Spaces of Aid:
spatial practices and the built environment
in humanitarian assistance

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Summary

The blue helmet, the white Land Rover, and the gated compound have become synonymous with international humanitarian assistance. Yet to date, few theorists have taken these material and spatial aspects of aid delivery as worthy of sustained study. Examining the everyday lives of humanitarian workers in the field reveals that it is impossible to separate their built environments and material accoutrements from the larger humanitarian project that they are promoting.

The last two decades have seen the humanitarian field experience become increasingly securitised and circumscribed: both physically and materially separated from its immediate environment. This detachment shapes the way in which the aid worker understands 'the beneficiary' and ultimately influences the aid worker's entire perspective on humanitarian assistance, primarily by reinforcing an us/them divide. Simultaneously, technological advances and a high velocity of international staff movement create a spatio–temporal rapprochement between the field enclosure and headquarters. The rapacious demand from headquarters for best practices, lessons learnt, and situation reports encourages a 'spectacle of development' as constructed from within the humanitarian enclave, where local issues become framed in global terms.

In the context of post–crisis reconstruction, this spatial disconnect is demonstrated by the mismatch between what is required by beneficiaries and what donors have created for them. A comparison of two cases studies – one from post–tsunami Aceh and the other from the post–hurricane Katrina US Gulf Coast – demonstrate how the material form of the single family house dominated these reconstructions in spite of the needs or wants of the beneficiaries. The thesis concludes by offering a model that synthesises these observations and lays the basis for future research. In light of increasingly antagonistic modalities of assistance, highlighting the material and spatial aspects of humanitarianism draws into question not only the utility of current approaches, but of the international humanitarian project at large.

CHAPTER THREE:

How the Built Environment Shapes Humanitarian Intervention

In the security manuals and policy recommendations for field staff, there is the implicit recognition that the built environment has a degree of agency. For example, aid workers are told not to live in luxurious houses as it may attract resentment from local populations:

> [i]f local people perceive that humanitarian staff live in luxury, paying excessive rents on unnecessarily lavish accommodation, not only will it damage the organisation's reputation but it may lead to greater insecurity for its staff, as local opinion turns against them (European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, 2004, 19).

Similarly, Van Brabant is clear that as part of an ideal acceptance strategy, material and spatial considerations are important. He writes that the location of a meeting may be important in forging positive relationships with the local community: "[s]ummoning local elders to your office, for example, conveys a different message from going to see them in their own environment" (Van Brabant, 2000, 63). In his section on "Implicit Messages" he asks the reader to

> consider the image that is projected by the use of mobile phones and VHF radios, the new 4–wheel drive vehicles with air conditioning and tall radio antennae, uniformed guards at compound gates, large desks of finished hardwood with two telephones and a secretary in attendance. Well organized, well protected, but well accepted? (Van Brabant, 2000, 64).

Another example of the general sense that the built environment is significant in shaping social interactions can be seen in the lead up to the 2003 bombing of the UN premises in Baghdad. According to The Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel in Iraq

> To enhance the protection of the Canal Hotel compound, United States military personnel established an observation outpost on the roof of the hotel and placed a five–ton truck to block access to a service road that runs parallel to the western perimeter wall of the Canal Hotel compound…*UN senior management was uneasy with this highly visible military presence…[and] asked the Coalition Forces to withdraw their heavy equipment from the front of the compound, dismantle the observation post on the roof top of the building and remove the obstacle on the access road because the United Nations did not own the property* [italics mine] (Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel in Iraq, 2003, 11).

Here is an explicit acknowledgement that the built environment is significant in building relationships with local communities and that an over reliance on physical security and deterrent approaches is counter–productive to the overall aim of assisting a population (Brahimi, 2008; Stoddard, Harmer *et al.*, 2006).[1] A similar line of reasoning was evoked more generally during the Iraq war when the US' enclosure within the fortified green zone was considered as a metaphor for their inability to win Iraqi 'hearts and minds' (Chandrasekaran, 2006).

The American architectural redesign of their embassies has also been the subject of significant negative commentary; the high modernist, slate grey buildings drawing derogatory comparisons with prisons and fortresses (Leapman, 2004).[2] In his 2009 article, Jonathan Glancey considers the current trend in American embassy building as an "architecture of failed diplomacy" (Glancey, 2009).[3] He argues that embassies should balance functional concerns such as security with a cultural sensitivity for their surrounding location. But in all these arguments, the precise relationship between buildings and their contribution to insecurity remains unclear. Often multiple logics are deployed simultaneously to support the intuition that somehow, buildings matter.

This chapter will investigate the relationship between the built environment and people with reference to material and spatial theory. It proposes that in order to understand the impact of the built environment in humanitarian intervention two reciprocal dynamics need to be considered: the way in which buildings structure social interaction and simultaneously how buildings come to embody social structures. While the last chapter concentrated on the physical form of the compound, this chapter looks at how a bounded auxiliary space is

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[1] This reluctance to adopt a deterrent approach has been identified as a potentially key explanatory factor in the ability of terrorists to successfully detonate a car bomb outside the offices of the SRSG in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello Power, Samantha. 2008. *Chasing the flame: Sergio Vieira de Mello and the fight to save the world*. (London: Allen Lane) ; Brahimi, Lakhdar. 2008. *Towards a Culture of Security and Accountability*. United Nations: New York.

[2] For more on the securitisation of American embassies see Boddy, Trevor. 2008. Architectural Emblematic: Hardened Sites and Softened Symbols, in Michael Sorkin (ed.) *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State* (London: Routledge); Gournay, Isabelle & Jane C. Loeffler. 2002. Washington and Ottawa: A Tale of Two Embassies. *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 61(4), 480-507; Loeffler, J. C. 2000. The Identity Crisis of the American Embassy. *Foreign Service Journal* June, 19-20. On embassies more generally, see Loeffler, Jane C. 1998. *The architecture of diplomacy: building America's embassies*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press)

[3] For more on the 'un–democratic' nature of US embassies see Glancey, Jonathan. 2009. The architecture of diplomacy. *The Guardian*, January 9; Ouroussoff, Nicolai. 2009. At a Border Crossing, Security Trumps Openness. *New York Times*, July 26.

created from the everyday performances and practices of the international community in the field. The chapter investigates the nature of this space and considers what its impact is on its 'inhabitants' through comparison with UK and US gated communities.

The second part of the chapter brings these two dynamics together by looking at how the privileging of certain humanitarian built forms structures and defines the humanitarian landscape. It does this through two case studies: the sport utility vehicle (SUV) and the so–called grand hotel. These cases have been chosen on the basis that they were identified in Chapter One as being dominant material tropes of the humanitarian experience in the field. Through these case studies, this chapter concludes that the built environment contributes to the maintenance of distinct spatial epistemologies and reinforces the divide between donor and beneficiary. The chapter demonstrates that this divide is not limited to the strict form of the humanitarian compound, but exists throughout the humanitarian landscape.

Part I: How the Material Matters, a Framework for Analysis

The use of the built environment to control human action is one of the fundamental tenets of urban planning and, more recently, of urban crime control (Minton, 2009). It also underlies the improvements to humanitarian building security, as discussed in the preceding chapter. The intention of these security upgrades is to ensure the separation of two groups of people – the people that support a given humanitarian operation and those who pose a security threat. It rests on the assumption that these groups are static, identifiable, and containable. This approach can be seen in the use the security barrier to restrict Palestinian movement between the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel (Weizman, 2007), or in the design of a classic prison which relies on material restraints to ensure the restriction of prisoners' movements.

The uniting feature of this type of material control is that it is the planned outcome of human agency. The control is intentional and the material, built environment is considered to be inviolable. But there are also unintended outcomes of spatial planning decisions in terms of curtailing or controlling human movements. Theorists as distinct as Newman (2003) and Jacobs (2000) have observed the unintended impacts that spatial design has on community security through the various ways in which it allows its users to see, occupy, and take ownership of their environments. By shaping patterns of behaviour, the built environment changes behaviour by making certain options more or less efficient, desirable, noticeable, or palatable. Work on spatial syntax argues that the layout of buildings will influence all

manner of human behaviour, from the efficiency of a daily routine; to the types and frequencies of interaction with other people and things; to the scenes and landscapes that are observed (Dovey, 1999; Hillier and Rooksby, 2002). While such observations are common to urban planners, humanitarians rarely take them into consideration in a conscious manner. But through the designation of certain areas of a city as secure, for example, a higher number and frequency of aid workers will be attracted to these areas' rental properties, restaurants, bars, and services. Not only will this potentially reshape the city, but for the aid worker, where they go and how they travel through it will constitute their experience of that place. In the terminology of the social theorist, Henri Lefebvre, these trajectories and places will structure the aid worker's *perceived space* and *lived space* (Lefebvre, 1991).

Perceived space (or spatial practice) is the space of everydayness. It is how a place is commonly used in routine existence and contains the "routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure" (Lefebvre, 1991, 38). Lived space (or representational space) is the space of "the imagination which has been kept alive and accessible by the arts and literature" (Shields, 2004, 210). It is

> space as *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'…This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects (Lefebvre, 1991, 39).

These two spaces are connected, trilectically, to a third space: conceived space (or representations of space).[4] This is "conceptualised space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers…all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (Lefebvre, 1991, 38) and is analogous to what I have been calling, in the context of humanitarian intervention, the humanitarian imaginary.

Applying Lefebvre's insights to the EC's advice to staff on "relations with local people" demonstrates that quotidian humanitarian practice severely limits the aid worker's exposure to the local surroundings and creates a highly biased map of his/her environment (European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, 2004, 21). They advise managers and staff to "spend a

[4] Most theorists consider lived space to be the 'third' space Soja, Edward W. 1996. *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. (Oxford: Blackwell) ; Shields, Rob. 1999. *Lefebvre, love and struggle: spatial dialectics*. International library of sociology (London: Routledge) ; Shields, Rob. 2004. Henri Lefebvre, in Phil Hubbard, *et al.* (eds.) *Key thinkers on space and place*, pp. x, 356 p (London: Sage); Saco, Diane. 1998. *Cyberspace and Democracy: Spaces and Bodies in the Age of the Internet* (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis). My designation of it as second space is purely within the rhetorical context of my argument.

considerable proportion of their time meeting and talking with a representative variety of local people" as part of an effective security strategy (European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, 2004, 21). They go on to stress the importance of

> random visits to homes in a variety of geographical areas…; visiting people living away from major towns and away from major roads. (There is a tendency for busy humanitarian staff to visit people near easily accessible towns and routes far more than those in areas off the beaten track);...visiting areas inaccessible to vehicles, on foot if necessary (European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, 2004, 21).

