projects and providing instant relief to the victims of conflict. However, it is sometimes difficult, even impossible, to reach people in territories with conflicts to provide emergency assistance to the victims and work continuously on project for more durable development. The process is slow, and states do not offer to collaborate with humanitarian actors to provide assistance on time. There is evidently a serie of steps to follow to get access "legally" for presence in conflict areas, but the pressure is real because of time constraints since emergencies cannot wait by definition. The humanitarian assistance in the situation of emergencies is crucial but it is complicated at the same time; being there on time but not following the procedure or waiting for the procedure and putting people's loves on stake. Saving lives or compromising on their principles. The delicacy of the situation has made it necessary for NGOs and humanitarian actors to build teams of humanitarians who are well trained and can act without huge cost. It is why it was needed to create humanitarian diplomacy teams among NGOs and INGOs as a model of state's diplomacy to negotiate access

and how assistance is going to be assured facing the political entities in charge of the conflict areas.

It is debated by the humanitarians themselves that the appellation of diplomacy should be held or replaced since it gets sometimes mixed and overlapped with state diplomacy. Some humanitarians even refused the word diplomacy because they do not consider themselves diplomats since it is very different from what state diplomacy is. The main difference is the involvement of the political agenda obviously because humanitarians are supposed to be completely neutral and impartial, but it is not the focus point of this paper. It is rather about humanitarian diplomacy and negotiations, the steps followed by NGOs and INGOs to deliver humanitarian relief. This paper is also aiming to shed light on humanitarian diplomacy practiced by NGOs in field works in conflict areas and how it is moved from theory to practice.

### Problem Formulation:

How is the humanitarian diplomacy practiced by NGOs and INGOs can be effective in providing assistance in conflict areas?

## Methodology:

### outline:

This section will outline the methods used to write this paper. To respond to the question in the problematic. A combination of a theoretical background and case studies will help in doing so. The paper is based on qualitative research methods, which means using the context of the source, contextualizing it and interpreting it subjectively. The qualitative method is over chosen because different opinions and ways of looking to the data can be used which gives the work an analysis aspect and research privilege. The methods chosen has its disadvantages, which are the subjectivity of the interpretation and being based mainly on the researcher's skills.

Two cases studies are chosen to help answering the problematic. The first case study is The World Food Program experience in Somalia from 2007 to 2013 in the presence of Al-Shabaab Al Mujahid armed group. The WFP was responsible for food aid and nutrition during that period in Somalia. The second case study is Médecins Sans Frontieres experience in Somalia during the same period and facing Al-Shabaab's armed group violence. Both case studies aim at identifying the traits of humanitarian diplomacy in comparing the two organizations' models. A brief review of literature is added to the paper to have a better and detained understanding of the ICRC's model of humanitarian diplomacy. It is seen necessary to talk about that model because of the constant reference of the ICRC's contribution to the humanitarian diplomacy field, as it is still a new addition to the world of humanitarianism and emergency relief and action. The theoretical framework of this paper is composed of two parts. The first part is conducted to discuss constructivism as an IR theory. Two scholars will be mentioned: Nicholas Onuf and Alexander Wendt, as both names contributed in shaping constructivism in social theory at first and in IR theory recently. On a practical level, Human Needs Theory constitutes the second part of the theoretical framework. Maslow and Burton are mentioned to define human needs theory on a theoretical level and on a more conflict resolution level.

The analysis part is for comparing the two cases studies and reflecting on their humanitarian diplomacy steps in details. While the discussion is going to be a more reflective part of seeing humanitarian diplomacy in IR theory, Human Needs theory and trying to build through an answer for the problematic.

And finally, a conclusion to answer the research question the thesis is based on.

#### Sources:

The information outlined in this research is mainly collected from secondary data found in literature and publication, and certainly internet. For the theoretical framework, primary and secondary sources were combined and consulted from Aalborg University online library and Google. For the case studies, primary sources were used for The WFP case and interpreted and is derived mainly from the official website of the organization. For the MSF case study, a combination of primary and secondary sources was used to collect the information needed.

#### Limitations:

There were two main limitations faced in writing this project, the first one is the direct accessibility to NGOs. Several attempts were made to try to get an internship or a more direct contact other than data found on the internet, but they were unsuccessful. The second limitation is time restriction as the humanitarian field is a time-consuming research area, and it was a challenge to frame the research and discuss it in a limited scope as it will be done



## The International Committee of the Red Cross Humanitarian Diplomacy model:

It is impossible to talk about humanitarian diplomacy without referring to the international committee of the red cross (ICRC) and its model of Humanitarian Diplomacy.

The ICRC founded in 1863, was a pioneer in engaging in humanitarian assistance and relief. With the headquarter in Geneva, the ICRC maintained a relationship with Switzerland and following its example of neutrality and peaceful intervention (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). However, it does not mean that the two intervene with each other's policies notably humanitarian policy and foreign policy. The ICRC's presence in the humanitarian relief scope is noticeable. It was an active participant in shaping the humanitarian law. The 1949 Geneva Conventions state parties recognized the ICRC as an impartial humanitarian actor and even assigned duties like visiting prisoners of wars and establishing an agency of tracing them (Harroff-Tavel, 2006).

The ICRC humanitarian diplomacy can be defined as a development of a network of relations with formal and informal responsables of armed conflicts in order to find a mutual ground on which all parties can stand. That ground is founded by virtues of humanity with respecting the humanitarian international law (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). The humanitarian international law and the humanitarian principles are the laws of the ICRC humanitarian diplomacy in conflict areas. The ICRC humanitarian diplomacy aims at making the voices of the victims heard and negotiating neutrally humanitarian agreements with conflict parties (Harroff-Tavel, 2006).

The ICRC humanitarian diplomacy model is based on four points. First, it is independent from state diplomacy. Humanitarian diplomacy for the ICRC is totally an independent organism that is separated from state diplomacy. It is for the simple reason of keeping neutrality and putting the goal of protecting the dignity and alleviating the sufferance of human beings. It is made sure that the ICRC cannot be biased to a part of the conflict (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). Humanitarian diplomacy is unlike state diplomacy, it is not concentrated on bringing peace politically for the simple reason of failing in doing so and consequently losing its credibility as humanitarian actor that put the interest of people first and before any other motive (Harroff-Tavel, 2006).

Second, the ICRC humanitarian diplomacy is based on a wide network of state and non-state actors. Maintaining a relation with different groups, states, NGOs and civil society is essential to the ICRC's humanitarian diplomacy. It has the freedom to engage a dialogue with non-state actors and discussing humanitarian issues more than states because of its neutrality and ability to be apolitical towards situations faced (Harroff-Tavel, 2006).

