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In security?

– Humanitarian organizations' and aid-workers'
risk-taking in armed conflicts

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Abstract

This study examines the field of attacks against humanitarian aid workers in conflict. The study seeks to contribute with a new perspective concerning organizational and individual risk-taking as jeopardizing aid workers' security. It further problematizes the dichotomous reasoning of whether to stay or withdraw operations when risks are high. This is done by discussing the problem from concept of human security in relation to the humanitarian mission. Data was collected through reading previous literature, conducting interviews and distributing a questionnaire.

The study finds several causes and motivators to high-risk behaviour and categorizes them as intentional and unintentional risk-taking. It further argues that organizations should take the perspective of risk-taking into account and manage unintentional risk-taking behaviour as it adversely affects the humanitarian aid workers' security.

Abstrakt

Denna studie undersöker problematiken kring attacker mot humanitära biståndsarbetare i konfliktområden. Studien ämnar bidra till detta forskningsfält med ett nytt perspektiv rörande risktagande på individuell så väl som organisatorisk nivå. Studien undersöker ifall detta risktagande kan äventyra biståndsarbetarnas säkerhet. Vidare problematiserar studien det dikotomiska tänkandet om huruvida organisationer bör dra sig ut eller stanna kvar i högriskområden. Detta görs genom att diskutera problematiken utifrån begreppet mänsklig säkerhet i relation till det humanitära uppdraget. Informationen samlades in genom att läsa tidigare litteratur, genomföra intervjuer och genom att distribuera ett frågeformulär.

Studien finner flera olika orsaker och incitament till högt risktagande och kategoriserar dessa som avsiktligt och oavsiktligt risktagande. Vidare uppmanar studien organisationer att beakta risktagandeperspektivet och att de bör hantera det oavsiktliga risktagandet eftersom det påverkar humanitära biståndsarbeters säkerhet negativt.

Keywords – *risk-taking, human security, humanitarian organization, aid worker, conflict zone*

Acronyms

HDR	Human Development Report
ICRC	The International Committee of the Red Cross
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
LIC	Low Income Country
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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1 Introduction

“The Red Cross temporarily pulls out of ‘critical areas’ in Zambo after mortar blast hurts 11” (GMA News, 2013); “Médecins Sans Frontières to pull out of Somalia after 22 years” (Smith, 2013); “Lack of security forces out Save the Children” (Gaines, 2007). Headlines like these appear in newspapers from over the world and show how the people working for human security end up as targets themselves. Although protected by International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in times of armed conflict, humanitarian aid workers are still being targeted by various armed groups including both terrorists and states (Rubenstein and Bittle, 2010). In addition to causing injury and mortality to the aid workers, the attacks also undermine and weaken the organizations’ capacity to carry out their operations (Bolletino, 2008).

The rules, environment and scale of armed conflict have changed and the role of non-state actors and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in contemporary conflict has grown increasingly important. In order to more extensively help the affected populations of conflicts, the 20th century has shown a multiplication of NGOs and humanitarian interventions (Duffield, 2012), especially in high-risk environments (Wille and Fast, 2013). However, the increased involvement in unsafe regions consequently jeopardizes the security of the aid workers and the mission they try to accomplish (Yalcinkaya, 2012).

To completely solve the problem of violence directed towards aid workers, one would have to investigate the arguments and goals behind these attacks, which is difficult to do without asking the perpetrators (Fast, 2010). Many authors have speculated around the reasons to why the attacks occur, resulting in a field of research containing various and contradicting explanations. Some claim that the politicization of humanitarian aid affects the perceived impartiality (Durham and Wynn-Pope, 2011) and the confusion created by the overuse of the concept *humanitarian* (Abiew, 2012; Buhmann et al., 2010). Others discuss the misuse of organizations’ emblems (Goniewicz and Goniewicz, 2013) whilst some argue for the changing nature of contemporary conflict (Rubenstein and Bittle, 2010; Stoddard and Harmer, 2006).

Although the perpetrators’ motives vary in a wide range, risk-taking is something that the aid industry and the individual worker themselves can control and thereby regulate to fit the security of the situation. The lack of individual and organization behavioural approaches is something emphasized by Fast

(2010), who means that, by acknowledging the importance of individual and organizational behaviour, the organizations can develop better ways of managing risk and security.

In their analysis of attacks against aid workers, Sheik et al. (2000) encouraged organizations not to intervene in high-risk areas, as doing so could increase security incidences. However, a recently published article has observed an increase in humanitarian interventions in insecure conflict areas (Wille and Fast, 2013). Connecting this with recent statistics that show a multiplication of security incidences towards aid workers (Stoddard et al. 2009), one can but wonder if the cause could be connected to increased risk-taking. A change of focus from the perpetrators motives to the risk-taking behaviour of the humanitarian workers and organizations could therefore be beneficial to the field of research.

1.1 Problem statement

In order to help the most vulnerable and affected populations in areas of conflict, humanitarian organizations expand their boundaries of jurisdiction, intervening in increasingly insecure environments and thereby jeopardize their staff's security. A heightened risk-taking from both individual as well as organizational level will expose the aid workers to various risks, which can lead to increased incidences of kidnappings, injury and mortality. If responding to these increased incidences by withdrawing operations, donors would lose their trust for the organizations and withdraw funds. Other than physically damaging the humanitarian aid workers, high risk-taking could also demoralize the whole industry and discourage the coming generations of aid workers. By losing the trust and funds of the donors and without any coming generation to recruit, the global humanitarian mission becomes jeopardized.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate attacks against aid-workers in conflict-zones from a security and risk-taking perspective. It will not seek the reasoning behind the attacks, but rather problematize the risk-taking behaviour of humanitarian organizations and personnel as potentially jeopardizing their own security, perhaps further jeopardizing the humanitarian mission. The risks taken by both the individual worker and the organizations will be further analysed from the perspective of human security. By highlighting the role of risk-taking this thesis further intends to contribute with a new and relevant perspective to the current field of research.

1.3 Research questions

In the context of armed conflict, the aim of the first two questions is to examine whether the risk-taking behaviour of aid workers or aid organizations could exacerbate the humanitarian aid workers' exposure to risks. The intention of the third question is to identify what reasons that motivate high-risk behaviour when operating in conflict zones.

- What kind of actions and decisions taken by humanitarian aid organizations could jeopardize the security of their workers in conflict-zones?
- In which situations do aid workers risk their own security, rendering them more vulnerable to attacks during armed conflict?
- When working in conflict zones, what legitimizes high-risk behaviour?

1.4 Contribution

As there is nothing connecting risk-taking and attacks in the literature today, this study will contribute to the research field by highlighting the perspective of risk-taking behaviour as potentially jeopardizing the aid worker security. The perspective of individual and organizational risk-taking could also be beneficial for humanitarian organization, which work in conflict zones, since taking it into consideration could enable a more extensive and thorough risk- and security management.

1.5 Definition

The thesis uses no single definition of armed conflict or conflict zone, but rather uses the concepts in general terms. Conflicts vary in intensity over short time-periods and within countries, cities or even on more local scales. Because of this, it is difficult to determine whether a humanitarian aid worker has experienced the same risks as another aid worker having worked in the same conflict in the same time-period. This means that even though the thesis would use a single definition of i.e. armed conflict, the contexts in which the aid workers have been active could still have varied significantly. When mentioning and discussing conflict zones however, the thesis refers to areas where an armed conflict is present and there are armed groups involved in armed combat. It should be noted that the thesis neither refers to political strife nor political disturbance.

2 Theoretical framework

As a theoretical framework for this study, three theories connected to risk-taking and aid work will be applied on the collected data together with the concept of human security, which will be discussed throughout the entire analysis. The theory concerning *The Normalization of Danger* gives a perspective from the organizations and the aid industry as a whole, highlighting the shifting ideas about disasters, emergencies and risk-management as an incentive for taking risks when working in conflict zones. The second theory, *Aid work as Edgework*, addresses voluntary risk-taking from the individual aid worker, emphasizing the inherent role of aid work as being risk-tolerant and meaning that the people practicing it knowingly puts themselves at risk to help others. Also concerning individual risk-taking, *Perceived risks and risk behaviour* emphasize the relation between perceived risks and risk behaviour using three different themes. *Human Security* is a concept that emphasizes everyone's universally equal right to the basic elements of security, and will be used in this thesis to problematize the risk-taking behaviour of organizations and individuals in armed conflicts. Both the three theories and the concept of human security will be used to analyse the data collected in order to answer the questions of this study.

2.1 The normalization of danger

In his article *Challenging environments: Danger, resilience and the aid industry*, Mark Duffield (2012) writes about a change in the aid industry and its way of thinking, which occurred after the end of the cold war resulting in a new way of working with security and risk. The perspective changed from a modernist 'protection from'-era to a post-modernist 'stay and deliver'-approach. Through these perspectives, Duffield (2012) also notes the evolvement of two different contrasting processes responding to the insecurity of humanitarian aid workers - the normalization of danger and the bunkerization of aid.

The modernists view disasters and emergencies, i.e. natural hazards that cause human suffering, as natural occurrences and as something external to society, meaning unmanageable. This view does not correspond with the later evolving post-modernist perspective, which perceives disasters and emergencies as something internal to society and therefore manageable (Duffield, 2012). In a similar way, the modernist view of that people should be free from risks has come to change into a more risk-

accepting approach. This means that risk and contingency is not only perceived as unavoidable, but also necessary to overcome problems in areas where security is low - much like the idea of resilience¹ (Duffield, 2012). Duffield (2012) states that this internalization of the concepts has constituted an incentive for increased humanitarian aid presence in internal conflicts and disaster zones of the global south, furthermore adding to the insecurity faced by the aid industry.

Duffield (2012) claims that aid organizations have come to accept threats and risks as a part of their work and that they, at the same time, are determined to stay in the insecure areas in which they are active. Duffield refers to this development as 'stay and deliver'. To be able to work in insecure environments and reach the one's they aim to help, the aid organizations let themselves become exposed to various risks. Through this resilience-based risk-accepting approach a normalization of danger has evolved (Duffield, 2012).

