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Neo-Colonial Actors?: Analyzing French NGOs in Francophone West Africa

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Abstract

Non-governmental organizations (NGO) have the reputation for being benevolent organizations that help populations in need. Globally, these organizations promote this particular image to the public, but international NGOs also often work in tandem with other neo-colonial structure systems to maintain Western domination over poor and underdeveloped countries in Africa and elsewhere. This thesis looks at this phenomenon through the lens of French neo-colonialism and the Françafrique regime to study the extent to which French NGOs participate in this neo-colonial system in Francophone West Africa. Using interview data and data collected from the European Commission's ECHO, this thesis looks at the role that donor funding and bureaucratization play in upholding neo-colonial structure systems and values. Additionally, I identify certain human elements related to insensitivity, Western superiority, and paths for the future. This thesis finds that, knowingly or not, French NGOs participate in this neo-colonial system through the creation of dependency structures, lack of technological development, and the prioritization of the superiority of Western values in Francophone West Africa.

Abbreviations

ACF	Action contre la faim
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
AFD	Agence française de développement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (European Community Humanitarian Aid Office)
HI	Humanity and Inclusion (Handicap International)
ICR	International Refugee Committee
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organization
NDGO	Non-governmental development organization

NGO   Non-governmental organization

MDM   Médecins du monde

MNC   Multinational corporation

MSF   Médecins sans frontières

PAM   Programme alimentaire mondiale (see WFP)

SAP   Structural Adjustment Program

USAID   United States Agency for International Development

WFP   World Food Program

WTO   World Trade Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

Non-governmental organizations (NGO) have the reputation of being benevolent, moral, and necessary to address issues outside the purview of governments and politics. This perception about the success of these organizations is promoted by the very NGOs themselves through publications, annual reports, and reputations. By and large, the international community accepts and legitimizes NGOs. An example of this is Médecins sans frontières' winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999. However, humanitarian aid is more complex than the reputations that these organizations portray, and it exists in a larger framework that benefits Western interests. When many countries in Africa gained independence in the early 1960s, they were not completely independent and ex-colonial powers continued to exert political and economic influence. Years of exploitation rendered these countries poor and less developed when compared to

industrialized Western nations. This outside intervention in politics, economics, and general internal affairs of newly-independent countries in Africa became understood as neo-colonialism.

When looking at the ties that European powers maintained with their ex-colonies, France in particular established a very tight relationship with its former colonies. Through the establishment of the Françafrique regime, France maintained control through military, political, economic, and linguistic means. France controlled the two currencies used in Western and Central Africa, which benefited the metropole economically. France's relationship with its former colonies was much more overt than the relationships that Great Britain and other European powers maintained with their former colonies. Due to the unique structure of French colonialism and neo-colonialism, this project asks: to what extent do the actions of French NGOs in Francophone West Africa uphold previous neo-colonial values and structure systems? By studying French NGOs, this project aims to understand how these nonstate actors operate in Francophone West African countries, particularly with respect to the Françafrique regime.

I. Research Motivations

This honors project is a result of many courses taken on the subjects of African politics, international relations, African literature, and history. I been very interested in learning about Africa through many different lenses. During my Senior year in high school, I took a political theory course that ended in a study of neoliberalism and the global inequalities established as a result of Western economic domination and free markets. I was struck by these inequalities, and desired to learn more about their causes, effects on local populations, and how they affect different institutions. At Colby, I continued studying French and elected to become a French major. Through courses offered by Professor Mouhamedoul Niang, I read francophone African literature, historical texts, and anthropological essays. We studied different cultures, watched

films, and looked at local perspectives to conflict, Western involvement, and other issues facing different communities in Africa. The courses I took with Professor Niang informed much of my desire to pursue this topic, which is a mix between international relations, comparative politics, and studies of the African continent. In pursuing this project, I hope to gain better understanding about the actions of NGOs and see if any viable options exist for change in the future.

II. Historical Context

During the colonial period, France maintained a particular relationship between the metropole and its colonies that was based on the *mission civilisatrice,* or civilizing mission. The secular *mission civilisatrice* grew from French republican ideals but also rested on the belief in the fundamental superiority of French culture, as well as the perfectibility of humankind. It also implied that colonial subjects were too primitive and barbaric to rule themselves, but France colonialism was capable of uplifting them (Conklin 1997). This mindset guided French colonial policy toward its colonies. Thus, France established tight control and maintained extremely close relationships with the organization and operation of its colonies. Economically, the CFA franc, which was imposed by France, tied West Africa to the world market on unequal terms (Conklin 1997). France also built schools, invested in infrastructure, and worked to extend certain moral elements of French republicanism. France also believed in the idea of assimilation, wherein French colonies would eventually be one with France (Smith 1978). In comparison to British colonial rule, which rested on the idea of 'informal empire,' France established very close ties with its colonies.

When colonized regions in Africa moved toward colonization, the French were significantly less prepared than the British. During the move towards independence, France did not establish a sound plan to facilitate the move toward independence. As Tony Smith describes,

"by deciding with whom they would negotiate, by what procedure they would institutionalize the transfer of power, and over what territory the new regime would rule, Paris and London decisively influenced the course of decolonization" (Smith 1978). When France relinquished its colonies in West Africa, the transitions of power were relatively seamless compared to those in other French colonies, like Algeria and Indochina (now Vietnam). However, the governments of many newly independent countries had been directly influenced by the French. Thus, the true level of independence was negligible, and France was able to maintain its close ties and continue economic exploitation. Directly following independence, France remained involved and controlled many aspects of the political and economic development of its former colonies.

III. Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature

This section provides an overview of the literature on neo-colonialism, non-governmental organizations, and NGOs as neocolonial actors. The review begins with analyzing neo-colonialism and its effects on African development, particularly during the era of globalization and market liberalization. It traces the imperialist activities performed by Western liberal countries, both through the neoliberal and neo-colonial lens. This section then moves onto an analysis of NGOs on the global stage with respect to development and humanitarianism, as well as the complicated relationship between donors and NGOs. I then outline the particularities of the relationship between the French state and the nonprofit sector. Finally, this literature review discusses the gaps in the literature and will propose how to analyze French NGOs as neo-colonial actors in Western Francophone Africa.

Neo-Colonialism in Africa

International involvement in African politics, economies, and civil societies never disappeared after most African countries gained independence nearly 60 years ago. Instead, colonialism merely "left through the front door and returned through the back door" to establish a new order of imperial dominance, namely that of neo-colonialism (Shivji, 2006c). As Kwame Nkrumah writes, "the neo-colonialism of today represents imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage" (Nkrumah 1965). Rather than breaking ties with former colonies, European powers continued to extract valuable natural resources, trade benefits, and political ties. As Nkrumah explains, neo-colonialism is characterized by the phenomenon wherein the State, which is subject to neo-colonialism, is independent and sovereign in theory, but "its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside" (Nkrumah 1965). Neo-colonialism at its origin allowed former colonial powers to maintain economic and political ties with its former colonies in order to extract resources and dictate economic development within the countries through military presence and strong economic ties.

African economies were intentionally kept weak by the imperialist colonial powers, thus allowing European countries to exploit the resources of new African countries after independence. Neo-colonialism upheld and reinforced many of the dependence structures that existed during the colonial period. As Nkrumah explains, neo-colonialism was based upon the division of large former colonial territories into small states that lacked the tools necessary for independent development, thus forcing these new states to rely on the former imperial power for defense and internal security. Thus, "their economic and financial systems are linked, as in colonial days, with those of the former colonial ruler" (Nkrumah 1965). Colonial economies were "export-oriented, vertically integrated economies, based on the export of raw materials and import of manufactured goods" (Shivji, 2006c). After independence, former colonial powers

were able to continue exploiting Africa's natural and human resources for their economic benefit. European countries, whose economies were primarily export-based and agricultural, were unable to compete on the global market. As Nkrumah argued: "so long as Africa remains divided it will therefore be the wealthy consumer who will dictate the price of African cash crops. Nevertheless, even if Africa could dictate the price of its cash crops this would not by itself provide the balanced economy which is necessary for development. The answer must be industrialisation" (Nkrumah 1965) Not only was industrialization necessary for African economic development, but it necessitated African unity as the foundation to counteract the powerful neo-colonial European forces that threatened African countries.

After the intentional underdevelopment of Africa, European countries continued to extract wealth from newly independent and economically dependent African countries. As Walter Rodney explains, "All of the countries named as 'underdeveloped' in the world are exploited by others; and the underdevelopment with which the world is now preoccupied is a product of capitalist, imperialist, and colonialist exploitation" (Rodney 2012). This capitalist exploitation was the basis of imperialist involvement in Africa, which continued far after the colonial period and into today. Many African countries were able to develop, albeit slowly and unevenly across the continent. One factor for this slow development was the lack of industrialization and a sustained dependence on agriculture. The result is that "African agrarian livelihoods are defined by a range of unstable and largely unrewarding engagements with broader market relations" (Harrison 2010). Most African economies are unable to compete with market forces that are generally controlled by Europe and the United States, the latter of which grew into a strong imperialist power following World War II. The ties between the former metropole and colonies became more complex, as "it is possible that neo-colonial control may be

exercised by a consortium of financial interests which are not specifically identifiable with any particular state" (Nkrumah 1965). This consortium of interests intervenes in Africa and extracts wealth from countries deemed "in need of Western help" and "undeveloped."

European countries moved swiftly to establish military presences, as well as financial ties and trade deals after African countries gained independence. Therefore, European powers were not just involved economically, but politically as well. Radical nationalists were overthrown in military coups, such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Ahmed Ben Balla of Algeria. Others were assassinated, as was the case for Patrice Lumumba of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso, and Pio Gama Pinto of Kenya. All of these missions were either sponsored or supported by Western Imperialists (Shivji, 2006c). In other situations, African leaders were used by European countries as puppets for their own agendas, such was the case of Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire and Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal. This system of exploitation is characterized by "the former colonial power in which economic, financial and military instruments work for keeping in power well-disposed leaders and maintaining favourable policies which procure economic and financial advantages." (Taylor 2019). Former colonial powers were thus involved in every facet of society in these newly independent African countries.

Françafrique and the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA)

Compared to other European countries, France retained a particularly tight and economically exploitative bond with its former colonies. During the colonial period, France created the entity of Françafrique, which tied French colonies to the metropole economically, politically, and culturally. France established the CFA zone, trade agreements, military defense accords, and cultural agreements based on the cooperation of the *francophonie* (Bovcon, 10).

Many scholars argue that the Françafrique, and particularly the CFA zone, is neo-colonialist in theory and in practice. The CFA is made up of two different currencies, which belong to two different economic communities: the *Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique Centrale* (CEEAC) and the *Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine* (UEMOA). Both of these currencies are printed in French banks and were first tied to the French Franc and then to the Euro. The goals of the CFA were twofold: to protect French economic interests for natural resources and to monopolize African markets for French manufactured goods (Taylor 2019, Bovcon 2009). As Taylor argues, the result is that the "CFA franc has helped entrench its member countries' dependent positions as relatively low-priced sources of raw materials" (Taylor 2019). The French colonial and postcolonial presence in Western Africa, coupled with the fragmentation of African national economies, "constitutes an irresistible pressure for the maintenance of colonial structures and policies and colonial 'development,' and that these in turn no less irresistibly produce foreign domination and underdevelopment" (Amin 2009). Thus, the foreign domination imposed by the French benefits of and perpetuates the same systems of dependence in Africa.

While many perceive the CFA as an economic entity, it exists as an element within the whole Françafrique apparatus, which has much deeper cultural and political implications, particularly with respect to International Relations. Maja Bovcon positions Françafrique "within IR literature as meaning France's 'sphere of influence' or its '*pré carré*' (backyard), which presupposes the hierarchical order of an otherwise anarchical international system" (Bovcon 2011). This approach to French-African relations within the Françafrique regime allows a particular analysis of North-South relations. This system was constructed to disproportionately benefit France while entire countries in Africa were kept poor. This phenomenon is illustrated by

a study conducted by Ameth Saloum Ndiaye, which demonstrated that between 1970 and 2010,

10 out of 14 CFA countries recorded net economic outflow (Saloum Ndiaye, in Taylor 2019).

Therefore, the CFA produces capital flight and corruption, while simultaneously preventing

economic diversification and perpetuating commodity dependence with France (Taylor 2019).

While France controlled much of the political and economic decisions within

Françafrique, "the lesser state (South) is not a mere passive recipient of the imperialist North.

While the leaders of the lesser states are constrained in their actions, they are nevertheless

partially responsible for the perpetuation or undermining of the dependency relations" (Nkrumah

1965: 21). Bovcon reiterates this point by noting that individuals on both sides benefited from

the personal enrichment possibilities brought about by the Françafrique regime (Bovcon 2011).

Both also emphasize the role of African political leaders in perpetuating this regime. The

Françafrique regime received support from many African political elites, including Félix

Houphouët-Boigny, the first president of Cote d'Ivoire. Houphouët-Boigny was a staunch

supporter of France's close ties with its former colonies and actually coined the term

Françafrique (Bovcon, 2009). The close ties established by France and upheld through the

continuation of the Françafrique continued the neo-colonial structure systems following

independence.

Neoliberalism and Africa

The effects of neo-colonialism did not fade as the global economy began to liberalize,

rather it morphed to fit Western, liberal values of free markets and democracy. David Harvey

describes neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-

being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an

institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty,

unencumbered markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2007). This institutional framework was

imposed by Western countries, particularly the United States and Great Britain, to reorder the

global power dynamics. These Western democracies are economically, politically, and culturally

different from African countries, whose political societies were perceived as markedly newer and

less developed. The globalization of markets posed a particular threat to economically fragile

African countries, where there was a high concentration of small and vulnerable economies

(Harrison 2010). Rather than generating wealth, neoliberalism has served a redistributive

purpose, by either channeling income and wealth from lower class to upper classes or from

vulnerable countries to richer ones (Harvey 2007). The effects of globalization and neoliberalism

on African economies has been detrimental, as Western countries impose liberal values on

countries that have yet to catch up. As James Furguson notes, "poverty is not a sui generis fact or

a consequence of global scarcity but only a symptom of powerlessness" (Ferguson 1990). Thus,

aid projects will not eradicate poverty because they only serve to reinforce the system that causes

poverty in the first place (Ferguson 1990). The neocolonial project protects Western interests

while keeping other countries reliant on Western power and aid.

     Neoliberalism in Africa has perpetuated the paternalistic nature of relations between

Africa and Western liberal nations. The common rhetoric in Western popular culture tends to

represent Africa in terms of "absences, delinquencies or alienness," which reinforces Africa's

sense of marginality with respect to achieving global progress (Harrison 2010). Issa G. Shivji

argues that the African state is villainized in the neoliberal discourse as corrupt and incapable of

learning. Therefore, the West argues that African countries need globalised foreign advisors to

mentor, monitor, and oversee their economic and political activity (Shivji, 2006c). This

paternalistic attitude guides Western relations with African countries, not just those of the former

colonizers, but other Western nations as well. This highlights Nkrumah's warning that "neo-colonial control may be exercised by a consortium of financial interests which are not specifically identifiable with any particular State" (Nkrumah 1965). The forced liberalization of Africa served to economically benefit powerful Western nations, as it both perpetuated and expanded the neo-colonial system within Africa.

It is not only Western liberal nations that have pushed neoliberal values on Africa, but also international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Harvey argues that advocates of the neoliberal mindset occupy positions of influence in many domains, including education, the media, corporations, state institutions, and international institutions such as the IMF and the WTO (Harvey, 2002). These institutions play crucial roles in imposing neoliberalism on African countries, as shown by the effects of the infamous World Bank report, *Accelerated Development for Africa: An Agenda for Africa* (World Bank 1981). This report was followed by structural adjustment programs (SAP) that concentrated on stabilization measures, such as eliminating budget deficits, decreasing inflation rates, opening the markets and liberalizing trade (Shivji 2006c). Shivji contends that the World Bank blamed the African state by claiming that "it was corrupt and dictatorial, it had no capacity to manage the economy and allocate resources rationally, it was bloated with bureaucracy and nepotism was its mode of operation" (Shivji 2006c). The World Bank's prognosis of the economic issues in Africa were not just economic, but political as well. Prescriptions were given in terms of good governance, human rights, transparency, and democracy, thus moving SAPs from the economic to political realm, and from policy to ideology (Shivji 2006b). The results of the SAPs have proved to be devastating for many African countries, as they were forced to sacrifice spending on social programs, such as education and healthcare (Shivji 2006b). Thus,

the neoliberal Bretton Woods Institutions produced reforms that required African nations to fit into Western liberal conceptions of good governance, economics, and policy that proved ultimately detrimental to countries in Africa.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which marked a fundamental shift in the international arena, Western imperialist powers were able to launch their ideological offensive. The neoliberal package imposed on African countries was, and continues to be, an ideological offensive rather than simply an economic program of reform (Shivji 2006c). The neoliberal rhetoric has shifted following the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War from anti-communist and pro-democracy to one of human rights. According to Bernard Hours, the Western liberal agenda wants a global recognition of fundamental human rights, which also works to normalize Western values as the final project of globalization (Hours 2003). The emphasis on human rights is not necessarily altruistic because "the political changes in the post-Cold War era have worked to establish closer linkages between trade and human rights standards" (Koshy 1999). The Western imposition of neoliberal institutions in Africa have thwarted efforts to develop and unite, thus hindering the establishment of a Pan-Africanist movement. Issa G. Shivji describes African Nationalism as the antithesis of globalization, which is inherently imperialist (Shivji, 2006b). Neoliberalism builds upon and solidifies the power structures imposed on Africa, which were established under colonialism and continued to the neo-colonial period.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Neo-colonialism

The role of NGOs within the context of globalization, free markets, and open trade agreements is rather contested by the academic community. Bernard Hours explains that NGOs have often been viewed as "non-objects" in the social sciences, much as other "third sector" organizations like charitable, militant, or developmental groups (Hours 2003). Much of the NGO

discourse also builds off of Francis Fukiyama's 'end of history' theory, which argues that the current capitalist system under the hegemony of the imperialist North is permanent (Igoe and Kelsall 2005; Shivji 2006b). The 'end of history' theory pushes the liberal ideals of globalization and free market capitalism as the final stage of history, thus refuting the possibility of any Marxist or socialist advancement following the fall of the Soviet Union. NGOs emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a response to failed development and aid projects, which were top-down endeavors (Hearn 2007). These decades saw a proliferation of NGO formation, mainly in response to neoliberal values of low government intervention and the changing global climate after the end of the Cold War (Igoe and Kelsall 2005, Hearn 2007).