Third, the ICRC humanitarian diplomacy is based on discretion. When it is necessary to have a discussion with a certain entity that can be a state or an armed group, it is important for the discussions to be private with no media's presence to avoid public pressure on parties. It is also aimed to reassure the parties that the space for communication is completely safe, but the confidentiality has a price which is the total dedication and will to solve the humanitarian problem faced.

Fourth and last, humanitarian diplomacy for the ICRC is targeted only for humanitarian purposes and do not promote peace and solving conflicts. Getting involved in the political aspect of a conflict means that the ICRC is choosing a side, or it is sponsored by a party of the conflict (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). The Committee's ultimate objective is to protect human beings suffering in the conditions of a war or conflict and protecting their dignity. It is also important because if engaging with a state to restore peace in a conflict area fails, it would take down the humanitarian work with it which is an enormous risk that the ICRC would not take (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). And finally, neutrality is one of the virtues that the ICRC promote to have better access to conflict areas. Giving up this property would cost losing the credibility and becoming a political actor instead (Harroff-Tavel, 2006).

The ICRC insists on distinguishing between being a diplomat and practicing humanitarian diplomacy. It is called being a delegate, which is different from being a diplomat (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). A diplomat is a representation of state which implies political agendas and motives that serve the state represented. Diplomats also act upon foreign policy that is a product made by a state with a certain ideology, religion and a personalized notion of power (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). The ICRC humanitarian delegates do not fall into these definitions. They go by the international humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles. Delegates serve only the interests of victims of wars and armed conflicts without any motive to implant an ideology or an interest or a particular party (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). They also have no religion affiliation or preference. There were times when the ICRC engaged in negotiations listening to religious presentations and non-religious ones showing nothing but the will to help people who suffer.

It is important to accept differences and sometimes put them aside to focus on humanism rather than other motives (Harroff-Tavel, 2006).

To Analyze and discuss Humanitarian Diplomacy, it is mandatory to mention diplomacy itself and distinguish between different streams of it. Some scholars consider Humanitarian Diplomacy as a subfield of public diplomacy. However, in this paper, the focus will be on humanitarian diplomacy specifically and it is for this reason it is needed to discuss public diplomacy vs humanitarian diplomacy.

According to the Encyclopedia of Public Relations (2013), public diplomacy is different from traditional diplomacy in a way that the latter is an inter-governmental communication, while the first is a communication between a government and foreign citizens (Heath 2013). It was a foreign policy tool shaped after the Cold War and applied by powerful countries (Heath 2013). However, it is now adopted by small countries, regional governments, unrecognized nation-states, non-governmental organizations, etc. (Heath 2013).

Along with the four fundamental points that distinguish the humanitarian diplomacy of the ICRC, the latter mentions that there are, indeed, some challenges that non-state actors could face in applying humanitarian diplomacy. One of the biggest challenges is practicing humanitarian diplomacy in an armed conflict and having to negotiate with an armed group (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). Armed groups use intimidation to maintain the power and do not respect the war laws most of the time. The ICRC recommends to respond by negotiating access and advocating humanitarian law with armed groups in addition to provide assistance to those who need it (Harroff-Tavel, 2006). When it is extremely difficult to engage in any kind of dialogue with the group, the ICRC goes with a third party that can communicate directly with the armed group and it is close to their approaches politically or religiously so they can have a positive influence on them (Harroff-Tavel, 2006).

## Theoretical Framework:

In this chapter, I will discuss two theories to use as a theoretical background of the analysis. I will discuss Constructivism as a theory of IR and Human Needs Theory (HNT) to analyze humanitarian diplomacy practiced by humanitarian actors in the scope of international relations discipline and a conflict resolution theory

### Constructivism in International Relations Theory:

International relations discipline is the study of relations between states politically, economically, and socially. It was adopted as a discipline after World War I to look in depth into the factors pushing states to opt for war in order to prevent it (Lawson, 2015). International Relations theory (IR theory) is a tool that enables to analyze aspects of the world through different lenses (McGlinchey, Walters and Scheinpflug, 2017). Realism and Liberalism are considered mainstream theories and were adopted for decades to explain the relation between power and state, considering the material factors only. By the 1970s, IR theory had grown and broaden to use different approaches including economic and social factors (Burchill *et al.*, 2005). The debate between realists and liberalists reached nowhere in IR theory to have a better understanding and decide about the potential of cooperation between states (Burchill *et al.*, 2005). After the end of the Cold War, the power balance that was a pattern of two blocks no longer existed which opened the discussion for the future of power development and let the chance of new streams of theories to participate in the international discussion. This gave the floor to the rise of the constructivist school. There are several factors that contributed to reconsidering constructivism; the debate between rationalists and critical theorists gave an opportunity to constructivists to express their point of view towards non-rationalist perspective (Burchill *et al.*, 2005). Realism and neo-realism focus on the power of state and military to ensure the state's survival in the international world and giving the title of "anarchical" to the international system. Liberalism builds upon it by saying that states' interests are a priority and anarchy is constant, but shared economic and political interests should be highly present for international cooperation (Burchill *et al.*, 2005). Critical theory challenges rationalists in including the social factor. They argue that actors, their identities and interests are socially constructed; and knowledge is highly related to interest (Burchill *et al.*, 2005). Critical theory also discussed international relations between theory and practice, giving the theoretical analysis part an importance especially during Cold war period. By the end of the Cold War, the neo-realist and neo-liberal perspectives could not predict and understand the changes that

were reshaping the global order. The fall of the Soviet Union and the two-block power that was holding the international system was another factor for constructivism to thrive and opened new way to perceive international relations and theory (Burchill *et al.*, 2005).

To better understand constructivism as an IR theory, it is essential to point to it in the frame of social theory. Constructivism in social theory is leaning towards idealism (Jackson and Sorensen, 2006). According to social theory, there is no objective truth or final truth. The social world is constructed by men according to the beliefs, culture and languages they were structured into. In the context of international relations, constructivism is intersubjective in analyzing international matters.

Nicholas Onuf, a leading scholar and introducer of constructivism to IR, explains in his article *Constructivism: A User's Manual* (1998) that people are responsible for the world they are living in. In other words, people construct the environment they are in, from social relations to rules to norms etc. (Onuf, 2012). Constructivism says that people and society are linked together and cannot exist without each other. It's a two-way process but it is necessary for a third element to be included which is rules (Onuf, 2012). He refers to the three elements as rules, agents, agencies. These elements are a construct of raw material and shaping it into the way the world it is. Agencies and actors have a complementary existence that goes both ways to shape a society and organized by the existence of rules (Zehfus, 2002).