As a contrasting view, Duffield (2012) also notes a bunkerization of the aid industry as a response to the heightened risks that is met in the increasingly challenging environments in which the organizations operate. Instead of internalising risk and acting through resilience, the organizations distance themselves from the local context in which they work by building fences and walls, hiring unarmed guards and being increasingly active in fortified aid compounds² (Duffield, 2012). By distancing themselves from the local society through strengthening protective measures, Duffield (2012) suggests that the aid organizations not only hinder the workers from helping those in need, but also might adversely affect their security since the contact with the local populations often provide a lot of risk-knowledge and acceptance.

¹ Resilience, simply put, is a system's ability to absorb shocks and bounce back to its original state and is a concept that is used in all schools of science. In this specific context it is used to understand the ability of aid organizations to absorb risks and danger but at the same time remain functioning. It also explains the shifting pattern of aid interventions, from contemplating 'when to leave' to discussing 'how to stay' (Duffield 2012).

² An area built for protecting NGOs and international agencies accumulated into a specific location. The area is characterized by gates, walls, wires and guards, which, in combination with security restrictions, are meant to prevent the workers from being exposed to risks (Duffield, 2010).

2.2 Aid work as edgework

Roth (2014) starts off with explaining contemporary societies as risk societies, which has led to an individualization of risk, meaning that individuals are accountable for avoiding risks themselves through self-governance. She further notes that the increasingly insecure environments facing humanitarian aid workers has been responded to with higher risk-taking in some cases, and by increased protection in others (Roth, 2014).

In her article, Silke Roth (2014) writes about the voluntary risk-taking aspects of aid work and further argues that it should be seen as a kind of edgework. Edgework, she explains, stems from risk-taking work such as volunteer search and rescue, fire-fighters etc. and basically implies a work in which one voluntarily exposes oneself to observable risk towards one's physical and/or mental health (Roth, 2014). Although not seeking risks, people involved in edgework are depicted as not avoiding risks either since they apply for the work knowing that risks are a part of the job. Roth (2014) mentions two main perspectives to why people engage in edgework and further argues that these can be seen among aid workers; to work with a challenging and meaningful employment on the edge, acting as an escape of everyday life; it inhabits the flexibility and autonomy that characterizes contemporary societies.

When connecting aid work with the concept of edgework, Roth (2014) conducted interviews with aid workers asking them about reasons to why they joined the aid industry and how they cope with risks. Many of the aid workers chose the job because it gave meaning to their lives, whilst some saw the inhabited risks as attracting them to the work (Roth, 2014).

When talking about the aid worker and risks, Roth (2014) found that risk is something that is perceived as part of the work and that it is even necessary to fulfil the mission of delivering aid to affected populations, much like fire-fighters and rescue workers. If no one would be willing to take any risks, there would be no people to recruit as aid workers since risks is something inherent in the industry (Roth, 2014). Individualized risk-taking and self-governance approach guides the workers in making choices and assessing risks. Furthermore, three interesting themes were found; the workers perceive themselves as facing risks regardless of where they are, be it at home in a 'safe' country or working in a conflict zone. They also adjust their perception of risk to the circumstances; what is considered a threat or risk changes over time and becomes more 'normal' when the workers get used to it; that the workers

contrasted their security with nationals not having the option of ‘going home’ or being evacuated from the danger (Roth, 2014).

2.3 Perceived risks and risk behaviour

In their study, Brewer et al. (2004) test three different hypotheses concerning risk behaviour in relation to perceived risks. The hypotheses are all connected with health behaviour and present different type of responses to perceived risks, and are called: accuracy hypotheses, behaviour motivation hypothesis and risk reappraisal hypothesis. The authors look at risk-behaviour over time by testing perceived risks of a population unvaccinated from Lyme disease, transmitted by ticks, and whether this perceived risk contribute to any changes in their behaviour. Throughout their study, they show that all hypotheses are applicable (Brewer et al., 2004).

Accuracy hypothesis basically implies that risk perception is accurately reflected in individual’s risk behaviour and other risk factors at the time. For instance, if a person who perceives himself/herself to be at low risk of becoming infected by a certain disease actually is at a low risk, a risk-behaviour of not taking any protective measures is adequate. The hypothesis shows a relation between being at low risk and perceiving low risk and thereby not taking any protective measures at a given time, but does not imply a causal connection (Brewer et al., 2004).

Behaviour motivation hypothesis explains how a change in perceived risk also changes the risk behaviour of an individual. This implies that a perceived increased risk in being affected by a certain hazard leads to a change in risk behaviour, for instance using protective gear, becoming vaccinated or whatever protection/prevention fits the case. The authors exemplify this as “I feel at risk for getting Lyme disease, so I’ll get vaccinated”³ (Brewer et al., 2004, p. 127).

Risk reappraisal hypothesis shows how a change in behaviour can affect perceived risks, reversed to that of behaviour motivation hypothesis. It means that, for instance by taking high protective measures to

³ Although the authors use this sentence to describe the Behaviour Motivation hypothesis, it should be noted that there is no vaccine developed for Lyme disease yet.

avert some kind of risk, your perception of risks might decrease (Brewer et al., 2004). By feeling safe from taking a certain measure that is believed to reduce risks, you suddenly lower your risk perception. The authors note that the protective measure does not have to eliminate or even reduce the actual risks, but anyhow results in lower perceived risks. They also note that even a planned action of prevention might reduce risk perception, i.e. that a person intends to get vaccinated and thereby already perceives risks as lower (Brewer et al., 2004).

Although these hypotheses can only be proven or rejected through longitudinal data, they provide with interesting perspectives on the relation between perceived risks and risk behaviour and will be used as a theoretical approach when looking at risk-taking in the context of this study.

2.4 Human security

The concept of human security was first and foremost constructed as a critique to the previously dominant security agenda of national security, which had its central focus on the protection of the state (Acharya, 2008). As a contrast, human security is universal and seeks to capture the importance of individuals' security in a globalizing world. The concept further tries to emphasize how it is jeopardized by poverty, disease and armed conflict and it has received increased focus in contemporary societies and in the international community (Sköns, 2007).

Human security was initially defined in the Human Development Report (HDR) of 1994 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and is constituted by seven sub-categories; economic security; food security; health security; environmental security; personal security; community security; political security (Acharya, 2008). All of these sub-categories were distinguished by their particular focus on people and individuals' security and by widening of the traditional security concept (Acharya, 2008).

2.5 Summarizing the theories

Even though meant to work on different levels, the three theories have some things in common since they all aim to explain high risk-taking behaviour although emphasizing different motives behind it. The normalization theory argues that higher incentives for intervention by humanitarian organizations have lead to an increased exposure of high risks, which further has resulted in an internalization of insecurity,

thereby making the organizations unaware of the risks taken. Edgework explains people working in aid as taking high risks because of it being an inherent part of the job since they need to take them in order to help others. Perceived risks and risk behaviour emphasize different responses that individuals make in relation to risk, which could both lead to a higher or lower risk-taking.

2.6 Previous research

Observing previous literature concerning attacks against aid workers in conflict zones, one could argue that the research field is divided between two main aspects. Articles that seek causes and motivators, which lead to perpetrators attacking aid workers constitute the first aspect, and articles that concern organizational protective measures and security management constitute the second aspect.

As mentioned in the introduction, authors who seek causes and motivators to the attacks have contributed with various explanations emphasizing different important aspects. Stoddard and Harmer (2006) write about the increased incidence in attacks against aid workers, and further trace this to the transformation of contemporary conflicts. This is something also brought up by Rubenstein and Bittle (2010), who also emphasises the importance of international law and the Geneva conventions in protecting health workers in conflict. There are also many authors who write about the humanitarian principles and how breaking these have led to increased targeted attacks against aid workers. Abiew (2012) implies that the concept humanitarian has gotten a negative meaning and Durham and Wynn-Pope (2011) argue that a politicization of aid has deteriorated the impartiality of humanitarian NGOs.

Whilst many emphasize the importance of the humanitarian principles, authors writing about security stress different factors. Yalcinkaya (2013) argues for a military-NGO collaboration as an additional strategy to the current security strategies used by humanitarian organizations and Brabant (2010) notes a deteriorating security environment and writes about the difficulty of contemporary security management strategies. The latter is also brought up by Bolletino (2008), who further argues for implementation of common security standards and improved security data collection.

There are however no articles that have focused, or made any clear connections, on the relation between risk-taking and attacks against aid workers. By focusing on how risk-taking can affect aid worker security, this thesis sheds light on this new perspective in the field of research.

3 Method

To answer the questions outlined in this study, a literature analysis method and interviews with humanitarian aid professionals and security experts was used in combination with a questionnaire including humanitarian health workers with field experience. The choice of combining these methods was made in order to suit the purpose of the study. Literature analysis gives a good overview of the subject and the interviews together with the questionnaire provide perceptions of the individual worker and the people working with security (Bryman, 2008). The collected data was further analysed through the three theories outlined in this thesis together with the aspect of human security. To further identify and understand the motives behind high risk-behaviour, a Logical Framework Approach(LFA)-analysis was conducted. LFA is an analytical instrument used to conduct logical analyses and is often used in project planning, monitoring and evaluation (Örtengren, 2003). The analysis is based around the main problem of a case and the LFA allows a visualization and examination of the causes and consequences of the problem (Örtengren, 2003). In this thesis, the LFA is applied on the data to analyse motives of high risk-taking, which will be explained and visualized in section 5.4 *Causes and effects of high risk-taking*.

This chapter presents and discusses the chosen methods for collecting data and further describes how sampling of respondents and informants was made. It also discusses the reliability and validity of the study as well as presents the encountered difficulties and limitations.

3.1 Collecting the data

The data collection of this study can be divided into three different sections: gathering of previous literature, conducting interviews and distributing a questionnaire. Whilst the literature analysis comprises the majority of the data, it is complemented with the data gathered by interviewing people working with security in Swedish NGOs and national authorities along with the questionnaire that was sent out to humanitarian health workers that have been active in various armed conflicts.

3.1.1 Literature analysis

Previous research and literature was used as the primary source of data in this thesis. When searching for articles, books and research concerning the subject, different databases were used to get a variety of

literature to process. These were mainly *Söder scholar* and *Google scholar*, although *Google* was also used. Main keywords used for searching the databases were shaped according to the purpose and questions of the study, comprising: *aid-worker, aid organization, humanitarian aid* – together with concepts such as: *risk-taking, security, security strategies, protection*. A majority of the articles gathered concerned no specific organization or nationality of aid workers and could therefore be seen as being of general kind. The literature was gathered during the course of the spring, from January to May, 2014.