Proponents of NGOs argue that NGOs and an improvement of African civil society would benefit African countries. NGOs were believed to be closer to society than governments, and thus better equipped to address the humanitarian and social issues that the West wanted to confront in Africa. (Clark 1991) Furthermore, NGOs are not restricted by politics in the same ways that governments are, and they can act with greater "diversity, credibility, and creativity" (Clark 1991). A critique of past development projects was that it was too top-down, centralized, and hubristic (Igoe and Kelsall 2005). In the 1990s, the belief was that NGOs would become the foundation of global civil society (Igoe and Kelsall 2005). However, NGOs do not act uniformly, especially when compared by nation of origin. Stroup and Murdie noted the systematic differences in actions and strategies taken by International NGOs (INGOs) from different national environments. For example, French advocacy tends to be more confrontational due to the "relative exclusion of French civil society groups from the political process" (Stroup and Murdie 2012). The complicated fabric of NGOs, at both the international and the domestic

levels, further increases possibilities for foreign domination. The humanitarian aid sector and NGOs are not entirely homogeneous, and the impacts different organizations have varies greatly.

Marxist and Socialist Critiques of NGOs

Contrary to the liberal praise for NGOs in confronting issues of poverty, sanitation, democracy, and other humanitarian issues in Africa, there is substantial research showing that NGO actions are not always beneficial, and rather promote a Western neo-colonial agenda. NGO activity tends to focus on issues of health, education, gender, democracy, and the environment, which tend to be the common domains mandated by donor groups and backers (Hours 2003). Many critiques of NGOs are either Marxist or socialist in nature, and thus these critiques are also in opposition to Western liberal imperialism. Issa G. Shivji expresses that since NGOs were born in conjunction with the ascension of neoliberalism, they participle in upholding and refurbishing its image (Shivji 2006c). In other words, the ascension of NGOs in the global setting is not merely a hegemonic project, but rather was based on the foundations of liberal theory (Hearn 2007). One Marxist interpretation of NGO activity asserts that Western concerns about welfare merely serve to pick up the pieces following the socially destructive SAPs (Igoe and Kelsall 2005). Furthermore, efforts to democratize African political systems are associated with liberal definitions of democracy for the middle classes (Igoe and Kelsall 2005). NGOs therefore push a liberal agenda of ineffective aid and democratization, while African countries remain weak and susceptible to market changes. NGOs often claim to be apolitical and ideologically neutral, however their actions remain aligned with neoliberalism (Sakue-Collins 2020).

There are also concerns about the quality of service that NGOs provide for local communities. NGOs that pursue humanitarian aid often promote Western liberal values, such as democracy. Human rights activists tend to fight for the rights that they believe to be the most

important, but these rights often conflict with what local populations feel would make the

greatest impact on the quality of their lives. For example, voting rights may be desirable from the

Western perspective, but for many people, this issue falls behind land tenure rights in levels of

importance (Barnett 2017). International NGOs promote a liberal agenda that often conflicts with

local views on what the community needs. Many international organizations become

paternalistic, which is "motivated by the desire to help--not just anyone, but those who are

deemed unable to act in their own best interests" (Barnett 2017). Experts critique the paternalism

present in international intervention, which includes the work of NGOs, particularly International

NGOs. The ostentatious paternalism that characterizes much NGO work--particularly that of

International NGOs-- is also present in neo-colonial rhetoric promotes aid and assistance through

a discourse that centers around the promotion of dignity based on the needs of beneficiaries

(Hours 2003). The paternalistic nature of Western involvement mirrors colonial and neocolonial

rhetoric that emphasizes the societal inferiority of the African continent compared to the

superiority of Western liberal values. Even efforts to restore power to localities often results in

Northern NGOs thwarting the work of Southern NGOs. Southern NGOs are also reliant on

foreign aid, which makes them dependent on external resources and patronage and reinforces

Northern development policies (Hearn 2007). Without acknowledging the detrimental effects of

Western liberal capitalism on African countries and the role that NGOs play in perpetuating this

narrative, there cannot be meaningful societal and economic progress in Africa.

A Critique of Humanitarianism and Human Rights

As shown in the previous section, the paternalistic nature of the imposition of Western

values on African societies is supported through NGO intervention. Many scholars raise

particular critiques on the humanitarian aspects of NGO intervention and the imposition of

universal Western values and universal human rights. International human rights NGOs focus on abuses abroad and seek "reform of governmental laws, policies, and processes to bring about compliance with American and European conceptions of liberal democracy and equal protection" (Mutua 2007). Thus, INGOs work to push a universal human rights agenda that aligns with Western liberal values. Two organizations that have engaged in this narrow approach to human rights are Human Right Watch and Amnesty International. Susan Koshy explains the transition of neo-colonial strategies of power as shifting from the goals of the civilizing mission during the colonial period of the nineteenth century to the American-sponsored anticommunist and modernization rhetoric that followed. Another shift came after the fall of the Soviet Union, and promoted "new universalist ethics of human rights, labor standards, environmental standards, and intellectual property rights" (Koshy 1999). There has been an increase of human rights NGOs on the global political stage, but their effectiveness has been uneven and sporadic (Koshy 1999). This transition in neo-colonial rhetoric aligns with the increase in NGOs that promote human rights, as well as neoliberal values.

Not only has the rhetoric surrounding human rights shifted, but so has the motivations behind intervention. Jean Bricmont critiques the use of "universal values" to justify, and sometimes require, international intervention on humanitarian grounds, which he terms humanitarian imperialism. He highlights this Western desire to critique human rights violations without critiquing the causes, conflicts, and wars that produce these violations. He notes a proliferation of organizations, usually based in wealthy countries, that watch and denounce human rights violations in poor countries (Bricmont 2006). Randall Williams echoes this, saying that "In the 1970s human rights became an increasingly favored tool through which activists in the global north sought to expose and mitigate a variety of extreme 'abuses,'" particularly in

formerly colonized countries (Williams 2010). Additionally, many human rights INGOs fail to

explain why abuses occur for fear of justifying them and revealing that some civil and political

rights violations stem from underdevelopment (Mutua 2001). Human rights INGOs developed

the "concepts of 'capacity-building,' 'empowerment,' and 'civil society' as they argued the need

for a long-term involvement in society and a sphere of the influence independent from the Third

World state" (Chandler 2001). Susan Koshy further explains that the "the institutionalization of

the role of NGOs within the UN reflects the very power differences that their activities try to

counter, since current arrangements favor the resource-rich Western-based NGOs" (Koshy

1999). Thus, human rights NGOs are unable to dictate their agenda as well as wholly critique the

neoliberal and western Imperialist structures that oftentimes are a source of human rights

violations in the first place.

Donor-NGO Relations

The relationships between donors and NGOs often dictates actions and agendas taken by

the organization, which limits independence. A large number of NGOs are donor funded, which

creates a particular relationship between donors and recipients. The cost of the development

services that NGOs provide cannot be met by their recipients, who come mainly from poorer and

less developed countries. Therefore, NGOs have to cover their costs by accessing surpluses

generated by the for-profit capitalist market economy—the same neoliberal economic system

that is creating deep inequalities between classes and countries (Fowler 1992). Many NGOs do

not have any independent sources of funding, and therefore have to seek donor funds through

procedures set by funding agencies, which could limit the scope of action an NGO could take

(Shivji 2006c). This system of funding NGOs creates an unequal partnership between donor and

recipient, as money becomes an expression of power (Reith 2010). The resource interdependence

is characterized by NGOs' reliance on donors for money and donors' reliance on NGOs for their reputation in development work, but this relationship is often asymmetrical (Ebrahim 2003b). Furthermore, because donors control funding, "it is often their goals that are pursued, with NGOs having to adapt to them" (Reith 2010). If NGOs do not fit within the donors' agenda, then funding could be rejected. The asymmetrical relationship between donors and NGO recipients has consequences for accountability measures, transparency, quality of services, and scope of action.

The power imbalances between donors and NGOs are reinforced through an established system of asymmetrical control and flow of money, but also in how NGOs pursue donor funding. NGOs are increasingly dependent on donor funding, which often restricts the actions an organization can take. Aid oftentimes comes with conditionalities, which is the fundamental tool used by donors to control NGO activities, as NGOs often have little power to reject it (Reith 2010). NGO mission statements are often vague and amorphous, with a substantial number of NGOs being set up to respond to what is perceived to be in vogue at the time (Shivji 2006c). However, Reith also notes that it is predominantly the NGOs that ask donors for money to sustain their operation (Reith 2010). International NGOs can be characterized as bureaucracies that develop partnerships depending on a cost-benefit balance in an effort to further their own material and ideological selfish interests (Egger 2017). It is also becoming increasingly common for NGOs to be commissioned by donors, the state, or even the corporate sector, to do consultancy work and to dispense funds or services (Shivji 2006c). The complicated relationship between donors and NGOs may be mirrored if NGOs turn and place conditionality upon services for recipients (Reith 2010). Reith does note that donors also experience pressure, as there are demands to keep money flowing. However, donors have flexibility on where to allocate funds,

whereas NGOs do not (Reith 2010). Donor-NGO relationships are complicated and create power imbalances with roots in conditionality and competition

Another critique of NGOs calls for greater accountability and transparency in the NGO sector (Burger and Seabe 2014). The public is becoming more discerning on the subject of NGO accountability and are therefore looking for indicators of achievement, impact, and efficacy (O'Dwyer and Unerman 2008). This shift towards heightened accountability and transparency affects donors, NGOs, and recipients alike. Accountability exists in many forms and characterizes the complex relationships between donors, NGOs, and beneficiaries. NGOs are accountable in several ways: upward to donors, downward to beneficiaries, and internally to the NGOs themselves (Ebrahim 2003a). Upward accountability, as explained above, is characterized by donor funding and conditionalities imposed on NGOs. The mechanisms of upward accountability are often in the form of annual project reports and financial records (Ebrahim 2003). Downward accountability, on the other hand, focuses on the relationship between NGOs and their beneficiaries. The mechanisms of downward accountability, such as evaluations, remain comparatively underdeveloped to upward accountability measures (Ebrahim 2003a). Future research needs to explore more authentic and valuable forms of downward accountability in order to improve the relationship between NGOs and beneficiaries (Burger and Seabe 2014). Alnoor Ebrahim also differentiates between external and internal forms of accountability. External accountability, such as laws and regulations, are inadequate mechanisms of accountability because they represent government standards for behavior. On the other hand, mission statements are an example of effective internal accountability, as they lay out the principles and codes of conduct of NGOs (Ebrahim 2003b). However, "if accountability mechanisms are merely used as control and justification instruments, rather than as tools for

learning or for disseminating findings, then mission drift will become more likely as NGOs become more distant from their beneficiaries" (O'Dwyer and Unerman 2008). It is therefore necessary to be wary of accountability mechanisms that put the donor's desires above the needs of the project beneficiaries.

Donors exert a lot of power over NGOs, and they can use their influence to push their own agendas and values. Many scholars argue that asymmetrical power relationships perpetuate neo-colonial and imperialist values. For example, Yimovie Sakue-Collins argues that "the uncritical subscription to western ideals and models through funding asymmetry enables non-governmental organizations... to function as ideological foot soldiers in the broader project of arrested development of Africa" (Sakue-Collins 2020). This highlights the fact that Western powers remain entrenched in the underdevelopment and exploitation of resources in Africa, which is a continuation of the colonial project. Issa G. Shivji critiques the power imbalance in which NGOs rely on donors for sustainable funding and legitimacy and notes a circulation of elites between the government and non-government sectors (Shivji 2006c). This highlights that the relationship between donors, NGOs, and governments are complicated and have a significant impact on organizations' actions. This critique of donor-NGO relationships is a critique of neo-colonial influences in Africa and the neoliberal exploitation that occurs as a result.

French NGOs

The NGO sector in France differs from many other Western liberal countries, particularly Anglophone countries, in that it receives little support from the centralized state. Contrary to other European countries, the French nonprofit sector was secularized and restricted by the centralized French state at the beginning of the 19th century (Archambault 2001). France is not a very receptive political environment for civil society organizations, and there are reports of

antagonism between French INGOs and the French government despite recent efforts to facilitate collaboration (Stroup and Murdie 2012). The relationship began to change in the mid-1960s, where there was a multiplication of organizations advocating for protection of the environment, women's rights, and international development in developing countries. France's nonprofit sector began to catch up to those in other Western countries in the 1960s and 1970s (Archambault 2001). French NGOs have considerable resources, but they are far less than those of major American, Canadian, and British NGOs, such as CARE, Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Oxfam (Cohen 2004). Even though France is a comparatively resource-scare environment for private charities due to the lack of funding provided by the French government, French NGOs benefit from a small but influential group of private supporters (Stroup and Murdie 2012).

France's NGO sector has developed behind those of Anglo-Saxon countries, but it follows a similar trajectory in terms of professionalization and bureaucratization. The creation of Médecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) in 1971 marked the beginning of a new generation of French NGOs (Cumming 2005). In the era of globalization, "the French state has encouraged developmental NGOs to undertake bureaucratic forms or professionalization" (Cumming 2008). Johanna Siméant argues that NGOs often turn 'global' in order to expand their ability to access human and financial resources, both public and private, and that this trend is partially driven by the growing competition between NGOs (Siméant 2005). Due to the unequal nature of donor funding and the particular nature of the French nonprofit sector, French NGOs actions are aligned with resource dependence theory and must respond to the demands of their donors, which is mainly from public donors and grassroot supporters (Cumming 2008). Large INGOs have become very professionalized, like their American, Canadian, and British counterparts, but

they are increasingly being perceived as bureaucratic and self-interested (Cohen 2004). The

French NGO sector differs from that of many other liberal countries, which is partially due to the

relative lack of support by the centralized French state. However, this does not stop French

NGOs from operating on the global scale.

Areas for Further Study

  The distribution of research between different African countries is very uneven and often

focuses on Anglophone countries. Obie Porteous examines this unequal distribution by

reviewing all peer-reviewed economic articles on Africa. He finds that 45% of all economics

journal articles and 65% of articles from the top five economics journals focus on five countries

(Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi). These five countries make up only 16% of

Africa's population (Porteous 2020). Many articles are also content-specific, and thus the

conclusions cannot be applied within a broader context (Porteous 2020). Importantly, Porteous

finds that countries that have English as the official language is one of the factors that most

influences the propensity for research to be conducted there. The other reasons Porteous

identifies are higher rankings on the peacefulness index, the number of international tourists and

population. The uneven distribution of literature leaves many gaps in research, particularly for

countries that do not have English as an official language. Therefore, studying other regions of

the continent, like Francophone Africa, would lead to a fuller understanding of political and

societal phenomena that influence events in Africa. This gap of literature needs to be filled to

create generalizable and region-specific research.

  While there is substantial literature that links NGO activity to perpetuating neo-colonial

influence and structures, there is not much literature of how French NGOs act within the neo-

colonial context. The French NGOs sector is not as large as those in Anglo-Saxon countries,

particularly those of the United States, Great Britain, and Canada, which tend to dominate the global NGO sector. However, understanding the role that French NGOs play in the global era could serve to illuminate neo-colonial practices that continue to exist. The particularity of the Françafrique apparatus within Africa and its relationship with NGOs is understudied and could further reveal elements of this relationship. Furthermore, while there is much literature on accountability mechanisms and the relationship between NGOs and donors, there is not much research on how this works in different NGOs. Considering the particular nature of French NGO funding in relationship with the French state, there is a lot of room for further research. Overall, this honors project aims to elucidate the gaps in the literature regarding French NGOs and how they act in Francophone West Africa.

IV. Hypotheses

Through this analysis of the literature around neo-colonialism and NGOs, a common theme emerges about the creation of dependency structures as an element of NGO-supported neo-colonial activity. Thus, this project will look into donor funding models as well as the size and administration of NGOs as independent variables. These two factors will be used to analyze whether French NGOs contribute to neo-colonial structures in Francophone West Africa. Thus, this project will address the two following hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive correlation between donor funding and French NGO neo-colonial activity.

H2: Bureaucratization of French NGOs leads to greater neo-colonial activity.

V. Methodology

My research for this project relies mainly upon interviews, as well as secondary data sources on funding. Beginning in January 2021, I conducted virtual interviews with current

humanitarian aid workers, local office administration, and field workers to better understand NGOs outside the controlled images published by different organizations. My research focuses on Francophone West Africa, which is comprised of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. Through the help of Professor Laura Seay and Professor Mouhamedoul Niang, I made primary contacts and then used a snowball method to find more contacts. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, with eight formal questions to begin, but conversation was able to flow wherever necessary. The questions were used to prompt the interview participants to speak about their experiences working in different French NGOs, the internal structure of the organization, thoughts on local perception, and issues related to funding practices.

I conducted eight interviews between February 1, 2021 March 10, 2021 with humanitarian aid workers that worked at large French NGOs working in Francophone West Africa. While I was unable to conduct field research due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I conducted interviews over Zoom and Skype. The interviews ranged from thirty minutes to an hour and were conducted in French and English. I spoke with participants in France, Senegal, Switzerland, Kenya, and the United States. The participants represent a relatively diverse set of experiences within the humanitarian aid sector, with some participants working only at the field level and others working in administrative roles. Due to the limitations of being unable to conduct field research, I could not access potential participants working at the local level in many different countries in Francophone West Africa. However, the virtual format allowed me access to workers at the international level. I have collected several perspectives from expatriate staff as well as country level staff.