The statement implies that even in the context of unsecuritised, normal, everyday humanitarian practice, spatial patterns, routines, and rituals occur that influence the way in which the aid worker sees and understands his/her environment. It is part of the habitus of aid work and needs to be considered for what this entails.

Pierre Bourdieu pioneered the concept of habitus as a way of getting beyond the problem of structure versus individual agency. Bourdieu himself defines habitus as

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organisational practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them (Bourdieu, 1990, 53).

Painter elucidates this famous definition by describing habitus as

> the mediating link between objective social structures and individual action and refers to the embodiment in individual actors of systems of social norms, understandings and patterns of behaviour, which, while not wholly determining action…do ensure that individuals are more disposed to act in some ways than others (Painter, 2000, 242).

Habitus is a notoriously slippery concept (Hillier and Rooksby, 2002). For the purposes of this discussion, the most important element to note is that it questions the privileging of human agency over material form. The place(s) surrounding the individual need to be considered for how they structure the thoughts, actions, dispositions, and preferences of individuals and in turn, attention needs to be given to how surroundings can be changed through individual action (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu claims to transcend "the dualism between explanations that attribute social change and social reproduction to certain overarching structures and theorisations that privilege individual subjective intention or experience" (Bridge, 2004, 59). In a similar vein, Giddens' structuration theory sees physical place and the actions of the individual as "simultaneously determinant and mutually

recursive rather than a simplistic dualism of opposing forces" (Warf, 2004, 132).[5] In both cases, there is no first instance of action, but a mutually constitutive relationship between the material environment and the individual.

More recently, drawing on work in the philosophy of science (Stengers, 2000, 1997) and post–structural philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004), Latour has also attacked the dualism of structure and agency, however from a more radical perspective. He claims that binary distinctions of people and things, of nature and society, serve only to obscure the underlying assemblages and networks which distribute power not only from human subjects to things but also in the reverse (Latour, 1993; Laurier, 2004). According to Latour (1993), the distinction between things and people – the world of objects and the social world – has never existed. He urges us to resist the modern urge to super–impose this artificial distinction upon lived experience, and to recognise the co–constitutive relationship between human and non–human actors. Unlike the previous theorists, Latour does not espouse a Marxist under–pinning, but rather positions himself in the anti–foundationalist tradition of Bergson (1988), James (1981), and Whitehead (1956; 1960).

The application of the insights of these theorists to discussions about humanitarian intervention reveals the urgent need to consider the co–constitute nature of aid workers and their built environments. The next section of this chapter will examine this spatial relationship in more depth, first by looking at the spaces that they create; second by examining the impact that these spaces have on those around them; and finally by considering the reciprocal impact of the spaces on the aid workers themselves.

Auxiliary space

The previous chapters have put forward the idea that through spatial practice in the field, a distinct space is created that is offset from its immediate environment. Chapter Two explored how the physical environment contributes to the maintenance of this space. But the argument that is being advanced is that there is a lived and perceived space of the field that exceeds the simple built form of enclosure such as the compound. This section both elucidates the qualities of such a space and explores how it might be constructed.

[5] Giddens, Anthony. 1984. *The constitution of society: introduction of the theory of structuration*. (Berkeley: University of California Press) ; Giddens, Anthony. 1993. *New rules of sociological method: a positive critique of interpretative sociologies*. 2nd edn. (Oxford: Polity) ; Giddens, Anthony. 1995. *Politics, sociology and social theory: encounters with classical and contemporary social thought*. (Cambridge: Polity)

The term auxiliary space is evocative of the auxiliary forces of a Roman army. These largely volunteer forces were brought together from across the Roman Empire, in flexible groupings to establish outposts of empire. Similarly, international humanitarian workers are drawn from a wide range of locations and brought together in a foreign land to promote shared values and cosmopolitan norms.[6] While differing in their approach and personal relationship to the particular location, like auxiliary forces, aid workers all have the shared objective of assisting and supporting a particular strategic goal. They are also fluid: moving frequently from one theatre of response to the next. Without pushing the analogy too far, it is useful in illuminating a key spatial aspect of international aid workers in the field. Even when they are not explicitly a spatially constrained group, boundaries are formed which create and maintain divisions between various groups.

Randolph Collins investigates how lifestyle rituals, which he defines as "natural rituals in the middle ground between formal ceremonial and low key unfocussed social encounters" (Collins, 2004, 297), create social boundaries which map out one group of individuals from another.[7] As applied to the concept of auxiliary space, it is plausible that the everyday lived experience of being part of the humanitarian community in the field creates and maintains social boundaries, which separate it, as a group, from the local community. In particular the principles of time, networks, rituals, and velocity play key structuring roles.

An essential constitutive aspect of auxiliary space is the role that differential understandings of time play in its creation and maintenance, particularly when compared to its immediate physical surroundings. The temporal structure of the in–country workday, including holidays and working hours, for example, will be strongly influenced by the country of origin. Local customs such as prayer and fasting may come into conflict with competing temporal demands such as fiscal and reporting deadlines from headquarters. The length of

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[6] For more on Roman auxiliary forces see Duncan-Jones, Richard. 1990. *Structure and scale in the Roman economy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) ; Luttwak, Edward. 1976. *The grand strategy of the Roman Empire from the first century AD to the third*. (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press) ; Holder, Paul A. 1980. *Studies in the auxilia of the Roman army from Augustus to Trajan*. (British Archaeology Reports) ; Goldsworthy, Adrian Keith & John Keegan. 2000. *Roman warfare*. (London: Cassell) ; Voegelin, Eric & Michael Franz. 2000. *The Ecumenic Age*. Order and history (London: University of Missouri Press)

[7] See also Tilly, Charles. 2005. *Identities, boundaries, and social ties*. (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm) ; Nexon, Daniel H. 2009. *The struggle for power in early modern Europe: religious conflict, dynastic empires, and international change*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press)

time that staff spends in a country also sets them apart from the local community. Much of the work carried out by an organisation may be done by staff who come for either very short periods as consultants (a few days or weeks), or for slightly longer, but still temporary, assignments of six months to two years. To remain in a country longer than a few years is unusual in most agencies and particularly so in the context of emergency relief and reconstruction. The demand for such skills is high and workers are often quickly moved on to the next emergency. The significance of this is recognised by the agencies themselves. As described by DFID in a recent report,

> [b]ecause of the hardships and the stress involved, the contract length of postings varies between countries. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the standard initial length of a posting is 6 and 12 months respectively whilst for secure countries it is often 36 months. Shorter contracts are important to safeguard the welfare of DFID staff but the resultant staff turnover needs to managed well if it is not to be harmful to DFID's development efforts. Our country survey found that 40 percent of teams believed that the standard length of overseas posting in their country was not long enough to promote staff development or to operate most effectively. Developing country officials and DFID staff also reported that staff turnover has been disruptive to relationships with key stakeholders and contributed to a loss of institutional memory (National Audit Office, 2008, 3.8).[8]

The relationship between constructions of space and understandings of time were addressed by the spatial theorists previously discussed. For example, Lefebvre proposed the idea of moments as the fundamental building blocks of affective, and ultimately spatial experience, and later was intrigued by ideas of rhythm in everyday life (Lefebvre, 2008, 2004).[9]

More recently, the relationship between the construction of place and time differentials has been taken up by globalisation theorists, who see increasing velocity as a defining characteristic of late–stage capitalism (or of a new age depending on their ideological bent) (Castells, 2000; Beck and Ritter, 1992; Giddens, 1990; Massey, 2006; Sassen, 2000).[10] Without entering into a discussion of the diagnostic utility of these theories, I do think that their descriptive power of networked relationships, which operate according to differential time requirements vis–à–vis their physical surroundings, is applicable to spaces of contemporary humanitarianism. Duffield, in a lecture, has referred to this linked geography of humanitarian spaces as the "aid archipelago" (2009). The fundamental qualities of this

[8] The occurrence of burnout amongst this group of individuals is also very high.

[9] On the relation between time and spatiality see also Kern, Stephen. 1983. *The culture of time and space 1880-1918*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson) .

[10] On velocity see Virilio, Paul. 2006. *Speed and politics*. Semiotext(e) foreign agents series (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e))

archipelago is its disjuncture with the local physical environment: temporally, socio–culturally, and in terms of mobility. As an exemplar, consider the description of the American base at Guantanamo:

> in some regards modelled on a vision of small town America: the base has a Starbucks and a MacDonald's; it has four wind turbines that generate enough energy for it to remain self sufficient; it has a scouts club; a bar and two traffic lights, the national anthem plays every morning; Miss Teen USA has even paid a visit. Through this sort of cultivation of a particular vision of American life in the base the claims of the homeland are asserted over those other bodies stationed there: the guards. […]Via the conduct of the American part of its population, therefore, the claims of the homeland are re–iterated through the presentation of a particular vision of American life in the base (Reid-Henry, 2007).

While no UN bases have the financial wherewithal to contain a Starbucks, the rituals of the enclave exist none the less. Clothing is Western, the language is usually that of the previous colonial power, the electricity, water and sanitation systems, and communications networks are self–contained. Certain exceptional behaviour is also permitted within the confine. This does not only apply to the ability to drink alcohol in Muslim countries, for women and men to work together or for women to bare their heads, but also to the categorisation of workers into pay scales and privilege according to their place of birth. Within the UN system, those workers categorized as local will earn a fraction of what their international colleagues earn.