Whilst the majority of the referred literature was peer-reviewed, three articles were not. These three articles were published by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Insecurity Insight and European interagency Security Forum, and were all written by eminent scholars having many years of experience in the field of their subjects. The reason to why this study included these articles is not only due to the fact that the authors have a long experience within respective field, but also because peer-reviewed articles commonly refer to them, implying that they are acknowledged within the field of research.

The literature written in the field of attacks against aid workers usually does not differ between aid and relief worker. This makes it difficult to determine which profession is referred to in the different articles. Adding to this, aid agencies are most often active in the areas, or at least countries, where the conflict is present before the conflict started, implying that there might be the same individuals working with long-term and short-term aid. Whilst there is a difference between the two professions, relief workers being connected to disaster aid and aid workers with development aid, no distinction will be made in this thesis due to the given reasons.

Since the subject of this study is quite sensitive and some of the opinions expressed could be seen as critique towards the work of the organizations, all of the respondents and informants will be referred to anonymously.

3.1.2 Semi-structured interviews

In order to get an insight of the security work of organizations and at the same time getting a perspective on individual risk-taking, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four informants working with aid worker security from different humanitarian NGOs and agencies. Since the questions of this study aim to learn about what organizational and individual actions that can jeopardize aid worker security, a

qualitative approach focused on different cases was desired, thereby the choice of using the semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2008). The pre-made structure contained questions concerning security strategies, high-risk responses and individual risk-taking, and made it possible to follow up on interesting subjects that came up during the discussion (Bryman, 2008). Since using structured interviews would restrict the discussion to certain topics, semi-structured interviews were preferred.

When searching for suitable informants for the interviews, strategic sampling was used to get in contact with the people most familiar with the security strategies of the humanitarian aid organizations and people that work with individual aid worker security in the field (Trost, 2001). This was done both through directly contacting individuals that had written something connected to the subject, but also by using the snowball method. The latter was done through contacting organizations, asking them about contact information to people with relevant knowledge in the subject and could be interested in participating in the study (Bryman, 2008). All the interviews were conducted in March and April of 2014. Although getting people to participate in the study was difficult, the sampling resulted in four semi-structured interviews with people who are engaged in security in their respective organization or national authority. It should be noted that these individuals all work through Swedish authorities and at Swedish offices of international NGOs, which could imply that their answers does not represent the humanitarian aid worker group as a whole. The choice of limiting the interviews and questionnaire to only include Swedish NGO's and authorities was both due to the convenience in reaching contacts in Sweden and also so that one questionnaire could be used for all respondents.

3.1.3 Qualitative questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent out to Swedish humanitarian health workers that have worked in armed conflicts. The choice of only contacting humanitarian health workers was to get as standardized respondents as possible, since being an aid worker can imply so many different professions being exposed to various levels of risks (Trost, 2001). One could argue that delimiting the study to a specific place and event would be a good way to get even more standardized respondents. However, due to the difficulty to get in touch with health workers that have been operating in conflicts, and even more so people that have worked such certain settings, the aspect of time and specification of conflict have been left out.

Except for getting a standardized respondent-group, in this case health workers, the choice of using a questionnaire was intentional in order to reach as many respondents as possible, especially since aid- and medical workers often have a lot on their schedule (Trost, 2001). Whilst interviewing all respondents might have given more in depth understanding and a possibility to follow up on certain questions (Bryman, 2008), the questionnaire was designed with questions concerning perceptions in order to capture individual thoughts, rather than grading feelings on pre-made scales. The questionnaire was based on ideas that had arisen when reading previous literature and Roth's theory concerning edgework and comprised of questions regarding organizational security and responsibility contra individual perception of risk, security and reasons to why they got involved in aid work in the first place. The questions were posed to see both the workers' connection to edgework and to get their perception of security strategies and risk. By using a questionnaire it was not possible to follow up on interesting themes that were brought up by the respondents. Since some themes were very interesting and could be further elaborated, one of the respondents was also interviewed over the phone.

The webpage *enkät.se* was used as a tool to create the qualitative questionnaire and a link to the survey was distributed via email. The choice of using an internet-based questionnaire was because people often are reluctant to go through the process of writing long responses by hand and then sending them by regular mail. In contrast, writing on a computer and sending it by email is quicker and more convenient.

When searching for respondents to the questionnaire, convenience sampling was used with some strategic factors, i.e. Swedish offices of mainly two large humanitarian organizations were contacted and asked for contact information to aid-workers that had been active through respective organization in a conflict-zone, much like the snowball method (Trost, 2001). These respondents represented the two humanitarian organizations and also other actors, such as NGOs and Swedish administrative authorities involved in humanitarian work. The age of the respondents range from 37 to 67 and the number of field missions in conflict areas range from two to at least 15 (one respondent lost count), comprising a number of conflicts from all over the world, including Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Iraq etc.

The questionnaire was distributed directly via e-mail to respondents that agreed on participating and also by using contacts in the organization who forwarded it to relevant co-workers that might be interested in

taking part in the study. The questionnaire was sent out to 12 health workers, where one person distributed it further to other potential respondents. Totally, seven health workers answered. As the questionnaire is qualitative and asks about individual perceptions the number of respondents was not that high and a larger sample as often used in quantitative studies was not needed.

3.2 Methodological difficulties encountered

Throughout the time of writing this thesis, difficulties of various kinds have been encountered. These involve getting enough respondents, shaping the questionnaire and finding the right literature.

When formulating the questionnaire, it was difficult to adjust the questions in a way that they would be understandable for everyone. It was even more difficult to make sure that everyone understood the questions in the same way as the other respondents so that the answers would be comparable. Since the questions posed in a questionnaire are static, it is not possible to follow up with complementary thoughts, which makes it even more important to ensure that the questions are designed in a correct and understandable way. Some of the respondents showed different comprehensions of the same question, especially when it came to the question if they perceived that their notion of security had changed during their years on duty. Whilst some understood it the way it was supposed to be answered, others answered the question as they thought that the risks had changed during their time in the field. It seems as though an initial pilot-study would have helped in overcoming problems of this sort (Trost, 2001).

Another difficulty encountered with the questionnaire is the problem of not being able to follow-up on certain answers. Although qualitative to give the respondents the space needed to elaborate their answers, the respondents did not always do so, but rather kept the answers short. In this sense, semi-structured interviews would be better in two ways: to be able to give follow-up questions in order to get a better understanding of the answers given and to get more elaborate answers by the respondents. If the study would be made again, semi-structured interviews would be preferred. This notion was also the reason to why one of the respondents was included in the interviews, to follow up on interesting answers and to develop the questions further to clarify some answers (Respondent 4 and Informant 5).

3.3 Validity and reliability

Bryman (2008) discusses the validity of a study as the extent to which its results can be generalized to other social contexts and whether it really captures the phenomena it means to study. A problem often related to qualitative studies is the difficulty to generalize the results, since they are often drawn from a specific case or a smaller population (Bryman, 2008). During this study, information was gathered in a qualitative manner through semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires mixed with analysing previous literature on the field. This study is not limited to a single case, but rather tries to gather data from various conflicts and different organizations giving it a higher generalizability than a case-study, but perhaps providing less in-depth knowledge concerning a specific case. However, one should also note that all informants and respondents were all working through Swedish organizations and authorities, and are thereby not representative for the target group it concerns, which is aid workers from all over the world being exposed to the attacks.

Using methods such as interviews and a questionnaire is important to this study, since they can gather data concerning individual's perceptions and real-life experiences (Bryman, 2008). However, the relatively scarce number of respondents and informants could mean that they are not representative for all aid workers who have worked in conflicts, implying that there is a difficulty in really capturing the global phenomena. The information gathered through the interviews and the questionnaire is triangulated with the data examined in the literature analysis. This is in order to strengthen the validity of the data and the study as a whole (Beckman, 2005). Although the sample is not representative for the whole group it concerns and thereby reduces the validity of the thesis, the data gathered through respondents and informants have proven very useful and further provided a significant insight of the problem.

The reliability of a study means the study's potential to be replicated in another social context and whether the method used adequately suits the research questions (Bryman 2008). When using semi-structured interviews as done in this study, it becomes somehow difficult to completely replicate the study since only the main themes are described in the study whilst additional ideas might come up during the interviews (Bryman, 2008). However, the questions asked in the questionnaire and interviews were quite general and concerned topics that are prevalent in the whole aid industry, as identified in the research literature. It could therefore be replicated to a large extent in other countries and with aid workers having other professions.

As for the question whether the method suits the research questions, the perception of the humanitarian health workers could probably have been more adequately gathered if interviews were conducted instead of using a questionnaire. In this case, there was no possibility to follow up interesting ideas. Although not being the perfect method, the questionnaire contributed with valuable data, which if done through interviews perhaps would have resulted in an even smaller respondent group. Both the interviews with the security representatives and the literature gathered were necessary to answer the questions of this study, since they presented information concerning both organizational and individual risk-taking.

In the following chapter, the findings of this study will be presented. As mentioned, the data was collected using three different methods, but will however be jointly presented in one united text.

4 Aid work in conflict

The presentation of the data collected is divided into sub-categories that correspond with the questions, purpose and theories of this study, in order to more easily use the information in the analysis and discussion. First, the importance of the work conducted by humanitarian aid organizations will be presented together with a summary of today's security situation of aid organizations active in conflict zones. This will be followed by an elaboration of the organizations' work concerning security and risk-taking, focusing on data from the interviews and research articles. Lastly, the risk-taking and security of the individual aid-worker will be presented with a focus on the respondents of the questionnaire and the informants from the interviews.

4.1 The role of humanitarian aid in conflicts

The actors in armed conflicts shatter societies all over the world by abusing human rights, disrupting health infrastructure and by using violence to win their cause (Sidel and Levy, 2008). With the evolvement of the post-cold war era, the world saw an increase in intra-state conflicts breaking down societies by destroying health infrastructures, degrading the environment and by causing direct injury and mortality (Acharya, 2008). Besides causing direct violence, these conflicts also cause a huge number of indirect morbidity and mortality through destroying hospitals, impairing food and water supply systems, sewage systems as well as preventing communication and various social services to be delivered (Sidel and Levy, 2008). Then, by not having access to food or water and with sewage and sanitary systems being down, diseases easily spread. On top of this, war diminishes the health system rendering it unable to help all the people in need.