In addition to interview data, I also compiled data from the European Commission's European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, also previously known as European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). The ECHO data shows all humanitarian aid grants given by the European Commission. The data provided by ECHO captures donor, implementing agency, recipient, value, crises or disaster, and the amount committed or contracted. ECHO data goes back as far as 1994, but the designation of specific implementing organizations began in 2011. For one dataset, I specified ECHO as the donor and for another, I specified France. As explained later in this thesis, the complex nature of funding practices and international NGO organization makes it difficult to measure where funding goes. Because of this, I looked only at French branches of French NGOs, like MSF-France, MDM-France, and Handicap International, to avoid capturing funding directed to different semi-autonomous branches. I also omitted funding going to the French branches of INGOs that are not based in France, like the French branch of the Red Cross. By choosing to look only at French branches of France-based NGOs, I hope to better understand how these organizations operate within the larger apparatus. A further study could go into the intricacies of the funding practices to see if different branches of French NGOs, or French branches of other INGOs, work to uphold neo-colonialism in the same way.

In evaluating the relationship between donor funding, bureaucratization, and neo-colonial activity, the interview data and data collected from the European Commission's ECHO serve as the primary sources of information for this project. In order to evaluate my data, I use a set of observable implications to determine whether or not I am able to support my hypothesis. These observable implications are observable factors that I would expect to see present if French NGOs are perpetuating neo-colonial structures. The criteria are as follows:

Donor Funding

1. I would expect to see a lack of technological development.

2. I would expect to see earmarked funding toward specific projects.

3. I would expect that INGOs receive the majority of funding from large donors.

4. I would expect to see NGOs exhibiting upward accountability to donors over accountability to beneficiaries.

Bureaucratization

1. I expect NGOs to exhibit a lack of exit strategy

2. I expect there to be a disconnect between staff working in the field and staff working in headquarters

3. I expect to find evidence of career humanitarian aid workers

Other Observable Implications

These observable implications did not fit in with my two hypotheses, but they are other indicators used to measure the extent to which NGOs perpetuate neo-colonial structures.

1. I would expect that there is an imposition of Western values.

2. I would expect to see instances of insensitivity to the local culture.

3. I would expect that INGOs exhibit a lack of training provided for the local population.

4. I would inspect there to be a decrease in local funding for projects and development.

VI. Overview

Chapter 2 analyzes how different donor funding practices create dependency structures,

limit NGO ability to act freely without outside influence, and lead to lack of technological development. In this chapter, I argue that that donor funding creates dependency and stalls development. NGOs are reliant on donors for funding, and beneficiaries are reliant on the funds that the NGOs bring. Chapter 3 looks at the growth of INGOs and their administrative structure. This section draws connections between the growth of INGOs, increased disconnectedness, issues of decision making, and neo-colonialism. Chapter 4 addresses the human elements and neo-colonial values that are upheld through this asymmetrical power structure that benefits Western liberal interests.

Chapter 2: Donor-Funding

"The French Embassy Story"

Looking at the global humanitarian assistance industry, "it's really the largest unregulated industry in the world." Many humanitarian aid workers have stories about unusual interactions with donors, administration, or the entire humanitarian aid apparatus. One such story is the "French Embassy story" told by one experienced humanitarian aid worker. The story takes place in the period following the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended fighting during the Second Sudanese Civil War. The French Embassy approached a French NGO with 300,000 euros and the desire to do a project in the south of Sudan. Looking for a project to do, the NGO settled on renovating an operating block at a hospital in the South that was in horrible condition with holes in the roof and no air conditioning. People were moving back to the Malakal region due to the cease in fighting, and there was also a major landmine problem. Therefore, the operating block appeared to be a good project. The French NGO decided to renovate the

operating block, and the finished project looks amazing. They installed lights and air conditioning, fixed the holes in the roof, and added new operating tables. However, while talking to the head surgeon of the hospital toward the end of the project, the aid worker commended the project saying, "Wow it's going to be really nice when it's finished." The surgeon turned and replied: "It wasn't so bad before."

This story serves to highlight the disconnect between Western humanitarian interests and what would actually most benefit the local populations. The irony of the situation is that the renovation of the operating block was a success, but the person who would use it the most did not see the need for it. At the opening ceremony, the French Ambassador and the local governor were in attendance. Pictures were taken, ribbons were cut, and people were happy with the project. In the same hospital, however, there was a shortage of nurses and no recovery ward. After surgery, there was no way to ensure the patients continued recovering or if they had complications. In reflecting on the French NGO's decision to renovate the operating block, the participant wonders, could the money have been better spent by hiring more nurses? The answer is not clear, but hiring nurses would certainly not have provided the same photo opportunity as the renovation of the operating block. Additionally, the new operating block brought construction jobs and improved facilities in the south of Sudan. However, it also benefited the NGO and the donor, which was the French Embassy in this situation. The French NGO was able to report its success back to the French Embassy to continue receiving funding in the future, and the project also reflected well on the French Embassy and France by extension. Everyone wins, but the Western interests stand to benefit more than others. One conclusion from this story is that "the product, the actual product of the humanitarian assistance industry, is getting rid of donor cash" (Interview on 2 February 2021).

This story illustrates the complex and often contradictory nature of donor funding and the ways that projects are conceived and executed. The majority of NGO funding comes from international bilateral donors and contributes to dependency structures that reinforce the power structures between the wealthier countries and the countries that are less-developed. French NGOs, like other International NGOs, oftentimes rely on large bilateral donors for the majority of their funding. With the exception of Médecins Sans Frontières, which relies primarily on private funding and rejects state funding, French NGOs like Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Médecins du Monde (MDM), Humanity & Inclusion (formerly Handicap International), and Solidarités International, all use bilateral donor funding. This usually comes from the European Commission through ECHO or from France itself through the Agence française de développement (AFD). This chapter discusses the complexities of donor funding apparatus and the dependency structures that are solidified. This chapter then looks at the incongruencies of this system and its implications for the success of International NGO (INGO) work in Africa. The chapter closes in addressing how these donor funding practices contribute to upholding neo-colonial practices

Donor Funding Apparatus

The funding for NGO projects primarily comes from large bilateral donors, which often comes with a set of requirements that limits the action an NGO can take in a particular region. As discussed in the Literature Review, the donor funding model works to create a power imbalance that constrains how NGOs are able to use funds. NGOs are very reliant on funding for the continuation of their operations, and therefore must continually seek donors to sustain the project. In explaining the reliance of NGOs on donor funding, one subject described the challenges of the relationship, stating:

> So, I guess I would say that the challenge was that you were quite reliant on only one or two donors… quite a precarious situation to be in, and in the end, we were not able to support the continuity of our operations … So, you know, I was very familiar with the fact that you have to keep fundraising in order to stay afloat and do the work you need to do. (Interview on 1 February 2021)

This particular NGO had to close its operation in Gabon because it was unable to maintain funding. This quote highlights the importance of donor funding in the continuation of NGO activity within a particular region, and a lack of funding could result in complete closure. NGOs are incredibly reliant on donor funding, and thus the dependency cycle dictates possible lines of action for many organizations. As Sally Reith explains, an "increase in donor control, combined with the desire of NGOs to expand, means that NGOs increasingly depend on donors and are consequently increasingly vulnerable to donor demands" (Reith 2010). Thus, there is a dependency cycle that is created and perpetuated between donors and NGOs wanting to grow, which renders NGOs even more susceptible to adhering to donor demands. An increase in donor control limits the actions that NGOs are able to take and reinforce NGO dependency on donor funding.

Most international NGOs rely primarily on bilateral funding to support their operations. Examples of these large donors include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), France's AFD, the British Department for International Development (DFID), and the European Commission's ECHO. Other sizable donors are wealthy international nonprofits, like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. According to the 2020 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report published by Development Initiatives, the total valued amount of human assistance totaled US$29.6 billion in 2019, which marked the first decline in the amount of assistance since 2012. The total value of humanitarian assistance totaled US$31.2 billion in 2018, US$29.1 billion in 2017, US$27.6 billion in 2016 and US$26.3 billion in 2015. In 2019, the five largest

donors in terms of volume were the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, European

Institutions, and Saudi Arabia (Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2020). Compared to

other global industries, the humanitarian aid sector is large and essentially unregulated.

Constraints on the Donor-Funding System

As discussed in the above section, the donor-funding apparatus is expansive, and it both

sustains the activities of NGOs while simultaneously limiting the actions that NGOs are

available to take. Within this apparatus, NGOs are often constrained by donors due to the

imposition of requirements or restrictions on use of funds. As illustrated in the "French Embassy

Story," bilateral donors often approach NGOs with specific projects in mind. Therefore, the

decisions that NGOs are free to take are rather limited. Other times, NGOs must approach donors

in search of the funding necessary to continue operational activity. This system places major

constraints on NGOs, both international and local, to conform their actions that best suit donor

desires.

Large international NGOs are generally better suited to garnering attention and handling

the sizable amount of donations, so they tend to receive a lot more funding than local NGOs,

whose work is generally less well-known, more localized, and on a smaller scale with fewer

employees. However, many international NGOs tend to contract out to local NGOs in order to

implement projects. As one subject describes of the difference between local and international

NGOs:

> They cannot get donor funding directly. Or they just don't have the administrative
> systems in place. Because in order to manage a grant from like, the European
> Commission or from USAID, you need an army of accountants… And it is a, it is just a
> monumental pain… to do it… And it just takes a huge team… But the local NGOs very
> rarely have that kind of administrative capacity. (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

This quote highlights the differences between local and international NGOs in terms of

capabilities to handle funding, which is often the result of a lack of adequate staff to manage

large donations. However, this system also makes local NGOs reliant on INGOs for funds. Local

NGOs will enter into partnerships with INGOs and get disproportionate financial outcomes. As

the same subject described, "the international NGO, of course, will end up taking the lion's share

of the funding or an outsized share of the funding, even if the local NGO is doing the work."

This imbalance is significant because local NGOs in Africa cannot accrue significant local

funding, and thus rely of foreign benefactors for the primary source of funding (Matua 2007).

This power imbalance benefits INGOs, for they can continue receiving the majority of foreign

funding while also implementing successful projects through the help of local NGOs. Rather

than being able to work independently, local NGOs must fit into this system that prioritizes

INGOs and Western interests above those of the local population. This asymmetrical framework

benefits international interests and keeps local NGOs reliant on the West, both through INGOs

and by contracting international donors.

       The larger INGOs also have reputations that benefit them when looking for funding.

Because the humanitarian aid sector is so vast, there are many organizations that have more well-

known reputations than others. Such organizations are usually large international organizations

like the Red Cross, Oxfam, Care International, International Rescue Committee, and Human

Rights Watch. One subject described the donor mindset as:

> We need to get rid of it, we need to do it in a way that looks good. We need to have
> justification in case things get screwed up. So, we're gonna go with the name brand
> organizations. We're going to go with the safer bets. Because in a way, it is hard to get rid
> of a lot of this money. And sometimes it's a lot of money. And so, and it's kind of a
> vicious cycle, because the government or just the general public want to give money. So,
> you've got all this money coming in? And what do you do with it? You could spend it the
> way you know best. But if that doesn't appeal to the donor, you won't get more money.
> (Interview on 2 February 2021)

The "vicious cycle," as the subject calls it, emphasizes the importance of appearances in the entire donor-funding apparatus. Donor money continues to flow to the "safer bets" because they can produce the most consistent result, which in turn allows them to maintain funding for future projects. Larger, name-brand organizations have the ability to garner more support from private donors, governments, and the public. In order to succeed as an NGO, the organization must appeal to the donor in order to secure funding. Thus, donor funding dictates, or at least strongly influences, the actions that NGOs decide to take. This quote also highlights the fact that the "safer bets" are often the organizations with the best reputation, that are the largest, or have projects in multiple countries. The perceived increase in legitimacy of these organizations by the donor community highlights the inequalities in perception of the developing world by the Western world.

Within the so-called "safer bets," there are still certain NGOs that have reputations for greater success, professionalism, and responsibility. There are also differences between international NGOs that receive funding, with Anglo-Saxon NGOs often being perceived as more professional and thus more appealing to donors. In reflecting on their experience working in a French NGO in Gabon, one subject recalled that:

> The French NGOs are typically smaller… and do tend to have the reputation of being a little less professional than the Anglo-Saxon NGOs. They also pay much less… You do tend to get high turnover. And the fact that we had to close up shop, for me, you know in hindsight showed a little bit of, I wouldn't say amateurism, but I think definitely an Anglo-Saxon NGO would've been more proactive in terms of the fundraising. (Interview on 1 February 202)

This quote highlights some of the operational differences between Anglo-Saxon and French NGOs. Even though this French NGO had a good reputation on the international sphere, it was less proactive with fundraising and ultimately could not sustain its operations. This quote also

touches on a key difference between French and Anglo-Saxon NGOs, particularly the fact that French NGOs have higher turnover and are less career oriented than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. As shown in Table 1, French NGOs receive a relatively low proportion of funds from ECHO. Lower funding and higher turnover rates separate French NGOs from more professionalized international NGOs, which leads to reputations of amateurism within the development field and has potential to impact funding. Larger French NGOs, like MSF, ACF, and MDM, are more able to appeal to donors better than smaller and less reputable counterparts. However, these French NGOs still work within the larger humanitarian aid system that prioritizes INGOs over local Southern NGOs.

In response to some of these constraints within the donor funding apparatus, NGOs often apply in consortium to receive funding. By applying with other organizations, the likelihood of receiving a grant increases. As one participant explains, "more and more when you get grants, NGOs have to apply in consortiums. So, like, they make an alliance of different NGOs… it's better for the donor because they can put it all in one pot. And, you know, it improves the chances because… everybody can sort of play their part" (Interview on 5 February 2021a). This method can provide NGOs access more funding. However, there are many issues within the system. The participant explained that applying in consortium had many flaws, stating that "it's [horrible] to manage, and they don't work very well. There's a lot of infighting, obviously." Increased competition to receive donor funding and infighting amongst NGOs is a result of the limited access to access funding. Even though applying in consortium can help the odds that an organization will get funding, donors are still likely to go with the well-known organizations, even if they are not the best suited to a particular project. The participant remembered a situation where his organization was selected to receive a grant, but another organization, Veterinarians

Without Borders, would have been better suited to deal with this situation. Nevertheless, his organization had better credentials and a better consortium, so the donor gave the money to them instead of Veterinarians Without Borders. This situation highlights the difficulties inherent in the donor funding model because even when NGOs apply in consortium to increase their chances, they often fall short.

Accountability Measures and Securing Funding

As explained in the above section, NGOs have to appeal to donors in order to receive funding to continue their operations. However, there are also specific reporting and accountability measures to ensure that funds are getting spent effectively and efficiently. Popular NGO accountability measures to donors include annual project reports and financial records. NGOs are also accountable to the public, for local laws occasionally dictate accountability measures employed by an organization. Finally, NGOs are accountable to their beneficiaries, but as Alnoor Ebrahim's research shows, these measures are comparatively underdeveloped and underutilized (Ebrahim 2003a). Accountability measures serve to provide the public with information on the actual product of NGO activity, but there is a limit to the information that different measures capture. This section looks at accountability measures, their implementation, and how NGOs employ them to attract more donor funding. Rather than being accountable to beneficiaries, this study finds that NGOs put more emphasis on the accountability to their donors and try to create a positive image in order to secure more funding.

The outward appearance portrayed by many NGOs can have multiple aims, which often includes actively working to secure more funding. For instance, in looking at the origins of MSF, it has changed from a surgical-based emergency-response NGO. David Chandler argues that MSF, which was founded 1971 by French surgeons and journalists, symbolizes a "new

humanitarian" cause that emphasizes "freedom of criticism" and the "right of intervention" in responding to human rights crises (Chandler 2001). One subject spoke of other changes in the MSF framework saying that "MSF now has very few surgical products. They've gotten into HIV and Malaria and TB and all these other things. That's where the donor money is" (Interview on 2 February 2021). MSF has increased the scope of what they do as well as expanded globally into 70 countries, both of which appeal greatly to donors. Similarly, ACF is active in 50 countries, CARE International is present in 104 countries, and Handicap International is in 55 countries. The global presence of many of these NGOs highlights the magnitude of these organizations, which also serves to reinforce donor funding by creating an appealing image. It "looks good" to be active in 70 countries and to engage in activism. This shows the high level of importance placed on making NGOs appeal to donors and the public.

NGOs use several methods to report back to donors and the public to stay accountable, but these reports can also be used to depict the organization in a more positive light in an attempt appeal to public and private donors. Annual reports are used to showcase what an NGO accomplished over the year. These reports highlight the impressive statistics that are put forth by the organization to highlight their medical accomplishments. In MSF's 2019 International Activity Report, for example, there are statistics on "Largest country programmes" divided into the categories "By expenditure," "By number of field staff," and "By number of outpatient consultations" (ACF Financial Report 2019). The next page reports impressive medical statistics on the number of malaria cases treated, people treated for cholera, and emergency room admissions. These statistics, which represent the combined data from all MSF missions, paints a pretty picture of the work that MSF accomplishes. However, many of these reports do not capture the nuances behind the data. One participant worked with other humanitarian workers to

collect and publish operational data, which they have started doing. NGOs publish selected data to makes the organization look good and to increase donor pay back. The interview subject noted that the NGO data reporting is based on "providing the best stories to keep the donors happy, then provide some benefit to the beneficiaries" (Interview on 2 February 2021). While beneficiaries do benefit from free medical assistance or other services provided by INGOs, the emphasis of INGOs is first on satisfying their foreign benefactors. Therefore, the upward accountability measures utilized by INGOs, like annual reports, do not paint the most accurate picture of an organization's work.