"Rules are statements that tell people what we should do" (Onuf, 2012). It is the medium between people and society and organizes their conducts according to what have been agreed on. When making a rule, it is making a standard either by following them or by following the people from the society and in this case it is called a conduct (Onuf, 2012). The terms agent and people can be interchangeable when people are active in a society. People become agents when they are making rules and acting upon them in an institutional context. An institution is composed of rules and patterns. Agents also act within an institution when they are given choices of following or breaking the rules (Zehfus, 2002). A society with rules and practices forms an institution. Institutions make an environment in which people become agents and act rationally according to a pattern of rules (Onuf, 2012).

Given all the definitions and keywords that form Onuf's theory of constructivism, it can be said that society is a complex structure. Its three variables, agents, rules, and institutions are interrelated and have a double property of being dependent and independent. Agents are considered autonomic as individuals, but the independency is taken away when they act as a group and additionally, they are restricted by rules. The same rules give them the chance to act collectively and, in their turn, limit the agents as a group and not as an individual (Onuf, 2012).

Agents speak to formulate a rule. Speaking in a way to get an agent to act is defined as speech act. Onuf explains that speech in another element attached to the rules since it is the form to deliver the idea and make individuals or groups understand it and follow it. According to Onuf, there are three types of speech act: assertive, directive and commissive (Onuf, 2012).

In Speech Act Theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969), action and language are similar in a way that we create rules and condition the way the hearer is going to act by speaking in a certain form. It is like playing chess; the other player is acting according to the first player's move (Duffy and Frederking, 2009). Assertion is stating a belief to make the hearer share it too. Directives is when the speaker expresses directly the intention of making the hearer act the way intended. Commissive speech is when the speaker is expressing the will to do something in the future (Duffy and Frederking, 2009).

Constructivists like Onuf based their theory on speech act theory because speech and language are considered an important tool that contributes to the making of rules. Assertive rules are information provided and stated in specific term to offer a kind of guidance (Onuf, 2012). They come more of a form of instructions. Directive rules are imperatives in their form. They are fast forward in giving "orders" that the hearer must follow. It is the speaker who decides the should and should not and he (the speaker) states openly what are the consequences if they are discarded (Onuf, 2012). And finally, commissive rules are composed of promises. The hearer gives promises to the speaker and once they are given, they become "commitment-rules" (2012: p12). Rules turn the material components into a social reality by the means of agents (Zehfus, 2002). The same agents are limited by the rules and it cannot be said that agents have full independency. Agents as a group are the one creating rules in the first place, but it limits their opportunities in front of other groups that are agents too (Onuf, 1998). Understanding the role of agents in creating and acting by rules of their own making without forgetting that in doing so it limits their freedom in a way makes us understand how a country is made (Onuf, 1998). It can be said that Onuf gave a definition of a country using constructivism to draw a picture of how countries are constructed.

Onuf's constructivism is also known as hard constructivism. He believes that institutions are man-made products that are socially constructed and made normative by individuals who once participating in the system, they become actors and the interest of these actors change by the social context. He also differentiates the material and social world. For Onuf, material worlds are certainly needed but only as a raw material to build on. It is the final product that is essential which is the social construction and the inter-relative roles and positions of agents, institutions and rules.

Alexander Wendt has also contributed in shaping the theory of constructivism building on Onuf's beliefs, but also making it more of an IR theory. Wendt believes that IR constructivism is more influenced by idealism because it is characterized by shared ideas and beliefs more than material facts. Identities and interests are not an outcome of the material world but rather the ideas and identities built by agents (Palan, 2000). Materialism for Wendt is associated with self-interest and power that is dominant on the international politics. He acknowledges the presence of rules and norms but he does not share the belief that norms are rules are rigid and exercised in only one direction (Palan, 2000). Identities and interests are not given and it is interaction that identities are built (Jackson and Sorensen, 2006).

Identity and behavior are the core of constructivism according to Wendt. Identity is an understanding of the self and is shaped when there is an interaction with a structure (Dixon, 2013). The international system according to constructivism is a society with structure and shared beliefs and social relationships. Norms are an outcome of the social relationships that regulate state behavior (Dixon, 2013).

#### Human Needs Theory (HNT):

Survival has been the instinctive behavior of humans since their existence; how to hunt, how to eat, how to protect themselves from danger, etc. it also through the times that men learnt how to differentiate between survival, living, and development. The process is based on what was available and what was not and what need is necessary, and which one is complementary. Human Needs Theory developed by Abraham Harlod Maslow in "Theory of Human Motivation" in 1943 is discussing human needs as part of behaviorism and psychoanalysis.

Maslow presented human needs in a hierarchical way to show that humans fulfill the basic needs first before moving to the next ones that are less basic and fill in the category of complementary. They are illustrated in a pyramid starting from the bottom with the most basic need and goes up to the least basic one.

Maslow's human needs are composed of five stages. The first and most basic one is the physiological need. It is related to a naturalistic composition of human body and its need for nutrition. It is an effort made by the body to keep a state of blood stream that is associated with the need to get fed and hunger (Maslow, 1943). Physiological needs are not limited to only nutrition, it is also the need of sleep, sexual desire, maternal behavior in animals and sheer activity, which all are essential for the human body and belong to the level of survival (Maslow,

1943). It is a pre-requisite to fulfill the physiological needs in order to move to the next ones. For example, Utopia for a hungry man is a place with food. The human mind can only think of other characteristics as complementary as long as he hasn't fulfilled his need for eating (Maslow, 1943). Safety needs come after the physiological ones. Safety needs are strongly linked to security that takes different aspects, financially, socially, health, and wellness (Maslow, 1943). To better understand his point, he illustrates it through the urge to stop a child's colic from bad food. He is well fed which satisfies the physiological need but once he is in pain from food the whole perception of life and needs changes to become a priority to stop the pain so the child would have the feeling of safety (Maslow, 1943). Safety is for sure simplified through Maslow's example because it is much more complex and layered for adults, but it is only looked at when the physiological needs are satisfied (Maslow, 1943).

Building on Maslow's pyramid of human needs, other scholars developed the idea of needs and distinguished it from satisfiers. The main difference between the two is former are universal and the latter are cultural and negotiable (Danielsen, 2005). Basic human needs do not vary in all environments and cultures, but what changes is how to satisfy those needs and it is strongly linked to the culture and society (Max-Neef, Antonio and Martin, 1992). No matter what type of society or environment a human being belongs to, the fundamental needs stay the same, but what is variable is how to satisfy these needs and this part is associated with economic goods because they are a form of being, having, doing and interacting and they are capable of affecting the efficiency of the satisfiers (Max-Neef, Antonio and Martin, 1992). The relation between needs and satisfiers and economic goods is dynamic and permanent, because they define the culture and culture defines the style of development (Max-Neef, Antonio and Martin, 1992).