These destructive and increasing intra-state conflicts created a need for a new, more comprehensive security than the traditionally used national security, the latter having its main focus on the security and upholding the nation (Sköns, 2007). The UNDP thereby constituted the concept of human security, comprising all individuals' own security and emphasized all peoples' universal right to security (UNDP, 1994). The concept of human security has grown in importance and is today acknowledged in the international community and used by various humanitarian actors in justifying their interventions in difficult environments with the so called responsibility to protect (Sköns, 2007). Although nations in many cases maintain the idea of national security as their main goal of security, the humanitarian aid

community has its primary focus on everyone's equal right to security, human security (Acharya, 2008). This is where the importance of humanitarian aid needs to be highlighted.

Although being a concept developed by a UN body, NGO's from all over the world contribute to human security everyday by providing relief to vulnerable populations, by assisting victims of war and through protecting the rights of all individuals affected by the disruptive force of armed conflict (Acharya, 2008). In their study, Buhmann et al. (2010) identifies important roles played by humanitarian workers in connection to conflict. The most apparent and probably most easily observed during conflict is the provision of resources and health care to prevent both direct mortality and the spread of diseases and hunger (Buhmann et al, 2010). In conflicts, when no actor takes the responsibility of the population's health, humanitarian agencies acts as providers of assistance to all those in need of help, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, nationality or other aspects of discrimination (Abiew, 2012). Other roles that aid workers have are for instance health workers as protesting against human rights abuse and acting as neutral advocators for peace and development. Whilst the humanitarian aid workers play the invaluable role of saving lives in the midst of conflict and speaking out towards crimes against humanity, a rising challenge of keeping these workers secure has been observed (Buhmann et al., 2010).

In the light of the attacks directed towards humanitarian aid workers, the current security situation of the aid industry is presented in the following section. There is a resounding perception of an increased risk posed to the aid industry compared to one or two decades ago, all authors discussing different reasons to why (Eckroth, 2010; Bollettino, 2008; Stoddard and Harmer, 2006; Wille and Fast, 2013). The growing concern was also brought up by the respondents who showed an anxiety for a heightened risk in general and of being kidnapped in particular (Respondent 1, 6 and 7). One aspect of the increased insecurity is the issue of criminality and lawlessness in conflict zones, being difficult to estimate and therefore hard to respond to (Van Brabant, 2010; Informant 2). Other problems have also been identified, such as high staff turnover, the sole reliance on acceptance and inadequate training for national staff as a probable cause for the increased risks (Stoddard et al. 2009). However, the security workers of the organizations perceived the biggest risks inhabited in the aid work as being traffic-related accidents and diseases (Informant 1, 2, 4 and 5).

Aside from the perceived increase in risks, one of the most frequently referred studies in the field measured an increase in both total security incidence and relative incidence rates by looking at reported

attacks (Stoddard et al. 2009). As additional contribution to the measuring of increased attacks against aid workers, a more recent study also shows a significant increase in overall aid worker insecurity (Wille and Fast 2013). Adding to this, one of the informants emphasized that there is a great under-reporting of attacks against humanitarian workers, especially concerning kidnappings (Informant 2).

When reading about differences between national and international staff security, a main body of research shows that national staff suffers a higher burden of the attacks than their international counterparts (Van Brabant, 2010; Fast, 2010; Stoddard et al, 2009). With the most recent numbers, Wille and Fast (2013) showed an increased unequal burden posed to national workers in proportion to international workers, not only in fatalities, but also in kidnappings. From the year 2006-2010, national staff accounted for over 70% of the fatalities and 49% of the kidnappings directed towards aid workers (Wille and Fast, 2013). This is something emphasized also by informant 2 and 3, who mentioned that the national staff and the national health care infrastructure is targeted more frequently than international entities.

The perceived and partly observed increase in insecurity has led to many humanitarian organizations having to rethink their choices of where and how to intervene in conflict settings (Fast, 2010). Campaigns such as the Health Care in Danger by the ICRC and various statements by a range of NGOs show how the aid industry is condemning this kind of violent behaviour.

This brings the following section concerning how the organizations cope and respond to insecurity and increased risks, including methods used, and how the choice of drawing back operations are made.

4.2 Humanitarian organizations managing their security

The most common security strategies used by aid organizations is usually one of the cornerstones of the security triangle: acceptance, protection or deterrence (Eckroth, 2010). Acceptance implies the organizations seeking support and trust with the local population and community, which inherently results in a higher security. Protection implies more physical equipment and operational policies to ensure the security of the aid workers, such as walls, helmets, curfews, restriction of movement and training etc. (Eckroth, 2010; Stoddard and Harmer, 2006). The last strategy, deterrence, is the least

common means to ensure security and implies posing threats to discourage directed attacks. This can mean hiring guards or coordinating security with military forces (Eckroth, 2010).

Of these methods, acceptance has been the most commonly used (Eckroth, 2010) and is also frequently utilized as a tool by Swedish organizations to ensure both access and the security of the individual workers (Informant 1, 2 and 4). In addition as being used as a means to ensure security, acceptance is also used to gain access to the most vulnerable populations (Informant 1). It could be seen as giving trust to the local actors, not relying on deterrence or a lot of protection, to seem less harmless and thereby getting access (Eckroth, 2010). Even though practised to ensure humanitarian access and security, Stoddard et al. (2009) notes that many security managers rejects the strategy of acceptance as a non-viable security strategy in high-risk environment because of the fact that it does not provide the security needed for the staff, implying that overemphasizing acceptance alone might lead to flaws in security. Difficulties in achieving acceptance is especially true when it comes to areas where crime rates are high and the belligerents are comprised of several loosely connected groups (Informant 2).

In the wake of the politicization of aid⁴, many organizations further emphasize the ‘soft’ methods of security, namely the humanitarian principles: impartiality, neutrality and independence. This is to assure the belligerents that they do not have any political goals with their humanitarian intervention, rather depoliticizing their operations (Stoddard and Harmer, 2006).

When it comes to the responsibility for security, the organization and the individual shares the burden of overseeing different parts respectively (Informant 1, 2 and 4). Whilst the organizations often control the physical protection and acceptance on a higher level, the individuals have the responsibility for their own security by following the security advice and restrictions set up (Informant 1, 4 and 5). These can be e.g. restricted movements, restricted working hours and following a certain dress code (Informant 1 and 5). In the questionnaire, the answers were divided. Whereas many respondents emphasized the vitality of following restrictions in order to be secure, some perceived the restrictions as barriers to helping people in need. Difficulties encountered with these kinds of restrictions will be further

⁴ Politicization of aid implies humanitarian agencies losing their perceived neutrality and impartiality since their increasingly development-focused aid is connected to larger political goals - read more in: Stoddard and Harmer, 2006; Fast, 2010

elaborated under section *4.3.1 Security and the aid worker*, where the experiences of the respondents will be presented.

4.2.1 High-risk responses

Responding to high-risk situations, the literature and the interviews show some different ways to cope with insecurity. Some suggest staying to deliver aid is prevalent, whilst others mean that there is a growing concern for keeping the aid workers safe through hardening security, by e.g. the use of fortified aid compounds. Adding to these, there is also the choice of leaving operations all together when security tightens.

The increased insecurity faced by the aid industry has been discussed as a result of an increased humanitarian presence and a growing number operations in conflict zones (Wille and Fast 2013). By looking at data showing increased severe security incidences towards aid workers, Wille and Fast (2013) notes that there is not only a general increased humanitarian presence in conflicts, but also a rising presence in high-risk environments, i.e. environments of active and indiscriminate violence. A similar note was made by one of the informants, saying that their working environment is not decided by the most secure workplace, but rather the location where most people are in need of assistance (Informant 1).

In contrast to relying on strategies of acceptance, security is also pursued by organizations and agencies through physical protection, such as renting accommodation in secure areas with fences, working and living in buildings with shell protection and sometimes hiring unarmed civil guards (Informant 2). Although many agencies strive towards as little physical protection as possible, high-risk situations sometimes demand for many protective measures, such as employing private security companies or being active within closed areas (Informant 4). There are some authors who note the use of fortified aid compounds as a means to secure aid workers in an all more insecure environment (Eckroth, 2010; Duffield, 2010), something that was also noted by some informants to this study who acknowledge their own organizations using the fortified aid compound as a means to protecting their workers when insecurity is too high (Informant 2, 3 and 4). Although this implies getting a higher staff security, the populations that they mean to help cannot be reached (Eckroth, 2010). One of the informants even noted

that being within a fortified compound sometimes could be more insecure if belligerents have valuable targets inside (Informant 3).

Another strategy used to avert high risks towards international staff is the transfer of risks, which, as noted by Van Brabant (2010), implies the transferring of high risks from international workers to local contractors or national staff. This is done by withdrawing international workers and employing national staff, thereby handing the responsibility over to the locals, adding further to the already unequally exposed situation of national staff (Stoddard et al., 2009). Although the strategy is used since the local contractors are perceived as having a higher acceptance and being more secure, the violence often just shifts to the national staff who have less resources and less training to protect themselves (Stoddard et al. 2009; Van Brabant, 2010).

When analysing the deaths of aid workers in areas of conflict, Sheik et al. (2000), gave the recommendation to limit humanitarian aid in high-risk situations, since a continuation of providing aid in those contexts would definitely result in increased aid worker mortality, implying that a lower risk-taking could help avert the insecurity faced by the aid workers.

When mentioning the decision of when to withdraw operations from a conflict, informants pointed out the difficulty to balance the risks for the workers contra the risks for the people they aim to help. To make that choice, one has to reflect on the reason to why the organization is there in the first place (Informant 2 and 4). Rather than withdrawing operations there was one example of when several international offices were attacked in Myanmar, where one organization reduced the active staff from 21 to 9 in order to reduce exposure, but at the same time stayed to provide aid (Informant 2). As a contrast, other organizations remove their entire operations if the risks are too high, but with the exception if the operation is vital for the exposed populations at that particular time (Informant 4). Similar thoughts are brought up by Van Brabant (2010) when discussing that risks must be assessed in the light of which benefits staying or leaving gives or what dangers it poses. Stoddard et al. (2009) also highlights this problem and argues that there are both agencies that withdraw their presence when insecurity rises and those who increase their presence to account for the loss of other humanitarian actors leaving the area.