In other situations, the accountability measures that foreign benefactors put in place is rather limited and can be ingenuine. The donors want to know how the money was spent, but then they generally neglect the impact that a project or mission had on a particular local population. One interview subject described the accountability process by explaining that:

> The reporting was just mostly to satisfy the donor requirements for accounting... showing where the money was spent. That was all of it…Occasionally the donor would ask for impact studies… But the donor for the most part, and I suspect this is the case with most humanitarian work, is it for the most part that was just kind of like box ticking. (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

This "box ticking" characterizes the donor-NGO relationship with this particular French NGO, and perhaps the humanitarian sector in general. It highlights the prioritization of funding than the impact of particular projects on local communities. The organization is accountable to its donors in order to secure more funding. However, donors also engage in upholding accountability measures that do not touch at the true impact of particular projects. As Alnoor Ebrahim explains, "the European Commission… is increasingly funding NGOs, often requiring highly detailed quarterly and annual reports on 'physical' achievements resulting from funded projects (e.g., numbers of irrigation systems built, hectares of land afforested, and numbers of village

organizations formed) as well as accounts of expenditures based on pre-specified line items"

(Ebrahim 2003a). The emphasis on physical achievements and data underscores the true impact

of some projects. This prioritization on donor funding aligns with the idea that the primary goal

of NGOs is "to collect as much money as possible" (Interview on 2 February 2021). The idea

that INGOs resemble businesses, or even multinational corporations in some cases, will be

addressed more in the following chapter. However, the lack of accountability towards the

beneficiaries highlights the fact that NGOs prioritize the accruement of funding rather than direct

benefit toward local populations.

There are anomalies to this donor funding model within the large INGO context. MSF

prides itself on rejecting large bilateral funding from state governments and instead relying

primarily on private donors, which it argues increases flexibility. This independence in terms of

funding allows MSF to report only to their private donors. One participant explains the benefits

of having this flexibility in stating:

> When we were working [on] Ebola… the situation was evolving on a regular basis…
> And we could decide with the same budget to close a center in a specific spot because
> there were new cases in another spot, and we could do it quite quickly and move
> resources and human resources and adapt. And we were working with an NGO in the
> same area that got funding to build an Ebola treatment center in a specific spot, where by
> the time they got there, there were no cases, but they could not say,"ok we will take the
> money and we will go somewhere else," because the funding was allocated to that
> specific project. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

This quote illustrates how donor funding can constrain the actions that NGOs are able to take. In

this situation, the other NGO was unable to adapt to the progressing changes in the Ebola

outbreak, which is essential in emergency response work. MSF was able to adapt and evolve in

order to suit the local populations. In 2019, MSF-USA's funding with donor restrictions

amounted to US$27,218,343 out of a total of US$222,971,038, which amounts to approximately

12.2% of funding. In 2018, the percentage of funds that were donor restricted was 11.3% (MSF

Financial Statements 2019). While MSF-France is responsible for its own fundraising projects,

the MSF-USA provides insight into general funding attitudes within the organization. These

amounts, while low, are not insignificant. With fewer constraints posed by the international

donor community, MSF touts their flexibility and speed of response to conflicts.

While MSF is able to exercise this greater flexibility, they still work within a larger

humanitarian aid context that prioritizes Western interests and practices over local desires.

Furthermore, as Johanna Siméant explains, even NGOs that rely primarily on private funding

work hard to preserve their contacts. This cautiousness is due, in part, to the fact that private

fundraising is very vulnerable to shifts in public opinion (Siméant 2010). This fear might also

motivate the actions that NGOs take, and the methods they use to address different issues. As

Stroup and Murdie explain, "while French organizations are not as wealthy as their British

counterparts, both are largely funded by private donors and thus may need confrontation in order

to gain media attention and ultimately attract support from the general public" (Stroup and

Murdie 2012). Even though MSF claims independence from the system, the organization is still

constrained by the need to maintain a positive public opinion to receive donations.

Issues within the donor funding apparatus

The entire donor funding apparatus comes with a whole host of issues, from restrictions

on use of funds to problematic practices by NGOs and donors. This section explores the

problems present in the donor funding apparatus and how that affects the ability of NGOs to

address the needs of local communities. As the above section addressed, NGOs must work hard

to secure funding in order to keep their operations running. However, the section questions

whether NGOs and donors are always genuine in how they report numbers in their effort to

attract and sustain funding. This section goes further into this issue, as well as the problems of racism and feelings of Western superiority.

Generally, NGOs are more accountable to their donors than to the public that they serve, which results in a lack of quality in some situations. Because most INGOs are active in so many countries at once, the response to different situations is not always as specialized as necessary. As one French NGO worker describes:

> You're using outdated technology, outdated systems, bureaucracy. There are poor incentive structures… there is no incentive to solve the problem, or by anyone's standards. The national government doesn't really want you to, the donors don't really want you to, the NGO certainly doesn't. You know… there's… poor knowledge of local context. There's a lot of copy pasting… pretty much all humanitarian work is copy paste. There is no incentive. There is no incentive to do it right. (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

This lack of incentive, which stems from a lack of accountability, highlights major flaws in the humanitarian system. If the NGOs are primarily accountable upward to their donors, and the donors do not really care if the problem gets solved, then there is really limited incentive to address the root causes to solve the problem. Therefore, donors will keep giving money to projects that will never address the root causes of a problem. In a way, the humanitarian system is putting a Band-Aid over the issues of human rights and global inequality. NGOs often shy away from addressing the root causes of human rights abuses, instability, and inequality. Many NGOs do not work to eventually become obsolete from lack of necessity, and therefore, "many INGOs fear that explaining why abuses occur may justify them or give them credence to the claims of some governments that civil and political rights violations take place because of underdevelopment" (Matua 2007).

The humanitarian aid system often uses outdated systems, bureaucracy, and outdated technology, which further highlights disparities between the West and countries in Africa. The

responses are not always specialized, and there is little knowledge of the local context. While

levels of success vary across organizations, projects, and countries, there is a general sense that

organizations cannot address the root causes of a problem. In cases of emergency response for

natural disasters and crises, this is not as much of an issue because NGOs enter to fill a gap and

then leave once the crisis is over. However, long term development projects have the potential to

exist for long periods of time without many significant measurable successes. One subject

describes his time working with a French NGO in Western Africa as a series of failures that

ultimately led to his decision to leave the NGO sector. He elaborated on these failures, saying:

> So that there's no incentive to invest in that technical quality anymore. And that's getting less and less and less and less… how do you increase turnaround for donors? Like how do you get grants out quicker? How do you get reporting done faster? … How do you have a slicker reporting machine? And how do you [get] a grant? How can you turn it into a grant machine essentially? (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

The description of this particular participant's experience mirrors concerns that other

humanitarian aid workers had with other organizations. The focus is on receiving donor funding

rather than delivering the best product to local populations. Due to their great reliance on donors

for sustaining operation, NGOs forgo technical investment and advancement in the quest to

accumulate more money. Ultimately, this highlights how the humanitarian aid sector has

morphed to resemble a large business with a marketing scheme rather than an organization that

works to alleviate poverty, disease, and inequalities.

Another issue related to the donor funding apparatus is when donor funding does not

come through, and NGOs must close up operations or give up a project. This section has

discussed humanitarian aid and donor funding mainly in terms of their particular relationship and

the accountability measures used. However, these organizations do provide the real product of

aid and services to local populations, whatever the level of quality it may be. For example,

access to free medical care, clean drinking water, and food security all benefit local populations.

However, if donor funding falls short, the NGO cannot address the needs of local communities

and it has real consequences. Because humanitarian assistance provides great access to funding

and technology, local populations are oftentimes reliant on the organization because they are

unable to access these services elsewhere. One subject described the relationship with local

communities and civil society organizations (CSO) as positive, and that "they were just so eager

to have a chance to talk with someone and explain some of the work they've been doing"

(Interview on 1 February 2021). People were excited to have projects and resources to confront

the issues in their community. However, the funding took much longer than expected and

ultimately never ended up coming through. The local population's initial excitement around the

possibility of funding for a project resulted in disappointment when the funding fell through.

This shows that while the scramble for funding creates asymmetric relationships between donors

and NGOs, there are also people who lose out when funding is not.

A major issue within the humanitarian aid system is the use of aid to push Western liberal

agendas and viewpoints on poorer countries. INGOs work within this framework to provide

necessary services that benefit local populations, but they also subscribe to the Western traditions

from where they are based. One subject spoke about donor practices and reasons why ECHO,

France, the United States, and other governments invest in humanitarian aid in the Sahel. He

describes the racism and geopolitical strategy involved in donor practices, saying:

> It was pretty clear why certain donors were doing this. I mean, European Commission
> invests in the Sahel because A, they're worried about terrorism, and B, they want to
> prevent migration. And they're pretty naked about it… you get a lot, you get a lot better
> chance of getting funding… if you mentioned something about migration in [the grant
> request], okay. You know, and it's totally disingenuous because everyone in the business
> knows that nothing we're doing is halting migration. And most of us don't even think you
> should halt migration. Most of us think that there should be more migration to Europe,
> you know, so, but we still put it in because we know that … the racist dudes over at

> ECHO the racist dude that's going to read it, you know, is going to be worried about, you know, a mosque opening up next to his house, God forbid. (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

This quote clearly highlights the racism at play in ECHO, for they invest in the Sahel even though humanitarian aid organizations will clearly will not halt migration and stop terrorism. The reasons that Europe invests in the Sahel are very blatant, as the subject describes, and many grant request writers know that including mentions to migration will better chances to receive funding. Investing in programs that will not address the root causes of migration and terrorism is another way that Western governments push their values upon developed countries. As Cumming explains, "Where humanitarian aid started out as an expression of empathy with common humanity, it has been transformed through the discourse of human rights into a level for strategic aims drawn up and acted upon by external agencies" (Cumming 2001). The great flow of aid coming from the West can also create dependency networks, where NGOs and thus beneficiaries are reliant on Western funding.

There are major issues within the donor funding apparatus that are racist, disingenuous, and keep countries in Africa reliant on foreign aid. There is little incentive pushing NGOs to improve technology and structures, for the current system grants them funding without asking about impact. By focusing on donors more than people, the needs of local populations take a backseat position. NGOs emphasize their "people-based" approaches to development that are grounded in the ideas of "capacity-building," "empowerment," and "civil society," which justifies "the need for a long-term involvement in society and a sphere of influence independent from the Third World state" (Chandler 2001). The long-term involvement in African countries are based on Western liberal values of empowerment, democracy, and civil society. However, this section has shown the pitfalls and hypocrisies of this system, where NGOs tout humanitarian

rhetoric and then use racist appeals to gain funding. NGOs perpetuate a system of Western domination over African countries through the flows of humanitarian aid.

Funding Data

Data collected from the European Commission's ECHO helps to showcase some of these trends and traces the flow of money from the European Union and France to Francophone West Africa. Table 1 represents grants given to West Africa by ECHO, while Table 2 looks at French funding towards the region. As Table 1 shows, there is a significant flow of money into West Africa. Francophone West African countries have benefited from large proportions of donor money given to West Africa. The portion of total Euros given to Francophone countries in West Africa ranges from 42.28% to 80.73% of total donations made. When looking at total euros going to French NGOs in Francophone West Africa, the amount varies significantly from year to year. In 2016, French NGOs did not receive any grants from ECHO, but in 2013, French NGOs received over 24 million Euros in funding. Thus, the percentage of funding ranges, with the high end being 19.83%. The proportion of total expenditures shows that French NGOs play a role in directing money from Western donors into Francophone West Africa. As a donor, ECHO has sent over 1.2 billion Euros to Francophone West Africa since 2011. It has donated over 130 million to French NGOs working in Francophone West Africa. This data highlights the significant ties that exist between Europe and Africa.

While NGO funding rarely comes from one source and instead relies on large international donors, like USAID and ECHO, governments still do play a role. Table 2 highlights similar findings to those outlined in Table 1. With France as the donor, the monetary amount of funding is significantly lower than ECHO grants to West Africa. Since 2005, the percentage of funding from France to Francophone countries in West Africa ranges significantly, with the

lowest percentage being 20.5% in 2007. However, in all years besides 2007 and 2017, the percentage of funding falls above 45%. At the high end, funding reached 93.5% in 2014. As with the percentage of funding to Francophone West Africa, the percentage to French NGOs in the region varies significantly. In some years, the percentage is very low, especially between 2005 and 2008. In other years, the percentage is much higher, and it reached 42.5% in 2013. One explanation for this higher percentage is because one grant went to multiple organizations. For example, in 2013 a 1.5-million-euro grant was awarded to "PAM/Solidarités International." As explained earlier in the chapter, applying in consortium increases chances that NGOs get funding. Additionally, while the total value of grants from France is relatively low, this could be explained by French attitudes toward the nonprofit sector, for "France offers the least receptive political environment for civil society organizations" (Stroup and Murdie 2012). France is known for lower levels of government funding for nonprofit work, as Stroup and Murdie explain "The share of official development assistance channeled through NGOs is less than one percent in France and about four percent in Britain, while the US government may channel as much of a third of its development assistance through NGOs" (Stroup and Murdie 2012) This could explain the variation in percentages for French funding to French NGOs. Nevertheless, France gives a significant amount of funding to French NGOs, which helps to support the hypothesis in conjunction with the interview data.

Besides highlighting the large cash flows, these datasets provide short descriptions of projects that the grant is going to help. These descriptions, labeled "crisis/disaster" in the dataset, show some traditional funding language as well as the earmarked funding that is discussed earlier in this chapter. In the ECHO dataset, examples of reasons for aid were: "Allocation de subsistance pour les populations les plus vulnérables," "réponse d'urgence auprès des

populations affectées par le conflit au nord du Mali," and "project Pédiatrique Médico-nutritionnel adressé aux enfants de moins de 5 ans."[1] It is possible to trace political changes, as well as epidemics and natural disasters. For example, in 2012 significantly more entries addressed the crisis in Mali, citing: "Réponse en Eau, Hygiène et Assainissement à la crise suscitée par l'afflux massif de réfugiés maliens en Mauritanie" and "Amélioration et sécurisation des conditions de vie pour les réfugiés maliens en Mauritanie et les populations hôtes."[2] In the France dataset, similar themes are shown. For example, there are grant entries reading "Crise alimentaire au Niger," or "Crise au Sahel."[3] The entries in this dataset are oftentimes less detailed and more generalized. Another unique element about the France dataset is that France gives a lot of funding to local governments and to French embassies, which is showcased in Table 2. In 2020, one grant of 298,991 euros was given to the "Commune de Chambéry - France" for the stated purposes of the "Crise au Sahel." Chambéry is located in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region of Southeastern France. While the dataset does not elaborate why Chambéry is receiving aid for projects in Burkina Faso, it highlights the particularly close ties that France still holds with its former colonies. Thus, the language as well as the numbers in the data show a significant flow of funding towards Africa through designated projects.

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[1] "Allocation of subsistence for the most vulnerable populations," "emergency response for nearby populations affected by the conflict in Northern Mali," and "Pediatric medical-nutritional project for children under 5 years." (translated by author)

[2] "Response in water, hygiene, and sanitation to the crisis created by the massive influx of Malian refugees in Mauritania" and "Improvement and securing life conditions for Malian refugees in Mauritania and the host population." (translated by author)

[3] "Food crisis in Niger" or "Crisis in the Sahel." (translated by author)

Table 1. ECHO Funding to West Africa between 2011-2020

Year	Total Euros	Total Euros to Francophone West African Countries	Total Euros to French NGOs in Francophone West African Countries	Portion of Total Euros to Francophone Countries	Portion of Total to Francophone NGOs
2011	123,686,422.75	57,350,751.84	10,417,335.00	46.37%	19.83%
2012	240,538,836.31	175,057,899.68	20,197,409.00	72.78%	11.54%
2013	219,146,455.24	176,909,825.27	24,031,131.79	80.73%	13.58%
2014	235,053,239.81	153,319,009.69	19,248,000.00	65.23%	12.55%
2015	249,150,807.75	152,750,557.36	12,824,500.00	61.31%	8.40%
2016	259,486,557.75	147,200,664.35	0	56.73%	0%
2017	222,510,129.00	94,077,129.00	7,455,000.00	42.28%	7.92%
2018	275,858,426.20	122,264,031.84	7,100,000.00	44.32%	5.81%
2019	197,906,636.10	120,499,766.10	21,201,000.00	60.89%	17.59%
2020	169,927,183.00	89,627,183.00	8,380,560.00	52.74%	9.35%

Table 2. France Funding to West Africa between 2005-2020

Year	Total Euros	Total Euros to Francophone West African Countries	Total Euros to Local Governments	Total Euro to French Embassies	Total Euros to French NGOs in Francophone West African Countries
2005	209,500.00	11,645,299.00	5,500,000.00	0.00	326,326.00
2006	13,719,765.00	8,419,931.00	4,320,000.00	0.00	199,931.00
2007	7,874,564.00	1,613,800.00	0.00	163,800.00	0.00
2008	10,078,662.00	4,713,711.00	4,000,000.00	0.00	63,711.00
2009	3,341,600.00	1,641,600.00	1,000,000.00	0.00	550,000.00
2010	11,742,340.00	8,067,340.00	2,100,000.00*	0.00*	350,528.00
2011	13,593,141.00	9,163,925.00	0.00	0.00	643,925.00
2012	21,595,124.00	17,495,124.00	1,031,123.00	0.00	1,420,573.00**
2013	16,097,671.00	13,463,671.00	250,000.00	0.00	5,721,185.00**
2014	27,925,000.00	26,100,000.00	14,150,000.00	0.00	5,700,000.00
2015	15,007,719.80	9,700,000.00	0.00	0.00	500,000.00
2016	13,791,324.04	7,200,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,650,000.00**
2017	18,480,163.00	8,292,163.00	0.00	0.00	3,099,834.00**
2018	21,501,807.00	14,036,807.00	0.00	0.00	4,500,000.00**
2019	16,595,536.00	10,314,325.00	320,000.00	719,325.00	2,775,000.00
2020	25,546,873.00	18,552,718.00	0.00	344,648.00	4,573,727.00

* Money to both local government and French Embassy
** Some grants were received in consortium with other INGOs

Conclusion

This chapter outlines the problems of donor funding and how it creates dependency

structures that enforces Western liberal power over African nations. In looking at humanitarian

assistance as an industry, it is large and unregulated. As the "French Embassy Story" illustrates,

the product of humanitarian assistance is to get rid of donor cash in a way that appeals to donors.