When it comes to conflicts, it was essential to develop theories to analyze them in relation to the international political sphere; starting from facts how they started and including all elements that contributed in their growth. Theories has always been needed to study the consequences of conflicts and predict the future of the conflict area in order to find solutions that can be fruitful and serving to the well-being of the populations. In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to mention the work of scholars that based their work on basic Human Needs Theory to try solving conflicts. John Burton is one of the most known scholar worth mentioning when talking about HNT.

John Burton's started from the basic needs theory of Maslow to forge a theorize conflict solving. He argues that participation, identity, recognition and security are non-material needs and are universal. The repression of these needs leads directly to conflict (Grace, 2015). Deep



rooted conflicts are the outcome of needs that are ignored. And by needs, he doesn't mean the material ones, he means the non-material social ones. In order to solve conflicts, non-material needs should be addressed (Grace, 2015). Conflict resolution is a methodology dedicated to respond to conflicts caused by lack of human needs conditions.

## Case Studies: Somalia's humanitarian crisis and facing Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahid

In this part of the thesis, I am going to discuss two case studies where humanitarian diplomacy was used differently in conflict areas and how humanitarian actors faced the challenges in these conflict areas. Somalia is one of the most unstable places of the world. With a civil war that has been going for more than two decades, it is considered a failed state and the humanitarian crises are increasing. The first case study is The World Food Programme (WFP) experience in Somalia. It was one of the organizations that has always been present in there, giving as much assistance as they can in order to save people. The second case study is from Médecins Sans Frontières's (MSF) presence in Somalia during the same period. Both organizations were operating in the same areas that include Mogadishu and Daynile from 2008 to 2013 in the presence Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahid as an armed group controlling the areas covered by the organizations. The experiences are taken from official reports made by WFP and MSF after the experience and reports made by research agencies investigating about humanitarian diplomacy and negotiations in conflict areas.

### Context:

Before going through the humanitarian assistance experience in Somalia, it is needed to mention the timeline and the frame in which the aid actors have been working.

Somalia's civil war took a violent turn in 1991 when after the fall of Siad Barre's regime. Clans began to fight for control which caused devastation and consequently famine and citizens leaving to the neighbor countries seeking refuge (*Somalia Civil War*, 2018). The US and The United Nations (UN) were intervening when rival leaders were fighting in the South. It caused more dislocation and starvation among civilians which led the UN to intervene militarily and launching peacekeeping operations. From 1995 to 2000 the dissolution of the Somali state continued and there was still no government formed to make the situation more stable. There was some kind of calm and economic emergence towards the end of 1990s when a transitional government was formed in 2000 by Puntland declaring itself a regional administration, but it collapsed again by losing its power (*Somalia Civil War*, 2018).

The Transnational National Government (TNG) was formed in 2004 with 275-member parliament, and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was formed months after giving the chance for the Islamic courts to emerge with Abdullah Yusuf as its leader (*Somalia Civil*

*War*, 2018). In 2007, the Ethiopian troops dispersed the Islamic court and the militant wing Harakat Al-Shabaab fought against foreign forces and had control over Southern Somalia. Violence increased with the group, causing casualties among Kenyan soldiers and even civilians and UN workers. The US condensed its presence and intervention after 09/11 fearing that the country would be a fertile ground to form terrorist groups and attacks. Its policy was to engage with TFG and move American diplomats and aid workers to assist with the government transition and build projects for development purposes (*Somalia Civil War*, 2018). Several attempts towards peace making in Somalia were made by the UN security council; the challenge has been to face Al-Shabaab attacks that put down hundreds of aid workers, African Union force (AMISOM). Although there was a government by 2015, it lacked capacities to function relatively normal by managing human resources and building infrastructure and confrontation with Al-Shabaab was on going involving AMISOM and militias too (*Somalia Civil War*, 2018).

#### WFP experience in Somalia:

World Food Programme (WFP) is one of the branches of the UN. It was established in 1961 to alleviate hunger in the world. The presence of WFP in Somalia is significant. It has been an active actor for more than three decades in Somalia providing food assistance and ensuring food security. According to their strategic plan, the WFP's objectives in Somalia are to prepare for and save lives during emergencies, rebuild livelihoods after emergencies, and reducing hunger and strengthening the capacity of countries to reduce hunger (WFP, 2008).

Since the beginning of civil war in Somalia, the country has known continuous food insecurity and livelihood that worsened around conflict time. It affected communities to cope with natural disasters and shocks (WFP, 2012). After the government was put down, systems of governance were formed locally, and their stability is variant according to the location. For example, the region of Putland and Somaliland in the north region had managed to ensure some stability in comparison with the rest of the country (WFP, 2012). However, administratively speaking, their capacities were still limited facing of the security issue especially in controlling the border conflict between the Sool and Sanag regions. Regional and local government in central Somalia had managed whatsoever to maintain a stability over the region the shoot-out Al-Shabaab from this area with the help of Ahlu Sunna Waljamaa, one of the local authorities that were strongly present in central Somalia (WFP, 2012). But the south has remained controlled by Al-Shabaab since 2008.

According to the WFP experience in Somalia, conflict is on the top reasons that contributes livelihood insecurity and displacements. The outcomes are instantly visible over restrictions in market access and trade and fighting over sources especially in the south-central area because of the armed conflict between Al-Shabaab and TFG (WFP, 2012). The confrontations between both parties, adding the support of the Kenyan and Ethiopian military forces for the TGF, affected the markets and security of the civilians (WFP, 2012).

Humanitarian access is affected negatively in these conditions. It has been controlled and reduced due to the presence of Al-Shabaab group in the southern areas. According to the strategic plan of WFP, the presence of the humanitarian actor is key to develop the communities' capacity to face hunger and livelihood security. But since the humanitarian actors face security challenges, it has limited their work to direct food delivery and emergency nutrition (Kreutzberger, 2010). The WFP ensured nutrition for 2 million beneficiaries until the beginning of 2010, which still a significant number, but it decreased from April 2010 because of the security issues with Al-Shabaab (Kreutzberger, 2010). The expansion of the militia group in 2008 was the peak period of attacks against humanitarian actors. International efforts were made to limit the group's activities such as labelling them as a terrorist organization, but it only escalated the violence (WFP, 2012). WFP aid workers have noticed that work conditions have become harder when the international community started paying attention to the armed group. The arrests and harassments did not exclude any humanitarian organization present in the conflict but the focus on WFP workers were intense in comparison to the other relief representations. Since the WFP is funded by the UN and the United States mainly, it has made Al-Shabaab precautious towards the intentions of the organizations. This has caused threats and attacks against the actors with demands that could not be accepted by a humanitarian actor (Kreutzberger, 2010). For instance, demanding "taxes" and bribes to let the food supplies travel from ports to lands. Trucks were stopped and blocked from continuing to their destinations unless they pay security taxes and sometimes they demand the food to be distributed among the group instead of reaching to civilians (Bubna, 2010). Al-Shabaab completely banned WFP activities in February 2010 by releasing a press statement that ordered Somali people to stop working or collaborating with the WFP. The organization continued to operate in Southern and Central Somalia but faced huge pressure from the group by delaying food distributions. The resistance pushed Al-Shabaab further to take complete control of WFP warehouses which consequently led to withdrawal from the group controlled areas. (Kreutzberger, 2010). Based on the situation in Somalia and what humanitarian organizations were enduring during that period, WFP was flexible in assessing its approaches according to the changes. The objectives

set were obviously not possible to reach, and priority was given to what Somali and the security situation in Somalia needed.