So, whilst some organizations show a 'staying safe'-approach being prevalent to ensure aid-worker security, there are also indications of situations where organizations take high risks by staying in

insecure environments. The data in the following section concerns reasons and ideas, gathered from literature and interviews, to why the aid organizations would expose themselves to such high risks.

4.2.2 Risk-taking and the aid organization

Humanitarian organizations often rely on the funds they receive from donors to be able to sustain their operations and continue to exist. When more and more organizations start working in conflict and disaster areas the funds become a matter of competition, where the ones taking the risk of delivering aid in the most insecure areas are the ones that receives the most media attention and thereby more donations (Bollettino, 2008). This does not only lead to increased operational risk-taking, but it also creates an unwillingness to cooperate in the field of security management (Bollettino, 2008). This unwillingness to cooperate was also expressed by two humanitarian workers from different organizations involved in field security, who mentioned that some less sensitive security information might be shared during meetings with other organizations, but that more sensitive information is always kept internally due to their principle of independency (Informant 1; Informant 3). The lack of cooperation in security and standardized data collection has in turn been portrayed as a security threat in itself, since it slows down the process of finding motives and developing remedies to attacks, which if pursued collectively could be much more effective (Rubenstein and Bittle, 2010). Connected to the funding acting as a push-factor for humanitarian organizations to take high risks, Abiew (2012) also note that the increase in humanitarian agencies also have amplified the donors' expectations for organizations to provide more aid to the most vulnerable populations.

A related idea, mentioned by informant 4, is that expectations of the people funding humanitarian agencies in conflict vary whether the agency is a national authority or an NGO, at least in the case of Sweden. Whilst national authorities have bigger expectations to provide security to their workers, NGOs often have bigger expectations that a significant majority of their funding should go directly to the people in need, and not so much to other important aspects, such as ensuring staff security (Informant 4). Also, by joining field missions for instance through MSF or the ICRC, you are perceived as a person who is willing to risk your life to secure others (Informant 4). Especially funding-related expectations connected to donors, such as unwillingness to fund security programmes and a desire for all the funds to go directly to exposed populations was also noted by Stoddard and Harmer (2006) who saw a reluctance to invest in and establish protective measures from the NGOs perspective.

Although risk-taking can be seen as ways to ensure funds, or as a response to donor-expectations, it could also be seen as an extension of the humanitarian mission of enhancing human security, something which was emphasized by one of the informants when talking about security and the workplace. He stressed the fact that their working environment is decided by the location in which most people need help, not by the location that is most secure (Informant 1).

4.3 The individual aid worker

From this point, the data presented will concern humanitarian aid on a more individual level, starting with explaining reasons to why people engage in aid work and if the risks inhabited in the work is understood before entering the aid industry. Then, the relation between the organizational security restrictions and the aid workers' ability to fulfil their mission will be elaborated, finishing with the phenomenon of aid workers internalizing high risks.

When answering why they applied to work within humanitarian aid, a majority of the questionnaire respondents expressed a feeling of wanting to help vulnerable people in need of assistance and seeking to make a difference in the world, referring to their personal values (Respondent 2,3,4 and 6). Some also emphasized their interest in working in low-income countries (LICs) and sharing their knowledge with other people (Respondent 1,5 and 6). Adding to this, others even expressed a gratitude to the work and meant that helping others was a privilege in itself (Respondent 2 and 3). Separating himself from the rest of the respondents, one man even noted that the risks implied were something that got him interested in applying for the job, giving more excitement to the work (Respondent 3).

As an implication of helping others in dangerous environments, many knew that high risks were inhabited in the job description, information which they had got from acquaintances and education (Respondent 2, 4 and 6). One man meant that facing high risks is a part of the employment, and that you need to take risks in order to access vulnerable populations (Respondent 7). In relation to this, thoughts were expressed concerning the individuals as always being exposed to risks, whether living in Sweden or a nation where armed conflict is present, i.e., you can always be at the wrong place at the wrong time (Respondent 3). Three of the respondents further emphasized the importance of always being well-

informed with risks in the environment where they work, since risk is something that always changes (Respondent 1, 3 and 6).

4.3.1 Security and the aid worker

As mentioned before, the responsibility for the workers' own security often rest on the individual's shoulders when it comes to following restrictions and taking risks. However, when asking the respondents to what degree the security strategies of the organizations helped ensuring their security, many of them expressed feeling of great trust to the people in charge of security and risk management (Respondent 2, 3, 4 and 7) whilst some meant that following the security restrictions set up is crucial (Respondent 6 and 7), implying that one's security otherwise rests entirely on the individual (Respondent 7). Aside from this, two respondents meant that it could vary, constituting 50-100% or 30-90% of their field security, referring to one's own pre-emptiveness and judgement as a supplement to the security. Others emphasized that individual acceptance and communication with the local community could further strengthen their personal security (Respondent 2, 3, 4 and 6).

Whilst most of them did not perceive the security-strategies of the organizations as restricting them from fulfilling their mission, some emphasized the restriction of working hours and geographical areas as rendering the workers unable to reach the populations in most need of assistance (Respondent 1 and 2), or making it difficult to transfer patients (Respondent 5; Informant 5). The restrictive rather than enabling role of protection, especially fortified aid compounds, was also noted by Eckroth (2010), where one of here interviewees questioned the compound's function, since it rather increased the distance to the affected populations than bringing them closer. Rather ensured worker security, but rejected human security. Regarding this intricate question, one respondent noted that the security restrictions is a response to the insecurity of the situation, implying that it is not the restrictions that prevent the work from being done, but rather the insecurity of high risks (Respondent 4).

Not being able to fulfil one's duty due to security strategies restricting access to high-risk populations have at many times expressed itself in frustration by humanitarian aid professionals (Stoddard and Harmer, 2006; Eckroth, 2010), sometimes resulting in the workers taking matters into their own hands, even breaking rules of restrictions, to help those in need (Informant 4 and 5). Many examples of this kind were brought up during the interviews, whereof two will be presented here. The first case

concerned an aid worker who abandoned the safe grounds of the organization's workplace in order to help affected populations in a high-risk area situated far from where the restrictions allowed staff to go (Informant 4). The other example was when one aid worker defied security restrictions in order to escort severely hurt children to the border so that they could receive aid, knowingly putting the personal security at high risk by moving outside the perimeters of the restricted areas (Informant 5).

Hence, although time-related and geographical restrictions are made to keep the aid workers secure, they sometimes move out of that sphere in order to help others in the end ensuring human security, knowingly putting themselves at high risks.

4.3.2 Risks and the aid worker

Although many aid workers are shocked when starting to work in a context of daily violent conflict, some of the respondents meant that they have learned how to deal with risks after they have worked in a number of high-risk missions (Respondent 3 and 4). Implying that intuition to risks takes a long time to develop, experience has made them less afraid, but more observant of risks (Respondent 3; Informant 5).

As previously mentioned, traffic accidents are often the greatest risks faced by aid workers working in conflict. One of the informants, also being a respondent, expressed that many workers feel secure when driving their car at home and therefore presume that the task is equivalent in the country where they work. At first, the traffic situation in countries affected by conflict can be shocking, but the perceived dangers decrease over time, implying a normalization of an insecure infrastructure (Informant 5). In the same way she noted that many aid workers normalize abnormal things such as the sound of bombings after being exposed to the occurrence over a long time-period (Informant 5).

When talking about the internalization of risks, three of the informants working with security used the allegory of the boiling frog⁵ to explain how perceived risks could be normalized when increased little by little (Informant 1, 2 and 3). They meant that, by internalizing the exposure of risks, people have a hard

⁵ If putting a frog in boiling water, the frog will instantly jump out because of the heat. If however putting the frog into cool water and increasingly turn up the heat, the frog will not notice the change and thereby does not jump out despite being boiled.

time seeing if it increases or not since we gradually become used to the new levels of risks as normal. One of the informants even suggested this normalization of risks as being something inherent in every person, always internalizing and normalizing what we are exposed to everyday (Informant 1). Through working with contacting many of the workers in the field, one informant meant that this kind of normalization could be seen in almost all of the people working in conflict zones, giving the example of one person who expressed a situation being fine although there were gunshots happening a couple of blocks away. The person meant that it was not that near and thereby did not pose a risk (Informant 4). One of the health workers perceived the same kind of normalization behaviour and noted that the boundary for what is 'normal' is constantly expanding, especially in high-risk areas, resulting in a kind of risk-blindness (Informant 5).

Two informants thought that this phenomenon was especially true when it came to the local actors who experience insecurity to a much higher degree for a longer time by living or growing up in the areas, in contrast to international staff who's missions are often restricted to a smaller time period (Informant 2 and 3). In fact, one of the reasons to why many of the international staff works in shorter time-periods in conflict areas is to counteract that this kind of risk-internalization occurs (Informant 3).

5 Analysis

In this section, the theories stated under the Theoretical Framework, will be applied on the collected data. Although the first theory, *the normalization of danger*, will be used to get a more organizational grasp of risk-taking and security, it will also be applied on the individual level of risk-taking, using the data from the literature and interviews. The theories concerning *edgework* and *perceived risk* will be applied on what has been found during the interviews and questionnaires to see how they relate to aid work and how that further affects the individuals' risk-taking and security. The concept of human security will permeate the analysis and problematize the risk-taking behaviour of individuals and organizations.