In choosing projects that look good, donors are incentivized to give more funding, and the cycle

continues. The flows of money from the West into INGOs, which are generally based in Europe

and the United States, also create dependency on international organizations and stall

development in Africa.

Regarding the observable implications outlined to assess the hypothesis that there is a

positive correlation between donor funding and French NGO neo-colonial activity, the findings

in this chapter support all of them. In looking at lack of technological development, there was

evidence that different NGOs were not incentivized to develop and implement new technologies

as long as they were able to receive donor funding. Interviews and ECHO data also supported the

observable implication of expecting to see earmarked funding toward specific projects,

particularly with donors applying conditionalities and directing funds for certain projects. This

chapter also found that INGOs receive a majority of funding from large funding sources like

USAID, ECHO, and AFD. Excluding MSF, which relies on private donors, all organizations

depend on large bilateral sources of funding and are vulnerable to donor desires. However, even

organizations that rely on private donors are still susceptible to changes in public opinion.

Finally, NGOs exhibit a propensity for upward accountability to donors through the use of

annual reports and other reporting mechanisms. Meanwhile, impact reports and accountability

measures to study downward accountability are underdeveloped and underused by NGOs and are

described as "box ticking." All of these observable implications uphold the hypothesis that donor funding leads to an increase in neo-colonial structure systems, as dependency is established through cash flows, lack of technological development, and accountability to donors rather than toward the populations that NGOs claim to help.

While INGOs rhetoric promotes human-based approaches to development that are based on human rights and empowerment, the reality is much more complicated. This chapter shows that while local communities benefit from humanitarian assistance, the dependency structures in place preclude from the possibility of substantial systemic change. Instead of attributing human rights violations, violence, and inequality to the global liberal economy, many organizations and governments have the opinion that Third World countries could not be trusted with their own development (Cumming 2001). The belief in Western superiority has informed Western involvement in Africa, but it also aligns with the values of the humanitarian assistance industry that claims to work outside the constraints of governments.

The following chapter will discuss how the internationalization of French NGOs has contributed to neocolonial activity in West Africa. As touched on in this chapter, many INGOs resemble multinational corporations. Donor funding apparatus and the size of INGOs fits into the larger humanitarian assistance industry that benefits Western liberal interests.

Chapter 3: NGO Size and Administration

The Unnecessary X-Ray

The size of INGOs within the humanitarian aid apparatus have grown to resemble large businesses and multinational corporations rather than acting like grassroots organizations that operate at the local level. The complex administrative structures characteristic of INGOs can

create competition and confusion both between NGOs and between branches of the same organization. One interview participant, an American surgeon, told a story about his time working in North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is a region that has experienced extreme violence and conflict during the past decades. He explained how the organization wanted to keep a presence in North Kivu, which resulted in multiple branches of the organization having and running missions in the same region. There were different missions run by France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The surgeon was working at the Belgian project, but it was the French branch that had a project with X-rays and orthopedic surgeons.

The surgeon had a case of a man who had a femur fracture that did not heal correctly and needed to be fixed. He tried to transfer the patient to the French mission, but they would not take him. The surgeon felt confident that an X-ray was not necessary to do the operation effectively, but the other expatriate staff insisted on getting an X-ray. The patient was sent six hours away to Goma to get the X-ray, which was uncomfortable for him. The surgeon explained that the patient came back a week later with a "horrible X-ray that didn't show anything different than I could have predicted" (Interview on 2 February 2021). The surgeon was able to appease everyone involved, but in doing so, the patient had to jump through administrative hoops to receive an operation that could have been performed without an X-ray. Could the patient have received better care with less hassle? While there are always communication problems within large organizations, this story shows how a lack of organization at the mission and country level can result in suboptimal treatment for patients. More than anything, this story exemplifies the pitfalls of large multinational organizations with many administrative barriers.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the donor funding model for NGOs reinforces elements of neocolonialism by perpetuating dependency structures through flows of aid and

western values. However, this donor funding model can continue, in part, because the INGO

sector is extensive, and that NGOs often resemble multinational corporations (MNC). This

chapter will discuss how the administration and size of INGOs contributes to dependency

structures and creates disconnects between humanitarian aid workers on the ground and the

administration in the headquarters.

INGOs or Multinational Corporations?

Large international NGOs resemble multinational corporations in the way that they

operate, receive funding, and are administered. Many subjects commented on the complicated

organizational structure of INGOs, with multiple administrative centers and country branches

under the name of one international organization. For example, MSF has five operational centers

located in Paris, Barcelona, Brussels, Geneva and Amsterdam. These operational centers are able

to work independently but are all members of Médecins Sans Frontières International. There are

also 24 MSF Associations, like MSF-UK and MSF-UAE, which report to one of the five

operational centers. This structure is complex, but it also resembles the structures of most

INGOs, both French and otherwise. For example, one subject described the organization of ACF

in comparison to MSF as:

> You have ACF-UK, ACF-Spain, ACF-US, ACF-France, and they all have missions
> except for ACF-UK. They all had missions that reported to their headquarters, but there
> was a central Action contre la faim that was responsible for… network wide policies... So
> individually, each headquarters had run its own show, but the main headquarters was
> responsible for it… Most NGOs in Europe follow a similar thing. MSF has a similar one.
> I guess the main difference is that Action contre la faim… one country had one mission,
> so… one headquarters in one country and a mission, whereas… in one country, [you]
> could have MSF-Holland, MSF-UK, MSF-France, and not always working with each
> other. (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

This quote reveals the complex organization of INGOs, especially with respect to having

different headquarters and missions. Different wings of MSF operate within the same country

with little to no communication. This highlights the expansiveness of the entire humanitarian aid complex and the size of different INGOs. While there is some slight variation in the structure of different organizations, like between ACF and MSF, there is still a general organizational framework that resembles a large company or multinational corporation. All organizations have a headquarters that dictates organization-wide agendas and activities, especially with respect to mission statements. Today's INGOs have morphed from NGOs into large multinational organizations with larger capacities, budgets, and purview.

Below the administration at different headquarters, there are usually other staff who work regionally, at the country level, and at the mission level. The number of people in these roles depends on the size and wealth of the organization. One subject describes the international and country level organization of MSF as:

> MSF has a very complicated structure at the international level. At the field level, usually we have a coordination in the capital that manages different projects--one or more depending on the country. And sometimes you can even have different MSF sections within the same country. So that's where it gets a bit more complicated. So, there is some coordination to do between MSF sections and then among the different projects. And then on the field you have the mission that is basically coordinated at the capital level and then different projects with the coordinator and the medical coordinator that are actually running the activities. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

The organization of the NGO has many levels and many people must report to others in different roles. Many levels of coordination must function for an organization to work properly, but INGOs have different levels of financial and administrative capabilities. For example, another French NGO only had "one regional director covering all of Africa, more or less." Having only one regional director is problematic when the region in question is actually an entire continent with 54 countries that have different cultures, languages, and histories. To have one director for the entire region of Africa neglects the diversity of the people on the continent. Additionally, it could lead to a 'copy-paste' situation where similar responses are used by NGOs in situations or

countries where the culture and political climate is much different. The NGO sector is not only large and overreached, but it also tends to generalize in ways that make responses more difficult and less effective.

INGO structure also allows the different branches of the organization to act somewhat independently from each other. While the heightened freedom can be beneficial in some places, it could lead to convoluted responses in some cases or over-involvement in others. In describing an experience while working at a French NGO in South Sudan, one subject described the overwhelming presence of humanitarian aid workers. The workers were from all different organizations and took a UNICEF plane to Aweil in South Sudan. Upon arrival in Aweil, he describes over fifteen Toyota Land Cruisers from every NGO imaginable to take the humanitarian workers to their respective missions. He described South Sudan as "NGO rich" because there were different missions all over the country and in different sectors. He emphasized that there was a "sometimes overwhelming NGO presence" (Interview on 10 February 2021). This experience highlights the nature of the NGO sector, wherein organizations and donors flock to areas with greater levels of need. However, this conversely means that some countries or regions receive disproportionate amounts of aid in comparison to others. Oftentimes in conjunction with the demands of donor funding, NGOs swarm to places experiencing a crisis that the international community deems acceptable for intervention while leaving other countries unable to access aid.

None of this is to say that countries in crises do not deserve help and funds from the international community. When there are crises, global support funnels aid into these countries, often through NGOs. One local French NGO worker explains this by saying: "Ce que je vois souvent, il y a plus de financement d'aller à un conflit... Quand tu prends le cas du Sénégal, le

Sénégal est moins financé que le Mali parce que le Sénégal est plus stable" (Interview on 16

March 2021).[4] This quote highlights the natural discrepancies in aid, with Senegal receiving less

aid than Mali because Senegal is more stable. As René Lemarchand explains, "Human and

environmental disasters attract NGOs like filings in a magnetic field, and the latter in turn

drastically reshape the contours of the social landscape" (Lemarchand 2013). There is more

financing to go into areas affected by conflict, or other crises like epidemics and natural

disasters. The participant also touches on the fact NGOs exist as long as funding is available.

These organizations can be there for several years, continually accessing donor funding and

providing services to local populations. In this sense, NGOs' actions mirror those of businesses

that continue involvement as long as it is lucrative. Local populations do benefit from the

services that NGOs provide, and organizations arguably provide the best services when able to

access sufficient amounts of funding. However, the overall structure of NGOs in the

humanitarian aid sector resembles a large multinational corporation rather than smaller and local

organizations working primarily at the local level.

The bureaucratic nature of INGOs is not unique to French NGOs, and it spans the entire

humanitarian aid framework, especially within large multinational organizations. As discussed in

the previous chapter, donor funding is the main way that NGOs are able to continue to operate,

and they often dictate the actions that an organization can take. One humanitarian worker with a

British NGO described the relationship between the US office, which was an affiliate and

oversaw operations, and the office in Senegal. He explains that even when the strategy was

developed in the Senegal office, it had to be approved by the U.S. office. Between these two,

there is also a regional structure for the entirety of West Africa that approves projects before

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[4] "What I often see is that there is more funding going to a conflict… When you take the case of Senegal, Senegal is less funded than Mali because Senegal is more stable." (translated by author)

sending them to the American office for approval. The Senegal office also serves as the go

between for their local partnerships and the U.S. office. While the Senegal office is doing the

work, partnering on the ground, and formulating strategies, the U.S. office has the final say. This

not only shows the bureaucratic nature of INGOs, but it also highlights the imbalances between

Western offices and their interests in comparison to local authority.

French NGOs have followed the professionalization and internationalization of many

Anglo-Saxon NGOs, and they have increasingly become more multinational and bureaucratic.

For example, at its inception in 1971, MSF had 300 volunteers. However, MSF leadership

disagreed over whether the organization should stay at its current size or expand. Claude

Malhuret, who was the MSF president from 1977-1978, explained that "there was a very real

opposition between people who didn't want things to become structured—who wanted to stay a

small commando unit of emergency doctors—and others who wanted to get organized."

(Founding n.d.) The members who opposed the expansion went on to form Médecins du Monde,

while MSF followed the path of organization in order to provide better care, more support, and

better resources. On the MSF website, the organization touts its professionalism and the move to

become more organized. MSF now has offices in 28 countries and employs over 30,000 people.

At its inception, MSF aimed to provide medical care for people, but it has expanded to include

advocacy and technical training.

Urgenciers, Development, or Both?

In looking at the public image of NGOs, there is a tendency for NGO staff to regard the

work of their particular organization as outside the realm of critique. For example, MSF accepts

little funding from governments and considers itself a medical *urgencier,* or emergency-response

organization. As one subject explained, "my organization specifically works mostly in

emergencies, so we are a bit at the side of this discussion [on development] … Our funding

[doesn't] go for development... we usually respond on a relatively short term to a specific

medical need... to simplify a little bit...the difference between emergency response and

humanitarian crisis and development" (Interview on 1 March 2021). While there are

organizations that focus mainly on development, MSF and other *urgenciers* also participate in

developmental policies. As Pascal Dauvin and Johanna Siméant explain in their book, *Le travail*

hummanitaire:

> Tout d'abord, les missions des humanitaires, même ceux dont l'image publique est la
> plus orientée vers l'urgence (Médecins du monde, Médecins sans frontières…), ne sont
> pas toutes de court terme ou correspondant à des "crises" (guerres, catastrophes
> naturelles, famines…). Elles révèlent la porosité qui existe souvent entre l'urgence et le
> développement, entre le long et le court terme. (Dauvin and Siméant, 2002)[5]

The authors point to situations where MSF has engaged in long term projects and development,

like intervention in the prisons of Abidjan and missions for children living in the street in

Madagascar. Therefore, even though some NGOs hold a reputation for not engaging heavily in

development, that is not always the case.

 While INGOs often portray pictures of white saviors responding to crises in faraway

countries, a majority or more of the NGO missions do not correspond with natural disasters,

famines, or wars. Therefore,

> Malgré leur image publique, l'essentiel des missions des ONG médicales ne se déroule
> pas en urgence : en 1998, sur les trois quarts des missions de MDM se déroulant à
> l'étranger, 20% sont qualifiées de missions d'urgence. Chez MSF France, on peut
> s'accorder à considérer que 75% des missions ne sont pas des missions d'urgence pure.
> (Dauvin and Siméant, 2002)[6]

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[5] "First, humanitarian missions, even those with a public image most oriented towards emergency response
(Médecins du monde, Médecins sans frontières…), are not all for the short term or correspond to "crises" (wars,
natural disasters, famines…). They reveal the porosity that often exists in emergency response and development,
between the long and short term." (translated by author)

[6] "Despite their public image, many medical NGO missions do not take place in crises: in 1998, of three quarters of
MDM missions took place internationally, 20% qualify as emergency response. With MSF, one can consider that
75% of missions are not purely emergency response." (translated by author)

These findings show how INGOs, even those claiming to be *urgenciers*, are more involved in development than they display to the public. With 20% of missions abroad considered emergency response for MDM and 75% of all MSF missions considered not pure emergency response, the public image and the actions of NGOs are at odds. Even though development and training of local populations has the potential to improve living standards, the effectiveness of developments made rests on the continued influx of funding.

Operations and Exit Strategies

The operation and structure of INGOs promote numerical measures of success to accomplish as much as possible, which oftentimes fails to address the root causes of the problems. One humanitarian aid worker spoke of his experiences with two different French NGOs as:

> MDM kind of formed out of MSF. They felt that there should be greater emphasis on the human rights component, and training and working with the locals. So, I actually liked the MDM projects better because it was more of a training component. Emphasis was not for us to go in and do as many cases as possible. But to work with a local guy and see what their needs were, support them and help them. (Interview on 2 February 2021)

Even though there are differences between this subject's experience with the two organizations, the participant still spoke of the problems with NGO action and a "go in and do as many cases as possible" mentality. This push to perform as many of a particular service as possible does help people, as more people are able to access the services provided by these organizations. However, there is also another motive in doing many operations or administering a lot of vaccines. As shown in the previous chapter, NGOs often publish annual reports that highlight the number of a particular procedure administered or the number of people supported by food security programs. These figures highlight the numerical successes of different projects while omitting true human impacts of these programs. For example, one subject spoke of his work in a hospital in North

Kivu, where an MSF mission had a 100 percent postoperative infection rate, which is very rare.

In this case, the reporting on numbers of operations completely omits the failure of the mission.

Additionally, while there are some French NGOs that focus mainly on emergency response,

others concentrate more on development. The traditional French NGOs known for emergency

response are MSF, MDM, ACF, and Handicap International. Cumming notes that these

urgenciers are "internationally renowned for their professionalism" (Cumming 2008). These

French NGOs have become multinational and are known for their professionalism. However,

even though the main goal of these NGOs is emergency response, they are increasingly

becoming involved in advocacy and development.

While INGOs are often lauded for their professionalism and structured organization,

many participants critiqued NGOs for falling short. The organization of these INGOs is clearly

complex, and the degree to which all members of the organizations subscribe to this idea of

professionalism varies. For example, one participant who had done multiple missions in several

African and Asian countries commented on the variability between missions, especially with

respect to the personalities of staff on the mission itself. He explains that, "A lot of these people

are sort of temporary. They'll work for six months, a year. There's not a lot of professionalism.

Or they move from place to place. So, it depends on who is the team leader? Who is the medical

coordinator? Who is the head of mission?" (Interview on 2 February 2021). Many subjects who

worked with the same organization had very different experiences depending on their mission

and team, but they spoke to the overarching trend that most personnel are temporary. With

personnel consistently changing over, questions are raised about the longevity and

professionalism of the organization. As the participant went on to explain: "It just varies. In a

way, it's unfortunate because you would think there would be a common strategy. And that's the

point of having a mission statement-- Is that you're on the same page... but you know, you're

not." While INGOs continue to stress their organization's professionalism, the short duration of

many personnel and lack of common strategy underscores their assertion.

The international operation of many NGOs tends to last for several years, rather than

quickly responding to a conflict and leaving. Many subjects from different NGOs talked about

the lack of exit strategies in the missions they worked on. One subject describes how NGOs are

likely to maintain operations in a country as long as funding continues, saying:

> Ils sont là pour plusieurs années. Maintenant, par exemple, quand je cite l'exemple
> d'Action Contre la Faim... le département de nutrition, le département de sécurité
> alimentaire, etc. Cela veut dire qu'ils sont là tant qu'il y a financement pour les
> départements... Toutes les équipes techniques ont les contrats pour les projets... S'il n'y a
> plus de financement, malheureusement, ils ne sont pas là. (Interview on 16 March 2021)[7]

This highlights the relationship between financing and the duration that NGOs stay active in a

region, which was touched upon in the previous chapter. However, this quote clearly shows that

NGOs oftentimes establish themselves for long periods of time. These organizations employ

local employees, which benefits local communities because it provides jobs and services to the

populations. This quote also shows that NGOs operate similarly to multinational corporations in

the sense that they continue operation as long as the money continues to flow. NGOs arguably

provide the best services when able to access the greatest amount of funding. However, this

quote shows how the overall structure of NGOs in the humanitarian aid sector resembles a large

multinational corporation rather than smaller and local organizations working primarily at the

local level.