It can be deduced that communication with Al-Shabaab was almost impossible and it is needed to act upon the urgent situation of deteriorating nutrition and displacements caused by the political conflicts and natural disasters and droughts. The WFP did not stop their operations in Somalia, but instead, tried to redirect the strategies to fit in the new setting. WFP switched to cooperation with other organizations at the systemic level in order to improve information sharing mechanisms. There was a collaboration with the Designated Official and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security to work on operating security standards (Kreutzberger, 2010). Other collaborations with INGOs and the private sector with the assistance of local authorities to continue the mission without putting WFP in the front picture. The organization also reviewed and strengthened staff skills. Experience is always favored among humanitarian actors especially the ones working in conflict and fragile areas because it is a skill highly needed for decision making in delicate situations. However, due to the incidents that happened between 2008-2013 and costed WFP members of their staff, security risk assessments to protect workers were held more regularly and almost intensively on the ground (Kreutzberger, 2010).

When it comes to the operational level, focus was mainly on transportation and logistics. In 2009, an incident was reported by UK Channel 4 of allegations that the food assistance from WFP do not reach the intended beneficiaries (GOA, 2012). The UN Monitoring Group of Somalia reported that 50% of food aid was diverted (Jackson and Aynte, 2013). The investigation office of WFP looked into the problem and ensuring safe passage for aid convoys became a priority; the majority of cargos come to Somalia across the sea via Mogadishu port, but since the security situation other alternatives were proposed and favored like land routes (Kreutzberger, 2010). One of the strategies WFP adopted is reducing the numbers of trucks in convoys to make their mobility easier in unsecure areas and situations (Kreutzberger, 2010). WFP switched to commercial Somali transport companies for food distributions and escorted by local army men for the simple reason of the familiarity of locals with the surroundings and armed groups are more tolerant of locals than international aid workers (Kreutzberger, 2010).

#### MSF experience in Somalia:

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) or Doctors without Borders is an international independent medical humanitarian organization that provides medical relief to people in different contexts

such as epidemics disasters, conflicts, exclusion from healthcare (MSF, 2019). It is composed of health professionals along with administrative staff. It was founded in Paris in 1971 by doctors and journalists and now it is considered one of the biggest INGOs that contributes to humanitarian assistance all over the world (MSF, 2019).

MSF presence in Somalia dates since 1979. The country has always been a turmoil of violence with unfavored conditions for organizations to work in. ups and downs for more than 30 years have made the presence of MSF difficult on the Somali land. Until mid 2006, when the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) took over Mogadishu and some kind of peace was established that made the international airport to reopen again (Magone, Neuman and Weissman, 2011).

To better understand the Somali conflict and the mindset of the locals and the armed group, MSF took an exploratory mission in summer 2006 with one of the members who were the head of a mission in 1997 in Somalia. The visit was for Jamaame, a town in the region of Mogadishu, and numeral rural areas around. Medical needs were identified quickly, and a project started in there to treat children with diarrhea cause from drought and drinking river water (Magone, Neuman and Weissman, 2011). It was a step towards working in Mogadishu to establish some kind of familiarity with the work MSF is doing and not being attacked and questioned for the nature of relief and its agenda from the militias and political groups. Right after Al-Shabaab took over the rule, it was easier for the organization to keep a well-established project than starting a new one. MSF has built a reputation in Somalia over the year of neutrality and commitment to the Somali welfare which helped to move suspicion over the organization as an agent for foreign political intervention (Belliveau, 2015).

Another factor that might help MSF in delivering assistance in Somalia is the nature of the service provided. Medical relief is necessary in any given situation. It is needed from civilians and the militias, and given the neutrality factor of medical humanitarian services, everybody is benefiting including Al-Shabaab group members (Belliveau, 2015). The project combined medical consultations and surgical interventions. Beneficiaries came from areas very close to the hospital where the project was set, mainly victims of bombing and raids, and gradually patients came from further areas. This is an indicator of success especially because the hospital was in neighborhood controlled by the Islamist opposition in 2008. It was common that members of armed groups refused to come to the hospital, so more than 50% of patients were women and children; but once direct clashes began combatants began to come and there is no distinction between them and armless civilians(Magone, Neuman and Weissman, 2011). It is mainly this factor that kept MSF going in Somalia. Medical relief is essential in every situation but also the neutrality of the staff giving their services to injured members of both civilians and

armed groups. According to MSF report, it was sometimes difficult to explain the principle of neutrality to some parties. For example, the African Union officers saw MSF as “the opposition’s surgeons”. It was necessary to remind the public from time to time that combatants represent a small portion of the patients treated. Most of them and they represent around 70% are women and children (Magone, Neuman and Weissman, 2011).

The last key factor that MSF worked on to set its project in Somalia was the choice of the staff working there. The team project was composed of partially international staff and a big majority of Somali senior staff (Belliveau, 2015). It was essential to have locals among the team because they are familiar with the system and also accepted by the grand majority of the public. It was also a good means to carry talks and negotiations with the government or the political party. Before setting the project in Mogadishu, it was set in a hospital in Daynile which was controlled by the warlord and local entrepreneur Mohamed Qanyare. He was a key figure in Mogadishu and controlled the hospital. Talks were held with Qanyare to reassure him that access will be given to everyone, not only civilians (Magone, Neuman and Weissman, 2011). Being able to sit with him was not easy, but since the staff was composed of local people who already worked in Somalia prior 2008 and are no strangers to Qanyare, made it possible to negotiate and get approval to work in the hospital and later on set the project in Mogadishu (Magone, Neuman and Weissman, 2011).