5.1 Resilience or increased protection – for whom?

Looking at Duffield's (2012) respective ideas of where the security responses of the aid industry is heading today one could both observe a willingness to stay and care and a bunkerization of the aid work when examining the data. The resilience way of thinking, as explained by Duffield, has been applied in the field and is used by some organizations. When looking at high-risk responses some organizations decide to withdraw operations or restrict all personnel to a fortified aid compound, whilst some organizations only partly remove staff to reduce exposure (Informant 2) and some even increasing their presence due to loss of other humanitarian agencies in the area (Stoddard et al. 2009; Wille and Fast, 2013). Although being a theory explaining individual behaviour, one could argue that this kind of high risk-taking behaviour to some extent contradicts the motivation behaviour hypothesis as explained by Brewer et al. (2004). Removing some staff means decreasing exposure and thereby answers the perceived increase in risks with protective measures, although still knowing that the risks are not eliminated. The choice of increasing presence in highly insecure areas, to make up for the loss of other withdrawing humanitarian actors, contradicts the motivation behaviour to a greater extent since the organization faces higher risks, but responds with increasing exposure. By looking in the humanitarian aspect of the organizations valuing human security above high risk-taking, one could argue that risk perception is not the only factor driving the choices of humanitarian organizations in the context of armed conflicts. Or rather, perhaps the perceived risks towards human security are valued higher than the perceived risks towards the aid worker security, and thereby the choice of intervening could be seen as the protective measure needed to decrease the risks of the affected populations of the conflict. This implies that the idea of Brewer et al. (2004) concerning motivation behaviour is also valid in explaining

increased interventions in high-risk areas. High risks for the affected people in conflicts of being exposed to violence or disease, harming their health and personal security, is responded to with the protective measure of humanitarian intervention to provide aid and shelter.

Looking at the data from the perspective of Duffield's (2012) bunkerization of aid, one could argue that this kind of development is also prevalent within the literature and in the stories of the informants and respondents. Both informants and authors noted withdrawing of operations and the use of fortified aid compounds as a means to ensure their own and their workers' health and security. The strategies are used both as common conduct and as high-risk response to perceived high risks and insecurity, although this implies lower access to vulnerable populations and also inhabits a few risks on its own (Informant 3; Eckroth, 2010). Using Brewer et al.'s (2004) idea of motivation behaviour on this kind of response, the hypothesis correlates with the risk perception and responding behaviour change seen in the data. If organizations perceive that their workers are or will be at high risk, they will undertake protective measures by using fortified aid compounds or withdrawing from certain insecure areas in order to ensure the workers' security. However, if the risks towards human security, i.e. various affected people in high-risk conflict areas, is seen as more important than the risks towards aid workers, the protective measure of withdrawing operations or bunkering up in aid compounds does not adequately satisfy the high risks posed to human security. This implicates that Brewer et al.'s (2004) motivation behaviour is not prevalent in this kind of high-risk response. On the other hand, the utilization of fortified aid compounds is not only legitimized through keeping the aid workers safe, but also by the fact that healthy aid workers can provide aid better than the ones who are injured, kidnapped or worse. So even though losing access to the most vulnerable populations, some argue that keeping the humanitarian aid workers secure within the area of the compound implies an increased ability to help others.

If not looking at high-risk responses, but at strategies used to ensure worker security, acceptance has become the most widely used in contrast to protection and deterrence (Eckroth, 2010). Although being used to ensure security to the workers at the same time as seeking access to affected populations, an over-reliance on acceptance measures has been observed. It has been criticised for not providing enough security to the aid workers, rather relying on relations with the belligerents to remain static and positive (Stoddard et al., 2009). Accepting low protective measures in order to acquire access can be linked to Duffield's (2012) notion of resilience and care to stay approach. If instead relying on protection or deterrence, there are similar problems to what Duffield (2012) explained when mentioning the

bunkerization of aid, that by boosting protective measures and constantly being active within aid compounds, the aid industry together with its personnel distance themselves from the context and the people to whom they are meant to provide aid (Eckroth, 2010). Although many aid workers seem to enjoy the protection provided by their organization, many also express a frustration in not being able to fulfil their mission due to security restrictions. As told by the informants, violating these restrictions was sometimes a result of aid worker frustration of not having access and thereby being unable to help the ones that are in greatest need, even though violating restrictions implies taking higher risks at one's own responsibility. Thereby, the workers ensured the health and personal security of others by risking their own security.

When commenting increased attacks against aid workers, Sheik et al. (2000) suggested that organizations should not expose themselves by intervening in high-risk areas, implying that such risk-taking would jeopardize aid worker security, leading to an increase in security incidences. However, if not intervening in high-risk areas, the adverse effects of the conflict will be exacerbated and more people will become exposed to risks. Although local actors are crucial in the first response, international aid organizations bring a lot of vital resources and reinforce the existing, e.g. health, infrastructure. On the other hand, by heightening protective measures or by withdrawing to a fortified aid compound, the aid organizations ensure their own workers' security, making them able to provide aid for a longer time.

By using Brewer et al.'s (2004) theory concerning motivation behaviour, one could argue that it is applicable in both the case of bunkering aid workers and in the case of staying to care, the only difference is whose security is being prioritized. Jeopardizing their own security, some aid workers and organizations move into high-risk areas in order to get access to affected populations, seemingly prioritizing the humanitarian and human security agenda above their own individual security. Some even defy security restrictions in order to provide aid to people in the most dangerous environments. Interpreting this through motivation behaviour, their protective measure is providing aid to vulnerable populations and their motivation is the high risks that these people are exposed to. When using fortified aid compounds and withdrawing operations, it would seem that the protective measure is bunkering up and/or withdrawing and that the motivation is to ensure aid worker security. This could be elaborated and seen as aid worker security implying a continuation of providing aid and thereby having the motive of ensuring human security rather than just aid worker security.

5.2 Edgeworking one's way to risk

The development of the bunkerization of aid, as explained by Duffield (2012) and seen in the findings, seemingly takes away the 'edge' off of aid work. Through the use of fortified aid compounds and by transferring risks to local contractors, the international aid industry gets securitized and removes itself from the main concepts of edgework. Roth (2014) explained aid work as being edgework because of the expression by humanitarian workers wanting to help people in need, although knowing the high risks involved. By transferring the risks to national staff and hiding in secure compounds, not only do the aid workers avert the inhabited risks of their job, but they also restrict themselves from helping the people in greatest need. This would imply aid work as not being an edgework, since the security strategy removes the main correlations mentioned by Roth (2014), i.e. doing a meaningful job by helping others, voluntarily putting oneself at risk, and the employment being flexible and autonomous. Bunkering up in aid compounds and following strict security restrictions means removing the autonomy of the employment, it reduces the ability to help the ones in greatest need and further seeks to eliminate the risks posed to the aid worker instead of accepting them.

By looking at the ideas of Roth (2014) in relation to the findings of this study however, one could argue that aid work corresponds with the resilience and care to stay strategies of aid organizations. As mentioned by Roth, the motivation of working with humanitarian aid is a result of individuals' values. The workers want to help vulnerable people and make the world a better place although being aware of the high risks included in the work description, voluntarily exposing themselves to risks. The same can be seen with the respondents of this study who emphasized that although exposing themselves to high risks they became aid workers in order to help others in need of aid. Similarly, Roth's (2014) findings that exposing oneself to risks as being necessary to provide aid was also found with both the respondents who meant that taking high risks means getting more access. Some informants also mentioned that their working environment was decided by the location of the most affected and vulnerable populations, not by the most secure location. By seeing aid work as edgework, one could argue that it legitimizes strategies of resilience and staying to care, since it implies taking the high risks in order to help others.

Many of the organizations' high-risk responses involve withdrawing operations, decreasing staff presence or bunkering up in fortified aid compounds. So although edgeworkers expose themselves to high risks in order to save others, attacks against a few brave humanitarian aid workers could result in a

withdrawal of an organization's entire operation, leaving the people affected by the conflict behind. Thereby, high risk-taking by a few workers in order to help more people could result in adversely affecting both the workers themselves and also the people they aim to help, since withdrawing operations would render them without any external aid. Applying the idea of edgework with the concept of human security can however show the opposite effect. As mentioned earlier in the analysis, edgework implies tolerance to high risks since taking risks is seen as a means of getting access to the ones that need help. Together with the ideas of human security and values of universal equality to security, the risk-acceptance of edgework might be the motivation driving the individuals who defy organizational security restrictions in order to help others. Although jeopardizing their own security, individuals reject security restrictions in order to help wounded children out of the country of conflict, and move into highly insecure areas in order to provide aid to affected populations (Informant 4 and 5). This means that, if not having the idea of human security or perhaps humanitarianism, the aid workers might have not go to the extent of violating security restrictions to help other people. Also if not being tolerant to risks and danger the aid workers might have wanted to provide aid, but would perhaps reject the idea because of the high risks involved. So although defying security restrictions could result in e.g. aid worker injury and further withdrawal of operations, the choice is driven by ideas of accepting risk in order to ensure the security of others and sometimes also result in saving other people's lives.

5.3 Normalization of danger – for individuals and organizations

In the collected data, reasons given to high risk-taking by the organizations have been in order to receive funding, because of donor expectations and as an inhibited part of providing aid, i.e. ideas of humanitarianism and human security. Although generating a constant exposure to risk through what Duffield would explain as the stay and deliver approach, it is difficult to determine whether the motivators of taking high risk has developed a normalization of danger on an organizational level. By applying Roth's (2014) theory concerning edgework however, some insight can be gained of how this could be possible.

Although the theory of edgework is focused on individuals, one could argue that the donor expectations faced by the humanitarian organizations, i.e. that their funds should go directly to financing their aid and not their security and that they should intervene in the most insecure environments, is a result of the branding of aid work as edgework. Since aid work incorporates voluntary risk-taking in order to provide

security for others, the same as edgework, organizations get criticized for over-emphasizing protective security measures, when their main goal should be providing aid, especially to the most vulnerable populations often situated in high risk environments. So, the expectations of donors to constantly push the organizations' borders of jurisdiction whilst at the same time decrease protection-funding could be seen as a result of the edgework brand that aid work has. As one informant noted when asking what kind of person seeks to be an aid worker: the kind of person that values other peoples' lives more than his/her own. By having this perception of aid workers, donors can justify expectations on wanting money to go directly to help the most adversely affected populations in the most insecure areas without giving a thought to security funding. Branding the aid industry as being tolerant and used to danger could imply accepting an increased exposure to high risks, thus leading to a normalization of danger within the aid industry.