While there is a level of agreement that NGOs continue to operate where money is

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[7] "They are there for several years. Now, for example, when I cite the example of Action contre la faim… the nutrition department, the food security departments, etc. That is to say that there are there as long as there is funding for the departments… All the technical teams have contracts for their projects… If there is no more funding, unfortunately, they are not there." (translation by author)

present, the opinions on the continual presence of NGOs in African countries varies

considerably. The participant quoted above commented on the persistence of NGOs, but also

noted that it would be bad for local communities if funding dried up and an organization had to

pack up and leave. Other participants have a more pessimistic view of the continual presence of

NGOs, saying:

> So, there's no official exit strategy. No one, no one has an exit strategy. Any NGO that tells you they have an exit strategy is absolutely full of [crap]. ACF is there as long as the money's there, and every NGO is there as long as the money is there, basically. I think it's important to note that at this point, the vast majority of humanitarian work is contracting. (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

Exit strategies are important because they dictate an NGO will leave a situation, but they are

oftentimes superfluous statements about an organization's plans to leave. This participant

highlights the discrepancies between the official statement of exit strategies and the reality of

donor funding models. As expressed in both quotes, the NGOs are present as long as there is

funding available to continue operations. As discussed in the earlier chapter, the donor funding

model incentivizes NGOs to stay in operation for as long as possible. The continued presence of

NGOs in African countries creates dependency structures that affect local capabilities to provide

for their people.

Dependency

Flows of aid from the West to countries in Africa often includes conditionalities and

creates dependency structures where poor countries are dependent on wealthy Western nations

for financial support. NGOs participate in the channeling of aid from Western countries to poorer

countries by acting as intermediaries. Issa G. Shivji explains that "the so-called NGO sector,

which is presented as pro-poor and morally driven, legitimises the essentially exploitative

capitalist system while the progressive agenda of people-driven development (radical, populist

agenda of the nationalists of yesteryear) is co-opted" (Shivji 2008c). By acting as an

intermediary in the flow of aid into Africa, NGOs participate in the creation of dependency

structures that make local governments reliant on aid. A lack of training and capacity-building

further solidifies the presence of NGOs by justifying their presence. By viewing locals as

inferior, the Western countries are co-opting the agency of local people and governments to

address the problems inherent in their society that have resulted from European and Western

colonialism and neo-colonialism. While promoting a humanitarian agenda, NGOs act as

benevolent, neutral actors on the global stage.

As shown earlier, organizations have different opinions on the need to train local

personnel and improve infrastructure. As one interview participant explains,

> It's hard. Like, it's to an extent, I mean, you know, it stated mission was to reduce hunger
> and malnutrition. And it did work to do that… Are structurally things changing? No, you
> know, was, like, where the root causes of hunger really being tackled? No. But… it
> wasn't working against it. (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

This quote exemplifies much of what other interviews participants expressed in their interviews:

NGOs may work to achieve their mission, but they do not go much further to actually address

structural issues. The local population does benefit from projects to reduce hunger and

malnutrition, vaccinate populations for Malaria, and treat HIV with antiretrovirals. However,

because the structural factors are not addressed, people in Africa will continue to require NGO

and Western aid to continue providing these provisions. This participant ultimately left the NGO

sector because "we didn't have a whole lot of successes" in impacting substantial change. The

inability, or lack of desire at the structural level, to address structural factors at the macro level

means that NGOs will continue to act as a band-aid over deeper issues. This perpetuates a cycle

of African states' dependency on the inflow of Western aid and personnel.

Another factor that contributes to the establishment of dependency structures is the lack

training to promote the capacity-building of local populations by international organizations. As discussed in the previous section, the general lack of exit strategies perpetuates NGO presence and solidifies dependency structures. Even so, there are instances where NGOs lose funding, close missions, or respond to crises elsewhere. As one subject describes,

> When you leave, you're part of the problem. And this happened… during the Civil War in Sierra Leone. Surgical care was actually better during the Civil War, then for about five years afterwards, because you have all these organizations and all these groups coming in providing care. And then hostility stopped and 'Okay, we're gonna leave.' And so, to transition to that is difficult. (Interview on 2 February 2021)

This quote shows that even though NGOs provide necessary medical care, they leave gaps when they leave. The Civil War in Sierra Leone raged for eleven years and ravaged the country, but the need for international assistance did not stop with hostilities ended. Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world, and many residents struggled to recover from the intense violence and destruction. While Sierra Leone is not part of Francophone West Africa, this story highlights how NGO presence within a country creates a dependency, even when and perhaps especially because they are providing essential services.

Much of the discussion around dependency structures upheld by NGOs fits into the larger neocolonial apparatus that prioritizes Western interests over the true and autonomous development of countries in Africa. One humanitarian aid worker described this dilemma by saying:

> If the question is, [is] all [this] money somehow hampering the natural development of health systems in those countries... somehow, yes, I think. I mean, we are very much aware that when we arrive in a specific context and we provide free-of-charge medical care, you are somehow... damaging the little health center that is living out of the fees that people pay for the consultations... big moral dilemma that health care should be for free, so we provide it for free. But those health workers that are trying to sustain a system in the long term can only live out of what people pay for their services... On the macro level, there are a lot of different theories about whether humanitarian aid is actually helping or stopping the real development. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

The subject highlights a systemic problem within the entire humanitarian system, which also has moral implications. In providing free medical care to local populations, the local capacity to respond to crises becomes diminished. Several participants spoke of people travelling hundreds of miles to receive free medical care, which severely disrupts the local health care systems that rely on incoming patients. By providing free medical care, NGOs are pulling patients from local businesses and disrupting the generally fragile infrastructure already in place. However, these organizations are providing essential medical care to local populations that they would not be able to access elsewhere. This subject has worked in the humanitarian aid sector for over ten years and recognizes the moral quandaries that persist within the larger humanitarian aid apparatus. The dependency structures generated by the presence of NGOs mirrors and contributes to a larger neocolonial apparatus that benefits Western liberal interests and the cost of the development of poorer countries. As Issa G. Shivji explains, "NGOs cannot be pro-people and pro-change without being anti-imperialist and anti-status quo" (Shivji 2008c).

Who should be in charge?

Due to the complex international structures of INGOs, there is often disagreement over who is best suited to formulate plans that will also have the best outcomes for the target populations. This disconnect exists in many different organizations, according to the participants interviewed for the project. As explained earlier in the chapter, the size and administration of these organizations create multiple pathways for communication. One subject described the decision-making process in a British NGO as directed from the affiliates, even though much of the programs are formulated at the local level. The subject explained that the Senegal branch of this NGO wants to become an affiliate—like the United States or France—to have more autonomy in decision making practices. The complicated chain of command makes it difficult

for local offices to take full control of their programs. However, the subject did express that the

Senegal office might struggle without the U.S. office's fundraising efforts. Another participant

expressed a similar sentiment, regarding the communication between administration and country

level staff as positive, but imperfect. As he explains, "Moi je dirais, en mon expérience, que

franchement ça c'est pas à 100%. Selon moi, parfois entre deux opinions et parfois ça diffère.

Mais, en termes de collaborations de travail, à 90% c'est okay, quoi."[8] This difference of opinion

often exists between people working at the country level and administrators working in affiliate

offices or at the international headquarters.

While there is a chain of command raising from lower level country offices to affiliates,

operational centers, and international headquarters, the level of contact between them varies

between organization and project. One subject describes the contact between the country office

in Gabon and the headquarters as:

> Minimal contact. I can't say they were overly engaged in the work I was doing. At one
> point we asked for some technical assistance, someone who was familiar with setting up
> these prosthetic centers, I didn't have that specific experience, and they did make
> someone available to come on mission to work with me. They were quite responsive to
> requests but there was not a lot of ongoing day to day contact. (Interview on 1 February
> 2021)

On the one hand, this allows local staff to pursue missions that they feel will best support their

beneficiaries. Also, the interview participant explained that the NGO was amenable to the local

office's needs but was not overly attentive to the day-to-day operation of the NGO. However, a

lack of contact can be detrimental when headquarters makes decisions without involving local

staff. This particular mission was shut down due to a lack of funding, but many of the staff in the

Gabon office were not included in the decision-making process and were quite surprised to learn

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[8] I would say, in my experience, that honestly it is not 100%. According to me, sometimes between two opinions
and sometimes they differ. But in terms of work collaborations, 90% of the time it's okay." (translation by author)

of the closing of the entire mission. This situation highlights one of the major questions about the

administration and structure of NGOs, namely whether decisions should be made at the local

level or the international level.

Opposing views about who should make the decisions exist for many large INGOs. One

perspective, which is often held by fieldworkers and local staff, is that the administration often

makes decisions that impede a mission's ability to perform the way it should. In explaining the

origins and organization of one French NGO, one subject describes,

> MSF now has very few surgical products. They've gotten into HIV and Malaria and TB
> and all these other things. That's where the donor money is. So, they've expanded what
> they do, they also like to be in all these countries, because it sounds good to be in 70
> countries. So, they have a footprint. So yeah, it's, you know, so internally, and then the
> way that the internal structure works, is you... And it's so [messed] up. Because the, the
> technical expertise, the medical people are not in charge. (Interview on 2 February
> 2021)

This participant speaks of the expansion of MSF from their early stages, where the organization

was focused on surgery, to its current wide-reaching programs. He also shows that donor

money influences what actions NGOs take and what causes they pursue. Finally, this

participant critiques the organization because the people with technical expertise, including the

doctors, are not the ones in charge. This organization, like many others, places decision making

in the hands of administration rather than people working on the ground with local

communities.

Another participant, who works with the same organization but has had experience in

the administrative capacity as well as at the field level, explains the division inherent in the

organization. She describes that "it's also a matter of perspective" and that:

> Sometimes… People on the field have a much better understanding of what is actually
> happening, what are the needs. They are more in contact with the local community. So,
> they have a better overview about the specific needs in that area. But people in the
> headquarters have a better general overview of what are the needs and we are using our
> resources in [a] different context. So that's why people in HQ… have to sometimes

> make decisions that sometimes in the field are not appreciated or they don't agree with. It's also because they are taken out of a larger perspective. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

This participant highlights the difficult relationship between people working on the ground and in the administration without claiming that one opinion is better than the other. The sources of disconnect and tension between these two groups rests in the structure of the organization itself. At the field level, there is a better understanding of the local context, which includes better knowledge of the most pressing issues and the desires of the local communities. However, this level of understanding only goes as far the local staff can communicate, interact, and understand local patients and communities. For the decisions made at the macro-level, the participant points to budgetary constraints as a reason for this disconnect. The organization must have funding that covers all its operations, and when decisions are made that affect a particular project, local field staff are dissatisfied and blame the administration. However, this issue is underscored by the fact that these organizations operate within a structure that funnels wealth from Western countries into African economies and creates dependency structures based on these funds.

Another factor that contributes to how decisions are made in these large organizations is the difference between temporary personnel and career humanitarian aid workers. One subject describes the structure in NGOs that pulls people in to be careerist and continue within the organization at an administrative level, saying:

> I think part of it is that the organization has this cache, and people, they will always have more people come in. Right, so they don't need expertise, because they have the expertise. And the people that stayed within, and they're fairly good. If you do a couple missions, they'll find a job for you. And you become HR… and so you can make a bit of a career out of it. And if you look internally, at MSF, it's called Doctors Without Borders. But… doctors are a very small part of the whole operation. (Interview on 2 February 2021)

As this participant explains, people make careers out of working in the humanitarian sector. For

example, one Italian NGO paid workers very well when compared to other NGOs but also when compared to nursing positions back in Italy. As the participant describes, "because the nurses stayed longer than the doctors" due to the high salaries, "they felt that they were more qualified." He remembered his time working with this organization in Sierra Leone, saying "I actually almost got into a fist fight with one of the ICU nurses… over patient management. I mean, it was crazy stuff. And he ended up becoming the head of the hospital because he stayed there longer." MSF pays considerably less, but people are still able to make careers out of working in the humanitarian aid sector. When considering this in terms of decision making, the people who have more experience with the organization make the calls. However, they may not have the technical expertise, even though they worked within the organization for a long time. Thus, the emphasis rests on the organization and its reputation rather than being able to provide the best care possible at the local level.

Conclusion

As this chapter shows, the bureaucratization of French INGOs—which coincides with an increase in size and administrative structures—contributes to uphold neo-colonial structures. These INGOs promote a professionalized and efficient organization that works to address crises and injustices. However, the reality of these organizations is much more complex. Through administration and bureaucracy, these large INGOs uphold structures that benefit large interests, attract donors, and create hierarchical power systems that benefit the interests of international donors, western public opinion, and the INGOs over the beneficiaries.

When looking at the observable implications outlined to test the hypothesis for this chapter, I find a link between bureaucratization and neo-colonial systems. The first observable implication, lack of exit strategy, was found to exist. Participant accounts stressed the fact that

NGOs will continue working on a project for as long as funding is possible. This permanence of NGOs reinforces dependency of local populations. Next, this chapter found there to be a disconnect between staff working in the field and staff working in headquarters. Many participants criticized the international and higher-level administration of being distant or making decisions that detracts from work happening on the ground. Finally, there was substantial evidence pointing toward the existence of career humanitarian aid workers. Participants spoke of people staying with an organization for long enough to be promoted to administrative positions. On the other hand, participants also mentioned a lack of professionalism of expatriate staff on certain missions, which is exacerbated by the short duration of some of these positions, particularly in medical INGOs. The data therefore strongly suggests that increases in bureaucratization lead to greater neo-colonial activity through operations that mirror an MNC and create dependency structures where African countries are dependent on Western aid.

The bureaucratization of INGOs is closely tied to the donor funding model that links organizations and donors. The cycle is perpetuated: donors support large reputable organizations, and NGOs grow both as a result of funding and in order to earn more funding later on. As these INGOs grow, acquire more funding, and solidify their global influence, the asymmetrical power dynamic between Western liberal and Africa continues to increase. The following chapter looks at NGOs in the global era and shows how globalization and the end of the Cold War have shaped NGO activity. The chapter also addresses insensitivity, capacity building, and some of the human elements present in humanitarian aid.

Chapter 4: NGOs in the Global Era?

The Drill in North Kivu

When conceptualizing the role for NGOs in the globalized era, particularly after the end of the Cold War in 1991, it is important to look at which elements of the NGO model remain relevant or have become outdated. Two subjects who both worked for the same French NGO told a story that illustrates not only the disconnect between administration and the work happening in the field, but the capacity for gross insensitivity exhibited by expatriate staff. The doctor, who experienced this event firsthand, was working in North Kivu during a time of relative stability and peace. The staff in the hospital got word that fighting had broken out. People were not made aware that this was just a drill planned by the administrator, and "all the local staff freaked out because they thought that the fighting had started. And the scenario was how fighting had started in the past." They brought in an ambulance and executed the drill, but local staff were extremely distressed. The doctor described their reactions, explaining: "I mean, talk about trigger points and PTSD and rekindling. I mean, staff were crying. They couldn't get in contact with their families. They didn't know what was going on." These people have lived through years of extreme instability and violence, none of which was considered by the administrator from headquarters.

The subject also explained his extreme anger that the organization decided to conduct a drill in such an insensitive and unnecessary manner. The doctor explained that "there was nothing of value added by making this a surprise event. Nothing" (Interview on 2 February 2021). If the organization had wanted to test the system, then they could have told everyone and most of what they wanted to accomplish would have occurred. However, the organization emphasized the importance of the organizational structure and doing things by this NGO's

standard while completely disregarding the local context and the possible consequences. This story also highlights how NGOs often enter a country and begin working without an adequate understanding of the local context. The conditions in many of these places are very different from the countries where these INGOs are headquartered, which can lead to gross insensitivity and a mindset that Western countries are superior.

Building off of the two previous chapters, this chapter focuses on the role and legitimacy of NGOs in the post-Cold War era. The role of NGOs is evolving with the increasing interconnectedness of the world through global liberal trade. As Issa G. Shiva writes, "NGOs were born in the womb of neo-liberalism and knowingly or otherwise are participating in the imperial project, or at least in the process of refurbishing its image" (Shivji, 2008c). As Shivji explains, the origins and growth of NGOs have risen with neoliberalism, as they have increased in size and evolved in capabilities. This chapter will analyze whether or not NGOs continue to be relevant in the world today and to what extent they perpetuate neo-colonial structure systems. First, this chapter will look more into instances of insensitivity and racism and then further explore dependency structures. Next, this chapter will look into training practices. Finally, the chapter will analyze whether NGOs can still remain neutral and the status of their position in the world today.

Racism and Insensitivity

One facet of neo-colonialism is the imposition of Western values and structures on other countries, and NGOs participate in this shaping of cultural practices. The previous chapters have discussed how structural factors contribute to the perpetuation of neo-colonial values, but neo-colonialism also works to alter the culture of local communities. NGOs often portray the image of the " médecin blanc soignant un enfant noir n'est pas pour rien dans la perception publique de

'l'humanitaire' : celle d'un engagement bénévole et non gouvernemental de professionnels, notamment médicaux, au contact direct de population souffrants" (Dauvin and Siméant 2002).[9] They often portray white saviors to increase the image of the NGO through media outlets and publications. However, NGOs often enter into a situation where the context is drastically different than that in their headquarters' countries, and Western models do not work in these new situations. As the story about the drill in North Kivu exemplifies, there are instances where an adherence to NGO protocol rooted in Western culture causes more harm than good and fails to function in a different context.