The distinction between local and international categories of staff goes beyond pay grade. It also dictates status within the organisation, and the length of time spent in a place. While international contracts tend to be quite short, as previously examined, local employees may spend their entire lives working for one organisation in one place. With reference to security phases,

> locally recruited staff members may be evacuated from the duty station in only the most exceptional cases in which their security is endangered as a direct consequence of their employment by the organization of the United Nations (United Nations, 10).

The priorities of INGOs and multilaterals are also strategically and temporally more closely linked to their respective places of origin than to that of the host government (Collier, 2007). As the source and location of primary funding, it is in their 'space of origin' – the country or institution in which they are ordinarily based – that field missions are approved and results

are assessed.[11] The creation and oversight of contracting, procurement and assessment all happen in the space of origin, as does the recruitment and retention of staff. Employees' career paths are tied to their points of origin, or, through short–term contracts, they are tied to particular events or disasters that may be leveraged into working in other, similar situations. Current debates and policy models at headquarters will inform strategy and approaches where programmatic operating procedures are often based on best practice or lessons learnt from previous reconstruction efforts, and may be implemented in a new situation with minimal adaptation to local circumstances. In the case of post–tsunami Aceh, the larger organizations flew in their crisis response teams from headquarters and quickly transported those field staff who had been working on similar crises (Telford and Cosgrove, 2006).

This often rapid circulation of staff between humanitarian missions and the links to headquarters are what Duffield is referring to in his term archipelago. Such velocity is logical from the perspective of the organisation. In order to accomplish a quick and efficient intervention an organisation needs people who are experienced with the instruments and processes of humanitarian response. An organisation cannot afford to re–invent all its procedures at every new disaster. From a political perspective, however, the reification of a mobile space of response means that certain assumptions regarding the appropriate process of response become increasingly difficult to challenge and will develop into the *de facto* way of doing things in a the event of humanitarian crisis. Within the context of the humanitarian compound, in Chapter Two, this tendency creates an environment where "you can forget where you are and sip your latte."[12]

The impact on 'others'

So far, the discussion has been primarily centred on how the space affects its primary inhabitants: the aid workers. It is also necessary however to consider how this space affects those around it, namely the intended beneficiaries and associated local community.

The impacts of restructuring a built environment are well documented, most notably for its counter–intuitive and unintended consequences. Scott (1998), Ferguson (2006) and Hodge

[11] While there is a stress in the programmatic literature on downward accountability, the key stakeholders remain those organisation and individuals who fund the intervention.

[12] As one NGO worker cynically quipped. Interview 5–e, Dili, 20 May, 2008.

(2007) all look at the way in which large–scale development schemes have backfired. In the area of humanitarian response, work by Edkins (2000b), Keen (2008), Duffield (2001), Chandler (2006), and Marriage (2006) have demonstrated how the implementation of humanitarian interventions produce unintended and often negative consequences for the very people for whom the intervention has been designed. While ideas of the reciprocal causal relationship between subjects and their environments have been common currency in other, more spatially oriented disciplines, development studies and practice have not, in the main, stressed the importance of spatial concerns. Doing so, reveals a whole set of ways in which the presence of the international community inadvertently changes its space of intent. For example, a well documented phenomenon upon the arrival of a peacekeeping mission is the nearly simultaneous arrival of prostitutes (Higate, 2007; Higate and Henry, 2004; Spees, 2004; Whitworth, 2004), which will change both the social structure and physical topography of a locale.[13] The majority of slim body of policy work that looks at the impact of (mostly peacekeeping) missions concentrates on the negative externalities that are introduced into the local economy such as inflation and the 'brain drain' of highly qualified local staff into menial but highly paid jobs with international organizations (Carnahan, Durch *et al.*, 2006). But other, more subtle effects occur as well.

In his work on everyday life, Michel de Certeau distinguishes between strategies and tactics. He calls a strategy

> the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed. As in management, every 'strategic' rationalisation seeks first of all to distinguish its 'own' place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from an 'environment.' A Cartesian attitude, if you wish: it is an effort to delimit one's own place in a world bewitched by the invisible powers of the Other. It is also the typical attitude of modern science, politics, and military strategy (de Certeau, 1988, 35-36).

A description that could equally apply to the contemporary humanitarian field mission. But according to de Certeau, any strategy *necessarily entails* the appearance of tactics that will be deployed by those whom the strategy is intended to control, or in the case of

[13] For an examination of this phenomena in historical perspective see Gillem, Mark L. 2007. *America town: building the outposts of empire*. (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press)

humanitarianism, to assist. These tactics are inseparable from any strategy, and will arise wherever one is imposed.

De Certeau describes a tactic as the exploitation of the gaps in a strategy; as equivalent to "wile" (Certeau, Jameson *et al.*, 1980, 6).[14] It has its own type of mobility,

> a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse (de Certeau, 1988, 37).

De Certeau particularly emphasises the deployment of tactics with regard to differentials in time. While a strategy has schedules and routines, tactics have "heterogeneous rhythms" that can be used to destabilize the strategy (de Certeau, 1988, 38-39).[15] He calls these practices, "making do".[16] In a context of post–disaster reconstruction, tactics are manifest by the intended beneficiaries in the way in which they use, adapt, or reject the houses, infrastructures or trainings that are provided for them by donors; in the way in which they 'make do'. [17]

How donors' strategies are adapted through the tactics of their intended users will be discussed in more detail in Part II of the thesis. For the remainder of this section, I will concentrate on the how donors themselves understand their built environments to have an impact on the surrounding communities. Returning to the previous discussion of the potential impact of the compound, its effects tends to be understood within the international community in one of three ways: in terms of symbolism; exceptionalism; and formalism.

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[14] See also Coleman, Simon. 2002. Do you believe in pilgrimage?: Communitas, contestation and beyond. *Anthropological Theory*, 2(3), 355-68; Crang, Mike. 2000. Relics, Places and Unwritten Geographies in the Work of Michel de Certeau (1925-86), in Mike Crang & Nigel Thrift (eds.) *Thinking Space*. Critical Geographies, ed. Tracey and Gill Valentine Skelton (London and New York: Routledge); Buchanan, Ian. 2000. *Michel de Certeau*. Theory, culture & society (London: Sage)

[15] De Certeau has been criticized for his totalising, unidirectional, and unmediated c.f. Frow, J. 1991. Michel de Certeau and the Practice of Representation. *Cultural Studies*, 5(1), 52-60. Likewise there is a tendency to provide a romantic and totalizing vision of the 'other' and to mythologise resistance c.f. Fiske, John. 1989. *Reading the popular*. (London: Unwin Hyman) .

[16] This term would be further elaborated within the context of other disciplines, most notably, in the area of peasant resistances Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death without weeping: the violence of everyday life in Brazil*. (Berkeley, Ca. & Oxford: University of California Press) ; Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the weak : everyday forms of peasant resistance*. (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press)

[17] De Certeau also uses the French term *bricolage.*

Traditionally, the baby–blue of UN peacekeepers or the Red Cross of the IF/ICRC has been a form of security in itself. By marking those buildings, assets, vehicles as property of the international community it *symbolises* that they and their inhabitants and users are protected by international law.[18] But the explicit targeting of humanitarian installations, such as in Baghdad and Algiers, has raised questions as to what else these symbols represent. An examination of the security manuals imply that what is symbolised is a state of exception: a continued global inequality between North and South/rich and poor that the organisations' mandates seek to redress. In the case of the built form of the compound, it may be seen as a location where exceptional behaviour takes place, as compared with the local population. It thus may become materially and symbolically associated with this inequality, exceptionalism, and ultimately, hypocrisy, and may become the target of hostilities from the local population.

This *spatial exceptionalism* has been the subject of much discussion over the last several years within the social sciences, particularly the form of the camp. Drawing (often loosely) on Agamben (1998), theorists such as Ek (2006), Minca (2006), and Edkins (2000a) have used the concept with reference to particular geographic locations or confined spaces where the established juridical order was arbitrarily suspended by the sovereign.[19] However, recent scholarship has questioned the applicability of Agamben to these so–called unique spaces by positioning them within longer geo–political narratives (Reid-Henry, 2007; Kaplan, 2005). Rather than a new and exceptional experience, these nested spaces, exempt from local laws and conditions, are the historical norm. Imperial cantonments, religious ghettos, elite suburbs have been a constant throughout the history of the built environment. The simultaneous presence of distinct cultural artefacts has been a recurrent characteristic of a moving and interdependent world (Bhabha, 2004; Tomlinson, 1999; Hirst and Thompson, 1999).

This recognition challenges suggestions such as those from Glancey (2009) that foreign buildings such as embassies should pay tribute to local architectural traditions. If the local is a variant of the global, why is it preferable to yield to the style of the moment, and *which*

[18] The implication was that if these assets were to be touched, a higher penalty would be invoked than a similar crime against a local civilian, as the workers of these organisations represented a higher, universal ideal.

[19] Recently, interest in the intersection between spatiality and sovereignty has also been taken place with reference to Schmitt, Carl & G. L. Ulmen. 2003. *The Nomos of the earth in the international law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*. (New York: Telos Press) .

'local' tradition is to be considered the preferred one? Therefore, rather than assuming that the co–terminus presence of different built forms is in itself a potentially disruptive force, there is the need to ask *how* this might be so.

Some development critiques, like Duffield (Duffield, 2009), and myself in an earlier work (Smirl, 2009), suggest that the form of the compound could evoke earlier forms of North/South relations such as the colonial enclave. A similar suggestion is also made by Hirst with regard to the military form of the fortress which he says is a "vital part of the European experience of urbanism" (Hirst, 2005, 180). Beyond its military objective, such a form would be a constant reminder to the citizenry of the ruler's elevated position, and their right and potential capacity to see and know all (Foucault, 1995).[20] If the built form in question is a European one, then its use in other contexts, even if its use was benign, could result in an association with originating ideas of conquest and domination. However, this would require either the demonstration of the affective, and universal significance of particular forms; or the demonstration that populations in one country are operating within the same semiotic frame of reference as the country of origin. In addition to assuming the perspective of local beneficiaries, it also ignores local settlement patterns, which in many parts of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East are highly focussed upon private, inward looking space; the compound being a common spatial arrangement for all sectors of society, and not necessarily restricted to the elite or the military. That contemporary spatial arrangements invoke previous patterns of colonial domination also raises issues of the inter–generational transmission of ideas which lies outside of the capacity of this study to examine.