Looking at the idea of normalizing danger from an individual perspective, all the informants noted that it is prevalent within the aid industry and that it occurs with almost every individual aid worker (Informant 4). One informant even stretched as far as to say that it is a natural thing that all humans do, meaning that whilst some things or environments might seem insecure at first glance people get used to the danger through everyday exposure (Informant 1). By branding aid work as edgework, it implies a tolerance of the risks involved towards one's own security in order to help others. So if accepting aid work as being edgework, one could understand why individual humanitarian aid workers take high risks, sometimes even violating security restrictions in order to fulfil their humanitarian mission. As an extension of accepting risks however, edgework could help explain the individual's tendency to normalize risks and insecurity. When presenting some interesting themes that came up in her study, Roth mentioned that many of the aid workers changed their perception of risk when working in conflict zones, needing to change their view on what is normal. This is explained in the data as a result of the constant exposure to violence and danger.

Although a normalization of danger and risks is prevalent with the aid workers who are active in conflict areas, some of the respondents and informants of this study experienced a higher understanding of risks after being part of several missions in conflict zones. By working in similar contexts of conflict several times, their understanding and intuition of risks are perceived to have developed. Even though impossible to correlate in this study, this kind of risk perception and behaviour could be seen in Brewer

et al.'s (2004) accuracy hypothesis, which implies that a person's risk perception, and thereby behaviour, adequately corresponds with the actual risks of the situation.

As mentioned by one of the informants, one can observe a normalization of risks with almost all of the humanitarian aid workers who operate in conflict zones (Informant 4). However, the national staff is believed to suffer a higher tolerance to how much violence is perceived as normal. This is due to the fact that they normalize it through a longer period of time by living and perhaps even growing up in areas where a state of conflict is normal and high-risk situations are everyday occurrences. Adding this to the transferring of risks from international to national staff, as mentioned in the literature, one could argue that this is the reason to why national workers and local contractors take or become more exposed to higher risks than their international counterparts. When observing the fact that a majority of attacks are carried out towards national staff, one could argue for several reasons. It could be due to the higher representation of national workers, or because of a transfer of risk together with higher risk-taking due to a higher tolerance of violence.

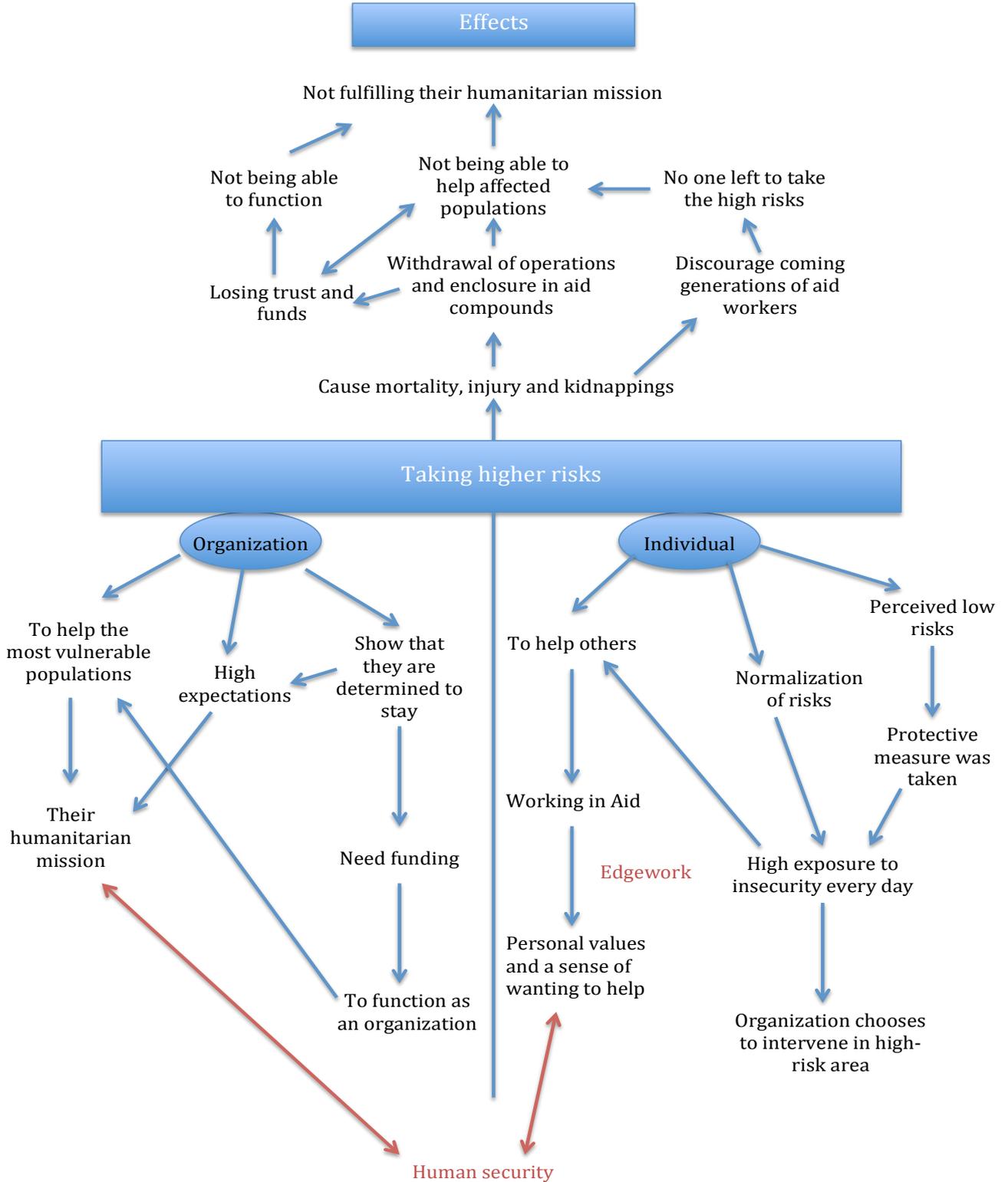
By looking at the risk reappraisal hypothesis explained by Brewer et al. (2004) some complementing ideas to the normalization of danger can be found. Although the majority of aid workers perceive higher risks when working in an area of conflict, many of the respondents seem to rely a lot on their organizations providing them with security. By relying too much on the organizations providing security through, e.g. negotiating acceptance in a local context, the aid worker might perceive the risks as being fairly small although in reality the actual risks might not have decreased. Especially concerning acceptance, which some security specialists have considered insufficient in providing adequate security, or difficult to negotiate if criminality is high in the area (Informant 2; Stoddard et al. 2009). The use of a fortified aid compound or unarmed guards for instance could result in the aid worker perceiving a decreased risk to being attacked. Thereby, the worker might take unnecessary risks instead of being cautious like when the person perceived the risks as being higher. Even though the perceived risks might have gone down, the actual risks might still be on the same level as before or perhaps even higher. Like one of the informants noted, the use of fortified aid compounds can sometimes pose a risk in itself if the belligerents see the location as a valuable target (Informant 3). This means that although a person perceives the situation as secure by taking some protective measure, the actual situation might be totally different. This could imply that the individual's risk-taking does not correspond with the actual situation, but rather becomes based upon the perceived high security.

5.4 Causes and effects of high risk-taking

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, chapter 3 *Method*, this is the chapter where the LFA-analysis will be explained and visualized. By conducting an LFA-analysis on the problem of taking high risks in relation to the data and analysis of this study, it is possible to derive common motivations behind the high risk-taking behaviour of humanitarian aid workers and organizations. The LFA is divided up between individual and organizational risk-taking, and can be found below the next paragraph.

From the centre and down of the LFA-tree, it starts off with the problem of high risk-taking and the reasons being the roots, deriving the deeper causes to high risk-taking, e.g. the individual takes higher risks in order to help people - he/she wants to help people because of working for a humanitarian aid organization – the individual works in aid because his/her personal values and the feeling of wanting to help people – values which can have their roots in the idea of human security, that all people have an equal universal right to their personal security. In a similar way, taking higher risks because the danger becomes normalized is due to the constant exposure of high risks. The aid workers expose themselves to high risks in cases where they want to help vulnerable populations and also if the aid organizations choose to intervene in high-risk environments. The reason to why organizations would intervene in high-risk contexts could be because of donor expectations, a need for funding or because of wanting to provide aid to affected populations. In the end, all these motivators could be traced back to their humanitarian mission, wanting to enforce human security although jeopardizing aid worker security.

LFA - Logical Framework Approach



When analysing the reasons and motivations to why both humanitarian aid workers and organizations expose themselves to high risks, the deeper causes to such behaviour can be traced back to the founding ideas of human security and humanitarianism, guiding both individuals and organizations in their work. This is illustrated on the LFA-tree above.

The top part of the LFA-tree constitutes the possible effects of high risk-taking if nothing is done. If high risk-taking continues in the same way and perpetrators keep directing their attacks towards the workers it could lead to several adverse incidences synergistically moving towards a non-functioning humanitarian aid industry, rendering the people affected by conflicts helpless without any external aid. If high risk-taking continues and leads to aid workers getting injured, kidnapped and killed during the process, it could lead to high-risk responses such as the aid organizations withdrawing operations or becoming increasingly active in aid compounds. This will implicate that the organizations will have a more difficult time helping the most vulnerable and affected populations and perhaps lead to decreased trust and funding. Decreased trust and funding means a decreased potential to provide aid, which further amplifies the already decreased trust and funds, in the end perhaps leading to a non-functioning organization and failing the mission of enhancing human security. The same way, increased attacks on humanitarian aid personnel might discourage coming generations in aiming for a job within the aid industry, limiting the number of people willing to take high risks in difficult environments and in the end exacerbating the non-functioning of the aid industry. Although this might be considered stretching the problem to its limits, it is important to note what consequences high risk-taking can have on the aid workers, aid organizations and the people they set out to help.

To sum up, the LFA identifies the reasons of high risk-taking and traces the behaviour back to the root motivation. At the same time, the analysis also illustrates possible consequences of continued high risk-taking, which could be severe if not adequately seen to. In order to go further with the results of the LFA, ways to manage risk-taking will be discussed in the following chapter.

6 Discussion

This section discusses possible solutions to manage the problem of high risk-taking. It argues for a division of intentional and unintentional risk-taking and further poses the question of whether the problem at hand really is the risk-taking behaviour of individuals and organizations or if it is rather their inability to take high-risks.