When asking participants about whether or not they felt that French NGOs were insensitive to the local culture, many responded that the organizations were respectful and that expatriates caused most issues. For example, one subject explained a French NGO policy, saying: "when it came to things like… respecting holidays, making sure that people could… do pilgrimages… We were adjusting to the schedules for Ramadan. And things like that, for the most part, I found were pretty good. I mean… at the local level, like when you get to the country offices, the vast majority of staff are local" (Interview on 5 February 2021a). At the country level offices in this NGO, local staff hold administrative roles and HR positions that have the power to dictate cultural practices. Because of this, the organization itself is understandably in tune with the local culture. However, expatriate technical staff can cause issues within the organization. This sentiment is mirrored by many accounts from other humanitarian aid workers. In combination with the composition of country offices, many INGOs use contracting with local organizations to implement projects, which requires an understanding of local culture. As one

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[9] "the white doctor treating a black child is not for nothing in the public perception of 'humanitarianism': that of the benevolent engagement et non-government-professionals, notably doctors, in direct contact with suffering populations." (translation by author)

local staff member in the Senegal office of a French NGO explained : "ils sont sensibles parce qu'elles, pour que le projet sera [un succès] ... la culture de chaque région... ils sont souvent obligés d'intégrer les acteurs locaux" (Interview on 16 March 2021).[10] In order to effectively partner with local organizations, NGOs must have some level of cultural awareness of the local context. However, this sensitivity to local culture makes sense when the majority of staff at the country office are local.

Even though the global NGO structure allows for a level of sensitivity to local culture, there is variation among NGOs and among staff. Many participants spoke of problems related to expatriate staff, who could be insensitive, ignorant, and racist. One doctor told a story that exemplifies expatriate feelings of superiority towards the local communities. While working in an MSF mission in North Kivu with a 100 percent postoperative infection rate, the expatriate surgeon confronted other expatriate staff with racist and dangerous attitudes toward local populations and capacities. The surgeon before explained that all dressings must be done in the operating room with a half bottle of hydrogen peroxide to avoid infection. The participant remembered the interaction:

> I started to look into that. And I went to the head of the mission, who… had been there for maybe six months or so. But she had done one other mission in Haiti, and so she felt that she was experienced. And I told her, I said, "hey, you know, we've got this, this infection problem." And she said, "yeah, well, it's a dirty African hospital." (Interview on 2 February 2021)

This quote highlights the extreme racism exhibited by the expatriate head of mission in North Kivu. Instead of interrogating why the postoperative infection rate was so high, the nurses were told to wash the walls of the hospital because it was "a dirty African hospital." However, the interview participant easily figured out that the new autoclave was defective. The other

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[10] "They are sensitive because for the project to be a success… the culture of each region… they are often obligated to integrate local actors" (translation by author)

expatriate staff claimed to have already checked the autoclave and claimed it worked. However, as soon as the surgeon mandated that the brand-new autoclave, which cost 90,000 euro, was not working and that they must sterilize instruments over a charcoal fire, the infection problem went away. This story highlights how preconceptions of African countries can be dangerous, because MSF was actually making people worse in this situation. The surgeon said that the expatriate staff were claiming that they were providing MSF-quality services to the local patients, but people might have been safer if they had not come into the hospital in the first place.

Another expatriate doctor had a very different view about the work that this particular organization was doing and how it treated local culture. He describes the organization as having an outreach office, which focused on how to systematically address issues of maternal mortality. He also spoke about interactions with local Imams and village elders to discuss their needs and what they wanted to see from the organization. Additionally, the staff would talk to the elders and local leadership to try to convey what they were doing and how it would help local women. The local leadership would then disseminate the organization's mission to their wives and daughters. These actions point to a level of cultural sensitivity toward local needs and desires. This participant also claims that the organization always comes to see what the needs of the local population are before establishing a mission. While this particular account points to a positive image of this organization's work with respect to adhering to local cultural practices, this realistically varies between mission and countries. As other workers within the same organization pointed out, these practices were not always standard practice. Additionally, the influence of donor funding in dictating the projects that organizations can pursue can be more limiting in some contexts than others.

Several interview participants spoke to the diversification of the NGO sector, with expatriate staff coming from more places than just Europe and the United States. As one worker described,

> I was the lone American in each of them. Most of the people were from everywhere else. You know, I think it's kind of Eurocentric a little bit. But there were people from Egypt, South America. So, the groups that I was in there might have been one or two Americans, but it wasn't the majority. Probably the largest number was from France, in general, but there were mostly from everywhere else. (Interview on 10 February 2021)

There is a diversification of the humanitarian aid sector, with doctors and expatriate staff coming from Latin America and Africa as well as from the traditional sources of Europe and the United States. While this participant notes a large number of French workers on his two missions, other interviewers did not speak to that same experience. Nevertheless, a diversification in the NGO sector resembles the globalization and growth of these organizations.

While many participants referenced instances where expatriate staff acted entitled, insensitive, and racist toward the local culture, few spoke about attempts to address these systemic issues. One participant spoke of discrimination and how the organization deals with differences, stating:

> Altogether as an organization, we're quite open. But I realize more and more that it's probably not true because we all come with our burden of some racism, some fear towards who is different from us. We can't neglect that part that is, kind of, innate, plus we work with... 40 thousand people … So of course, an organization is done by the people that work with them. So, within this 40 thousand there are all sorts of people. So yes... I think we have more of a problem of power between the international staff and the national staff because international staff, by default, have positions that are higher in the hierarchy than the local staff, with exceptions of course. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

This participant highlighted some of the problems inherent in the international system, noting that expatriate staff come with preconceived notions of what other cultures look like. As a few participants explained, some expatriate staff were ignorant to local culture while others were outright racist. This is not true for all international staff but can be a real problem. Additionally,

the participant spoke about the power dynamics between international staff and the national staff, who hold lower positions within the organization. Of the participants who mentioned issues with racism, most spoke of problematic staff rather than the entire system. However, this quote clearly outlines a power dynamic that exists between international and national staff and shows that the system clearly upholds an unequal structure.

When asked about what the organization is doing to addresses instances of discrimination, the participant responded that there is no formal training about these issues. Instead she explains,

> Usually we get a cultural briefing once we get in the country... and they're like "this is what you should not do here" or "this is how you should behave to be more welcome in the community." It's mostly related to practical things--how to greet. [These kinds] of little things that can make a big difference in your daily life. But it's also about the general overview, like how people react, and usually it's based on things that happen in the past, these kinds of misunderstandings. But no, we don't have a formal training. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

There are steps taken to address cultural differences at the country level, which is important and helps to avoid instances where ignorance results in a larger problem. However, the lack of training on larger issues of insensitivity, discrimination, and racism shows that the organization does not view these issues as significant problems. While this participant also stressed the growing diversification within the organization, with personnel travelling from all over to work on different missions, this does not address the issues of discrimination and racism that exist.

While these organizations enter with the good intentions to help local populations fight hunger, disease, and other crises, they often discount local expertise. Many participants spoke of organizations hiring young and inexperienced expatriate staff over experienced local staff. One participant cited ACTED as an example, saying "they typically recruit people straight out of university… and put them in positions of leadership… You'll get this like, you know, 22-year-

old like French guy who's in charge of logistics, and he's like supervising national staff that are like, you know, in their 40s and 50s" (Interview on 5 February 2021a). Therefore, it is common for local knowledge and expertise is sidelined by expatriate staff who have little training, experience, or cultural knowledge. This disregard for local expertise was highlighted by a story that another participant told of his time working with IRC in Indonesia after the 2005 tsunami. While working alongside a few expatriate staff, they confided that they have a saying that goes: "you may be expat, but I'm expert." This saying highlights the power dynamic that is often created between expatriate knowledge and local expertise, the latter of which is often sidelined and devalued. Even though IRC is not a French NGO and Indonesia is not part of this study, this quote illustrates the pervasive and dangerous attitudes of the humanitarian aid sector that prioritizes international knowledge over local expertise.

Who should get treated?

Another major issue regarding the work of NGOs in poor countries is the decision on who should get access to the service. Particularly when NGOs are engaging in developmental practices, the choices that organizations make always benefit one population while leaving out others. As one participant working with a French NGO explained:

> Of course, we cannot cover all the needs. We have to choose, and every time you choose, you leave somebody out. So sometimes we invest on malnourished children because… that's the big priority, and it probably is the big priority... and then you have pregnant women just nearby that are not covered. Or you focus on conflict, you know, mass casualty and emergency room for the wounded and then you totally neglect... you know, communicable disease, chronic conditions. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

This clearly highlights one of the major problems within the humanitarian sector: there will always be people that will not be reached by NGOs. Some people will not receive medical care, while others will get access to clean drinking water but are simultaneously struggling to deal with communicable diseases. As the participant went on to say, "you always make a choice

because you cannot totally replace the system, and you have to face the reality that there are some people just nearby that you cannot help." The NGO sector is not a replacement for a functioning health system or sufficient infrastructure. In countries where many people live in poverty, NGOs cannot address all the specified needs. However, these countries cannot rise in the global economic system because their resources and personnel continue to be extracted and directed by outside interests.

Another participant spoke of how the mission focused approach of the NGO he worked at as being occasionally limiting. As a short-time staff member, he described the organization as having a tendency to limit the goals of missions, with the goal of his particular mission being to decrease infant mortality. However, he explained: "I wanted to do other stuff while I was there, but I was reminded of the goal" (Interview on 10 February 2021). Many humanitarian workers described a similar situation of wanting to help people outside the tight consigns of the mission. Another humanitarian worker with the same NGO spoke about the limitations of operating under a strict project mission, saying that "there was this Cholera outbreak and MSF was short on doctors. So, I was like… we've got this training project. We've got a local surgeon. He's doing great. I'm going to go over and help the Cholera center, where they actually need help. And that upset the expat operating room nurse, even though the head of mission there was fine with it" (Interview on 2 February 2021). This experience highlights a limited level of flexibility with respect to the mission's goals. Flexibility was accorded because the head of mission was amenable to working for changing needs. However, this flexibility clearly does not exist in all missions.

NGOs cannot address all needs, and that is not their role. Their presence, however, provides essential services while continuing the system of domination by Western imperial

interests. NGOs are justified because their involvement helps local communities, but not enough that these communities are able to function on their own. As money flows into countries, dependency structures are created that subjects local populations to continue requiring western support while being simultaneously exploited by Western economic interests.

NGOs and neutrality

Looking at the origins of many international *urgenciers*, like MSF and MDM, the main goal was to remain neutral to the demands of local and international governments. During the Cold War era, it was easier to remain neutral because the global political stage operated in a bipolar climate between the United States and the Soviet Union. At the origins of the humanitarian aid sector, "the nongovernmental nature of NGOs meant that they could operate despite political pressure." (Chandler 2001). However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, global politics became much more complex and the ability for NGOs to remain neutral changed. As one participant pointed out, "the whole NGO model is a Cold War remnant where you had a humanitarian space" (Interview on 2 February 2021) However, as the global order became more complicated and conditions have changed. As the participant elaborated, "But that [space] sort of doesn't exist. So, you know, it used to be that you can negotiate with both sides and say, you know, I'm neutral, I'm in the middle, I'm going to take care of everyone. But [how do] you do that, when there is no battlefield, there's no front line. And so that's a little bit complicated. And so, security, I think has become worse." Due to the shifting global politics, the role of NGOs has shifted as well, and they cannot remain neutral in the same way as before. This participant also emphasized that security has become worse, which makes it difficult for NGOs to intervene in crises and safely conduct their work. The place for NGOs in this globalized era is up for debate, with some seeing them as a remnant of the past and others believing that NGOs can evolve.

The whole concept of neutrality rests on the idea that NGOs can enter into an area of conflict or crises without taking either of the sides of the opposing parties. This allows NGOs to provide the best care for populations affected by the conflict. For example, when looking at the origins of the Red Cross, David Chandler explains that "The principle of impartiality derived from the desire to assist without discrimination except on the basis of needs, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress" (Chandler 2001). However, the shift away from neutrality coincides with a "new humanitarianism," as Chandler describes the phenomenon of human rights becoming more political. As one participant explained, "Often organizations supporting them are also constrained in the types of services they can provide. Constrained by the donors or constrained by the host government that can also put a lot of hoops to jump through to access certain services." Increased difficulty to work within the constraints designated by the host governments, coupled with the more complex nature of international relations has made it more difficult for NGOs to operate in a neutral fashion. Another participant working in the Senegal office for a British NGO explained,

> All the NGOs are supporting the strategy and the government policy. But in some ways, we have to be, like, doing kind of influencing. Influencing the government policy, for like, those people like women's, young people, marginalized people. So, we have to do some kind of influencing on the level of government. But, given that we are here in Africa, it is very difficult to be face to face with the government. They are very powerful. So, what we do is, kind of, do what is very important for NGO is do some kind of research, have some kind of evidence to show the government: these are the facts, and this is what we want you to do. Like, partnering with a government in order to influence them. (Interview on 4 February 2021)

As this participant explains, NGOs engaging in advocacy are forced to work with the local government to insight change. Even though NGOs often claim to work outside the purview of governments and international politics, they are also forced to work with host governments to affect certain changes and advocate for marginalized people.

The "new humanitarianism" of INGOs, NGOs, and advocacy groups also creates an order where organizations are becoming more involved and vocal in the occurrences of local governments. The "new humanitarian" agenda promoted "subsidiary of sovereignty" or "right of intervention" as well as "freedom of criticism" or "denunciation" (Chandler 2001). Thus, humanitarian aid has become increasingly political. As the participant above explained, it is essential to work with country governments to insight change, which is an inherently political act. When MSF won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999, Dr. James Orbinski explained that "as an independent volunteer association, we are committed to bringing direct medical aid to people in need. But we act not in a vacuum, and we speak not into the wind, but with a clear intent to assist, to provoke change, or to reveal injustice" (International Activity Report 2019). No longer is neutrality an important factor in being able to provide humanitarian assistance to people, as political action and the freedom of criticism become the norm in the humanitarian aid sector. The publications of popular NGOs today also illustrate this point. In MSF's 2019 International Activity Report, an article on the crises in the Sahel explains that "in this volatile context, access for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and other humanitarian organisations has become increasingly difficult, yet ever more urgent" (International Activity Report 2019). In response to the increasing conflict, MSF takes the stance to protect ordinary civilians and solidifies its role in responding to the conflict. Despite the violence, MSF is committed "to continuing our activities in the region, assisting people in distress and fighting to preserve humanitarian principles and space." (MSF Annual Report 2019). MSF's publications push its legitimacy upon the public and positions the organization as the morally driven actor within situations of conflict. Similar rhetoric can be found in annual reports published by ACF, MDM, and ACTED.

Therefore, the NGOs and the humanitarian assistance sector has shifted from neutrality to a more militant version of aid in the face of conflict. However, this rhetoric is guided by Western principles and reinforces the need for Western involvement. As Chandler explains, "not only is the more interventionist approach seen as a legitimate response to humanitarian crises in non-Western states, it is increasingly understood to be nonpolitical and ethically driven" (Chandler 2001). This concept is again highlighted by Dr. Orbinski's Nobel Prize acceptance speech, where he also explained: "Let me say this very clearly: the humanitarian act is the most apolitical of all acts, but if its actions and its morality are taken seriously, it has the most profound of political implications. And the fight against impunity is one of these implications." (Nobel Peace Prize n.d.) These attitudes, which gained popularity after the end of the Cold War, also justify Western intervention in countries under the name of humanitarian assistance. This rhetoric also places Western governments and organizations as morally superior to countries where these conflicts and crises occur. However, there is a lot of hypocrisy in this rhetoric. By condemning human rights abuses abroad, NGOs and other organizations place blame on other countries without recognizing the abuses that take place internally in the host countries of these organizations. Additionally, these organizations rarely point to the true origins and reasons of different conflicts, which are often the result of capitalism, neo-colonialism, colonialism, and liberalism. By failing to address the systemic issues that created many inequalities, crises, and instability, the Western international community absolves itself from the past crimes it has committed, like colonialism. This all relates back to what Issa G. Shivji explained about the future of NGOs: they cannot be pro-human without being anti-imperialist at the same time.

Looking toward the Future

As NGOs become more political and involved in the international affairs of different

countries, they also face challenges in an attempt to remain relevant. Participants spoke of the

changing role of NGOs, particularly in the context of local capabilities and other factors. One

participant spoke of the evolving context that NGOs are faced with, stating that:

> The states took a much proactive role in trying to deliver support for their populations. That is very good. On the other side, we are faced with the fact that sometimes they don't have the full capacity in many different ways, like resources, capacity, budget, competence, etc. to deliver emergency response mainly… So somehow the space for emergency response from international partners is somehow shrinking. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

As this participant explains, one of the evolving issues that NGOs face is a more proactive

approach by governments to address the issues of their populations. However, she acknowledges

that local governments still lack the resources to respond to emergencies, which is a result of

exploitative economic practices and outward cash flow from poorer countries to the West.

Another change that NGOs are facing, particularly medical response organizations is that "WHO

also became much more operational than it used to be in terms of emergency response to medical

emergencies, mainly outbreaks but not only, also disasters etc. So, they are also gaining in

capacity to respond" (Interview on 1 March 2021). With the World Health Organization

becoming more adept in responding to crises, the need for medical *urgenciers* is also shrinking.

Even though the space is shrinking, NGOs are continuing to adapt. Whether or not NGOs can

remain neutral is another question.