This is not to say that visual and formal associations should be dismissed out of hand. However, rather than proposing an essentialist assumption that certain forms imply certain reactions on the part of host populations, a deeper level of analysis is required that asks why certain forms seem to be associated with certain outcomes. Within the context of the political iconography of the city, a common assumption is that "axes reflect totalitarian tendencies, while less formal arrangements express democratic conditions" (Sonne, 2003, 29; Sudjic, 2005; Sudjic and Jones, 2001; Walker, 2003). A related idea is that buildings are characteristic

[20] For more on the use of defensive, military architecture in the creation of an Israel see Yacobi, Haim. 2004. *Constructing a sense of place: architecture and the Zionist discourse*. Design and the built environment (Aldershot: Ashgate) ; on the defense of diplomatic space see Vale, Lawrence J. 1992. *Architecture, power, and national identity*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) ; and on spaces of incarceration or detainment see Kaplan, Amy. 2005. Where Is Guantanamo? *American Quarterly*, 57(3), 831-58.

of their producing societies, an idea that was explored by the artists Bernt and Hilla Becher who dedicated their lives to the photo–documentation of industrial typologies such as the winding structures of mines, processing plants, water towers, factory halls, silos and blast furnaces. Obsessed with both the form and function of these structures they wanted to use classification to better explore their intuition that these so–called anonymous buildings had "landscape–defining characteristics" (Lange, 2007, 28).

The Bechers were particularly interested in the association of particular forms with their social era and how the forms impacted on their landscapes and social environments. Applying this to the context of humanitarian field missions raises questions as to which era or society compounds are associated with and what they say about the society in which they are currently deployed.[21] According to Lefebvre, "the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space" (Lefebvre, 1991, 38). He also proposed that different historical eras have different spatialisations – different ways of thinking about space and also being shaped by it. This latter point brings the discussion back to the previous chapter, and a dramatically under–examined aspect of the increased securitisation of humanitarianism: how the living in an enclavic space affects the humanitarians themselves. With reference to compounds, it raises the question whether the form of the compound could itself be a contributing factor to increased perceptions of insecurity. This question will be explored in the following section with reference to so–called gated communities.

The impact on the aid workers: gated communities

Since the 1960s the defensive architectural technique of the gated communities (GCs) have been studied as a identifiable and prevalent settlement type (Blakely and Snyder, 1997).[22] Atkinson and Blandy (2005) define GCs as a "housing development that restricts public access" symbolically and/or physically, "usually through the use of gates, booms, walls and fences. These residential areas may also employ security staff or CCTV systems to monitor access. In addition, GCs may include a variety of services such as shops or leisure facilities"

[21] See also Virilio, Paul. 1994. *Bunker archeology*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press)

[22] There is an extensive literature on gated communities including those in the 'developing world'. See the Special Issue of Housing Studies 20:2 (2005) and the special issue of Environment and Planning D: Society and Space. Within this literature there are well established debates regarding whether it is possible to speak of a universal form of gated community, and authors such as Atkinson and Blandy caution against making universalist claims that ignore local history and context. Atkinson, Rowland & Sarah Blandy. 2005. Introduction: International Perspectives on the New Enclavism and the Rise of Gated Communities. *Housing Studies*, 20(2), March 177-86.

(Atkinson and Blandy, 2005, 177). Most importantly, they represent an attempt by their residents to disengage with the wider social processes in an attempt to increase security, safety and comfort. They are "residential enclaves [that] in all times and places share a basic characteristic of setting themselves off from the urban matrix around them, through control of access, and the solidification of their perimeters" (Luymes, 1997, 198). Work on GCs in the UK reveals startling similarities with international humanitarian compounds. Acknowledging the immediate difference - that the compound is established with the purpose of accomplishing a particular labour outcome, while the GC is established primarily for residential and associated purposes such as increased social cohesion and quality of life - comparisons may offer insight both in terms of material form, and in the ways it affects their residents' understandings of their local environments.

For many internationals, the experience of working in the field will have an effect much like that of Atkinson and Blandy's description of the inhabitants of so-called GCs in the UK, US, and Canada. Consider Atkinson and Flint's description of connected "fortified residential and work spaces" which resemble "a seam of partition running spatially and temporally through cities" (2004, 877). Residents of GCs restrict their movement to a small and secure number of places…"elite fractions seamlessly moving between secure residential, workplace, education and leisure destinations" (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005, 180). Similarly, for many humanitarians in the field, movement is restricted between office, home and target project. Contact is often limited with the aid recipient, and when it exists it is highly codified interaction – often within humanitarian or government space.

Significant research has been undertaken on the relationship between the form of a GC and the perceptions and behaviours of its inhabitants. The results raise similar questions for the inhabitants of humanitarian enclaves. In particular, three findings are applicable to this discussion. **First**, Low (2001, 2003) found that the process of living in gated communities may have actually increased residents' fear, even though fear of crime and personal insecurity are cited as a major reason for moving to a GC (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). The first way that this would occur was through the general, overall increased attention to security which heightens residents' awareness of anything that might seem abnormal. By surrounding themselves with constant reminders of the possibility of crime such as CCTVs, guards, and gates, residents begin to frame their existence in terms of secure versus non–secure situations. As applied to the case of international humanitarian assistance, a similar

impact could be seen from the introduction of system wide, standardized training programmes for staff; the mainstreaming of security concerns into programme design; and the introduction of increased physical security measures.

A **second** way in which GCs increase their residents' fear, is through heightening the residents' distinction between the space of the GC, which is safe, and that which lies outside the gates and is unsafe and threatening. Residents of GCs expressed the feeling of being threatened "just being out in normal urban areas, unrestricted urban areas" (Low, 2001, 54). The process of gating a community is by definition about identifying those that belong and those that do not. The category that is used to define this belonging is spatial. Those that are outside are against us; those that are within, are with. Rationally, there is a recognition that not all the people who live outside of the humanitarian enclave are enemies. However, looking at the impact that gating has on its inhabitants, even within a normal civic setting, raises serious concerns as to the potential impact of humanitarian enclaves on the humanitarians who reside in them.

A security expert in Banda Aceh felt that within expat communities in the field a "siege mentality" can develop, where "you don't speak the language, don't read the local press so are completely isolated from what is going on around you. This can mean that you have the impression that everyone is incredibly nice, or that everyone is out to get you."[23] He went on to say that, in an immediate post–disaster situation internationals are particularly isolated; they "really don't have any contact with the local community."[24] In this context, an event that is actually part of the "normal chaos" happens, such as kids throwing stones at a passing car, or a mugging of international staff, it is seen as a huge aberration warranting (and requiring) stringent security measures. [25] And unlike most other places, where the longer you stay, the more comfortable you get, in an expat situation the situation is "highly charged" and because as a Westerner you are "highly visible" even in a neutral or positive way, you begin to think that everything is about you, and may interpret things in a skewed way. [26]

[23] Interview 1–l(ii), June 10, 2008, Banda Aceh.
[24] Interview 1–l(ii).
[25] Interview 1–l(ii).
[26] Interview 1–l(ii).

At the time of the above interview, in June 2008, there had been an increase in recorded incidents of crime (World Bank/DSF, 2008) which many expats in Aceh were anecdotally interpreting as proof of increasing anti–foreign sentiment amongst the Acehnese. However, my informant proposed that this crime increase could actually be seen as evidence of things in Aceh "returning to normal"; that people were no longer in a state of "post–tsunami shock". [27] Further, prior to and during the tsunami, crime figures were not published making any statistical increase using an artificially low crime rate for its starting point. However, within the 'gated community' of the 'expat bubble', anecdotal experience (often second or third hand – see Chapter Four on community enforced negotiation for more on this) quickly turns into fact, resulting in increased security measures on the part some international organisations.

A **third** way in which the spatial arrangement of the gated community affects its residents' perceptions is through path dependence. Low observed that once residents started to live within GCs they were unlikely to move out again (2001, 47). This is supported by Merry (1981) which found that a lack of familiarity with ones' surroundings is an important contributing factor to residents' perception of danger. Again, as applied to trends in humanitarianism, the more that humanitarians tend to enclose themselves, or adopt defensive or deterrent security strategies, the less likely they will be to revert to acceptance strategies. Even if the fear is not supported by empirical evidence, over long periods of time it my lead "people to unnecessarily secure themselves, remove themselves from social activities, and increase levels of distrust of others" (Wilson-Doenges, 2000, 600).[28]

This is supported by those who argue for a geographic basis for culture; for example, Wagner and Mikesell (1962) stress the importance of the "habitual and shared communication [that] is likely to occur only among those who occupy a common area'" in the formation of a cultural identity (as quoted in Cresswell, 2004, 17). Within this cultural identity are shared models of self and also shared models of the other. By increasingly using the compound epistemology as the basis for envisaging and understanding the place that

[27] Interview 1–l(ii).

[28] See also Blakely, Edward J. & Mary Gail Snyder. 1997. *Fortress America : gated communities in the United States*. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press) ; Taylor, Ralph B. 1988. *Human territorial functioning: an empirical, evolutionary perspective on individual and small group territorial cognitions, behaviors, and consequences*. Environment and behavior series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) .

they are in, both possibilities of thought and possibilities for action are shut off: dismissed as non–options or worse, simply unimaginable. If we consider Tuan's (1977) view that as human subjects we get to know the world through our perception and experience of places, if the perceptions and experiences of humanitarian workers are confined to compounds, then there is little chance for humanitarians to get to know the world that they are assisting. If the objective of the humanitarian assistance is to better understand, relate to, assist, and capacitate the 'other', is this not completely at odds with such practices of enclosure? If experience of space and place are fundamental to a human's understanding of the world, what is the impact of humanitarian enclavism on its inhabitants' understanding of the beneficiary that lies outside the gates?