6.1 Managing the problem of high risk-taking

Before looking at how to manage the problem of taking high risks, it would seem rational to divide what risk-taking is intentional and what is unintentional. The intentional risk-taking behaviour could be seen as primarily being motivated by ideas of human security and humanitarianism, guiding the individual aid workers and organizations when choosing to intervene in a high-risk area or violating security restrictions in order to provide aid to others, even though putting one's own security at stake. Looking at unintentional risk-taking behaviour, one could argue that it mainly stems from normalizing danger by being exposed to high risks everyday, or it could also be traced to Brewer et al.'s risk reappraisal, perceiving risks as low because of taking some kind of protective measure, although the actual risks are still high. Both of these unintentional drivers could imply a risk-taking that does not correspond with the actual insecurity of the situation. By looking at the features of the different types of risk-taking, one could argue that the unintentional risk-taking is in most need of management, since there is no specific motivation, e.g. helping others, driving the behaviour. In contrast, intentional risk-taking is a choice, which is legitimized by motivations of helping others and is therefore much more difficult to manage, if it even should be managed at all.

Whilst bunkering up in aid compounds and transferring risk to national staff is not a feasible option since it diminishes the core ideas and purpose of humanitarian aid, a goal for the aid organizations could be to decrease unintentional risk-taking and at the same time take the risks needed in order to help vulnerable populations, in the end enhancing human security. This can be possible by continuous reminders by the aid workers themselves and by organizational activities concerning normalization of danger and perceived versus actual risks. Also, all organizations, whether they rely on security strategies of protection or acceptance, should constantly emphasize the importance of individual risk-taking. They should also inform the aid workers that organizational security strategies does not ensure their safety to a 100%, and that they always need to be cautious and use their own judgement and intuition when

making choices. Of course, intentional risk-taking should also be made with adequate risk-management through careful considerations of inhabited risks, and should be weighted against how much aid a certain operation or intervention would provide. However, there is also some certain intentional behaviour that could be seen as constituting unnecessary risk-taking. When it comes to intentionally withdrawing international personnel and transferring risk to national staff, this does not result in a more secure situation for aid workers, but rather passes on the posed risks from one individual to another.

6.2 Taking high risks - a security issue?

So, is risk-taking a problem for the aid workers' security? Well, risk factors such as traffic accidents, diseases, crime, attacks and kidnappings are the biggest problems facing the humanitarian aid workers who are active in areas of conflict. However, when looking closer at how the aid workers become exposed to these kinds of risks, increased risk-taking from both organizational and individual level is a main factor exacerbating the mentioned risk factors. This is irrespective of whether the behaviour is motivated by wanting to ensure human security or just through having normalized the danger. One could thereby argue that the risk-taking itself, by exposing the individual to all risk factors, constitutes the highest risk to the aid workers' security, not individual factors such as traffic accidents or attacks.

Since limiting organizational operations in a high-risk area or bunkering up in a fortified aid compound would decrease security incidences towards, at least, international humanitarian workers, a decreased risk-taking implies higher security and thereby indicate that risk-taking matters in aid worker security. Sheik et al. (2000) meant that by not intervening in high-risk areas, organization could avert possible risks to their workers' security. Keeping this in mind whilst analysing Stoddard et al.'s (2009) study, which showed increased security incidences towards aid workers, one could argue that the growing number of attacks are connected to the higher risk-taking of aid organizations, as also observed in the data. The same can be seen on an individual level where aid workers themselves emphasize that following security restrictions is key to ensure one's own security, whilst violating them implies higher risk-taking for higher access, but also lower security. But as seen in the data, withdrawing international aid workers to secure areas can sometimes implicate increasing the exposure of national staff by transferring risks, which means that bunkering up in fortified aid compounds does not provide higher security for aid workers in general, but only for international aid workers in particular.

One could argue that higher risk-taking implies lower aid worker security, whilst lower risk-taking means higher security for the aid workers. However, this notion is dependant on the question of whose security matters. If talking about human security, taking higher risks and low protective measures could imply higher security, whilst lower risks and high protective measures could mean lower security.

To understand the relationship between the perpetrators and the humanitarian organizations, one could use the allegory of a chess game. The management of security and attempts to gain access to vulnerable populations always depend on the perpetrators' previous move. Losing to many pieces might encourage an organization to act defensively and if being put in checkmate, the organizations often have no choice but to withdraw. However, sometimes one has to risk the possibility of losing a chess piece in order to achieve the higher aim motivating the move.

7 Conclusion

Attacks against aid workers is the outcome of the actions taken by perpetrators, humanitarian organizations and individual aid workers. Therefore, one needs to examine all perspectives and actors involved in the process in order to understand the phenomenon as a whole. This study does not mean to reject theories and assumptions about perpetrator motives, but rather tries to shed light on another angle of the problem. This is why the purpose of this study is to analyse whether the risk-taking behaviour of organizations and individuals could be a contributing factor jeopardizing aid workers' security.

By answering the questions outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, this section will conclude the main ideas and aspects brought up and discussed during the extent of the study. To remind the reader of the questions, they will be brought up following this paragraph and further be answered accordingly.

- What kind of actions and decisions taken by humanitarian aid organizations could jeopardize the security of their workers in conflict-zones?

One could argue that taking high risks by moving into insecure environments is one of the main actions taken by organizations, which potentially jeopardizes the security of their workers. Looking at the opposite strategy however, bunkerization of aid seems to defeat its own purpose, rendering the workers unable to provide aid whilst being secure within the high walls of the fortified aid compound. The question also depends on what workers it refers to. If it refers to international aid workers, they are probably more likely to run the risk of being attacked if the organizations would intervene in high-risk environments. If referring to the national staff and local contractors however, they would seem to be more exposed to attacks when international aid workers withdraw or bunker up, transferring the risk-taking to the national workers.

Motivations driving high risk-taking have been found to be need for funds, donor expectations and wanting to help adversely affected populations. Through the analysis and with the help of the LFA the motivations could be traced back to the ideas of humanitarianism and wanting to ensure human security. Being critical however, one could question the humanitarian and human security agenda being the root motivator of every organization's high-risk behaviour. Perhaps the reason behind taking high risks in order to ensure funding and satisfy expectations could be the fact that the organization wants a secure

income, not only to help others but also for the sake of its own survival, and that the individual worker is driven by economical or careerist incentives rather than ideological ones.

- In which situations do aid workers risk their own security, rendering them more vulnerable to attacks during armed conflict?

As seen in the LFA-analysis, taking high risks often has its root causes in the personal values of the individual worker together with concepts such as human security and humanitarianism. However, high risk-taking can also be exacerbated through unintentional processes such as normalizing danger and perception of reduced risks. The risk reappraisal hypothesis showed that e.g. low risk-taking behaviour does not necessarily correspond to the security of the situation, since actual risks might still be high. If the respondents and other aid workers being active in conflict zones show a complete trust to the security management of respective organization, their perceived risks might go down whilst the actual risks are still high. The normalization of danger is seen with a majority of, at least Swedish, aid workers and could exacerbate unintentional risk-taking. Through constant exposure of danger the risks become internalized and seen as normal, which further decreases the perceived risks whilst actual risk might be continuously high.

If looking at cases where aid workers intentionally jeopardize their own security, it is mainly motivated by values of wanting to help vulnerable populations of conflict zones. This can be through e.g. violating security restrictions in order to help otherwise inaccessible populations. By looking at aid work as being edgework this kind of risk-taking could be understood more clearly, since working with edgework implies both tolerance to risks and using exposure to risks as a tool for gaining access.

- When working in conflict zones, what legitimizes high-risk behaviour?

As mentioned in the discussion, one should differ between intentional risk-taking that is used to help others and unintentional risk-taking, which is caused through normalization of danger or misinterpretation of actual risks. If an individual takes high risks because of having normalized danger for a longer time or because they put too much trust on their protection, one could argue that the high risk-taking has no motivation behind it. Thereby, one could argue that this kind of high risk-taking is unnecessary and that it should be limited to avoid risks.

If talking about the intentional risk-taking, the combination of characteristics from aid work being

edgework and the universality of human security somewhat legitimize aid workers to take higher risk even though it implies a higher insecurity for them. For both organizations and individuals, intentionally exposing themselves to high risks is legitimized by the fact that they have accepted risks as being a part of accessing vulnerable populations. Additionally, organizations also motivate interventions in high-risk areas by referring to donor expectations and the need for funds.

Wanting to provide aid to the most vulnerable populations in conflict zones, organizations make the choice of working in high-risk environments, consequently risking the health and security of the aid workers themselves. However, if not taking the risk of working in these areas and instead locking up their workers in fortified aid compounds and transferring risks to national staff, the organizations prevent themselves from assisting populations living in insecure areas. Through such behaviour, one could say that the workers and organizations do not fulfil their humanitarian mission in aiding the ones in greatest need. So even though jeopardizing their own security, the aid-workers do so in order to ensure security for others, in the end perhaps ensuring human security.

7.1 Contribution to the field of research

By exploring attacks against aid workers from a new perspective, this thesis has contributed with indicating the relevance of both individual as well as organizational risk-taking when operating in conflict zones. It also traces the origin of high risk-taking by investigating causes and reasons, which drive the individuals and organizations in their work. The thesis further shows that by dividing risk-taking into intentional and unintentional behaviour, more effective management of risk-taking could be conducted.

7.2 Further research

Although this study has aimed to show the importance of risk-taking in the area of attacks against aid workers in conflict zones, much further research concerning risk-taking behaviour is needed in order to understand its relevance to aid worker security incidences. Within the subject of risk-taking there are also several different topics that should be researched further. As noted by Van Brabant, the question concerning what responsibility the organizations have in the security of national staff and local contractors is an important subject needing further attention, especially since national workers are the ones being most affected by the violence.

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Here, the respondents and informants of this study will be clarified and listed to the extent that they remain anonymous. The first part concerns the informants with whom interviews were conducted and the second part concerns the respondents of the questionnaire.

Interviews

Informant 1, male

Informant 2, male

Informant 3, male

Informant 4, male

Informant 5, female (also respondent 4 to questionnaire)

Questionnaire

Almost all of the respondents of the questionnaire have been active through three or more

organizations/actors when working in conflict zones. Since the answers of the respondents thereby reflect their total experience, the organizations will not be specified.

Respondent 1, female

Respondent 2, female

Respondent 3, male

Respondent 4, female

Respondent 5, male

Respondent 6, female

Respondent 7, male