Having this asset surely helped with getting access in the beginning, but it did not make it easy for communication with Al-Shabaab. Even though the group tolerated MSF’s presence, the communication channel was very weak, almost inexistent. There was no direct communication with the group when the situation was getting more complicated by 2011 for example. Negotiations were limited between local representative of Al-Shabaab or what they call humanitarian representative and senior local staff of MSF. So basically, communication was between one single representative from the armed group who was not highly ranked and had to report back requests and demands. The waiting time was inconvenient to the organisation since it is a conflict area and emergencies were unpredictable (Belliveau, 2015). Additionally, the humanitarian officers were changed almost every three months and replaced by new ones, mostly non-locals and were non receptive to MSF’s demands. However, Al-Shabaab’s health officers were receptive but did not have much authority.

It is clear, as discussed before, that pre-establishment of the project in a rural area helped with the presence of MSF in Mogadishu between 2009 and 2012. For example, MSF, with the help of the medical team, was able to operate and manage the hospital without negotiations with Al-

Shabaab. However, talks with the group were needed for geographical expansion or international staff visits (Belliveau, 2015).

MSF was always ready to negotiate diplomatically but to a certain extent. As any other NGO working by the IHL and humanitarian principles, there are some limits that it cannot be crossed, otherwise the essence of the nongovernmental work shall not exist and has its impartiality. Crossing the red lines have even cost some organizations to withdraw from the region because it would hurt all parties more than serve them (Belliveau, 2015). In 2009, Al-Shabaab imposed 11 conditions on humanitarian actors present in the area in order for them to continue working there (Belliveau, 2015). The hardest ones were paying a 20,000 dollar tax every six months and dismissing female workers and replacing them with local male ones (Magone, Neuman and Weissman, 2011). Obviously, compromise was needed to keep the project going but again, the “product” MSF was offering was valuable to al-Shabaab, which helped the humanitarian actor to keep the project going without having to cross its red lines.



## Analysis:

Both WFP and MSF contributed to the humanitarian assistance on different levels. Food assistance and medical relief remain the most needed services when it comes to emergencies in conflict areas. The experiences discussed above show how humanitarian diplomacy can be practiced on different levels and from different angles. In the case of the WFP, and according to the reports made by the organization, there was not a mention of negotiations through communication with Al-Shabaab. Their humanitarian diplomacy was seen through their strategies that were changing all the time according to the situation they were put into. Focus was more on the logistics of the service provided which is food delivery. The WFP is one of the humanitarian organizations that were present through the Somalian civil war and contributed in feeding millions of Somalians in war time and emergencies. Humanitarian assistance has been a priority to the organization and efforts were made at their best to meet the objectives set. Operating in a conflict area such as Somalia is challenging especially when it comes to negotiations for access which part of humanitarian diplomacy. According to the WFP case, humanitarian diplomacy was used in a different way. Communication with Al-Shabaab group was not possible because of their accusations of the organization of taking part of the US political agenda and being an ally to the government. Since the door for communication was almost closed, The WFP tried to use its humanitarian diplomacy in adjusting their strategic plan and coping mechanisms to adapt to the situation and conditions imposed by the armed group. The initial strategic plan put for 2008-2012 includes not only humanitarian relief in emergencies, but also helping the communities to develop the skills to face the future emergencies by themselves. Since the development part of the project was momentarily not possible to work on, WFP focused more on adapting their plan on an organizational, operational, and systemic level.

What is unique about WFP humanitarian diplomacy is the will to improve cooperation and coordination with external actors and the private sector. The WFP was having a hard time having access to Al-Shabaab controlled areas. Its strategy was in cooperating with other humanitarian actors in order to deliver food but keeping a low-key profile to be able to still work in there. Cooperation was also made with other UN agencies to collect information and information sharing for the purposes of better cooperation mechanism and improving security (Kreutzberger, 2010). Using the private sectors services has put WFP under the light of criticism of following a pragmatic approach. To ensure continuing transportation and distribution of food, WFP hired private security companies and sometimes cooperated with the

military. In some periods when violence against humanitarian actors was at its peak, WFP hired local armed guards and trucking companies to secure convoys (Kreutzberger, 2010). The principles of neutrality and impartiality are debated with the WFP decision to work with the armed guards, but the humanity principle was put forward which is not usual when it comes to respecting the humanitarian principles (Kreutzberger, 2010). The organization also put efforts in strengthening the capacity of staff by designing and conducting more training and educating modules to have a highly qualified team that can deal with the situation faced at the time. Unfortunately, there hasn't been any official data that depicts how the training was reflected in negotiating with Al-Shabaab, but according to the media and reports from agencies that conducted research of dealing with the armed group, the WFP was one of the organizations that had a difficult time with them (Jackson and Aynte, 2013). Based on the data and research, it can be said that the WFP humanitarian diplomacy was seen through their strategic plans and the ongoing plan improvements and adjustments and adopting a more pragmatic approach to humanitarian relief to continue food aid distribution despite the conditions imposed.

MSF experience was "safer" in terms of strategy. It is not seen as pragmatic as the WFP's. MSF has engaged in communication as a means of negotiating access as part of its humanitarian diplomacy. It is considered a relatively success story in comparison with other organizations that tried to do the same. The success goes to several factors which are the pre-project preparation phase, the value of the product and the choice of the negotiators. Sending a team to Somalia before setting the project was a game a changer. It allowed the team to study the environment and develop a familiarity with the region and its culture to know how to engage with the people in power.

MSF succeeded to take over the hospital in Jamaame but when it came to making decisions it was never spoken by its name. It gave the mission of public speaking to the elderly clan leaders and people in power to speak to the local army and the militias. MSF public communication in Daynile was factual and close to the activity. It was important to keep a low profile and stay away from efforts of defeating AL-Shabaab. It was also important for MSF to distinguish themselves from international players and "do not talk politics" as they were asked by the group (Magone, Neuman and Weissman, 2011). Dialogue with Al-Shabaab was possible and easier to hold because they valued medical assistance more than other services offered by other humanitarian organizations. They rejected WFP food assistance and other food aid agencies accusing them of being allies with international actors to take down the group, but MSF's work was needed by the group itself because they -MSF-, from their part, worked neutrally and

impartially when it came to treatments and surgeries. This factor should be highly stressed as it was part of MSF humanitarian diplomacy to show their total impartiality in giving assistance no matter what the affiliation of the patients to not be accused of cooperation with the army or any international and external entity that declared the group as a terrorist affiliation that should be taken off power.