A counter argument could be that the compound is just the extreme example of humanitarian assistance, used only in the least permissive of environments. In the majority of cases, humanitarian workers move freely within society. This criticism will be explored in the second section of this chapter by looking at two dominant material forms of 'the field' as identified in Chapter One: the sports utility vehicle and the grand hotel.

Part II:
Case Studies: the Agency of the SUV & the Grand Hotel in Shaping Humanitarian Assistance

Sport utility vehicles

The white sport utility vehicle (SUV) has become a symbol of international humanitarian presence; in many countries better recognised than the symbol of the blue helmet of UN peacekeepers. To humanitarian workers, it represents physical safety both in terms of its large frame and on–road visibility, and in terms of the protection that has historically been derived from its symbolic values of neutrality, impartiality, and universality. However, to the Third World it has arguably come to represent the petroleum fueled inequality that has led to a situation where a self appointed few behave in a way which damages their surroundings and others. More recently, the SUV may also be seen as a symbol of hybridity and the co–option, by local power brokers, of Western elite dominance.

While the white SUV has become a ubiquitous part of aid work, any history of why or how this happened is lacking. In the late 1970s, Land Rover held 80 percent of the aid market

(Wernle, 2000). While this translated into merely 40,000 to 70,000 vehicle sales per year, their importance "goes far beyond the numbers" (Wernle, 2000). As late as

> the early 1980s, Land Rover was the vehicle of choice of aid organisations such as the United Nations, Oxfam and the Red Cross. There was even an old saying that, for 70 percent of the world's population, the first vehicle they saw was a Land Rover (Wernle, 2000).

By 2000, Land Rover's share had fallen to just over five percent, with new entrants such as Toyota, Nissan, and Mitsubishi taking over Land Rover's share (Wernle, 2000). The form and design of the vehicle, however, has remained remarkably unchanged since the introduction of the iconic Defender model in 1948. It is still a four by four, all terrain vehicle, based on model of a jeep (Campbell, 2005). It has a gross vehicle weight of approximately 3,500 kg, a strong, rigid chassis often with an integrated front grill and all terrain tyres. It sits high off the ground and can pull a load equal to its own weight.[29] In the context of humanitarian aid it is almost always painted all white, and bears the logo of the agency that owns it. The jeep itself was developed in response to the requirements of troop movements during the Second World War (Campbell, 2005). As the jeep's heir, "[f]rom the outset then, the SUV has been marked by the military" (Campbell, 2005, 956).[30] Nor has the potential of this history been lost on the marketing teams of Land Rover and its competitors. Advertising and promotional material continues to emphasise the capacity of the SUV to protect its passengers from the dangers of the passing environment (Campbell, 2005; Glover, 2000; Bradsher, 2003). In the original 1940s and 1950s development context, Land Rover did present one of the few vehicular options for development agencies to transport staff in areas with poor or sometimes non–existent roads.

Just as the vehicles are associated with safety and refuge (Glover, 2000, 364), they are also intentionally linked in their promotional material with ideas and images of adventure, individualism, and frontierism. Speaking of SUV names (and therefore of marketing strategies), Glover says that a common theme is "the Western frontier, those most mythologised and culturally laden of times and places" (Glover, 2000, 362). Likewise, according to Campbell, consumers of SUVs felt that through their purchase they expressed "a rugged individualism" emphasising their connection to untamed nature and the idea of

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[29] Taken from the Land Rover website http://www.landrover.co.uk/gb/en/vehicles/defender/features–and–specifications/technical–specifications.htm accessed August 13, 2009.

[30] See also Shapiro, Michael J. 1997. *Violent cartographies: mapping cultures of war*. (London: University of Minnesota Press) .

the frontier (Campbell, 2005, 957). This is significant for the context of humanitarianism in two ways. First, with regard to potential viewing audiences in the First World, the image of a brand such as Land Rover or the Toyoto Buffalo being used in humanitarian contexts will add to the appeal of their eventual purchase. As quoted in *Automotive News,* a management consultant named Ken Slavin, being interviewed for a report on Land Rover said,

> [w]hen you have disasters, you need 4x4s [sic.]. There's nothing better for a 4x4 vehicle than to be seen with an emblem that says United Nations or Oxfam or the World Wildlife Federation. That's worth a whole lot of money to any manufacturer (Wernle, 2000).

This is supported by Koshar's research which demonstrates that "a car's notionally unique national qualities depend in part on how motoring nations from other nations regard it as both artifact and image once it travels, literally and figuratively across national borders" (Koshar, 2004, 123).[31]

The second way in which the association of the SUV with frontierism, rugged individualism, and adventure is significant is with regard to the aid workers who use them. As discussed in Chapter 1, in so far as the aid workers can be seen to be part of the international community, and sharing a habitus of advanced stage capitalism in their countries of origin, they will have common symbols and mythologies. Particularly with regard to OECD nationals, to step up, into a (white) Land Rover, is to simultaneously step *into* the myth of the First World aid worker assisting Third World populations in need. Furthermore, it allows them to step into it in relative comfort and, until recently, security.

The experience of being inside a Land Rover, or inside an automobile more generally, has been the subject of sustained attention in the area of the phenomenology of car use (Sheller, 2004; Dant, 2004; Thrift, 2004).[32] These theorists look at how the experience of being in an automobile – either as a driver or a passenger – has affective, and ultimately epistemological and ontological impacts. Work by Miller (2001) and Michaels (2001) has proposed the car as social–technical hybrid with driver and vehicle operating as a co–constitutive assemblage. In line with Sheller (2004) I argue that the experience of being in a car, or in this case a Land Rover, "orient[s] us toward the material affordances of the world around us in particular

[31] See also Edensor, Tim. 2004. Automobility and National Identity: Representation, Geography and Driving Practice. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21(4-5), 101-20.

[32] On 'automobility' and the sociology of mobility see Urry, John. 2007. *Mobilities*. (Cambridge: Polity) ; Featherstone, Mike. 2004. Automobilities: An Introduction. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21(4-5), 1-24; Featherstone, Mike, N. J. Thrift & John Urry. 2005. *Automobilities*. (London: Sage) .

ways and these orientations generate emotional geographies" (Sheller, 2004, 228).[33] These emotional geographies (or in Lefebvre's terms perceived and lived spaces), shape the way in which the aid worker see themselves *in* a place.

In the most basic of terms, it changes the experience that the aid worker has of the physical environment and climate. Instead of being exposed to heat, rain, dust, the aid worker can ride along in a climate controlled environment. Likewise, it changes the noisescapes of a place, enclosing the rider in a sonic envelope (Bull, 2004). It may allow the passengers to move at a higher velocity than the majority of other people around them, introducing a level of inequality of movement, and possibly making movement for those on foot, bike, motorcycle, horse, or even lower, older cars more dangerous. This may also introduce an affect of privilege and/or guilt for this inequality.

Work on the social impact of the SUV in America suggests that the rise of the sports utility vehicle parallels a model of citizenship that values safety and inviolability of person above all else (Mitchell, 2005; Campbell, 2005). Similarly, the material practices of the international community may be seen to constitute an attempt at self–imposed exclusion from the wider neighbourhood, as well as the exclusion of others (Atkinson and Flint, 2004), reinforcing the observations from local residents that "the objectives of the international community are different from those of the community they are assisting."[34] Just as the white Land Rover (or SUV) is associated with certain affective and symbolic resonances to the people who use it, it may evoke other, quite different things to those for whom it is meant to assist.

Globally, the SUV's large petrol–guzzling body has increasingly become a symbol of the excess of the West and the exceptionalism with which the West is seen to regard itself. The vehicle is also a constant reminder of the underlying economic driver of much global

[33] See also work on the sociology of emotion Hochschild, A.R. 1983. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. (Berkeley: University of California Press) ; Hochschild, A.R. 1997. *The Time Bind: When Work Comes Home and Home Becomes Work*. (New York: Metropolitan Books) ; Hochschild, A.R. 2003. *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work*. (Berkeley: University of California Press) ; Bendelow, G. & S. Williams. 1998. *Emotions in Social Life: Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues*. (London: Routledge) ; Katz, J. 2000. *How Emotions Work*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) ; Goodwin, J, J Jasper & F Polletta. 2001. *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press) ; Ahmed, S. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

[34] Interview I–v, Banda Aceh, 19 December, 2007.

conflict: unequal access to oil.[35] In El Fasher, Darfur, home to one of the UNAMID 'supercamps' discussed in Chapter Two, the introduction of hundreds of humanitarian Land Cruisers (or Buffalos, in this context) has led to the streets being widened to avoid traffic jams. The example of Darfur, also points the destabilisation of the myth of the SUV as safe haven. As of August 2009, "due to a spate of carjackings" all Toyota Land Cruiser (Buffalo) vehicles have been withdrawn from use by UN personnel (UNAMID, 2009). This phenomenon is not restricted to Darfur, and increasingly SUVs are seen as valuable both for their re–sale price and as fighting vehicles for rebel groups who would cut off the Buffalo's top and attach a gun.[36] The increased frequency of carjackings is forcing aid agencies to look to other, less conspicuous modes of travel, such as local taxi drivers and minibuses. More dramatically, these trends are rendering car travel, as a mode of transport, effectively unusable outside of urban centres, and in Darfur, travel by helicopter between cities and towns, has become the norm for aid staff. Nor is the co–option of vehicles restricted to SUVs. In April 2007, the New York Times leaked a UN report that said the Sudanese government had been intentionally painting its planes white with UN insignia in order to ship arms to Darfur (Hoge, 2007).

What it is important to note, is that while carjackings have increased, they have not been associated with an increase in violent attacks against humanitarian workers. In general, the transaction is a purely monetary operation, with the vehicle being taken away and the passengers returned unharmed. However, returning to Latour's idea of hybridity (Latour, 2005) and Miller's proposal of the car as an assemblage of worker and vehicle (Miller, 2001), any assault on a SUV is seen as an assault on the aid worker, and ultimately, on the larger humanitarian norms the vehicle has come to represent. Rather than an assault on the hybrid form of the Land Rover/aid worker, the capture of the vehicle is a bid for what it embodies: wealth, excess, greed, military might. It is a clear statement that what is wanted from the international humanitarian community is not their assistance, but their material assets and the associated power. Nor can this desire be interpreted in a simple, linear manner, which sees rebels groups or government militia capturing humanitarian assets in order to replicate Western material modes of existence. Rather, these actions need to be interpreted as a local response – a 'making do' – to the already, existing, structuring material space of

[35] And as much as the vehicles have become the target of displeasure with the international community, so too are they sought after by government ministries as a requirement of international assistance.