NGOs are facing this evolving context, but different participants disagreed over what this

means for the future of the humanitarian aid sector. As the participant cited above continued on

to explain,

> I think it also makes us reflect on how we can be relevant in what we do. Because the point is not necessarily to have a project...but to cover a gap. So, if there is no gap, that's great. I mean, ideally… MSF should disappear because the states should cover for their

own needs with some external help... and that there would be no need for international medical organizations because the medical structure is capable of answering to all the needs of the population. But, I mean, I think we are very far from that. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

This participant suggests that NGOs should become irrelevant someday as local governments are able to provide for the needs of their citizens. However, it is not clear when this will occur, especially as the global market economy continues to intervene in African economies in extractive and exploitative ways. While MSF may work to fill a gap and those the gaps are shrinking, it also does not work to fix the sources of crises, inequality, and conflict itself.

As NGOs adapt to remain relevant, there are still questions about whether they should continue to exist in the first place. While NGOs claim to promote sustainable practices, such as partnering with local organizations and investing in development, the usefulness of these actions is limited by money and local governments. As one participant explained,

Of course, we have different situations, and depending on the context, but most of the time, we really try to work with the local health system. So local hospitals, so trying to reinforce local hospitals, local health centers... we also have international staff or what we call delocalized staff, you know people may be coming from the capital to the rural area. But we also work with the local staff. Because one of the points is: try to reinforce the capacity. And when we leave, they will be able to somehow continue, because we invest in training. Again, of course, the limitation is that they probably will not have the material it takes to run the activities, the medical treatment... But yes, we mostly work in partnership unless it is really not possible. (Interview on 1 March 2021)

This participant explains how this French NGO aims to partner with local hospitals as much as possible, except in situations where that is not possible like when there are no local facilities or there are security risks. However, she argues that by investing in training and capacity building, local facilities should be able to continue operation even after the organization leaves. Having more qualified doctors and improved facilities benefits local communities, as long as there is funding available to pay local staff and purchase supplies.

Even if NGOs claim to be investing in training of local personnel, the extent to which

that occurs varies greatly across projects. While some participants spoke positively of an NGOs commitment to training the local populations, other participants critique expatriate staff for believing themselves to be superior to local doctors and surgeons. One participant explained his experience working with a French NGO in South Sudan, saying:

> I was doing a training for the surgeons and there was a French operating room nurse, and he was very upset with me because I wasn't doing these huge operations like the guy before me had done. Even though the patients were dying in the operating room or postoperatively because there were no nurses in the wards. You know, we were doing these small cases and I was helping the local guys. (Interview on 2 February 2021)

Instead of stepping in and doing as many cases as possible, this surgeon focused on training local doctors to do small cases. Doing large operations was unsustainable due to the lack of nursing staff, so the surgeon focused on what was possible. This quote also highlights the varying views of expatriate staff; while the French nurse believed that doing the greatest number of operations would be best, the American surgeon wanted to focus on bolstering the local capacity in a sustainable way. The fact that patients were dying due to lack of nursing staff after undergoing big operations shows a fundamental issue with how this organization was approaching its role, namely that big surgery does not help local patients if they are unable to safely recover afterward. By failing to invest in local capacities and listen to local opinions, this NGO was engaging in actions that were unsupportable by the local capabilities once the organization leaves and international aid stops.

Investing in showy surgical programs without bolstering the support systems, like nursing staff in the wards, is an ineffective and unsustainable option for local communities and points to a gross misunderstanding of local contexts. As the American surgeon explained, "I was looking at the denominator issue. How do we fix the needs of the population? And they were looking more at the numerator. This one person will be helped by me. Which is true, but it's not going to

help the whole population. So how do we figure out how to help the whole population?"

(Interview on 2 February 2021). Even though individual people are helped by a particular

procedure and surgery, there are many cases where continuing to provide these services is not

sustainable. For instance, when people are unable to recover safely due to a lack of nurses in the

ward, risky surgeries are unsustainable and dangerous. By going in and operating as one would

in a Western developed country, NGOs show a mentality of superiority and insensitivity to local

needs. Because this surgeon has a public health background, he focuses on the needs of the

population over those of the individual. In assuming that helping one person is better than

helping a community as a whole, NGOs are halting any opportunity for providing significant

improvements to local communities. While this paper cannot address the moral debate over

choosing who and how to treat people, addressing the needs of individuals instead of focusing on

systemic issues continues systems of dependence that places poorer countries below Western

liberal interests.

In addition to systemic issues that fail to address root causes of many issues, NGOs create

unequal opportunities for local populations. The act of hiring staff for missions is inherently

unequal, as some people will benefit from NGO jobs while others will not. When asked how the

participant thinks that local populations do the work of a particular NGO, she responded saying:

> I think it's definitely more complicated than yes, I get free drugs and yes, I get treated.
> Because it's a big mix, you're also bringing a lot of money to the communities. They're
> paying salaries. The way we are selecting our staff on the fields is a big challenge for the
> community. How do you choose the guards, the cook, the drivers, you know... can also
> create tensions and that's something you need to keep in mind every time. So, I would say
> in general the perception is quite positive, but it's also complex. (Interview on 1 March
> 2021)

Even though receiving free medical care benefits the local population, the organization's other

operations can cause dissatisfaction in the larger community. Coming into a country and hiring

local staff will inevitably disenfranchise some people. Even with a relatively positive image, the general operations of the organization also affect local populations. The same participant expressed how the NGO oftentimes takes people from other areas of the country to provide care. While this benefits people receiving care at the mission's headquarters, it may be creating gaps elsewhere in the country.

As the participant describes, providing these services is "an easy win. We provide medical care for free and the level is normally quite good, especially compared to what they are used to" (Interview on 1 March 2021). However, despite this positive reception, structures of dependency can be established. An American surgeon in South Sudan describes being confused why a mission was doing so many thyroid operations, and:

> I started asking around, like so, what's going on with the thyroid things. Why? What's up? And they started to confide in me that a thyroid operation cost 250 in Khartoum. So, what was happening was, since I was the American surgeon in Malakal, people were flying down to Malakal to have surgery by the American surgeon for only 100 dollars. (Interview on 2 February 2021)

While previous surgeons working in the hospital had no issue doing so many thyroid operations, this doctor decided to ask around more to understand the causes of the problem. Another interview participant described people coming from all over to access the services provided by this organization, and people would travel from Niger into Nigeria to receive care. The organization had a reputation for providing good services with reputable international doctors, so people would pay money to travel to receive free services rather than pay for the operation to occur closer to home. This creates dependency on international staff and organizations to provide quality healthcare while simultaneously pulling resources from other locales in the country.

While this structure of dependency is created, there are benefits attributed to the presence of NGOs beyond just the people receiving treatment, access to clean water, and other services provided by humanitarian aid organizations. As one local staff at the country level office of a

French NGO in Senegal commented, "Il y a un bon rapport, la qualité de travail. Il y a un bon

rapport d'équipe des personnes. La déjà... ça permet aussi d'avoir un esprit d'ouverture...

beaucoup de régions, beaucoup de conférences" (Interview on 16 March 2021)[11] As he

highlights, NGOs provide an opportunity for local staff to experience other cultures and an

international community through working regionally and travelling internationally. These

opportunities provided by NGOs benefit the people working for the organization at the country

offices. A doctor working at a French NGO explained the dichotomy of the humanitarian aid

apparatus,

> One is these are good jobs for the local guys. So, in a lot of places, more MSF or even some of the others, people are pulled in. So, we were in North Kivu, people were pulled in from Goma. We were in Aweil, people were pulled in from Juba. Um, and they're good paying jobs. So, they're not going to rock the boat. (Interview on 2 February 2021)

Many local staff benefit from higher pay and better capacity to treat patients, but dependency

structures are also in place, particularly when "The [expat] guy that's there, telling them that they

suck and only he can do the operations, which isn't true at all." While there are issues inherent in

the system, organizations "are providing money and jobs. And they are helping out. They are

providing some training. Some of the local guys end up becoming expats in other countries, so

that's good. Um, so you know, it's not all bad. It's sort of complicated." By working with and

training local staff, capacities are increased, and doctors are able to grow as doctors. Both

participants touch on the opening of international opportunities provided by NGOs, which was

likely much less accessible before. The international aid apparatus is inherently complicated.

While there are many benefits for local populations, the space for humanitarian aid organizations

is shrinking as local capacities are growing and as conflicts are becoming more dangerous and

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[11] "There is a good relationship, the quality of work. There is a good relationship between teams. There already… that permits a spirit of opening… many regions, many conferences." (translation by author)

less localized.

A Local Perspective on *Action contre la faim*

The wide range of opinions toward NGOs exhibited in this chapter show the complicated and often contradictory nature of the humanitarian assistance sector. Even those who assert that NGOs contribute to the neo-colonial structure present in Africa recognize that there are good elements to the work that NGOs do. However, one subject told a story that has "been told so many times in ACF, it has kind of become lore." While working in the country office in Senegal in 2010, there was a warehouse manager who was being promoted to a position in the logistics department. The interview was a formality because the man had worked with the organization forever, and:

> At one point, you know, someone asked… in the interview [and they were] like, just, you know, an easy question, okay? Is what alright, so what are the letters ACF stands for? And, you know, and he responded with without missing a fucking beat, responded, Afrique Coloniale Française. Well, no one ever had the courage to ask… Like, are you joking? (Interview on 5 February 2021a)

This story illustrates a local perspective on the ACF and the wider apparatus in general. The interview participant describes a portion of the population that is nostalgic for the colonial period. This story illustrates that NGOs are viewed, at least to some local staff, as contributing to the neo-colonial project.

Conclusion

This chapter addresses some of the more human elements in humanitarian work, as well as questions confronting the sector as the international structure becomes more complex in the decades after the end of the Cold War. The two previous chapters analyze how donor funding and bureaucratization reproduce and uphold neo-colonial structures, like a dependency on Western aid. In this chapter, I focus on the promotion of Western superiority, the devaluation of

local expertise, and questions for NGOs in the future. Neo-colonial values that uphold ideas

Western superiority contribute to the overall neo-colonial structure that was discussed in the

previous chapters.

In looking at observation implications for this chapter, many were found to exist. First,

this chapter found instances where Western values were imposed upon local communities. While

not always overt, the strong belief within the humanitarian aid sector that expatriate knowledge

outweighs local expertise promotes Western superiority. However, many participants pointed to

the fact that country level offices are always respectful of the local culture, especially because

they generally employ local staff. The larger NGO apparatus seems to value Western superiority

and pushes Western values, such as human rights. This chapter also outlined many instances

where NGOs were found to be insensitive to local culture. Even though several participants

pointed to country level sensitivity to local culture through respecting local religious holidays,

there were issues with expatriate staff and the larger structure itself. While some participants

pointed to specific issues with insensitive expatriates, there were also structural factors that

enabled insensitivity, discrimination, and racism. Instances of insensitivity by expatriate staff

reflect a larger neo-colonial system that prioritizes Western knowledge and power. Many

participants, particularly in the medical NGO field, spoke to the lack of training for local

populations. This was occasionally mission dependent, with some missions focusing more on

training and others dismissing local expertise and going in to do as much as possible. Finally,

when looking at decreases in local funding, this chapter found instances where a project

detracted from the local capacity to provide for their own hospitals and clinics by hiring local

doctors and staff. However, no participants spoke to changes in local funding practices for

infrastructure like hospitals and schools. This chapter has highlighted some of the human elements that also work to uphold neo-colonial values and structure systems.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis began with a question about the role and actions of French NGOs in Francophone West Africa and whether or not they contribute to neo-colonial structures. This project set out to better understand how French NGOs operate globally with particular attention to the Françafrique regime. Through an analysis of donor funding and bureaucratization, this project outlined structural factors inherent in the INGO system that benefits Western liberal institutions. In Chapter 4, I looked at some of the consequences of these structural problems, as well as how participants viewed the existence of these organizations in the future. As this project has shown, French NGOs uphold and reinforce neo-colonial structure systems in Francophone West Africa. In this final chapter, I review how all these factors contribute to neo-colonialism, as well as proposing areas for further research.

Through a thorough analysis of donor funding practices, this project aimed to understand if and in what ways donor funding contributed to neo-colonialism. Chapter 2 focuses on donor funding practices and uses four observable implications to evaluate the links between donor funding and neo-colonialism. The chapter focuses on lack of technological development, earmarked funding toward specific projects, INGOs receiving the majority of funding from large donors, and upward accountability to donors over accountability to beneficiaries. Through an analysis of participant responses, all four observable implications were upheld.

Donor funding created poor incentive structures for technological advancement, and many participants spoke to funding being allocated to specific projects. Earmarked funding restricts NGO flexibility to pursue actions it deems necessary, but it also imposes the donor's

agenda onto NGOs. Additionally, it is nearly impossible for local NGOs to access funds from large international donors, which requires them to contract with large INGOs for access funding. This hierarchical structure places donors above INGOs and local NGOs, with local NGOs at the bottom. Finally, NGOs were more likely to use upward accountability measures towards donors through annual reports and publishing financial reports. Only a few participants mentioned accountability measures towards beneficiaries, as these mechanisms remain underdeveloped and are often just seen as "box-ticking." To supplement these observable implications and interview data, Chapter 2 also included data from the European Commission's ECHO. This data highlights the proportion of ECHO and French funding going to Francophone West Africa and to French NGOs in Francophone West Africa. Interestingly, France granted large quantities of funding to different French Embassies in Francophone West Africa, as well as to the French Commune of Chambéry. Thus, through a system that relies on donor funding, NGOs become reliant on international aid from primarily Western donors. The reliance translates to a lack of technological development and asymmetrical payout for beneficiaries. Because NGOs rely so heavily on donor funding to continue operations, they become more accountable to donors than to beneficiaries.

Chapter 3 presents an analysis of bureaucratization within the French NGO sector, which is matched by the growth in size and administration of these organizations. As INGOs are increasing in size, their administration and bureaucracy grow with it. As a result, many INGOs are composed of many affiliates that interact almost independently from each other under the mission and direction of one international office. This chapter also finds that large INGOs operate similarly to large businesses and corporations--truly accepting a complicated globalized

structure. In this chapter, I identified three observable implications by which to measure the relationship between bureaucratization and neo-colonialism.

By examining whether there was a lack of exit strategy, disconnect between staff working in the field and staff working in headquarters, and career humanitarian aid workers, I was able to understand the bureaucratic nature of these organizations. Many subjects spoke of a lack of exit strategy with NGOs continuing missions for as long as funding is available. However, subjects also spoke of large gaps created by the departure of an NGO. There was also evidence of a disconnect between administration and field work, with decisions made at headquarters often being unpopular on the ground. Finally, there was evidence of career humanitarian aid workers, with variation across different organizations. However, a few subjects spoke of volunteers moving into administrative roles after completing a few missions. Thus, this growth in the size and administration of French NGOs relates to greater control and access to funding, but also to a larger disconnect between field staff and headquarters. Chapter 3 found substantial evidence to point to an increase in bureaucratization leading to the upholding of neo-colonial structures.

Outside of the two hypotheses discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, many participants spoke of experiences with insensitivity and discrimination, as well as questions for the future of NGOs. To analyze this data, I looked at four observable implications to test how these factors relate to neo-colonial structures and values. I found there to be instances of impositions of Western values, particularly an emphasis on the superiority of Western knowledge. There were also many participants who spoke about insensitivity, not always to local culture, but toward local populations and capacities. This insensitivity often rested with particular expatriate staff, but the overall NGO apparatus does little to train and dissuade these instances of insensitivity. Many participants also spoke about a lack of training provided for the local population,

particularly in the medical field. This lack of training often coincided with the belief that local staff were not capable of doing these complex operations, which relates back to the stated belief in expatriate superiority. Finally, this project did not find instances where local funding for projects, like health care or education, were decreased. However, many participants spoke to NGO projects taking local staff or pulling patients from existing facilities, which inhibits local infrastructure and creates dependency. These factors contribute to the perpetuation of neo-colonial structures and values, even though they rest outside my two hypotheses. Chapter 4 also elaborates on why it is important to look at the human elements within these structures to better understand how the system affects staff and beneficiaries.

In conclusion, this project presents evidence that French NGOs perpetuate neo-colonial structures and values of Western superiority in Francophone West Africa. Through the use of interview data and data from the European Commission's ECHO, this project was able to find evidence that these structures persist in the region with French NGOs aiding in the maintenance and growth of dependency structures through funding and large administrative capacities, while also contributing to building up Western knowledge at the detriment to local expertise. While this project outlines many important phenomena within French NGOs, many of these trends are not unique to French NGOs and Francophone West Africa. Rather, they extend the entire humanitarian aid sector. The dependency structures are created through asymmetrical power and an emphasis on Western knowledge and economies. Thus, the French NGOs work within a larger system that contributes to creating dependency, namely governmental and multinational interests. While presented as benevolent and apolitical institutions, NGOs work within a complex political global organization.

This thesis attempts to understand to what extent French NGOs uphold neo-colonial values and structures, but there are many areas for further study that may elucidate the complexities of this phenomenon. First, it would be interesting to study how the complex administrative structures of INGOs contributes to neo-colonial activity and whether this growth has any quantifiable benefits for beneficiaries. This field of research could also benefit from a study into how different branches of the same organization operate on the global scale, and whether they are more autonomous or guided under the framework from the international headquarters. In looking at how neo-colonialism is perpetuated through NGOs and their work to distribute aid, it would be interesting to study local NGOs and efforts to break from this rigid structure. Can local NGOs find alternative sources of funding that do not impose the same restrictions as Western donors? In looking more into this area of study, it could be possible to find ways to break these ties that perpetuate neo-colonialism and create something new in its place.

Appendix: Interviews

1. Nigerian NGO worker. Interviewed on 1 February 2021.

2. American surgeon NGO worker. Interviewed on 2 February 2021.

3. Senegalese staff at British NGO in the country office. Interviewed on 4 February 2021.

4. Former French-American NGO worker in West Africa. Interviewed on 5 February 2021.

5. American OB-GYN and former NGO worker. Interviewed on 5 February 2021.

6. American OB-GYN and former NGO worker. Interviewed on 10 February 2021.

7. Italian pediatrician and NGO worker. Interviewed on 1 March 2021.

8. Senegalese staff in French NGO at country office. Interviewed on 16 March 2021.

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