If MSF and WFP experiences and approaches to humanitarian diplomacy should be compared, MSF was more able to have a dialogue with Al-Shabaab than WFP. The latter could not do the same not because of its lack of tools or experience, it can be said that MSF assistance was more valued to AL-Shabaab than WFP's. additionally, it should not be forgotten that WFP is an entity of the United Nations that is seen by the group as an enemy since it is allied with the United States of America that both declared the group as terrorists who should be fought. The WFP humanitarian diplomacy is valued of a more in-depth approach since it targets strategies and always keep improving their means of working logistically, systematically and operationally. It is judged to be more pragmatic than MSF in sticking to the humanitarian principles and going by the ICRC model of humanitarian diplomacy, but it was a way of keeping the assistance going in a sterile environment for communication or dialogue with the armed group. WFP valued more the principle of humanity than impartiality and neutrality in collaborating with local army and the private sector to at least keep the food delivery going in a country declared under the threat of famine and epidemics. This does not invalidate nor devaluates MSF's humanitarian diplomacy. It is evident that the kind of service they are offering was a significant reason why Al-Shabaab group was tolerating them more than WFP since they personally benefit from the medical assistance, but it does not mean that MSF put forward neutrality and impartiality for accepting to work with the armed group causing a violent conflict.

## Discussion:

Humanitarian intervention teams have always been one of the first actors in emergencies in conflict areas. As for humanitarian workers, they have been putting their lives in danger for the sake of saving victims of wars and arms conflict. For decades, their work has been put aside from the picture of international politics and international relations as a whole. The emphasis put on states and power and the importance of sovereignty has eclipsed the role of NGOs and INGOs in the political sphere. NGOs are part of civil society that represent a big chunk of the construction of the state. It is the civil society that observes and controls what governments are doing. The power of civil society lies in the public opinion and non-governmental institutions to which NGOs belong. NGOs' role as an effective part of the social society lies in their advocacy and their will to discuss freely issues that are related in the first degrees to the citizens as human rights issues and development issues. The engagement and the role of the NGOs shows more in the states of war and areas of conflict. It is with their advocacy, development project and humanitarian relief that people get their voices and their cases can be shown to the international world in order to act upon the situation.

Humanitarian diplomacy is an important part of NGOs' humanitarian assistance. It is the means to open the doors to their teams to operate in needed areas with emergencies. It is a relatively new concept that NGOs been practicing recently with the label humanitarian diplomacy rather than just negotiations or getting access. It is undeniable that getting access is a huge part of humanitarian diplomacy, but other tools and practices are also needed in order to have a full definition of the concept.

Based on the two cases studies analyzed of the WFP and MSF in Somalia as examples of their humanitarian diplomacy in Somalia facing Harakat Al-Shabaab Al Mujahid, it is dedicated that humanitarian diplomacy is very flexible when it comes to practice and applying it on the field work. The two organizations were present during the same period of time which is between 2008 and 2013. It means they both were in the same conditions with the difficulties put against humanitarian actors. Both MSF and the WFP are renown organizations with projects and teams all over the world offering their assistance to the victims of wars, armed conflicts, and natural disasters. However, each one had its own way of perceiving humanitarian diplomacy and applying it to the environment they were working in. The WFP put its focus on continually adjusting their strategies to fit with the ongoing and escalating relations with Al-Shabaab. It is true that the armed group were giving a hard time to the humanitarian representations present on their controlled areas, but the WFP was one of the organizations that suffered the most due

to the following. The WFP is an apolitical organization that is part of the UN institutions. Since the UN declaration of the group as a terrorist one that should be eliminated, Al-Shabaab started acting against the WFP to the extent of totally banning it for some time around 2010. It is known to Al-Shabaab that the United States is one of the sources of the UN's funding. And the US has shown its motives towards Al-Shabaab since the group admitted their affiliation to Al Qaida terrorist organization. Linking all these factors can show what image the group constructed for the WFP. According to the constructivist theory, conducts and behaviors are a construct of human beings or agents putting the rules with the use of language. Both Al-Shabaab group and the WFP shaped an image that each one acts upon the other. The WFP being part of the UN has the image of being an ally to the US which means for Al-Shabaab that it is considered a biased actor and a western presence in their soil that should be destroyed. On the other hand, Al-Shabaab had controlled areas and put regulations for NGOs, civilians, and the government that everybody should follow and in breaking their code, consequences should follow. The image of Al-Shabaab and the WFP is constructed the way is it because they were put in the environment they were put in. If it was a different environment with different conditions, the rules would change and situation of both the WFP and Al-Shabaab would differ. MSF did not face such a problem. It is known to be a completely independent organization that offers medical assistance in emergencies. It had a long history with Somalia and its presence had been accepted by people and the armed group. When its team managed to operate in Mogadishu and the neighboring areas, it had made clear that they will not speak politics. This is a rule that the MSF has normalized since day one to reassure Al-Shabaab of their total neutrality and not get involved in any political misunderstanding that would cost them their presence for relief.

Following the ICRC humanitarian diplomacy model, MSF seems to work by it more than the WFP. MSF has kept their neutrality and impartiality throughout their presence in the period of Al-Shabaab's control. The team refused to talk to any political party in the hospital, pushing the locals who were in charge to confront any kind of problem and keeping their talks limited to the medical mission they were there for. When negotiating access, the administrative team held meetings with the humanitarian officer of Al-Shabaab in discretion without the presence of the media or any entity that would pressure any party or make the atmosphere of dialogue difficult in any way. Involving third parties was also one of the tools that the ICRC humanitarian model mentions, and MSF acted by. MSF engaged and involved older leaders of clans and tribes to dialogue with the armed group and economic leaders and political ones for the simple reason of letting negotiations happen between locals. Seeing familiar local faces is

always good start and a kind of reassurance to the other party that there is no external or Western power that tries to take over their land and insert their agents for political agendas. Another point that helped MSF's humanitarian diplomacy case to be more successful is the need of their services by Al-Shabaab group. According to HNT, it is the urge for needs that push human beings in acting in a certain way in given situations. In the case of MSF, Al-Shabaab members themselves were wounded during the armed conflict with the army and governments and needed more medical facilities that they can afford. The nature of their need changed their perception of the "virality" or the violence against MSF. The priority of the need of security paved the way for MSF's presence on the controlled areas without much difficulties as the WFP faced. This does not underestimate the role of the WFP in alleviating the sufferance of people in Somalia. However, this was not considered by Al-Shabaab because it does not affect the members directly. Again, if this theory is analyzed according to the Human Needs Theory, the armed group saw food delivery as complementary to them unlike medical assistance.

The WFP model of humanitarian diplomacy and MSF's are different indeed, but it does not mean that one is wrong and the other is right. Humanitarian diplomacy is a tool practiced by hundreds of humanitarian relief actors present in conflict areas, but each one with its circumstances. However, they all obey by the international humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles.