[36] Interview 3–b(iii), Phone Interview, August 13, 2009.

humanitarian assistance informing "a new range of strategic military initiatives" (Hoffman, 2004, 212) in contemporary Third World conflict.

The Grand Hotel

A second material trope that is seen as a key aspect of auxiliary space, is that of the so-called, grand hotel (Denby, 1998; Sandoval-Strausz, 2007). Technically, the term is used to refer to a large, luxury hotel, usually dating from the nineteenth century and having colonial heritage (Henderson, 2001; Stewart, 1988). But in the context of humanitarian work, it will usually refer to one or two large hotels in a given city or town which are used for the majority of diplomatic conferences, summits, press briefings, retreats, and negotiations. They will often be left over from previous regimes such as British colonialists in Singapore (Henderson, 2001), or the Portuguese in East Timor. What makes it architecturally recognisable will be both the grandeur and scale of its physical form and its multi–functionality. It will usually have bars, restaurants, conference halls, travel agents, shops, swimming pools, and health clubs. And while these may not be well maintained, at some point they would have been the height of luxury in their respective milieus. In the context of international humanitarian assistance, the grand hotel may be the only structure with adequate facilities from which to live and work.

The space of the grand hotel provides the setting for a remarkable number of political acts and performances. Particularly in the context of humanitarian assistance, the space of the grand hotel is central to both formal, high politics, and to the politics of the everyday: the informal meetings, chance encounters, and daily rituals of both local political classes and visiting elites (de Certeau, 1988; Bourdieu, 1990; Vesely, 2004). Not only is it implicated in local power structures and contestations, but, in the event of social and political collapse, it often provides sanctuary and enclosure for guests and local populations alike. As a site of perceived inequality and amorality it may equally be the target of outrage, vandalism and violence (Sandoval-Strausz, 2007). But despite its centrality to international political interactions and events, outside of cultural (Jameson, 1990) or tourism studies (Pritchard and Morgan, 2006) it remains largely unexamined. Although its iconic or emblematic status is regularly invoked in the context of a particular conflict, with the sole example of Hoffman's radical ethnography of the Brookfields Hotel in Sierra Leone (Hoffman, 2005), I have come across no work within international relations or development studies that seriously engages

with the object of the hotel and its central role in international humanitarian intervention.[37] The present study begins this investigation, although it only provides an initial overview of a larger work on the topic, which is currently under preparation.[38]

As discussed in the context of aid workers' autobiographies, the space of the hotel is a recurrent theme. In the context that aid workers can also be considered to fall into the related category of tourists or travellers, the hotel, as a temporary shelter, is a necessity. In the literature of tourism and travel studies, this is the way in which the hotel is most commonly considered: as a networked space of flows (Castells, 2000); a transit space (Pritchard and Morgan, 2006); a non–space (Augé, 1995). The necessity for frequent refurbishment, novelty, and (re)branding meant that high–end hotels also presented the opportunity for famous architects to experiment with ultra- (or post-) modern designs. This arguably significantly influenced the framing of the object of the hotel in cultural theory (McNeill, 2008; Davis, 2006; Jameson, 1990).

While the 1990s theories on hyper–modernity and globalisation have since been amply critiqued for their hyperbolic claims regarding the ontology of a new age, certain aspects warrant a re–examination. In particular, the much (ab)used work of Marc Augé deserves a second look. Augé assigned the term *non–lieux* to

> contemporary topographies characteristic of what he calls 'supermodernity' – namely those urban, peri–urban, and interurban spaces associated with transit and communication, designed to be passed through rather than appropriated, and retaining little or no trace of our passage as we negotiate them (O'Beirne, 2006, 38).

And as identified in Chapter One, 'threshold spaces' made up a significant part of the humanitarian field experience. For Augé, these are not "just spaces to be analysed but manifestations and above all agents of a contemporary existential crisis, a crisis of relations to the other, and by extension a crisis of individual identity constituted through such relations" (O'Beirne, 2006, 38).[39]

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[37] Martin Coward deals with it obliquely in the context of his theory of "urbicide" Coward, Martin. 2002. Community as Heterogeneous Ensemble: Mostar and Multiculturalism. *Alternatives*, 27(1), 29-38; Coward, Martin. 2009. *Urbicide : the politics of urban destruction*. (New York: Routledge) ; Coward, Martin Philip. 2001. Urbicide and the question of community in Bosnia-Herzegovina. [electronic resource]. (University of Newcastle upon Tyne).

[38] Smirl, Lisa. (In progress). Do not disturb: the affective significance of the "grand hotel" in international politics. *Journal of Architectural Theory and Practice*, (Special Issue on Gated Communities).

[39] See also Augé, Marc. 1998. *A sense for the other: the timeliness and relevance of anthropology*. Mestizo spaces (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press) ; Augé, Marc. 1994. *Pour une anthropologie des*

This crisis of relations to others is particularly relevant in the context where the 'other' (or in the humanitarian context, the beneficiary) only makes select appearances within the non–space of the hotel: as subservient waiters, porters, maids, or prostitutes. In the ethos of contemporary hotel management, staff should neither be seen nor heard, melting seamlessly into the décor, effectively erasing themselves from the interior landscape. Katz claims that, in the context of twentieth century US and European hotel construction, hotels

> came to resemble cities in microcosm, vertical cities housing laundries, valet services, barbers, gymnasiums, travel offices, drug stores, libraries [sic.], music rooms, baggage rooms, automobile fleets, libraries, swimming pools, clothing stores, banks, florists, gift shops, screening rooms, medical services, convention halls, newsstands, mail services, roof gardens, and ballrooms – to name only the respectable services that hotels provided. Like the self–contained superblock, the privatized space of the metropolitan hotel could be said to have turned its back on the city (Katz, 1999, 137).

As claimed by Ibelings, while the 1950s and 1960s saw the global spread of these big, architecturally similar hotels (Ibelings, 1998),[40] many of which are still in use in the Third World capitals under discussion, by inhabiting these non–spaces, the international humanitarian community may be seen as turning its back on its constituents. However, the nature of the work is such that the beneficiary is at the centre of the imaginary and if the beneficiary is absent, then s/he must be invented. Inside the non–space, says Augé "[t]here is no room…for history unless it has been transformed into an element of spectacle" (Augé, 1995, 103): into a meeting, conference, or workshop where the problem can be distilled into so–called action points and plotted into a matrix.

The significance of the hotel as metaphoric stage for a wide range of humanitarian gatherings has been vastly under–emphasised. As a touristic enclave, hotels are "'purified' spaces, which are strongly circumscribed and framed, wherein conformity to rules and adherence to

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mondes contemporains. (Paris: Aubier) De Certeau also used the term non–space, although with reference to the space of tactics. There is the potential for an interesting comparison between these two authors use of the concept de Certeau, Michel 1988. *The practice of everyday life*. trans. Steven Rendell (Berkeley: University of California Press)

[40] See also King, Anthony. 2004. *Spaces of Global Cultures; Architecture, Urbanism, Identity* Architext Series (London: Routledge) ; King, Anthony D. 1990. *Urbanism, colonialism, and the world-economy: cultural and spatial foundations of the world urban system*. International library of sociology (London: Routledge) and Wharton, Annabel Jane. 2001. *Building the Cold War: Hilton International hotels and modern architecture*. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago) .

centralized regulation hold sway" (Edensor, 2001, 6).[41] Moreover, the rules and regulation are geared towards the international clientele immediately creating a power–imbalance between those that are framing the discussions and those have been invited to attend. As security becomes more of an issue for the international community and mobility increasingly restricted it is likely that the necessity of the hotel as a venue for conferences will not diminish in the near future.[42] Nor are the 'performances' necessarily restricted to official gatherings.

The hotel lobby has long been regarded as a key site of social, cosmopolitan interactions (Berger, 2005; Kracauer and Levin, 1995; Cocks, 2001) and in the context of the field its significance is amplified. This is the place where local and international businessmen, journalists, politicians, aid workers all come to unwind and to interact (George, 2004; Courtemanche and Claxton, 2003; Minion, 2004). Information is exchanged, alliances publicized, and rumours spread. A further examination of the significance of these networks is undertaken elsewhere, but for the purposes of this chapter, I will now turn to how these non–spaces are seen by those outside the hotel.

As Tomlinson rightly points out, these non–spaces are only non–spaces from the perspective of the visiting travellers; for the hotel's employees and the local residents they are real spaces (Tomlinson, 1999). From an external perspective – that is, not only from a perspective of someone standing 'outside' but also from the perspective of someone who is not a user of these spaces – the grand hotel is important in a number of ways. First, it may represent a space of opportunity: a place of potential employment; a locale to sell souvenirs; or from which to offer taxi rides. Second, it may be seen as a place of safety. In the context of Hotel Timor, in Dili in 2008, one of the three internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in the city had grown up outside the hotel's front door.[43] To the IDPs, proximity to the hotel was thought to confer safety.[44] Similarly in the context of the Serbian siege of Sarajevo, Martin Coward quotes from testimony before the US Congress in which gunners on the hillside

[41] See also Sibley, D. 1988. Survey 13: Purification of Space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 6, 409-21; Schmid, Karl Anthony. 2008. Doing ethnography of tourist enclaves: Boundaries, ironies, and insights. *Tourist Studies*, 8(1), April 1, 2008, 105-21.

[42] Likewise, the continued use of short-term consultants and experts guarantees their place within auxiliary space.

[43] The other two were outside the main hospital and across from the UN's Main Base: Obrigado Barracks.

[44] It also potentially offered positive externalities like running water, or leftover food.

overlooking Sarajevo apologized to BBC journalist, Kate Adie, for shelling the Holiday Inn where the foreign correspondents were known to live, "explaining that they had not meant to hit the hotel, but had been aiming at the roof of the National Museum next door" (Coward, 2002, 30).[45] During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, *Hotel des Milles Collines* became a refuge of last resort for internationals and Rwandan civilians alike as they attempted to barricade themselves against the Interhamwe's machetes (Dallaire and Beardsley, 2003).[46]

The imagined safety of the hotel is the by–product of the association with not only international humanitarian law and humanitarian conventions, declarations, and resolutions but also because of the hotel's association with inequality and privilege. These same qualities can also make the hotel a target, as seen most recently with the bombing of the Taj Hotel in Mumbai (Biswas, 2008). What is being attacked, precisely, is a matter of debate. While it is sometimes seen as a direct targeting of the symbols of foreign interests (Wharton, 2001), it could just as likely be seen as the targeting of domestic political dealings (Donais, 2002), or in its embodiment of the "essential common ground of togetherness" (Iveson, 2006, 80).[47] A hotel may also be seen as the site of immoral or amoral behaviour, which also contributes to it being perceived as a predominantly masculine space. More mundanely, as a high, often centrally located and well built structure, it may offer a valuable strategic acquisition from the perspective of local military actors.

In summary, the hotel contributes to the shaping of humanitarian relations in the field in myriad ways and deserves additional research attention. In the context of this thesis, its impact is most noticeable in the way in which it shapes the perceptions and understanding of the local situation for the aid workers it houses. For the people that pass through it, it is a temporary non–space, but for its host community, it is a part of everyday lived and perceived spaces. Considered in tandem with the SUV and other material forms of humanitarianism, the hotel creates a material landscape of humanitarian intervention. From the perspective of the internationals, this landscape is temporary, but from the perspective of

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[45] *Killing Memory: The Targeting of Bosnia's Cultural Heritage*. 1995, cited at http://www.h–net.org/people/editors/show.cgi?ID=124286 accessed on August 14, 2009.

[46] See also Harrow, Kenneth W. 2005. 'Un train peut en cacher un "autre"': narrating the Rwandan genocide and Hotel Rwanda. *Research in African Literatures*, 36(4), 223-32; Hitchcott, Nicki. 2009. Travels in Inhumanity: Veronique Tadjo's Tourism in Rwanda. *French Cultural Studies*, 20(2), May, 149-64.

[47] See also Coward. Community as Heterogeneous Ensemble: Mostar and Multiculturalism. ; Coward. *Urbicide : the politics of urban destruction*.

local people, it has become the permanent topography of assistance. The people in the hotel rooms, in the cars, in the offices will change but the built environment stays the same. If anything is symbolised by the compounds, the cars, the planes, perhaps it is first and foremost the repetition of the ritual of assistance. While the internationals each experience the field as a new, albeit enclosed, experience of the *'other'*, the material and spatial rituals of the interaction never change.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the various ways in which the material environment of humanitarian assistance impacts outcomes. I have argued that the primary way in which this occurs is through the subtle framing of perception (Goffman, Lemert *et al.*, 1997), and the creation of spatial epistemology particularly with regard to impressions and understandings of the 'other', the beneficiary.

By spatialising binary categories of good/bad; safe/dangerous, there is the tendency to regard those people who are located within the safe space of the hotel or compound as 'good' and those outside of the space as 'bad'. While the spaces discussed – the compound, the SUV, the hotel – ensure the virtual elimination of violent crime within their confines, their diplomatic space of exception may actually encourage other types of non–violent crime such as graft, theft and fraud. And while, according to one reading, the mobility and weightlessness of the internationals in these spaces is a powerful resource, it also opens up a space for the locals to exert power from below (Low, 2003, 131). With a longer time horizon of employment, local employees may have the knowledge of local personalities, relationship, and affiliations that may help direct projects or funds to the groups or agencies of their choice. Certain local workers may be in better positions to exploit loopholes in procurement systems, obscure nepotism, and act as informants to the host governments. These gated experiences will then contribute to how the internationals understand, interpret, and report back upon the entire country. They may fail to recognise that their experience of a given country is dramatically mediated by their experience within the secure spaces and that the actions of locals within these spaces are inevitably a response to the spaces themselves; a form of 'making do'. For example, in the UK government's reports on the failures of development assistance in insecure environments, the lack of capacity and implied dishonesty of local partners was often blamed for a lack of programme results (National Audit Office, 2008).

The idealisation of the beneficiary is equally common and necessary for the continuation of the humanitarian project. Without a sublime beneficiary, in need of and grateful for assistance, the entire project is called into question (Žižek, 1989). Interestingly, this process may be easier from within the confines of a secured enclave, as the reified abstraction of the beneficiary is not challenged by the contradictions and complications of a human subject.[48] For example, DFID uses a theoretical model as the basis of determining aid allocations to various countries. It is based on World Bank data and other indicators that are fed back from country level assessments.[49] However, the circumscription of information and knowledge (which constitute these assessments) will be determined by the extent to which the international community is kept separate from the populations that it is meant to assist.

Both tendencies – the overly positive and the overly negative constructions of beneficiaries – are amplified by the short time span of internationals relative to nationals which mean that many internationals have a superficial experience of their 'surrounding' environment. Much like the gated communities residents' disengagement "with wider urban problems and responsibilities, both fiscal and social, in order to create a 'weightless' experience of the urban environment" (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005, 180), the internationals' ability to leave, to come and go at will, guards against anything but the most codified and superficial interaction with local citizens. While spatial divisions between humanitarians and beneficiaries have always existed, increased perceptions of risk and securitised building trends are reinforcing (and reifying) them in physical form. Similar to Hoffman's use of the barracks as a spatial metaphor for contemporary African cities (Hoffman, 2008), the compound has become a metaphor for contemporary humanitarian intervention – at the level of individual, group, and society.

[48] A similar process occurs to the traveller, more generally. See Besio, Kathryn. 2007. Depth of fields: travel photography and spatializing modernities in Northern Pakistan *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25, 53-74.

[49] "The model uses income and overall population size as a proxy for the extent of need, and World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Analysis data as a proxy for government capacity to use aid effectively. The model has led DFID to increase the proportion of aid going to populous poor countries, some of which are also insecure, such as the DRC…" National Audit Office. 2008. *Department for International Development: Operating in insecure environments*, October 13. NAO: London.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated how material and spatial factors are essential to understanding contemporary humanitarianism. It has looked at how the built environment of the field shapes the spatial experience of aid workers and how in turn, this contributes to the way in which humanitarianism at large is conceptualized. The resulting imaginings are then delivered back to the beneficiaries as humanitarian assistance. The objects and assistance that is given represents the needs, wants, and understandings of the humanitarian community, rather than that of the beneficiary. If, and when, the beneficiary adapts the aid to better accommodate their own needs, these modifications rarely match the expectations of the humanitarians involved. This mismatch does not result in the donor undertaking a re–evaluation of the approaches and techniques that have been used or why they haven't worked. Instead, the material and spatial constraints of humanitarianism mean that any anomalies are written out of the official transcript of a given response.

This is not to say that humanitarian interventions do not result in reflective assessment exercises, either by the agencies themselves or by external bodies. They do. However, the assessments and exercises face the same constraints as the original projects. First, as products of auxiliary space, the observations and recommendations of aid workers and of visiting consultants and experts are framed by the material and spatial circumstances of the field (Goffman, Lemert *et al.*, 1997). Second, even when the analyses are the outcome of less constrained research, for example, of in–depth academic research or locally produced studies, the material and spatial characteristics of humanitarianism effectively neutralizes any potential for change that these inputs may contain. Because the material and spatial aspects of humanitarian intervention are an almost completely overlooked aspect of any intervention, they tend to undermine proposals for significant change and perpetuate the dominant modality of antagonistic assistance.

The concluding section of the thesis will synthesize these findings into a spatial model that illustrates the dynamic which occurs between the field and headquarters. The model is tri–partite, inspired by Lefebvre's trilectic model outlined in Chapter Three (Lefebvre, 1991). It has three components: auxiliary space –– the space of the humanitarian imaginary –– and the space of tactics.

Proposed Model

In the first part of the thesis, I identified the concept of auxiliary space. This refers to the physical, material, and spatial environments resulting from the everyday practices of the international community when performing an intervention. These include the logistical aspects of working in the field but also include the spaces that are created through institutional factors. For example, high staff turnover and heavy reliance on short–term experts mean that most employees will only minimally engage with local culture, place, or language. Further, field missions operate on a different time scale from their surroundings: working according to the budget cycles of their domestic governments and defining their own holidays and working hours. Safety and security requirements mean that field staff may live and work in enclosed areas, creating path dependency where expat employees frequent the same bars and restaurants. This all contributes to a unique auxiliary space, which is effectively de–linked from local circumstances. Within this auxiliary space, the material trope of the compound is prominent and can be considered as a metaphor for the current practices of securitisation of field missions.

What I've referred to as the humanitarian imaginary is the second aspect of my theoretical framework. It is the abstract, conceptual, yet programmatic way the international community thinks about the so–called problem of under–development (Easterly, 2006; Ferguson, 1990). The imaginary refers to the shared norms, institutions, and legal frameworks that shape and constitute international discourse on humanitarian assistance. It also includes the associated policies, technologies, and expertise. Examples here are needs assessments, logical frameworks, or conflict assessment matrices. The imaginary is sustained through the development and promotion of campaigns, targets, and slogans such as the MDGs or, in the context of reconstruction, building back better. It includes the "sanitized worlds of civil society and good governance" (Corbridge, 2007, 194). This humanitarian imaginary is based largely upon inputs from auxiliary space: on the feedback, evaluations, and pictures that are reported back from the field. And because these inputs are developed primarily from within the auxiliary space, which is de–linked from local environments, a dynamic is created where the 'real' local circumstances are always kept at bay, always outside the process. This, in turn, creates the tendency to seek out or create the spectacle of the development problem or need. Any solution is biased towards the needs and expectations of the donors, rather than the beneficiaries. Even when the solution is more nuanced and originates from beyond auxiliary space, the material and spatial processes will

eviscerate its critical potential by transforming it into the sanitised language and mechanisms of the humanitarian imaginary.