In contacting Care International Denmark, CEO Rasmus Jacobsen shared his views and reflections on humanitarian diplomacy based on years of experience in Care Denmark and prior in the Danish Refugee Council. Getting access to conflict areas, Jacobsen sticks to applying the ICRC model and the humanitarian principles. However, NGOs have a more pragmatic approach. For him, it really depends on the continent/ place. In some places with military it is preferable to use the ICRC model, in other places it is better to do it pragmatically. There is no right or wrong way to do it. It is a matter of what works best according to the situation

Starting with the Danish Refugee Council, it is definitely a more pragmatic organization since it works on both humanitarian assistance and development; but again, abiding by the ICRC model or not, what is most important to them is to deliver on the field work. And both of them have been successful to intervene in conflict areas that is what kept them there and going. Creating a dialogue is crucial to deliver services in conflict area. It is more about quality than method. The Danish Refugee Council has been for so many one of the only organizations that managed to stand still and deliver assistance in Syria doing cross border. In Iraq too, they succeeded to go to places no other NGOs could reach. Jacobsen was in charge of one of projects in Iraq as emergency director.

The government needs to know how and why and when humanitarian intervention is going to happen. Sometimes the difficulties consist of maintaining access more than getting access. He also highlights the physical danger that humanitarian actors are exposed to in conflict areas, which is an obstacle too to deliver aid, but it is more of negotiations with governments that defines the space and time they will get in order to be effective on the field.

Getting access can be on the expense of the humanitarian principles, but again it is broad to say that since interpretations of the principles differs from one person to the other. You cannot get full access and apply the humanitarian principles by the book. They always find themselves in situations where they have to compromise to reach areas. The compromise is extremely difficult but since they are negotiating, they have to take the humanitarian principles from theory to practice. Mr. Jacobsen mentioned that they are of course red lines that should not be crossed in negotiating access. He continues, red lines are signaling when “enough is enough” and how far to go accepting the conditions and when to pull out. In these discussions/ negotiations, there are many agencies with different red lines which makes it extremely difficult to act 100% by the humanitarian principles. Consequently, there is always an organization that can take a step further, which brings us again to negotiating the humanitarian principles, so it is extremely complex in the field. The complexity also shows in the presence of different agencies at the same time with crossing agendas and different red lines, and the necessity to cooperate in order to both operate at the same time.

For example, the red lines in Iraq for the Danish Refugee Council were around transit set ups that the military did. There was some sort of transition that displaced people did to go from an isolated area to a Clinique center camp. The Danish Refugee Council was operating there as well, and it was almost impossible to differentiate the Danish Refugee Council from government due to the military overtaking the area. At some point the Danish Refugee Council had to exit because they were not agreeing with the military method of dealing with the situation. From the people’s perspective, they were seen as the Western presence in their territories and put the lives of humanitarian officers in danger.

A strong organization practices its humanitarian diplomacy on two levels: with governments and with the locals. It is important to perceive the acceptance of the people to whom the assistance is for. Talking to people in the areas of work and continuously explaining the kind of work done is crucial to the continuity of the humanitarian actor

## Conclusion:

Humanitarian diplomacy has become a crucial part of NGOs and INGOs structure. It is a means to ensure access to the humanitarian actor and effectiveness in the field work. Even though it is a new addition to the structure, it can be seen applied in many ways and forms. The ICRC, as an initiative, has set a model to follow in order to ensure the integration of international humanitarian law. The humanitarian law is the only rule written explicitly that the humanitarian field goes about. Even the ICRC itself did mention the flexibility of humanitarian diplomacy and states that it is not something that can be followed by the book. Circumstances and conditions differ from an environment to another. Therefore, humanitarian diplomacy cannot be rigid as a written law. It more conducted by practices which are considered flexible. It is from here than the differentiation between state diplomats and humanitarian diplomats can be drawn.

The Case study of MSF brought in this research and the case study of the WFP illustrate the success and challenges humanitarian face when it comes to negotiating access. The conditions in Somalia with Harakat Al-Shabaab Al Mujahid has tested the limits of both of them and each one has dealt with the situation differently. The WFP was more pragmatic to the use of the ICRC model than MSF. It focused more on its strategies which gave its approach a depth but allowed itself to work with army guards and army contractors to ensure food delivery to the victims. The WFP has been more pragmatic maybe towards the practices of humanitarian assistance and diplomacy, but the respect of international humanitarian law was always present in its interventions. The WFP is still considered one of the organizations that stood still in front of Al-Shabaab during the period of the violence. It has delivered food to more than 2 million people per year with a small decrease in the last year of its presence due to the difficult conditions it was put in. it can be said that humanitarian diplomacy practiced by the WFP was effective despite the limitations that had. It was effective in its way of handling the pressure from the armed group even with no communication whatsoever. The organization opted to work on its strategy and internal logistics instead by updating internal policies, collaborating with external and local actors, cooperating with local merchants and truck companies and in doing that the WFP is contributing to the economy and growth of the local market. It is a way to show that there is not a single way of doing things.

For the case of MSF, the humanitarian team was more stick to the model set by the ICRC and it also was successful being present in Somalia during armed conflict time. MSF's humanitarian diplomacy was based on pre-research that was made before setting up the project. A special team's presence in Somalia doing research and getting in touch with local leaders is



an effective way that allowed them to have access to the region of the project and dialoguing with Al-Shabaab more easily than the others. Face to face negotiations were not at their best since the armed group is always pragmatic towards international humanitarian entities, but MSF opted for communicating with the locals using local senior staff to have the familiarity factor checked. Talking to national people is always easier and more effective when negotiating humanitarian access. National staff is familiar with the language, the culture, and the religion so using a speech that is adequate to the mentality of the people negotiating with brings effectiveness to humanitarian diplomacy. For a better understanding of humanitarian diplomacy, this paper drew the attention to the link between IR theory and humanitarian diplomacy. Constructivism was used to depict how the rules in society are constructed by agents and the organization of society is linked to the respect of these rules. Agents, actors and rules have an inter-relative relation that makes them dependent and independent at the same time. Looking at humanitarian diplomacy, it is not based on rigid rules but more on conducts. Conducts in constructivism are a form of rules that if they are accepted by the actors and applied within an agency, they become normative. Understanding this concept, humanitarians and humanitarian actors can apply humanitarian diplomacy in any given situation all parties who contributed in creating the rules go by them. Applying Human Needs Theory is also a way to have better practices towards a more affective humanitarian diplomacy. It is essential to identify and understand the needs of the party the humanitarian actor is negotiating with in order to detect the problem and solve it in an effective way. Needs can be material or non-material. In the case of conflicts with violence towards citizens, it is recommended to think about the material needs first in order to identify the instant problem and then on the long term, to work on the non-material needs while grasping the history and the culture of the place as a step towards a better humanitarian diplomacy.

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