The third aspect of the model refers to the way in which the projects that are built are experienced and adapted by their intended (or unintended) user. It can be considered as lived project space and used to understand how the beneficiaries respond and adapt to what the aid workers build and provide. De Certeau refers to these practices as 'making do' (de Certeau, 1988).[50] In the thesis, this process of 'making do', is explored in the context of the post–tsunami solution of the single family house, in Aceh. Instead of using the houses to live in, as the donors anticipated, the beneficiaries and other stakeholders such as the GAM and BRR, used the process of house building as a revenue stream and the house as a fungible commodity. Such tactics stood in contradistinction to donors perception of the house as a sacred gift, and challenged their idealised conception of what a humanitarian response is supposed to look like and how a beneficiary should act. But the space of the humanitarian imaginary is an abstract space that relies on conceptual, reified models and templates. There is no room in this space for any feedback that destabilizes the fundamental principles of humanitarianism, as they are understood within the imaginary. It pushes out these dissonances, privileging the spectacle of humanitarian as represented within auxiliary space.

This framework is also not necessarily limited to North/South relations. In the context of the post–Katrina reconstruction of the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans, Brad Pitt's version of 'building back better' uses techniques derived from international best practice in so–called green architecture. However, the houses are being built back on the original land, despite the fact that the area is still considered at risk of future levee breaks. While the residents of the Lower Ninth Ward were not unhappy to have solar panels and carbon neutral cladding, their real needs and desires were downplayed in the humanitarian imaginary. In the space of the imaginary, the global ideal of green housing developments and innovative architecture superseded the residents' immediate and basic need to have their neighbourhood made safe from future hurricanes. Similarly, New Urbanist planning principles of community centred development are to be commended for their socially and environmentally responsible tenets. However, the New Urbanist aspiration of a full scale re–

[50] James Scott has developed the related concept of 'métis' or 'muddling through' in Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. The Yale ISPS series (New Haven, Conn. & London: Yale University Press)

visioning of the Mississippi Gulf Coast failed to account for the conservative predilections of their clientele (or beneficiaries) who preferred McMansions and SUVs to 'small homes' and public transport. Examining issues of donorship in an American (or North/North) context also highlights the ethical issues involved in designing for another group or even person. Here, approaches used in the architectural profession, such as *charrettes* warrant closer attention from humanitarians, as do the lessons that arose post–Katrina with regard to the appropriate timeframe in which to plan and where such planning should take place.

Implications for Theory and Policy

It is important to point out what this study is *not* advocating. It is not calling for humanitarian workers to fling open their compounds and walk into the far–flung regions of the world to live at one with the 'other'. In fact, it implies the opposite. Highlighting the material constraints, which are necessary for the practical application of contemporary humanitarianism to function, simultaneously identifies why humanitarianism is fundamentally flawed in its conception. To go to another, to tell them what they need, and to do so from a position of superior material power, can only be a form of domination. As long as the material power is so much superior as to be unassailable, so great as to be completely overwhelming, humanitarianism may be seen to function. Those who are overpowered will accept what is being offered without question, without retort. But as the power differential lessens and the mechanisms of control become visible, those being dominated may begin to exert their own desires, opinions, and approaches. This implies that the current displays of material force and securitization by humanitarianism cannot be read as extensions of Western power, but rather as its absence. The need to retreat to the compound – both figuratively and physically – implies that an urgent and fundamental rethink about the objectives and possibilities of humanitarian assistance is required.

Ironically, the same space of the compound and its associated auxiliary space is the very thing that prevents such a re–visioning. The rapacious demand from headquarters for field reports, best practices, lessons learnt, and situation reports encourages a spectacle of development as constructed from within the humanitarian enclave. Here, local issues are framed in global terms. Recent trends toward the securitisation of humanitarian space also suggest that local challenges to the humanitarian project (i.e. 'making do') are interpreted through global frames of reference. For example, increases in criminal activity and the

prevalence of small arms and light weapons in many of the states where humanitarian workers live, have become linked within the humanitarian imaginary to global terrorists threats. Rather than understanding increases in kidnappings or the theft of NFI shipments as acts which are motivated by local dynamics, humanitarian organisation frame these acts as their explicit targeting as part of a larger anti–Western campaign. In turn, the retreat of humanitarians toward militarized spaces and the deployment of aid workers to overtly politicized territories such as Afghanistan and Iraq, does link together local political dynamics with global demands, reinforcing the beliefs of the humanitarian imaginary.

It is possible that it is too late to redress the situation: that the dynamic put in place through previous modes of spatial domination (Smirl, 2009) have reconfigured the landscape to such a degree that new, hybrid approaches to development and conflict have emerged. Hoffman (2004) examines the transformation of warfare within the context of West Africa. In Sierra Leone, the targeting of civilians by combatants was a tactic adopted by rebel groups seeking to maximize their political leverage *vis–à–vis* the international community. According to Hoffman, this tactic was subsequently adopted by Liberian rebel groups, in the context of their own civil war. While the targeting of civilians was originally the perverse result of humanitarian assistance in Sierra Leone, it has become disjoined from its origins and has been further developed and adapted to suit the needs of Liberian political forces. Similarly, it is possible that the political project of humanitarianism as embodied in the bodies and built environments of aid workers, has become irrelevant (if this was ever not the case). Their significance stems only from the political and economic resources that they entail. In so far as the kidnapping, ambushing, and hijacking of humanitarian aid is a tangible rejection of the humanitarian project, it is political. But step out of the compound, and these acts are perhaps no more than the tactics of battle to which aid workers are at best incidental, at worst an unwitting revenue stream (Munkler, 2005).

In the context of already existing humanitarianism (Hoffman, 2004), this work also points to the need for further work on aid workers' experiences and perceptions in the field. As mentioned in the introduction, initially, the focus on the material aspects of aid work is often met with suspicion and defensiveness: that what is being critique is not the aid worker's relative wealth by the aid worker's *morality*. Examining the larger structures which shape and constrain the aid worker's experience in the field, moves the discussion away from the level of personal accusation and individual failings and into a realm where measured

critique and analysis can be undertaken. Such a critique points to the need for further work on issues of access and remote management, most notably by rethinking what constitutes 'the field'. As a marker of the structural pathologies of the post–war aid architecture, the spatial distribution of headquarters and the field points to the need for a radical reconfiguration of the way in which aid is delivered. Ultimately, this will challenge the underlying principles of sympathy (Rutherford, 2009), assistance, and relief. To recognise that what is given cannot be extracted from the material and spatial (historical) processes in which it is embedded changes the parameters of and possibilities for humanitarianism. At a broader level, the consideration that material form needs to be considered for its potential agency (Miller, 2005; Latour, 1993) challenges the fundamental positivist assumptions of humanitarian intervention; a project which puts at its centre, the potential of the individual agent to change the direction of world history.

Future Research Directions

This thesis has been a first step toward applying a spatial and material lens to humanitarian intervention. As a first attempt, an intentionally wide scope was adopted. Not only were the spatial and material environments of the aid workers themselves considered, but the material and spatial qualities of the interventions were also assessed. As well as address these issues within a traditional North/South context, the dynamic of post–crisis reconstruction was also explored within a North/North context. Because of this broad scope, certain areas inevitably could not be investigated. Ideally one or two more cases would have been undertaken. Initially, I was interested in including South Sudan and/or Darfur as an in–depth case study. This would have allowed for further testing of the hypothesis that the material approach of the international community is similar, regardless of whether it is in a post–conflict or a post–natural disaster context. However, constraints of time and funding precluded this possibility. Through this thesis and my previous article (Smirl, 2008), I have exhausted the research potential of the Aceh case. The unexpected arrival of Hurricane Gustav, in August 2008 and the mandatory evacuation of New Orleans curtailed my field research on the Gulf Coast. However, I am undertaking further research on new architectural approaches to post–disaster housing there, in the context of a forthcoming article.

Additional work should also be done on the compounding tendency of humanitarian intervention and the increased securitisation of humanitarian personnel. Exploring the

spatial history of contemporary humanitarianism in more depth could provide insight into current trends of the rapprochement between military and humanitarian interventions. Buchanan and Muggah's (2005) findings that perceptions of insecurity were highest not only de facto active conflict situations but also in places like Nepal and Angola imply the possibility for a larger research project which would explicitly explore the potential link between levels of physical securitisation and perceptions of insecurity. Ideally this would be done under the auspices of a supporting organisation with a significant field presence, as it is almost impossible to obtain information on staff security as an independent researcher. The results of this research would be of relevance not only to humanitarian intervention but also to broader understandings of the affective significance of the built environment. For example, what are the impacts of new housing developments with insurance requirements and building codes, which stress security (Minton, 2009)?

There is also a crucial need for sustained research work on impact of the material and spatial aspects of humanitarianism on surrounding communities (Carnahan, Durch *et al.*, 2006; Pouligny, 2006). Part of the reason that this had not been done is due to the practical difficulties involved in this type of research (translation, establishing the validity of responses, establishing a sufficiently long time horizon). However, such research could be an excellent locus for a critical re–evaluation of the humanitarian project. Together aid workers, and national and local actors could elaborate a full spectrum account of how aid as a process, an act, and a space reworks and has reworked the communities in which it operates.[51] Such a project could also integrate the tactics and approaches that beneficiaries and their associated communities and networks have deployed in the context of aid missions. This might move aid work away from the construction of imaginary subjects (and objects) of development and towards partnership that might be recognised as such by the 'partners' themselves.

The issue of time horizons also deserves further attention. Insufficient attention has been paid to the pernicious effect of short–term consultants on humanitarianism at large. Forensic work on the monetary investment alone would be revealing in its scale and scope. A historical investigation of the role of experts and consultants in humanitarianism, arguably

[51] This of course, opens up the question of where *this* work falls in the spectrum of mediated inputs; a question that I intend to address in subsequent research.

would be destabilising for the entire aid industry. Some of these areas, I intend to pursue in my own work. Others, I hope will picked up by other researchers.

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